

This project is funded by the European Union and co-financed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities



Teched
CONSULTING SERVICES

GAP Analysis Results

GAP Analysis **Results**

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WYG Consulting, Zagreb
Zagreb, 2017.

IMPRESUM

GAP Analysis Results

PUBLISHER:

WYG Consulting, Zagreb

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DESIGN:

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PRINT:

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NAKLADA:

100

ISBN 978-953-59633-1-8

The CIP record is available in the computer catalogue of the National and University Library in Zagreb under the number 000969053.

This publication was produced under the project "Support to the Councils of National Minorities at the Local Level", funded by the European Union and co-financed by the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. The content of this GAP analysis is the sole responsibility of the author and project implementer: WYG Consulting and Teched Consulting Services and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union or the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

Zagreb, 2017.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation
CoE	Council of Europe
CSO	Civil society organization
CLRNM	Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities
CNM	Councils of national minorities
CRNM	Councils and representatives of national minorities
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
LAG	Local action group
LRSGU	Local and regional self-government units
NM	National minorities
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OHRNM	Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia
RNM	Representatives of national minorities
UN	United Nations

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SUMMARY

Human rights are, in terms of their concept and context, fundamental, general and inalienable, and belong to all persons, regardless of whether or not they are citizens of a particular country. As such, they confirm the ideal of free human beings and the widest aspect of man's sociality and human dignity.

Human rights should be conceptually distinguished from the rights of citizens and the rights of minorities. For example, exercising the right to vote, the right to elect and be elected to public service, the right to freedom of information, expression, choice of employment, entrepreneurship and the like, is covered by the term citizen's rights i.e. rights that are exclusively granted to citizens of a certain country.

On the other hand, exercising the rights of certain social communities that have specific ethnic (national), religious or linguistic characteristics, whether exercising these rights individually or in a community with other members of a particular minority, is covered by the term minority rights. The exercise and protection of fundamental human and special minority rights are in the jurisdiction of national state institutions i.e. specific ethnic (national) policies adopted at the national and international level.

The European states differ based on their approach to the ethnic (national) affiliation of their citizens. On the one hand, there are those that do not recognize, formally nor legally, the existence of national minorities. On the other hand, there are those that perceive ethnic affiliation, such as religious, linguistic and the like, as something that can be expressed in private life, but they do not encourage the state's interest in recognizing specific collective minority rights. The third group, which includes the Republic of Croatia, recognizes national minorities. Apart from ensuring the protection of national and cultural identity, this group also ensures special positions in parliament i.e. the right to political presentation and articulation of their interests.

The legal and institutional regulation and policies related to the protection of national minorities and the exercise of minority rights in the Republic of Croatia must be regarded as a complex, dynamic, variable and multifaceted social framework. This is due to several reasons. As a state and society, the Republic of Croatia, as well as its relationship with minority communities and their rights, have to a significant extent been determined by some internal and external processes.

First of all, this is the internal political process of separation from the former federal union (SFRY) and six constituent federal nations, and war-fought for and gained independence with international recognition. Apart from the internal adverse circumstances, external factors i.e. the various forms of pressure from the international community on Croatian legislation, especially in the pre-accession period of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, have had significant influence on the exercise of the rights of national minorities.

Accordingly, in the recent history there have been two outcomes of the Republic of Croatia's relationship with national minorities and their rights. The state-based doctrine as the first outcome was marked by a significant gap between the normative and actual situation regarding the exercise and protection of

minority rights in the process of the independence of the Republic of Croatia after the 1990s. The Euro-Atlantic doctrine, as the second outcome refers to the period after the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2000, followed by assumptions for long-term changes that brought Croatia closer to high European standards in the area of protection of national minorities and the exercise of minority rights.

The equality of citizens belonging to national minorities with members of the majority people is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia. Article 15 guarantees the equality of all members of national minorities, the freedom to express their national affiliation, to use their language and script, and to exercise cultural autonomy. Laws regulating the protection and exercise of the rights of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia are: 1. The Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities (2002), 2. The Law on the Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities in the Republic of Croatia (2000), and 3. The Law on Upbringing and Education in the Language and Script of National Minorities in the Republic of Croatia (2000).

The Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities was adopted by the Croatian Parliament in December 2002. Its adoption created a comprehensive legal and institutional framework for the protection of the rights and freedoms of members of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia. For the first time, institutes of councils and representatives of national minorities were introduced into the legal system of the Republic of Croatia by means of which members of national minorities at the local level participate in public life and manage local affairs. In addition, its adoption fulfilled one of the important international obligations that the Republic of Croatia accepted through its membership in the Council of Europe.

Moreover, there are still a number of relevant laws, programs and strategic documents aimed at the protection of national minorities and the exercise of minority rights in the Republic of Croatia. Based on this, it can be concluded that the Republic of Croatia has built a comprehensive legal and institutional framework in this area.

However, after the four electoral cycles of “minority elections” from 2003 to 2015 and the high normative level of legally guaranteed rights and freedoms, certain shortcomings and constraints have been noted in the implementation of the legal provisions and the established practice regarding the work of councils and representatives of national minorities. As a result, the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia launched the project *Support to the Councils of National Minorities at the Local Level*.

The project encompasses the implementation of research-analytical and educational activities as well as activities related to designing, establishing and testing a web-based interface for monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities. The objective of the project is to provide preconditions for the active participation of councils of national minorities in monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and the development of their own local communities in the Republic of Croatia.

The GAP analysis is an integral part of the project *Support to the Councils of National Minorities at the Local Level* and it is aimed at ensuring the full and effective exercise of human rights and improving and facilitating the active and full participation of national minorities in the economic, cultural and social life of Croatian society, while preserving their own identity, culture and tradition.

The general objective of the GAP analysis is to assess the capacities of the councils and representatives of national minorities in order to establish their statutory roles at the local and regional level, and to present the deviation of the current state in relation to the desired state. The central part of the monitoring and evaluation of the exercise of minority rights and freedoms is based on empirical research from the perspective of three subsamples: councils and representatives of national minorities, local and regional self-government units and key local development stakeholders.

Specifically, the analysis focuses on three areas of activity of the councils and representatives of national minorities: 1. monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Law at the local and regional level; 2. active participation in the creation of local development policies and policies aimed at protecting human rights and the rights of national minorities and 3. active networking with key local development stakeholders and participation in community development processes.

The project covered qualitative and quantitative research methods and techniques. Qualitative research was conducted by means of individual in-depth interviews and by moderating group discussions (focus groups). Seven in-depth interviews were conducted and three focus groups were organized with representatives of county and city CRNM coordinators in three cities (Zagreb, Bjelovar and Split) in order to gain insight into the specifics of their work. The semi-structured in-depth interviews lasted for an average of 60 minutes, and the moderated focus group discussions lasted for an average of 90 minutes. The data merged with qualitative research was collected in the period from 22 March to 22 July 2016.¹

The quantitative research was conducted by a survey method on a quota two-stage stratified sample. Depending on the availability of representatives and members of national minority councils, heads of local and regional self-government units and civil society organizations in the selected sample, the following techniques were applied: online questionnaire using the Lime Survey application, face-to-face questionnaire with co-operation of field interviewers, polling with a postage-paid questionnaire and telephone questionnaires. A total of 356 accurately completed questionnaires were collected (277 online, 19 face-to-face, 55 via post and 5 via telephone). Completion of the questionnaire lasted for an average of 50 minutes and the data was collected in the period from 31 May to 31 August 2016.

The realized sample of councils and representatives of national minorities (N=243) encompassed 152 councils and 91 representatives of national minorities, representing 53% of all constituted councils and elected representatives of national minorities in the 2015 elections. At the end of the questionnaire, local and regional self-government units completed 64 questionnaires, including 6 counties, 32 cities and 26 municipalities. Civil society organizations completed 49 questionnaires, of which 16 were LAGs, while the rest were national minority associations or associations that work for the purpose of local community development.

It is sociologically encouraging to analyse and describe the sociodemographic structure of the population observed since social, demographic and economic aspects are the determinants of certain differences in attitudes, motivation, values and behaviour of particular social groups. In this way, the questionnaire shows that of the examined councils and representatives of national minorities, the following prevailed: more male respondents (74%), aged above 50 (almost 60%), tertiary education

¹ The qualitative data analysis is integrated with the quantitative data analysis Chapter 5 *Final consideration with key findings and recommendations*

(48%), and secondary education (46%). Moreover, there is a markedly low representation of the young population up to 30 years (6%) and women (26%). It is quite clear that for achieving a specific goal, such as a high level of IT support, this socio-demographic structure of CRNM is not entirely satisfactory. Moreover, bearing in mind the value systems of younger and older age groups, as well as gender representation and socialization models for assigning social roles, there is an evident need for a certain turnaround to additionally activate women and the younger population amongst representatives and councils of national minorities due to social and institutional well-being and long-term sustainability of the CRNM institution at the local level.

The majority of the research problem of the project *Support to the Councils of National Minorities at the Local Level* is the monitoring and evaluation of the exercise of minority rights and freedoms in the Republic of Croatia. This is also the fundamental objective and purpose of the project: developing and implementing the GAP analysis in order to gain a wider insight into the current preparedness and ability of the councils and representatives of national minorities to exercise the guaranteed special rights and freedoms provided to them by the Republic of Croatia by means of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and other special laws, relevant strategic documents and programs aimed at protecting and exercising minority rights. For this reason, in the research conceptualization and development of measuring instruments, the deliberation of the research problem and information gathering was divided into three target areas: monitoring the implementation of CLRN, creating policies related to national minorities and cooperation with other local development stakeholders.

Monitoring the implementation of CLRN included a group of questions which gathered information on respecting the rights of national minorities, the key problems facing members of national minorities, knowledge on and exercise of rights and obligations based on CLRN, and the constraining factors related to the implementation of CLRN.

Creating policies related to national minorities included a group of questions that gathered indicators on the level of participation of NM councils and representatives in the creation of minority development and local policies, the perception of the relevance of the advisory role of NM councils and representatives, the material and professional preparedness of NM councils and representatives for the advisory role and the forms of their mutual cooperation.

Cooperation with other local development stakeholders included a group of questions that gathered indicators on the frequency and quality of cooperation between NM councils and representatives with other local development stakeholders, their networking and participation in projects aimed at local community development.

Bearing in mind the complexity of the research conducted, it can be generally concluded that at this moment, fifteen years after the application of CLRN, there are markedly more constraining factors than the ones that would help CRNM to be a developed, functional and highly respected institution, and CLRN, a comprehensive and consistent law whose provisions are fully respected. This, of course, does not mean that there has not been some progress made since the councils and representatives of national minorities were presented and elected, and the law was put into effect.

For example, when assessing the contribution of CLRN to improving the position of national minorities in the local community, it is noticeable that more than half of the questioned LRSGU and

CSO subsamples agreed with certain positive trends in the field of its application in favour of a better position of the members of national minorities. However, it was also observed in this assessment that the representatives of the self-government units attributed a greater contribution than the members of civil society organizations, among which there was an equal number of those who attributed a certain contribution (41%) and those who emphasized that the contribution of CLRNM in improving the position of national minorities was small or none (39%). If this result is understood as a message sent by the respondents, it is evident that besides the desired positive effects on the position of the national minorities, there are also those unwanted ones that need to be further mitigated or eliminated in order to achieve greater satisfaction by applying CLRNM at the local level.

Some of the past research in this area has shown that among the constraining factors i.e. obstacles in implementing CLRNM, include: insufficient capacities and/or willingness of individual state administration bodies to implement the Constitutional Law, insufficient interest of executive bodies of local and regional self-governments to cooperate with CRNM, apathy and/or insufficient motivation of members of national minorities or their organizations and representatives to actively improve the position of NM, general unconformity with the political culture based on minority rights, and the like. The fact that the research carried out showed that almost all of these obstacles are present today in the opinions and attitudes of the questioned subsamples leads us to the general conclusion that the existing shifts are of a more formal rather than substantive nature. For this reason, it is concluded that it is more appropriate to talk about the constancy of the constraining factors and obstacles related to the implementation of CLRNM at the local level rather than fully mitigating or eliminating them i.e. to prevent their negative effect on the rights and freedoms of national minorities which are recognized and guaranteed by the Constitutional Law.

Singling out the two main reasons that greatly impede the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of the three questioned subsamples ultimately constitutes six fundamental ones. Of course, they do not exhaust a much wider list of problems associated with the implementation of CLRNM but the economic criterion was met i.e. ranking the constraining factors based on their relative importance as attributed to them by the research participants.

According to the opinions of CRNM, the main reasons that make it difficult to implement CLRNM are insufficient funds allocated to councils and representatives, and their solely advisory role. CSO members are largely in agreement with the fact that the major constraining factors are the insufficient number of active individuals and the lack of CRNM connection. When observing the order of constraining issues singled out by the heads of the self-government units, it is evident that they largely agree that the main constraining factors are the lack of interest of the members of national minorities in exercising their own rights and insufficient familiarity of the NM members with the role and function of CRNM.

The catalogue of problems that explicitly limits the implementation of CLRNM also includes an assessment of identifying the greatest and least influence of the actors themselves on the implementation of the Constitutional Law. CRNM are most dissatisfied with the local and regional self-government units who, in their opinion, make it most difficult to implement CLRNM, while they perceive themselves as the least constraining stakeholder. CSO members perceive the members of national minorities and their councils and representatives as greatly constraining to the implementation of CLRNM, while they attribute LRSGU and the social environment as least constraining. An almost identical

opinion was noted among representatives of the self-government units. Their dissatisfaction is directed largely towards members of national minorities who they consider to be the main constraining stakeholder, followed by CRNM as a moderately constraining factor, while they consider themselves and the social environment as the least constraining factor in the implementation of CLRNM.

Insufficient activity and motivation of members of national minorities for the exercise of their own rights are identified as crucial constraints in all three of the questioned subsamples. However, more than half of the CRNM respondents (57%), in hopes of positively attributing their activities, maintained that they were relevant, identified and recognized by the civil sector and LRSGU. But with this they also showed remarkable criticism and common experience as their actions are frequently limited by LRSGU and, somewhat less by CSOs. On the other hand, self-government units, broadly speaking, provided socially desirable responses whilst civil society organizations were considerably more critical in their statements, presenting CRNM as a relevant and recognized institution at the normative level. In reality however, in terms of expertise, cooperation and activities, many weaknesses and disadvantages of CRNM have been highlighted thus abating the initially demonstrated relevance and real appreciation. Hence, in both of the questioned subsamples it can be generally stated that CRNM is conformed and tolerated at the attitudinal level, but insufficiently appreciated, and at times ignored at the level of actual behaviour.

The functioning and organization of the councils and representatives is not based solely on their characteristics and procedures. It is largely based on compliance with the provisions arising from the Constitutional Law, followed by the understanding and the need of local authorities to accept CRNM and civil organizations in general. In addition, the assessment of the work of the councils and representatives brings forth the need to demarcate their purpose and existence from the role of other national minority associations, as it may reflect favourable or unfavourable inter-ethnic relations at the local and/or national level. Moreover, in some self-government units, though in a smaller number, the councils and representatives are already functioning relatively well, whilst the same cannot be noted in other units. Furthermore, there are differences in the functioning of the councils and representatives of the so-called "old/traditional" and "new" national minorities, etc. Bearing in mind all this, it is clear that any form of generalization about the organization and necessary changes to the CRNM institution runs the risk of possible simplification and predicting different and specific influences affecting the work of minority institutions.

However, despite this institution's complex organization, there are some aspects that have been identified through research and have been deemed universal i.e. those that, despite the local specificities, have a more general character that is appropriate for all. For example, it is shown that if local authorities express greater understanding for the acceptance of the civil sector and CRNM, and if they meet all their obligations under CLRNM towards the councils and representatives, their efficiency and activity will significantly improve. It should certainly be kept in mind that the self-government units' failure to fulfil some of their obligations towards CRNM is to a significant extent a result of their own lack of capacity, both financial and material, as well as human.

In addition, although CRNM's funds are secured from the funds of self-government units, the Constitutional Law failed to standardize any sanctions and responsibilities for those units that fail to do so. In this way, the executive heads of the self-government units were offered an instrument i.e. a mechanism of good will to regulate the work of CRNM. This is certainly not a desirable form of action and

ultimately, as depicted by the research results, it causes a huge imbalance between self-government units and the ways of meeting the goals related to the rights and freedoms of national minorities through their elected bodies – the councils and representatives.

The research also shows that, in order to achieve better or more desirable results, the councils and representatives of national minorities have to focus on having a more comprehensive understanding and application of the relevant CLRNM provisions in practice, regular submission of the statute, financial plans and final accounts to the competent bodies of the self-government units, as well as systematically building the need for a better understanding of the CRNM institution among the members of national minorities and less active CRNM members. In addition, the mutual cooperation between CRNM should be strengthened, as well as encouraging work through the coordination of national minorities and constantly aiming to increase the activities and interest of the members of national minorities in exercising their own rights. These are mainly instruments and ways of meeting the goals of achieving long-term sustainability and the purpose of the CRNM institution.

The research further points to several specific findings related to CRNM functioning, performance, and efficiency in co-creating local policies. For example, CRNM's level of involvement in creating local policies related to national minorities is less influenced by them being formally equipped and efficient, and more influenced by the openness and willingness of self-government units to cooperate with councils and representatives, and the civil sector in general. The reflection of this finding is present in the conclusion that in those local communities that are less open and willing to cooperate, CRNM's efficiency is lower. Conversely, in those local communities with greater openness and initiative to cooperate with CRNM and the civil society, CRNM's efficiency is greater. Furthermore, the councils and representatives are more active and more efficient where there is greater interaction with members of national minorities. Moreover, in the self-government units that are more open to cooperate with CRNM, the members of national minorities predominantly address CRNM for information (seeking information or advice and providing suggestions or advice), and less for complaints regarding violation of their legally guaranteed rights and freedoms.

Overall, the research undoubtedly shows that efficient implementation of the Constitutional Law requires the activity of the members of national minorities and their connection with the councils and representatives, as well as the connection of CRNM with civil society organizations. In addition, the acceptance of the institution of councils and representatives by self-government units is an essential prerequisite for accepting members of national minorities among members of the wider local community. Thus, only the increased activity and cooperation of all categories of stakeholders at the local level make up the mechanism of direct impact on attitudes and behaviours, and on the sensitivity to the issues of the rights and freedoms of national minorities.

However, research has shown that cooperation among local development stakeholders is relatively weak, and negligible in some cases. In the past year, only 28% of the questioned CSOs offered NM associations the opportunity to cooperate on projects aimed at local community development. Of the questioned civil society organizations, 41% of them offered the current CRNM the opportunity to cooperate on projects aimed at local community development.

In such an environment, civil society organizations, CRNM and self-government units can certainly be well engaged, but the overall progress will not be noted by the influence of just one reference group

regardless of its persistence in this area. Creating more opportunities to foster cooperation and build mutual trust among local development stakeholders can therefore be one of the tasks of the civil society, as well as of all other stakeholders interested in the enrichment and development of the local community and beyond.

Lastly, the final analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the institution of councils and representatives showed that when sorting the features into favourable and unfavourable, and internal and external, the assessment of advisory capacities was dominated by CRNM's internal weaknesses, the external threats on CRNM's internal strengths and the external opportunities. The probable outcome of such a position is, to say the least, the stagnation of the CRNM institution. Ultimately, CRNM's activity and engagement, as well as its advisory capacity and further development depend largely on the initiation of cooperation by self-government units on the one hand, and by strengthening CRNM's capabilities and expertise on the other hand.

Besides all the described features derived from the data collected by the research, the most general and seemingly controversial one which increases the chances for the successful sensitization and integration of minority issues in total society should also be mentioned. Working towards achieving consistency with the needs, beliefs and past experiences of the majority people is certainly something that the minority agenda needs to take into consideration. As a message, and almost without thinking, it can be concluded that working with a minority is at the same time working with the majority.

1

INTRODUCTION:
THEORETICAL, LEGAL-
INSTITUTIONAL AND
CONTEXTUAL BASIS OF
RESEARCH

1 INTRODUCTION: THEORETICAL, LEGAL- INSTITUTIONAL AND CONTEXTUAL BASIS OF RESEARCH

1.1. Social aspects of ethnicity and protection of minority rights – European and Croatian context

Ethnicity and ethnic diversity hold a special place in the political, socio-cultural and economic life of every modern society, including the Croatian one. Bearing in mind the key determinants of ethnicity, such as language, history, origin, religion, and the ways of dressing, decorating and eating i.e. the cultural traditions of social communities according to which they differ from one another, it is vital for every modern society to recognize and accept two implicit assumptions on which the understanding of this complex phenomenon rests.

The first assumption is that *ethnicity is an entirely social phenomenon* that is shaped by learning i.e. socializing and adopting culture. It can rightly rely on theoreticians of ethnicity who do not interpret ethnic diversity within human groups and different populations as a genetic, biological foundation of certain characteristics. Instead, the collective identities and practices of different groups in society are seen as the product of adopting specific lifestyles, norms and beliefs of the communities they belong to (Giddens, 2007).

The second assumption refers to the *dynamics of social relations* i.e. to their specific differences and social variations, which may be internal and external. The first case deals with the differences and social variations within a particular society, while the second one focuses on the differences and social variations between different societies. If ethnicity is accepted as an entirely social phenomenon, it is undeniable that the main mechanism of transmission and maintenance of ethnic identity is the tradition and customs that are passed from generation to generation. *Although it is maintained by tradition, ethnicity is not static nor immutable.* On the contrary, it is “fluid and can adapt to changing circumstances” (Giddens, 2007: 247).

In terms of concept and context, ethnicity is inherent to all members of a certain population i.e. to the total population of a particular society. However, ethnically homogeneous political communities are virtually unknown in human history. In most cases, they are ethnically heterogeneous or multi-ethnic,

which may be the result of war conquests, migration, trading or some other factors. The usage of ethnic symbols in modern practice and politics is usually associated with *minority groups*² within a particular population (Giddens, 2007).

Ethnic i.e. national diversity can considerably enrich individual societies as multi-ethnic states are often “strengthened by various contributions of their inhabitants” (Giddens, 2007: 257). However, the different linguistic, religious and cultural affiliation of a population does not guarantee security and peace, and can cause internal turmoil and threats, and often open conflicts between individual ethnic (national) groups.

Before explaining the purpose of the project task, it is necessary to summarize and briefly present two other issues related to safeguarding the freedom and protection of minority rights in modern democratic societies of the West and identifying the position of the Republic of Croatia and its constitutive principles in this area. These issues are: the models of ethnic (national) integration; and the traditional doctrines of human and minority rights determined by international legal instruments.

Today, contemporary sociology recognizes three basic forms of ethnic (national) integration in multi-ethnic societies. These are: assimilation, the melting pot model and cultural pluralism (Giddens, 2007). These three forms provide principle responses to the following questions: 1. How to accept ethnic diversity and prevent conflicts? and 2. What should be the relationship between ethnic minority groups and the majority population within multi-ethnic societies?

*The assimilation approach*³ requires that minority communities, especially relating to immigrant groups, “change their language, clothing, lifestyle and cultural views as part of integration into a new social order” (Giddens, 2007: 256).

The second approach to the issues and problems of minority communities is known as the melting pot model, which enables ethnic (national) diverse communities to fit their traditional diversity into a new social environment, creating new, evolving forms of cultural practices. “Hybrid forms of food preparation, fashion, music and architecture are examples of the melting pot model” (Giddens, 2007: 256).

The third model “different but equal” i.e. *cultural pluralism* implies that members of an ethnic (national) group are equal members of a particular society and that they should have the same rights as members of the majority population (Giddens, 2007).

In order to understand the measures and the recapitulation of politics towards ethnic (national) minorities of the Republic of Croatia, which is the task and purpose of the next part of this analysis, it is important to also note that “minority rights are only a part of the human rights corpus” (Tatalović, Lacović, 2011: 376). In recent times, however, the notion that “minority rights cannot simply be subjugated under the category of human rights” (Mesić, 2003: 163) has become more prevalent in the

² There will be no discussion of the wider definition of the term minority group i.e. statistical “minorities” which can cover various subgroups within a population. The concept of a minority group i.e. *ethnic (national) minority* is used in accordance with sociological concepts which, apart from taking into account numerical differences, seeks to determine whether members of *ethnic (national) minorities* are in a worse position than the majority population, while also providing a developed sense of group solidarity or belonging to a minority group. Thus, the term “minority” in the analysis anticipates its potentially subordinated position relative to the majority, regardless of the number of its members.

³ In the scientific literature, along with the term *assimilation*, as the key name for the model of cultural-ethnic homogenization of society, the term integration of minority groups into a homogeneous political community is often used.

international community i.e. they cannot be solved uniformly without an institutional-legal national framework which is under the constant monitoring of the international community.

Regarding the normative standpoint, European states relate differently to the ethnic (national) affiliation of their citizens. On the one hand, there are those that “do not recognize, formally nor legally the existence of national minorities”, e.g. France, Greece and Turkey (Tatalović, Lacović, 2011: 376). On the other hand, “ethnoculturally neutral states” (Mesić, 2003) perceive ethnic affiliation, such as religious, linguistic and the like, as something that can be expressed in private life, but does not encourage the state’s interest in recognizing special minority collective rights. For example, Italy and Finland recognize linguistic minorities, but not national ones. The third group, which includes the Republic of Croatia, “recognizes national minorities and, moreover, is one of the few countries such as Slovenia and Romania, which ensures the protection of national and cultural identity of members of national minorities and ensures special positions in parliament i.e. the right to political presentation and articulation of their interests” (Tatalović, Lacović, 2011: 376).

The current brief discussion and examples of different notions of the term *minority group* i.e. ethnic (national) minorities, served mainly as a general approach important for understanding and defining the very concept of minority rights. According to the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities (CLRNM or Constitutional Law hereinafter), in Article 4, paragraph 1 “Every citizen of the Republic of Croatia shall have the right to freely express his/ her national affiliation, the right to exercise individually or jointly with other members of his/her respective national minority or jointly with members of other national minorities the rights and freedoms defined in this Constitutional Law and other minority rights and freedoms as defined in special laws.”

According to the Handbook for National Minority Councils, resulting from the project of support to councils of national minorities in areas of special state concern within the framework of the European Union project (EU CARDS 2003), “minority rights can be defined as a set of special measures used to protect, preserve and enhance national or ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identities and particularities of minority groups and persons belonging to these groups and the achievement of their full integration into social, economic and public life on the principles of equality and non-discrimination in access to and exercise of different rights.”

Special measures under the Constitutional Law refer to the recognition and promotion of the so-called *positive discrimination* as a process of exercising special minority rights that arise from the subordinate position of minorities in relation to the majority people in the Republic of Croatia. This subordination may be reflected in their lower numbers, as well as in the weaker economic, political, cultural and other influences of particular minority groups and individuals in the wider community. Therefore, by taking specific measures and exercising specific minority rights, it aims to provide conditions for the survival of minority groups and their integration into the wider community, while preserving their own identity and preventing involuntary assimilation.

Minority rights, as part of and an upgrade to the classic human rights,⁴ relate to the rights of individuals, members of minorities, who can exercise their minority rights independently and in community with other members of national minorities (Constitutional Law).

⁴ Classic human rights are divided into three groups: civil, political and social rights, and are concisely expressed in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted and proclaimed by the UN General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948.

