

# STUDY



## PERCEPTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Chişinău 2016

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This study was developed by the People's Advocate Office and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in consultation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Moldova, under the joint project "Supporting National Human Rights Institutions as per International Treaty Bodies and UPR Recommendations". The People's Advocate Office, OHCHR and UNDP Moldova shall not be responsible for correctness and fullness of the contents or for any loss or damage that may be caused directly or indirectly due to use of the information or reliance on the contents of this survey, either in the original language or translated versions.

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Data collection and interpretation was performed by the team of the CBS-AXA-Center of Sociological Investigations and Marketing Research, consisting of Vasile Cantarji, Natalia Vlădicescu and Maria Vreșiș, as well as all operators involved directly in data collection in the field, to whom we would like to convey our sincere gratitude for their professionalism and hard work. The analysis of the collected data and elaboration of the study report was carried out with the support of Andrei Brighidin, human rights expert.

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# Abbreviations

LPA	Local Public Authority
CBS-AXA	Center of Sociological Investigations and Marketing Research
CNAM	National Health Insurance Company
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
NR	Non-response
DNK	Do not know
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
OHCHR	The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
EU	European Union

# Executive summary

This study aims at finding out the public perception on human rights in the Republic of Moldova and is focused especially on measuring the level of knowledge, attitude and experiences of the population in this regard, by quantifying the following aspects:

1. *Knowledge* – population's general awareness of fundamental human rights and freedoms;
2. *Attitude* – general public perception on the need and importance to observe and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Republic of Moldova;
3. *Experiences* – personal experience or of the immediate social circle on human rights and fundamental freedoms violation and mitigation of human rights abuses.

The study describes some important aspects regarding public knowledge and awareness of human rights, their observance by different players, in general, and compared to different vulnerable groups in the country. The findings of the study are especially important in the current context of the Republic of Moldova. First, it appears that the information level of the population is very low, especially among rural population. Also, the reduced access to information in this context, and the possibility to defend the violated rights should be mentioned. Another particularly important aspect of the public perception is that the human rights are systematically violated in the Republic of Moldova. It is necessary to pay great attention to the right to health, right to social protection, right to education, right to work, and right to a fair trial.

At the same time, this study confirms the need for higher attention to the equality and non-discrimination principle, taking into account specific issues faced by different groups and vulnerable or marginalized persons, including people with disabilities, LGBT, people living with HIV, the Roma and non-citizens. Depending on social groups they belong to, people face different impediments in exercising their inherent rights. In the opinion of respondents, the state does not always ensure that the human rights are to be exercised without discrimination based on such criteria as social status, age, sex, residence, disability, HIV+ status, health, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, income. Low standards of living and lack of financial resources were mentioned as impediments in observing such vital rights as access to healthcare and right to education. The right to a fair trial is less known by the population, but it is also, one of the most violated. Women are frequently discriminated in the political life, employment and society, in general.

The role of state institutions in observing human rights is sufficiently well understood by the population. On the other hand, however, the respondents consider that the top institutions of the state, along with the law-enforcement agencies, are those who most of all violate the human rights and particularly scarcely contribute to their observance and protection. The level of knowledge about the human rights protection system and state policies in this field is low. The study acknowledges that only one out of four persons knows about the National Human Rights Action Plan for 2011-2014<sup>1</sup>, adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova.

The reduced level of information and knowledge of the population about human rights leads to low level of seeking protection against violations and abuses. There is no knowledge about the right to address to authorized institutions and seek relevant support when the human rights are violated.

The respective findings are widely substantiated in this study. The study consists of seven analytical chapters, which include findings resulting from research, as well as suggestions to improve the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Republic of Moldova.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://lex.justice.md/md/339395/>

# Context of the study

Measuring the public perception about the human rights in the Republic of Moldova represents an important tool in identifying, according to ordinary citizens, the existing issues in the field, measuring the evolutions in the last years and planning new strategic actions to improve the existing situation.

A general study on human rights protection in the Republic of Moldova was developed in 2004 with the support of UNDP Moldova<sup>1</sup>. Another Study on Equality Perceptions and Attitudes in the Republic of Moldova was developed in 2015 by the Council on the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)<sup>2</sup>. The recent study reflects the current situation of human rights, providing credible and valuable information about the impact of state policies on population in general, as well as on vulnerable, marginalized and stigmatized groups in particular, suggesting further specific recommendations to improve the existing situation.

As a result, the development of this study was guided by two major **objectives**:

1. measuring the perception and public opinion regarding the current situation of human rights in the Republic of Moldova, reflected through a more detailed analysis of the observance of certain human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as:

- right to education;
- right to health care;
- right to social protection;
- freedom of assembly and association;
- right to a fair trial;
- right to life, physical and psychological integrity;
- right to work and labor protection;
- right to information, freedom of opinion and expression;
- right to equality and non-discrimination.

2. measuring the perception and opinion of groups of marginalized persons regarding the observance of human rights, being in vulnerable situations compared to the rest of the population, and namely:

- people with disabilities;
- victims of domestic violence;
- ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities;
- former detainees;
- people living with HIV;
- LGBT people;
- people living in the security area;
- elderly;
- non-citizens;
- women.

Hence, the Study on Perceptions of Human Rights in the Republic of Moldova based on people's knowledge, attitudes and experiences represents a valuable source of information for further development of national policies and strategies focused on the real needs of country's population.

<sup>1</sup> The sociologic Study on Human Rights developed with the support of UNDP Moldova can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.undp.md/publications/doc/Survey.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Study on Equality Perceptions and Attitudes in the Republic of Moldova can be accessed at the following link: <http://md.one.un.org/content/unct/moldova/ro/home/publications/joint-publications/studiul-privind-percepiile-i-atitudinile-fa-de-egalitate-in-repu.html>

# Methodology of the study

To achieve the purpose and objectives of the study, the following research methods were applied:

- - analysis of existing relevant documentation;
- - quantitative study;
- - qualitative study.

## *Quantitative study*

The study was carried out in accordance with the following methodological parameters:

- **Method of data collection:** face-to-face interviews, moderated by an interviewer;
- **Sample size:** 1015 persons between 18 years and older;
- **Sampling:** stratified, probabilistic, bi-phased;
- **Stratification criteria:** 13 geographic regions that coincide with the administrative territorial units before returning to districts (rayons), residential environment (urban-rural), size of urban localities (2 types), number of population in rural localities (3 types of rural localities);
- **Sampling:** volumes of urban strata and totals per regions (former counties), and the volume of rural strata were calculated proportionally with the number of population in accordance with the data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova<sup>3</sup>.

Taking into account the high degree of engagement of the population of the Republic of Moldova in the labor force migration, the distribution of the number of population per sampling regions has been adjusted by weighting, taking into account the number and gender characteristics and age of the population working abroad, based on the Labor Force Survey carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics<sup>4</sup>.

- **Randomization stages:**

**I. Locality:** within adjusted strata, the localities (73) were selected randomly, based on a table with random numbers.

**II. Family:** maximum number of interviews carried out from the sampling point of view was 5. Families who were interviewed were selected randomly, based on pre-established path analysis.

**III. Person:** if the selected families were composed of more adult persons, the interviewed person was established by the method of closest birthday.

- **Representation:** the sample is representative for adult population of the Republic of Moldova, by a maximum error of  $\pm 3.1\%$ .

The period of data collection was 12 – 23 December 2015. The interviews were carried out at the residence of the respondents. The questionnaire was developed in Romanian language and translated into Russian language, thus, giving the possibility to the respondents to choose the language of communication during the data collection process.

The analysis of the data is presented based on a number of socio-demographic characteristics grouping them for statistical representation.

Hence, **age groups** used for data analysis are as follows: 18-29 years, 30-44 years, 45-59 years, 60 years and older.

<sup>3</sup> <http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Database/RO/02%20POP/POP01/POP01.asp>

<sup>4</sup> <http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Database/RO/03%20MUN/MUN07/MUN07.asp>

The level of education of respondents is analyzed based on three groups:

- Low level: *No education, unfinished primary school (up to 4 grades), primary (4 grades), incomplete secondary education (9 grades);*
- Average level: *General education (11-12 grades), lyceum/high school (12 grades), professional education (1 year of study), vocational education (3 years);*
- High level: *College (2-5 years), higher education, Master's, Doctor's degree.*

*Socio-economic level*<sup>5</sup> is presented depending on the welfare of the respondents in the three groups, respectively:

- Low level
- Average level
- High level

Distribution of respondents by socio-demographic characteristics is represented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (sampling structure)**

		%	Number
Gender of respondent:	Masculine	45.6%	457
	Feminine	54.4%	558
Residence place:	Urban	46.0%	463
	Rural	54.0%	552
Age of respondent:	18-29 years	24.1%	162
	30-44 years	27.5%	223
	45-59 years	25.6%	293
	60+	22.7%	337
Nationality:	Moldovan/ Romanian	84.5%	834
	Russian	3.8%	45
	Ukrainian	4.5%	55
	Other	7.2%	81
Education of respondent:	Low level	23.7%	247
	Average level	46.4%	475
	High level	29.9%	293
Occupation:	Economically active	36.8%	335
	Economically inactive	38.2%	328
	Pensioner	25.0%	352
Socio-economic level:	Low level	29.9%	338
	Average level	33.3%	335
	High level	36.8%	342

<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of definition, we used the information on commodities/appliances in the households used for a long period of time: connection to pipeline, TV set, natural gas, automobile, land line, cell phone, washing machine, cable TV, satellite TV aerial, fridge/freezer, computer, internet connection. The grouping was made via Varimax method (Dimension reduction/Factor, [http://sites.stat.psu.edu/~ajw13/stat505/fa06/17\\_factor/13\\_factor\\_varimax.html](http://sites.stat.psu.edu/~ajw13/stat505/fa06/17_factor/13_factor_varimax.html)), the sampling was grouped in three groups with equal weights.

## Qualitative study

The qualitative survey included 9 focus groups and 19 in-depth interviews with human rights experts. The interviewed experts were suggested by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in cooperation with the People's Advocate Office. In this case, the experts were guaranteed the confidentiality of answers.

To recruit the respondents, participants at the focus groups, there was used the “snow-ball” method, taking into account the following criteria: age, residence, education and other specific characteristics of each interviewed group. To recruit the respondents – people living with HIV, the regional Social Centers for HIV positive persons were involved. For group discussions with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons (LGBT), the selection of respondents was assisted by the non-governmental organization GENDERDOC-M<sup>6</sup>, based on criteria pre-established by CBS-AXA.

**Table 2. Plan of the focus groups**

	Category	Number of participants	Date
1.	Focus group with persons with disabilities	9 respondents	20.02.2016
2.	Focus group with persons who live in the security zone	10 respondents	20.02.2016
3.	Focus group with victims of domestic violence	8 respondents	21.02.2016
4.	Focus group with religious minorities	9 respondents	21.02.2016
5.	Focus group with people living with HIV	9 respondents	26.02.2016
6.	Focus group with LGBT persons	9 respondents	27.02.2016
7.	Focus group with ethnic minorities	10 respondents	28.02.2016
8.	Focus group with Roma people	4 respondents	28.02.2016
9.	Focus group with non-citizens	4 respondents	03.03.2016

The focus groups took place in Chisinau. The period for collection of qualitative data was February-March 2016.

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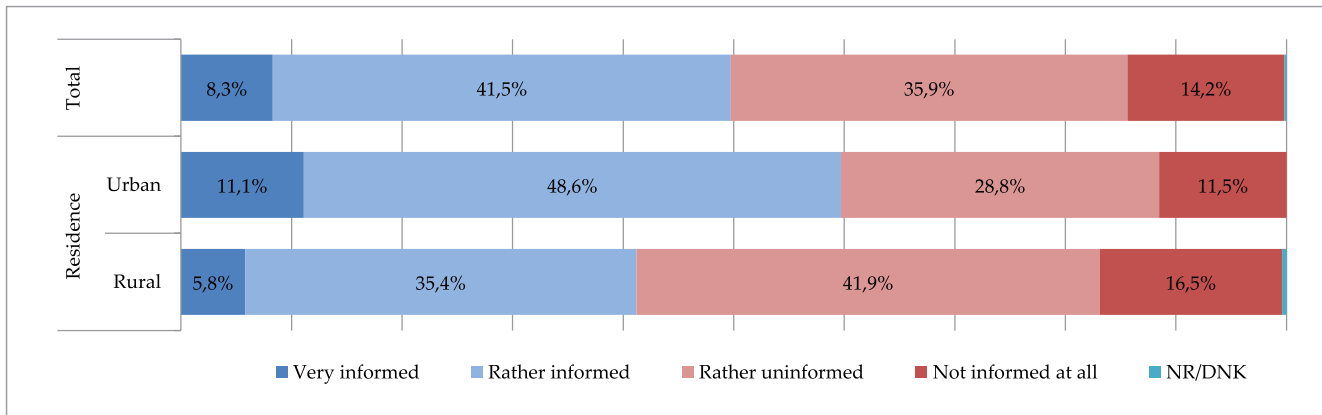
<sup>6</sup> [www.gdm.md](http://www.gdm.md)

## CHAPTER 1.

### Level of information of the population about human rights in the Republic of Moldova

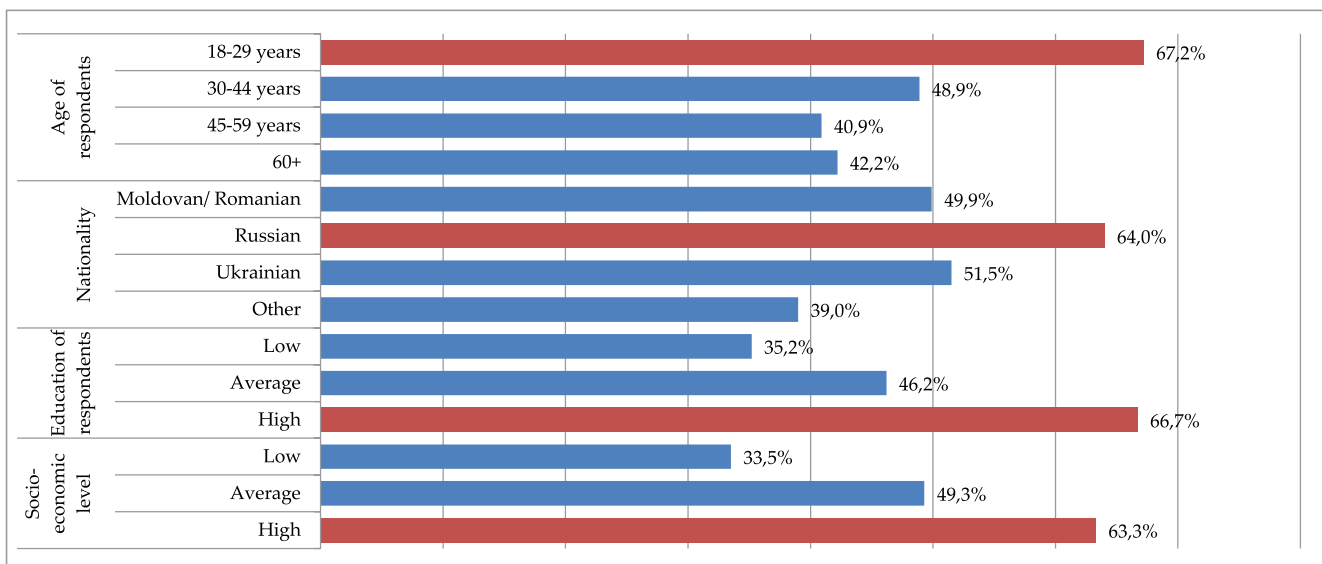
One of the most important findings of the study is that the level of information of the population about human rights is low. Only half of respondents consider that they are rather informed in this context, compared to only 8.3% of those who declared that they are very informed. The level of information is higher in towns, where the share of persons who declared this is 59.7% compared to only 41.2% respondents from villages (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Level of information of the population about human rights**



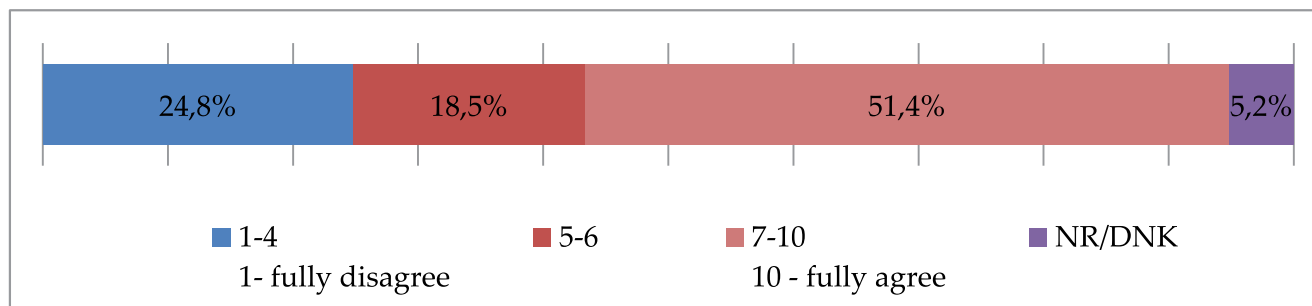
The young people from the age group 18-29 years are considered very informed, accounting for 67.2% affirmative answers; respondents with higher education – 66.7%; of Russian nationality – 64%, also the persons with high socio-economic level – 63.3%. The poor, i.e. with low socio-economic level are the least informed. Only 1/3 of respondents of this group consider themselves informed about human rights (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Level of information of the population about human rights by socio-demographic profile**



The level of public knowledge about human rights was evaluated by assigning marks on a scale from 1 to 10 for answers to the question ‘Is there a lack of knowledge of human rights among the population?’, where ‘1’ signifies ‘Entirely disagree’, and ‘10’ signifies ‘Totally agree’. An important share of about 70% of respondents confirm the lack of knowledge about human rights, assigning marks from 5 to 10 to the answer to the question (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Level of knowledge of the population about human rights**



The participants in group discussion associate human rights, first of all, with ‘freedom’, especially freedom of expression: ‘freedom of speech’, and ‘the right to express my opinion’. The ‘right to life’ and ‘right to education’ were most often mentioned by respondents as spontaneous associations. Some respondents mentioned that human rights represent for them ‘democracy’, and other specified that human rights signify first of all, ‘accountability’, ‘our observance of other people’s rights and freedoms’.

In the opinion of ethnic minorities and non-citizens, human rights represent ‘everything the law allows me to do’ and ‘following the law’. Some participants in the group discussions specified that the law is not observed and/or legal provisions are applied selectively – ‘our government respects only itself’.

Hence, the rights enjoyed by the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, in the opinion of the persons interviewed in the group discussions, can be classified in 3 groups:

- mentioned in all group discussions: *right to education; right to work and adequate working conditions; right to information, freedom of opinion and expression; right to freedom of conscience, thought and religion;*
- mentioned in several group discussions: *right to life and decent standard of living; right to health; right to social protection; freedom of assembly and association; right to rest and leisure;*
- mentioned in one of group discussions: *right to equality and non-discrimination; right to private life; right to family.*

A number of respondents mentioned that human rights are not known. In the same context the respondents mentioned that one should address to informed persons, lawyers, who know better the human rights.

Also, the experts confirmed that the population not simply does not know about its rights, but even the interest to know them is low. Some experts stressed out the fact that the need to know the rights appears when a person’s rights have been violated.

*‘It is a problem that people are not always interested to know their rights; only when they face or are in a situation, they start to document themselves to try to understand where their rights were violated or what could be done to defend them, what are the remedial mechanisms.’ (Expert 13)*

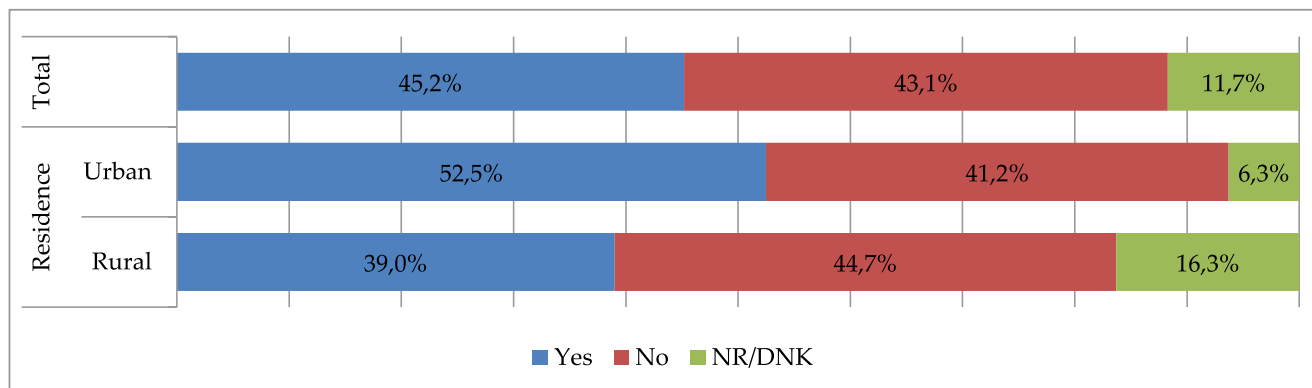
*‘In the RM there is no legal culture and people rarely know their rights; they often find out about their rights when these were violated, when they understand their rights have been violated and they reach to a lawyer when the problem is serious.’ (Expert 15)*

*‘Actually, the population does not know what human rights are, nor it is looking for a source of information about human rights; I can say that the majority is not interested in knowing them. (Expert 14)*

The perception of majority of respondents during group discussions is that *'human rights are only on paper'*. At the same time, the representatives of groups who feel rejected by the society (LGBT, the Roma) consider that human rights protect them from *'discrimination, humiliation and swearing language'*.

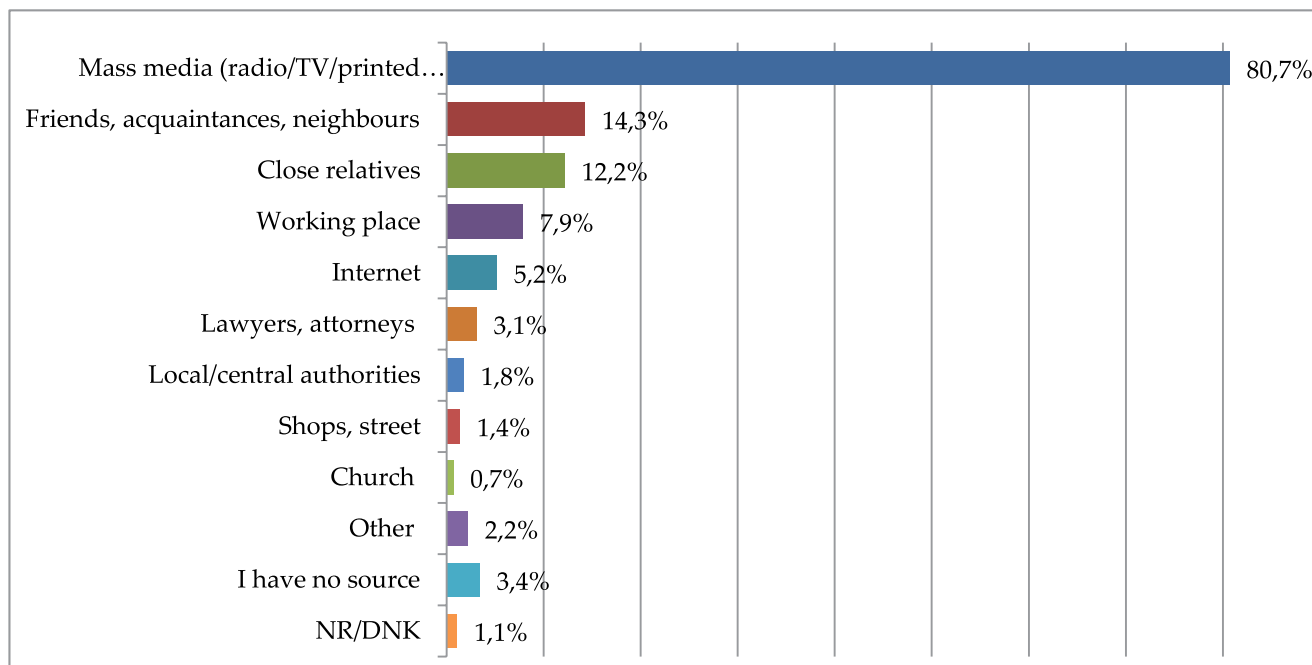
The information on human rights and possibilities to defend these rights is considered accessible by 45.2% of respondents. Those from urban area who have the same consideration account for a larger share of 52.5%, compared to only 39% of respondents from the rural area. The respondents from villages show high level of uncertainty, because 16.3% of them could not or did not want to comment on this aspect (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Access to information on human rights and protection mechanisms**



Most people, 80.7%, are informed about human rights from the mass-media (radio/TV/printed media); the information source for more than ¼ is the close social circle (friends, acquaintances, neighbors – 14.3%, relatives – 12.2%), and almost 8% receive the respective information from their employment (Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Sources of information on human rights and protection mechanisms**



During the group discussions, the respondents confirmed that the mass media, Internet and the persons from own circle are the main sources of information: *'from TV, neighbors, reading some information'*.

*'I know what has been taught at school'*, declared some respondents. At the same time, they specified that currently, the education institutions pay special attention to knowing and observing the rights of the children. In some group discussions, the subject of the rights of the children led to heated discussions, expressing contradictory opinions. Some respondents truly believe that some situations are exaggerated. The children are taught a lot about their rights, but less about their responsibilities that come with: *'the children have too many rights'*.

One of the interviewed experts voiced an opinion different than that of respondents in the group discussions, underlining that the situation is opposite. Hence, the education institution remind often the children about their obligations but not about their rights. As a result, we have a generation who does not know its rights.

*'For instance at school, the teachers say: 'the child knows too much about rights, but has to know about the obligations too. But I want to ask the teacher: 'How often does he/she speak about rights and how often about obligations during a class or during a course?'. He/she speaks for 45 minutes about obligations and once a week, if ever, speaks about the rights during the life skills lesson. The child is 98% subject to knowing the obligations. (Expert 4)*

The participants to the study, who previously benefited of some support, for instance, counselling on behalf of the civil society, mentioned it's key role in informing a specific community (the Roma, LGBT, people living with HIV, etc.) about its rights and protection mechanisms when the rights are violated.

Besides the sources mentioned by respondents who participated in group discussion, the interviewed experts specified the role of public institutions and their representatives: lawyers, policemen, LPAs, doctors, etc. in informing the population about human rights.

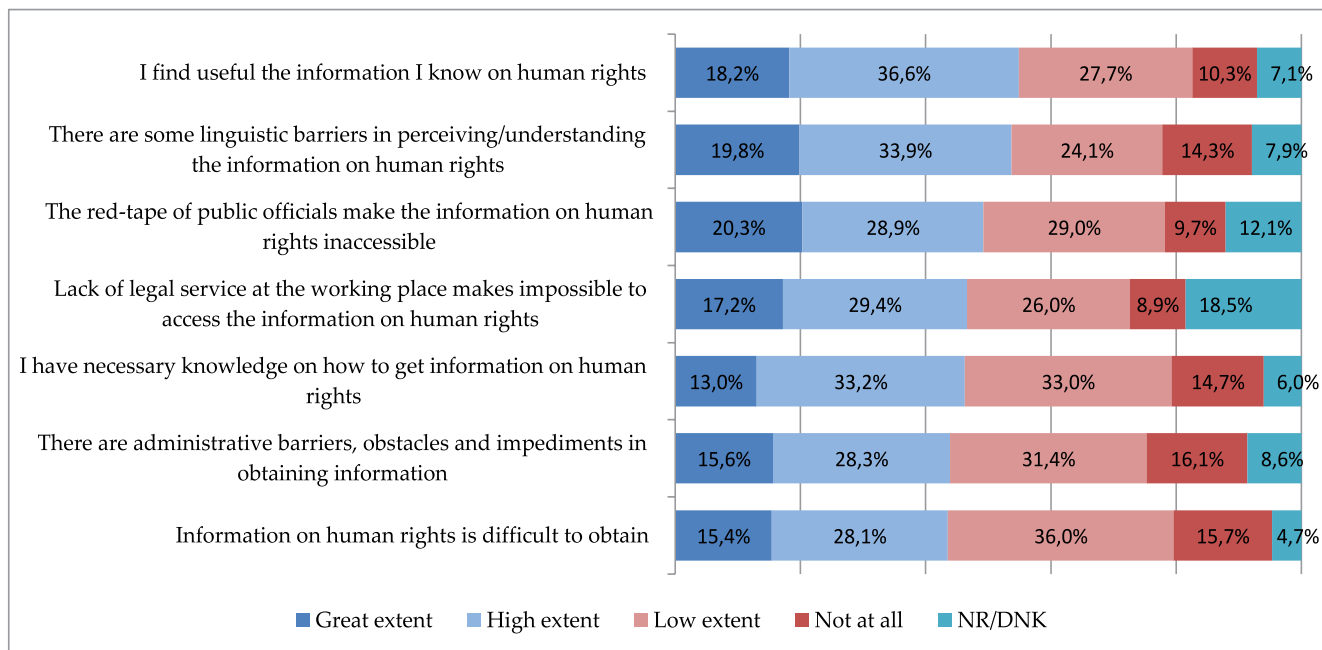
*'When a person has a problem, the lawyer, as a specialist, is a source. As a rule, when a person has legal issues, he/she comes to a lawyer and the lawyer informs him/her about his/her rights and ways of protection.'* (Expert 3)

*'An ordinary man either informs himself from Internet, and if there is no Internet, appeals to the assistance of a known lawyer. Every person knows a lawyer to consider.'* (Expert 14)

*'There was a case when an elderly woman came to audience and I asked her how did she know about the Representative X in locality X. She said, 'I went to the doctor, had issues with a state institution, my blood pressure increased, and the doctor told me to go to Mr. Z, because he would help you.'* (Expert 10)

Being asked to confirm the extent of such affirmations on information about human rights, it was observed that the answers *'to a very large extent'* *'to a large extent'* had a great share. About 55% of respondents consider that the information on human rights is useful, 54% - consider that there are certain linguistic impediments in perception/understanding the information on human rights, and almost half – 49.2% think that the red-tape of public officials makes the information on human rights inaccessible. At the same time, only a bit over 40% agree (answers *'to a very large extent, large extent'*) that there are *administrative impediments, obstacles and barriers in obtaining the information, and the information on human rights is difficult to find* (Figure 6).