Since the classic doctrine of human rights implied that “minority members enjoy individual equality before the law and therefore can (no longer) legitimately request additional benefits to maintain their ethnic particularities” (Mesić, 2003: 162), the United Nations Organization, which defined its *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* through such a political philosophy, was no longer able to highlight and represent collective minority rights. Thus, in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* there is no mention of the rights of national and ethnic minorities” (Mesić, 2003: 162).

This restriction was only corrected in 1992 when the United Nations accepted the *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*. The same year, the Council of Europe initiated the process of signing the *European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages*, and in 1995 the signing of the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*. The Republic of Croatia, as a signatory to these international documents and instruments, is obliged to act according to their legal standards (Mesić, 2003).

The exercise and protection of fundamental human and special minority rights are within the scope and competence of national state institutions, and are based on accepted legal standards at the national and international level. It is therefore necessary to briefly examine the rights, standards and principles that the Republic of Croatia has undertaken to implement and protect under certain conditions.

1.2. Legal and institutional framework for the protection of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia

The legal and institutional regulation and policies related to the protection of national minorities and the exercise of minority rights in the Republic of Croatia must be regarded as a complex, dynamic, variable and multifaceted social framework. This is due to several reasons. As a state and society, the Republic of Croatia, as well as its relationship with minority communities and their rights, have to a significant extent been determined by some internal and external processes. First of all, this is the internal political process of separation from the former federal union (SFRY) and six constituent federal nations, and war-fought and gained independence with international recognition. The independence of the Republic of Croatia led to the abandonment of the former Yugoslav model for the protection of nationality,⁵ while the model for the protection of national minorities was only being created and built during the immediate war and post-war years (in the 1990s). Apart from the internal adverse circumstances, external factors i.e. the various forms of pressure from the international community on Croatian legislation, especially in the pre-accession period of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, have had significant influence on the exercise of the rights of national minorities. Without further analysis of the reasons, Tatalović and Lacović found that as a consequence of war and war destruction, “the complex and difficult economic and social situation in the first ten years of independent Croatia marked a significant gap between the normative and the actual state when it comes to the rights of national minorities” (Tatalović, Lacović, 2011: 381).

An important item of the process of further democratization of the Croatian society was the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2000, followed by the creation of presumptions for long-term changes that brought Croatia closer to high European standards in the area of protection of national minorities and the

⁵ At that time, Croatia was defined as “a national state of the Croatian people, the state of the Serbian people in Croatia and the state of the nationalities residing in it” (Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, 1974, according to: Mesić, 2003: 167).

exercise of minority rights. Formally and institutionally, “minorities in Croatia are protected at all levels - from international minority rights and bilateral agreements, through the Constitution and the Constitutional Law, to special laws and local self-government statutes” (Mesić, 2003:170). A brief summary of some of the most important legal instruments, group of principles and competent bodies that are concerned with effective minority protection and the position of minorities in the Republic of Croatia is presented below.

- The Republic of Croatia has undertaken to respect human and minority rights in relation to all its citizens. These obligations are based on the *national legislative framework* and *international documents* adopted by the Republic of Croatia and which form an integral part of the national legislation.
- The equality of citizens belonging to national minorities with members of the majority people is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia.
- The Constitution further stipulates that equality and protection of the rights of national minorities are regulated by the Constitutional Law.
- The bilateral agreements on the protection of national minorities were ratified with the Republic of Hungary in 1995, the Republic of Italy in 1996, the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro in 2005, the Republic of Macedonia in 2008 and the Republic of Montenegro in 2011, and the Republic of Croatia is a party of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe and the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages since 1997.
- Laws that exclusively regulate the protection and exercise of the rights of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia are: 1. *The Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities* (2002), 2. *The Law on the Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities in the Republic of Croatia* (2000), and 3. *The Law on Upbringing and Education in the Language and Script of National Minorities in the Republic of Croatia* (2000).⁶
- National strategic and operational documents have an important role in securing the rights of national minorities: the National Roma Inclusion Strategy for the period 2013-2020, the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy for the period 2013- 2015, and the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities for the period 2011-2013.
- The Republic of Croatia confirmed its commitment to the protection of human rights and the rights of national minorities by signing the *Treaty of Accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union* (2011), by which it undertook to continue to strengthen the protection of minorities and to improve the protection of human rights, inter alia through the effective implementation of the *Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities*.
- The overall national coordination and monitoring of policies and activities directed at national minorities is entrusted to the *Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia*.
- The following also play an important role in ensuring the rights of national minorities: *the State Council for National Minorities, councils and representatives of national minorities, CNM coordinations, and the competent ministries at the national level* i.e. the relevant bodies at the local and regional level and minority associations

⁶ All of the special laws and regulations that govern the rights of national minorities are not mentioned here, but they are listed in the literature list at the end of the document.

- The following international organizations also play an important role in monitoring that the rights of national minorities are ensured: the *United Nations*, the *Council of Europe*, the *European Union* and the *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe* (OSCE).
- Representatives of minorities in the parliament have a general political mandate rather than a special minority one, and there has been an increase in the number of permanent representatives of minorities in the parliament (from five to eight representatives). In addition, minorities gained the right to elect their representatives in the representative and executive bodies of local and regional self-government units.

There are also a number of relevant strategic documents and special laws and programs in the Republic of Croatia (that are not shown here) that are aimed at the protection of national minorities and the exercise of minority rights. Based on this it can be concluded that the Republic of Croatia has built a comprehensive legal and institutional framework in this area. However, even such well-established laws and legal and institutional regulations are only the starting assumptions for quality protection and exercise of minority rights. Given that there are difficulties in applying and accepting legal instruments for the protection of minorities, even when the Government demonstrates enough political will, there are certain weaknesses in the manner in which specific minority rights are regulated, which creates space for their improvement. According to legal force, the *Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities* is right below *the Constitution* and is a key law in guaranteeing minority rights. The following section will briefly review and present some of its parts, as well as the shortcomings related to concrete measures and policies in the protection of national minorities and the exercise of minority rights.

1.3. The Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities

By means of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union,⁷ the Republic of Croatia undertook to adopt a new Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities.⁸ The Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities was adopted by the Croatian Parliament in December 2002. Its adoption created a comprehensive legal and institutional framework for the protection of the rights and freedoms of members of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia. For the first time, institutes of councils and representatives of national minorities were introduced into the legal system of the Republic of Croatia by means of which members of national minorities at the local level participate in public life and manage local affairs. In addition, its adoption fulfilled one of the important international obligations that the Republic of Croatia accepted through its membership in the Council of Europe.

The Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities defined the national minority as a group of individuals whose members have the following characteristics:

- they are citizens of the Republic of Croatia;
- they have traditionally resided in the territory of the Republic of Croatia;

⁷ In June 2004, the Council of Europe granted the candidate status to the Republic of Croatia, and accession negotiations were opened in October 2005. Following the signing of the Accession Treaty in December 2011 and the ratification process in all the Member States, the Republic of Croatia became the 28th EU Member State on 1 July 2013.

⁸ In 1991, the Croatian Parliament passed two documents which expressed its readiness to protect minorities. These were: *Resolution on the Protection of the Constitutional Democratic Order and the Rights of Minorities* and the *Constitutional Law on Human Rights and the Rights of Ethnic and National Communities or Minorities in the Republic of Croatia*. However, due to some constraints, the legal and institutional framework for the protection of minority rights and the list of recognized national minorities have been changed several times since the independence of the Republic of Croatia.

- they have specific ethnic, linguistic, cultural and/or religious features distinct from other citizens;
- they express a desire to preserve their specific characteristics.

In addition, the *Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities* guarantees the exercise of the rights and freedoms of members of national minorities, which relate to the following:

- the right to freely express his/her affiliation to a certain national minority in the Republic of Croatia;
- the right to use their family name and first name(s) in the language they use, and to have their name officially recognized to them and their children through entry in registers and other official documents;
- the right to have their identity cards printed and completed also in the language and script of their use;
- the right to freely use their language and script, in private and in public, and in official use;
- upbringing and education in the language and script of their use;
- the right to use their signs and symbols;
- achieving cultural autonomy through the preservation, development and expression of their own culture, and preservation and protection of their cultural heritage and tradition;
- the right to practising their religion and establishing their religious communities together other members of the same religion;
- access to the media and public information services (receiving and disseminating information) in their language and script;
- self-organization and association in pursuance of their common interests;
- representation in representative bodies at the state and local level, and in administrative and judicial bodies;
- participation of the members of national minorities in public life and local self-government through the Council and representatives of national minorities;
- protection from any activities jeopardising or potentially jeopardising their continued existence and the exercise of their rights and freedoms.

The exercise of certain minority rights and freedoms in the Republic of Croatia may be based on a number of criteria: 1. the numerical representation of members of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia or in one of its territories, 2. acquired rights and 3. international treaties.

The Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities also enabled the establishment of coordinations of the councils and representatives of national minorities. This enables the coordination of: two or more councils of national minorities that are established within the same local government unit, two or more councils established in the same regional self-government unit, and two or more councils established in different local and regional self-government units.

Monitoring the exercise of the rights and freedoms of members of national minorities, determined by the *Constitution of the Republic of Croatia*, the *Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities* and other special laws, are carried out by state administration bodies, in matters falling within its scope of work, which is coordinated by the Government of the Republic of Croatia. Once a year, the Government is obliged to submit a report to the Croatian Parliament on the implementation of the *Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities*.

From the previous review of the legal and institutional framework for the protection of minorities and the *Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities*, it can be noted that the legislator's intent was to achieve two general objectives. These are:

1. **comprehensiveness** – in one place (Constitutional Law) to comprehensively cover and regulate the rights and freedoms of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia;
2. **The application of high international protection standards** - in contrast to the previous ones, the new laws should incorporate the highest European and global legal standards for the protection of national minorities and the exercise of minority rights.

However, after four election cycles⁹ and the high normative level of legally guaranteed rights and freedoms, certain shortcomings and constraints have been noted in the implementation of the legal provisions and the established practice regarding the work of the councils and representatives of national minorities. The next part highlights some of the identified problems in previous analyses and in the work of other authors.

The particular difficulties and problems identified in the work of Tatalović and Lacović¹⁰ relate to the following:

- insufficient capacities and/or willingness of individual state administration bodies to implement the Constitutional Law;
- insufficient interest of executive bodies of local and regional self-governments in cooperating with councils and representatives of national minorities;
- apathy and/or insufficient motivation of the members of national minorities or their organizations and representatives to actively improve the position of national minorities.

A more in-depth identification of particular difficulties and problems is found in the work of Mesić:¹¹

- There is a tendency towards arbitrary interpretations and even interference in law enforcement, which all make protecting not only minority rights but also human rights in general, a very sensitive and uncompleted democratic project in Croatia.
- There is no systematic concept of ethnocultural justice as an integral part of social justice - minority rights seem to be more or less mechanically upgraded to the legal system (largely due to international pressure).
- Teaching materials, as well as textbooks, for primary and secondary schools continue to remain mostly unicultural and ethnocentric or croatocentric.
- The majority people, as well as the minorities have not yet adapted to a culture based on minority rights, and the political climate is generally characterized by a lack of commitment to democratic procedures, human rights and the acceptance of diversity.

⁹ The first elections for councils and representatives of national minorities were held in 2003/2004, and it was marked by a small turnout of voters and a series of organizational and communication problems. The next elections were held in 2007, 2011 and 2015.

¹⁰ Tatalović, S., Lacović, T. (2011) Twenty Years of National Minority Protection in the Republic of Croatia. *Migration and ethnic issues* 27 (3):375-391.

¹¹ Mesić, M. (2003) European Standards of Minority Protection and the Status of Minorities in Croatia. *Sociological Review*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3-4:161-177.

- The so-called *minority paradox* or *paradox of minority rights* is observed. Namely, it is shown that minority organizations and leaders who articulate minority agendas are guided mainly by ethno-national aspirations rather than the true spirit of civil and human rights. In short, minorities here act as a “spare majority” and therefore find it harder to find allies in the wider, majority public, if they even seek them there. When seeking assistance for the protection of their interests, they will first address the supervisory bodies of the international community which, in the present situation, is perceived as another sign of their disloyalty to the Croatian state. There are two more determinants of the *minority paradox*: the emulation of the majority and/or the behaviour of their kinship states.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Human rights are, in terms of their concept and context, general and inalienable, and belong to all persons, regardless of whether or not they are citizens of a particular country. As such, they confirm the ideal of free human beings and the widest aspect of man’s sociality and human dignity.

Human rights should be conceptually distinguished from the rights of citizens and the rights of minorities. For example, exercising the right to vote, the right to elect and be elected to public service, the right to freedom of information, expression, choice of employment, entrepreneurship and the like, is covered by the term citizen’s rights i.e. rights that are exclusively granted to citizens of a certain country.

On the other hand, exercising the rights of certain social communities that have specific ethnic (national), religious or linguistic characteristics, whether exercising these rights individually or in a community with other members of a particular minority, is covered by the term minority rights. As such, minority rights are special and are in the scope and jurisdiction of national state institutions, which relate differently to the minority affiliation of its citizens.

The legal and institutional regulation and policies related to the protection of national minorities and the exercise of minority rights in the Republic of Croatia must be regarded as a complex, dynamic, variable and multifaceted social framework. This is due to several reasons. As a state and society, the Republic of Croatia, as well as its relationship with minority communities and their rights, have to a significant extent been determined by some internal and external processes.

First of all, this is the internal political process of separation from the former federal union (SFRY) and six constituent federal nations, and war-fought and gained independence with international recognition. Apart from the internal adverse circumstances, external factors i.e. the various forms of pressure from the international community on Croatian legislation, especially in the pre-accession period of the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, have had significant influence on the exercise of the rights of national minorities.

Accordingly, in the recent history there have been two outcomes of the Republic of Croatia's relationship with national minorities and their rights. The state-based doctrine as the first outcome was marked by a significant gap between the normative and actual situation regarding the exercise and protection of minority rights in the process of the independence of the Republic of Croatia after the 1990s. The Euro-Atlantic doctrine, as the second outcome refers to the period after the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2000, followed by assumptions for long-term changes that brought Croatia closer to high European standards in the area of protection of national minorities and the exercise of minority rights.

The Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities was adopted by the Croatian Parliament in December 2002. Its adoption created a comprehensive legal and institutional framework for the protection of the rights and freedoms of members of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia. For the first time, institutes of councils and representatives of national minorities were introduced into the legal system of the Republic of Croatia by means of which members of national minorities at the local level participate in public life and manage local affairs. In addition, its adoption fulfilled one of the important international obligations that the Republic of Croatia accepted through its membership in the Council of Europe. Moreover, there are still a number of relevant laws, programs and strategic documents aimed at the protection of national minorities and the exercise of minority rights in the Republic of Croatia. Based on this, it can be concluded that the Republic of Croatia has built a comprehensive legal and institutional framework in this area and has achieved a high level of protection of the rights of national minorities through its legislation.

2

CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2 CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Purpose of integrated GAP analysis

The GAP analysis is an integral part of the project *Support to the Councils of National Minorities at the Local Level* and it is aimed at ensuring the full and effective exercise of human rights and improving and facilitating the active and full participation of national minorities in the economic, cultural and social life of Croatian society, while preserving their own identity, culture and tradition.

The project encompasses the implementation of research-analytical and educational activities as well as activities related to designing, establishing and testing a web-based interface for monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities. The objective of the project is to provide preconditions for the active participation of councils of national minorities in monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and the development of their own local communities in the Republic of Croatia.

This project is complementary to the IPA 2012 project of the Ministry of Public Administration, which will monitor the exercise of the rights defined by the CLRNM under the competence of the Ministry of Public Administration. For example, the harmonisation of the statute of local self-government units with CLRNM will be monitored, while this analysis will focus on monitoring the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of its implementation into the life of the local population expressed through the opinions of CRNM, CSO and LRSGU.

The GAP analysis aims to describe the role and to assess the capacities of the councils and representatives of national minorities.

The general objective of the GAP analysis is to assess the capacities of the councils and representatives of national minorities in order to establish their statutory roles at the local and regional level, and to present the deviation of the current state in relation to the desired state.

Specifically, the analysis focuses on three areas of action of the councils and representatives of national minorities:

- monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Law at the local and regional level;
- active participation in the creation of local development policies and policies aimed at protecting human rights and the rights of national minorities;
- active networking with key local development stakeholders and participation in community development processes.¹²

By means of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities, the members of national minorities are guaranteed the right to participate in public life and manage local affairs through councils and representatives of national minorities in municipalities, cities and counties. From 2003 to 2015,

¹² The elaboration of specific objectives is part of the chapter on conceptualization and methodology of empirical research in the continuation of this paper.

“minority elections” were held four times, and during that period, a number of amendments to the legislative framework¹³ were implemented to strengthen the role of the councils and representatives of national minorities (CRNM) and increase their efficiency. Nevertheless, the annual reports of the Government on the implementation of the Constitutional Law,¹⁴ Research Analytical Reports (CARDS 2003, Tatalović et al. 2010) as well as the four submitted opinions on Croatia by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention on the Rights of National Minorities of the Council of Europe indicated shortcomings in the functioning of the councils and representatives of national minorities.

Given the difficulties and problems encountered in the implementation of the *Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities*, the proposal of the integrated GAP analysis is presented here as a basis and tool for identifying deviations or gaps between set goals (normative level) and the assessment of the current situation for its improvement and appropriate implementation of the provisions of the Constitutional Law.

The monitoring and evaluation of minority rights and freedoms are carried out on the basis of more data sources i.e. from different perspectives. These are:

1. *The Government of the Republic of Croatia* i.e. secondary analyses of annual reports on the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities;
2. *The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe* i.e. a secondary analyses of the Committee’s Opinion on Croatia – i.e. periodic reports on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities submitted by the Government to the Council of Europe;
3. EU CARDS 2003 *project reports*, as well as some other projects in this area;
4. *Councils and representatives of national minorities (CRNM), civil society organizations (CSO) and local and regional self-government units (LRSGU)* i.e. analysis of empirical research results – as a basis for the GAP analysis (Table 1).

The analysis further focused on the local context and verification of the recognizability and networking of the councils and representatives of national minorities in the local community. Examples of good practice of the cooperation of councils and representatives of national minorities (CRNM) with local self-governments, as well as key local development stakeholders (such as local action groups and/or community development associations) were examined. Examples of good practice were shaped in the form of recommendations for improving the role of councils and representatives of national minorities in monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Law, in creating local development policies and in participating in development processes at the local and regional level, given the importance that this might have at the national level.

The GAP analysis aimed to gain a wider insight into the current preparedness and possibilities of the councils and representatives of national minorities to use the guaranteed special rights and freedoms

¹³ This also includes amendments to the Constitution (OG 76/10) which, in addition to the mentioned 10 national minorities, is complemented by 12 other national minorities. The Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities (OG 155/02, 47/10, 80/10, 91/11, 93/11) and the Law on the Register of councils and coordinations of councils and representatives of national minorities (OG 80/11, 34/12), amendments to the Law on Local and Regional Self-governments, are only some of the key changes in the last few years.

¹⁴ The Government of the Republic of Croatia regularly submits reports on the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities to the Parliament, starting with the first consolidated report for 2003 and 2004, and then for each subsequent year. The latest available one is the *Report on the Implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and on the Use of Funds Secured in the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia for 2014 for the Needs of National Minorities*.

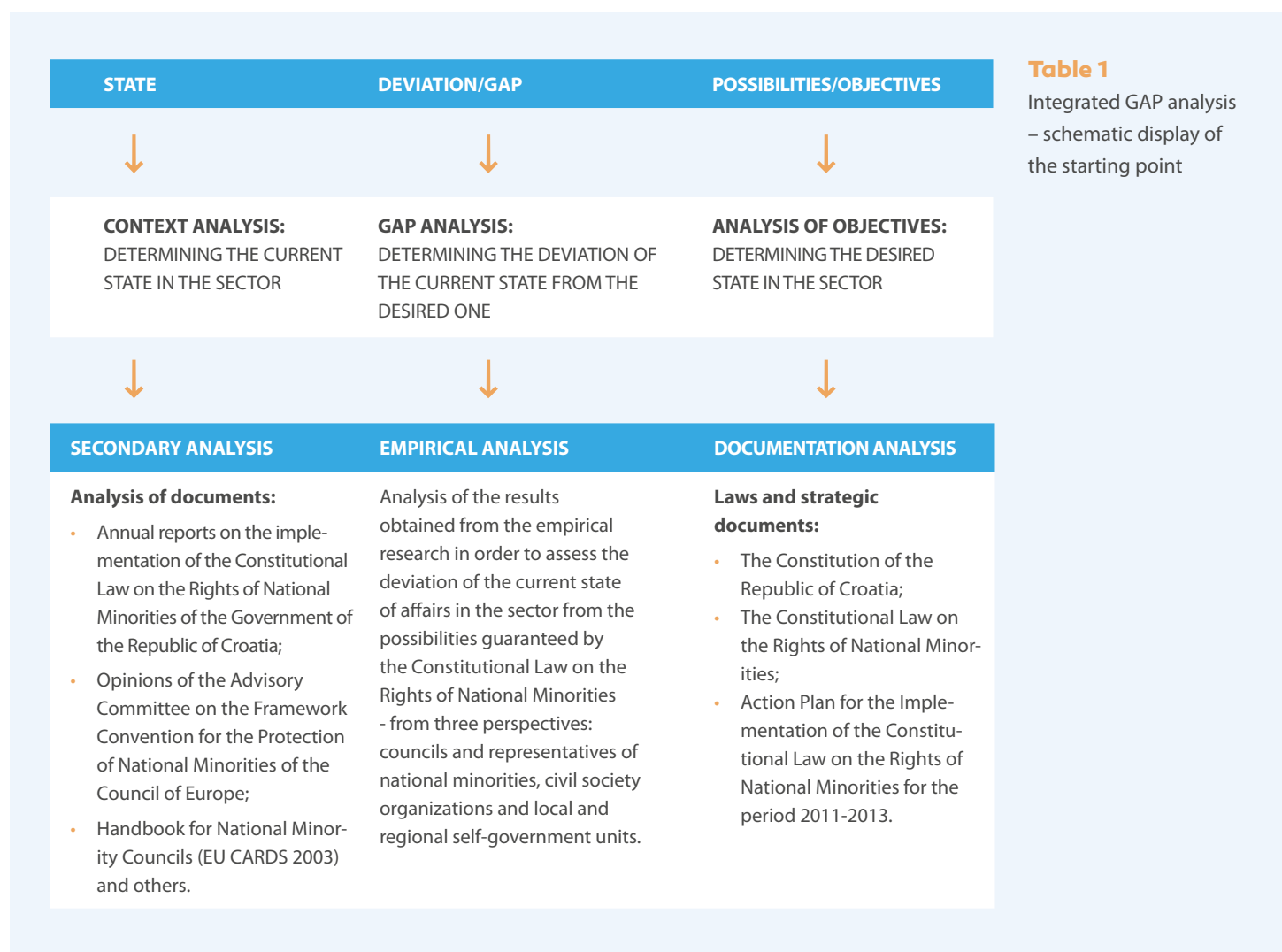


Table 1
Integrated GAP analysis – schematic display of the starting point

provided by the Republic of Croatia under the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and other special laws and programs aimed at the protection and exercise of minority rights. Therefore, the central part of the analysis encompassed the monitoring of the exercise of the rights and freedoms defined by Article 7 of the Constitutional Law in all ten of the provisions that allow the members of national minorities in Croatia to exercise their minority rights, individually or together with other persons belonging to the same national minority, and when it is determined by the Constitutional Law or by special laws, together with members of other national minorities.

For the purposes of the final synthesis of integrated GAP analysis results, short conclusions were drawn from the Government’s report on the review of the state of implementation of the Constitutional Law of 2014 under the provisions (Article 7 of the CLRNM) which guaranteed special minority rights and freedoms, and in order to identify possible deviations from their exercise (Table 2). In addition, the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe, stemming from the Fourth Opinion on Croatia in November 2015 are presented (Table 3).

Table 2

The exercise of special rights and freedoms of members of national minorities in 2014 (The Government of the Republic of Croatia)

1

The use of their language and script, in private and in public, and in official use.

- During 2014, no significant progress was made in the area of exercising the right to equal official use of the minority language and script in relation to previous years. Members of national minorities did not exercise the right to use their language and script in proceedings before the administrative bodies of self-government units nor in proceedings before the state authorities.
- Compared to 2013, there was a significant increase in the number of court proceedings conducted in the language of the national minority, but the number of cases in which the party rejected this right also increased.
- The number of issued bilingual identity cards decreased, and during the reporting period the largest number of bilingual IDs were requested by members of the Italian, Serbian and Czech national minorities.
- The analysis of the state of harmonization of the statute of self-government units with the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and the Law on Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities in the Republic of Croatia has shown that out of the 27 local units that are obliged to harmonize their statutes with these regulations, 10 have completely harmonized their statutes, 12 did not elaborate in detail the exercise of each individual right, while 5 local self-government units, including Vukovar, did not at all regulate the exercise of these rights by means of their statutes. It is expected that in the forthcoming period, the amendments to the Law on Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities, on whose adoption the Government of the Republic of Croatia was bound by the Constitutional Court, will ensure a uniform and detailed statutory regulation of the rights of members of national minorities for official and public use of their language and script, and thus the full exercise of these rights.

2

Upbringing and education in the language and script they use.

- In 2014, in the area of upbringing and education in the language and script of national minorities, a high level of implementation of the Constitutional Law was ensured. Moreover, education of pupils in the language and script of national minorities (model A) was successfully implemented, while more and more pupils were involved in learning the language and culture of national minorities (model C).
- For the school year 2014/2015, the teaching structure of 8 elementary schools was approved based on model B and C for the children of Albanian, Hungarian, Serbian and Macedonian national minorities.
- In October 2014, the Croatian Parliament adopted the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology, which also includes curricula and programs for teaching in the language and script of national minorities.
- Special efforts have been made in the upbringing and education of members of the Roma national minority. The enrolment of children members of the Roma national minority in pre-school programs is continuously ensured in order to bridge the gap between the socio-eco-

conomic situation in which children belonging to the Roma national minority live in and the opportunity for their successful integration during compulsory elementary education. Over the past six years, there has been a constant increase in the number of Roma children in elementary education, while there was a slight drop in the school year 2014/2015. Nonetheless, the positive trend in the increasing number of Roma national minority students enrolled in the secondary education system was continued in 2014.

3 Use of their signs and symbols.

- In 2014, the Ministry of Public Administration did not receive any remonstrances nor were any remarks made on the exercise of the right to preserve traditional names and symbols and to use the signs and symbols of national minorities.

4 Cultural autonomy through the preservation, development and expression of their own culture, and preservation and protection of their cultural heritage and tradition.