**Figure 6. Agreement or disagreement on a number of affirmations regarding information on human rights**



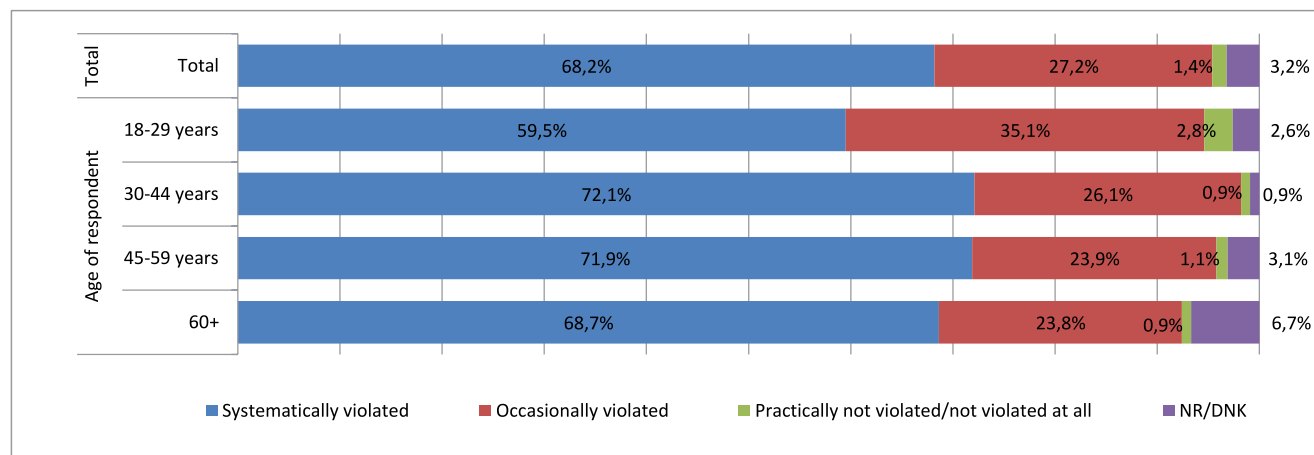
## CHAPTER 2.

### Level of observance of human rights in the Republic of Moldova

#### 2.1. General perception of human rights observance

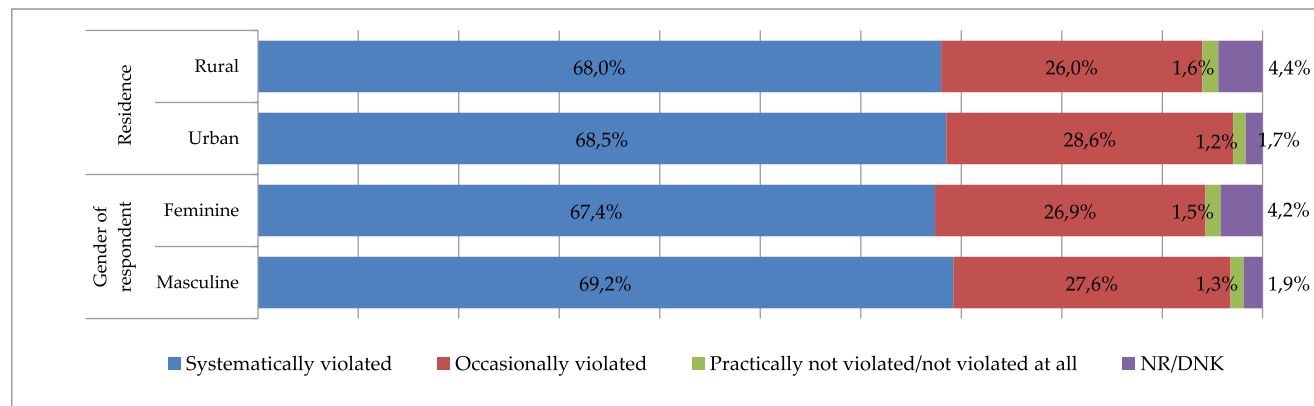
According to the findings of this study, the human rights are systematically violated in the Republic of Moldova, based on the answers provided by 68.2% of respondents, while 27.2% of respondents consider human rights are violated occasionally. There are no wide discrepancies between the answers, in accordance with the age group of respondents, however, a slightly higher share of about 72% accounts for persons who consider that the human rights are violated systematically, this representing the age group of 30-59 years (Figure 7).

**Figure 7. Opinions with regard to violation of human rights in the Republic of Moldova**



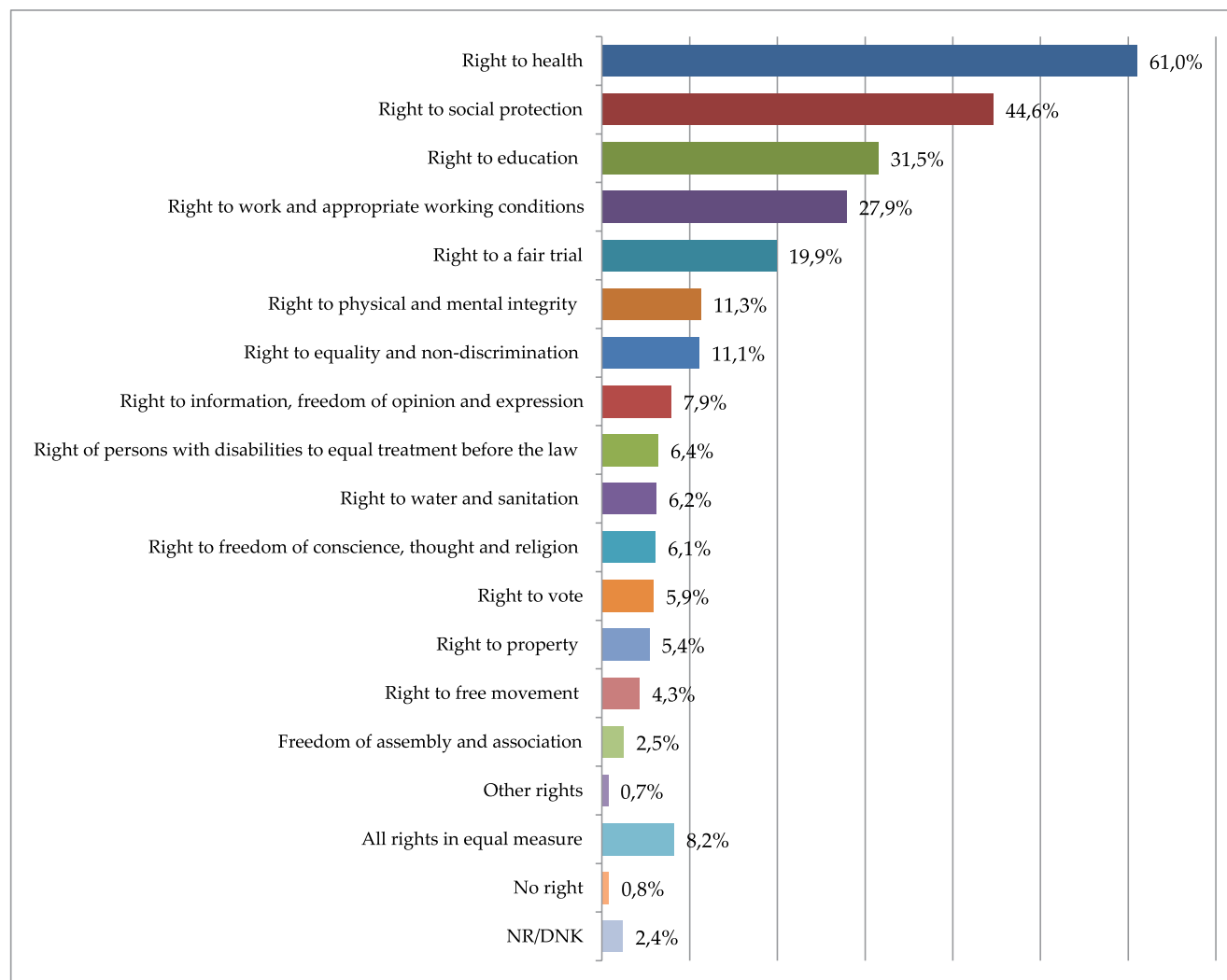
At the same time, there was registered a higher share of men (69.2%) compared to women (67.4%) who declared that human rights are violated systematically. There is a discrepancy between shares of respondents from areas of residence: 28.6% respondents from urban area and 26.0% - from rural area consider the human rights are violated occasionally (Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Opinions on the violation of human rights in the Republic of Moldova by areas of residence and gender**



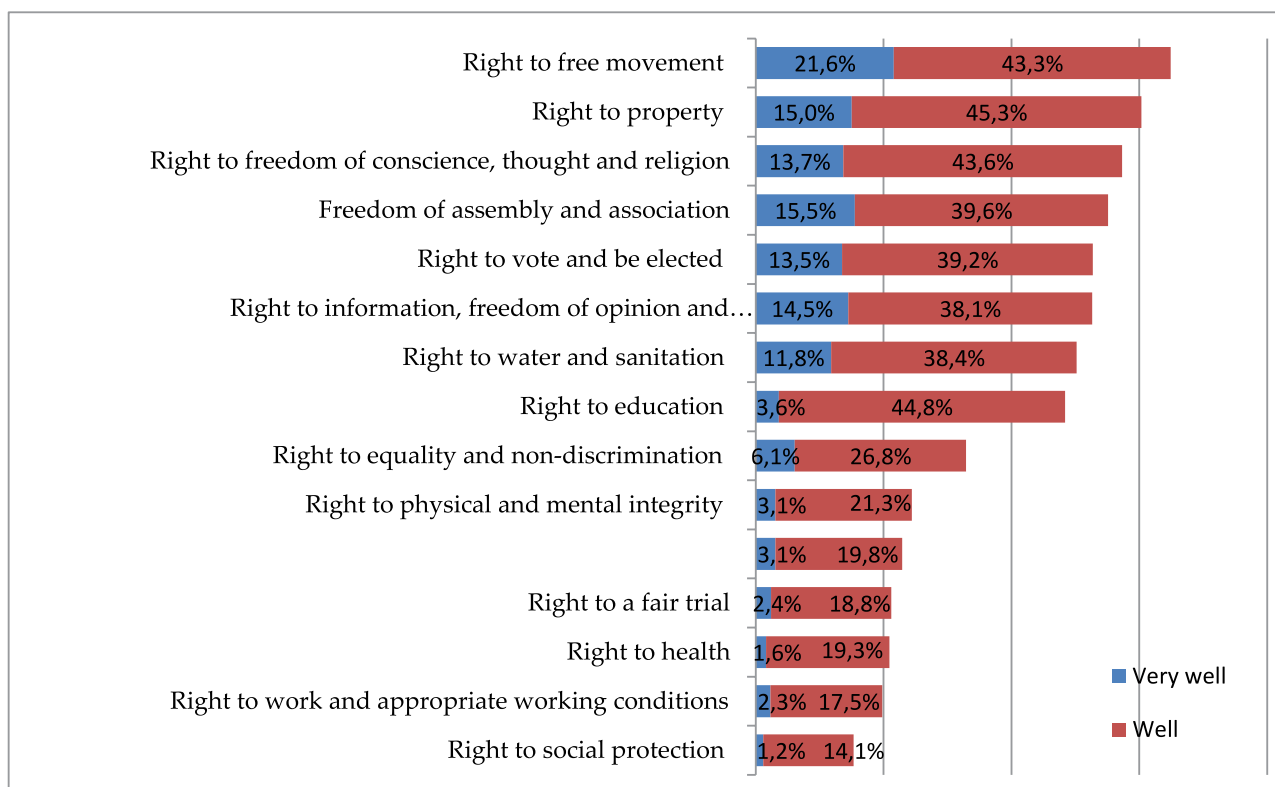
*Right to health* is considered the most actual and important right that requires enhanced attention from Moldovan society. This opinion is shared by 61% respondents, followed by the *right to social protection*, with 44.6% affirmative answers, *right to education*– 31.5%, *right to work and good working conditions* – 27.9%, *right to a fair trial* (to justice) – 19.9%. Other rights and freedoms accounted for less than 11% affirmative answers (Figure 9).

**Figure 9. Human rights and fundamental freedoms requiring enhanced attention of the Moldovan society**



In the opinion of the respondents, the *right to free movement* is the most observed right in Moldova, according to about 65% of answers ‘very well’ and ‘well’, followed by *the right to property* with over 60% answers of the same type, and such rights as: *right to freedom of conscience, thought and religion; freedom of assembly and association; right to elect and be elected; right to information, freedom of opinion and expression; right to water and sanitation* accounted for 50% and 60% of answers. The least observed, according to respondents, are the *right to social protection* and *the right to work and favorable working conditions* (Figure 10).

**Figure 10. Assessment of human rights and fundamental freedoms observance in the Republic of Moldova**



In the opinion of participants in the group discussions, the *right to education, right to vote, right to freedom of conscience, thought and religion, right to freedom of opinion and expression and the right to family* are the most observed rights in the Republic of Moldova.

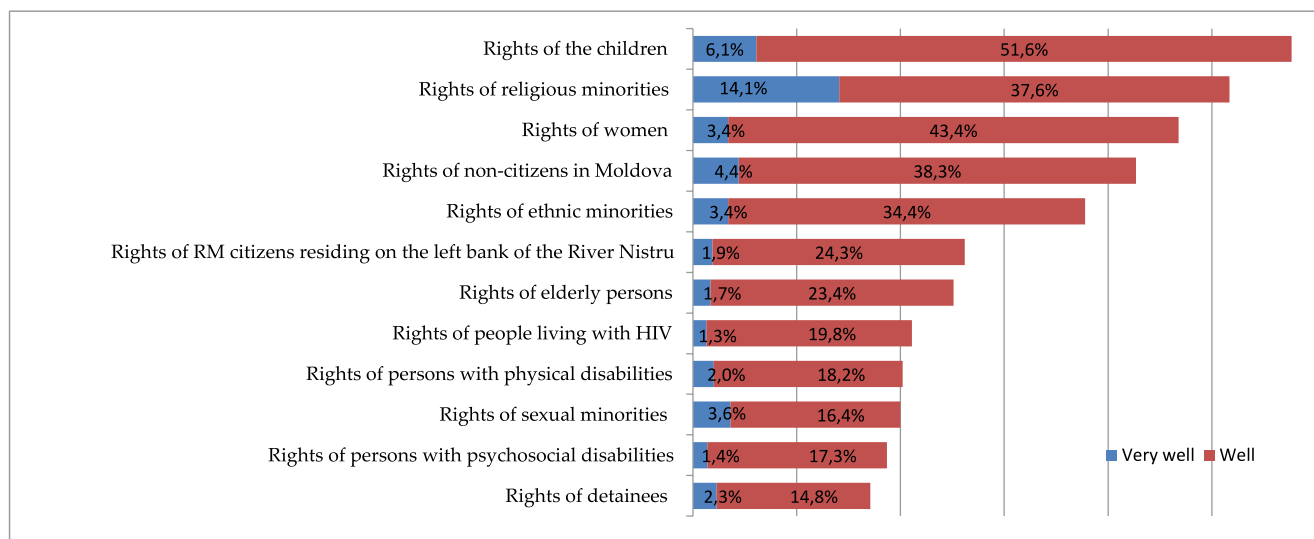
The human rights experts think that most rights are observed, taking into account the existence of cases of partial violation of some rights. For instance, the right to education is observed in the Republic of Moldova, but informal payments are widely spread during the study process, which limits certain rights.

According to the participants in group discussion, the *right to work, right to health, right to decent standard of living, right to equality and non-discrimination, right to physical and psychological integrity, right to family*<sup>1</sup> are the least observed rights.

The opinions of respondents regarding the observance of human rights and freedoms of certain categories of persons differ. The highest share of the interviewed persons who considers their rights are observed ‘very well’ and ‘well’ referred to the *rights of children* (57.7%) and observance of the *rights of religious minorities* (51.7%). *The rights of women* are considered observed by 46.8% of respondents, about 40% of respondents consider the *rights of foreign citizens in Moldova and the rights of ethnic minorities* are observed, about ¼ of respondents consider that *the rights of citizens of the Republic of Moldova residing on the Left Bank of the River Nistru and the rights of the elderly people*, are also observed. The respondents consider that the *rights of detainees and rights of persons with psycho-social disabilities* are the least observed rights (Figure 11).

<sup>1</sup> The right to a family is violated, according to LGBT representatives and people living with HIV, while other categories of respondents mentioned that the rights are observed.

**Figure 11. Assessment of human rights and fundamental freedoms observance of some categories of persons in the Republic of Moldova**



Some interviewed experts mentioned that *social rights, right to a decent standard of living* are violated in the Republic of Moldova, especially when social payments do not cover the necessary minimum of existence. The respondents from the category of pensioners mentioned this too.

*'I receive MDL 800 pension. Everyone knows how much heating costs and how much we pay for it. Besides, we have to pay for electricity, gas, TV cable. I was sued. I paid but not entirely. I had little left, then I could not afford anymore. I told them I was not going to pay because I did not have the money', and they cut off my heating. Heating is my business now.* (F, 59 years, representative of ethnic minorities)

*'I receive MDL 470, we have 52 acres of land. We bought it because we had children and had to feed them. The children have left now, and the land is left behind. No one can work the land with MDL 460. I ask why the pension is so little; I have no transport, no petrol, I am sick and cannot work the land, and the pension is not paid.'* (F, 60 years, representative of ethnic minorities)

## 2.2. Perception of human rights observance by certain vulnerable groups

Failure to observe certain human rights was confirmed by the representatives of vulnerable groups interviewed during group discussions.

**People living with HIV** mentioned that most often they are faced with *non-observance of confidentiality* that leads inevitably to stigmatization. People living with HIV accept a different behavior of the community members towards their own person, but are very affected when other family members, especially children are involved. Although they recognize important progress in protecting people living with HIV in the last year, however, there are situations when the information about HIV+ status is communicated at the working place. In some cases, the revealing of HIV status is indirect, an eloquent example of this is the isolation of HIV+ pregnant women in the maternity ward.

*Do you understand the humiliation, discrimination? All workers found out in 2-3 days. I worked another couple of months (after the disclosure of information on HIV+ status). I went to the Director and I handed in my resignation. They keep away as it is a contagious, infectious, but it is not. All keep away.'* (M, 47 years, person living with HIV)

*I was in the maternity. My mother's acquaintance works there. She saw that I was in a different ward, because the healthy people are in different wards, the persons with diagnosis are separated and this is a bit wrong. I did not tell her, but she understood and started the rumors. I have a daughter of 15 years. That neighbor told another one, I was very afraid for my daughter...' (F, 37 years, person living with HIV)*

Usually the doctors are those who do not observe the confidentiality in a narrow circle of persons, and further they spread the rumors.

*'My daughter is in grade 9 at school. Last year she had civic education class. They were talking about HIV and the teacher told them that there was a woman in their village with such disease. She gave the name, surname, and the address, and mentioned that the woman had three children...' (F, 32 years, person living with HIV)*

However, there are persons who are contempt with how the doctors managed the situation, affirming that they helped them enormously.

*'When I found out I was in the TB hospital and the doctors kept the confidentiality. In my case, the doctors kept the secret and comforted me that I would receive treatment once registered. Everything was well at the local clinic. My family was also Ok.'* (F, 51 years, person living with HIV)

People living with HIV consider that the stigmatization based on HIV+ status is determined by population's lack of information and fear of this illness. Establishing the status, to great extent, changes the life of people living with HIV and this is reflected especially in the relations with others. People living with HIV whose status was revealed in the community, usually leave that community.

*'I went to Moscow, Russia. I did not really return home, but even now, many do not understand, but sometimes I close my eyes to it.'*(M, 46 years, person living with HIV)

*'I try to ignore the rumors in the village. I have to move to another place, to buy a house in Chisinau, because I can see that people are keeping away. (M, 47 years, person living with HIV)*

People living with HIV consider their right to family is violated when they are not allowed to adopt a child.

*'I had caesarean; the child lived for an hour and 15 minutes. I was very stressed out and I wanted to adopt a child. When I went to the adoption agency, they gave me a paper stating that one of the conditions is not having HIV, to which I confirmed that I have it. They told me, 'sorry, forget about children!'' (F, 32 years, person living with HIV)*

At the same time, more people living with HIV, who participated in group discussions mentioned that they do not know their rights and responsibilities regarding:

- presentation of medical certificates at employment;
- communicating the HIV+ status to doctors (dental services).

The representative of **religious minorities** mentioned that in the last 12 months they faced many situations of discrimination. Most frequently these happen at the working place and create certain disagreements in relation with the colleagues.

Although these situations are very different, these refer to religious beliefs of the interviewed persons:

- the days off do not coincide with religious holidays:

*I worked in a very serious organization, at the ministry level, and nothing was accepted there ... When Saturday is a working day, it is not accepted to take leave There are moments when you are pressed to come if necessary, and I had to leave. A few times I could get away with it, but last time I had to work on Saturday – so I resigned.’ (F, 28 years, representative of religious minorities)*

- prohibition to discuss religious issues in the education institution:

*‘The school administration told me not to talk about the Bible during lessons. Obviously I teach something different, not religion. However, the Code of Education says the teacher should be ready to provide intellectual, cultural, literary and spiritual education.’ (M, 24 years, representative of religious minorities)*

- different behavior regarding other employees:

*‘The Bible talks about 12 commandments ... do not steal is law, not principle, but being among thieves I am condemned because I do not do what they do ... I am marginalized a lot. (F, 54 years, representative of religious minorities)*

More representatives of religious minorities described situations when the Orthodox priests provoked population to aggressions during public events. These situations were discussed with local public authorities (LPAs), were published in the local media, but usually do not go to court.

*‘The Christians receive this as persecution and this is something normal to them, hence, they do not sue for this... Jesus Christ was oppressed and said you would be oppressed too because you follow my steps, and in the end, we are stronger’ (F, 28 years, representative of religious minorities)*

*‘Jesus Christ did not sue anyone when He was beaten, tortured, oppressed and persecuted. He did not sued and He teaches us not to do so.’ (M, 69 years, representative of religious minorities)*

A young lady participating in the group discussion with religious minorities mentioned she was facing daily the rejection and disgust of the society, especially on behalf of her peers, and this treatment is due, to great extent, to different clothing.

*‘When I was hospitalized in Chisinau the girls I was sharing the room with were keeping away from me, because I was of different religion. They did not want to talk to me, I had to stay separately. When the nurse came to give us the infusion drip, she would ask me, ‘If your parents do not see, nobody sees you, why would you wear the kerchief? She would take and put it aside so I could not reach it. When I was going to the canteen, everyone would keep away from me, were rejecting me because I was of different religion. You can see it from the behavior and suddenly they become judgmental... I was walking on the street once, and I said ‘hello’ to a woman with a child, and the child says, ‘Mom, why do you reply? She is a Baptist.’ The child was 7-8 years’ (F, 16 years, representative of religious minorities)*

Most of the representatives of religious minorities have erroneous perceptions about the LGBT group. They despise this group of persons and are firmly convinced that the sexual minorities do not have the right to defend their rights. The respondents provided for the following arguments regarding the LGBT group:

- they are mentally ill:

*'It is a case of mental illness. The Bible says, man and woman, it is stupid otherwise, there is no human rights violation here.'* (M, 69 years, representative of religious minorities)

- risk of the end of human race:

*'People should breed, and if we accept what the sexual minorities want, the people would die, everything stops, the development ... if we talk about homosexuals, the entire world comes to a halt. They are talking about (artificial) insemination, women – yes, but the men??'* (M, 24 years, representative of religious minorities)

- bad example to children:

*'These homosexuals influence the children; I am very concerned about this issue, because the children absorb everything like a sponge. They accept all they see; they would see these things as something normal from childhood...'* (F, 28 years, representative of religious minorities)

- associated with pedophiles:

*'This leads to pedophilia at the end. They want to have children, so they adopt children, girls, and who knows what is going on there...'* (F, 22 years, representative of religious minorities)

Some representatives of the LGBT group, who participated in group discussions, specified that they were mostly bothered by their association with pedophiles. These perceptions are totally erroneous and affect enormously their imagine.

- they are blamed for HIV spreading:

*'In the case of sexual minorities, we all know that HIV comes from homosexuals. The disease itself.'* (M, 24 years, representative of religious minorities)

As a result of the group discussions, it has been observed that the LGBT community has lots of myths about sexual orientation. This also illustrates the need for support and counselling of some members of the LGBT community.

*'I believe if I am gay, it has something to do with my parents' sins ... they sinned during a big religious holiday, or whatever. I think it is my parents' mistake or maybe someone in my family was like this, or did it ...'* (gay, 18 years)

Representatives of **LGBT community** mentioned that the right to physical and mental integrity is the most violated right. The society condemns, blames, threatens them, and in some situations even assaults them. Aggression is mostly directed towards gays, hence, the society is more tolerant towards lesbians. In the opinion of some respondents, the right to family is the most violated right of the LGBT community.

However, to great extent, the LGBT community is concerned about the discriminatory attitude, rejection from the society, especially from the close one.

*'I do not understand: the parents accept a child born with physical disabilities ... but we were born normal, they know us, were supportive and accepted us. And once we tell them we are gay, they refuse to understand us, think we are crazy and do not accept us anymore.'* (gay, 20 years)

At the same time, more young respondents, representatives of the LGBT group mentioned that they do not feel safe, that they are verbally and physically assaulted on the street. Also, they declare that the law-enforcement agencies despise them. There were cases when the police refused to register complaints and if these are not registered, nothing can be done by law. At the same time, it is difficult to find witnesses in such situations because the members of the society tolerate aggression towards the LGBT group, considering it often as 'a lesson taught'.

*'Since they think you are crazy, they tell you, 'go and treat yourself in Costiujeni and do not address to the police.' In my situation, they beat me... I addressed a complaint to the police. My mother told my dad that I complained, and the dad and brother asked me: 'Why are you looking for justice if you are guilty (for being gay)?' (gay, 20 years)*

*'We are protected by law against psychological aggression, sexual harassment, but in fact, these rights are not observed because it is impossible, you cannot prove such violence took place anywhere, nor at the police or in court' (transgender, 27 years)*

The opinions regarding sexual orientation differ as well in the LGBT community. Some consider they have the right to private life and not to be discriminated based on sexual orientation; the society should accept/respect them, but other representatives of the LGBT community consider they have to be cautious in manifesting their orientation in public, preventing, thus, possible negative reactions from some less tolerant persons.

*'If you go to a doctor and say: I have a toothache or a headache and then add, you know, I have slept with Vasea yesterday... the doctor's behavior would change' (gay, 27 years)*

In many group discussions, the **Roma** were identified by the interviewers as the category of persons whose rights are frequently violated in the Republic of Moldova. The Roma interviewed during the focus-group mentioned that there are stereotypes in the society that affect them daily, most of them having negative connotations, such as: *'the Roma lie', 'the Roma steal', 'the Roma have evil eye', 'the Roma make spells', 'the Roma read the future', etc.*

The Roma interviewed admit that there are persons with anti-social behavior among them, as much as among other ethnic groups. But they cannot explain why labels are extended to all Roma. Moreover, in the opinion of some respondents, the Roma are provoked to have certain behavior when they are isolated, labelled or they are even asked to read the future.

While some Roma try to capitalize on the opportunities presented to this ethnic group by using the support provided by state institutions, civil society and charity organizations, others feel frustrated and do not want anything but being accepted by the society, alongside with other citizens. They have felt these frustrations since childhood and they are concerned that their children will be labelled as well.

*'I feel this difference from childhood, since I remember myself. For instance, in school, I was always outside the circle of my mates in grades 5-9. The reason was my darker skin. When you go out, there are groups that make jokes or something else. I was in hearings lately, for instance, and I was not even allowed to talk, to express my opinion. A motorbike was stolen from my household, and the case terminated in giving justice to the culprit, while I was 100% prejudiced. I could not even speak... what bothers me now is that when my child grows, he will suffer because he is Roma... this is not justice, because he is just a child and he has no guilt he is darker or is Roma.' (F, 22 years, Roma origin)*

However, these Roma try to integrate in the community: they go to school, they work but they are still marked by discriminatory attitudes of the other members of the society, who do not even understand the discrimination.

*'I worked in a restaurant (in Chisinau) as a waiter. I was very respected, nobody thought I was stealing. They were very open and received me nicely. I was called the 'gipsy girl'. They would not keep away from me or anything like this, but when they were calling me 'gipsy girl', which they thought sounded nice, I did not feel right because we were the same... they would say they were joking and I should not get mad, because they liked the word, and it was a good thing, but I would feel offended, mad. I did not want them to stress out that I was Roma, I wanted to be the same.' (F, 22 years, Roma origin)*

On the other hand, there are those who believe that the Roma status provides for some facilities and that the state institutions should provide for some benefits, even if in some situations, they do not fulfil certain legal criteria. Hence, this category of Roma perceive the failure to render a service as ethnic discrimination, even if de facto the reason for not rendering the service is failure to meet the requirements.

*'Issues with the kindergarten, because she is Roma and they would not accept her. But we addressed to the Mayor and he helped us, because the girl has no document, since she was born in Moscow, but currently is here.'* (M, 37 years, Roma origin)

*'I wrote letters to the ministry, I went to social assistance, I started to knock at doors, mayoralty, district until I reached Mr. Radita responsible for Roma's rights. And suddenly all changed. They were all indifferent. I asked for help and I was told, we would do it, everything would be fine. I was always told I was missing something: one or another certificate... now I receive social allocation for children, 1st degree disability pension, compensation, allocation for winter season. A Belgium organization helps families with many children, and us very much, we thank God for that. It helps us with groceries, dishwasher powder and many others.... Now our life is much easier. They bring us fire wood, medicines or pay for hospitalization, they help us with everything, if we cannot get it from hospital or family doctor, if there are more complicated things; we do all with their assistance. It is more easier now. I cannot say I am being limited in anything or humiliated because I am of Roma origin, there is no such thing.'* (F, 43 years, Roma origin)

Non-citizens declared mostly the same issues in human rights observance as those mentioned by citizens of the Republic of Moldova, but also said that both citizens and non-citizens of the Republic of Moldova are poorly informed and concerned about human rights topics. Hence, they end up learning about provisions when certain rights are flagrantly violated. In the case of non-citizen students, they would benefit from a greater support if coming through an exchange program to our country. Non-citizens may face red-tape problems and/or limitation of some rights due to low level of information of public servants and/or service provider.

*'The public servants do not face these situations very often and do not know what acts we should submit. It is easier for them to refuse, saying that they do not know the procedure or simply they do not know. Dealing with a non-citizen requires more time, more feeling; they are also afraid that if something goes wrong they would have problems. Sometimes, they do not want to do it; it is difficult to search the legislation for the procedure, rights. They refuse you because this is the easiest way or tell you it is not possible.'* (M, 34 years, non-citizen)

However, some non-citizens stressed out that at their work there are certain limitations for them in accessing some services and procurement of some goods, a situation that represents violation, in their point of view. The following were listed:

- impossibility to procure agricultural land:

*'For instance, a non-citizen cannot procure land (plot) or rent it.'* (M, 43 years, non-citizen)  
*'Such issue appear when you want to procure immovable property, they ask whether you are a citizen of the RM or not.'* (M, 34 years, non-citizen)

- limited access to services and/or request for additional acts:

*'When we come to Moldova, we would like to conclude a phone contract, and we are not allowed because they do not have the security of our stay and they cannot find us when we leave.'* (M, 34 years, non-citizen)

*'Moldovan citizens do not know the rights of foreign citizens. I went to a bank to receive money and presented my residence card, and it refused to provide me with the service. They asked for my passport, but I do not cross the border... I did not show them the passport but went to another bank instead. There was a young lady there who called and found out that she can provide services based on residence card...'* (M, 43 years, non-citizen)

- payment of higher taxes and fees:

*'Non-citizens pay double taxes. Why shall I pay twice more, if we have the same business? I don't understand'* (M, 34 years, non-citizen)

*'The tuition fees for foreigners are more expensive than for locals, who pay MDL 5000, while we pay MDL 20 000. The amount varies from one university to another.'* (M, 43 years, non-citizen)

- high difficulty in employment in some companies or as a public servant.