- Through cultural autonomy, national minorities exercise their cultural and artistic freedom in all aspects, through which they can develop and promote their cultural and national identity. The analysis of the activities carried out during 2014, which were aimed at ensuring the cultural autonomy of national minorities, indicates the systematic promotion of national minorities and their active and equal contribution to cultural life.
- In 2014, the Ministry of Culture funded the following: equipping a library, newspaper and literary-publishing activities, performing arts and music activity and cultural-artistic amateurism, visual arts, new media and film industry, international cultural cooperation, archival and museum-gallery activities and protection of heritage of national minorities.
- In 2014, programs of numerous minority associations and institutions were funded by significant funds through the State Council for National Minorities. In the forthcoming period, cultural activities and programs of national minorities will be co-financed within the framework of ensured funds.
- The State Council for National Minorities identified progress in exercising the right to cultural autonomy, but noted insufficient knowledge on the methodology for reporting on expenditure of the financial resources provided by the state budget and identified the need for further education of national minority associations and institutions in this area.

5 The right to practising their religion and establishing their religious communities together other members of the same religion.

- The Republic of Croatia has reached a high level in exercising the right to practise their religion, as well as the right to establish religious communities together with other members of the religion.

- Agreements on issues of mutual interest were signed with the following religious communities in Croatia: the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Islamic Community, the Jewish Community Coordination, the Jewish Community of Bet Israel, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Macedonian Orthodox Church. By doing so, the Republic of Croatia committed itself to provide funds from the state budget on an annual basis. These funds are calculated according to the multiplication of the coefficient stipulated by the contracts and the gross basis for the calculation of salaries of public and civil servants.

6 Access to the media and public information services in their language and script.

- The exercise of the rights of national minorities to access the public media in 2014, according to the assessment of the State Council for National Minorities, due to insufficient media coverage of minority activities and content, was unsatisfactory.
- Croatian Radiotelevision (HRT) has not yet complied with the obligations arising from the Agreement between HRT and the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the period from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2017 in respect of contents intended for national minorities, as regards the share of that content in the entire television program and in terms of content quality. Emissions for national minorities are not integrated into other programs, and minority activities are not visibly recognizable in terms of integration into the overall public, cultural and political life.
- In the forthcoming period, additional efforts should be made to implement this Agreement, and in particular to contribute to a more objective and professional approach to minority themes and to the formation of minority editorial offices.

7 Self-organization and association in pursuance of their common interests.

- In relation to the elections for councils and representatives of national minorities, the State Council for National Minorities emphasizes the problem of ensuring funds for the implementation of elections and their promotion, which is further aggravated by the application of amendments to the Law on Income Tax on budgets of local and regional self-government units, and especially in those units located in areas of special state concern.
- In the forthcoming period, pursuant to Article 136 of the Local Elections Act, the State Council also proposes that the election of councils and representatives of national minorities be regulated by a special law.
- Regarding the issue of non-regulation of the status of representatives of national minorities as non-profit legal entities, the State Council proposed to the Ministry of Public Administration that, by means of amendments to the Law on the Register of Councils and Coordination of Councils and Representatives of National Minorities, the status of non-profit legal entities should be given to the representatives of national minorities.

8 Representation in representative bodies at the state and local level, and in administrative and juridical bodies.

- Members of national minorities fully achieved their representation in the Croatian Parliament.
- In relation to the representation of members of national minorities in state administration bodies, administrative and professional services and offices of the Government of the Republic of Croatia in 2014, compared to 2013, there was an evident reduction from 3.51% to 3.49% but it should be taken into account that the total number of civil servants and employees was reduced by 4.19%. Decisions on the ban on new employment of civil servants and employees in state administration bodies, administrative and professional services and offices of the Government of the Republic of Croatia from 2009 and 2014 have also led to the reduced employment opportunities in the civil service in general as well as for national minorities.
- There has also been a slight decrease in the number of civil servants and staff members of national minorities in the bodies of the administration of local and regional self-government units in 2014, compared to 2013.
- Given that a certain number of members of national minorities do not express their national affiliation when applying for job vacancies, the Ministry of Public Administration and the Ministry of Interior indicate the need to regularly encourage them to declare their nationality for employment advantage in accordance with CLRNM.
- Planning employment in the civil service for the following period specifically took into account the representation of members of national minorities in the total number of civil service employees, therefore the Admission Plan for 2014 (OG, No. 65/14 and 100/14) planned admission into the service for a total of 67 members of national minorities.

9 Participation of the members of national minorities in public life and manage local affairs through the councils and representatives of national minorities.

- In 2014, the financing of councils and representatives of national minorities from the state budget was positively assessed. In spite of the unfavourable economic situation, the Government of the Republic of Croatia financed the programs of councils and representatives in local units of weaker economic development, and in the forthcoming period it will be taken into account that the funds for this purpose are planned in the state budget.
- And in this reporting period, it has been noted that a smaller number of councils and representatives still show no significant interest in functioning and work, they do not draft annual work plans, nor do they submit funding requests from the budget of the self-government units, and they do not submit appropriate reports.
- In the forthcoming period, certain activities will continue to be undertaken in order to achieve full involvement of councils and representatives of national minorities in public life and management of local affairs, and to increase the efficiency of councils and representatives, as well as local units. It is also necessary to continue training and seminars in order to improve their work in the public domain.

10

Protection from any activities jeopardising or potentially jeopardising their continued existence and the exercise of their rights and freedoms.

- In 2014, in the area of developing tolerance to towards diversity and combating discrimination, a draft of the new National Anti-Discrimination Plan was drafted for the period 2015-2020. The aim of the new National Plan is to further encourage the implementation of various measures aimed at combating discrimination in all important areas of life defined by the Anti-Discrimination Act.
- Numerous seminars, roundtables and consultations that were held in 2014 have contributed to the further fight against prejudice and stereotypes, and the discrimination and segregation of national minorities. It was particularly emphasized to introduce training on the implementation of the Anti-Discrimination Act and on the Charter on Fundamental Rights, and to continue the national campaign *NO to hate speech on the Internet*.
- In the forthcoming period, it is necessary to effectively implement the Anti-Discrimination Act and to continue to inform the wider public about the rights of national minorities and the problems they face.
- It is necessary to intensify the training of members of national minorities on ways to protect their rights in accordance with the Anti-Discrimination Act.
- Institutions responsible for the organization and training of state and public service employees should continue to carry out organized forms of informing and training of all employees in order to familiarize them with the provisions of the regulations on the protection of national minorities, to combat discrimination and to promote tolerance.

A The exercise of special rights and freedoms of members of national minorities - **Recommendations for urgent action:**

- The concern of minority rights should be defined as a priority and integral part of the program of the Government of the Republic of Croatia in the field of human rights and, in close cooperation with minority representatives, to develop effective mechanisms to ensure that members of national minorities exercise their rights without any negative consequences resulting from that choice.
- Systematically and timely condemn all instances of nationalistic and anti-minority rhetoric in public and political speech and in the media, and to ensure effective investigation and punishment of all cases of hate crime and hate speech.
- Identify as a priority the development and revitalization of marginalized areas, mostly populated with members of disadvantaged ethnic minorities, especially returnees and Roma, through targeted investments in infrastructure and creating employment opportunities.

B The exercise of special rights and freedoms of members of national minorities - **Further recommendations:**

- The concern of minority rights should be defined as a priority and integral part of the program of the Government of the Republic of Croatia in the field of human rights and, in close cooperation with minority representatives, to develop effective mechanisms to ensure that members of national minorities exercise their rights without any negative consequences resulting from that choice.
- Systematically and timely condemn all instances of nationalistic and anti-minority rhetoric in public and political speech and in the media, and to ensure effective investigation and punishment of all cases of hate crime and hate speech.
- Identify as a priority the development and revitalization of marginalized areas, mostly populated with members of disadvantaged ethnic minorities, especially returnees and Roma, through targeted investments in infrastructure and creating employment opportunities.
- Increase support to promote cultural activities of national minority associations, including through the State Council for National Minorities, while taking due account of their diversity and ensuring the promotion of minority cultures within the integrated wider cultural policy as a valuable element to Croatian diversity.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy to promote inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation, and to intensify efforts to promote respect for diversity in society in general, in particular through better intercultural education and public media activities.
- Raise public awareness on the legal remedies available against hate speech and hate crimes, and to promote professional journalism and ethical conduct in the media through targeted training.
- Increase support for media in minority languages, including independent and small media, in order to encourage a pluralistic media environment and to increase employment and training of members of national minorities in major media outlets.

Table 3

Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 2015

- Raise public awareness on Croatia's international and national legal obligations towards national minorities and to promote close consultation with local authorities and minority and majority representatives in order to effectively enforce the right to use minority languages and scripts at the local level in accordance with national legislation.
- Ensure that all school curricula and textbooks reflect the diversity of Croatia and that teachers are effectively educated in adapting diversity and promoting intercultural respect in the classroom; directly consult with representatives of national minorities on all issues related to education in the language of national minorities, including through the model of bilingual and multilingual methodologies in an integrated environment.
- Improve opportunities for members of national minorities, including women, to actively participate as integral members of Croatian society in the decision-making process at the central and local level; prioritizing the employment of members of national minorities in public services, including police and judiciary.
- Revise the National Roma Inclusion Strategy and harmonize it with the conducted evaluation, paying special attention to its implementation, with increased co-operation of all line ministries and providing sufficient resources; actively involve representatives of Roma at all levels, from the development to the implementation of the new Action Plan.

2.2. Conceptualization of empirical research

The conceptualization of empirical research consists of a brief description of the starting conceptual and analytical scheme with an elaboration of the targeted research areas and their content. It also includes insight into the basic problem and the specific objectives of the research, and the timeline of the research implementation, from the preparatory stage to the presentation of the overall project results.

2.2.1. Starting conceptual and analytical scheme

The central part of the monitoring and evaluation of minority rights and freedoms is based on empirical research from the perspective of: the councils and representatives of national minorities, local/regional self-government units and key local development stakeholders (Figure 1) in the targeted areas of their activity (Table 4).

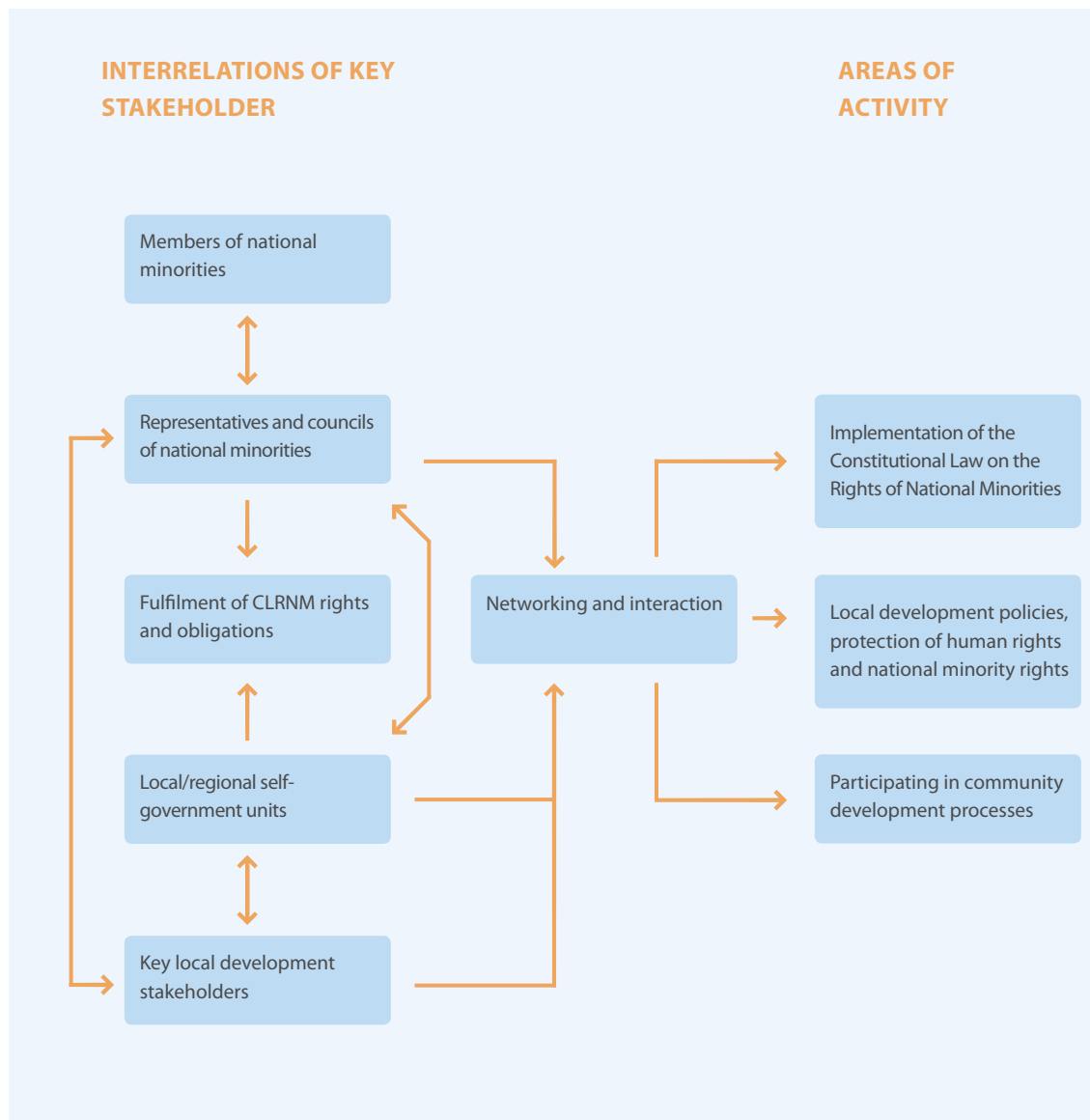


Figure 1
 Starting conceptual and analytical scheme of the empirical analysis

Table 4
Elaboration of the three
targeted areas of CRNM
activity

Targeted areas of activity	Elaboration of the targeted areas of activity	Type of questionnaire			
		CNM	RNM	CSO	LRSQU
FIRST SEGMENT: MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION <i>Monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities</i>	RESPECTING RIGHTS Respecting the rights of national minorities	<i>Group of questions on respecting the rights of national minorities</i>			
	CLRNM AND THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTIONS The impact of passing CLRNM on the position of national minorities and the role of individual institutions	<i>Group of question on the impact of passing CLRNM on the position of national minorities and the role of individual institutions</i>			
	EXERCISE OF RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS Knowledge and exercise of rights and obligations based on the Constitutional Law	<i>Group of questions on the exercise of rights and obligations</i>			
	CONSTRAINING FACTORS Constraining factors in the implementation of the Constitutional Law	<i>Group of questions on the constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM</i>			
SECOND SEGMENT: CREATING POLICIES <i>Creating policies related to national minorities</i>	LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION The level of participation of councils and representatives of national minorities in creating of minority development and local policies	<i>Group of questions on the level of participation of CRNM in creating local policies</i>			
	ADVISORY ROLE Perception of the relevance of the advisory role of councils and representatives of national minorities	<i>Group of questions on the relevance of the advisory role of CRNM</i>			
	PREPAREDNESS TO WORK Material and professional preparedness of councils and representatives of national minorities for the advisory role	<i>Group of questions on the preparedness for performing the role of CRNM</i>			
	FORMS AND QUALITY OF COOPERATION The frequency, forms and quality of cooperation of councils and representatives of national minorities with other local development stakeholders	<i>Group of questions on the forms and quality of cooperation between stakeholders</i>			
THIRD SEGMENT: COOPERATION BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS <i>Cooperation with other local development stakeholders</i>	NETWORKING Networking with other local development stakeholders	<i>Group of questions on the networking of stakeholders</i>			
	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT Participating in projects aimed at local community development	<i>Group of questions on project participation</i>			

2.2.2. The research problem and objectives

The research problem i.e. the issue which the project *Support to the Councils of National Minorities at the Local Level* aims to address, has its theoretical significance, and the answer to it or its solution requires the use of scientific research methods. Theoretically, **the majority of the research problem constitutes the monitoring and assessment of minority rights and freedoms in the Republic of Croatia.** The project seeks to look at the perspective of the members of councils and representatives of national minorities, their insights into the status of minority rights at the local level and their activities in monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Law, as well as their experience in cooperating with the heads of local and regional self-government units and key local development stakeholders.

This is also the **fundamental objective and purpose of the project:** developing and conducting the GAP analysis in order to gain a wider insight into the current preparedness and possibilities of the councils and representatives of national minorities to use the guaranteed special rights and freedoms ensured by the Republic of Croatia through the CLRNM and other special laws and programs aimed at the protection and exercise of minority rights.

The assumptions on how to address such a wide-ranging research problem and fundamental research objective are highlighted in a **series of specifically set research objectives and problems, and derived variations of the research hypothesis** according to the elaborated areas of activity from Table 4. For example, some of the most important research questions are listed in Table 5.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	PROBLEM QUESTIONS	HYPOTHESES
Assess the contribution of CLRNM to the position of national minorities in the local community.	Do the questioned subsamples differ in their assessments in relation to CLRNM's contribution to the position of national minorities in the local community?	The questioned subsamples differ in their assessment of CLRNM's contribution to the position of national minorities in the local community.
Assess the respect for the rights of national minorities in the local community.	Do the questioned subsamples differ in their assessment of the respect for the rights of national minorities in the local community?	The questioned subsamples do not differ in their assessment of the respect for the rights of national minorities in the local community.
Assess the familiarity of CRNM with the legal framework in the area of protection and exercise of minority rights.	Do the questioned subsamples differ in their assessment of the familiarity of CRNM with the legal framework in the area of protection and exercise of minority rights?	On average, the CRNM subsample, more frequently than the other subsamples, believes it is well familiarized with the legal framework in the area of protection and exercise of minority rights.
Assess and single out the constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM.	Do the questioned subsamples differ in their assessment of the constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM?	The questioned subsamples do not differ in their assessment of the constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM.
Assess the relevance and qualification of CRNM's advisory role and function.	Do the questioned subsamples differ in their assessment of the relevance and qualification of CRNM's advisory role?	On average, the CRNM subsample, more frequently than the other subsamples, believes it is relevant and qualified for the advisory role.

Table 5

Elaboration of specific objectives, problems and research hypothesis

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	PROBLEM QUESTIONS	HYPOTHESES
Assess the frequency and quality of the cooperation between CRNM and other local development stakeholders.	Do the questioned subsamples differ in their assessment of the frequency and quality of the cooperation between CRNM and other local development stakeholders?	The questioned subsamples differ in their assessment of the frequency and quality of the cooperation between CRNM and other local development stakeholders.
Assess CRNM's role and participation in creating minority and local development policies.	Do the questioned subsamples differ in their assessment of CRNM's role and participation in creating minority and local development policies?	The questioned subsamples do not differ in their assessment of CRNM's role and participation in creating minority and local development policies.

2.2.3. Timeline for the implementation of integrated GAP analysis

Table 6 shows the timeline for the implementation of the research, from the preparatory phase to the presentation of the results.

Table 6
Timeline for the implementation of integrated GAP analysis

Implementation period up to the date of delivery of results		Activities
02.02.2016	11.03.2016	The preparatory phase includes a review of the literature, legislative framework, previous analyses and research results, law enforcement reports and conventions, media coverage of the topic, consultations with stakeholders, and preparation and delivery of research draft.
14.03.2016	11.04.2016	Incorporate the comments of OHRNM and UO members into the final text, further elaboration of the draft based on interviews with key stakeholders, finalization of research instruments and drafting of the final draft
31.05.2016.	31.08.2016.	Conduct online questionnaires and face-to-face questionnaires with CRNM, LRSGU and key local development stakeholders on the given sample, carrying out in-depth interviews and focus groups in three regions
01.09.2016.	02.11.2016.	Processing quantitative and qualitative data
03.11.2016.	31.01.2017.	Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data; drafting and delivery of the final synthesis of integrated GAP analysis results
01.02.2017.	28.04.2017.	Consultation on the results and the need for additional analyses, incorporation of the comments of OHRNM and UO members into final text; delivery of FSG
02.05.2017.	15.06.2017.	Translation of FSG into English, Croatian and English texts prepared for printing
20.06.2017.	30.06.2017.	Printing 400 copies of the Croatian FSG version and 100 copies of the English FSG
10.07.2017.	31.07.2017.	Presentation of GAP analysis results in 5 regional centres. Participation of research participants in outcome discussions; drafting minutes from the discussions

2.3. Research methodology

The research methodology consists of a brief description of the applied research methods and techniques, the specificity of field research, the sampling method and data processing, creation of measuring instruments, questionnaires and a semi-structured guide, categorization of national minorities and the regional division of the Republic of Croatia.

2.3.1. Data collection methods and techniques

The project covered qualitative and quantitative research methods and techniques. The quantitative research was conducted by a survey method. Depending on the availability of representatives and members of national minority councils, heads of local and regional self-government units and civil society organizations in the selected sample, the following techniques were applied: online questionnaire using the Lime Survey application, face-to-face questionnaire with cooperation of field interviewers, polling with a postage paid questionnaire and telephone questionnaires. A total of 356 questionnaires were collected (277 online, 19 face-to-face, 55 via post and 5 via telephone). Fulfilment of the questionnaire lasted for an average of 50 minutes and the data was collected in the period from 31 May to 31 August 2016.

Qualitative research was conducted by means of individual in-depth interviews and by moderating group discussions (focus groups). Seven in-depth interviews were conducted which outline the perspectives of the following persons/groups: a member of an association whose activities are directed at the protection of human and minority rights, a deputy prefect from the national minorities, the president of the county council of national minorities and the vice president of the national coordination of one national minority, a representative from an association dealing with minority issues, the president of the city council of national minorities, a media specialist specializing in minority issues, a researcher dealing with human and minority rights.

In addition, three focus groups were organized with representatives of county and city CNM coordinations in three cities (Zagreb, Bjelovar and Split) in order to gain insight into the specifics of their work. One focus group had representatives of the city and county with representatives of city and county coordinations, and the other two focus groups had members of the presidency of county coordinations of several national minorities. A total of 20 people participated. The semi-structured in-depth interviews lasted for an average of 60 minutes, and the moderated focus group discussions lasted for an average of 90 minutes. The data merged with qualitative research was collected in the period from 22 March to 22 July 2016.

In addition, members of the State Council for National Minorities, Parliamentary representatives from the members of national minorities, scientists, researchers and journalists who monitor the protection of the rights of national minorities, members of the Rural Development Network and members of minority associations were consulted. The interviews of the State Council for National Minorities members, which was published in the Minority Forum from 2008 to 2016, were analysed for the purpose of deepening the information potential of particular research issues and content. Preliminary research results were presented and discussed with the councils and representatives of national minorities during the training workshops from January to March 2006 in five cities: Bjelovar, Osijek, Rijeka, Zadar and Zagreb.

2.3.2. Sample and research participants

The research covered three subsamples i.e. the three main subgroups of respondents. The primary group of respondents were members of national minority councils and representatives of national minorities chosen in the elections which were held on 31 May 2015, since the objective of the project is to strengthen their role at the local level. The second group of respondents were from executive and administrative bodies of local and regional self-government units, and the third group of respondents were representatives of local action groups and associations implementing local development projects.

CRNM subsample: The total population of the first group of respondents (CRNM) is represented by 288 elected councils and 169 elected representatives of national minorities in the elections that were held on 31 May 2015. Although elected, not all councils nor representatives of national minorities registered themselves in the Register of Councils, Coordinations of Councils and Representatives of National Minorities of the Ministry of Public Administration. Of the total number of elected councils and representatives, 268 councils and 146 representatives were registered in the Registry by 1 March 2016, while the process of registering the other elected councils and representatives is ongoing.¹⁵ Table 7 shows the distribution of registered and unregistered councils based on the self-government level. Of the elected representatives, 3 were unregistered at the county level, 12 in municipalities and 8 in cities.

Table 7

The share of registered and unregistered councils of national minorities based on the self-government level

Self-government level		Registered councils	Unregistered councils	Total
County	Frequencies	71	0	71
	Percentage	100.00	0.00	100.00
City	Frequencies	116	12	128
	Percentage	90.63	9.38	100.00
Municipality	Frequencies	81	8	89
	Percentage	91.01	8.99	100.00
Total	Frequencies	268	20	288
	Percentage	93.06	6.94	100.00

Councils of national minorities: The population for selecting the sample of national minority council members is represented by the elected councils of 14 national minorities in 19 counties and in the City of Zagreb.

Representatives of national minorities: The basic set for selecting the sample of representatives of national minorities is represented by the elected representatives of 19 national minorities in 20 counties and in Zagreb. Based on the size of the reference population, the planned sample size was calculated: **90 representatives and 120 councils of national minorities.**

¹⁵ Register of Councils, Coordinations of Councils and Representatives of National Minorities from the Ministry of Public Administration's portal served as a source of data on the number of registered elected councils and representatives of national minorities. <https://uprava.gov.hr/o-ministarstvu/ustrojstvo/uprava-za-opcu-upravu/registri/registar-vijeca-koordinacija-vijeca-i-predstavnika-nacionalnih-manjina-832/832/>

National minority	Population parameters		Structure of the anticipated sample		Percentage deviation of the sample share from the population parameters
	Frequencies	Percentages	Frequencies	Percentages	
Albanian	17	5.90	7	5.83	0.07
Bosniak	34	11.81	14	11.67	0.14
Montenegrin	6	2.08	3	2.50	-0.42
Czech	11	3.82	5	4.17	-0.35
Hungarian	17	5.90	7	5.83	0.07
Macedonian	6	2.08	3	2.50	-0.42
German	2	0.69	1	0.83	-0.14
Roma	29	10.07	12	10.00	0.07
Ruthenian	4	1.39	2	1.67	-0.28
Slovakian	6	2.08	3	2.50	-0.42
Slovene	9	3.13	4	3.33	-0.21
Serbian	133	46.18	54	45.00	1.18
Italian	13	4.51	5	4.17	0.35
Ukrainian	1	0.35	0	0.00	0.35
Total	288	100.00	120	100.00	0.00

Table 8

Planned structure of the CNM sample based on affiliation to a particular national minority

The samples for councils and representatives of national minorities are twofold stratified: firstly, proportional to the shares of individual national minorities in the total number of councils and representatives of national minorities, and secondly according to representation per county. Since the number of participants is predetermined, the anticipated sample falls into the group of intentional quota samples of a proportional type (according to two control variables of the baseline set). The planned structure of the CNM sample, based on affiliation to a particular national minority, is shown in Table 8, and the planned structure of the RNM sample is shown in Table 9.

Given that the population of the representatives and councils of national minorities is distributed by counties in accordance with the representation of members of each national minority in the total population, in order to ensure the representativeness of the sample by another key variable, the sample is then twofold according to the parameters of population representation of representatives and councils of national minorities per county. After twofold stratification, a balanced representation of the various self-government units (municipalities, cities and counties) was ensured.

The realized sample of councils and representatives of national minorities (N = 243) encompassed 152 councils and 91 representatives of national minorities, representing 53% of all elected councils and representatives of national minorities.

Table 9
Planned structure of the
RNM sample based on
affiliation to a particular
national minority

National minority	Population parameters		Structure of the anticipated sample		Percentage deviation of the sample share from the population parameters
	Frequencies	Percentages	Frequencies	Percentages	
Albanian	22	13.02	11	12.22	0.80
Austrian	1	0.59	1	1.11	-0.52
Bosniak	8	4.73	4	4.44	0.29
Bulgarian	1	0.59	1	1.11	-0.52
Montenegrin	6	3.55	3	3.33	0.22
Czech	10	5.92	5	5.56	0.36
Hungarian	16	9.47	9	10.00	-0.53
Macedonian	6	3.55	3	3.33	0.22
German	4	2.37	2	2.22	0.14
Polish	1	0.59	1	1.11	-0.52
Roma	9	5.33	5	5.56	-0.23
Ruthenian	2	1.18	1	1.11	0.07
Russian	3	1.78	2	2.22	-0.45
Slovakian	4	2.37	2	2.22	0.14
Slovenian	14	8.28	7	7.78	0.51
Serbian	45	26.63	23	25.56	1.07
Italian	9	5.33	5	5.56	-0.23
Ukrainian	7	4.14	4	4.44	-0.30
Jewish	1	0.59	1	1.11	-0.52
Total	169	100.00	90	100.00	0.00

LRSU subsample: The sampling plan of this subgroup of respondents encompassed the entire population of those local and regional self-government units who have elected RNM and constituted CNM in their territories, as it was expected that this group would have the lowest response rate (which has been pointed out in many previous studies). The invitation to participate in the online survey was passed on to the executive bodies of local and regional self-governments (heads, mayors and prefects) through the Croatian County Community, city associations and association of municipalities of the Republic of Croatia, in order to achieve a higher response rate. It was proposed that the questionnaire be filled in on behalf of the self-government unit by the head, mayor or prefect. If they were unable to complete the questionnaire, it would be completed by their deputy/a person from the administrative department or service responsible for national minority issues (in smaller units these are generally administrative departments for social activities).

At the end of the field research, local and regional self-government units completed 64 questionnaires - 6 counties, 32 cities and 26 municipalities.

Subsample of key local development stakeholders: The selection of associations aimed at local community development was guided by the visibility criteria and evidence of good practices in achieving partner relations, involving national representatives of national minorities in their activities, and innovativeness in terms of project implementation. The target sample envisaged 42 organizations, two for each county. Local action groups (LAGs), local community development associations, national minority associations and local development agencies were considered.

Civil society organizations completed 49 questionnaires, of which 16 were LAGs, and the remaining were national minority associations or associations aimed at local community development.

Subsample error: Since the total population of civil society organizations is unknown, the error for the CSO subsample cannot be calculated. Therefore, Table 10 lists the error estimations for the other examined subsamples: RNM, CNM, CRNM and LRSGU.

SUBSAMPLE	95 percentile confidence interval (5% error estimation)	99 percentile confidence interval (1% error estimation)
RNM	± 7.1 %	± 9.4 %
CNM	± 5.5 %	± 7.3 %
CRNM	± 4.3 %	± 5.7 %
LRSGU	± 10.8 %	± 14.3 %

Table 10
 Error estimation of the subsample

Although the size of the sample is directly related to the reduction in the overall error estimation, there is no general rule as to how many respondents a sample should contain. Nevertheless, it is almost always customary to expect samples with a smaller number of units to be regularly less precise than those with greater ones. **Given that there were only 49 CSOs and 64 LRSGU in the subsamples of this research, it must be noted that the results and interpretations outlined below can only be considered indicatively and relatively imprecise with respect to the CRNM subsample (N = 243).**

2.3.3. Measuring instruments, questionnaires and semi-structured guide

In order to achieve the objectives of the research, the measuring instruments were constructed according to the conceptual and analytical scheme of the research, which describes the key actors and their mutual relations in the three mentioned areas of activity (law enforcement, creating policies/policy making, cooperation of local development actors). The instruments consist of questions and statements with nominal or ordinal scale estimates.

Four questionnaires were constructed (Annexes 1, 2, 3 and 4) with fewer deviations in the content and topics tailored to the four subgroups of respondents (CNM, RNM, LRSGU, CSO) and a semi-structured guide for individual in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (Annex 5).

2.3.4. Data processing methods

The interviews and focus group discussions were audio recorded, listened multiple times and transcribed (example of transcript in Appendix 6). Descriptive analysis of qualitative data for thematic areas was used to gain deeper insight into the research subject and to adjust the thematic framework and operationalization, and to improve the instruments for quantitative research. Thus, only a small number of interviews and focus groups were held just before the survey, while the remaining in-depth interviews and group discussions were conducted during the field surveys (at the time of data collection). The quantitative data collected through questionnaires were merged into the SPSS database and analysed by univariate, bial and multivariate statistical procedures.

Descriptive and inferential statistics¹⁶ were applied during the analysis of the quantitative research results. Within the descriptive statistical indicators, the frequency distribution of all manifest variables (in the case of qualitative variables - percentage distribution of responses, in the case of quantitative variables - arithmetic mean and deviation standard) were analysed, along with graphic display of relevant manifest variables (structural circles in the case of qualitative variables, and a frequency histogram in the case of quantitative variables).

Within inferential statistics, the relevant parameters of three key populations were assessed using tests of statistically significant differences and correlations. In the examples of correlation testing of certain relevant phenomena, parametric and nonparametric correlation measurements were applied, depending on the type of analysed variables (the correlation of qualitative variables is tested with the Chi-squared test and the Spearman rank correlation coefficient, while the Pearson correlation coefficient was used in the case of quantitative variables). Determination of statistically significant differences is performed, depending on the number of analysed groups, using t-test and variance analysis. T-test is used when testing statistical significance differences between two groups. Variance analysis is used when testing statistical significance differences between more groups.

Latent (background) space measurements were researched by means of exploratory factor analysis, determining the dimensionality of the latent space as well as the level of internal consistency of the measuring instruments by calculating the Cronbach α confidence coefficient. Based on the obtained factor structures, composite additive indices were constructed.

2.3.5. Categorization of national minorities

For analysis purposes based on the type of national minority, the following categorization was used:

1. Roma national minority;
2. "New" national minorities (includes members of Albanian, Bosniak, Montenegrin, Macedonian, Slovene and Serbian national minorities);
3. "Old" (traditional) national minorities (include members of Czech, Hungarian, Ruthenian, Slovakian, Italian and Ukrainian national minorities).

All tests of differences between the mentioned types of national minorities are conducted without

¹⁶ The results of the empirical research were analyzed in the statistical package SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). All statistical tests were carried out at a 5% level of risk.

members of five national minorities i.e. without seven respondents (one member of the Jewish, Polish and Bulgarian national minorities, and two members of the German and Russian minorities).

2.3.6. Regional division of the Republic of Croatia

For the purposes of regional analysis, the Republic of Croatia is divided into six geo-demographic and economic-specific regions (Figure 2):

1. North Croatia (Varaždin, Koprivnica-Križevci, Bjelovar-Bilogora, Virovitica-Podravina and Međimurje counties);
2. East Croatia / Slavonia (Požega-Slavonia, Brod-Posavina, Osijek-Baranja and Vukovar-Srijem counties);
3. Zagreb region (the City of Zagreb and Zagreb County);
4. Central Croatia / (Sisak-Moslavina, Karlovac and Lika-Senj counties);
5. Istria and Primorje (Primorje-Gorski Kotar and Istria counties);
6. South Croatia / Dalmatia (Šibenik-Knin, Split-Dalmatia, Zadar and Dubrovnik-Neretva counties).

The mentioned regions cover several micro-regions of Croatia obtained by the multivariate classification of former municipalities.¹⁷

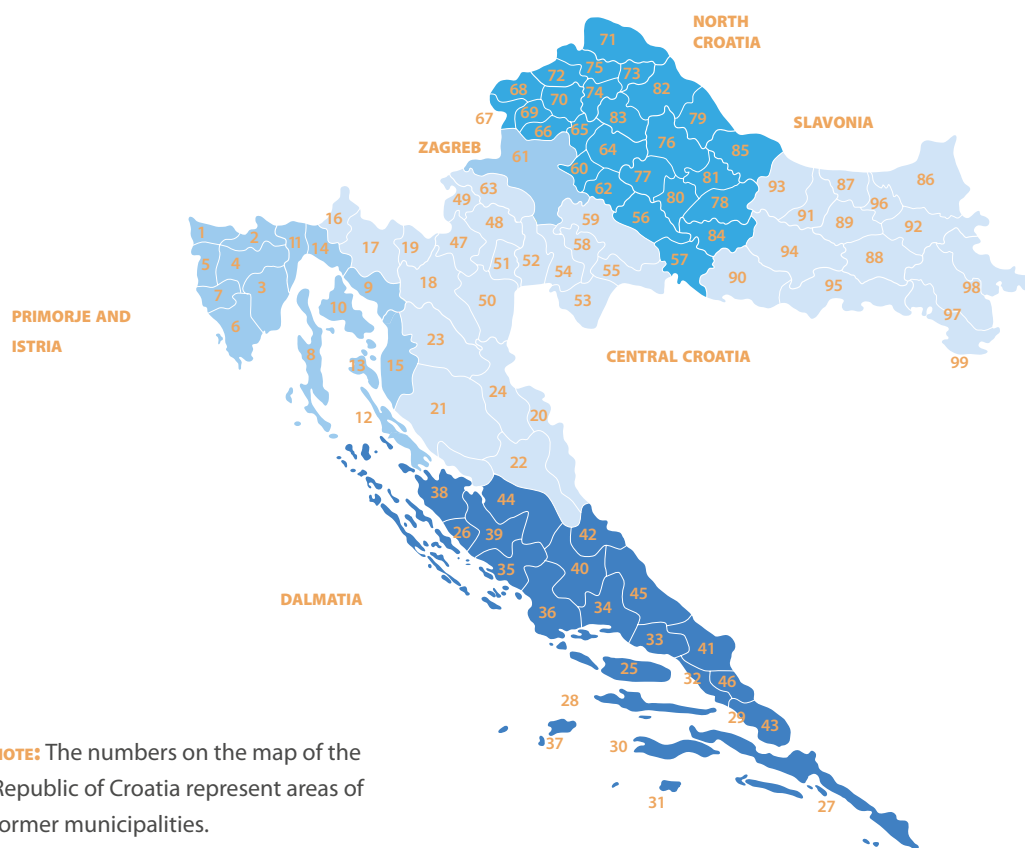


Figure 2
Regional division of the
Republic of Croatia

NOTE: The numbers on the map of the Republic of Croatia represent areas of former municipalities.

¹⁷ From several socio-economic and demographic indicators of development of Croatian municipalities, seven items were identified by means of factor analysis, while the cluster analysis retained a solution with 22 microregions (Rimac, I., Rihtar, S., Oliveira-Roca, M., 1992).

2.3.7. Ethical issues

During the data collection, processing and analysis, and the publication of results, the researchers respected ethical standards in the conduct of social research in relation to protecting the research participants' privacy and all necessary measures were taken in order to protect against any possible damage to the research participants.

PROTECTION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Obtaining informed consent for participation in the research

Participation of respondents in the survey was voluntary and anonymous. Before conducting the survey, the respondents were familiarized with the subject, purpose and objectives of the research, as well as the method of gathering the data and they had the option- if they were not interested in participating in the survey – to refuse to participate. Furthermore, they had the right to refuse to participate in the research at any time during the survey. In this regard, the informed consent to participate in the research shall be oral. The same ethical principle is applied in the implementation of in-depth interviews and in focus group discussions.

Protection of participants' anonymity

The anonymity of the research participants is fully guaranteed since their contact information will not be linked to the completed questionnaires. Since the research results will be presented as a total, the identity of individual participants will not be able to be determined.

The qualitative data collected during the interviews and focus group discussions is anonymised and processed together per topic. The list of interviewed participants and the scope of information which they will receive will be disclosed to the project beneficiary, the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. This information will not be publicly disclosed and will serve only the purpose of verifying the scope of consulted stakeholders, whose views are relevant to the researched topic.

Data storage

Access to the original data will only be granted to the analytical researchers during the duration of the research. The completed questionnaires collected during the research will be stored in the project office in Zagreb until the end of the project period, after which they will be recycled.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The GAP analysis is an integral part of the project Support to the Councils of National Minorities at the Local Level and it is aimed at ensuring the full and effective exercise of human rights and improving and facilitating the active and full participation of national minorities in the economic, cultural and social life of Croatian society, while preserving their own identity, culture and tradition.

The project encompasses the implementation of research-analytical and educational activities as well as activities related to designing, establishing and testing a web-based interface for monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities. The objective of the project is to provide preconditions for the active participation of councils and representatives of national minorities in monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and the development of their own local communities in the Republic of Croatia.

The central part of the monitoring and evaluation of the exercise of minority rights and freedoms is based on empirical research from the perspective of three subsamples: councils and representatives of national minorities, local and regional self-government units and key local development stakeholders. Specifically, the analysis focuses on three areas of activity of the councils and representatives of national minorities:

- *monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Law at the local and regional level;*
- *active participation in the creation of local development policies and policies aimed at protecting human rights and the rights of national minorities;*
- *active networking with key stakeholders in local development and participation in community development processes.*

The project covered qualitative and quantitative research methods and techniques. Qualitative research was conducted by means of individual in-depth interviews and by moderating group discussions (focus groups). Seven in-depth interviews were conducted and three focus groups were organized with representatives of county and city CNM coordinations in three cities (Zagreb, Bjelovar and Split) in order to gain insight into the specifics of their work. The semi-structured in-depth interviews lasted for an average of 60 minutes, and the moderated focus group discussions lasted for an average of 90 minutes. The data merged with qualitative research was collected in the period from 22 March to 22 July 2016.

The quantitative research was conducted by a survey method on a quota two-stage stratified sample. Depending on the availability of representatives and members of national minority councils, heads of local and regional self-government units and civil society organizations in the selected sample, the following techniques were applied: online questionnaire using the LimeSurvey application, face-to-face questionnaire with cooperation of field interviewers, polling with a postage-paid questionnaire and telephone questionnaires. A total of 356 accurately completed questionnaires were collected (277 online, 19 face-to-

face, 55 via post and 5 via telephone). Fulfillment of the questionnaire lasted for an average of 50 minutes and the data was collected in the period from 31 May to 31 August 2016.

The realized sample of councils and representatives of national minorities (N=243) encompassed 152 councils and 91 representatives of national minorities, representing 53% of all constituted councils and elected representatives of national minorities in the 2015 elections. At the end of the questionnaire, local and regional self-government units completed 64 questionnaires, including 6 counties, 32 cities and 26 municipalities. Civil society organizations completed 49 questionnaires, of which 16 were LAGs, while the rest were associations of national minorities or associations that work for the purpose of local community development.

3

ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH RESULTS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CRNM, CSO AND LRSGU

3 ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH RESULTS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CRNM, CSO AND LRSGU

3.1. Basic features of the realized samples

3.1.1. Realized sample

The realized sample encompassed a total of 356 respondents: 91 representatives of national minorities (RNM), 152 national minority councils (CNM), 64 local and regional self-government units (LRSGU) on whose territory the councils and representatives of national minorities were elected in the 2015 elections, and 49 civil society organizations (CSOs) dealing with local development and issues of national minorities.

The analysed sample encompassed 68% of council members and representatives of national minorities, 18% of heads of self-government units and 14% of members of civil society organizations (Figure 3).

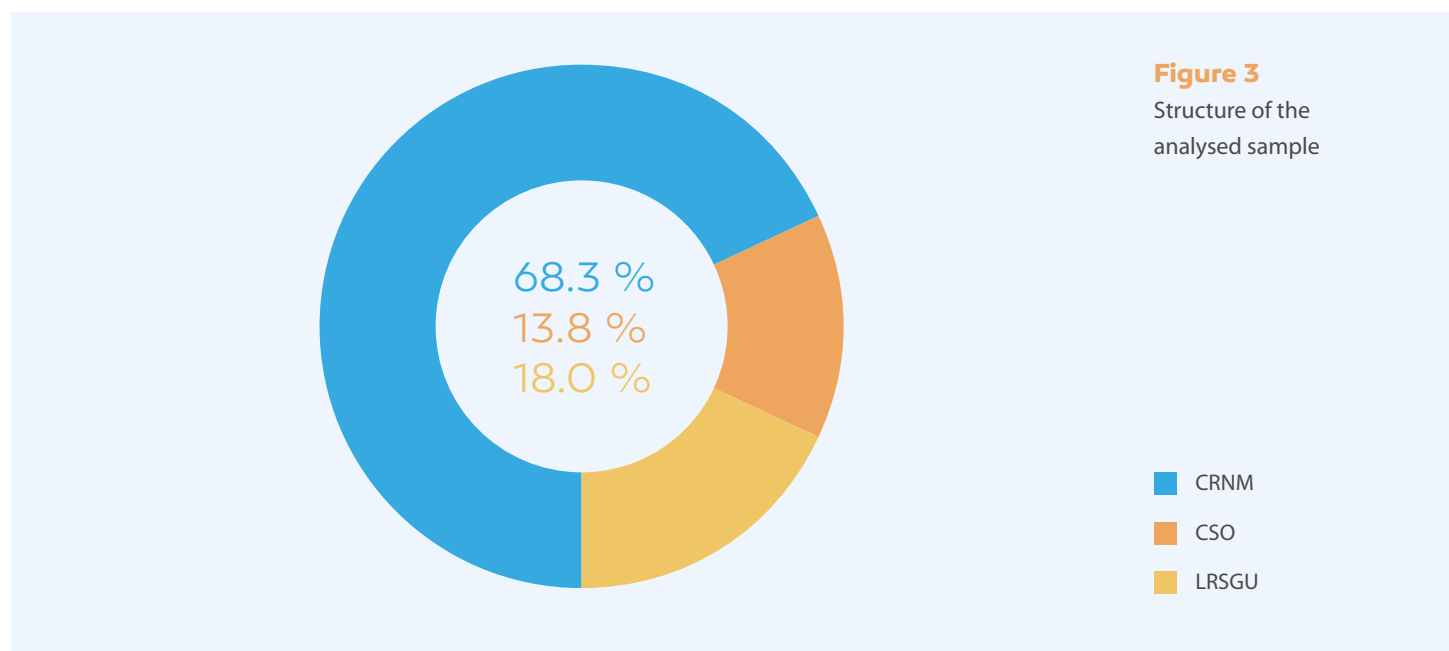




Figure 3
Structure of the analysed sample

3.1.2. CRNM subsample

Of the total number of elected representatives and constituted councils of national minorities in the 2015 elections, the questionnaire was completed by 54% of national minority representatives (Figure 4) and 53% of members of national minority councils (Figure 5).

Given the total population, 53% of CRNM were questioned (Figure 6).

Figure 4
Share of questioned and unquestioned RNM

Questioned 
Unquestioned 

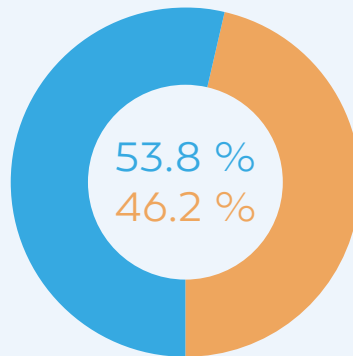




Figure 5
Share of questioned and unquestioned CNM

Questioned 
Unquestioned 

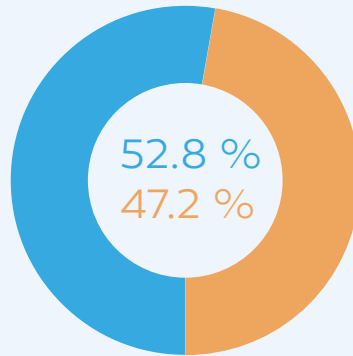


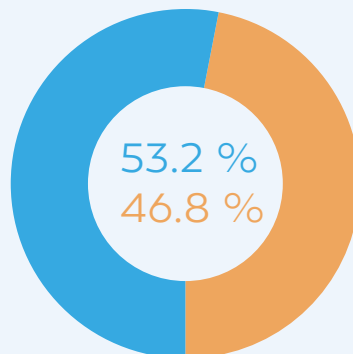


Figure 6
Share of questioned and unquestioned CRNM

Questioned 
Unquestioned 



The realized CRNM subsample encompasses responses from 37% of representatives of national minorities and 63% of members of national minority councils (Figure 7).

With regard to the subsample of national minority councils (Figure 8), the questionnaires were mostly completed by the presidents of the councils (CNM) (86%).

The largest share of questioned CRNM, almost half, were from Istria, Primorje and East Croatia (Slavonia), while the smallest share of questioned CRNM were from the Zagreb region (Figure 9).

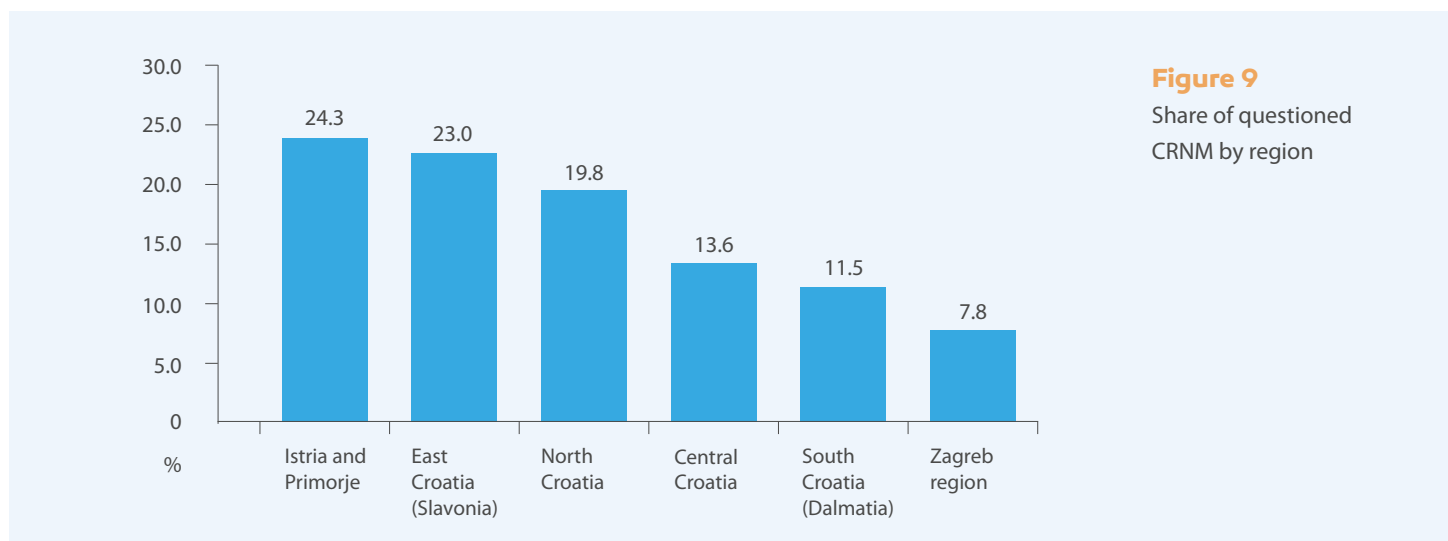
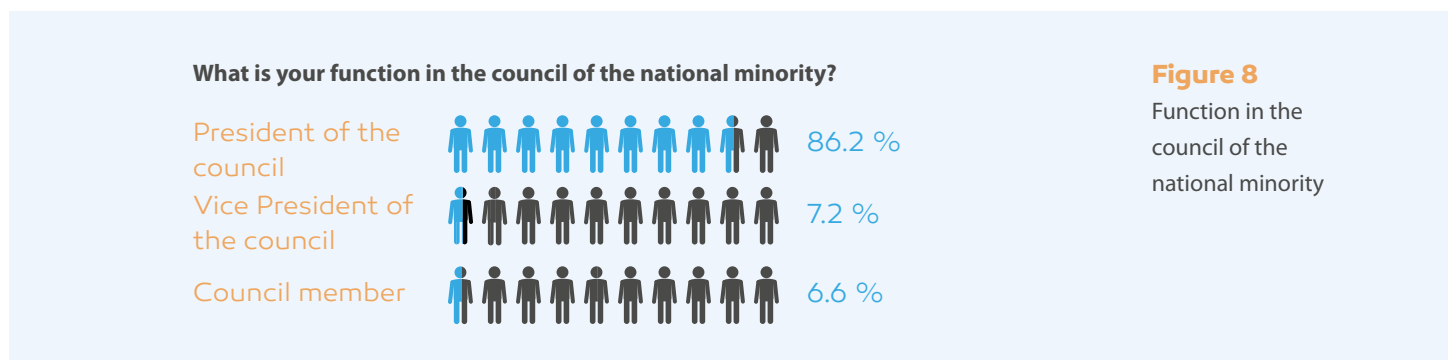
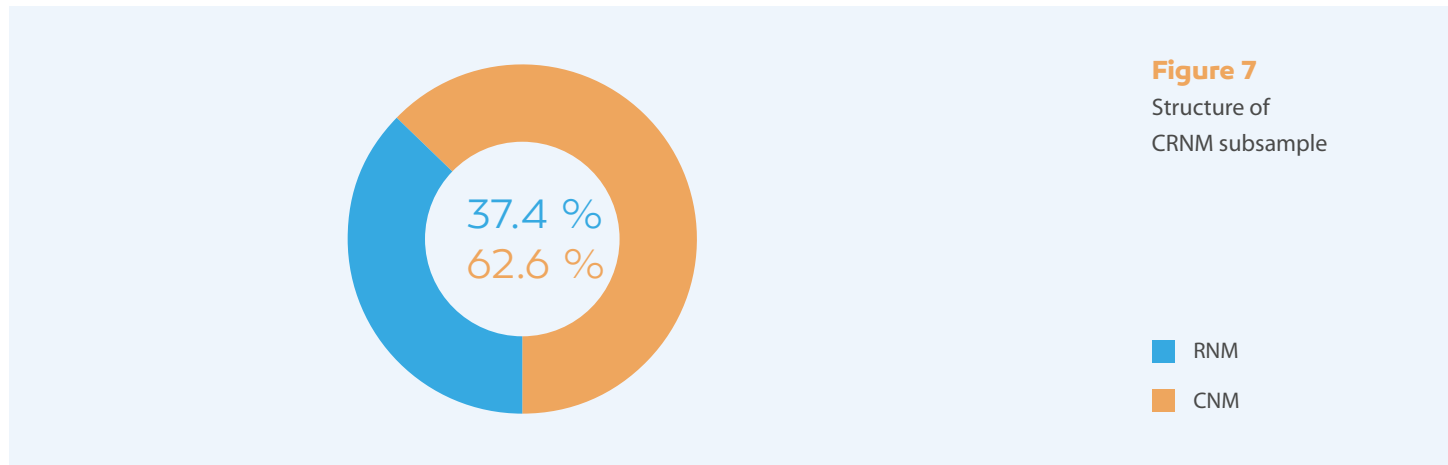
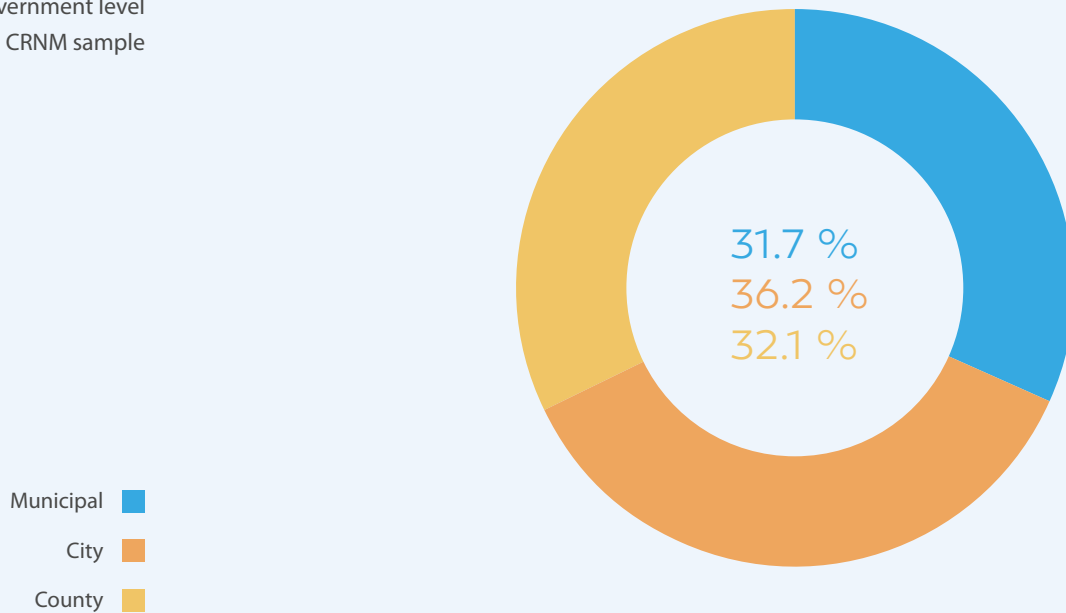


Figure 10

Self-government level
of the CRNM sample



With regard to the level of self-government, approximately one third of the representatives and council members of national minorities were questioned at each level (Figure 10).