Violation of **rights of citizens residing on the left bank of the River Nistru** was informed particularly by the interviewed experts, underlining the fact that the population from Transnistria does not enjoy the same rights and freedoms as the citizens from the right bank of the River Nistru. It should be noted that the general population of the Republic of Moldova from the right bank of the River Nistru does not see this aspect. Hence, one quarter of the population considers that their rights are observed 'very well' and 'well' (Figure 8). While the interviewed experts draw the attention to numerous violations of political rights, *freedom of assembly and association, freedom of opinion*, etc., the ordinary people from Transnistria including the representatives of civil society, are persecuted if they share opinions other than those promoted by so-called Transnistrian leadership.

Persons who want to visit the left bank of the River Nistru have no right to freedom of movement. The residents from the immediate vicinity of both banks of the river are most affected. Some respondents mentioned that the persons have no right to their agricultural land, which is private property.

*'They restricted the roads by putting barricades so people do not cross, so they cross through border points. Although we had tar roads, these were covered with soil so the residents cannot pass with their cars to Transnistria. To register all those who pass, but they register only the cars, because people walk.'* (M, 28 years, person living in the security zone)

Right to personal data is violated, in the opinion of experts, by the Chisinau authorities when providing information about citizens of the Republic of Moldova to unknown authorities from the left bank of the River Nistru.

*'Unconstitutional forces from the left bank of the River Nistru may use these personal data against the citizen and the data are provided by Chisinau.'* (Expert 10)

Some experts mentioned that the right to life, freedom and safety, right to fair trial, etc. of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova residing or temporarily residing on the left bank of the River Nistru are not observed. The fact that there are no functional mechanisms to monitor and sanction the violation of human rights in Transnistrian region is a very important aspect.

*'There is no such notion as human rights for the population of Transnistria... In Transnistria, we have to start from scratch in the field of human rights. The situation is similar to what Moldova had 10-15 years ago. Awareness campaigns for people, but mostly with the young people because they can change, then to work with the law-enforcement agencies.'* (Expert 12)

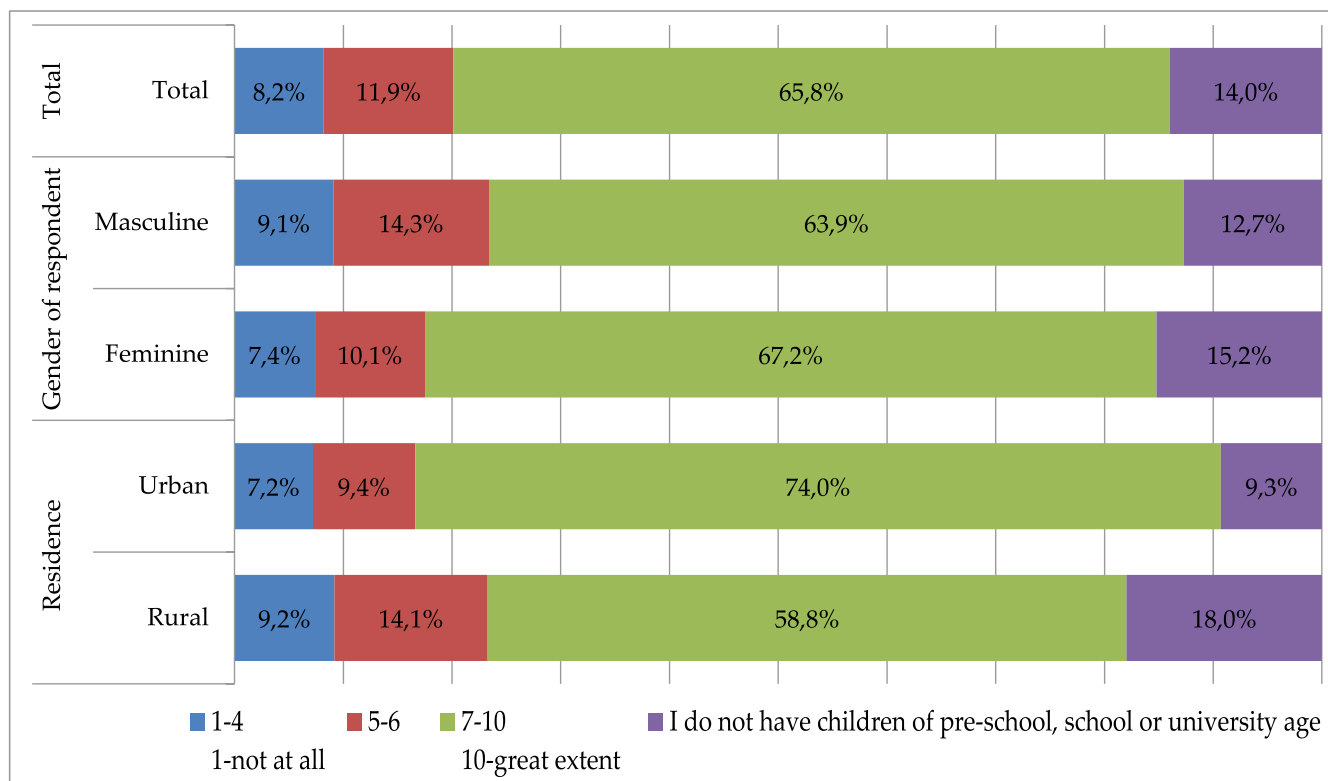
### 2.3. Right to education

One of the fundamental human rights is the right to education. A number of questions was addressed to respondents to assess the extent to which the right to education is protected in the Republic of Moldova, giving marks from 1 to 10.

The respondents were asked to talk about how parents' financial resources affect the right of children to education, by providing marks from 1 to 10, where 1 signifies *does not affect at all*, and 10 – *affects very much*. Only 8.2% of respondents consider that the right to education is not affected by financial possibilities of the parents, marking it from 1-4, about 11.9% – marked with 5-6, and a considerable share of 65.8% has the opinion that the financial possibilities of the parents affect significantly the right of the children to education, marking it with 7-10.

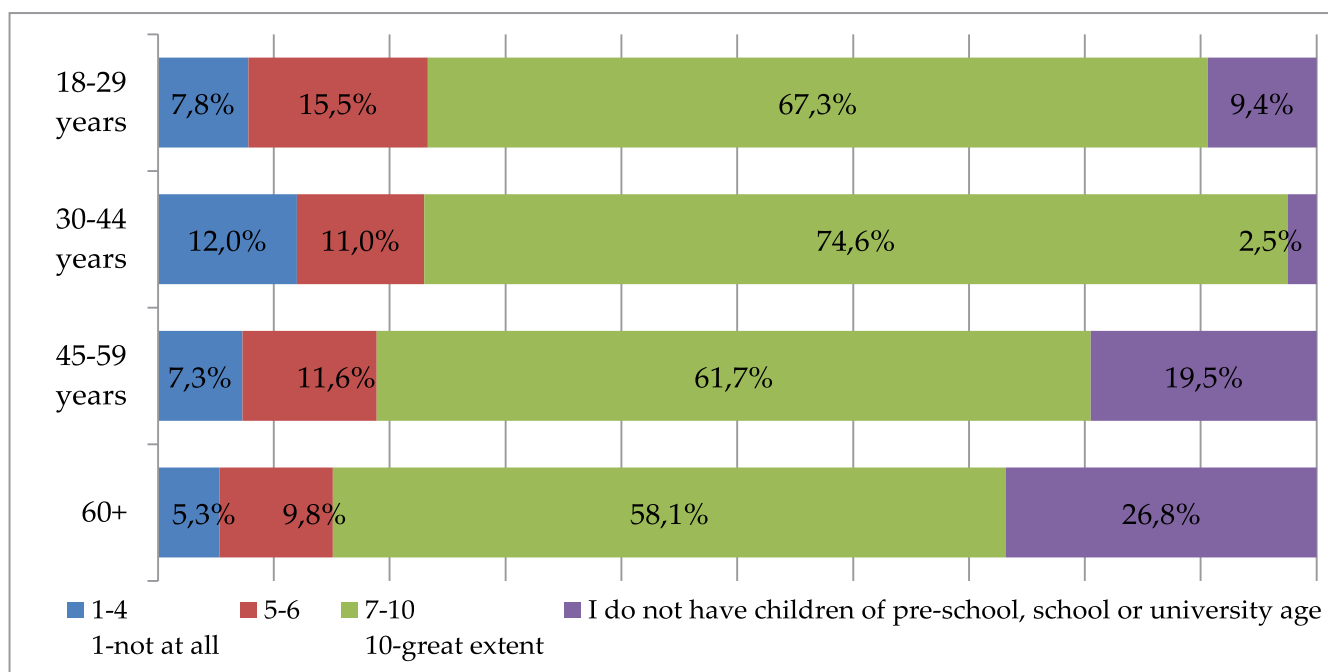
This opinion is supported by a considerable share of 74% respondents from urban environment versus only 58.8% of respondents from villages, more by women, accounting for 67.2% compared to the share of 63.9% of men, who marked with 7-10 (Figure 12).

**Figure 12. Financial possibilities of the parents affect the right of children to education**



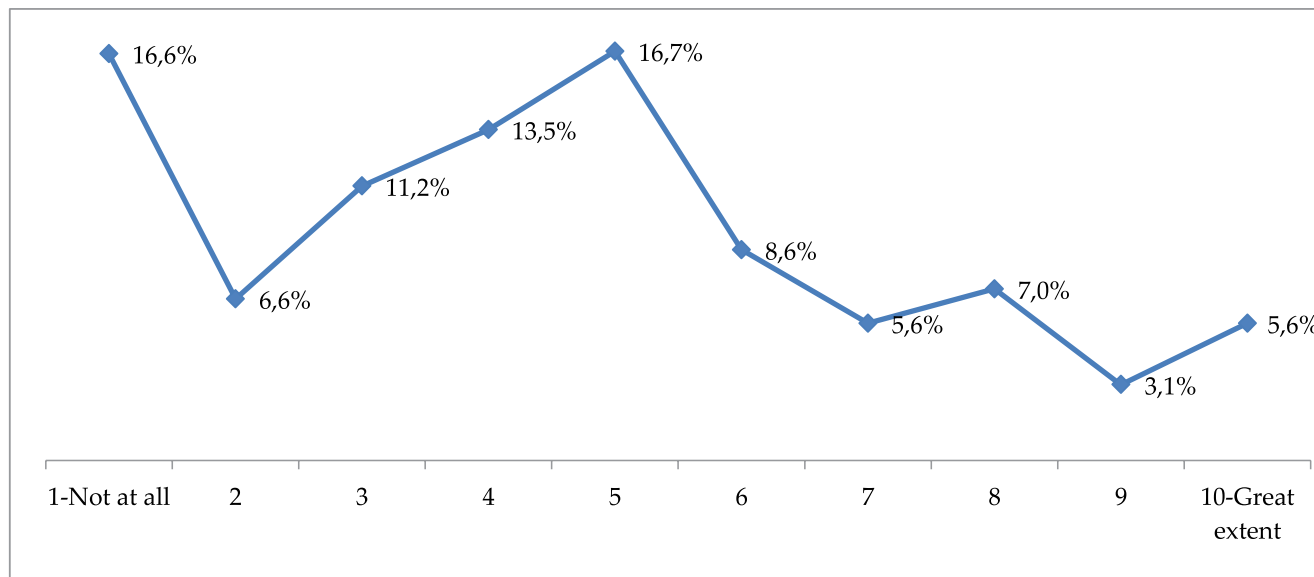
It should be mentioned that about 75% of respondents from the age group 30-44 years consider that the financial possibilities of parents affect the right of the children to education, marking it with 7-10 (Figure 13).

**Figura 13. Opinii privind măsura în care posibilitățile financiare ale părinților afectează dreptul copiilor la educație în funcție de vârsta respondenților**



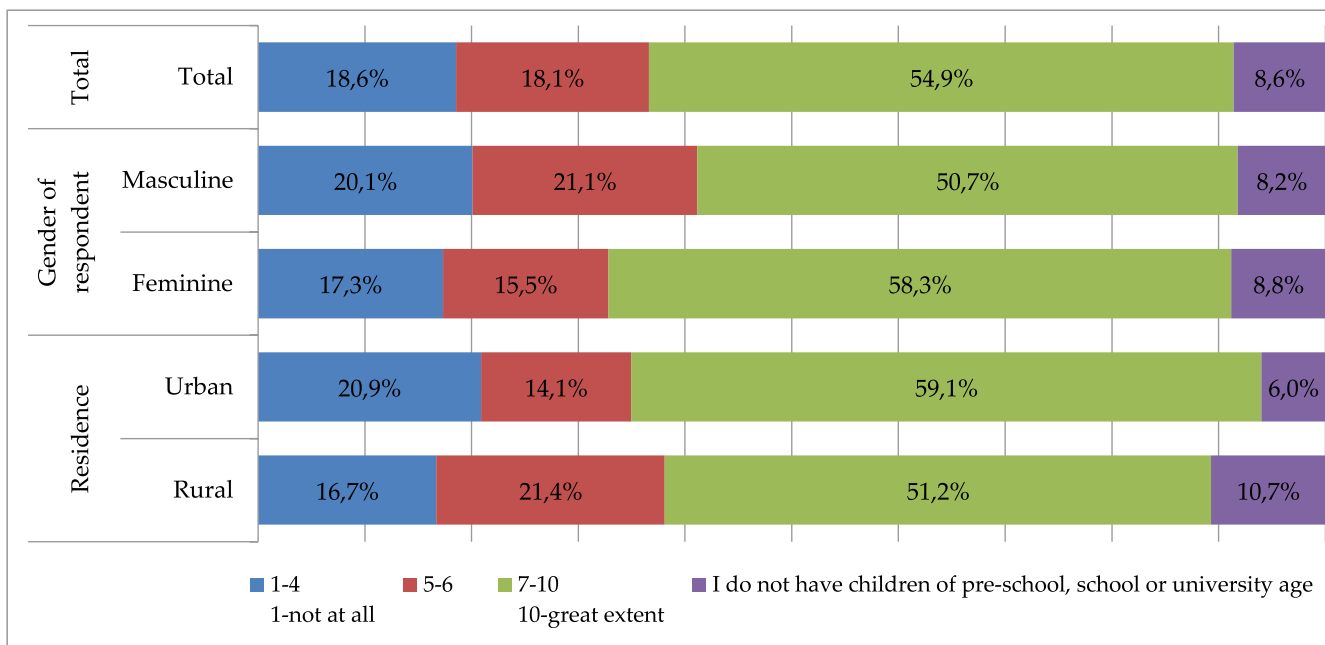
Only 1/5 of respondents marked with 7-10 the equal access to education for all guaranteed by the State and 47.9% agree less or not at all with this affirmation, marking it with 1-4 (Figure 14). There are no considerable differences between opinions depending on the social and economic status of the respondents.

**Figure 14.** State guarantees equal access to education and equal study conditions for all



About 55% of respondents consider that closing down small schools and transferring the children to the nearest localities during the Education Reform affects greatly the right of children to education, marking this indicator with 7-10 points. This opinion is supported by women, accounting for 58.3% compared to men (50.7%), also by residents of towns, 59.1%, compared to respondents in villages, 51.2% (Figure 15).

**Figure 15.** Does closing down small schools and transferring the children to nearby localities during the education reform affect the right of children to education?

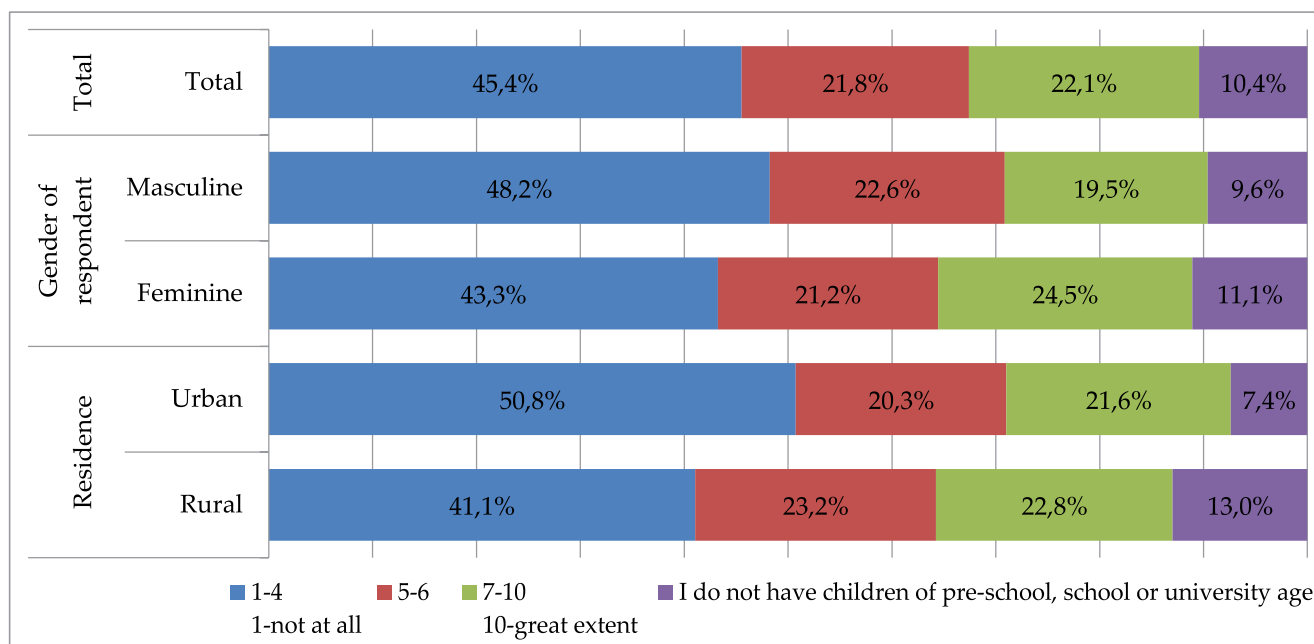


This aspect was instantly reflected during group discussions. Some parents voiced the opinion that although the State guarantees the lyceum education, some children are deprived of this right, because there are no lyceum/high schools in the community, nor financial resources and/or free transport to the nearest school.

*‘The schools, lyceum/high schools are closed down. The children have no choice, they are limited. My child has to travel 30 km daily to the lyceum/high school, because our school closed down. The children are not transported by the State, if it is too far, but it will take years to solve this. The travel, food are not compensated. They receive only MDL 30 a day for the transportation. How about the stress during the transportation? They are in danger, in different situation.’ (M, 50 years, person with disabilities)*

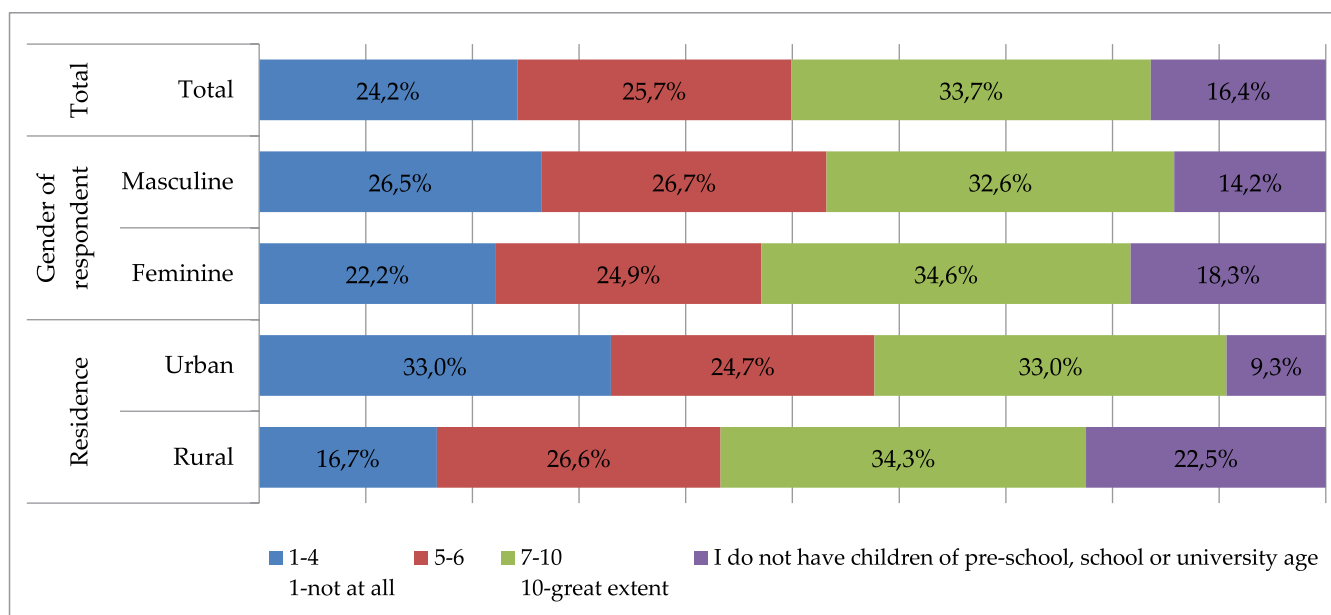
About 45.4% of respondents agree that by applying measures to prevent cheating during Bacalaureate exams, the right of children to education is affected to a small extent or not at all, marking the respective indicator with 1-4. Same opinion is shared by mostly men, 48.2%, then women, 43.3%, also by respondents from towns, 50.8%, compared to those from villages, 41.1%. However, 1/5 of respondents consider that these measures affect significantly the right of the children to education, which is supported preponderantly by women than men (Figure 16).

**Figure 16.** Does the creation of preventive measures during Bacalaureate exams affect the right of the children to education?



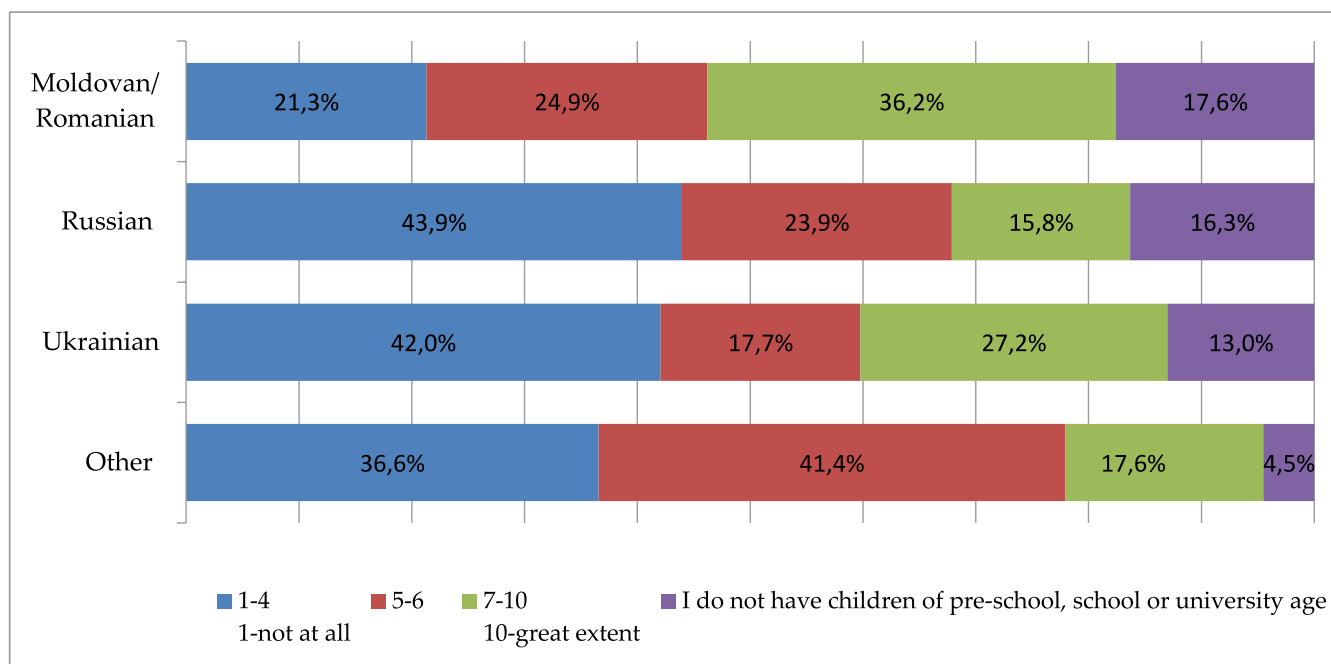
Another aspect evaluated by the study was if there are sufficient conditions provided for by the State to children from Russian-speaking schools to be able to learn the official language. About 1/3 of respondents consider that these conditions are sufficient, marking them with 7-10. The respondents from urban area are less happy about this, marking 1/3 of answers with 1-4; those from rural area expressed little concern about this context (Figure 17).

**Figure 17. Are there sufficient conditions for students from Russian-speaking schools to learn the official language?**



At the same time, about 40% of respondents of other nationalities, as well as 21.3% of Moldovans/Romanians consider that the State does not provide enough conditions for students from Russian-speaking schools to learn the official language, marking this answer with 1-4 points (Figure 18).

**Figure 18. Conditions for students from Russian-speaking schools to learn the official language, by nationalities**



The right to education in the mother tongue was mentioned in the group discussions with ethnic minorities, but the focus was not on the mother tongue (Ukrainian, Bulgarian), but on education in Russian language. The opinions at this chapter are divided, on one hand, some respondents consider that the share of Russian-speaking schools decreases and think it is a violation of the rights of minorities, on the other hand, other respondents affirm that it is a normal process in the conditions of decreased demand. The idea that minorities should learn the language of the country they live in has been outlined. A participant in the group discussion gave her own example when studying in Romanian language brought her benefits, although, she was forced by circumstances to study in this language.

*'My mother is Bulgarian, father is Russian, I studied in Romanian school. My first 7 years of school were in Russian language, but since there were few children, the school closed down and I was forced to go to a Romanian school. I have studied from the second half of grade 8 to grade 12 in Romanian language, and nobody called me Bulgarian. During the breaks we would speak Russian because there were many children speaking Russian. Children would not call us Russians, the teachers did not press us either. We have integrated very well in the collective.'* (F, 21 years, representative of ethnic minority)

When talking about the violation of human rights of minorities, some human rights experts mentioned that the persons of different ethnic origin do not have the possibility to study in the mother tongue. However, if they do have this possibility, these studies cannot be continued; as well they cannot develop their mother tongue, which is being replaced by Russian language.

*'Let's say, our district X has only one Ukrainian village where the children can study in Ukrainian language at the gymnasium. Once they graduate, these children lose the hope to study further in the Ukrainian language, moreover, the school is threatened to be closed down. Once the school is closed down, the right of these children to study in the mother tongue is going to be violated.'* (Expert 16)

*'As for ethnic minorities, they are favored, but unfortunately, not as it supposed to be. We have to observe their right to develop their national culture and spoken language, but we observe the right of minorities to speak Russian and not Gagauz or Ukrainian languages.'* (expert 3)

Generally speaking, the right to education of the minorities is observed in the Republic of Moldova but there are certain linguistic barriers in the studying process in the fields taught in Romanian language.

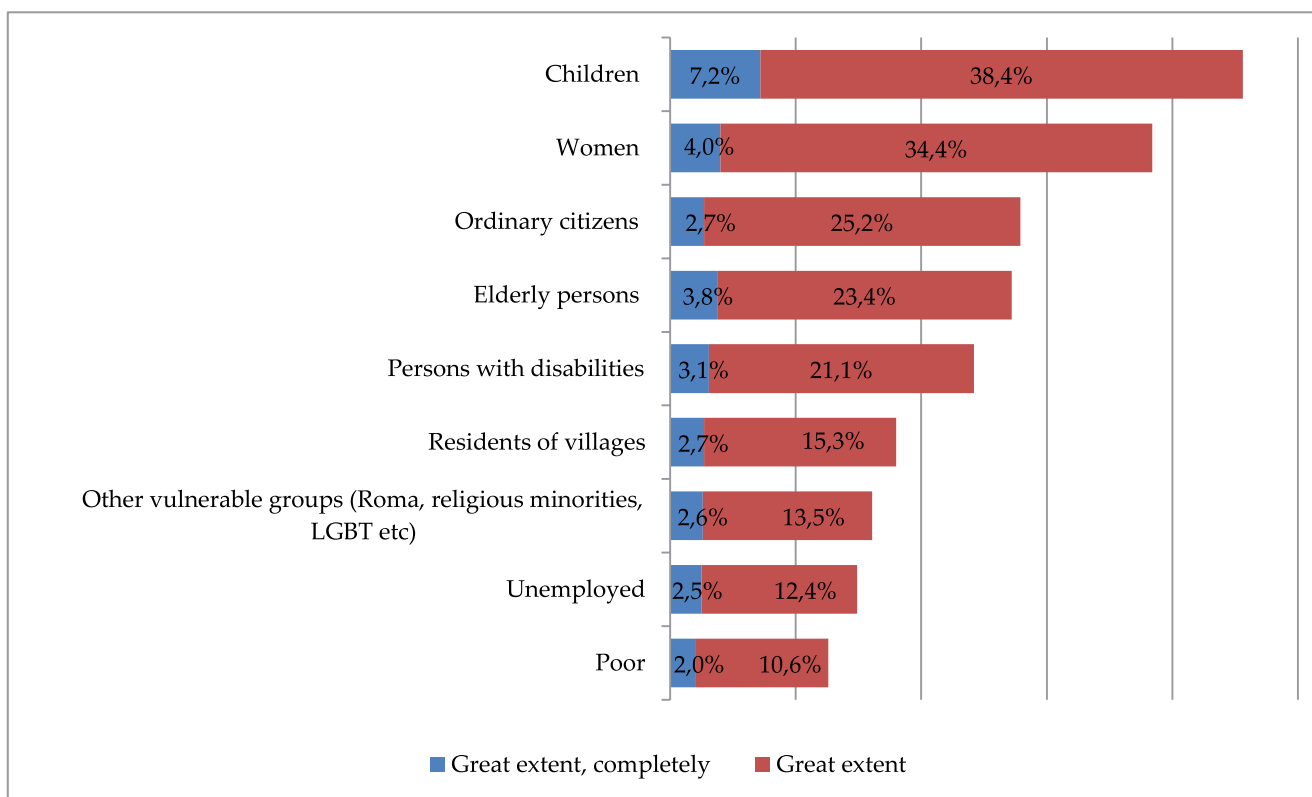
The right to education in the mother tongue of the Romanian speakers is violated in the Transnistrian region. Studying in Romanian language on the left bank of the River Nistru is limited by so-called authorities through direct pressure on principals, teaching staff, parents and cancelation of some activities, and imposing direct barriers (high rents, inadequate spaces, etc.). Children from Grigoriopol who want to study in Romanian language study in the second shift in the school in Dorotcaia. In the opinion of respondents this aspect has negative consequences on the quality of studies of children from both localities.