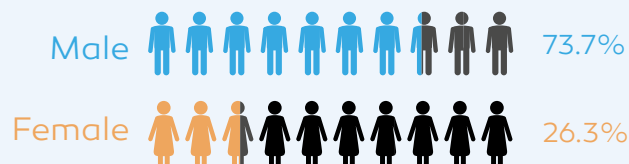
3.1.3. Socio-demographic features of CRNM

Figures 11, 12 and 13 show that among the questioned CRNM, the majority were male (74%), older than 50 (almost 60%), tertiary (48%) and secondary education (46%). There is a noticeably low representation of the young population – aged up to 30 (6%).

Figure 14 shows that more than half of the questioned representatives (RNM) and council members (CNM) are employed, while 45% are currently not employed (30% retirees and 15% unemployed).

Figure 11

Gender of the
questioned CRNM



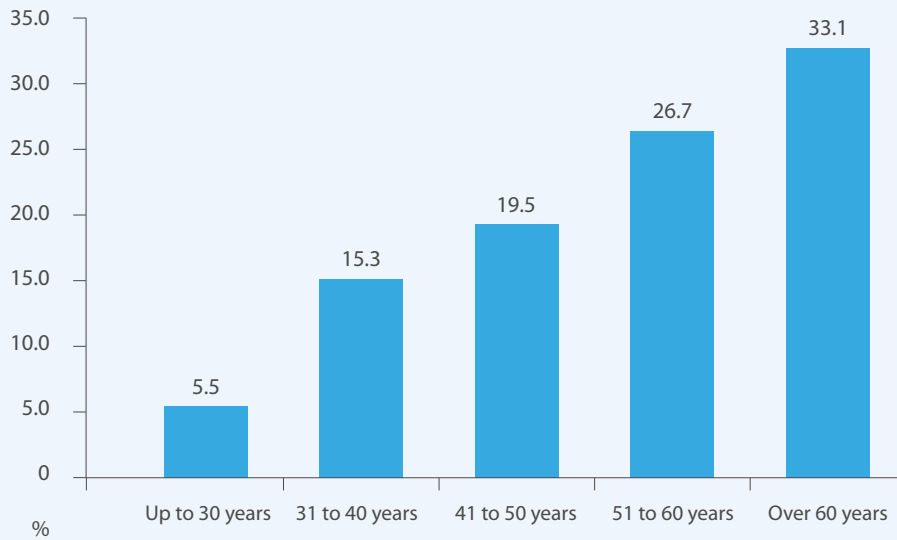


Figure 12
 Age of the questioned
 CRNM

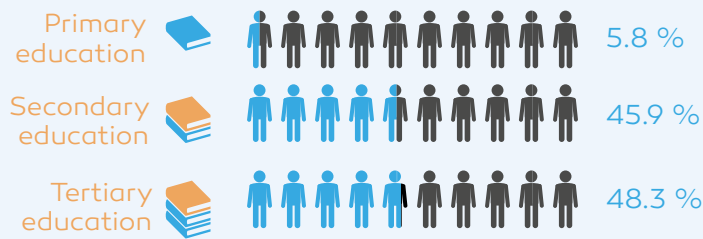


Figure 13
 Level of education of
 questioned CRNM

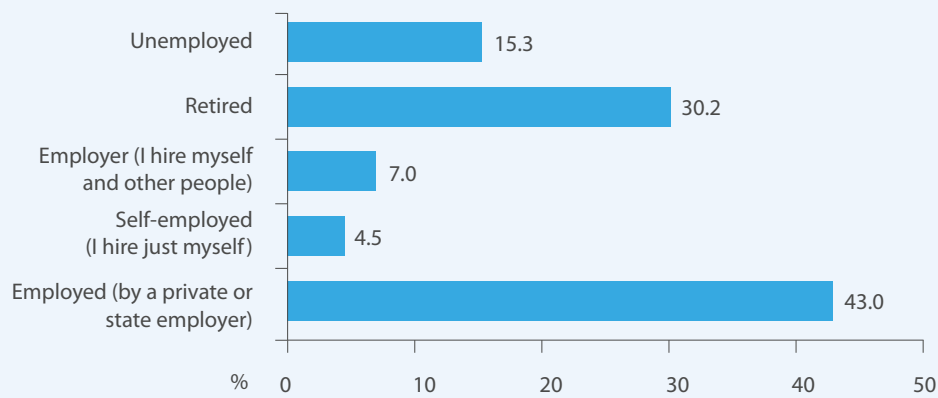


Figure 14
 Employment status of
 questioned CRNM

Given the socio-demographic features of CRNM, certain statistically significant differences and correlations have been established:

- The share of women in CRNM is greater in “old” (traditional) national minorities and smaller in “new” and Roma national minorities;
- The share of persons with low professional qualifications is higher at the municipal self-government level and lower at the city and county self-government levels;
- The largest share of the younger age groups was determined in the councils and among the representatives of the Roma national minority, which also had the largest share of persons with low professional qualifications;
- The largest number of questioned CRNM assessed their own financial situation as neither better nor worse than most, while those who assessed their own financial situation worse than most were mainly situated at the municipal level.

HIGHLIGHTED

- Among the questioned CRNM, the majority were male (74%), older than 50 (almost 60%), tertiary (48%) and secondary education (46%). There is a noticeably low representation of the young population – aged up to 30 (6%), and women (26%).
- More than half of the questioned representatives (RNM) and council members (CNM) are employed, while 45% are currently not employed (30% retirees and 15% unemployed).

3.1.4. Subsample of CSO members and LRSGU representatives

A total of 113 members of civil society organizations and representatives of local/regional self-government units (Figure 15) were questioned. The realized sample encompassed 43% of civil society organizations (N = 49) and 57% of local/regional self-government units (N = 64).

The CSO subsample (Figure 16) encompassed 17 national minority associations (35%), 16 local action groups (33%) and 16 other types of civil society organizations (33%).

The LRSGU subsample (Figure 17) encompassed 32 city (50%), 26 municipal (41%) and 6 county (9%) self-government units.

With regard to the overall LRSGU population, where NM representatives and NM constituted councils were elected in the 2015 elections, the sample encompassed 30.05% of self-government units, namely: 29% of county, 40% of city and 23% of municipal self-government units in which CRNM have been established.

The regional representation of questioned CSO members and representatives of self-government units (Figure 18) shows that, as in the case of the CRNM subsample, the largest share of those questioned, almost half, were from East Croatia (Slavonia) and Istria and Primorje, while the smallest number of those questioned were from South Croatia (Dalmatia).

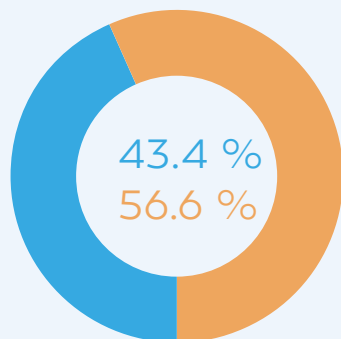


Figure 15

Structure of the CSO and LRSGU subsample

- CSO
- LRSGU

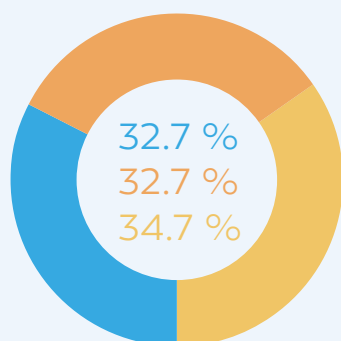


Figure 16

Structure of the CSO subsample based on the type of civil society organization

- LAG
- Other CSOs
- NM associations

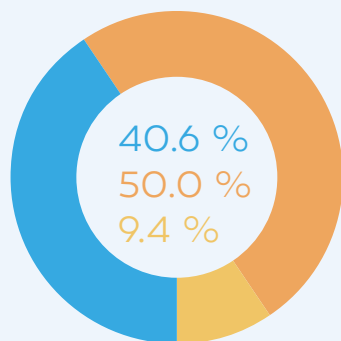


Figure 17

Self-government level of the LRSGU sample

- Municipal
- City
- County

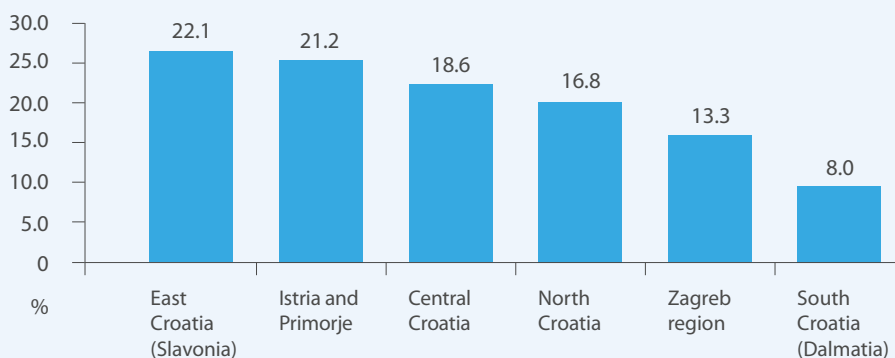
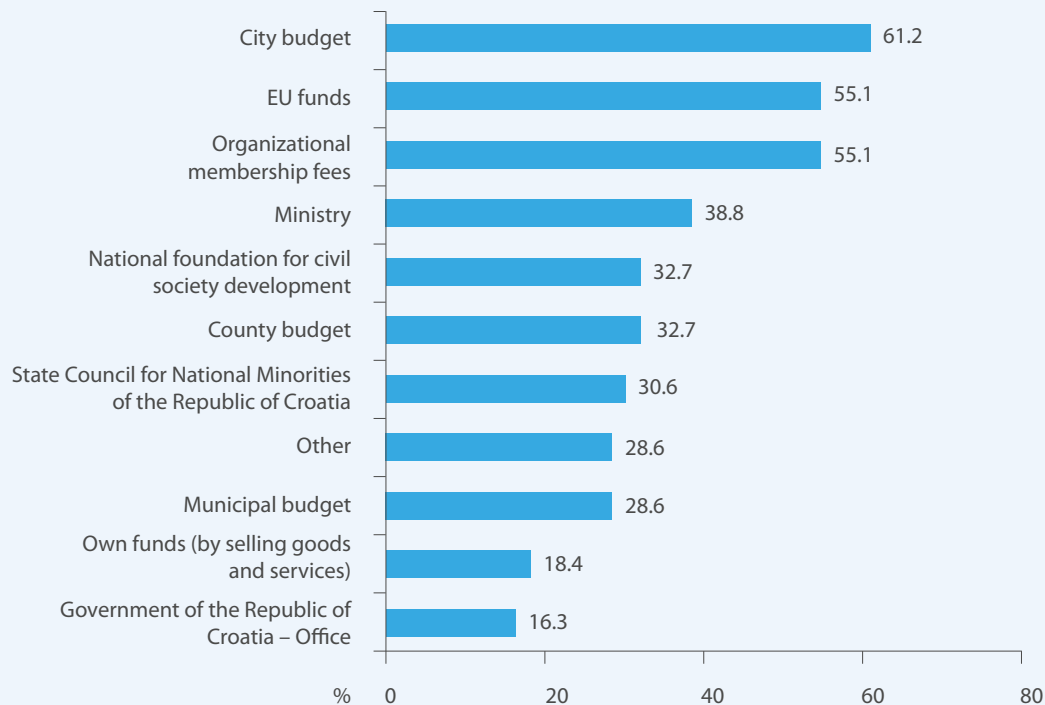


Figure 18

Share of questioned CSO and LRSGU by region

Figure 19

Funding sources of questioned CSOs



3.1.5. Structure of CSO subsample with regard to funding sources

The largest number of questioned civil society organizations are funded from a variety of sources, mostly from the city budget, European funds and organizational membership fees (Figure 19).

3.2. Monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities

3.2.1. The influence of passing CLRNM on the position of members of national minorities in the local community

Less than one third (26%) of the questioned CSO members and LRSGU representatives assessed that CLRNM significantly improved the position of NM members in the local community (Figure 20). If we add the 30 percent who believe that CLRNM's contribution to the improvement of the position of national minorities in the local community is average, it is possible to deduce that almost half of the respondents perceive certain positive contributions of CLRNM to the position of national minorities in the local community. However, almost a quarter (24%) of those members of civil society organizations and representatives of self-government units assessed CLRNM's contribution to improving the position of NM members in the local community as small while one fifth (20%) could not assess the influence of CLRNM on the position of NM In the local community.

The previous finding becomes more instructive and interesting if a statistically significant difference between the two subsamples, members of civil society organizations and representatives of self-government units, is taken into consideration when assessing CLRNM's contribution to NM's position in the local community (Figure 21). Namely, the determined difference shows that members of civil society organizations assess CLRNM's contribution to the improvement of NM members' position in the local community lower (average value = 2.67) than heads of LRSGU who assess it higher (average value = 3.31), and the same and not so small number (20%) of those in both subsamples who could not assess the contribution of CLRNM. In the wider sense, when assessing CLRNM's contribution to improving the position of national minorities in the local community, it is possible to note that both of the questioned subsamples agreed on certain positive contributions in the area of its application in favour of the better position of national minorities. However, it is also shown that LRSGU representatives predominate in this assessment, attributing a higher contribution (67%) to the improvement of NM's position as opposed to CSO members' attribution (41%). Namely, among CSO members, there was an equal number of those who claimed that there were positive shifts (41%) compared to those who claimed that CLRNM's contribution to the improvement of NM's position was low or none (39%).

CLRNM's contribution to the improved position of NM members in the local community is largely confirmed by members of civil society organizations and representatives of self-government units who also believe that LRSGU bodies accept CRNM as relevant partners in creating policies related to NMs and those who attribute a greater contribution to the effective implementation and application of CLRNM i.e. they attribute greater contribution to the upgrading and protection of the NM position by all the examined actors (with the exception of the Ombudsman)

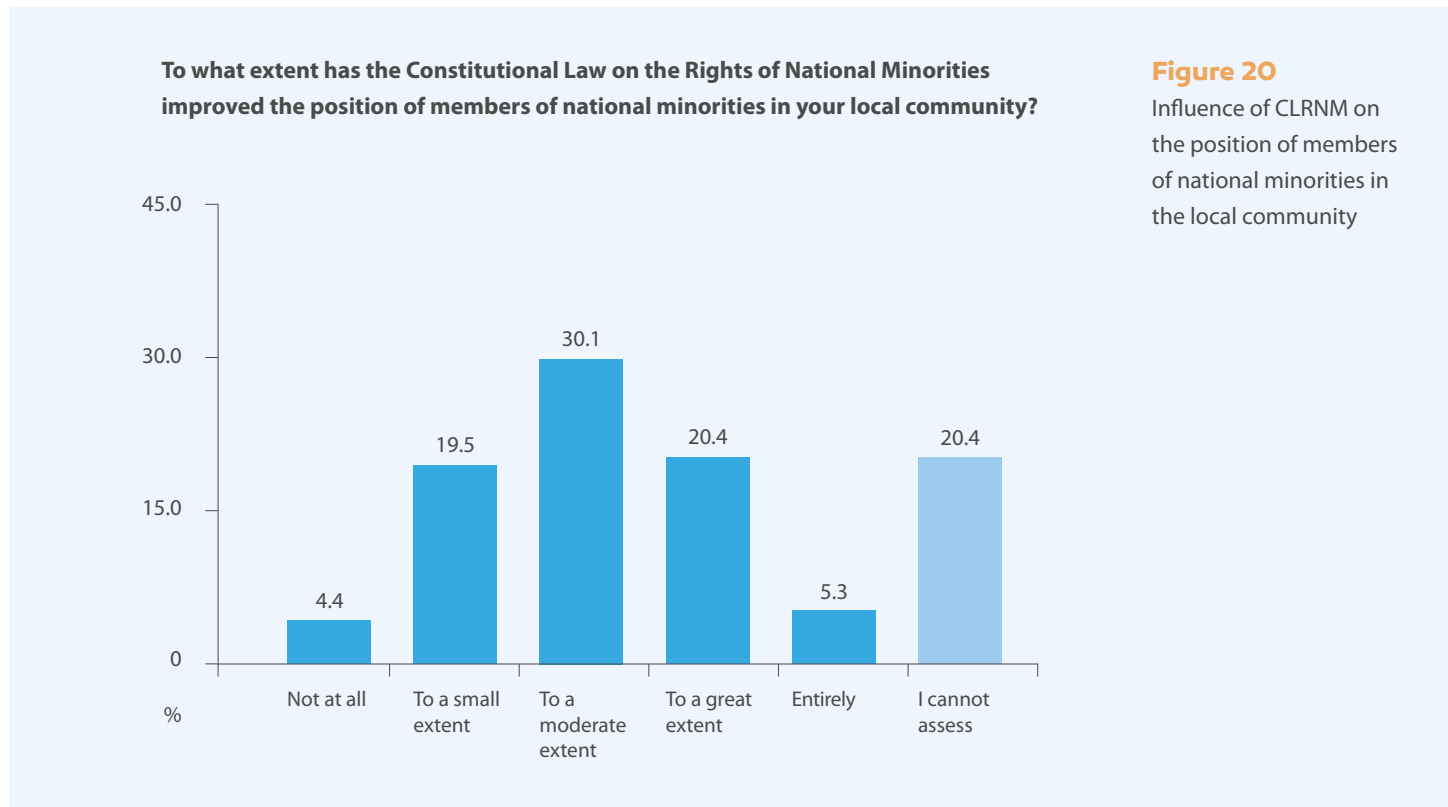


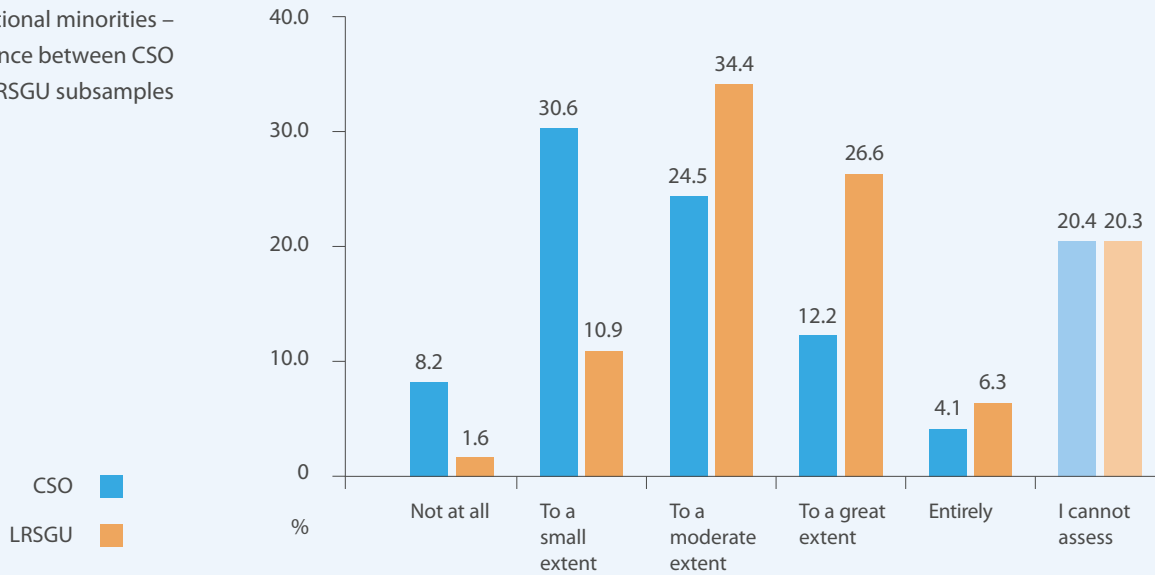
Figure 20
Influence of CLRNM on the position of members of national minorities in the local community

Additionally, in the CSO subsample, CLRNM's contribution to the position of national minorities in the local community was more positively assessed by those members of civil society organizations who were more satisfied with the communication with LRSKU bodies than those who were not.

Figure 21

CLRNM's contribution to the position of member of national minorities – difference between CSO and LRSKU subsamples

To what extent has the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities improved the position of members of national minorities in your local community?



HIGHLIGHTED

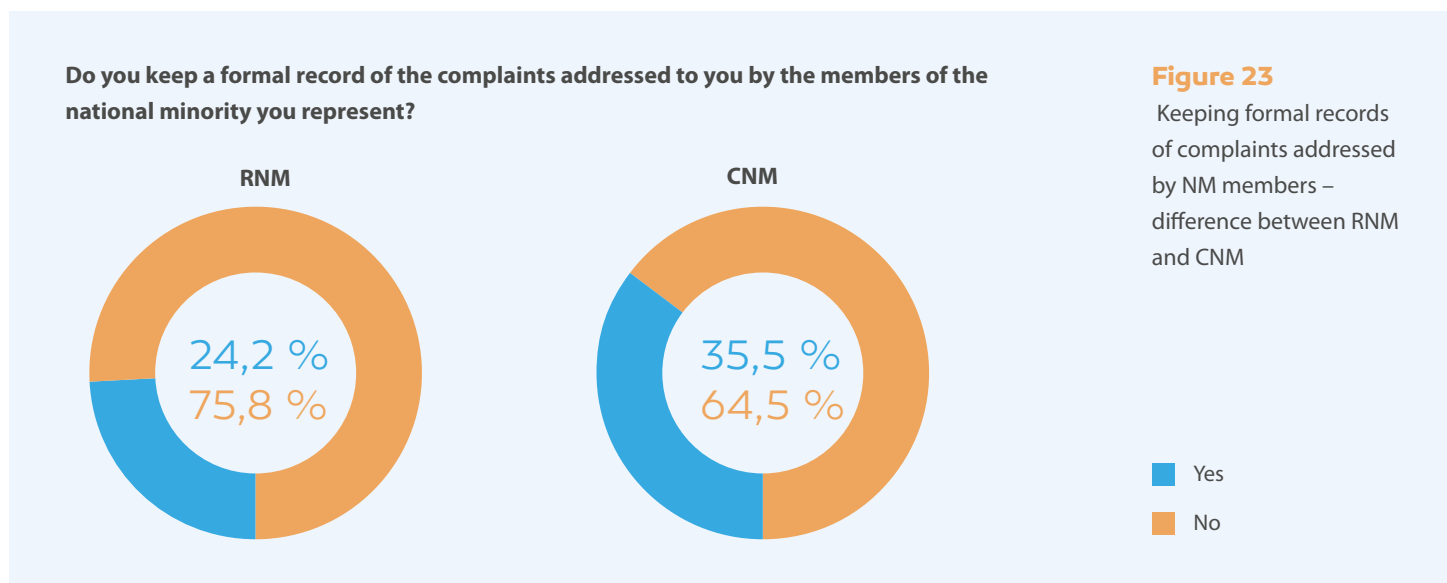
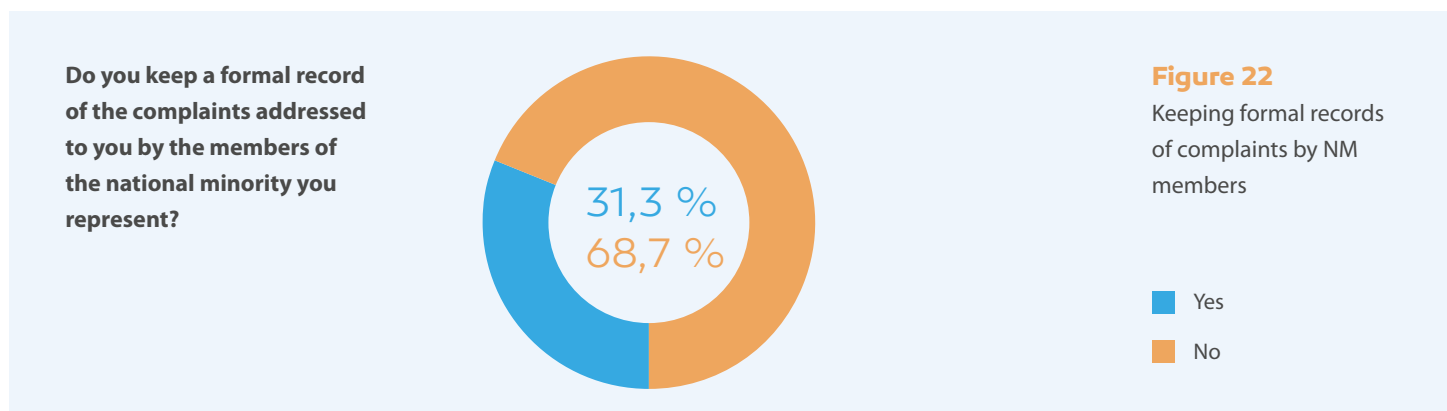
- More than half (56%) of the questioned CSOs and LRSKUs attributed a moderate or significant contribution of CLRNM to improving the position of national minorities in the local community.
- In addition, members of civil society organizations assess CLRNM's contribution to the improvement of NM members' position in the local community lower (average value = 2.67) in relation to the heads of LRSKU who assess it higher (average value = 3.31),
- Hence, when assessing CLRNM's contribution to improving the position of national minorities in the local community, it is possible to note that both of the questioned subsamples agreed on certain positive contributions in the area of its application in favor of the better position of national minorities. However, it is also shown that LRSKU representatives predominate in this assessment, attributing a higher contribution than CSO members, among which there was an equal number of those who claimed that there were positive shifts (41%) compared to those who claimed that CLRNM's contribution to the improvement of NM's position was low or none (39%).

3.2.2. Respecting the rights of national minorities

3.2.2.1. Keeping records on respecting the rights of national minorities

Slightly less than a third of the questioned CRNMs keep a formal record of the complaints addressed by members of the national minority they represent (Figure 22).

Although there is a larger proportion of CNM among those questioned who keep a formal record, there was no statistically significant difference between the representatives and councils in monitoring and keeping formal records of complaints addressed by members of the national minority they represent (Figure 23).



Whereby, formal records are mainly led by:

- Members of “new” national minorities in relation to members of “old” (traditional) NM;
- CRNM that have office equipment (landline telephone, computer, email address and website), logistic and financial resources for use and they use a computer to carry out activities for CRNM purposes;
- those councils and representatives who keep themselves well familiarized with the legal framework of the CRNM institution;

- CRNM who fulfil their obligations towards LRSGU (regularly submit work plans, financial plans and final accounts to the competent local/regional self-government bodies),
- CRNM who receive complaints on the violation of minority rights by members of the national minority they represent.

On the other hand, the situation is even worse among the questioned heads of LRSGU: only 7 (11%) declared that their self-government unit keeps a formal record of respecting the rights of national minorities (Figure 24).

The previous finding is supported by the statistically significant difference determined between CRNM and LRSGU with regard to keeping formal records. Councils and representatives of national minorities largely keep a formal record of the complaints addressed by members of the national minority they represent, while self-government units keep significantly less formal record of respecting the rights of national minorities.

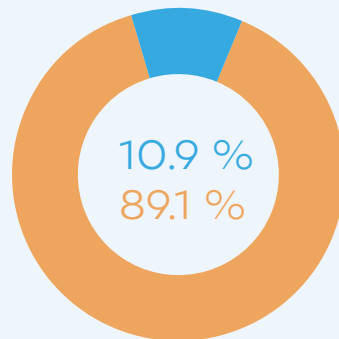
3.2.2.2. Receiving complaints regarding the violation of minority rights

Nearly half (48%) of the questioned CRNM members (during the current mandate) were addressed by members of the national minority they represent for complaints regarding violation of their legally guaranteed rights (Figure 25).

Figure 24

Keeping formal records of respecting the rights of NM – LRSGU subsample

Yes 
No 

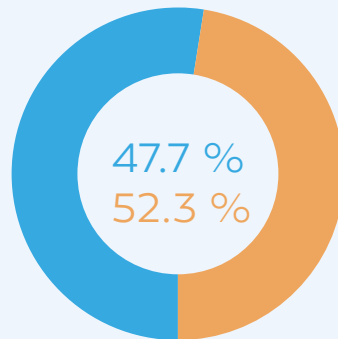


Do you keep a formal record of the complaints addressed to you by the members of the national minority you represent?

Figure 25

Complaints of NM members during the current CRNM mandate

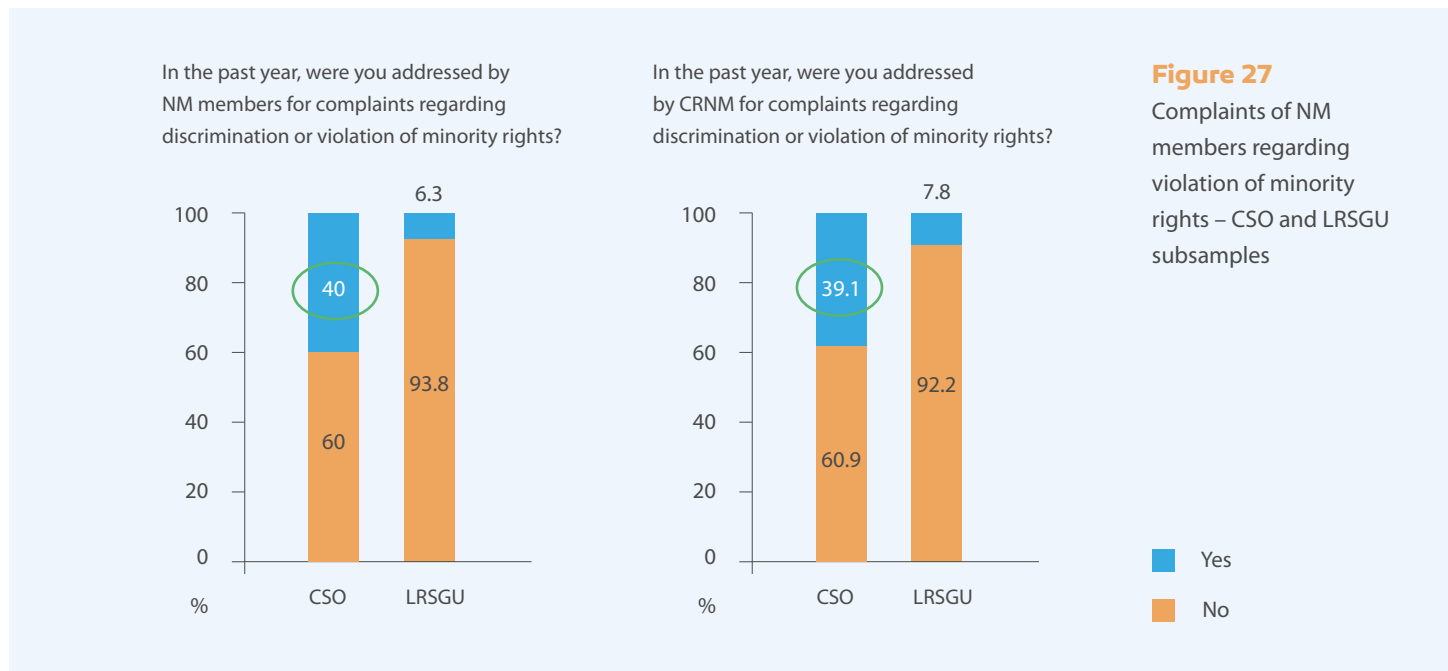
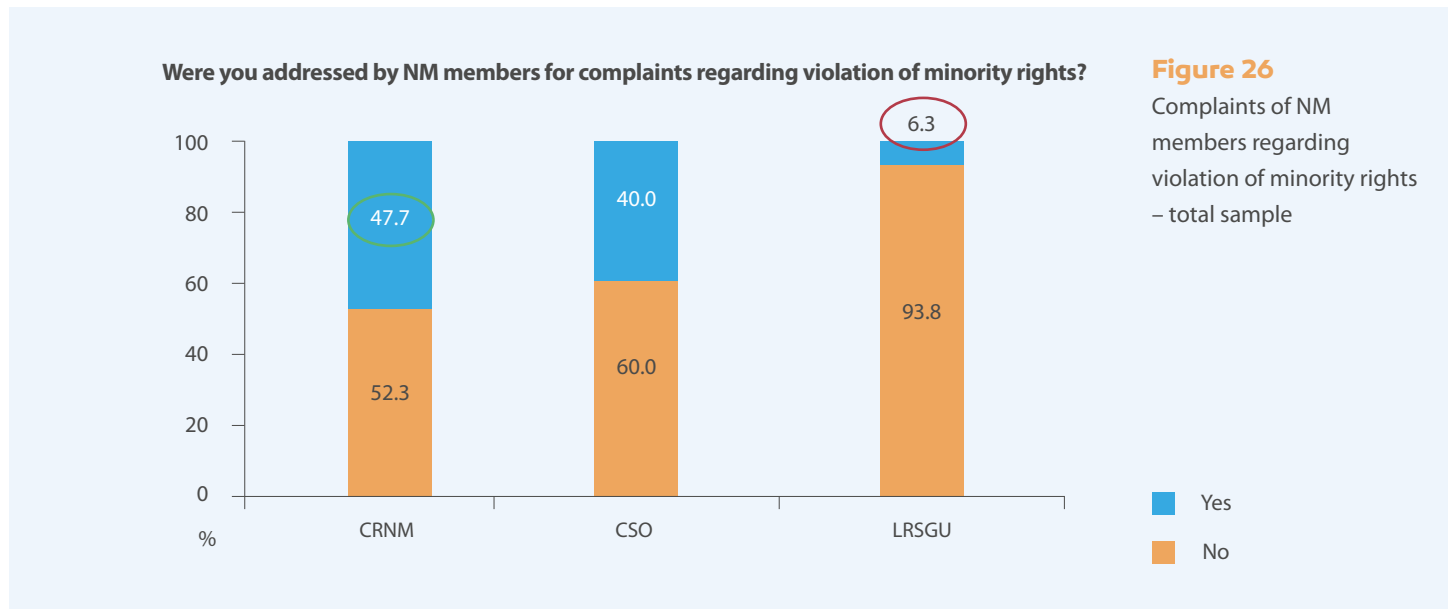
Yes 
No 



During the current mandate, were you ADDRESSED BY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL MINORITY YOU REPRESENT for complaints regarding the violation of their legally guaranteed rights?

In addition to the large number of complaints submitted to CRNM, a significant number of complaints were submitted to civil society organizations. 40 percent of the questioned CSO members confirmed that in the past year, their organizations were addressed by members of national minorities in connection with discrimination or violation of minority rights. On the other hand, only 6% of the questioned LRSGU representatives stated that in the past year, members of national minorities addressed their own self-government units due to complaints on discrimination or violation of minority rights (Figure 26).

Given the above data, the results shown in Figure 27 additionally support the perceived tendency that members of national minorities and CRNM will more likely address their complaints regarding discrimination or violation of minority rights to civil society organizations (and less to self-government units).



3.2.2.3. Respecting the rights of national minorities in the local community

In order to gain insight into the exercise of minority rights at the local level and to identify whether certain rights and freedoms of national minorities are respected, the research included an instrument that measures the beliefs of the questioned participants with regard to the special rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities.¹⁷

According to the questioned CRNM, the minority right that is least respected is the right to representation in representative bodies at the state and local level, and in administrative and juridical bodies (Figure 28). This belief was held by 45 percent of the questioned CRNM.

Similar opinions were held by the questioned members of civil society organizations – the national minority rights which is least respected in the local community is also the right to representation in representative bodies at the state and local level, and in administrative and juridical bodies (Figure 29). 43 percent of the questioned CSO members agreed with this opinion.

In this respect, the right to representation in the representative bodies at the state and local level, as well as in the administrative and juridical bodies, as the right that is not sufficiently respected in the local community, is mostly mentioned by members of NM associations and less by members of other types of civil society organizations.

According to the opinion of the questioned heads of self-government units, the national minority right which is least respected in the local community is the right of access to the media and public information services (receiving and disseminating information) in the language and script of the national minority (Figure 30). This belief is held by 39 percent of LRSGU representatives.

When distinguishing (ranking) the rights of national minorities that are least respected in the local community, a statistically significant difference has been determined between the CRNM subsample, CSO members and LRSGU representatives. Hence:

- the right to have IDENTITY CARDS cards printed in the language and script of a national minority and the right to self-organization and ASSOCIATION in pursuance of common interests are rights that are poorly respected in the local community and they are more often pointed out by LRSGU representatives, and less by CRNM;
- the right to REPRESENTATION in the representative bodies at the state and local level, as well as in the administrative and juridical bodies and the right of members of national minorities to participate in public life and local self-government through councils and representatives of national minorities were more often pointed out by CRNM, and less by LRSGU representatives.

¹⁷ In this way, it failed to separate the political participation at the state and local level i.e. representation in the Croatian Parliament, municipal and city councils and county assemblies, and in the executive bodies of the units (deputy mayors, mayors, prefects) from representation in administrative bodies at the state and local level, which employ members of national minorities. For this reason, the dissatisfaction of the respondents regarding the exercise of these rights from the CLRN should be taken with a grain of salt as the right to political participation is fully realized and there is no reason to express dissatisfaction in that part. On the other hand, members of national minorities are insufficiently represented in the administrative bodies at the state and local level so there is a possible recurrent dissatisfaction of the respondents as seen in Figure 28.

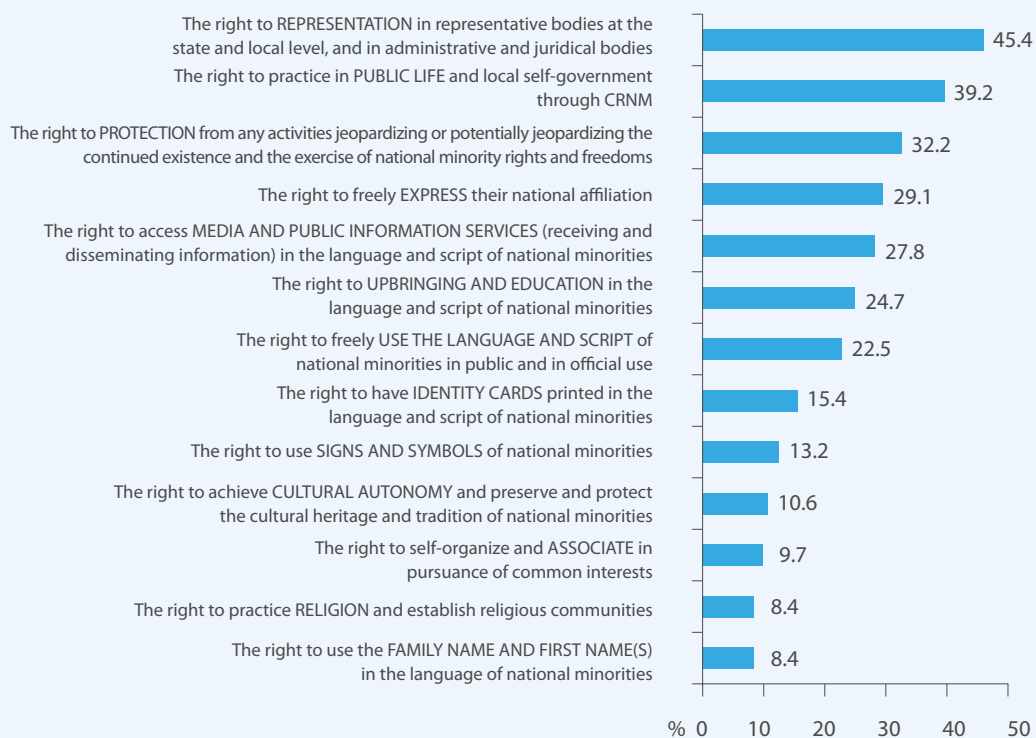


Figure 28
The rights that are least respected from the perspective of CRNM

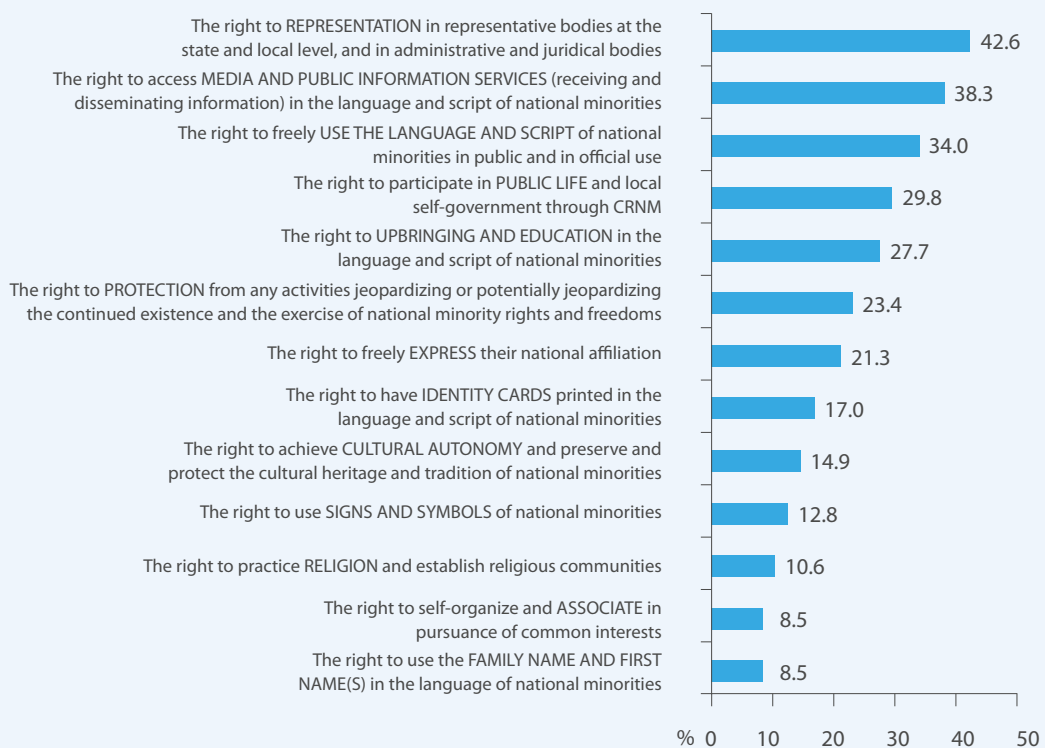
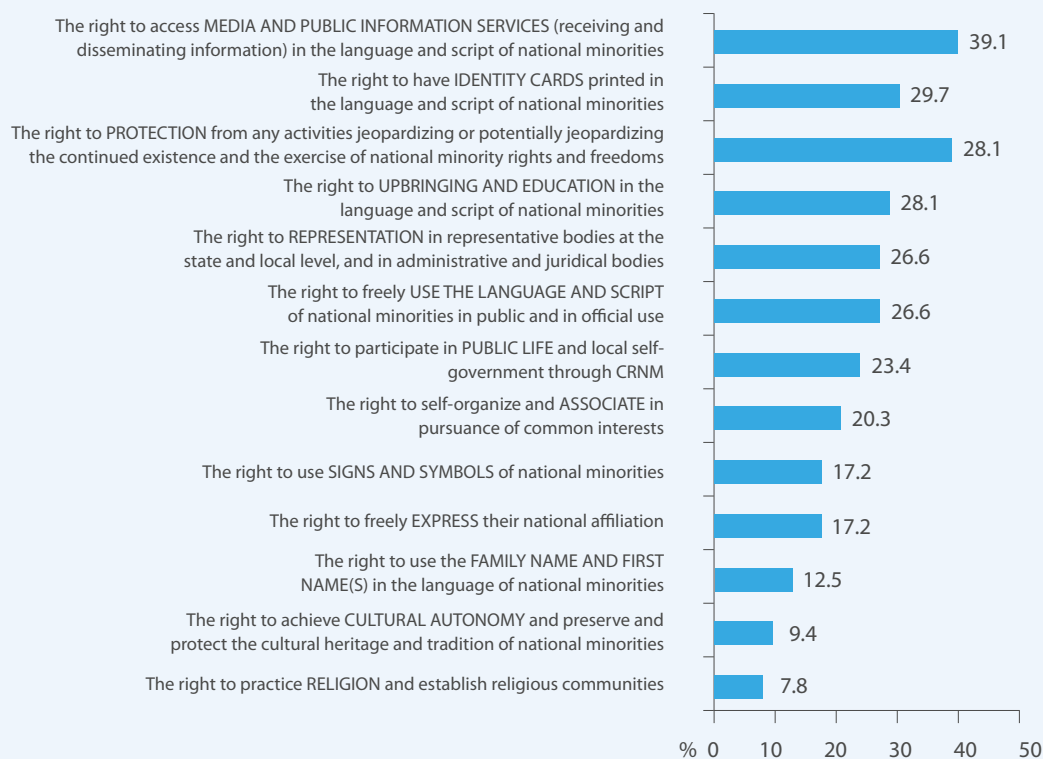


Figure 29
The rights that are least respected from the perspective of CSO members

Figure 30
The rights that are least respected from the perspective of LRSGU representatives



In Table 11, the minority rights are ranked according to the frequency of their selection as the least respected rights, where the rankings are counted on all respondents, and separately on the three subsamples of the respondents. A smaller rank signifies a higher frequency of selecting a particular minority right, as the rights that are not sufficiently respected in the local community.¹⁸

Table 11
Ranked national minority rights

Collective rank	Ranked national minority rights	SUBSAMPLE		
		CRNM	CSO	LRSGU
1	The right to REPRESENTATION in representative bodies at the state and local level, and in administrative and juridical bodies.	1	1	5.5
2	The right to access media and PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES (receiving and disseminating information) in the language and script of the national minority.	5	2	1
3	The right to PROTECTION from any activities jeopardising or potentially jeopardising their continued existence, and the exercise of national minority rights and freedoms.	3	6	3.5
4	The right of members of national minorities to participate in PUBLIC LIFE and local self-government through councils/ representatives of national minorities.	2	4	7
5	The right to UPBRINGING AND EDUCATION in the language and script of the national minority.	6	5	3.5

¹⁸ Among the offered rights, the respondents selected those three which they believed were the least respected in the local community.

Collective rank	Ranked national minority rights	SUBSAMPLE		
		CRNM	CSO	LRSQU
6	The right to freely USE THE LANGUAGE AND SCRIPT of the national minority, in public and in official use.	7	3	5.5
7	The right to have their IDENTITY CARDS printed in the language and script of the national minority.	8	8	2
8	The right to freely EXPRESS their affiliation to a certain national minority.	4	7	9.5
9	The right to use the SIGNS AND SYMBOLS of the national minority.	9	10	9.5
10	The right to achieve CULTURAL AUTONOMY, and to preserve and protect the cultural heritage and tradition of national minorities.	10	9	12
11	The right to self-organization and ASSOCIATION in pursuance of common interests.	11	12.5	8
12	The right to use their FAMILY NAME AND FIRST NAME(S) in the language of the national minority.	10	9	12
13	The right to practising their RELIGION and establishing their religious communities.	11	12.5	8

- Councils and representatives of national minorities have a significantly higher level of keeping formal record (31%) of the complaints addressed to them by members of the national minority they represent, while self-governments keep significantly less formal record (11%) on respecting the rights of national minorities
- In addition to the high number of complaints (48%) in connection with discrimination or violation of minority rights that were submitted to CRNMs in the past year, a significant number of complaints were also submitted to civil society organizations (40%). On the other hand, only 6% of LRSQU respondents stated that members of national minorities had addressed their self-government units in the past year for complaints about discrimination or violation of minority rights.
- Members of national minorities and CRNM showed a higher tendency to address civil society organizations with regards to complaints about discrimination and violation of minority rights, and a much lower tendency towards self-government units.
- According to the questioned CRNM and CSO, the minority right that is least respected is the right to representation in representative bodies at the state and local level, and in administrative and juridical bodies. According to the opinion of the questioned heads of self-government units, the national minority right which is least respected in the local community is the right of access to the media and public information services (receiving and disseminating information) in the language and script of the national minority.
- According to the questioned heads of LRSQU, the minority right that is respected to the least extent in the local community is the right to access media and public information services in the language and script of the national minority.

HIGHLIGHTED

3.2.3. Knowledge and exercise of rights and obligations based on the Constitutional Law

3.2.3.1. Information and familiarity of CRNM regarding legal and the contents of the narrower and wider community

Assuming that CRNM needs to be able to provide valid information and judgement on the features and effects of its action in the area of exercise and advocacy of minority rights and freedoms at the local level, both for the members of its national minority and for the wider community, an instrument for self-assessment of general information and familiarity of CRNM with specific topics and content in this field has been prepared. The constructed instrument contains 8 items (topics), 4 of which are related to familiarity with the legal framework,¹⁹ and the other 4 are related to knowledge on the current and “minority situation” in the community as well as political developments in the country.²⁰ This division of items is not the result of statistical processing and analysis (factor), but instead the product is of a priori splitting and content grouping of items. The average values based on the personal assessment of the respondents (Figure 31) show relatively high knowledge on virtually all the examined aspects of the applied instrument. There is slightly less familiarity with CNM handbooks and international reports on minority rights.

Given the significance and further implications that such information potential can have on the quality of work of CRNM, there was a need to determine whether there was a difference between the questioned individuals in relation to whether they belonged to the representative subsample (RNM) or councillor (CNM). In Figure 32 it is noticeable that the questioned council members assessed themselves as more familiar with the content of each individual item, yet a statistically significant difference between RNM and CNM was determined on 5 items. Namely, according to the personal assessment, members of the councils are more familiar with the Constitutional Law, their role and function, and LRSGU’s obligations towards CRNM, and they are also more informed on the local problems of the national minority they represent and the problems of the wider community in which they live, as opposed to RNM which evaluate themselves as less familiarized and informed with the above mentioned content. This disparity of the two subsamples, although it may be due to very different reasons, is likely to be the outcome of better organizational, personnel, working and material conditions for the activities of CNM compared to the more modest capabilities of RNM in this respect.

By adding the values of the reference items, two separate additive indices were constructed: familiarity with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and information on the social, political and minority context.

The average values of the two constructed indices is statistically significantly different i.e. CRNM, according to their own personal assessment, are more informed on social, political, and minority contexts (average value of CRNM = 3.59), compared to the slightly weaker familiarity of CRNM with the legal framework (average value of CRNM = 3.29).

¹⁹ The items related to information and familiarity with the legal framework are contained in the part of the question: “To what extent are you personally informed on: the role and function of the representative/council of national minorities, the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities, handbooks for national minority councils, obligations of local/regional self-governments towards the representative/council as the advisory body?”

²⁰ The items related to information on the current and “minority situation” in the community and political developments in the country are contained in the part of the question: “To what extent are you personally informed on: local problems of the national minority that you represent, problems of the wider community in which you live, current political developments in the county, international reports on the status of national minorities?”