*'Since our locality receives children from Grigoriopol, i.e. young people who want to study in the official language, respectively, the study schedule of pupils from Dorotcaia is changed, because they are forced to have shorter classes, to crop the programme so both lyceum/high schools can study, because from morning till afternoon the school is for children from Dorotcaia, in the afternoon Grigoriopol comes in buses. Hence, the lessons are shorter, more difficult programme.'* (M, 28 years, person from security zone)

## 2.4. Right to healthcare

The right to healthcare guaranteed by the State to different groups of persons is perceived differently by the respondents. The study data show that a great share of respondents considers that the children are those who benefit the most from the right to healthcare. About 45% consider that the right of the *children* to healthcare is fully or greatly ensured, about 38% - consider the same with regard to *women*, and about 27% mentioned these opinion with regard to *ordinary citizens* and *the elderly persons*. The respondents disagree to this affirmation in the case of *poor persons and unemployed*, with 13% and 15% answers expressed regarding full guarantee of the right to healthcare for these categories of persons (Figure 19).

Figure 19. The right to healthcare guaranteed by the State



It was mentioned during group discussions that the right to healthcare of some categories of persons is violated. In this context, the reference was made often to people with low income and the elderly persons. The persistence of informal payments in the medical institutions limits significantly the access of persons with small income to medical services, irrespective whether they have or not medical insurance.

The right to healthcare of the elderly persons is violated from the perspective of accessing healthcare services, attitude of the medical staff and quality of provided services. Many personal examples or examples of acquaintances were provided which represent violation of the right to healthcare.

*'I went and I told the doctor about my illness, what was bothering me. She asked about my age. I said I was 65 years old, to which she asked, 'so what do you expect?' I went to get treatment, and she asked about my age? I do not go to that doctor anymore, I go to another.'* (F, 65 years, representative of religious minorities)

*Persons with disabilities* is another category which always suffers from the violation of the right to health. Although the legislation provides for certain privileges in accessing medical services, in reality, most of them cannot benefit from these advantages.

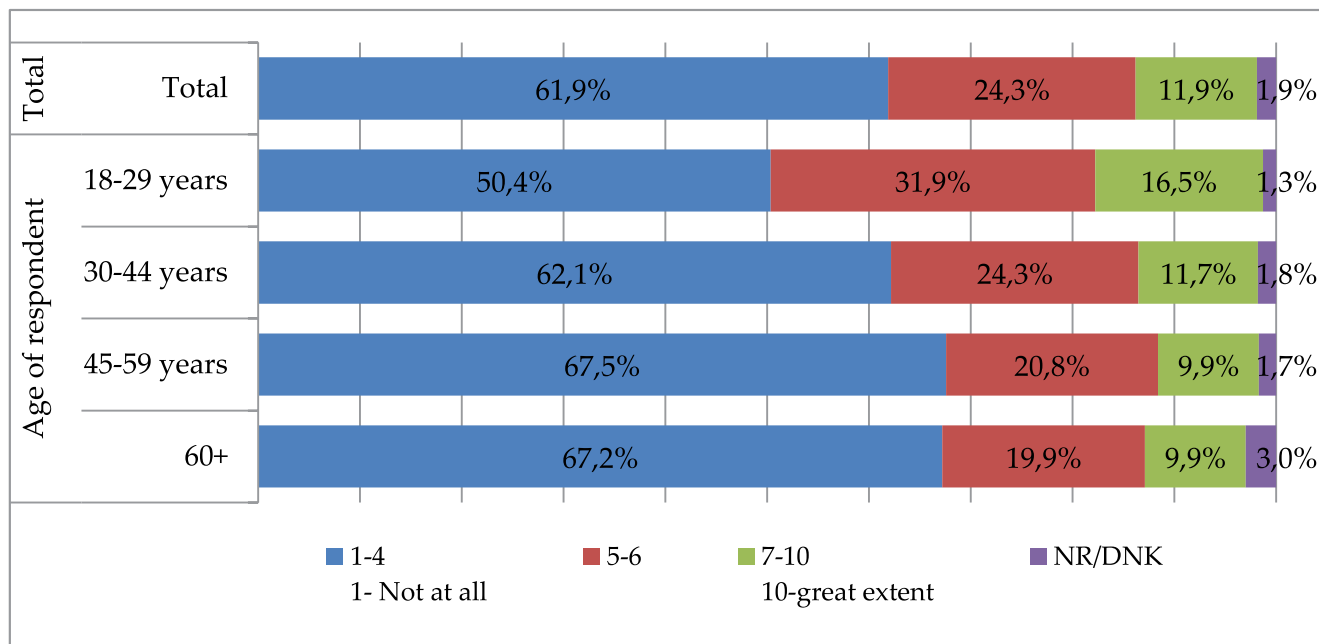
*'The right to health, every person with disabilities should be hospitalized once a year; I am waiting for the second year and they tell me there are no beds. Since my illness cannot be cured, it has to be monitored so it does not aggravate. I have to be hospitalized once a year for medical treatment. I treat myself with my own funds from pension and salary.'* (M, 31 years, person with disabilities)

*'By law, the state is obliged to take care of disabled persons from their birth, but they are not helped. If we talk money, everyone pays for himself/herself.'* (M, 59 years, person with disabilities)

The opinion of respondents about the access to medical services was assessed based on three questions. The interviewed persons were asked to provide answers by marking from 1 – *to great extent* to 10 – *to little extent*.

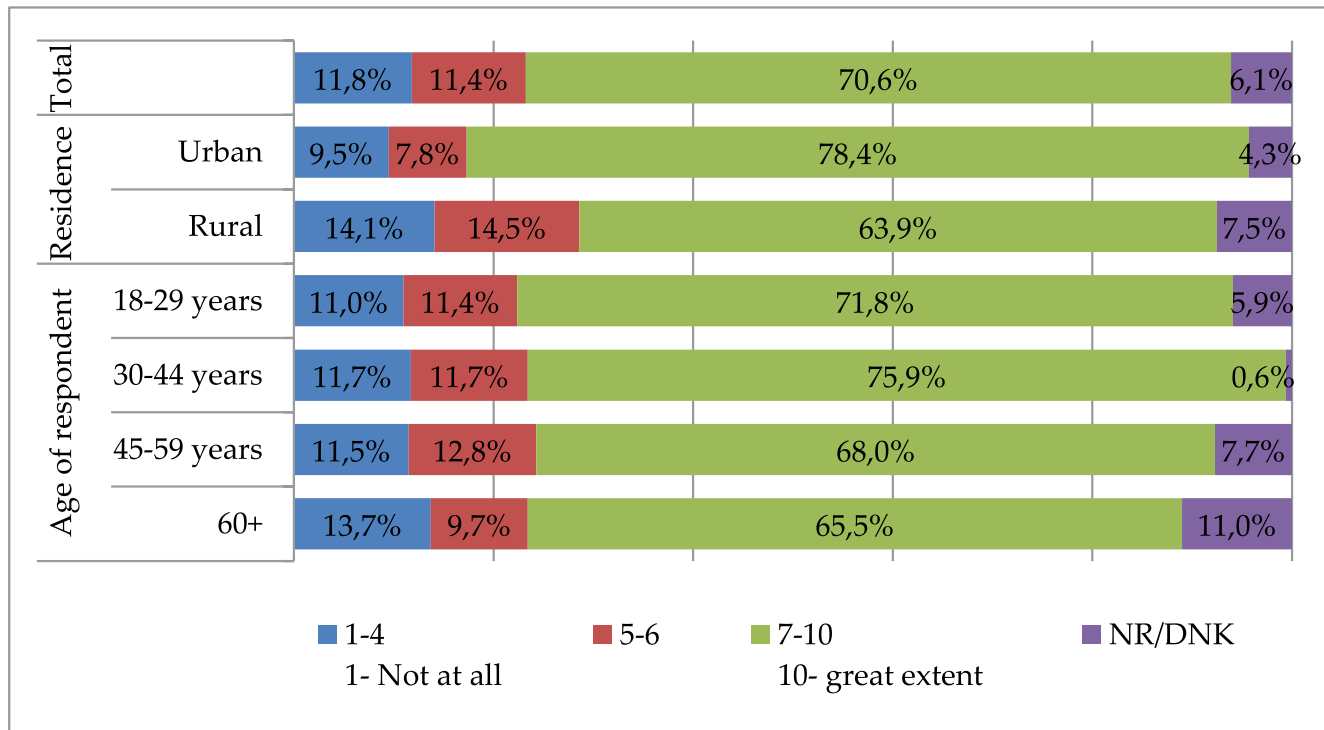
About 62% of respondents marked the option *State ensures free access to quality medical services* with 1-4, which signifies that the State does not or little ensures equal access to respective services. There are no significant discrepancies by residence and gender of respondents, at the same time, there are high shares of the elderly persons. Over 67% of respondents of 45 years and older consider that the State does not guarantee or little ensures equal access to quality medical services, while the share of young people is 50.4% (Figure 20).

**Figure 20. Extent to which the State ensures equal access of everyone to quality medical services**



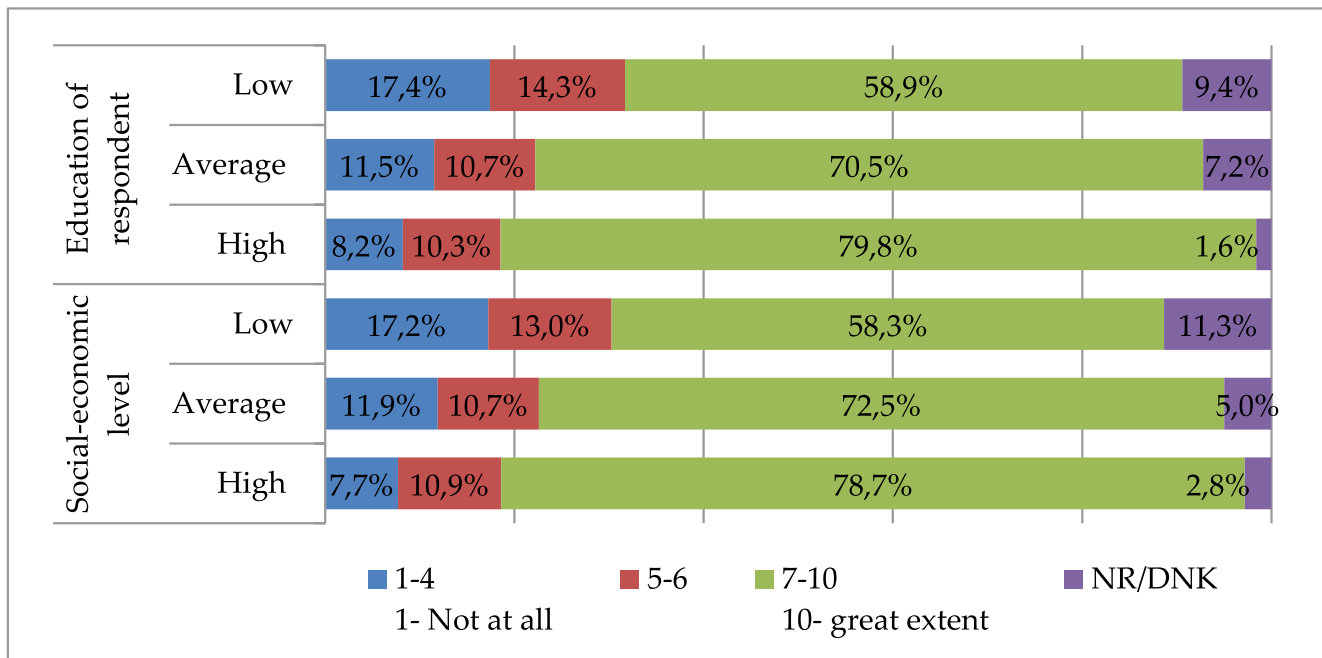
Over 70% of respondents consider that the money/financial resources of the person affect greatly or even highly the right to healthcare, marking this option with 7-10. The most affected are the respondents from urban area, whose opinion exceeds by 15 percentage points the share of those from rural area, who marked this opinion with 7-10. The respective opinion is supported by a share that exceeds  $\frac{3}{4}$  of respondents from the age group 30-44 years, followed by those from the age group 18-29 years by about 72% answers that the availability of financial resources affect the right to healthcare services (Figure 21).

**Figure 21. How does money/financial resources affect the right to healthcare?**



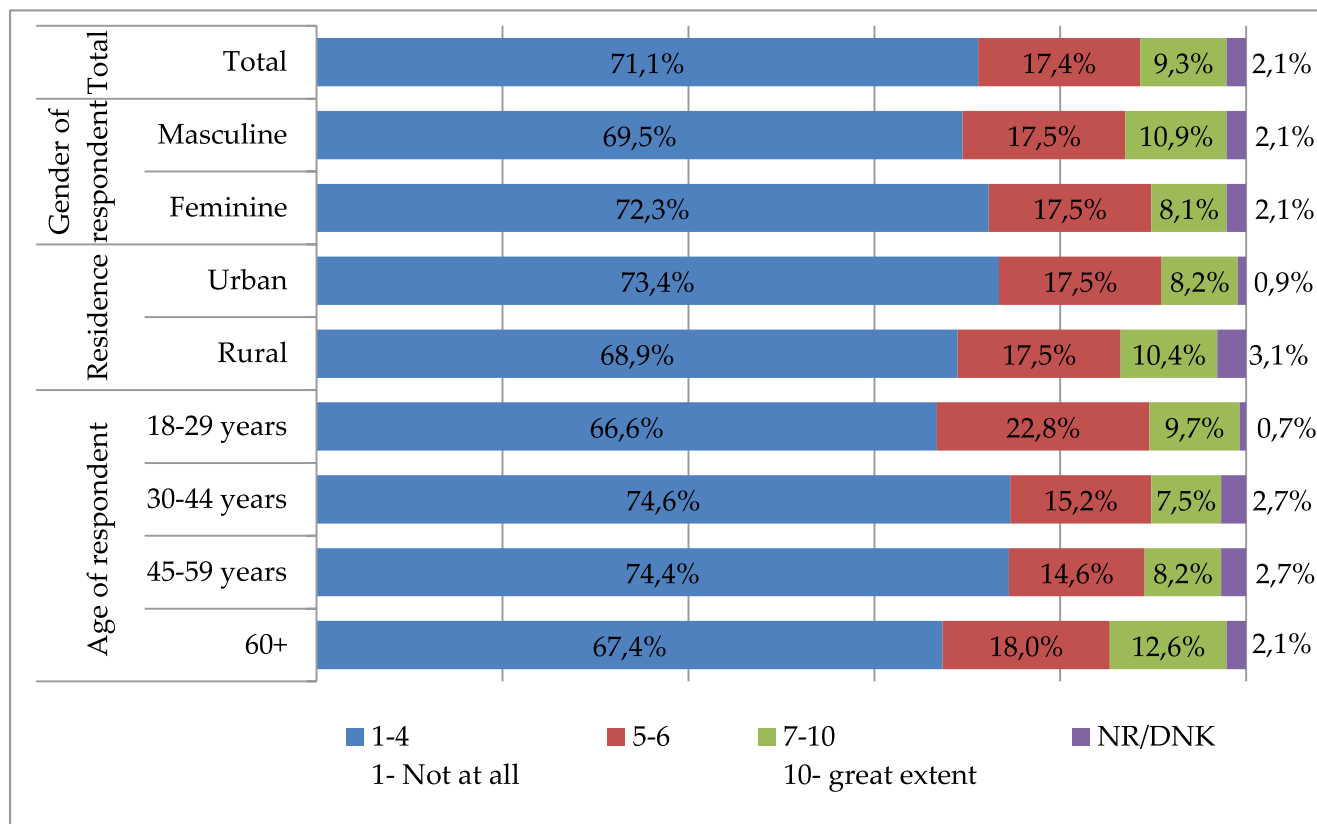
It is important to mention that this opinion is supported by about 80% of respondents with high education and social and economic level (Figure 22).

**Figure 22. How does money/financial resources of the person affect the right to healthcare, by level of education, social and economic level of respondents?**



In the opinion of respondents, the compulsory medical insurance does not insure its holder with an adequate level of medical services. About 71.1% respondents marked this indicator with 1-4, which signifies that not at all or very little coverage. The women account for a more significant share compared to men, and the respondents from towns exceed the respondents from villages in this opinion. Same positions are supported by a higher number of respondents of 30-59 years, compared to other age groups (Figure 23).

**Figure 23.** Does compulsory medical insurance provide the holder with adequate medical services?



Compulsory medical insurance, in the opinion of participants, provides access to consultation and hospital services, but since the financial resources are missing, the access to treatment is significantly decreased. Hence, after hospitalization some persons end up using traditional medicine. Most of the interviewed persons mentioned that the right to health is violated because the informal payments are predominant in the system.

*'I feel safe as long as I am healthy and can work. If you get sick, the corruption is high and you have to pay to get treatment, the medical insurance does not count.'* (M, 20 years, waiter, representative of ethnic minority)

*'Medical insurance is only for consultations, the medicines are not provided, even if we have serious health problems. If you have money, you get treatment, if not, you live as you can ...'* (F, 52 years, person with disabilities)

The non-citizens also mentioned the inefficiency of the compulsory medical insurance system. Having compulsory medical insurance does not give them any benefits, and the non-citizens prefer to go to private institutions where there is a clarity about the payment for services and the medical services are perceived as of better quality.

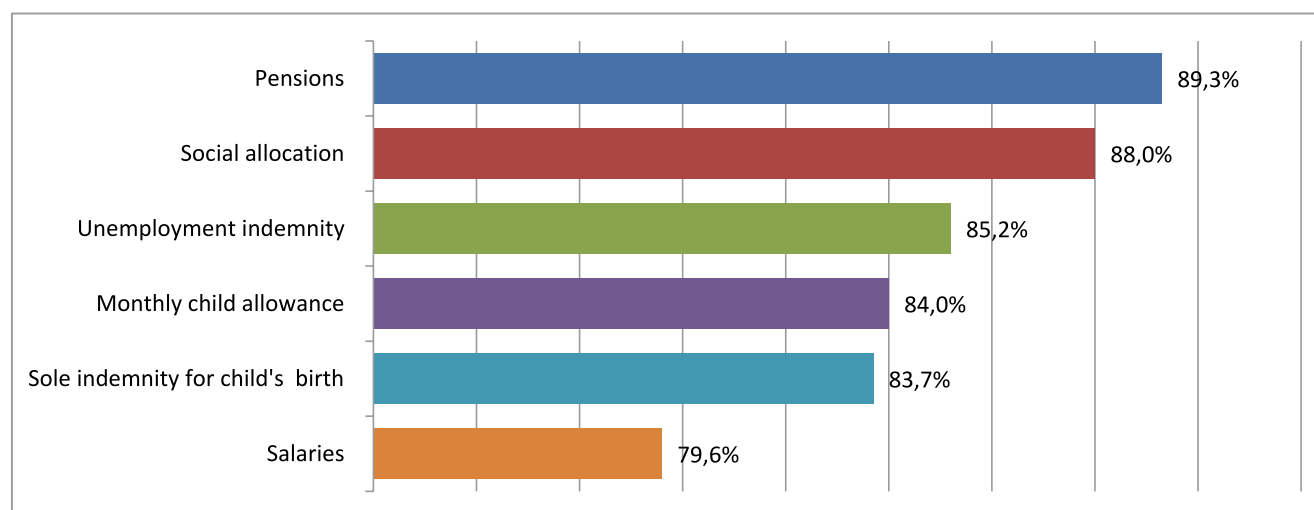
*'Being a student I have to have the insurance, but they require so many papers, and as I understood it is of no use... it is better when I go to the private sector: they are more friendly, the services are better and not as expensive.'* (F, 21 years, non-citizen)

*'There is a problem with the compulsory insurance. I have paid for more than 10 years but I did not get any free aspirin. I had to purchase all the medicine prescribed by the doctor. I was thinking if I deposit the money I pay annually for this insurance, when I get sick I would have as twice money; I can solely provide for my medical insurance... the insurance is not efficient, the State is robbing its citizens.'* (M, 43 years, non-citizen)

## 2.5. Right to social protection

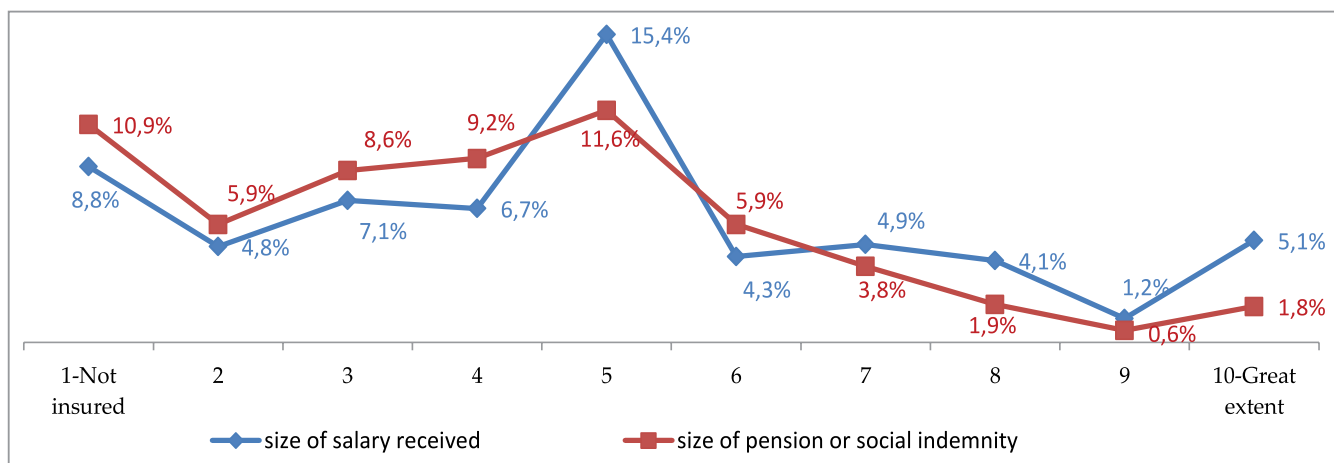
According to the results of this study, the right to social protection of the population, estimated in the light of monetary income, is ensured low or very low in the Republic of Moldova. In all cases, between 80% and 90% respondents declared these opinions, but the poorest assessment was given to pension size, which registered about 90% of answers, followed by the size of the social allocation - 88% (Figure 24).

**Figure 24.** Level of income related to adequate level of social protection in the Republic of Moldova, answers – *low and very low*



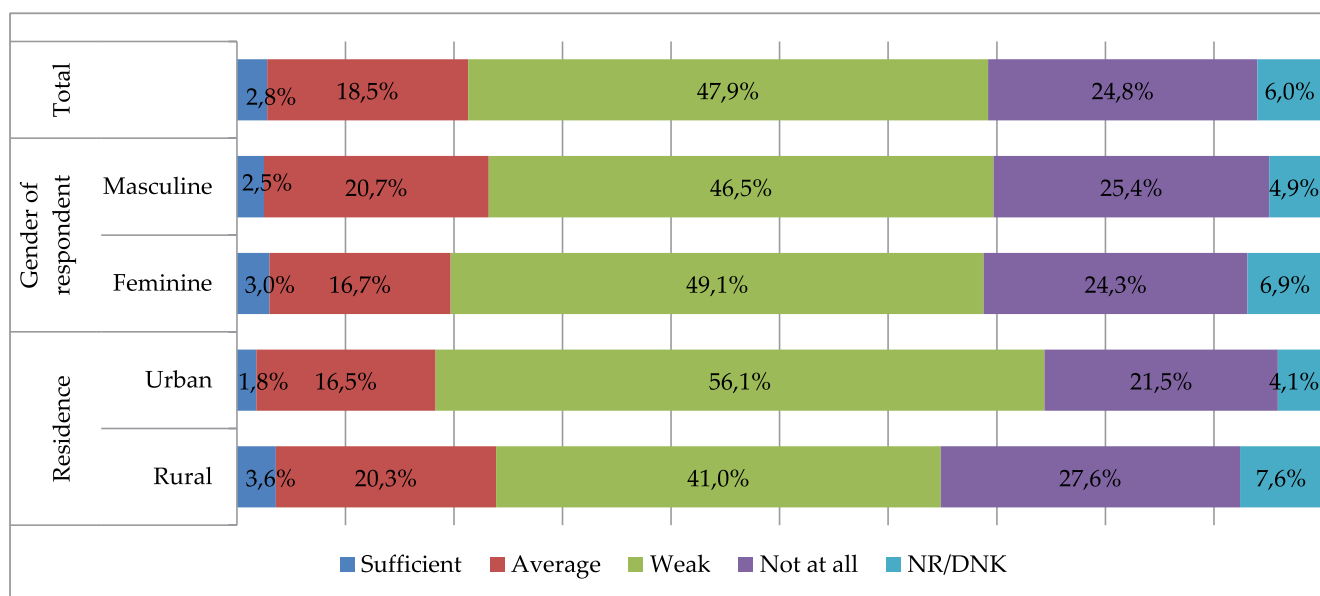
The assessment of own assurance of the right to social protection estimated based on the quantum of the salary, indemnities and pensions shows the same trends. About 43.9% of respondents consider that the salary does not guarantee at all or guarantees very little (1-4 marks) the right to social protection, and 57.5% - have the same opinion about the indemnities and own pensions (Figure 25).

**Figure 25. Personal guarantee for the right to social protection estimated based on quantum of salary, indemnity and pension**



In the opinion of respondents, persons with physical or psycho-social disabilities are protected extremely poorly, considered by about 72.7%. Less than 1/5 of respondents consider that the persons with disabilities have an average protection. This opinion is shared mostly by women (73.4%) then men (71.9%), especially by respondents in towns (77.6%) (Figure 26).

**Figure 26. Social protection of persons with physical and psycho-social disabilities**



Most respondents who participated in group discussions showed compassion towards the persons with disabilities, and these were mentioned among the categories of persons whose rights are violated in most group discussions. However, in three group discussions there were respondents who were outraged by the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. In their opinion, the children with disabilities are disfavored; the State intends to save on their behalf. Actually the need to include these children is not perceived, but the other participants in the group discussions approved the same opinions.

*'Mother teachers at the lyceum/high school and told me it is planned to include all children with disabilities in mainstream school, alongside with other children, same programme. I think it is a bad thing. They did it so the special school could not cope. A child with disabilities is not capable ... to analyze the information as well as a healthy child. He/she requires a different programme. Maybe the child does not hear well, does not speak well or has other issues – it is unreal.'* (F, 28 years, representative of religious minorities.)

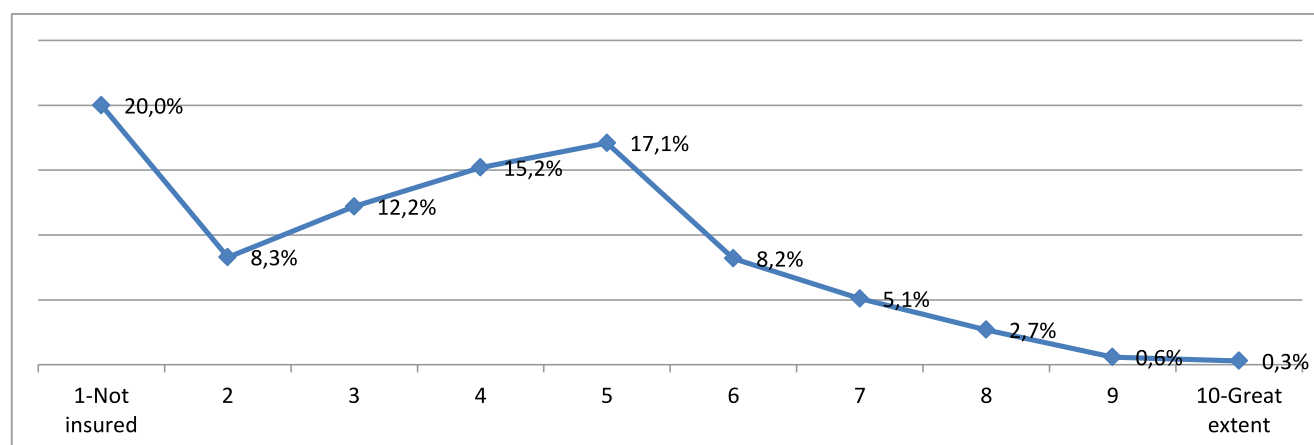
The interviewed experts mentioned the need of inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream school as a first step for the society to get used to these persons and to move from *'medical to social approach, not to focus on disability that needs to be treated but the fact that the person is accepted, with his/her disabilities, by the society'*.

Many experts mentioned that from the point of view of human rights, the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities in 2010 was a very important step for the persons with disabilities of the Republic of Moldova. Hence, the Republic of Moldova has assumed the responsibility to ensure the observance, promotion, and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in the same manner as the rights of other members of the society. But there are significant gaps in implementing and monitoring the Convention. An Expert reminded about the fact that by providing excessive benefits to persons with disabilities, especially with regard to the Labor Code and other legal acts<sup>2</sup>, it actually creates barriers in their employment. The entrepreneurs want profit and the State put the burden of inclusion of persons with disabilities on their shoulders without providing them with any benefits. It was mentioned in this context: the persons with disabilities cannot be hired for a determined period of time (probation); reduced working schedule without cutting the salary; right to more annual leave, etc. and the employers do not want to hire persons with disabilities.

*'The companies avoid hiring persons with disabilities because the Government placed the burden of responsibility assumed by ratifying the Convention on the companies. The State wants to ensure the right of persons with disabilities to employment but does not give any compensation, incentives, benefits to companies to hire persons with disabilities.'* (Expert)

In general, the observance of human rights of socially vulnerable persons in state institutions (hostels, asylums for elders, support centers, etc.) is low, about 55% respondents marked this question with 1-4, and a share of 20% respondents consider that the observance of human rights in this context is not insured at all (Figure 27).

**Figure 27. Observance of human rights of socially vulnerable persons in state institutions (hostels, asylums for elders, support centers, etc.)**



A higher share, about 1/5 of respondents in urban area, elderly persons of 60 years and older, respondents with high education have the same opinions (Table 3).