Average values of CRNM's degree of familiarity, from the perspective of CRNM, on:

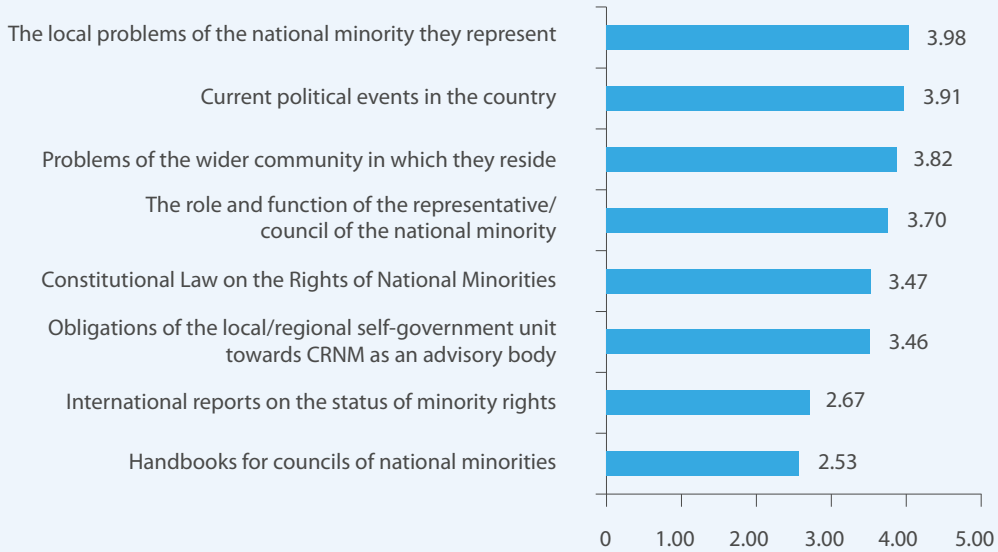


Figure 31

Self-assessment on general information – CRNM perspective

Average values of CRNM's degree of familiarity, from the perspective of CRNM, on:

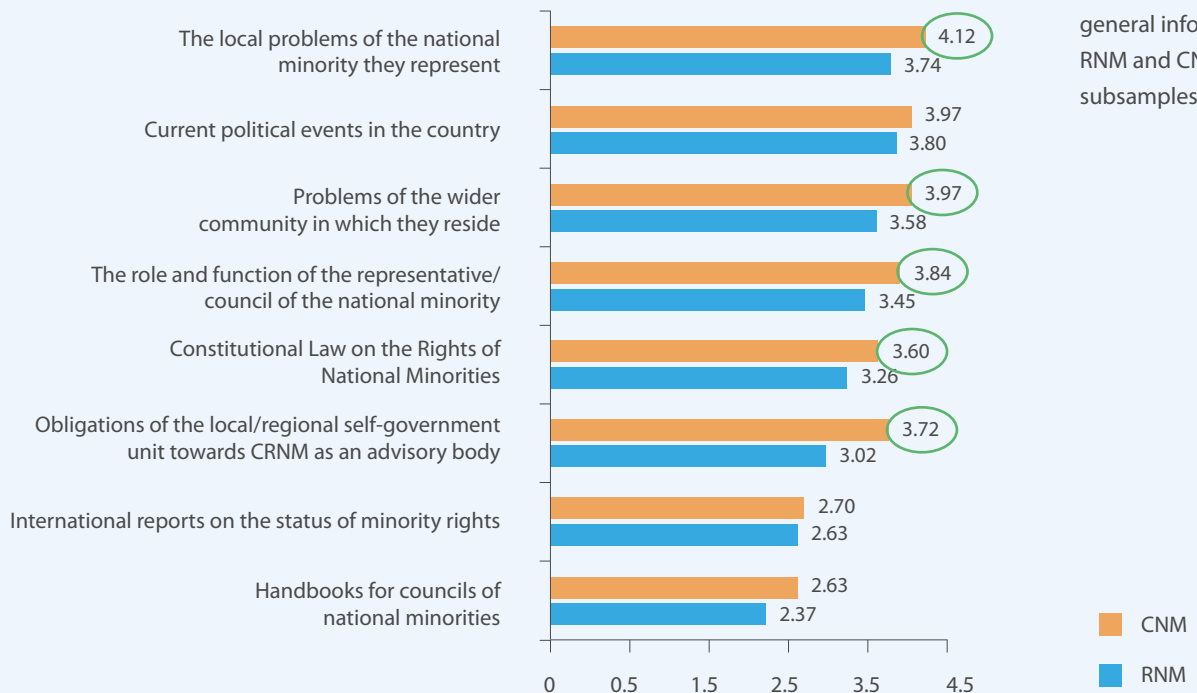
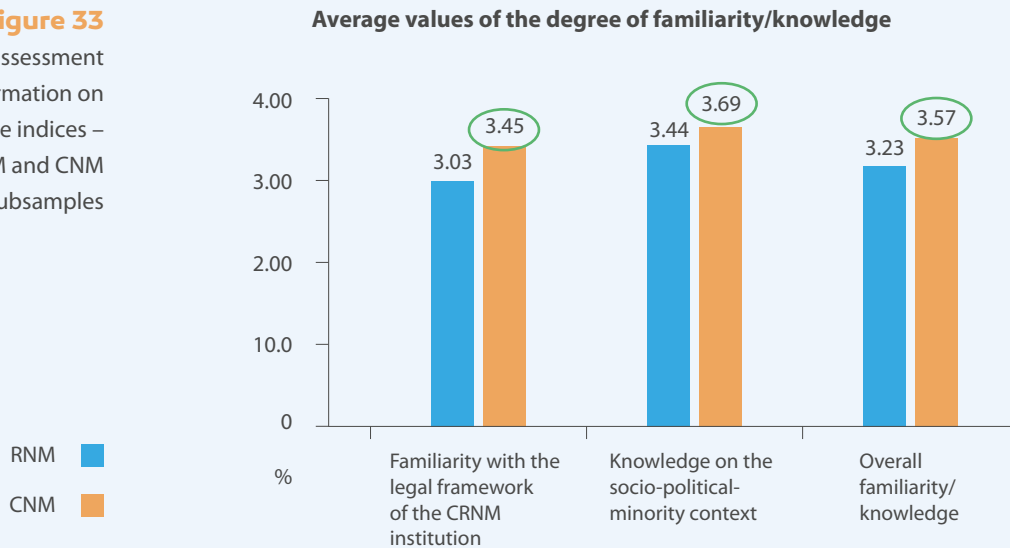


Figure 32

Self-assessment on general information – RNM and CNM subsamples

Figure 33

Self-assessment of information on additive indices – RNM and CNM subsamples



On both indices, as well as on the aggregate index of familiarity and information, a statistically significant difference between representatives (RNM) and members of national minority councils (CNM) was determined. The difference was reflected in the personal assessment of the CNM members who found themselves to be more informed and familiar with the contents of all three indices compared to the questioned representatives of national minorities (Figure 33).

According to the degree of familiarity and information, the following statistically significant differences were identified:

- CRNM at the municipal level are least familiar with the legal framework of its own institution, while CRNM at the county level are most familiar with it;
- Councils and representatives of “new” national minorities hold themselves to be most familiarized with the legal framework of their institution, while the councils and representatives of Roma national minority are least familiar with it;
- CRNM who carry out other advisory, executive, or representative functions at the local, regional and/or state level are more familiar with the legal framework of their own institution, unlike those who do not perform such functions;
- The degree of familiarity with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and the degree of information on the social, political and minority situation is assessed higher by those councils and representatives whose current mandate is not their first one, those nominated by a NM association, those who have all kinds of work resources available to them, and those who frequently use the computer and e-mail to carry out CRNM activities.

- All average values on the items of the instrument on specific legal contents and contents of the narrower and wider communities indicate a relatively high level of familiarity and information of the questioned CRNM.
- Overall, CRNM are more informed about the social, political and minority context (CRNM average value=3.59), in comparison to slightly lower familiarity with the legal framework of the CRNM institution (CRNM average value=3.29).
- On the additive indices: familiarity with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and information on the social, political and minority context, as well as on the aggregate index of information, there was a significantly higher level of self-assessed familiarity and information of CNM members in relation to the lower level expressed by RNM.
- This disparity of the two subsamples, although it may be due to different reasons, is likely to be the outcome of better organizational, personnel, working and material conditions in the activities of CNM compared to the more modest capabilities of RNM in this respect.
- CRNM at the municipal level are least familiar with the legal framework of their own institution, while CRNM at the county level are most familiar with it.

HIGHLIGHTED

3.2.3.2. Familiarity of CRNM with specific topics from the perspective of CSO and LRSGU subsamples

Members of civil society organizations and representatives of self-government units also assessed the degree of familiarity of CRNM with specific topics and the degree of connection with the electorate they represent. Table 12 lists the contents and topics that the target subsamples assessed.

TOPICS (CONTENTS):	SUBSAMPLE		
	CRNM	CSO	LRSGU
Familiarity with CLRNM and other laws concerning NM	+	+	+
Familiarity with the role and function of CRNM	+	+	+
Familiarity with the local problems of NM that CRNM represent	+	+	+
Familiarity with LRSGU's obligations towards CRNM	+		+
Connection of CRNM with its electorate		+	+

Table 12

Familiarity of CRNM with specific topics – from the perspective of CRNM, CSO and LRSGU

CRNM's familiarity with its own role and function was assessed lowest by members of civil society organizations and heads of LRSGU (Figure 34).

The comparison of the average scores of the two subsamples (Figure 35) shows that when assessing CRNM's familiarity with all the proposed contents and topics, as well as assessing its connection, the councils and representatives with the minority body represented by LRSGU representatives gave statistically significantly higher scores than CSO members, who assessed CRNM's familiarity with each covered content, as well as its connection with its electorate with a lower score.

Figure 34

Familiarity of CRNM with specific topics from the perspective of CSO and LRSU

Average values of CRNM's familiarity/connection from the perspective of CSO members and the heads/representatives of LRSU

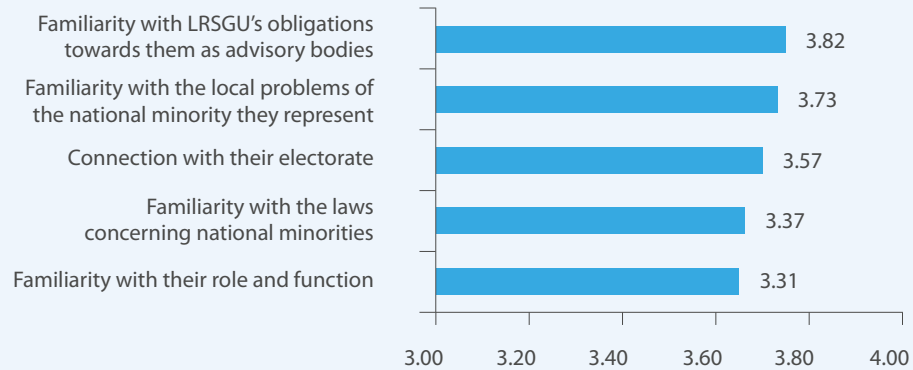
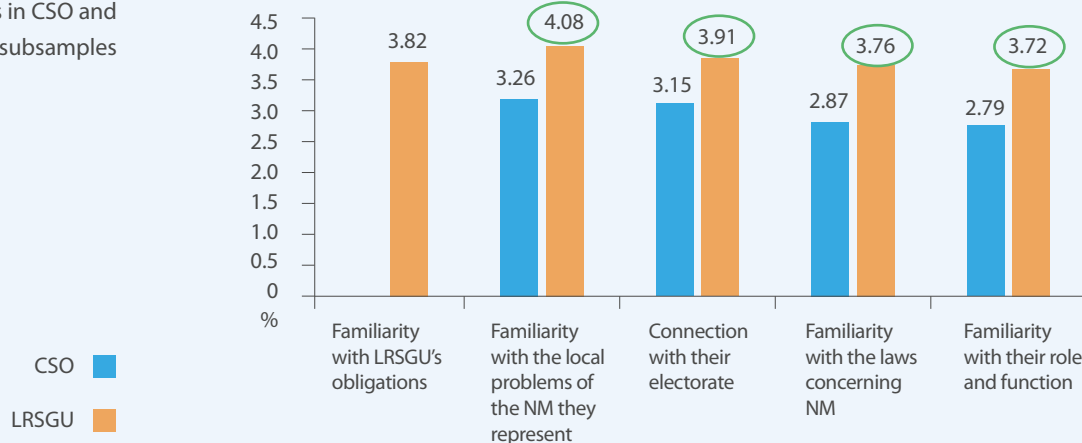


Figure 35

Familiarity of CRNM with specific topics – differences in CSO and LRSU subsamples

Average scores of CRNM's connection with their electorate and the degree of CRNM's familiarity with selected content



In the wider sense, CRNM's familiarity with all the given and examined topics was assessed with a high score by:

- **Members of civil society organizations and representatives of self-government units who**
 - confirm acceptance of CRNM by LRSU and CSO;
 - emphasize the greater contribution of CLRNM to improving the position of NM members;
 - believe that the wider public/self-government unit is more inclined to strengthen the CRNM institution;
 - attributes a greater contribution from all those included in the questionnaire to the effective implementation and application of CLRNM.

- **Members of civil society organizations**

- whose organizations proposed candidates for the election of representatives and council members at the last elections;
- whose organizations offered the current CRNM the opportunity to cooperate on projects aimed at local community development;
- who assess the level of use of CRNM advisory services by LRSGU to be greater;
- who assess CRNM as more active in the decision-making process regarding NM issues;
- who emphasize greater contribution of self-government units in the smooth implementation and application of CLRNM.

- **Representatives of those self-government units**

- who provided training and publications for CRNM;
- where more than half of the minority advisory body was actively involved in sessions that discuss issues of interest to NM
- who are more satisfied with the communication with CRNM.

All of the above support the thesis that CRNM is more active and more effective in a stimulating social environment i.e. in those local communities where LRSGU bodies, as well as civil society organizations are more open to cooperate with CRNM. The average score of CRNM's degree of familiarity (with the Constitutional Law and other laws concerning national minorities, their role and function, and the local problems of the national minority they represent) from the perspective of members of civil society organizations, statistically significantly deviates from the average scores of CRNM's degree of familiarity from their own perspective and from those of the representatives of self-government units. In this regard, CRNM's degree of familiarity with these contents is assessed lower by the members of civil society organizations, and higher by the heads of LRSGU and by the councils and representatives of NMs (Figure 36).

Average scores of CRNM's degree of familiarity from three perspectives



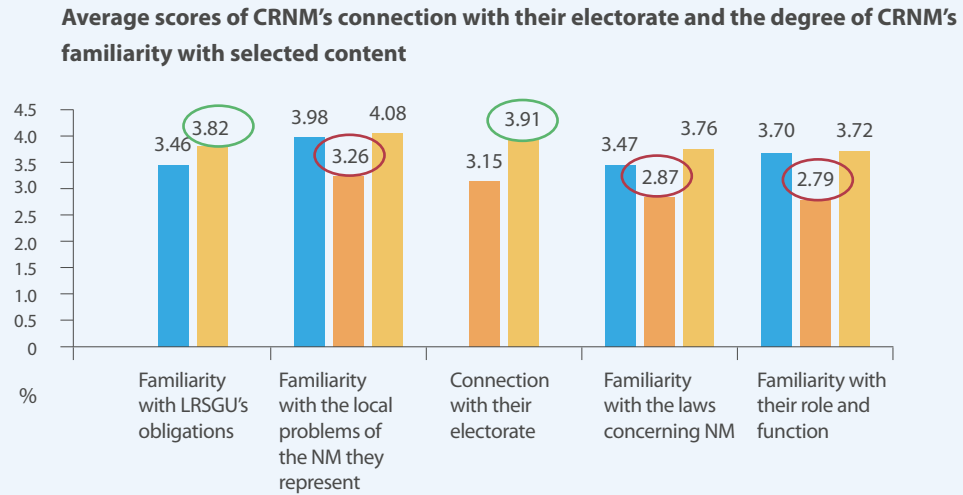
Figure 36

Familiarity of CRNM and LRSGU with the laws and problems concerning NM from the perspective of CSO

By summing up the broader scope of CRNM familiarity with different content in three perspectives i.e. three average scores, it is noticeable that their degree of familiarity is most often assessed with higher scores by LRSGU representatives, their familiarity is assessed slightly lower by the councils and representatives of NMs themselves, while the lowest scores are from members of civil society organizations (Figure 37).

Figure 37
Familiarity of CRNM with selected topics – differences between CRNM, CSO and LRSGU subsamples

CRNM
CSO
LRSGU



HIGHLIGHTED

- Members of civil society organizations and heads of self-government units assessed CRNM's familiarity with their own role and function with the lowest score (average score=3,31), and gave the highest score to CRNM's familiarity with LRSGU's obligations towards CRNM as the advisory body (average=3,82).
- By summing up the broader scope of CRNM's familiarity with different contents and topics in three perspectives i.e. three average scores, it is noticeable that their degree of familiarity was most often assessed with higher scores by the representatives of LRSGU (average=3,86), their familiarity is assessed slightly lower by the councils and representatives of NMs themselves (average=3,71), while the lowest scores are from members of civil society organizations (average=2,99).
- CRNM have been shown to be more active and efficient in a stimulating social environment i.e. in those local communities where LRSGU bodies, as well as civil society organizations are more open to cooperate with CRNM.

3.2.3.3. Assumptions for the efficient implementation and application of CLRNM by self-government units

The members of civil society organizations and representatives of self-government units assessed the degree of familiarity of LRSGU bodies with laws concerning NM, the level of interest of LRSGU bodies in implementing laws concerning NM, the degree of their familiarity with the local problems of NM, and the level of their involvement in the life of minority communities through family and informal relations. Table 13 lists the contents assessed in certain subsamples.

The questioned representatives of self-government units and members of civil society organizations gave the highest score to LRSGU's familiarity with CLRNM and other laws concerning NM (Figure 38).

CONTENTS (TOPICS):	SUBSAMPLE	
	CSO	LRSQU
Familiarity with CLRNM and other laws concerning NM	+	+
Familiarity with the role and function of CRNM		+
Familiarity with LRSQU's obligations towards CRNM		+
Familiarity with international reports on the status of minority rights		+
Familiarity with the local problems of NM	+	+
Involvement in the life of minority communities through family and informal relations	+	+
Interest in implementing laws concerning NM	+	

Table 13
Contents (topics) assessed in CSO and LRSQU subsamples

In this regard, heads of LRSQU assess that LRSQU bodies are well familiarized with CLRNM and other laws concerning national minorities, the role and function of CRNM, LRSQU's obligations towards CRNM and with local problems of national minorities, while their familiarity with international reports on the status of minority rights is assessed as moderate.

On the other hand, members of civil society organizations assessed the familiarity of LRSQU with CLRNM and other laws concerning national minorities and their familiarity with the local problems of national minorities with a higher score, while their interest in implementing laws concerning NM was assessed with a lower score.

The distinctive threshold (average values) of the heads of self-government units statistically significantly deviates from the threshold (average) of members of civil society organizations. This relates to the representatives of self-government units assessing the familiarity of LRSQU bodies with CLRNM and other laws concerning NM, their familiarity with the local problems of NM and the level of their involvement in the life of minority communities through family and informal relations with generally higher scores, while members of civil society organizations assessed with a lower average score.

Average values of the degree of familiarity/involvement/interest of the self-government bodies

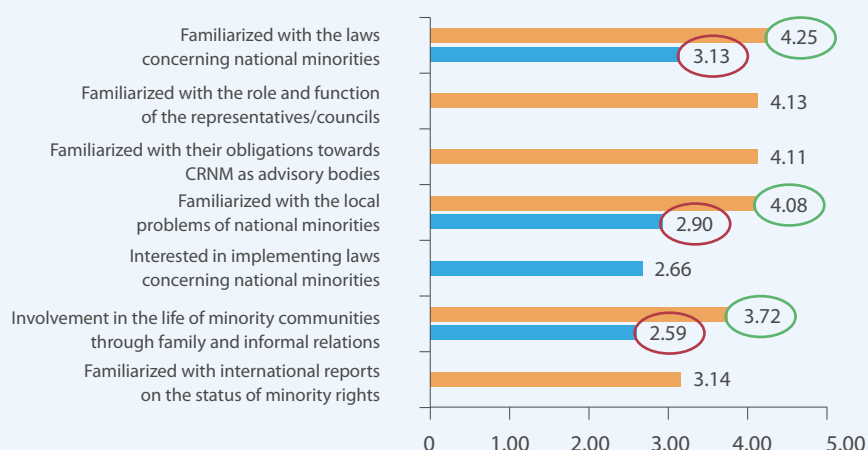


Figure 38
Familiarity of LRSQU bodies with selected contents – LRSQU and CSO subsamples

■ From the perspective of the heads/representatives of LRSQU
■ From the perspective of CSO members

Given the increased likelihood of allocating lower values to the self-government units in terms of the above topics, a sample of the CSO members was made in the attempt to detect any differences between those who express higher or lower values. A higher degree of familiarity of LRSGU bodies with laws concerning national minorities and the local problems of national minorities, higher involvement in the life of minority communities through family and informal relations, and their greater interest in implementing laws concerning NM, were expressed by those members of civil society organizations that were at the same time:

- more satisfied with the communication with the self-government units;
- more inclined to assess the cooperation between LRSGU and the civil sector with a high score;
- assessed the level of using CRNM's advisory services by LRSGU, with a higher score;
- confirmed the acceptance of CRNM by the self-government unit;
- attributed a higher level of active involvement of CRNM in decision-making processes regarding national minority issues;
- confirmed that their self-government units finance the activities of minority organizations;
- highlighted that LRSGU and the social environment, as well as members of NM, are less constraining factors in the implementation of CLRN;
- assessed the familiarity of councils and representatives with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and CRNM's connection with its electorate with a high score;
- recorded less complaints from NMs regarding discrimination and violation of minority rights;
- assessed, in a larger number, that the self-government unit is more inclined to strengthen the CRNM institution;
- attributed greater contribution of CLRN to improving the position of NM members in the local community;
- attributed greater contribution of all actors (with the exception of NM members, NM associations and the Ombudsman) to the improvement and protection of the NM position.

All of this indicates that self-government units that are more open to cooperate with the civil sector, are also more open to cooperate with CRNM.

In addition, two distinct features were identified in the subsample i.e. from the perspective of CSO members (Figure 39). According to the first one, moderate familiarity with the laws concerning NM, from the perspective of CSO members, there is no statistically significant difference between the degree of familiarity of CRNM and LRSGU bodies. In contrast and according to the second feature, a statistically significant difference in the CSO subsample was determined. Members of civil society organizations attribute a higher degree of familiarity with the local problems of NM to CRNM, and a smaller degree to LRSGU bodies.

A higher degree of familiarity of LRSGU bodies with CLRN and other laws concerning NM, the role and function of CRNM, LRSGU's obligations towards CRNM, the local problems of national minorities, as well as greater involvement of LRSGU bodies in the life of minority communities through family and informal relations, was attributed by the representatives of the self-government units:

- who were more satisfied with the communication with CRNM;
- whose self-government units finance the activities of NM associations and other minority organizations;
- who consider LRSGU to be a less constraining factor in the implementation of CLRN;
- who assess CRNM's familiarity with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and CRNM's connection with their electorate with a high score;

Average scores of CRNM and LRSQU's familiarity from the perspective of CSO members

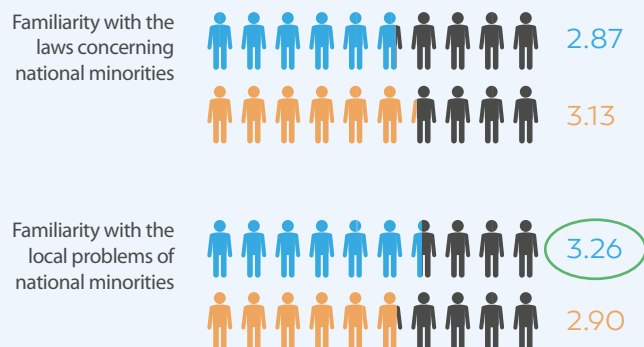


Figure 39

Familiarity of CRNM and LRSQU with the laws and problems concerning NM from the perspective of CSO

■ CRNM
■ LRSQU

- to whom NM members address to a lesser extent regarding complaints on discrimination or violation of minority rights;
- whose self-government units mostly turned to CRNM to seek information or advice, and to provide suggestions or advice;
- who attributed greater contribution of CLRNM to improving the position of NM members in the local community;
- whose self-government units achieved a larger number of constitutional obligations and implemented a larger number of mechanisms and measures for the protection of NM;
- whose self-government units, while preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of national minorities, frequently sought the opinion and/or suggestions from CRNM;
- whose self-government units often informed the members and councils about sessions where issues of NM significance were discussed and they frequently delivered materials to them from such sessions;
- whose self-government units largely provided CRNM with official computers and trainings.

- The questioned representatives of the self-government units and members of civil society organizations assessed the highest degree of familiarity of LRSQU bodies with CLRNM and other laws concerning NM.
- A higher degree of familiarity of LRSQU bodies with CLRNM and laws concerning national minorities, the local problems of national minorities, and their level of involvement in the life of minority communities through family and informal relations was expressed by the representatives of the self-government units, while the members of civil society organizations assessed them with a lower degree of familiarity.
- Members of civil society organizations attributed a higher degree of familiarity with the local problems of NM to CRNM, and a lower degree of familiarity to LRSQU bodies.
- One of the indicated connections suggested that those self-government units that were more open to cooperate with the civil sector, were also more open to cooperate with CRNM.

HIGHLIGHTED

3.2.3.4. Fulfilment of CRNM obligations

More than 80% of the questioned CRNM carry out their obligations towards the self-government unit in terms of regular submission of the work plan and program, financial plan and final accounts to the competent local/regional self-government bodies (Figure 40).

All of the mentioned obligations are carried out by the councils in a statistically significantly greater degree than by the representatives of national minorities (Figure 41).

Figure 40

Fulfilment of CRNM obligations towards the self-government unit

Do you carry out the following activities:

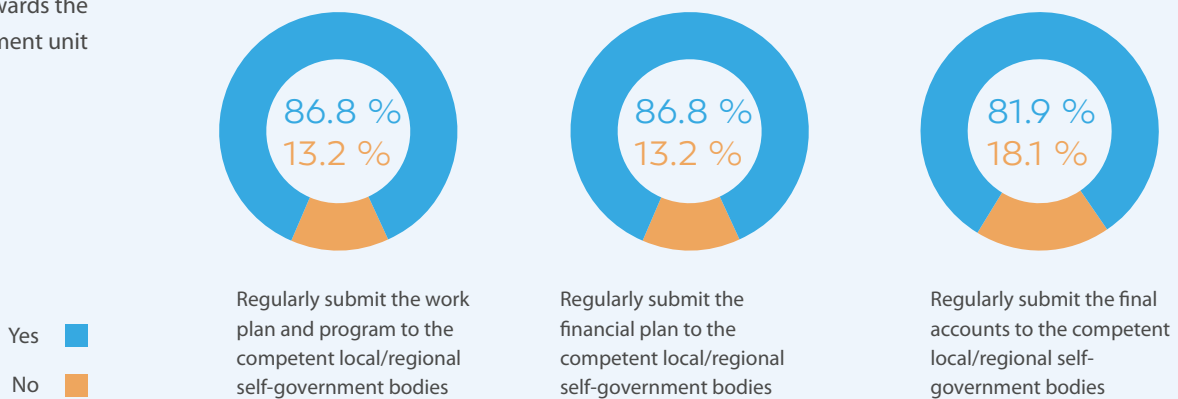
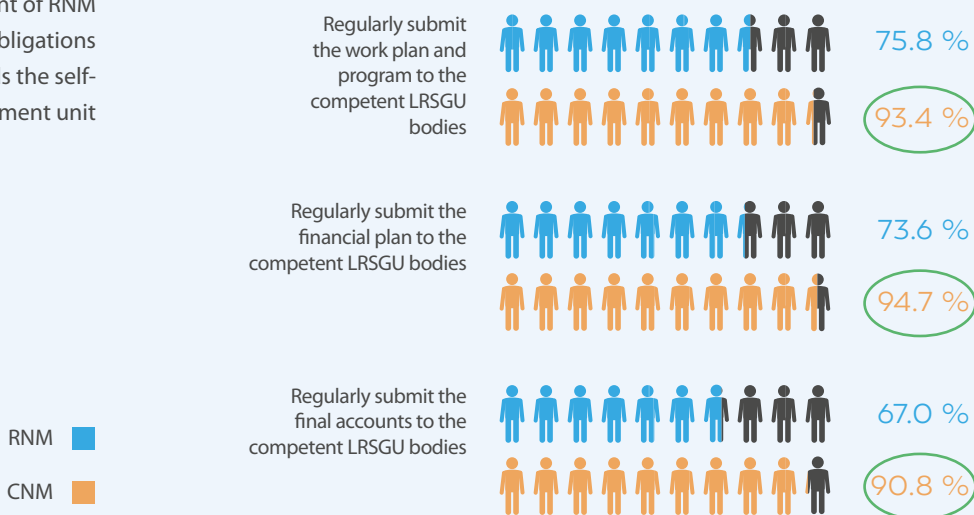
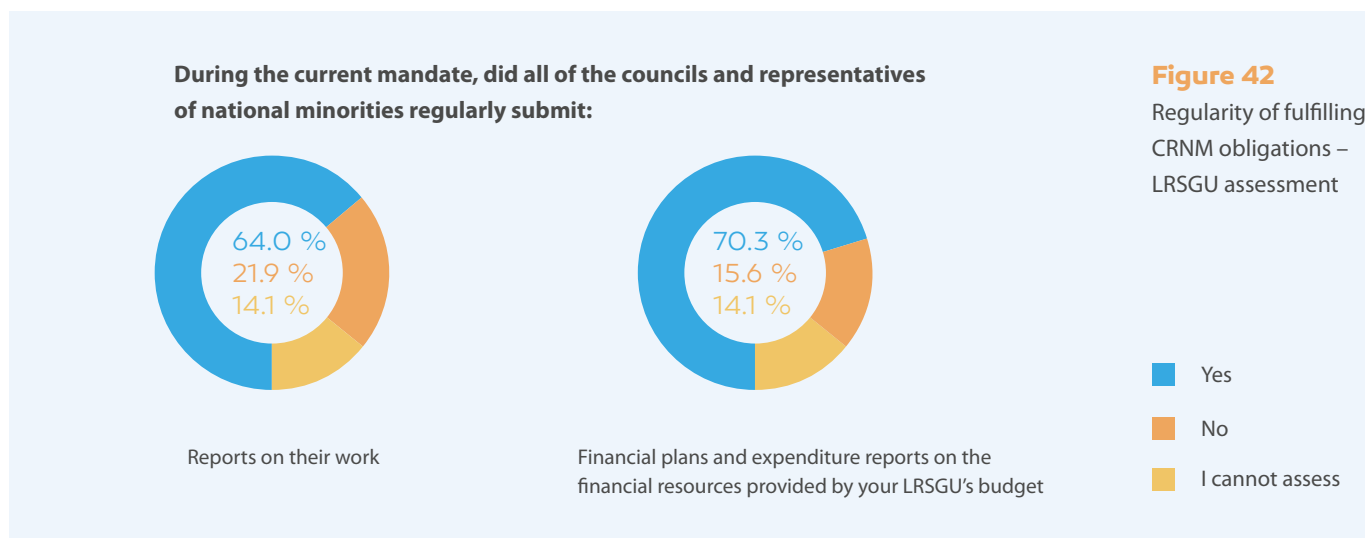


Figure 41

Differences in the fulfilment of RNM and CNM obligations towards the self-government unit

Share of questioned CRNM that fulfil the anticipated obligations





Whereby, the mentioned obligations:

- are least carried out by CRNM of Roma national minority, and mostly carried out by councils and representatives of “old” (traditional) national minorities;
- are least fulfilled by CRNM at the municipal level, and most fulfilled by CRNM at the county level;
- are to a greater extent fulfilled by those members whose current CRNM mandate is not their first one, the CRNM which was nominated by a NM association, those who carry out other advisory/representative/executive functions, those who have all kinds of work resources available to them, those who use the computer and e-mail to carry out CRNM activities, and those who assess their own familiarity with the CRNM legal framework and their information on the socio-political and minority situation to a high degree.