<sup>2</sup> Law No. 60 of 30.03.2012 on social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

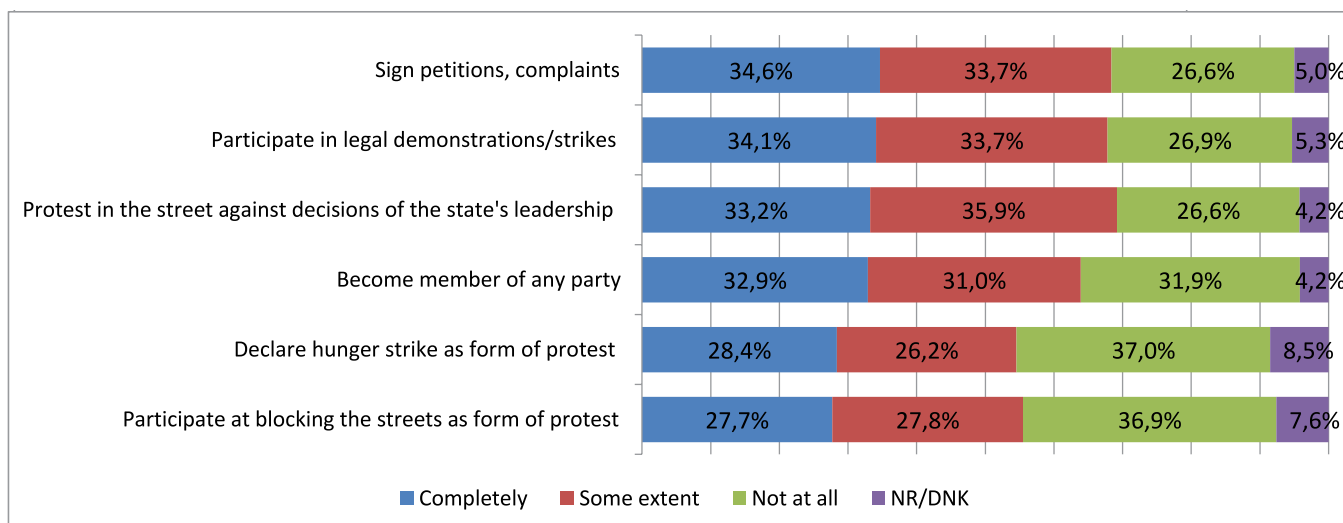
**Table 3.** Observance of human rights of socially vulnerable persons in state institutions (hostels, asylums for elders, support centers, etc.) based on social and demographic characteristics

		1-not insured	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	NR/DNK
Residence	Urban	24.2%	9.3%	10.4%	15.8%	16.8%	9.5%	5.3%	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%	7.2%
	Rural	16.4%	7.5%	13.7%	14.8%	17.3%	7.0%	5.0%	4.4%	0.7%	0.4%	12.8%
Age of respondent	18-29 years	18.1%	7.8%	10.1%	13.5%	16.2%	12.2%	6.4%	5.0%	1.1%	0.6%	9.0%
	30-44 years	18.3%	8.9%	13.6%	16.8%	20.1%	6.1%	4.6%	1.4%	-	-	10.2%
	45-59 years	19.5%	8.6%	12.7%	16.9%	15.7%	7.6%	5.1%	2.1%	0.6%		11.2%
	60+	24.5%	7.8%	12.1%	13.3%	16.0%	7.1%	4.4%	2.7%	0.7%	0.8%	10.6%
Education of respondent	Low	14.9%	6.9%	15.8%	17.2%	18.0%	5.6%	5.0%	3.5%	1.7%	-	11.4%
	Average	19.8%	8.0%	11.1%	17.1%	14.7%	9.7%	4.9%	2.9%	0.4%	0.1%	11.4%
	High	24.3%	9.9%	11.0%	10.9%	20.1%	7.8%	5.6%	2.0%	-	0.9%	7.6%

## 2.6. Freedom of assembly and association

Comparable shares of respondents' opinions about the freedom to participate in or to organize different actions were registered. The highest share (about 34%) is represented by persons who consider they are free in signing petitions, claims and in participating in legal demonstrations/strikes, and the lowest shares refer to the freedom to participate in actions blocking the streets as a protest or declare hunger strike. There were registered high shares of respondents (about 37%) who declared they do not feel free to participate in these actions (Figure 28).

**Figure 28.** Opinions of respondents regarding how free they fell in participating and implementing various activities



The LGBT community mentioned that it is important for them to organize the LGBT Parade to increase the visibility and perception of people about LGBT community in the society.

*'If more LGBT persons come out, and people see how many we are, their way of thinking would change. If we talk about a party, if it has little votes, it is removed, if more, it is seen and accepted. We have to come out and it is not important to shout. It is important for the world to see that we exist and we have rights.'* (gay, 20 years)

*'It is necessary to come out and show that we are many, and it is important to know the people from LGBT community. People think about us that we are weird, perverts, as shown on TV. But when they see a big community, even intuitively, they see these people exist, they are many, and they should be taken into account.'* (transgender, 27 years)

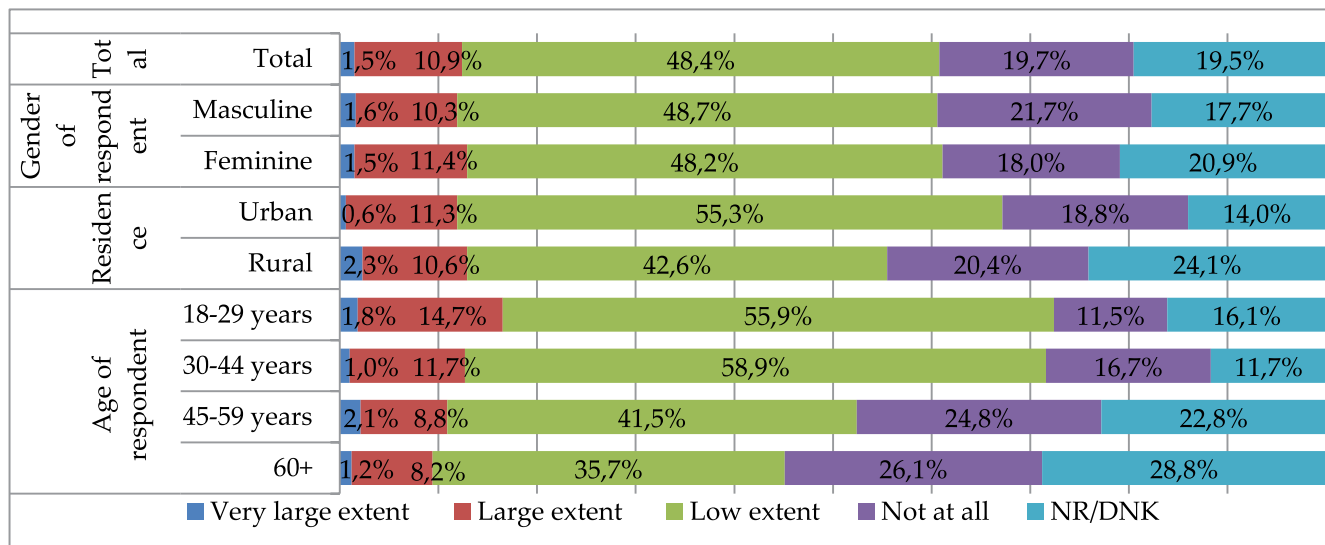
However, some representatives of the community consider that these measures, on the contrary, lead to negative attitude towards LGBT persons. This aspect was supported by participants from other group discussions, who declare themselves tolerant towards LGBT, but are bothered by public display of LGBT group. There are representatives of the LGBT who consider that the Parade should be supported greatly by 'traditional' persons who accept the LGBT community. In their opinion, the effect of this Parade would be more constructive.

*'I believe these events should not be attended by too many LGBT, but by normal people who support the LGBT community to show people that they are many, and then more would respect those who support the LGBT.'* (lesbian, 23 years)

## 2.7. Right to a fair trial

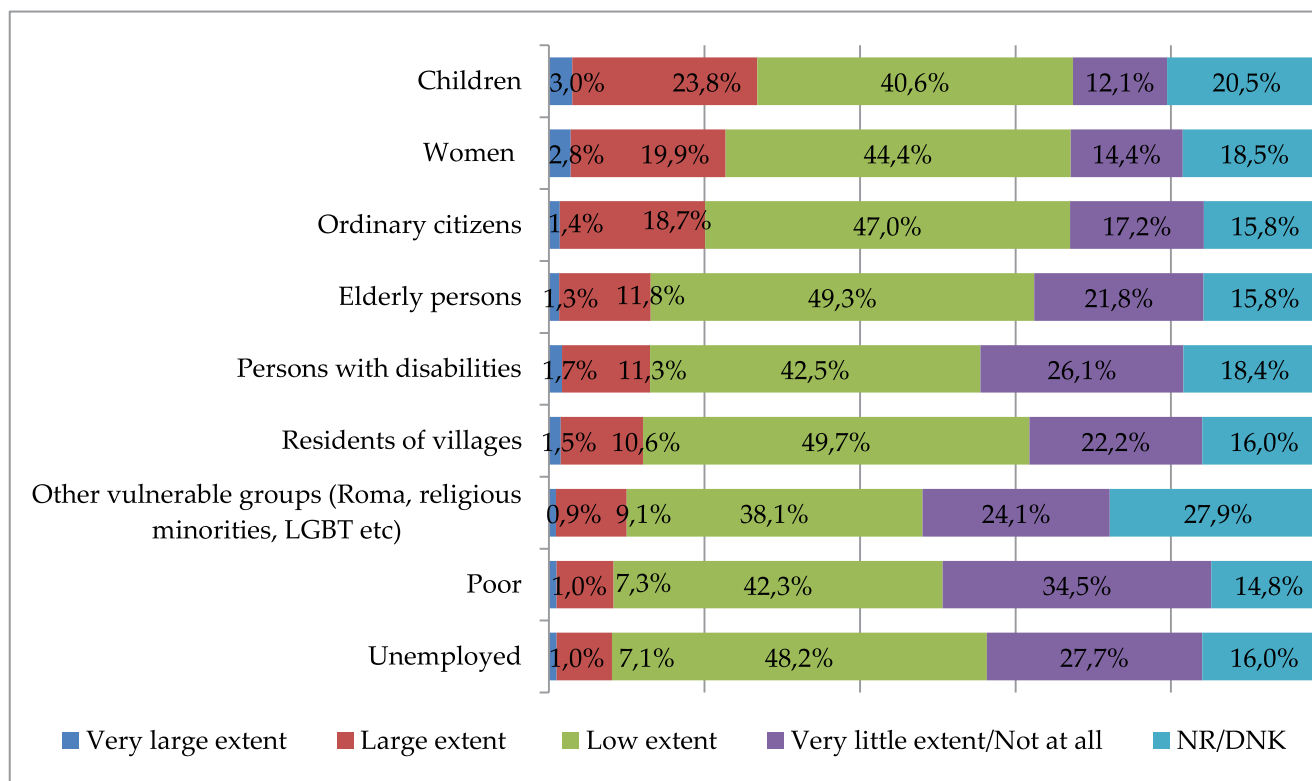
About 12.4% of respondents consider that the right to a fair trial is ensured *greatly or very much* compared to 68.1% who consider that this right is ensured *low or even at all*, and about 19.5% did not want or did not know what to say about this subject. It is noticed that the men (70.4%) and respondents from urban area (74.1%) consider that this right is ensured to a small extent or even not at all. Also, the negative opinions (i.e. of those who opted for *low extent or not at all* answers) about the right to a fair trial, and as the level of knowing this right vary depending on the age of respondents. Also, it is noted a limited level of knowing of respondents from rural area (Figure 29).

**Figure 29. Right to a fair trial guaranteed to respondents**



According to the respondents, the rights of the children to a fair trial are more insured because about 27% of them consider this right is insured to a great extent or very much. Followed by women as persons who benefit from the right to a fair trial, a fact expressed by 22% of respondents. In this context, the rights of unemployed and poor persons are insured very poorly (Figure 30).

**Figure 30. Extent to which the right to a fair trial is insured to certain categories of persons**



The respondents interviewed in group discussions show persistent distrust in the justice of the Republic of Moldova. It was mentioned that the justice is selective and marked by acts of corruption. Hence, the interviewed people consider that persons with higher income are advantaged. At the same time, it is considered that the informed persons and those who know where/who to address to increase their chances to a fair trial.

In group discussions, many respondents described own experience or of their friends when they had to bribe the law-enforcement bodies and/or the courts.

*'I had a traffic accident and I was driving. There were 4 persons with me and all were injured. I paid for their treatment and medicines. Then I was called to the Prosecutor's Office and I was told I had to go to prison. It came to the point that I had to bribe that prosecutor to close the case. He told me I had to get him a truck of sand through different persons so nobody could track it down. I paid MDL 1500 and I walked free.'* (M, 59 years, person with disabilities)

In the opinion of many experts, the right to a fair trial is a right less known by the population, but at the same time, is one of the rights most often violated. Besides many measures have been undertaken to contribute to its observance to a greater extent, such as video recording of the hearings.

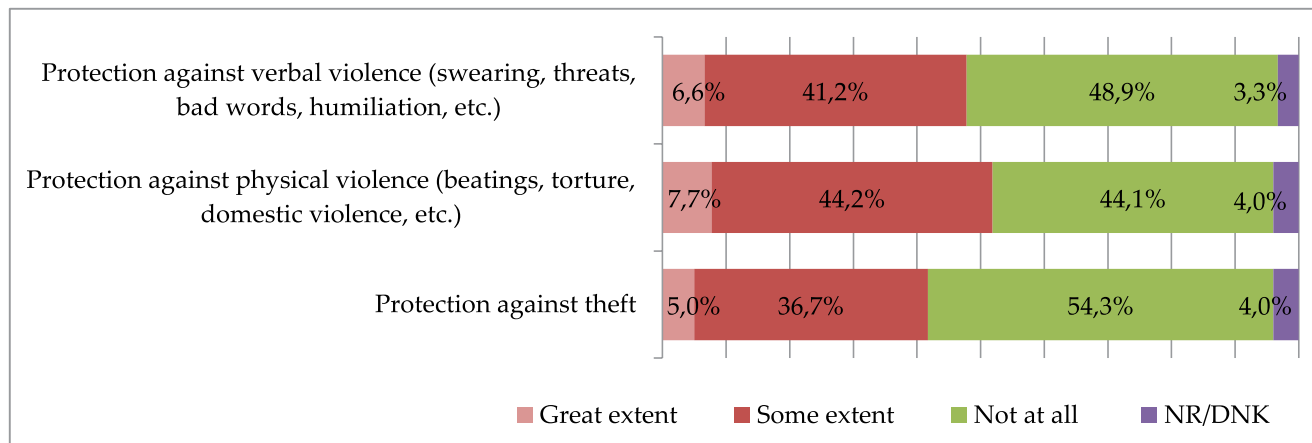
*'The right to a fair trial is very complicated. There are legal provisions that allow the judges not to justify their decisions, which is a serious issue.'* (Expert 2)

*'If to talk about the rights guaranteed by the European Convention of Human Rights, I believe that the right to a fair trial is the most violated. We have many issues in this filed.'* (Expert 3)

## 2.8. Right to life, physical and mental integrity, individual freedom and security of person<sup>3</sup>

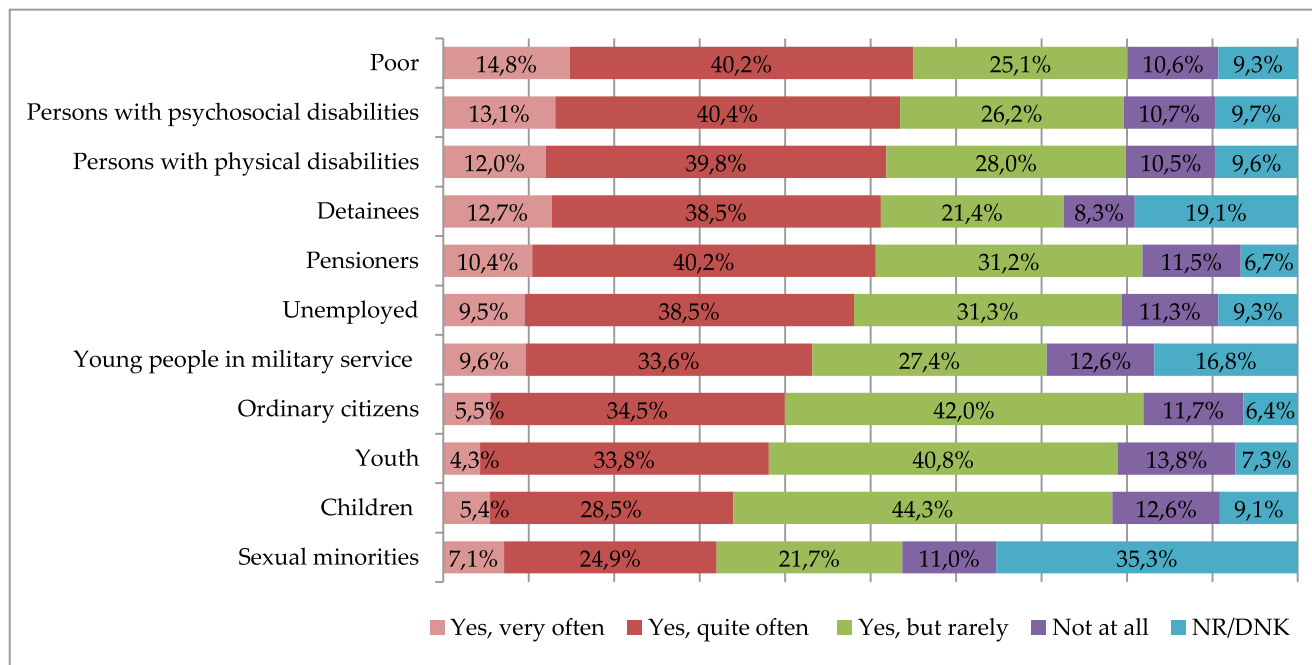
Security of person is another right assessed in the study. More than half of respondents consider that the security of person against physical violence is fully or somehow insured. The worst insurance is the protection against theft, and 54.3% of respondents declared that they are not protected at all at this chapter (Figure 31).

**Figure 31. Level of security of person**



Violation of rights of poor persons is considered a reality by about 55% of respondents, of persons with psycho-social disabilities – by 53.5% of respondents, and of those with physical disabilities and detainees – by about 51% of respondents (Figure 32).

**Figure 32. Extent to which the right to life, physical and psychical integrity of certain categories of persons is violated**



<sup>3</sup> Sub-chapter refers to rights stipulated in art. 24 and art. 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova.

The representatives of the LGBT interviewed in group discussions declared that first of all, the right to life and physical and mental integrity is not observed. When they reveal their sexual orientation, many LGBT persons are psychologically and physically aggressed. This is even more prominent in the case of persons from religious families and/or of strict traditions, such as the Roma.

*'On the New Year's Eve one of my cousins told my family I was gay. They invited me for the St.Vasile holiday and married me. I divorced in 2 weeks. But I was forcedly married. I never liked girls, I told them I did not want to, but they called me home for the holiday, they organized an engagement party. I refused, I cried and I told them I was gay, why are you doing this? – because it is shame, people will find out, neighbors, family and you must marry. I was beaten, offended and forcedly married. I have the right to my own life. I knew than what is meant to happen will happen but I would not stay married to a girl. If my family wants me, they will accept me as I am.*

*My brother-in-law is married to my older sister. She is 2 years older than me. She is married to a lawyer. When he found out he hit me, my aunts hit me, I was offended, judged by my family and when I found out that my brother-in-law wants to lock me up for 2 weeks, I was shocked. I run away from home and never went back.*

*They looked for me and asked me to go to France for a short holiday. I was at the computer and heard my mother talking on the phone. She was saying that I am to go overseas, and when I am there, they would take all my papers/documents so I cannot return to Moldova and I stayed there.*

*My grandmother told me, 'if you leave this girl, forget you have a family, forget you have a house, forget about everything.'.. I took my clothes and left the house. '(Gay, 18 years)*

Women who are victims of domestic violence mentioned that they are often subject to blackmail, intimidation and threats, implying different aspects: from taking away the children and different goods to death threats. Most of all, they do not address to state institutions, and when they do, mostly they are not helped. The reaction of the community, neighbors in most cases is the tolerance for such abuses.

*'The neighbors knew, do you understand? The neighbors saw what was going on but would not interfere, because what is in your household is yours... your fight, it is between you two, you go to bed together and make peace, this is what they think.'* (F, 58 years, victim of domestic violence)

*'The neighbors would not interfere: it is your business, you picked him, you live with him. Sometimes they would laugh: did you have a scandal again? Something like this but they would not interfere. Now, we have neighbors who are screaming, beating each other, make huge noise, but the other neighbors do not interfere, because it is your business, you picked him, you live with him, we have no business to interfere with your family'* (F, 32 years, victim of domestic violence)

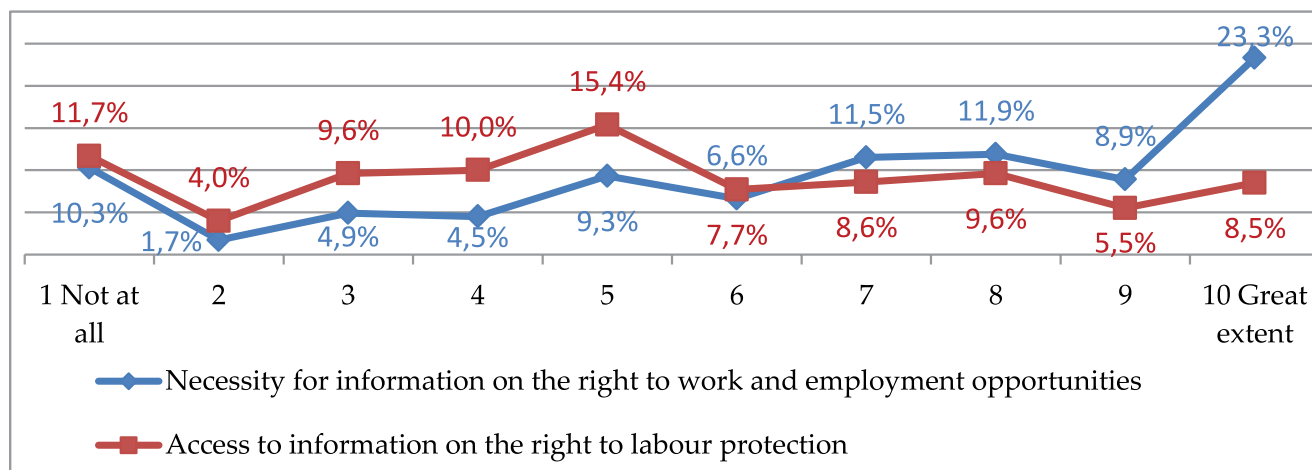
In the opinion of some experts, not only the community, neighbors are tolerant towards domestic violence but the law-enforcement agencies as well at local level/police does not take seriously this problem. Also, some experts mentioned the existence of some gaps regarding the restraining order, which does not protect fully the victim.

*'If to talk about domestic violence, the policemen are very well trained in this field, however the victims come, complain and the policeman tells them they need medical and legal expertise. If you don't have bruises, there are no grounds.'* (Expert 5)

## 2.9. Right to work and protection of employment

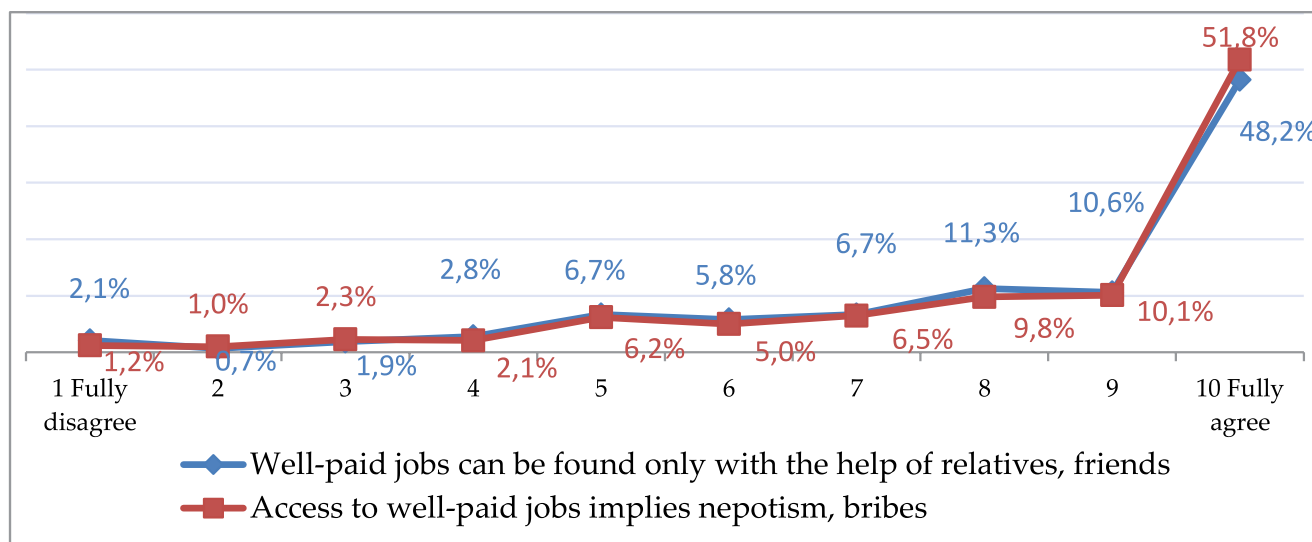
The necessary information on the right to work and employment opportunities as well as access to information on the right to protection of employment was estimated from 1 to 10, where 1 signified *not all*, and 10 – *to highest extent*. There is a higher share of those who consider there is a need for information, because 23.3% of respondents consider that *there is very high need* and 55.6% confirmed this need as *relatively high need*, marking the respective question with 7-10 points. At the same time, about 1/3 of respondents (marks 7-10) consider that the access to information about the right to protection of employment is ensured *relatively high*, and 8.5% - *to a great extent* (Figure 33).

Figure 33. Necessity and access to information on the right to work



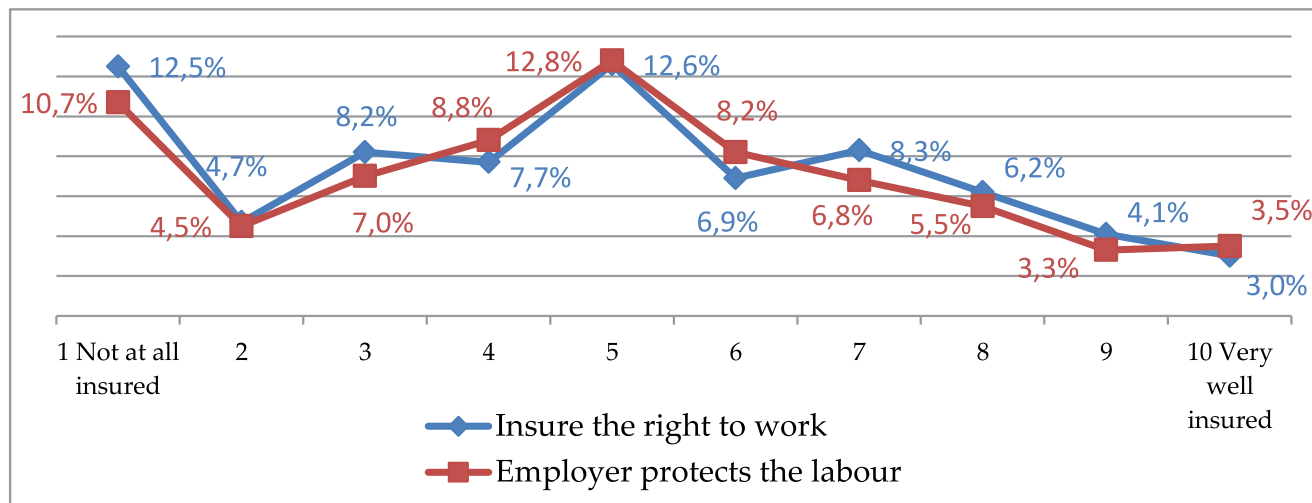
Same scale from 1 to 10 was used to estimate the possibilities and opportunities to find a well-paid job. Most respondents agree that well-paid jobs can be found only with the help of relatives, friends or by bribery, almost 80% marked this indicator with 7-10, expressing the relative agreement with the affirmations provided by the research, and almost 50% declared that they *fully agree* (Figure 34).

Figure 34. Possibilities to find a well-paid job



On the other hand, about 1/3 of respondents does not agree with the affirmations that the right to work is assured and that the employer respects the right to employment (1-4 marks), and over 10% consider these rights are absolutely uninsured (*not insured at all*). Only 10% consider that to some extent the respective rights are ensured, marking the answers to the respective affirmation with 7-10 (Figure 35).

**Figure 35. Opinions on observing the rights at the work place and employment protection**



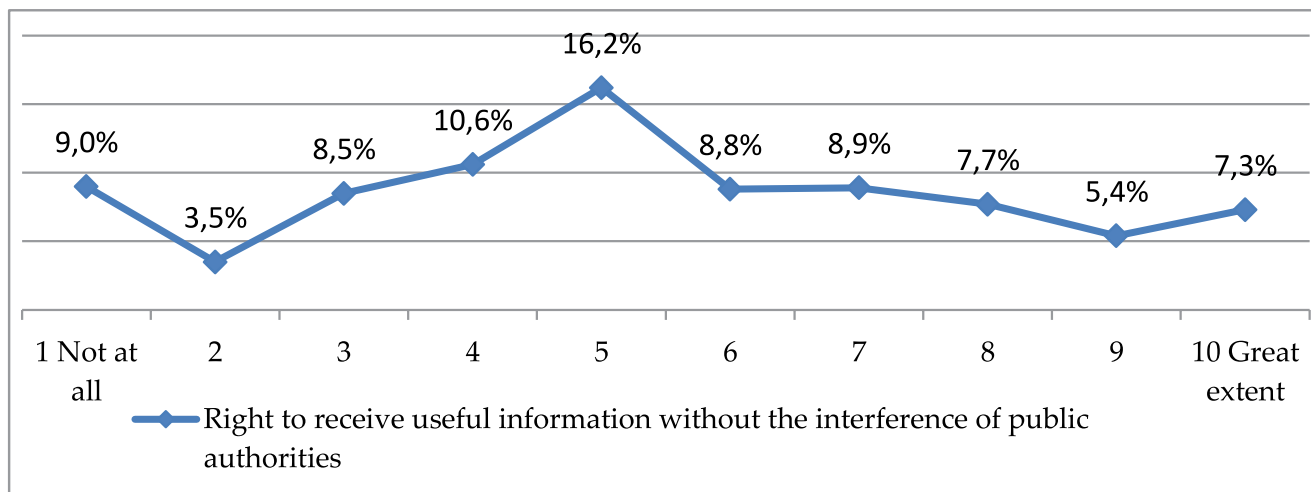
In the qualitative study, both the respondents from the group discussions, and some experts are concerned by the share of 'salary in the envelope' phenomenon, which further decrease the social security of the persons. Although, the persons who are employed illegally or receive a share of remuneration informally know about this, however, they said that the employer declared paying all social contributions, when in reality, it never happened. The persons learn about this when they need to access some medical services or social payments.

*'It must be a mistake, this cannot be!... he withheld for medical insurance, pension fund, etc. but the insurance is not active, the pension fund... when the woman had to retire after working in such organization, the amount was missing...'* (F, 38 years, victim of domestic violence)

## 2.10. Right to information, freedom of opinion and expression

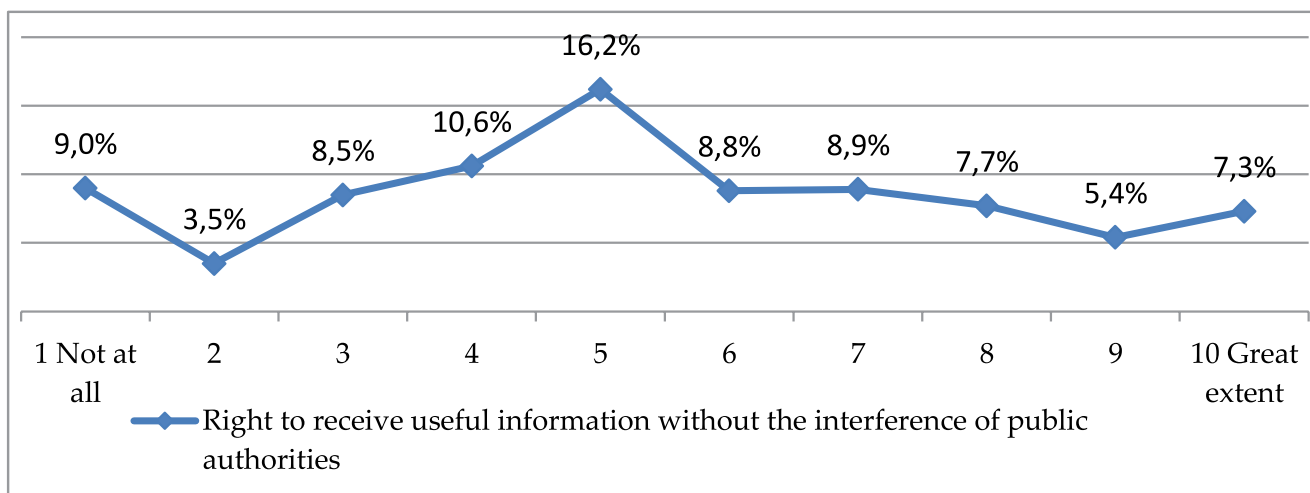
The opinions of the respondents regarding the extent of ensuring the right to useful information without the interference of public authorities, evaluated based on the same scale from 1-not insured at all to 10-insured very well, distributed as follows: about 1/3 of respondents consider this right is not enough insured (1-4 points), with 9% respondents who declared that this right is not observed at all. About 30% consider this right is observed highly, marking this affirmation with 7-10 points (Figure 36).

**Figure 36. Extent to which the right to useful information without the interference of public authorities is insured**



In the opinion of respondents, the right to freedom of expression as an ordinary citizen, which accounts for 41.7% answers was marked with 7-10 compared to 37.2% of same answers for the affirmation on right to freedom of expression of journalist. At the same time, it is necessary to mention that the level of knowing the rights of journalism by respondents is lower, about 15% could not say anything about this affirmation (Figure 37).

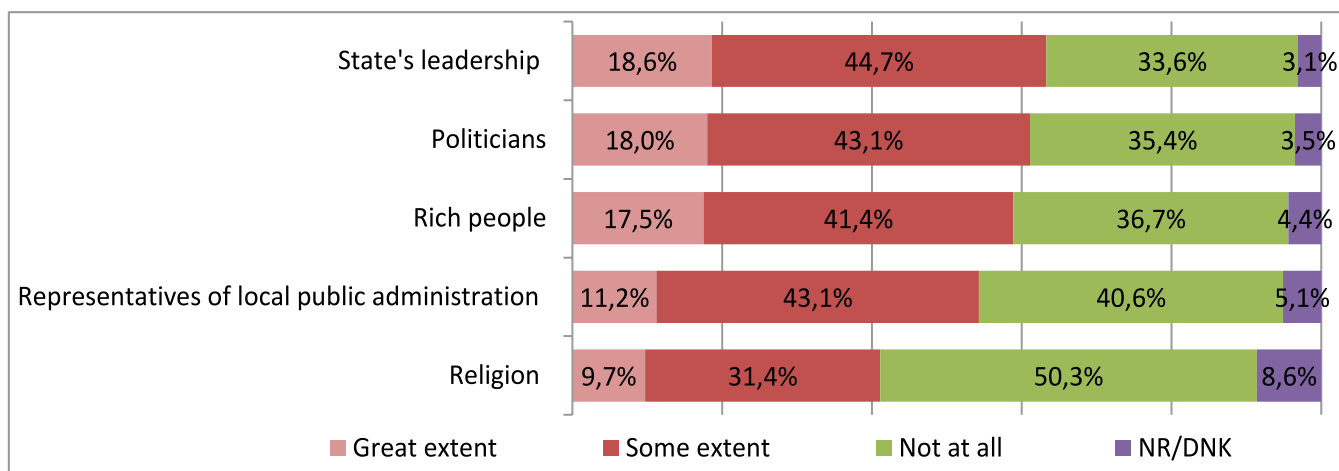
**Figure 37. Observance of the right to freedom of expression**



The answers provided by the respondents show the persistence of risk perception as a result of free expression. In general, more than half of respondents feels these risks.

In particular, it is risky to express opinions about the State's administration, expressed to some extent by 63.3% respondents, and 18.6% consider that this is highly risky. Approximately to the same extent, the risk is expressed compared to politicians, 61.1% consider that there is some risk, and 18% - high risk. Less risky is expressing the opinion on religion, 41.1% consider that the risk persists somehow, and 9.7% - highly risky (Figure 38).

**Figure 38. Opinions regarding the risk to express views about certain groups of persons**

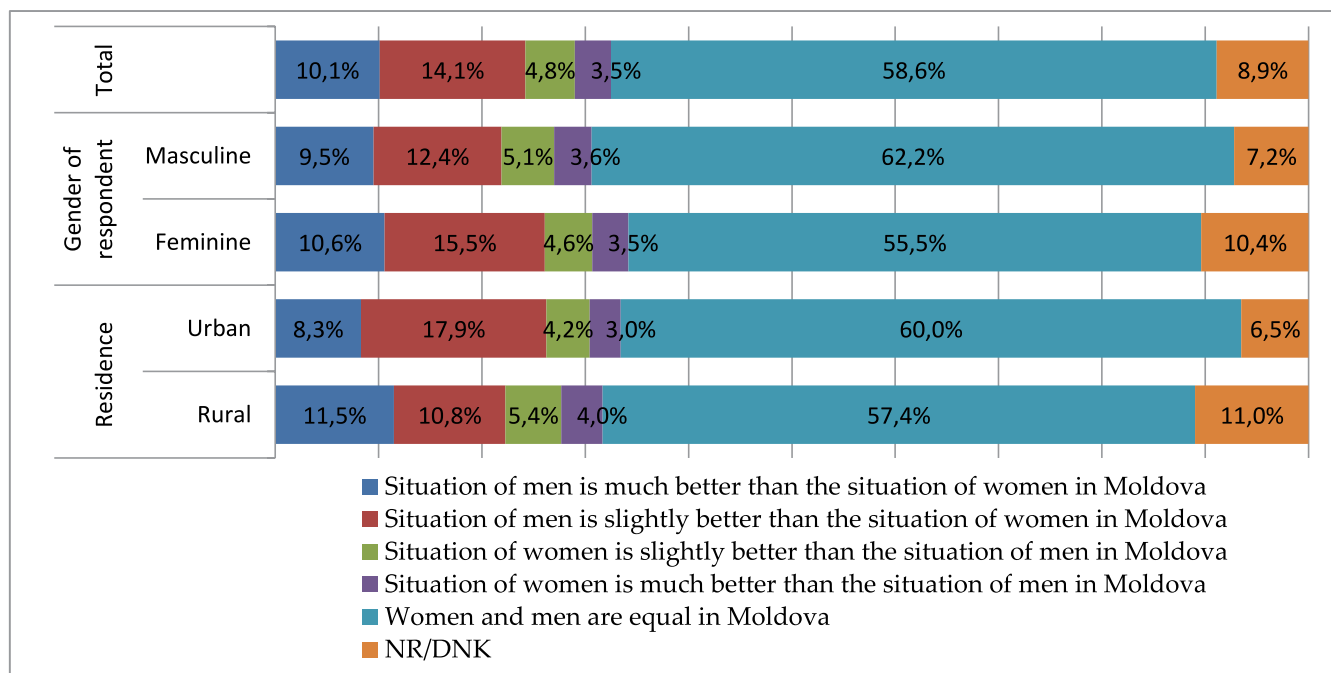


In different contexts, the representative of religious minorities declared they can express freely their opinion about religion. Moreover, the representatives of some religions consider this is their duty to promote the ‘word of God’. When they are blamed and labelled in the society, some declare they accept such phenomena as something normal.

### 2.11. Right to equality and non-discrimination

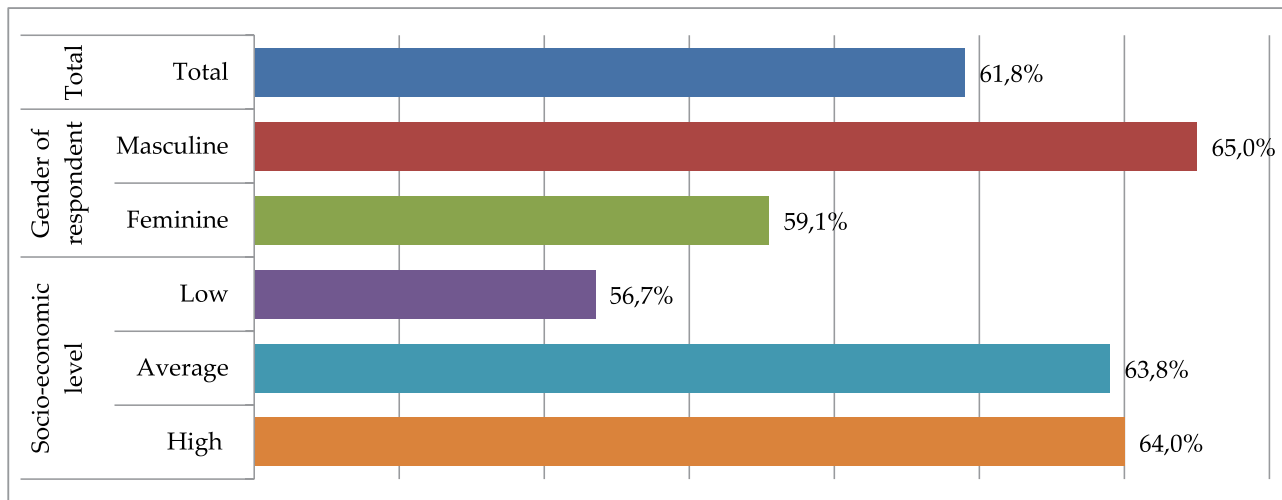
Equal rights for men and women are mentioned by 58.6% of respondents, at the same time, every fifth respondent considers that the situation of men is somehow better than the situation of women. Male respondents who consider that women and men are equal account for a share of 62.2% compared to 55.5% female respondents. Also the perceptions of equality are more persistent among respondents from towns (Figure 39).

**Figure 39. Opinions regarding the equality between men and women**



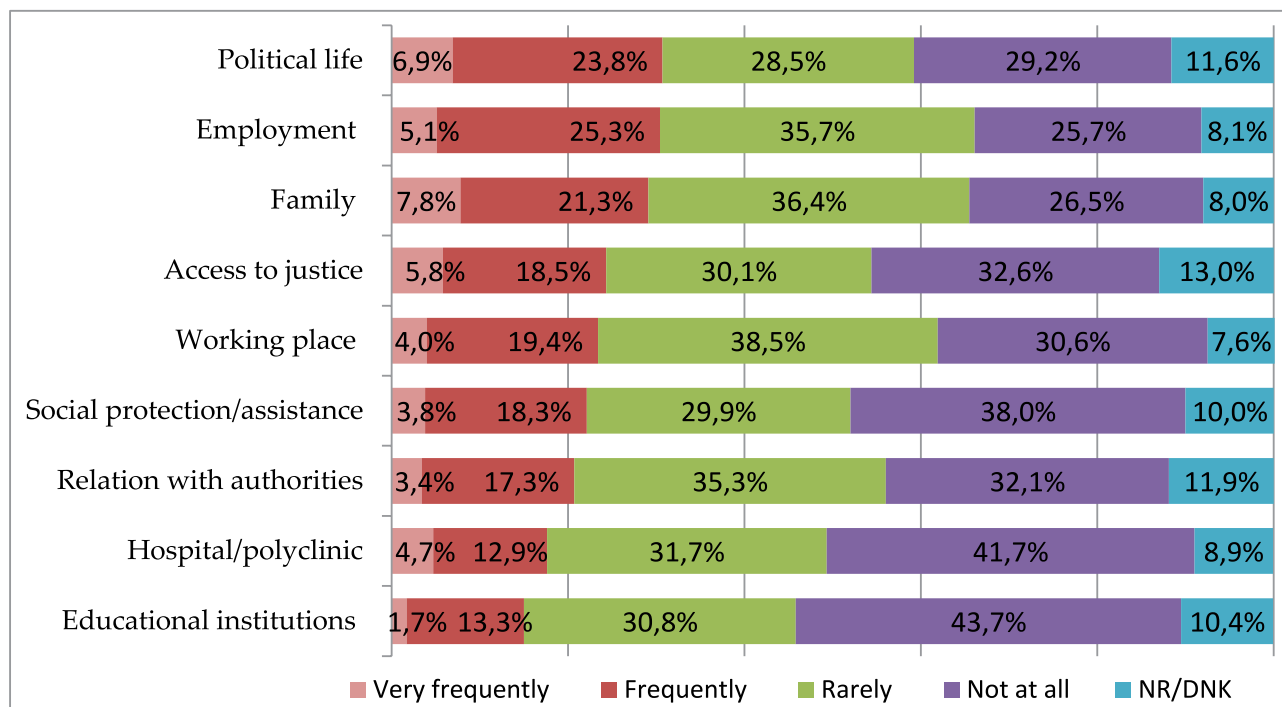
In general, equal chances for men and women are perceived positively by about 61.8% of respondents, who provided affirmative answers to 'Do you think there are equal chances between men and women in the Republic of Moldova?'. Same answers were given by 65% men included in the study compared to 59.1% women, preponderantly among the respondents with a higher socio-economic level, shares of about 64% compared to 56.7% were noted among those with a lower level of living (Figure 40).

**Figure 40. Equality of chances between men and women**



Women are discriminated more often in the political life, family and employment - about 30% mentioned this happens frequently or even very frequently, about ¼ of respondents has the same opinion about access to justice and discrimination in employment, about 20% - social assistance/protection and relations with authorities, less about hospital/medical unit and education institutions (Figure 41). It should be mentioned that these two fields, medicine and education, are employed preponderantly by women.

**Figure 41. Opinions on discrimination of women**



The opinions of respondents interviewed in the group discussions regarding the equality of chances between men and women in communities are divided. On one hand, some consider they are equal, and on the other hand, some say they are not equal. The latter is divided in two categories: those who consider the things should change so the women are not discriminated and those who consider this is a normal state of affairs.

According to the study, the religious minorities recognize that women are not equal to men, but mostly they do not see this as a problem. *'Leading the church is man's job', 'sermon is given by man'* - at this point, a respondent said that there is progress in this field, and gave examples of female pastors in Europe. However, some respondents insist on the fact that women depend on religious confession of the life partner – *'man teaches his family about the religious truths. The woman will not be responsible ... woman may be different (different religion before marriage), but she should be in the same religion as the man'*. Not all respondents share this idea, considering the best way is to have a consensus in the family.

The Roma consider there are some old traditions regarding women, which should be respected. On the other hand, some Roma women consider these traditions obsolete and that Roma woman should enjoy same treatment as the man.

*'If we visit someone or people are visiting us during a holiday, the tradition is to lay the table with everything. Men sit at one table, the women at another table. I visited rich Roma, friends from Odessa Moscow, who have the same tradition as the Roma from Moldova...'*(M, 37 years, Roma ethnic group)

*'Maybe I am wrong, but I think in this situation the right of the woman is fully violated. She has to work, she has to cook, but she has no right to be respected... I don't think I would be able to do this. I would feel as the help. However, I am not sure because when you love someone, there are habits, you could do a lot, maybe I would do this as well. But today I am not ready.'* (F, 22 years, Roma ethnic group)

*'Since I was young I had the same situation, since my grandparents to my parents: we had the same bringing. The men enjoy holidays, we just clean modestly not to disturb them. This is an old Roma tradition, but we live in Europe now, we have to change... My girls are brought up in the XXI century in a modern world. They go to clubs, wear pants, shorts in summer. They choose their attitude. The older girl wears Roma clothing. But another one, not even close. She is very modern.'* (F, 43 years, Roma ethnic group)

Women victims of domestic violence talked about different disadvantageous situations, compared to men. They said that sometimes the men speculate on distribution of roles and responsibilities in the family, having requirements towards women's roles but do not fulfil their own responsibilities.

*'The woman does laundry, the woman cooks, cleans the house, which I could not cope with because I had to cut wood, feed the horse, the cow, because all were on my shoulders. He would come home and find a dirty dish and if he was drunk... you did nothing today – beat, beat me.'* (F, 31 years, victim of domestic violence)

The persons who live in the security zone mentioned that they are discriminated compared to persons from Transnistrian regions regarding the costs they have to pay to benefit from certain services.

*'The biometric passport costs MDL 850, but they do it for free. They pay some MDL 18. My sister and my sister-in-law came and paid MDL 35, while we have to get biometric passport.'* (M, 67 years, person from the security zone)

*'...we have street illumination for only two hours, but over there, the entire night. They have the right to retire earlier, have a bigger pension than we do, the gas is cheaper.'* (F, 48 years, person from the security zone)

These opinions were supported by some interviewed experts that mentioned that the Government of the Republic of Moldova made many concessions in the negotiation process and sometimes, it is more convenient to be a resident of the Left Bank of the River Nistru. An example in this regard is the compulsory medical insurance.

*'According to the legislation of the Republic of Moldova, they (pensioners from the Left Bank of the River Nistru) receive the medical insurance free of charge ... they do not pay a penny into our budget, they do not contribute to the CNAM fund, and they know it very well. We should amend the law so they can contribute as well, because only by contributing, the person is thankful' (Expert 10)*

- Other criteria of discrimination in the last 12 months were discussed by the persons interviewed in the group discussions refer to:
- socio-economic situation;

*'I felt discriminated. I am in grade 12 currently and we had theses in the first term. Some children with a better financial situation defended the theses for better marks of 9 and 10. i.e. they knew it beforehand... we are friends, they told us: yes, we paid and the teacher told us topics for the essay, approximate exercises, but we were told that the topics were chosen from 3 options 1 hour before we receive the topic' (F, 18 years, pupil)*

- residence, perceptions that some residents of urban area disregard the residents from rural area;
- spoken language, the Romanian-speakers feel discriminated when they are asked to speak Russian language and/or some services are denied because the person who provide these services speaks Russian;

*'I felt discriminated when I tried to call a taxi. The woman speaks Russian. I am trying to give her my address in Romanian, but she tells me, 'Speak Russian, I do not understand'. I tell her, 'I also cannot say these figures in Russian, for instance, 90, 900 and she tells me, 'well, if you cannot speak...' and hung up on me. I called twice and either there was the same woman or they are asked to speak Russian at the taxi company. I felt very bad.' (F, 32 years, victim of domestic violence)*

On the other hand, the Russian-speakers mentioned that they are often criticized *'they lived entire life in the Republic of Moldova and did not study the language'*, especially in the rural area, and when they require services. Also, a representative of ethnic minorities said that she does not like when she receives answers in Romanian language to her applications formulated in Russian language. She considers her rights are violated because she does not know Romanian language.

Another subject is the language of communication in Transnistria, which was not discussed by ordinary citizens but was stressed out mostly by experts. According to them, the Left Bank of River Nistru has three official languages: Moldovan, Russian and Ukrainian, but only Russian language is accepted.

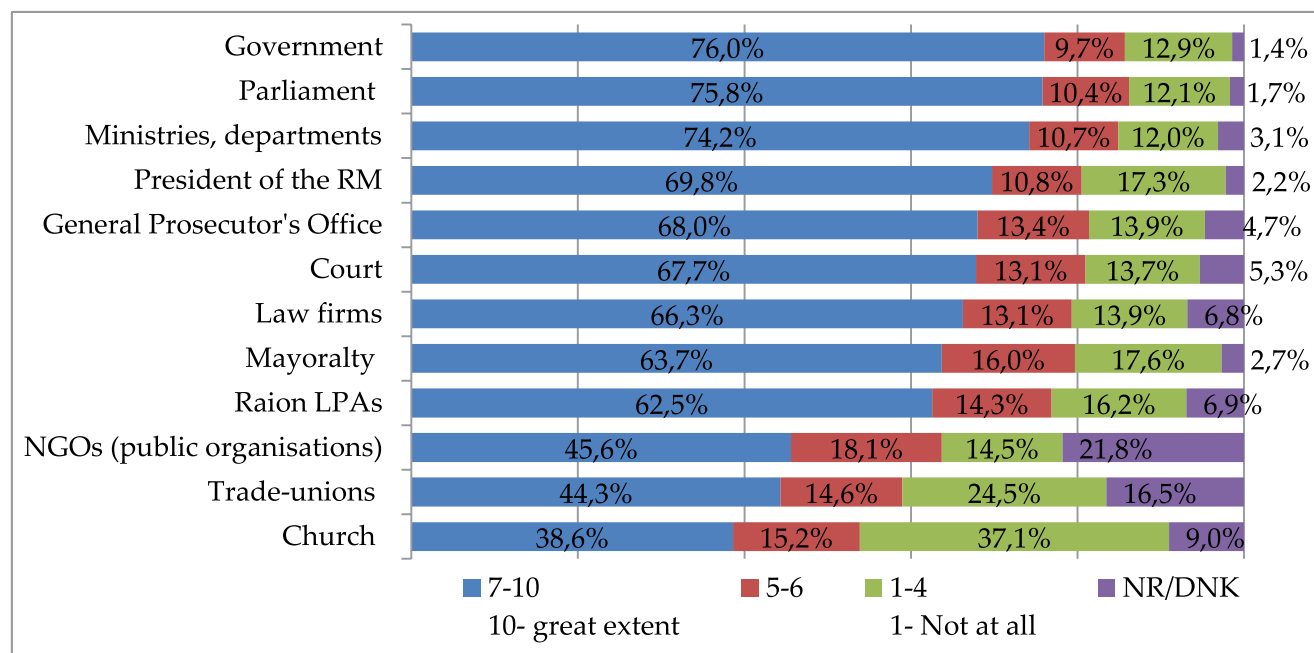
*'Failure to accept a language is persistent, even there are 3 official languages: Moldovan Russian, Ukrainian... Moldovan-speakers find it very difficult and practically cannot find any job. All documents are in Russian. Same situation is with Ukrainian language. Nobody would employ you if you do not speak Russian. This right is extremely violated.' (Expert 12)*

## CHAPTER 3.

## Role of the institutions in observing Human Rights

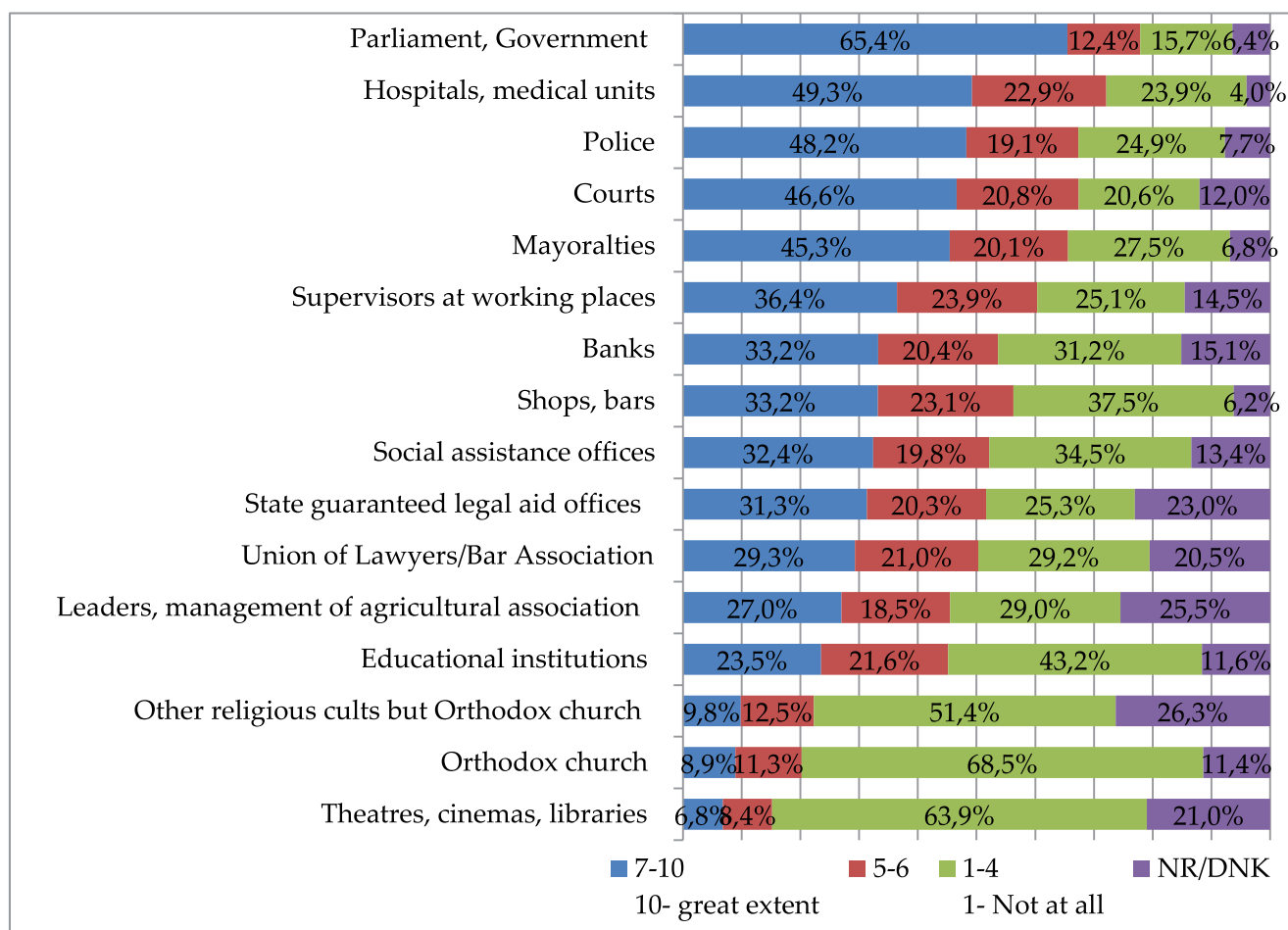
State institutions, other institutions and organizations that function in the Republic of Moldova, have a very important role in promoting and observing human rights. The extent to which the situation can be improved in this regard depending on different institutions was appreciated by the respondents on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means that respondents think that the improvement of the situation does not depend at all on the respective institution, and 10 – depends to great extent. About ¾ of respondents consider that improvement of the situation of human rights depends to great extent on the Government, Parliament and their departments, marking these respective options with 7-10, about 70% - on the President of the Republic of Moldova, and about 68% - on law-enforcement institutions (Prosecutor's Office, courts, lawyers' firms). This depends less on the church, trade-unions and NGOs that accounted to 40% of answers marked with 7-10 (Figure 42).

Figure 42. Role of the intuitions in improving the situation of human rights observance



About 65.4% of respondents consider that the Parliament and Government are the institutions that violate most of all human rights, marking them with 7-10 points, followed by medical institutions (hospitals, medical units), police, courts of justice, mayoralties marked with 7-10 points varying between 45-49%, other institutions registered less than 36% similar answers. Cultural institutions, church, religious cults are considered entities in which activity violation of human rights is a reality seldom seen. (Figure 43).

**Figure 43. Extent to which the State and private institutions violate human rights**



Different group discussions were attended by local players, who specified in more contexts that they tried, as representatives of the LPAs or other public institutions, to involve into the protection of vulnerable categories of persons, usually children or elderly persons. In many situations, the red-tape and lack of support from state institutions determined them to provide only some advice or find alternatives for children, while the aggressors would stay in the community, behaving as usual.

The situations showing that the local players are not sufficiently prepared to intervene in the protection of children are described below:

‘We had a little girl whose mother lived with a partner. She was 9 years. We noticed some changes in her behavior. We saw she was more withdrawn than usual and we talked to her a bit. Eventually she told us that the father tries to touch her. The social assistant and I tried to talk to her more and address to the police. But we did not have proof. How can you go to a person and say ‘look what you have done?’. He was always pressing her or was using the moment when the mother was touched and he would touch her too. We told the girl: you go to church and you know prayers. Pray before bed to wake up ok in the morning. And try not to be conspicuous with him around...’(F, 48 years, teaching staff)

‘I had the possibility to do something, to call social service but I did not do it because I thought social service can solve it only in two ways. Either to go to boarding school or foster family, but these decisions are not very good. It was better to endure the insults from my father, because I was still at home. We had families in the village, which children were taken away by social assistance and those children were also discriminated ... were beaten, exploited and I did not want this for myself. It was better to be with my family, my mother would support me as a mother, and I endured, I did not tell anyone.’ (F, 18 years, victim of domestic violence)

In the opinion of respondents, the human rights are most often violated by representatives of different state institutions. This opinion was provided by 43.2% of respondents, of which 44.9% men and 41.8% women, respondents from towns 47% compared to 40.1% respondents from rural areas. Same opinion was given by a higher share of respondents of 30-44 years; 48.6% of answers were given by representatives of state institutions, as well as 48.3% of respondents with high level of education (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Frequency of violating the human rights by individuals (violence, theft, etc.) or representatives of different institutions

		Particular persons	Particular persons and representatives of different institutions to equal extent	Representatives of different institutions of the state	NR/DNK
<b>Total</b>		10.9%	34.5%	43.2%	11.4%
<b>Gender of respondent:</b>	<b>Masculine</b>	12.0%	34.7%	<b>44.9%</b>	8.4%
	<b>Feminine</b>	10.0%	34.2%	41.8%	13.9%
<b>Residence:</b>	<b>Urban</b>	10.2%	34.9%	<b>47.0%</b>	7.9%
	<b>Rural</b>	11.5%	34.1%	40.1%	14.4%
<b>Age of respondent:</b>	<b>18-29 years</b>	17.4%	38.1%	37.4%	7.1%
	<b>30-44 years</b>	8.8%	31.7%	<b>48.6%</b>	10.8%
	<b>45-59 years</b>	7.2%	35.7%	43.2%	13.9%
	<b>60+</b>	10.7%	32.5%	42.9%	13.9%

In the opinion of respondents of group discussions, the human rights are violated by ordinary people as well, especially when we refer to discrimination.

*'Sometimes we, the people, violate human rights, and the right to confession. In our village, the neighbor wanted to sell the house. The buyer was someone of another religion. An old woman was living four houses down the street and asked the people in the village not to allow the buyer into the house. What is her problem? People violate the rights; everything starts in the society, from the person. I see he is black, what is my problem? Yes, he is a human like me.'* (F, 21 years, representative of ethnic minorities)

The institutions that should protect the persons from human rights violation are those that often violate the rights.

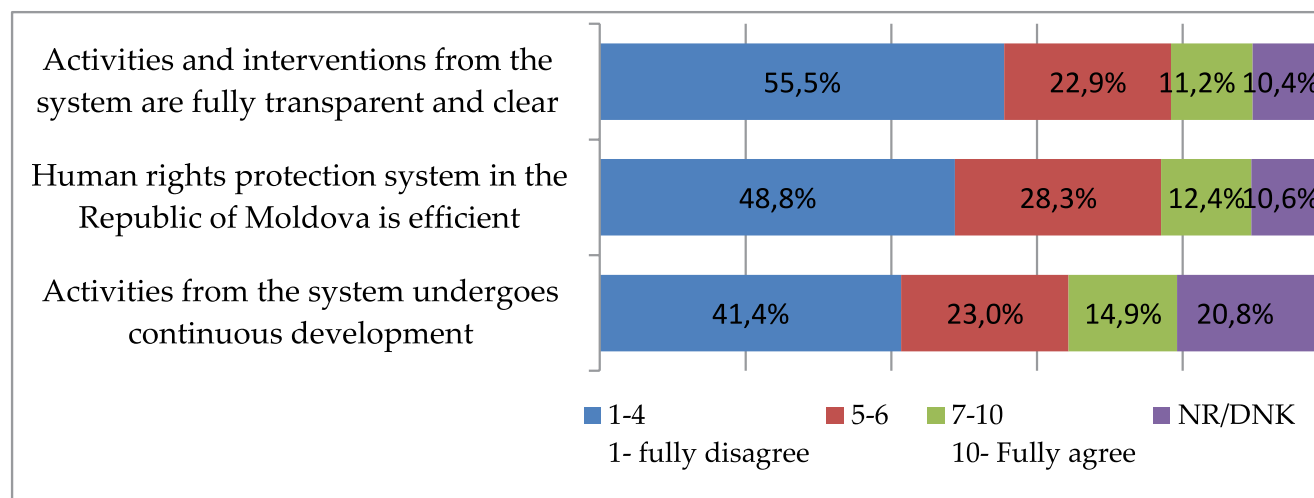
*'I believe the police also violates the law. Instead of helping the country to prosper, they receive bribes from persons and you can do whatever you want.'* (M, 28 years, person with disabilities)

## CHAPTER 4.

## Human Rights protection system in the Republic of Moldova

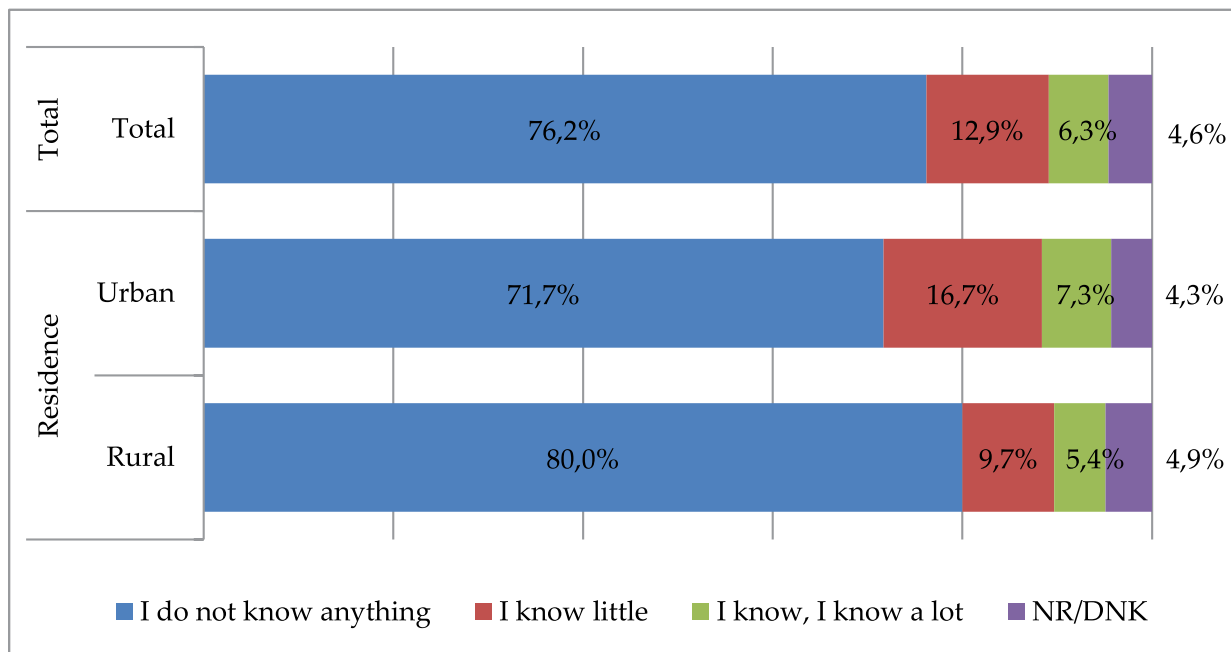
The study included a number of affirmations regarding the human rights protection system in the Republic of Moldova, giving the respondents the possibility to express their agreement or disagreement by marking on a scale from 1- totally disagree to 10 – totally agree with the respective affirmation. *Transparency of activities and interventions in the system* is an affirmation registered in 55.5% answers expressed as disagreement marked with 1-4 points. The affirmation about the efficiency of human rights protection system was not accepted by 48.8% (1-4 marks), and 41.4% expressed the disagreement regarding ongoing improvement of the system (Figure 44).

Figure 44. Human rights protection system in the Republic of Moldova



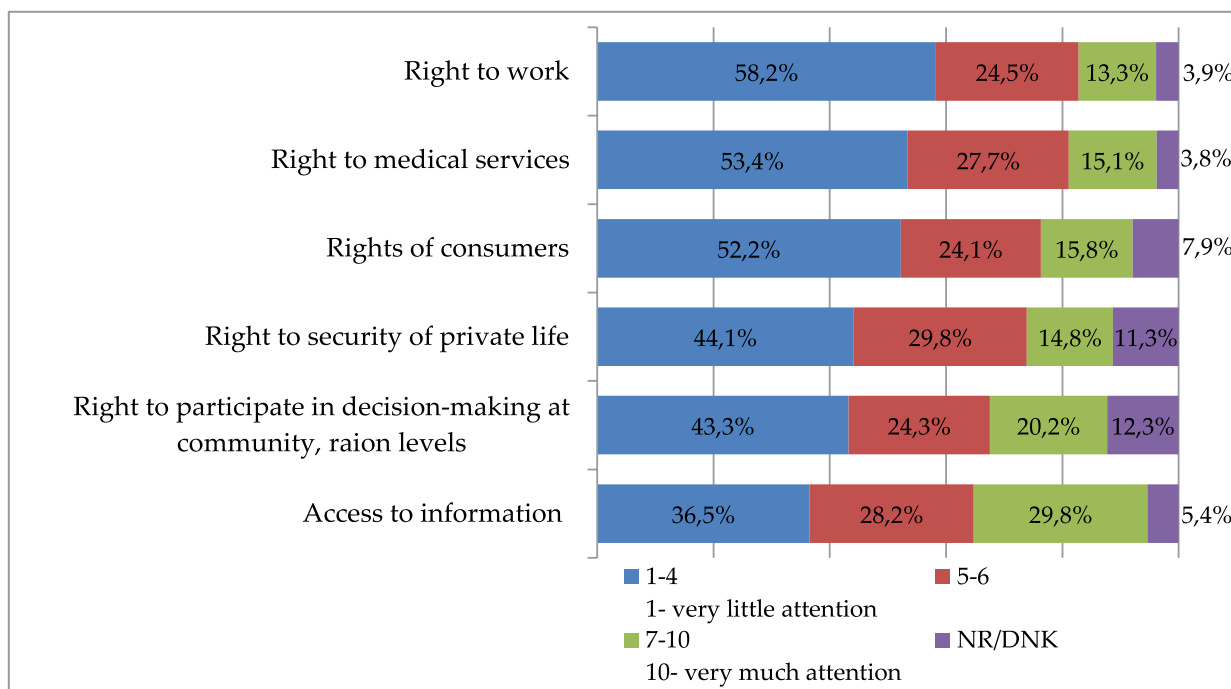
The information of population about human rights policies promoted in our country is extremely limited. Over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of respondents *does not know anything* about the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) for 2011-2014, adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova and only 6% declared that they *know* or *know something* about it. Even less know about the plan mentioned by the respondents from rural area, of which 80% declared that *do not know anything* compared to 71.7% of the population from towns (Figure 45).

Figure 45. Level of knowledge about the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) for 2011-2014



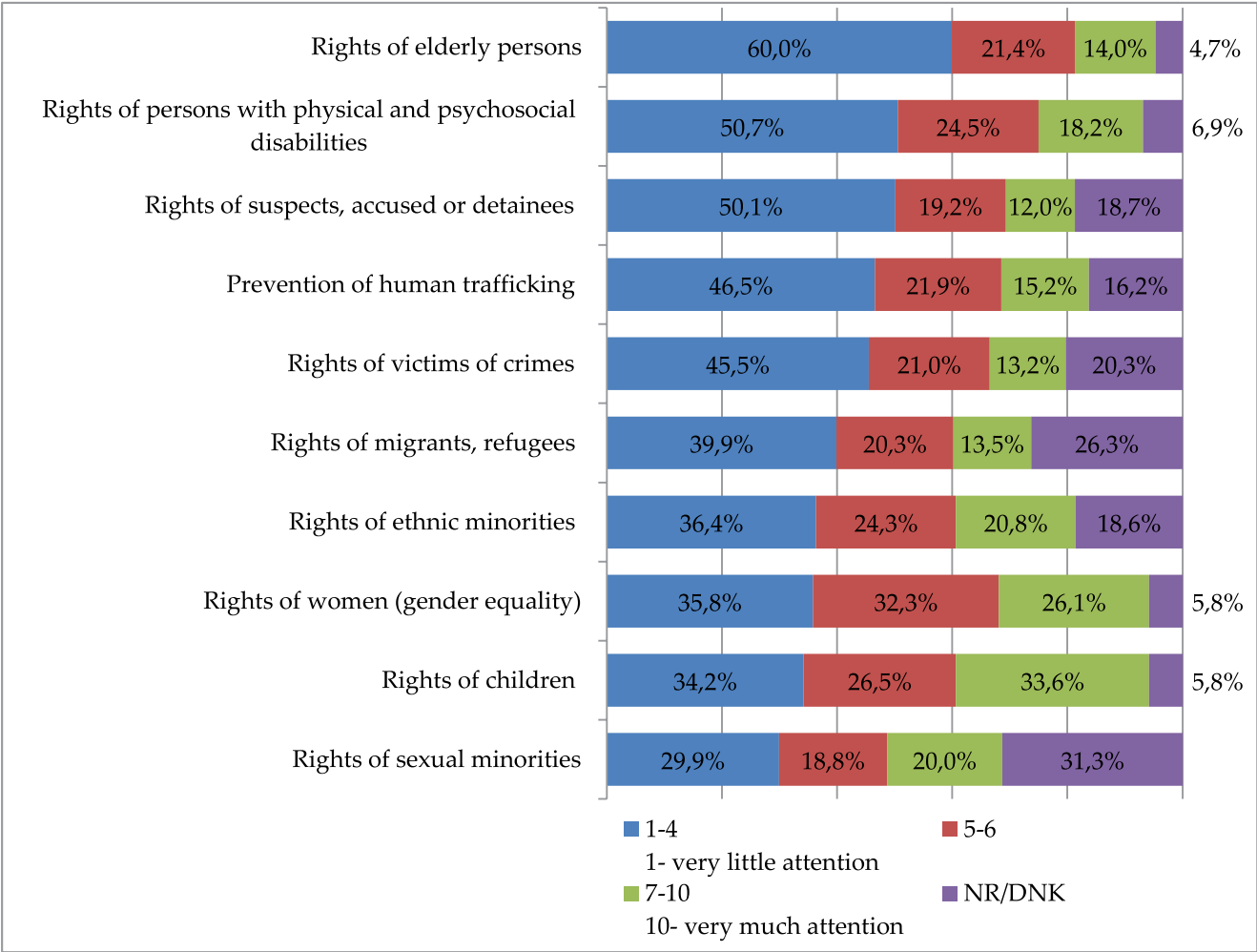
In general, the respondents consider that very little attention is paid to human rights in the Republic of Moldova, in special to *right to work*, which was marked with 1- very little attention by over ¼ of respondents, and with 1-4 by almost 60% respondents. About 1/5 of answers (1 point) was given to the *right to medical services* and *rights of consumer*, and about 53% marked with 1-4 points the attention provided to the abovementioned rights. It is noted that a higher attention is paid to *right to information* marked with 1-4 points by about 36% respondents, and with 7-10 points by 30% respondents, which requires special attention (Figure 46).

Figure 46. Attention paid to human rights in the Republic of Moldova



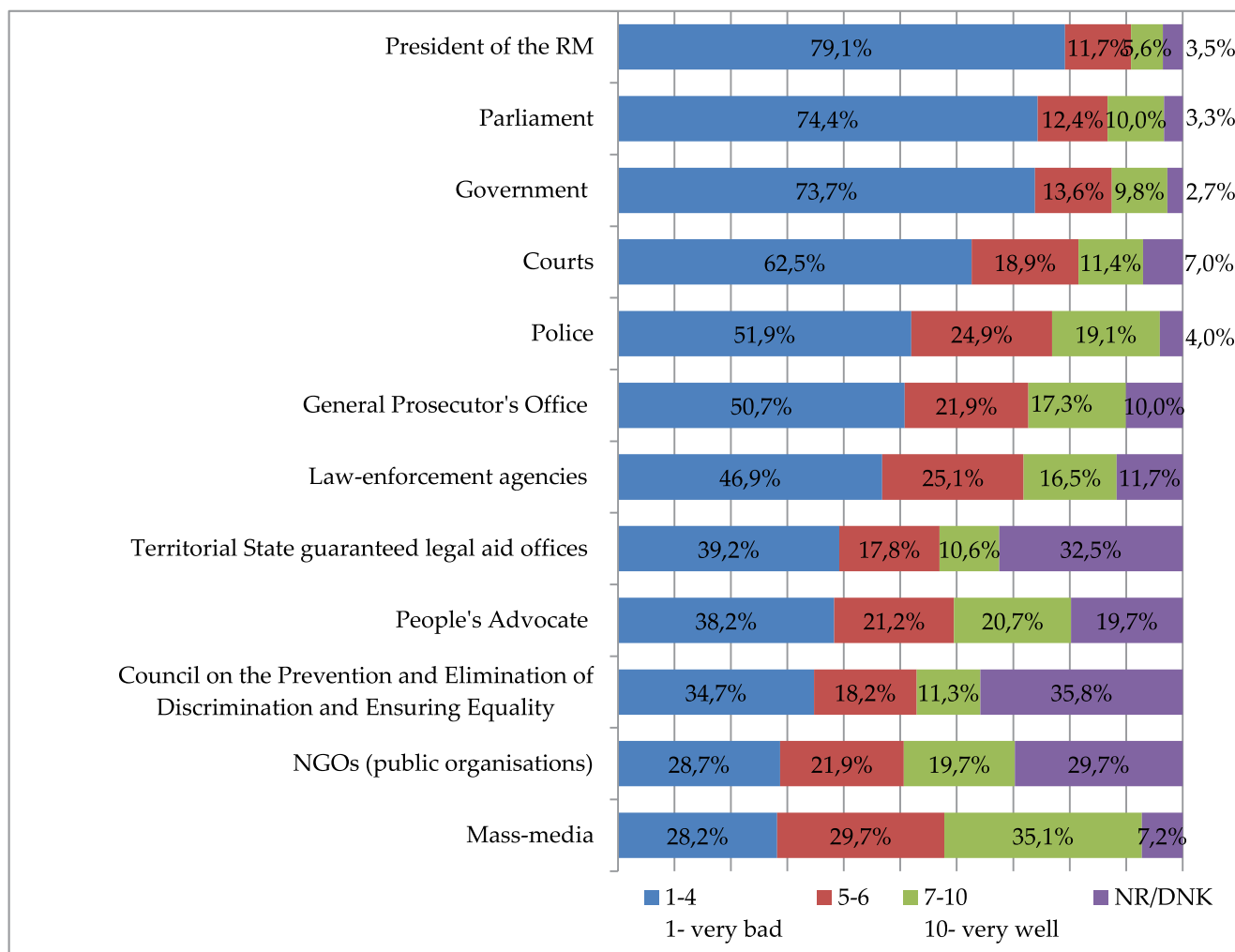
The human rights of vulnerable groups do not enjoy necessary attention, especially *elderly people* get the smallest attention accounting for 60% of answers marked with 1-4. This was confirmed in group discussion – ‘*you are pensioners: why do you need this? You are going to die tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, why do you need justice? What are you looking for? – the justice is in the graveyard.*’ (F, 64 years, victim of domestic violence). Also, limited attention is paid to *persons with disabilities* and *persons suspected, accused or in detention*, accounting for 50% of answers marked with 1-4 each. At the same time, there is a decreased level of knowledge about the rights of sexual minorities, migrants, and refugees. Almost 30% of respondents could not provide an answer (Figure 47).

**Figure 47. Attention paid to human rights of certain vulnerable groups in the Republic of Moldova**



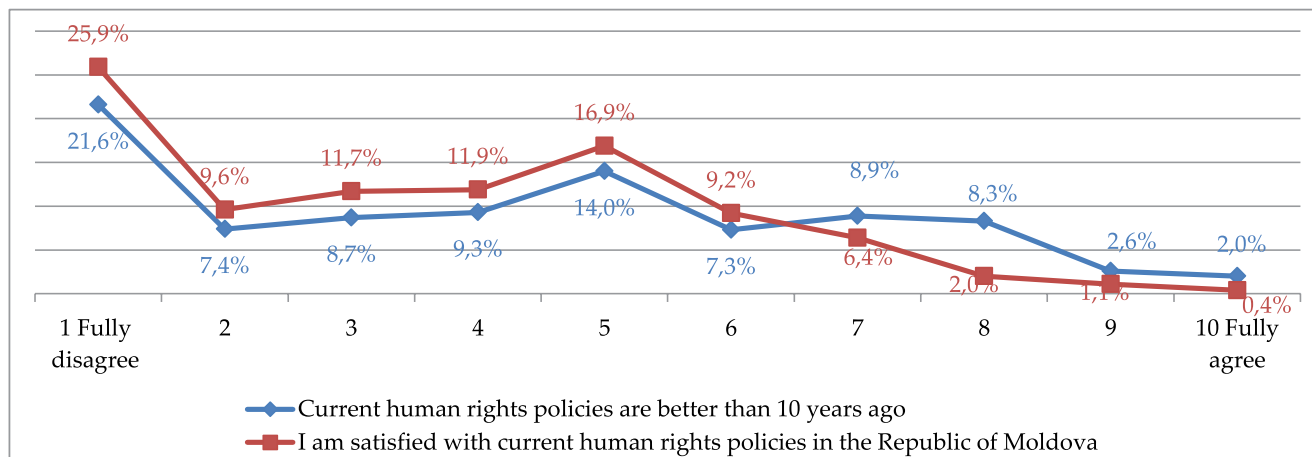
In the opinion of respondents, the President of the country contributes the least to the protection of human rights in the Republic of Moldova: 79.1% of respondents marked from 1 to 4, where 1 signifies *very bad protection*, and 10 – *very good*. The Parliament and Government received 74% of negative answers each, and the courts – 62.5%. The mass-media accounted for the lowest shares of negative answers (7-10 points), which shows that it ensures or contributes satisfactorily to the protection of human rights in Moldova (Figure 48).

Figure 48. Estimated manner of ensuring or protecting human rights in the Republic of Moldova by state institutions



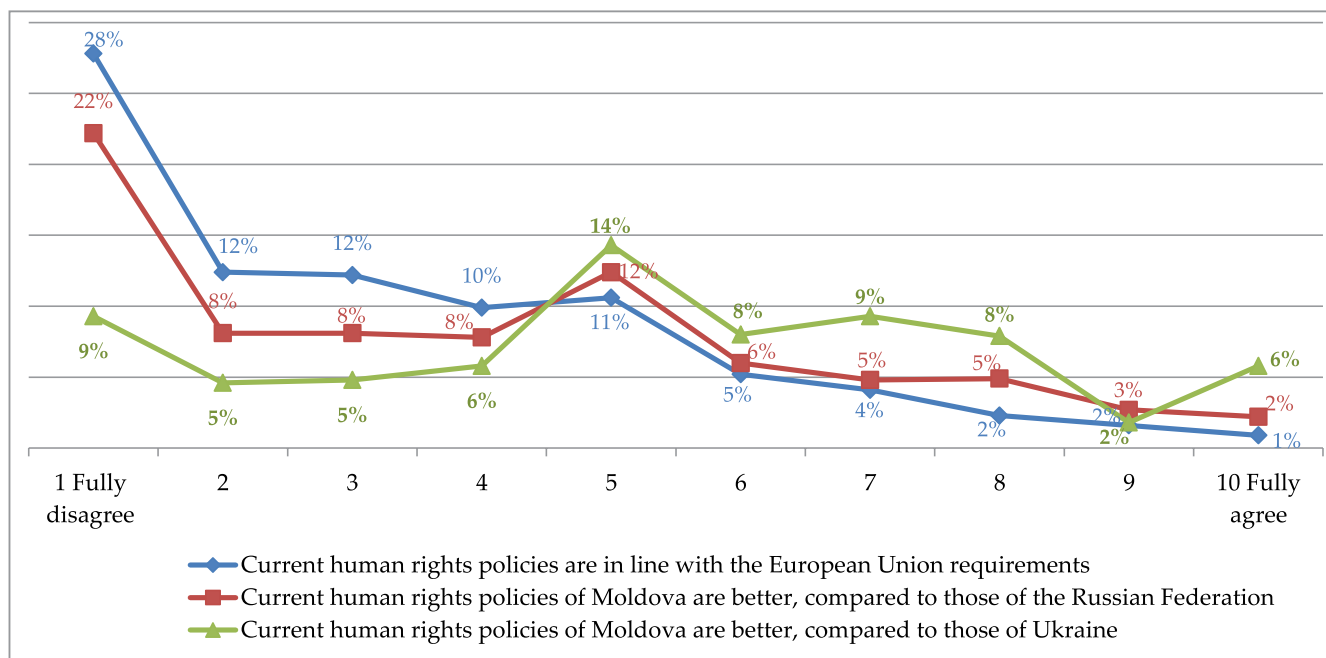
The extent to which the respondents agree to five affirmations about human rights policies, as well as the level of satisfaction with current policies in the field were assessed on a scale from 1 – *totally disagree* to 10 – *totally agree*. We can observe almost the same trends when evaluating the current human rights polices and namely, their quality compared to 10 years ago and level of satisfaction provided by current policies in the country. However, we can see that the level of satisfaction provided by current polices is lower compared to their quality 10 years ago. The first situation accounts for shares of 1-6 points, the second affirmation – shares of 7-10 points (Figure 49).

**Figure 49. Assessment of current human rights polices in the Republic of Moldova**



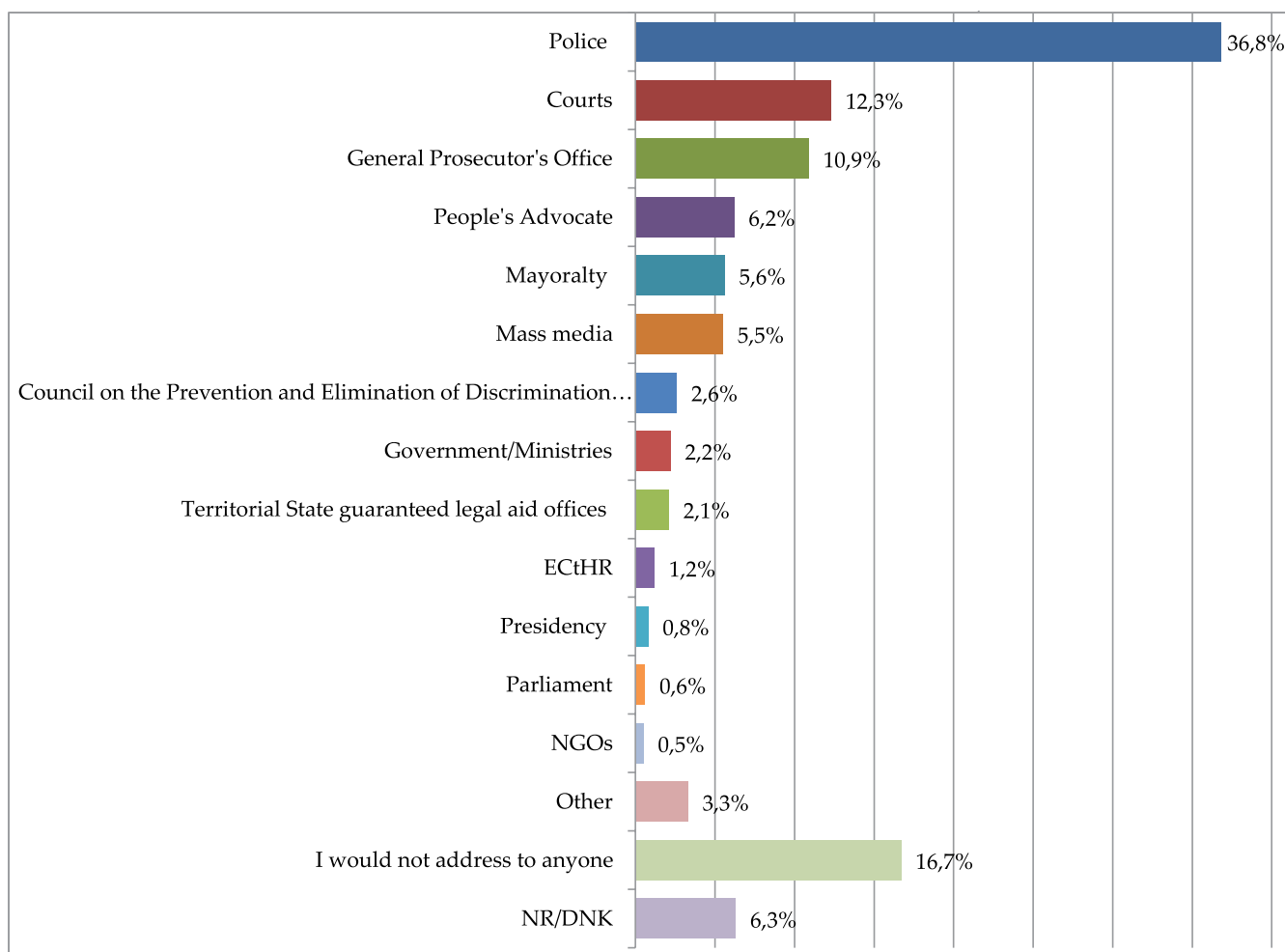
Assessment of human rights polices of our country compared to polices of other states shows that the respondents express their disagreement with the fact that these are in compliance with the EU polices. Even less agree to the respective affirmation. Approximately the same trends are observed when compared with the polices of the Russian Federation in the same field. As for relevant Ukrainian polices, the trends a more positive, with high scores of those who consider that the Moldovan human rights polices are more efficient and welcoming then the polices from the neighbor country (Figure 50).

**Figure 50. Comparing human rights polices of the Republic of Moldova with other states**



The most popular institution to which the respondents would address in case the rights are violated is the Police - 36.8%, courts – 12.4%, and General Prosecutor’s Office - 10.9%. Other options accounted for less than 10% of answers. At the same time, the population does not understand that it can defend its rights in courts. About 16.7% declared they would not go anywhere, and 6.3% - could not give an answer in this context (Figure 51).

**Figure 51. Preferred institutions, if the rights of respondents or of their relatives are violated**



Participants in group discussions said that one can address to different institutions or social players depending on what right was violated. The Mayoralty/LPA is one of the institutions covering the widest range of issues, and if one does not find help there, the responsible officials would direct to authorized institutions. The social assistant will help if some allocations were denied, allocations foreseen by law. It is advisable to go to the police, if one is a victim of an offence.

*'It depends on the problem. If we talk about a theft – police, if an education-related problem – Department of Education, if it is a social problem – social assistance. (M, 61 years, person with disabilities)*

Some respondents voiced that *'people do not know where to address their problem'* and they get the perception that the state institutions *'are not interested to inform the population about its rights.'*

It was specified during group discussions that knowing your rights and institutions you can address to when these are violated protects you and ensures your access to information and services.

*'We had a situation like this in our village. A woman called the Emergency and it did not send a car, because people with high blood pressure usually call the Emergency unit. Her daughter lives in Chisinau and called the Hotline, which probably called the Emergency Unit, because it asked the woman why she called the Hotline. She said, 'I did not but my daughter from Chisinau did'. (F, 65 years, representative of religious minorities)*

Most citizens address to a specialist when there are more serious violations of human rights. Usually, almost everyone tolerates verbal aggression, defamation, but consider they have to react when their goods and physical safety are endangered.

*'If it is a verbal thing, I do not care. One can say whatever; but if it gets physical, then yes, it is serious. (F, 22 years, representative of religious minorities)*

Two of ten respondents, who participated in the quantitative study, said they never addressed to anybody. In the group discussions and in-depth interviews with experts, we requested their opinions about causes for not-addressing. The population does not seek help because:

- **does not trust**, a reason most often invoked in group discussions;
- **the procedure is too long, tiresome and too much red-tape** – *'laws protect you, but the effort you have to make to reach to them... sometimes it is easier to surrender'* (gay, 27 years) ;
- **system is corrupt**, an aspect that determines distrust in the system – *'if you have money, you are protected, if you don't have money – you are not protected'*, this aspect was voiced by non-citizens interviewed during the research:

*'The main reason is distrust in leaders. They do not trust even the judges, police. What rights are we talking about here? They do not believe justice is going to be served, because there is corruption in law-enforcement agencies.'* (M, 43 years, non-citizen)

- **they do not know where to address** – *'person does not know where to address to'*;
- **tolerance towards abuses:**

*'People are so deprived that they do not even know when their rights are violated. The people have had enough.'* (F, 58 years, resident in the security zone)

*'We do not want to create inconveniences; maybe next time... I cannot go to a policeman or to the mayoralty and say I have got a problem! We refrain from this, we believe it will go away or it is not that important... (F, 48 years, victim of domestic violence)*

- **lack of positive examples** – perception of abuses as a normal thing in the society:

*'You think there is no reason to address to anyone because how would they help you? You look away, you look at other families – it is the same, or even worse than in your case.'* (F, 58 years, victim of domestic violence)

- *inadequate attitude of officials and responsible persons:*

*'Once I sought help with regard to domestic violence and I did not like it at all... I was humiliated. For instance, I was asked, 'Are you not cooking him good soup?'; which really makes you feel humiliated. Then the husband comes home after talking with the policeman and tells me, 'you were very stupid to talk to the policeman. I bought him a drink and we had it together so you can relax, nothing would change.' After this, I felt disgusted to address again because I saw it does not matter to anyone.'* (F, 32 years, victim of domestic violence)

*'The judge told me, 'As a woman, you must shut up and not to provoke him', but I am not a persons who provokes...'* (F, 31 years, victim of domestic violence)

*'People are shy. You go and wait for them to drink their coffee, then it is lunch after 11.00, and there is nobody after lunch.'* (F, 33 years, resident in the security zone)

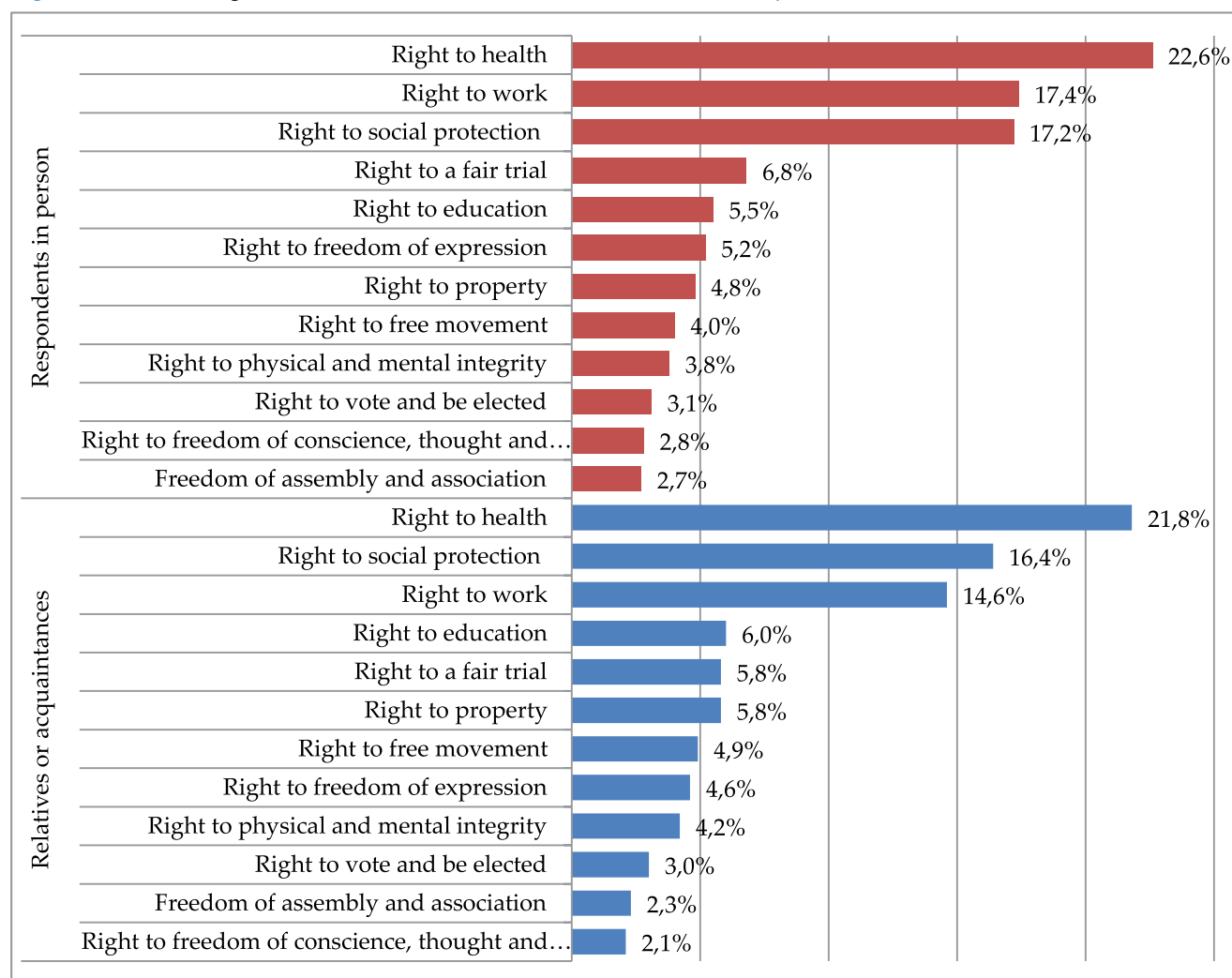
- *fear of consequences* – ranging from fear of unknown, phobia of community's reaction – *'what will other say?'*; fear of aggressor:
- This reason was often invoked by women victims of violence – *'you keep the problems in your yard'*, *'we are afraid of what people say'*. However, there are examples of prompt reaction of authorities which reasons to the victims not to tolerate abuses – *'it was decided in 24 hours and I received a restraining order for 90 days. After the trial, he asked me, why did you report me to the police?...'* (F, 31 years, victim of domestic violence).

## CHAPTER 5.

## Frequency of Human Rights violations in the Republic of Moldova

It looks like human rights and fundamental freedoms are violated very often in the Republic of Moldova. The opinion of respondents and their acquaintances about frequency of human rights violation was assessed in the research. The data showed that the *right to health*, *right to work* and *right to social protection* are violated most often, both of respondents and their close friends. Hence, every fifth person declared that the right to health was violated, including of relatives and friends; 17% each mentioned the right to work (16% - relatives and friends) and social protection (14.5% - relatives and friends). Between 5-6% declared that the *right to fair trial*, *right to education* and *right to freedom of expression* of respondents and their relatives and friends were violated. Other rights accumulated less than 5% of answers in both cases (Figure 52).

Figure 52. Human rights and fundamental freedoms violated in the last years



The highest share of answers about violation of the right to health was registered by the respondents from the urban area (26% affirmative answers); the right to work (more than 21%) was registered with persons of 30-59 years, and the right to social protection (over 22%) – among respondents with low socio-economic level (Table 5).

**Table 5. Human rights and fundamental freedoms violated in the last years by residence, age, socio-economic level of the respondent**

	Residence		Age of respondent				Social and economic level		
	Urban	Rural	18-29 years	30-44 years	45-59 years	60+	Low	Average	High
Right to education	6.2%	4.9%	8.7%	6.6%	4.6%	1.7%	4.5%	5.4%	6.4%
Right to health	<b>26.1%</b>	19.6%	19.0%	25.7%	24.7%	20.2%	21.4%	21.7%	24.4%
Right to social protection	18.6%	16.0%	12.5%	17.4%	17.8%	21.4%	<b>22.3%</b>	15.7%	14.4%
Right to information, freedom of opinion and expression	3.5%	2.1%	4.9%	2.6%	1.8%	1.8%	1.2%	2.7%	4.1%
Freedom of assembly and association	3.6%	1.9%	4.2%	4.1%	1.8%	0.3%	0.3%	3.5%	3.8%
Right to fair trial	8.3%	5.5%	8.5%	7.9%	5.9%	4.7%	5.2%	7.6%	7.3%
Right to physical and psychological integrity	4.2%	3.4%	4.2%	4.4%	5.3%	1.0%	2.4%	3.7%	5.0%
Right to free movement	4.7%	3.4%	4.5%	6.0%	3.8%	1.5%	2.3%	3.8%	5.6%
Right to property	4.3%	5.2%	4.5%	5.2%	5.3%	3.9%	2.2%	5.6%	6.1%
Right to freedom of expression	5.5%	5.0%	6.8%	5.7%	5.7%	2.2%	2.4%	5.9%	6.8%
Right to work	19.3%	15.7%	17.0%	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>21.5%</b>	8.1%	17.0%	19.1%	16.1%
Right to vote and be elected	4.8%	1.7%	6.1%	2.5%	3.1%	0.8%	2.3%	0.9%	5.8%

Complaining about human rights violation with certain institutions is very low. 38% of persons mentioned the violation of right to a fair trial, 35.5% - right to property, 20-25% - violation of right to education, right to social protection, right to work of all persons who complained about the violation of their rights (Table 6).

**Table 6. Complaining about human rights and fundamental freedoms violated by respondents in the last years**

	Total answers	Answer share	
		Yes	No
Right to fair trial	69	38.0%	62.0%
Right to property	48	35.5%	64.5%
Right to education	56	24.6%	75.4%
Right to social protection	174	23.7%	75.9%
Right to work	177	20.7%	79.3%
Right to training	27	18.9%	81.1%
Right to physical and psychological integrity	38	17.8%	82.2%
Right to freedom of movement	41	16.4%	83.6%
Right to health	231	16.0%	84.0%
Right to vote and be elected	32	13.2%	86.8%
Right to freedom of expression	53	12.7%	87.3%
Right to information, freedom of opinion and expression	28	3.9%	96.1%

It looks like the population does not know about the possibility to address to institutions authorized when their rights are violated. A considerable number of respondents declared that they addressed to persons from close social environment (relatives, friends, acquaintances) about violations in different fields such as, the right to health, right to work, right to freedom of movement. In group discussions this aspect was confirmed by some respondents who would rather seek help from relatives, friends than institutions. This behavior is valid in the case of domestic violence, when the victims appeal to relatives, co-workers and friends.

*'His parents, brothers and sisters talked to him. But you know, when you love someone, you make concessions, you give another chance, but later you are sorry.'* (F, 38 years, victim of domestic violence)

*'When I have a problem, I speak to my friends, and they support me – 'why did you fight? You lost your temper and what did you gain? Either endure or yield.'* (F, 48 years, victim of domestic violence)

As for state institutions, the first place is held by LPA (29 complaints) with all types of issues, followed by the police (20 complaints), courts (17 complaints), and the mass media (15 complaints). It could be seen with regard to violation of the right to health that a number of persons addressed to the Government/ministry, complaining about social protection – to the LPAs, violation of the right to a fair trial was declared to the courts, law firms, police, and the right to work – different institutions equally (Government/ministry, courts, LPAs, law firms, etc.).

It should be noted that the study mentioned also petitions of representatives of different institutions, although, these situations are rare.

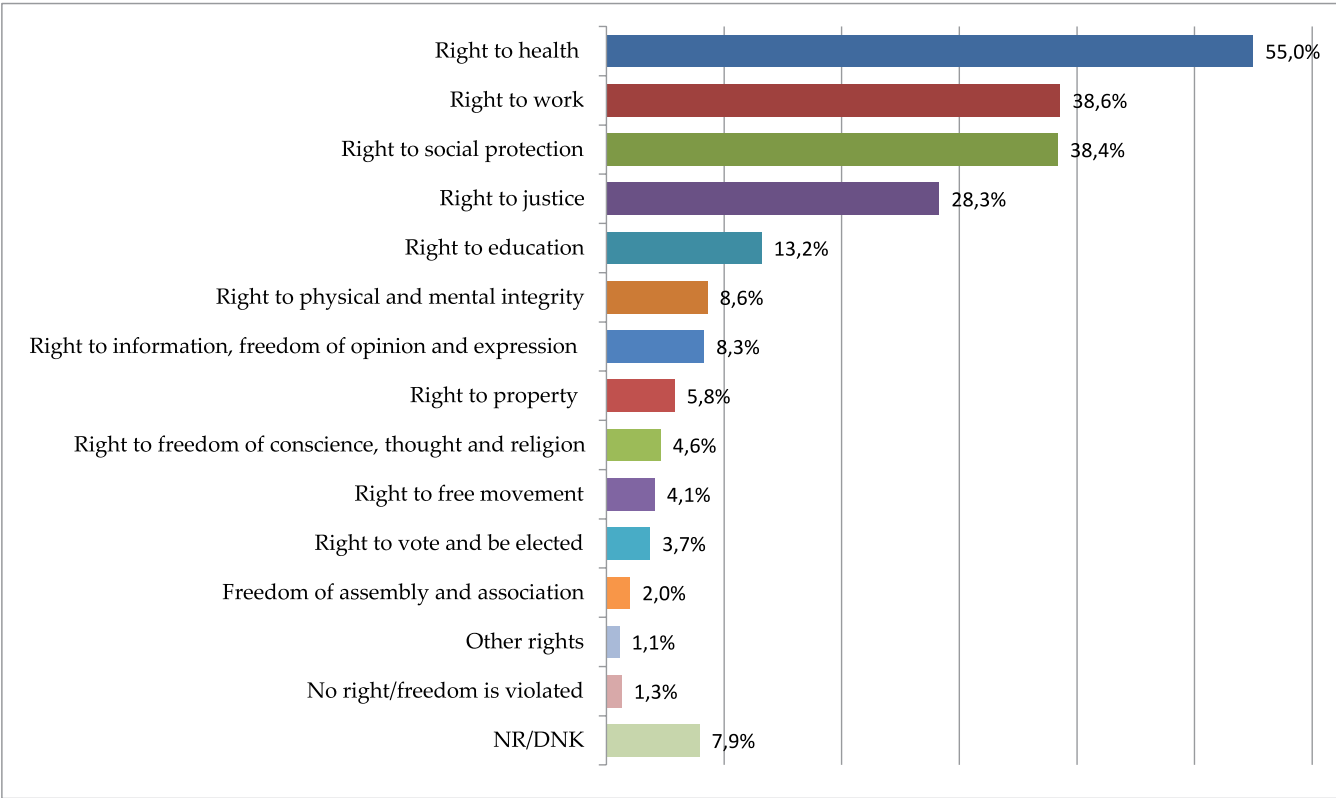
*'I did not complain even when I had conflicts. I did not tell anyone. Obviously the social assistant found out about my problems and suggested a solution. I had to be hospitalized in a maternal center...'* (F, 23 years, victim of domestic violence)

*'I ended up in hospital with concussions and bodily injures. Before the hospital, as it was said: you keep your problems to yourself. One is ashamed of what people might say. Maybe you are not as good as you think. Always, people would say that the woman is to be blamed. Always. In all situations, the man is right, the woman is wrong, whatever she says. So in most cases, be quite and endure. Until I got to the hospital and the doctors called the police and I asked for divorce and got divorced.'* (F, 58 years, victim of domestic violence)

Mostly, the EU states are perceived by the respondents as states that provide protection to vulnerable groups from the perspective of human rights protection. However, when the citizens of the Republic of Moldova face violation of human rights in the EU states, mostly, they would not complain justifying that they are foreigners, they do not know the law etc. *'I wanted to sue there (EU state)... I did not know the law, I did not know anything..'* (M, 47 years, person living with HIV)

In the opinion of respondents, in general, the *right to health* is the most frequently violated right in the Republic of Moldova (55% respondents), about 38% respondents mentioned the *right to work* and *the right to social protection*, 28.3% - *right to justice*, 13.2% - *right to education* (Figure 53).

**Figure 53. Frequency of human rights violation according to ordinary citizens of the Republic of Moldova**



## CHAPTER 6.

### Recommendations to improve the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in the Republic of Moldova

The participants in group discussions mentioned the following necessary actions to improve the observance of human rights in the Republic of Moldova:

- Continuous monitoring of human rights observance;
- Informing the population about institutions responsible for the protection of human rights;
- Insistent complaining of the population;
- Ensuring equal justice – in this sense it was underlined the need to fight corruption, protectionism and de-politicization of law-enforcement agencies;
- Empowerment of population by applying more severe sanctions, punishments for those who violate the human rights;
- Educating a tolerant and sensible society to the observance of human rights, providing own example in the family:

*‘The family should teach the child not to differentiate between white and black, and other criteria. The school should teach the children to be more tolerant, not to divide people into poor and rich. He/she is also human even if does not have as much money as you do. Do not discriminate. We should start from there.’ (F, 21 years, representative of ethnic minorities).*

- Protecting vulnerable categories of persons by ensuring them with specialized assistance;
- Severe punishment of judges who deliver decisions in violation of human rights;
- Enhancing population’s involvement in decision-making and activities carried out at community level;
- Promoting, depending on leadership, decisions of representatives of vulnerable categories;
- Developing some information, support and counselling services to assist the persons whose rights were violated, as well as the rights of offenders;
- Request for and support to human rights observance by the development partners through specific mechanisms when certain helpful investments are made:

*‘A development partner, such as EBRD, could condition the funding of these renovations in Chisinau mun. by obliging the mayoralty to include the accessibility ramps for persons with disabilities.’ (Expert 1)*

The Roma ethnics consider that Roma themselves must change their attitude towards the stereotypes in order to fight them. Hence, the interviewed persons declared that it is necessary for the Roma to send their children to school, the adult Roma start working and get more involved, from the civic point of view in decreasing the anti-social phenomena that contribute to Roma’s labelling. In the same context, some respondents recognized that they want to involve more in education of a certain category of Roma, but have certain fear regarding own security.

*‘There are a lot of beggars who really do not have anything to eat. But obviously, there are beggars who are not real. The fortune-reading is a big scheme. She reads the fortune on the street, according to the leaflets spread out. But there is a group of them waiting around the corner, so by initiating the fortune-reading, you initiate your own problems. The desire is big; to change the attitude towards Roma in the country, they must change first.’ (F, 43 years, Roma ethnic group)*

*'First of all, I believe we, the Roma, should change. For instance, if I see someone causing problems, I must take him by the hand and ask him to stop, because then he can stop me, if I am wrong. I believe we have to teach each other not to harm... We all know, even from TV, from talking to these fortune-readers that the people who beg are not alone. I can give you a personal example. I was holding 3 bananas in a plastic bag. A little Roma girl and a boy came to me to beg for money. I offered them a banana each to eat, to which the boy tells me, 'You eat it!'. I told them they were disrespectful because I offered them something to eat. Afterwards, a man of about 30 years came out and asked me if I was looking for problems. I have the courage and the fear of what might happen to me. I have the courage to change it, but not as much as I have will, although my fear is greater than the courage.'* (F, 22 years, Roma ethnic group)

According to the results of the study, the LGBT community believes it will be accepted by the society when the political leaders stop being homophobic and the public messages call for tolerance for this community.

*'If the Government says that being gay is normal, you will see how the people's attitude changes. They will become more loyal. Even the people do not accept them, at least they would leave them alone; they exist – good for them, and will have a normal attitude towards them.'* (lesbian, 23 years)

According to many respondents from different categories, the insistent request for the protection of your rights and confidence in own forces are very important.

*'I never had such a case (of aggression), but if I had, I would call the police, and if I did not get assistance, because I know my rights, I would go further until I reach the goal. In the end, I am a normal person, I do not have disabilities, and even if I do, I have the right to life, the right to be protected. If one does not want to observe this right, there is someone else who would. Not all think the same. I move forward until I get to the bottom of the issue and I find someone to help me.'* (lesbian, 19 years)

The opinions about human rights observance in perspective are divided. Some respondents consider that as long as the legislation is not observed by all citizens, the corruption and politicization of state institutions will persist. It is very difficult to register progress.

Other respondents consider that the situation in the human rights field depends very much on political vector. Some consider that approximation to the EU forces the authorities to observe the rights of minorities and they are even concerned with a possible change of the vector. Other respondents believe that only EU quality standards should be implemented, but in their opinion, the rights and freedoms of sexual minorities contravene with religious and traditional norms. Some experts think that the violation of human rights would increase on the background of economic crisis, especially in the fields guaranteed by the State, giving as example the right to healthcare, where there are already some signs of alarm.

A number of respondents, however, is optimistic regarding the improvement of human rights observance, justifying that the process has already started: people are more informed – they insist on the observance of their rights. Also, ongoing monitoring and pressure from non-governmental and international human rights organizations forces the state institutions to make progress in this field.

In the opinion of some respondents, the current information possibilities via Internet, social media and professional and free of charge support of the representatives of civil society are very important resources in improving the observance of human rights. Modern techniques provide the residents of Republic of Moldova with the possibility to defend themselves.

*'It is very difficult to trick the people today. Even if the politicians say one thing, and the journalists something different, there is social media/Internet where the person can get information. There are video cameras everywhere. Everyone films. You can say whatever you want, but the people believe what they see. We can get justice now.'* (M, 34 years, non-citizen)

*'My son installed light bulbs at the gate (with sensors). When we are walking on the street, the lights go on. Even when the birds are flying. I have a video camera under the roof. Nobody can come closer because they know I have a video camera.'* (F, 64 years, victim of domestic violence)

## CHAPTER 7.

### Conclusions and recommendations

The assessment of the situation in the country compared to the level of knowledge, observance and protection of human rights in the Republic of Moldova revealed certain gaps and challenges related to these aspects, and in this context, the level of population's information about their rights in different areas of the life is especially important.

- **Level of information about human rights in the RM.** The study reveals an extremely low level of population's information about human rights. Only half of respondents consider they are somehow informed and only 8.3% consider they are fully informed in this field. The level of information is more developed among urban than rural population, where the share of those who are rather uninformed is almost 60%. The experts who participated in the study confirmed that the population does not know its own rights, and has a low interest in knowing the rights, mentioning that the need to know the rights appears when these rights are violated or restricted.

The information about human rights and possibilities of their protection is considered accessible by less than half of respondents. Over 80% inform themselves preponderantly from the mass media (radio/TV/printed press). In group discussions, the school was also identified as source of information in this context, at the same time, mentioning that children are spoken to more frequently about obligations and less about rights. The study underlined the role of civil society in informing the specific communities (Roma, LGBT, people living with HIV etc.) about their rights and option for protection, the role of public institutions and their representatives: lawyers, policemen, LPAs, doctors, etc., in informing the population about human rights.

*Taking into account the geographical discrepancy on accessing the information about human rights, it is imperative to focus on the rural population's ability.*

*Also, a number of training activities has been recommended: (i) enhance teaching methods of human rights in schools; (ii) implement 'human rights' curricula nationwide; (iii) train public officials in human rights field.*

- **Level of human rights observance in the Republic of Moldova.** In general, the human rights are violated in Moldova: either systematically or occasionally, a fact confirmed by 95% of respondents. The society has to pay special attention to the right to health, right to social protection, and right to work and favorable working conditions. The freedom of assembly and association, the right to free movement and the right to property are considered less important, based on only less than 5% of affirmative answers. These are considered the best protected in Moldova.

According to the study, the rights of the children, the rights of religious minorities, of women are considered well protected in Moldova compared to the rights of detainees, rights of the persons with disabilities, and the rights of sexual minorities. Different social groups face different problems. *People living with HIV* face lack of confidentiality, especially on behalf of the medical staff, which violated the right to non-discrimination, leads to stigmatizations affecting especially their children. *The LGBT community* is concerned about discriminatory attitude, society's rejection, in special of relatives, which violates their right to physical and psychical integrity. *The Roma* are also in the category of persons whose rights are being frequently violated in the Republic of Moldova due to negative stereotypes in the society that affect their daily life. *The non-citizens* mentioned the persistence of protectionism and corruption in service provision, red-tape and/or restriction of some rights due to low level of information of public officials and/or service providers. Another aspect revealed by

the study refers to *violation of rights of residents on the Left Bank of the River Nistru*. It was mentioned the fact that the population from Transnistria and representatives of civil society face violation of political freedoms, freedom of assembly and association, right to opinion, etc.

*Based on the findings of the study on most frequently violated rights, it is recommended to develop, adopt and implement policy documents focused on the following rights: to health, right to social protection, right to work, right to fair trial, rights of persons with psycho-social disabilities, right to physical and psychical integrity, right to equality and non-discrimination, and right to water and sanitation.*

*At the same time, it is necessary to organize a number of activities with special orientation to certain groups of population: (i) amplify efforts to promote equality and non-discrimination of people living with HIV, with focus on medical personnel (protection of confidentiality and combating stigmatization); (ii) inform the population about the right to freedom of conscience, religion and beliefs with an accent on zero tolerance of discrimination of religious minorities and atheist persons; (iii) enhance the efforts to promote non-discrimination of LGBT persons; (iv) amend the legal framework to combat efficiently the offences based on prejudice; train the policemen and prosecutors in this field; (v) develop and implement some complex actions to prevent and combat stigmatization and discrimination of Roma population; (vi) amplify the efforts to promote diversification and combat xenophobia; (vii) promote human rights in Transnistria region.*

- **Right to education.** The right of children to education is especially affected by financial possibilities of the parents. More than 2/3 of respondents have this opinion, and it is more stressed out in urban area. The results of the study show that the State does not ensure or does not ensure equally the access to education, based on the answers of almost half of respondents. Closing down small schools and transferring the children to the nearest schools affect even more the right of children to education, due to lack of financial resources and/or free transportation services to the nearest school.

Another aspect refers to the creation of sufficient conditions so the children from Russian-speaking schools could learn the official language. Only 1/3 of respondents consider these conditions more or less sufficient, but the respondents from urban area are less positive.

*Certain activities are necessary in order to remove these discrepancies: (i) assess the implementation of the right to education from the perspective of geographical accessibility, (ii) ensure the right to education in the mother tongue for ethnic minorities.*

- **Right to healthcare.** We would like to reiterate that the right to health requires a special attention from the State, and the study reveals the fact that some categories of persons have their right to health violated. In this context, a special attention was paid to persons with modest income and elderly persons. The persistence of informal payments made to medical staff limits significantly the access of persons with low income to medical services, irrespective if they have or not compulsory medical insurance. The pensioners are among them.

*In this context, the following actions are recommended: (i) intensify efforts to combat corruption in medical institutions and promote rights of patients; (ii) develop and implement policies to improve the access and quality of medical care services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities.*

- **Right to social protection.** The assessment of the level of ensuring the right to social protection in the light of quantum of salary, indemnities and pensions points out to an extremely reduced observance of this right. More than 40 per cent of respondents consider that the salary received does not ensure this right, and almost 60% say the same thing about indemnities, including for children, and pensions. The persons with physical or psycho-social disabilities are extremely weakly protected, and the need to include the children with disabilities in general schools is considered a first step in

moving from medical to social approach of disability, the accent being made on the acceptance of respective persons by the society.

*The following are necessary: (i) amplify the efforts to include the children with disabilities in mainstream schools; (ii) rethink the protection and inclusion system of persons with disabilities to stimulate the employers to contribute to this desideratum.*

- **Freedom of assembly and association.** Freedom to participate or organize different events is rather protected in Moldova: almost 70% of respondents declared they feel free to participate or organize different actions. There were contradictory opinions regarding the LGBT community, according to which the 'LGBT Parade' is necessary to increase the visibility and to change the perception of people about the LGBT community. *These findings prove the need to promote the freedom of assembly and association, including of LGBT persons.*

- **Right to a fair trial.** Lack of trust in the judiciary persists in Moldova, and the right to a fair trial is considered ensured by only 12% of respondents. The lack of trust is underlined by the fact that every fifth respondent considers that this right is not insured at all. *To improve the situation it is necessary to intensify the efforts to implement justice sector reform to ensure the right to a fair trial.*

- **Right to life, physical and mental integrity.** Personal security is considered ensured by about half of respondents, although the protection against theft is considered reduced. In general, the right to life, physical and mental integrity are especially violated in the case of poor persons, persons with disabilities, and detainees, confirmed by about half of respondents. A separated aspect was discussed regarding domestic violence, especially physical aggression and different forms of threats. The lack of implication and of tolerance on behalf of the community, neighbors, as well as state institutions, local law-enforcement agencies was mentioned in this context.

*The efforts to combat domestic violence can be enhanced as following: (i) ratify the Istanbul Convention; (ii) amend the legislative framework to apply the restraining order to protect the victims of domestic violence.*

- **Right to work and protection of employment.** The need for information about the right to work and employment opportunities is very stringent, according to more than half of respondents. At the same time, the access to information about the right to labor protection is more limited, according to only 1/3 of respondents. The access to a well-paid job can be ensured only with the help of relatives, friends, nepotism, bribe, and the right to employment protection is considered insured by only 10% of respondents. The informal compensation provided by the employers was also discussed. Its negative impact is acknowledged by the population preponderantly in accessing social or medical services.

*To decrease their negative effects, the following is recommended: (i) promote the right to work and associated rights, with the focus on the rights of employees and obligations of employers; (ii) amplify the efforts to combat unofficial payments to employees.*

- The promotion of the **right to freedom of opinion and expression** is acknowledged. This right is considered ensured by only 40% of respondents compared to the right of the ordinary citizen and the right of a journalist to expression.

- **Right to equality and non-discrimination.** Equality of chances between women and men continues to be a challenge in Moldova. Only about 60% of respondents consider they have equal rights. At the same time, different forms of discrimination of women, preponderantly in political, employment, and family life still exist. The opinions of respondents are contradictory in the case of religious confessions, Roma ethnic group, which are based on persistent stereotypes and old traditions.

*In this context, the following activities are necessary to diminish the discrepancies and to contribute to the promotion of gender equality: (i) promote gender equality in all areas of life by developing incentive mechanisms to employ mothers with children of 0-3 years old; institute crèches for children up to 3 years; (ii) promote information about gender equality between women and men; (iii) amplify the efforts to include the ethnic minorities by creating opportunities to study the official language; (iv) ratify the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages;*

- **The role of institutions in observing human rights.** The state institutions, other institutions and organizations active in the territory of the Republic of Moldova have an important role in promoting and observing human rights, and the most relevant in improving the situation are the Parliament, Government, ministries and their departments. At the same time, the study states that all these institutions, in the opinion of the respondents, also violate enormously the human rights. According to the respondents, most frequently the human rights are violated by the representatives of state institutions and less by individuals.

The law-enforcement agencies, mayoralities and district LPAs play a major role in observing human rights. The study also discovered lack of leverage and/or reduced level of knowledge of LPAs and other public institutions of the possibilities to engage in the protection of some vulnerable categories, such as children and elderly persons.

*In this context, it is necessary to implement the following actions: (i) train the focal points in the field of human rights in public institutions; (ii) train public officials in the field of human rights, with a focus on state's obligations; (iii) identify incentive mechanisms for persons to complain about the abuses of public servants.*

- **Human rights protection system in the Republic of Moldova.** The assessment of human rights protection system in the Republic of Moldova was based on transparency of system interventions, efficiency and ongoing development. In the opinion of respondents, the system faces challenges in all these aspects. Only 10% consider that transparency is ensured and the system is efficient, and only 20% consider that the system undergoes continuous development. Very little attention is paid to such fundamental rights as the right to work, right to medical services, and as well as to vulnerable groups of population, such as elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and detainees. It is important to mention that the population does not know about state's polices in the field, and is not informed about the courts it can appeal to when the rights are violated.

*Hence, it is very important to strengthen the legal efforts of the population, with the participation of the People's Advocate, Council on the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, the Police and General Prosecutor's Office.*

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