On the other hand, 64% of the questioned heads of self-government units stated that, during the current mandate, all of the councils and representatives established within the self-government unit regularly submitted reports on their work, while 70% stated that all councils and representatives regularly submitted their financial plans and expenditure reports on the financial resources provided by the budget of the self-government unit (Figure 42).

In this regard, from the perspective of the heads of the self-government units, these obligations are largely performed by CRNM of those LRSU:

- who have provided the current councils and representatives with more logistic and financial resources, and a greater amount of resources in general;
- who have fulfilled a number of constitutional obligations and implemented a larger number of mechanisms and measures for the protection of NM.

In the self-government units where CRNM regularly carry out their obligations towards LRSU:

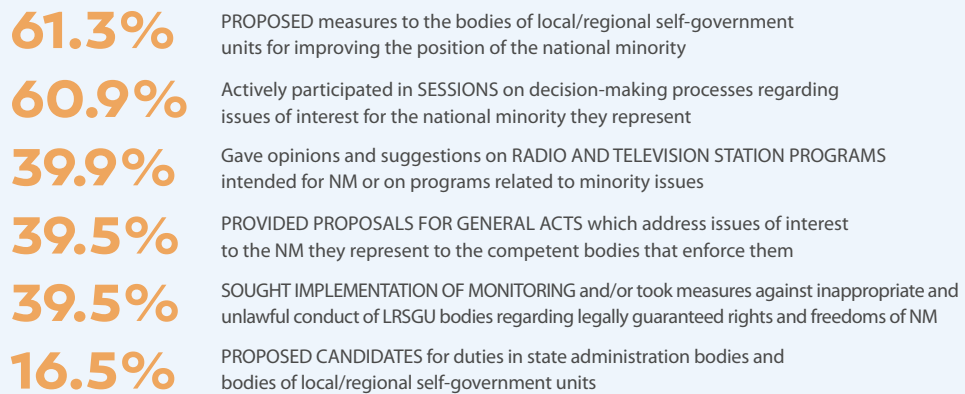
- the heads of LRSU are more satisfied with the communication with CRNM;
- the heads of LRSU attribute a greater contribution to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM to CRNM, NM members, NM associations, coordinations of national minority councils, the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament and the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

3.2.3.5. Exercise of CRNM rights

61% of the questioned CRNM, during their current mandate, proposed measures to the bodies of local/regional self-government units for improving the position of the national minority, and they actively participated in sessions and decision-making processes regarding issues of interest to national minorities. Moreover, less than half (40%) provided proposals for general acts which address issues of interest to NM, proposed candidates for duties in state administration bodies and bodies of local/regional self-government units, and gave opinions and suggestions on radio and television station programs intended for national minorities or programs related to minority issues.

Implementation of monitoring and/or taking measures against inappropriate and unlawful conduct of bodies of local/regional self-government units in respect of legally guaranteed rights and freedoms of national minorities was sought by 16% of the questioned CRNM surveyed (Figure 43).

Figure 43
Frequency of activities undertaken during the current CRNM mandate

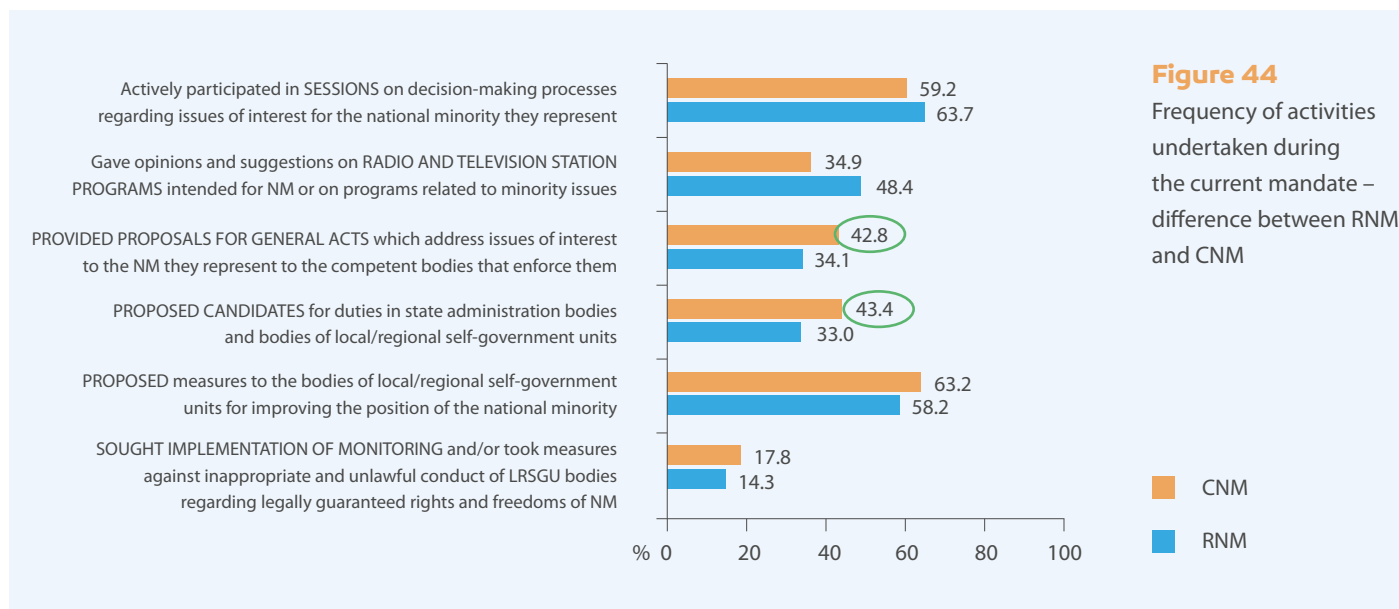


A statistically significant difference was noted between RNM and CNM in the frequency of exercising two constitutional rights, whereby the councils of national minorities provided more input in terms of nominating candidates for duties in state administration bodies and bodies of local/regional self-government units, as well as providing more proposals of general acts regulating questions of interest to the national minority they represent to the competent authorities who pass them (Figure 44).

The Constitutional rights were least exercised by CRNM at the municipal level, and most exercised by CRNM at the county level; by members who, to a greater extent:

- are not carrying out the CRNM mandate for the first time;
- also perform other advisory/representative/executive functions;
- have at their disposal logistical support and more work resources in general;
- are more familiar with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and are more informed on the socio-political and minority context;
- participate in the work of some coordination;
- keep a formal record of the complaints addressed to them by NM members;
- fulfil their obligations towards the self-government unit (regularly submit the work plan and program, financial plan and final accounts to the competent local/regional self-government bodies).

The interaction between members of national minorities and CRNM is an essential factor in the efficient implementation and application of CLRNM. This is indicated by the finding that those CRNM who were addressed by members of the national minority they represent, due to complaints in connection with the violation of minority rights, largely exercised all of the mentioned rights.



- More than 80% of the questioned CRNM carry out their obligations towards the self-government unit in terms of regular submission of the work plan and program, financial plan and final accounts to the competent local/regional self-government bodies.
- All of the mentioned obligations are carried out by the councils in a statistically significantly greater degree than by the representatives of national minorities.
- On the other hand, 64% of the questioned heads of self-government units stated that, during the current mandate, all of the councils and representatives established within the self-government unit regularly submitted reports on their work, while 70% stated that all councils and representatives regularly submitted their financial plans and expenditure reports of the financial resources provided by the budget of the self-government unit.
- It was observed that the two most frequent activities carried out during the CRNM mandate were proposals and meetings. Namely, 61% of the questioned CRNM, during the current mandate, proposed measures to the bodies of local/regional self-government units for improving the position of the national minority, and they actively participated in sessions and decision-making processes regarding issues of interest to national minorities.
- During the CRNM mandate, the least carried out activity was the implementation of monitoring and/or taking measures against inappropriate and unlawful conduct of bodies of local/regional self-government units in respect of legally guaranteed rights and freedoms of national minorities – only 17% of the questioned CRNM sought this measure.

HIGHLIGHTED

3.2.3.6. CRNM's formal preparedness for performing the advisory function

Based on certain manifest variables,²¹ the latent variable "CRNM's preparedness for performing the advisory function" was constructed. It has shown to be predictable for CRNM activity since formally equipped CRNM have, to a much larger extent, exercised all the mentioned rights of CLRNM, with the exception of the right to seek the implementation of monitoring and/or take measures against inappropriate and unlawful conduct of bodies of local/regional self-government units in respect of legally guaranteed rights and freedoms of NM.

In order to carry out the advisory function, the following are more formally equipped and qualified: councils of national minorities, CRNM at the county and city level, CRNM of "old" (traditional) and "new" minorities and CRNM from the Zagreb region. Less equipped and qualified are: representatives of national minorities, CRNM at the municipal level, and members of the Roma national minority.

To a great extent, formally equipped actors for performing the advisory function:

- carry out the existing obligations towards the self-government unit,
- are addressed by the members of NM,
- keep a formal record of the complaints addressed to them by the members of NM,
- provide advice and suggestions to the self-government units,
- are more satisfied with the communication with the self-government unit,
- participate in the work of some coordination(s),
- do not consider LRSGU, the members of NM and CRNM to be constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM,
- the self-government unit accepts their proposals (measures to improve the position of the NM, proposals of candidates for duties in the state administration bodies and LRSGU bodies, acts regulating issues of interest to NM)
- attribute a greater contribution of all actors (with the exception of the Ombudsman, international organizations and non-minority civil society organizations) to the improvement and protection of the position of the NM,
- confirm the acceptance of CRNM by the civil sector,
- self-government units seek their opinion when preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of the NM, frequently informing them about sessions where issues on the position of NM are discussed, and they frequently deliver materials to them from such sessions;
- attend and actively participate in such sessions,
- cooperated with the civil sector on projects aimed at local community development,
- are satisfied with the cooperation with all the actors encompassed in the questionnaire,
- highly assess their own material status,
- have a higher level of education.

²¹ The latent variable "CRNM's preparedness for performing the advisory function" was constructed taking into consideration the number of CRNM mandates to date, experience in performing other advisory/representative/executive functions at the state/regional/local level, having work resources (office space, office equipment, official computer, cost and labour charges, official e-mail address), the frequency of using a computer for CRNM activities, level of self-assessment of familiarity with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and the level of information on the socio-political-minority context.

Given that the share of formally more equipped CRNMs is higher in those self-government units that have (from a CRNM perspective) appointed a person or have established a service responsible for communication and cooperation with NMs, and have harmonized the relevant general acts with the CLRNM provisions, and since there is no determined difference in the perception of acceptance by the self-government unit between more equipped and less equipped CRNMs, it is once more confirmed that CRNMs are more effective in environments that are more open to cooperating with CRNMs. At the same time, it indicates the assumption that the implementation and application of CLRNM will be more difficult and less efficient in those self-government units that are reluctant to cooperate with CRNM and NM, regardless of their formal preparedness.

Based on certain manifest variables,²² the latent variable “CRNM activity/efficiency” was constructed.

Greater activity/efficiency is expressed by CRNMs:

- at the county level,
- who are not carrying out the CRNM mandate for the first time,
- who were nominated by NM associations,
- who also perform other advisory/representative/executive functions,
- who have at their disposal a larger number of available work resources,
- who use the computer and e-mail to carry out CRNM activities,
- participate in the work of some coordination(s),
- who are more familiarized with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and are more informed about the socio-political-minority context.

More active and efficient CRNMs:

- are more satisfied with the communication with the self-government unit,
- are more addressed by the NM members,
- address the self-government unit to a greater extent in order to seek information and/or advice and to submit complaints, objections and criticisms,
- assess the minority advisory body as a less constraining factor in the implementation of CLRNM,
- the self-government unit largely accepts their proposals (proposals of measures to improve the position of the NM, proposals of candidates for duties in the state administration bodies and LRS-GU bodies, proposals of acts regulating issues of interest to NM)
- attribute a greater contribution of all actors (with the exception of the Ombudsman and international organizations) to the improvement and protection of the position of NM,
- to a greater extent confirm the acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU and the civil sector,
- self-government unit often seeks their opinion when preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of the NM, frequently informing them about sessions where issues on the position of NM and discussed, and they frequently deliver materials to them from such sessions;
- are more satisfied with the cooperation with all the actors encompassed in the questionnaire,
- cooperated greatly with civil society organizations on projects aimed at local community development

²² The latent variable “activity/efficiency of minority advisory body” was constructed taking into consideration carrying out CRNM’s obligations towards the self-government unit, keeping a formal record of NM members’ complaints, the frequency of addressing the self-government unit in order to provide suggestions and/or advice, the frequency of attendance and active participation at the sessions of the self-government unit which address issues regarding the position of NM, and the exercised Constitutional rights.

- and their share is higher in those self-government units that have (from a CRNM perspective) appointed a person or have established a service responsible for communication and co-operation with NMs, and have harmonized the relevant general acts with the CLRNM provisions.

Since there is a statistically significant, positive but relatively low correlation ($r = 0.461$) between two constructed latent variables (“CRNM’s preparedness for performing the advisory function” and “activity/efficiency of minority advisory body”), it is confirmed that the effective implementation and application of CLRNM requires not only formal preparedness and CRNM activity/efficiency, but also the willingness of self-government units to cooperate with NM and CRNM.

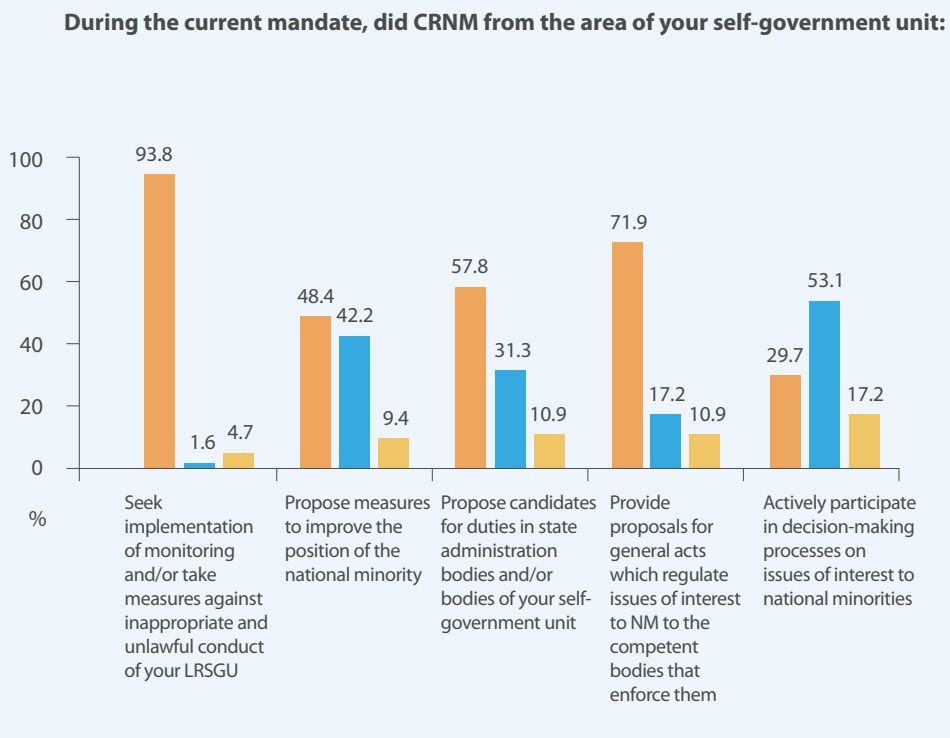
3.2.3.7. The exercise of CRNM rights from the perspective of the heads of LRSQU

53% of the questioned representatives of the self-government units stated that during the current mandate CRNM actively participated in the decision-making process regarding issues of interest to NM, while 42% stated that CRNM proposed measures to improve the position of NM. Only a third of the questioned heads of the self-government units confirmed that CRNM had nominated candidates for duties in the state administration bodies and/or LRSQU bodies, and 17% proposed general acts regulating issues of interest to NM (Figure 45).

Given the already noted trend, here it is also confirmed that in those self-government units in which CRNM actively participate in the decision-making process regarding issues of interest to NM, the questioned heads of the self-government units were more satisfied with the communication with CRNM,

Figure 45

Frequency of undertaken CRNM activities from the perspective of LRSQU



they provided them with more logistic and operational resources, and they met more Constitutional obligations and implemented more measures and mechanisms for the protection of national minorities.

3.2.3.8. Fulfilment of self-government units' obligations towards CRNM from the perspective of CRNM, representatives of LRSGU and CSO

Over 50% of the questioned CRNM stated that the self-government unit did not carry out the required monitoring and/or did not take any measures against the inappropriate and unlawful conduct of LRSGU bodies with respect to the legally guaranteed rights and freedoms of national minorities, and almost half of their candidate nominations for duties in state administration bodies and LRSGU bodies were not accepted. In addition, over one third of the respondents stated that the self-government unit did not accept the proposals for measures and general acts regulating minority issues of interest to CRNM (Figure 46). Given the significant importance of these guaranteed rights and freedoms of NMs, CRNM's dominant criticism towards meeting LRSGU's prescribed obligations can be stated.

It is also indicative that a relatively high share of the questioned CRNMs could not assess whether the self-government unit accepted their proposals i.e. whether the self-government unit carried out the requested monitoring.

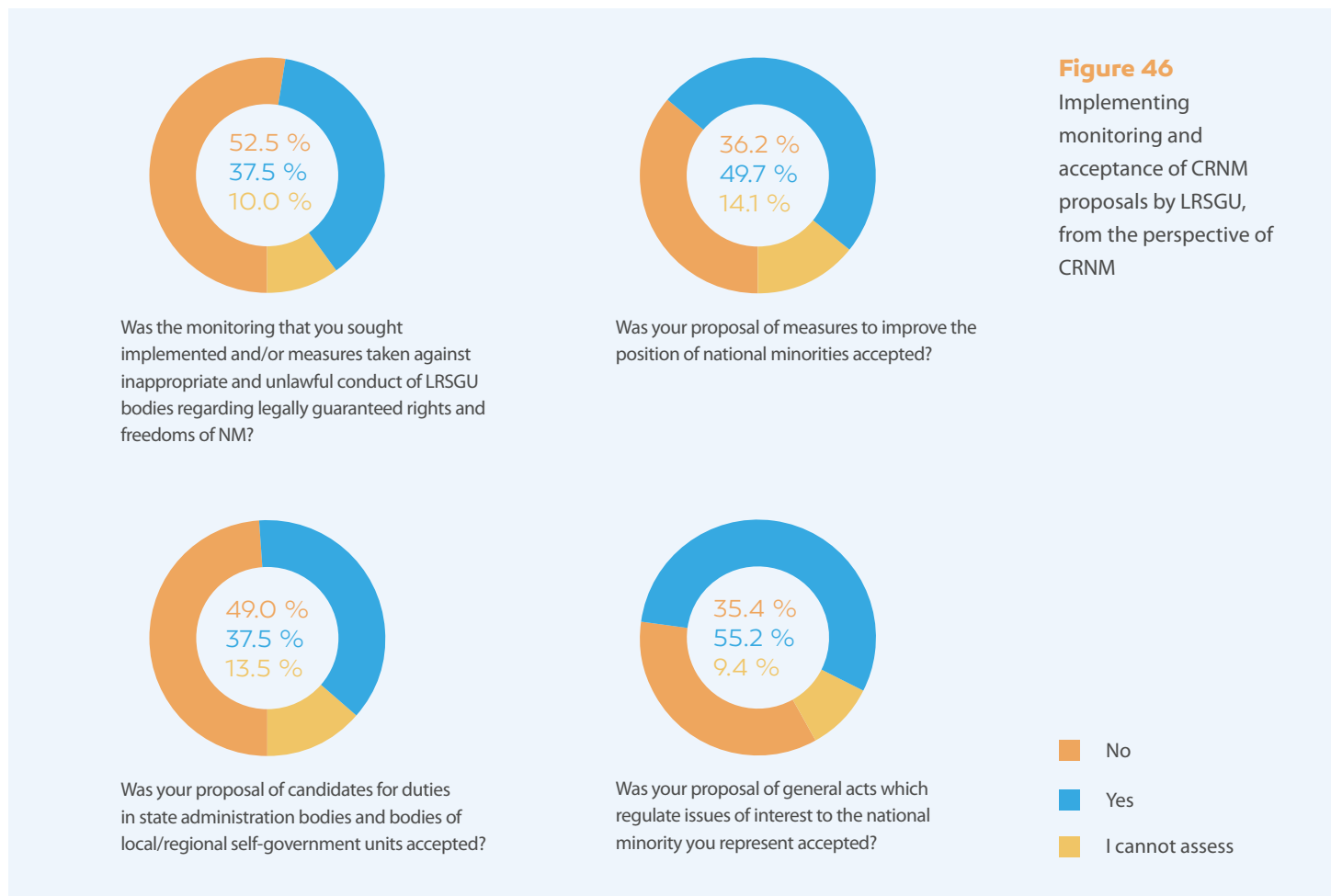


Figure 47

Appointment of a competent person or service at LRS GU for co-operation with NM – assessment of CRNM

Did the local/regional self-government unit appoint a person or establish a service responsible for communication and cooperation with national minorities?

- Yes ■
- No ■
- I cannot assess ■

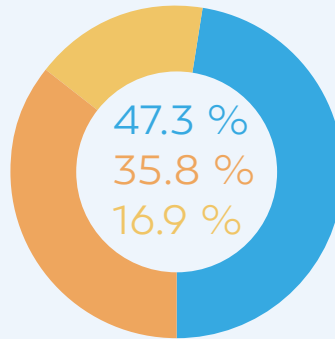
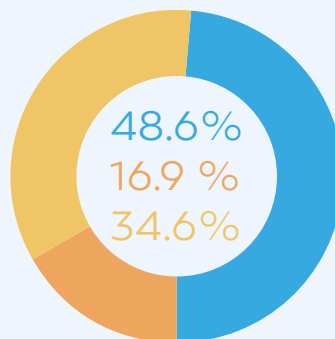


Figure 48

Harmonization of LRS GU general acts with CLRNM provisions – assessment of CRNM

Are all relevant general acts of the local/regional self-government unit harmonized with the provisions of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities?

- Yes ■
- No ■
- I cannot assess ■



Regarding the fulfilment of LRS GU's other obligations (appointing a person/establishing a service responsible for communication and co-operation with NM, and harmonizing all of the self-government unit's relevant general acts with CLRNM), a relatively high share of the questioned CRNM also could not assess whether the self-government unit had fulfilled the anticipated obligations. 17% of the questioned CRNM could not assess whether LRS GU had appointed a person or established a service responsible for communication and co-operation with NM (Figure 47), while a third of the respondents could not assess whether all of LRS GU's relevant general acts were harmonized with CLRNM provisions (Figure 48).

CRNMs who could not assess whether the self-government unit had fulfilled these obligations were more represented at the municipal level and less at the county and city self-government levels. Additionally, among them there was a larger share of those who were carrying out the CRNM mandate for the first time and a smaller share of those who have experience in performing the CRNM role.

However, less than half of the questioned CRNM stated that the self-government unit fulfilled the above-mentioned obligations - appointed a person or established a service responsible for co-operation with the NM and harmonized LRSGU's general acts with CLRNM.

With regard to the self-government unit subsample, 98% of the questioned heads of the self-government units confirmed the harmonization of all relevant LRSGU general acts with CLRNM provisions, and 94% stated that they financed the activities of other non-minority CSOs. Furthermore, 78% of the questioned self-government units finance the activities of NM associations, 67% of them designated the administrative department or appointed a person responsible for communication and cooperation with national minorities, while 58% of them prescribed official use and way of using flags and other NM symbols (Figure 49).

Share of questioned self-government units that fulfilled Constitutional obligations and implemented mechanisms and measures for the protection of NM

Have all the relevant general acts of your self-government unit been harmonized with the provisions of CLRNM?



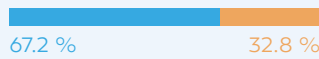
Does your self-government unit finance the activities of other civil society organizations?



Does your self-government unit finance the activities of national minority associations?



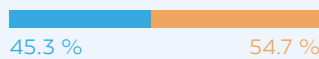
Has your self-government unit designated an administrative department or service/ appointed a person responsible for communication and cooperation with NM?



Does your self-government unit's statute prescribe official use and ways of using NM flags and other symbols?



Does your self-government unit's statute prescribe equal official use of NM languages and scripts?



Does your self-government unit finance the activities of other national minority organizations?



Has your self-government unit secured resources in its budget for educational institutions that teach in the languages and scripts of NM?



Does your self-government unit secure resources in its budget to co-finance radio and television station programs intended for NM?



Figure 49
Share of questioned LRSGU who implemented certain mechanism and measures of protection of NM



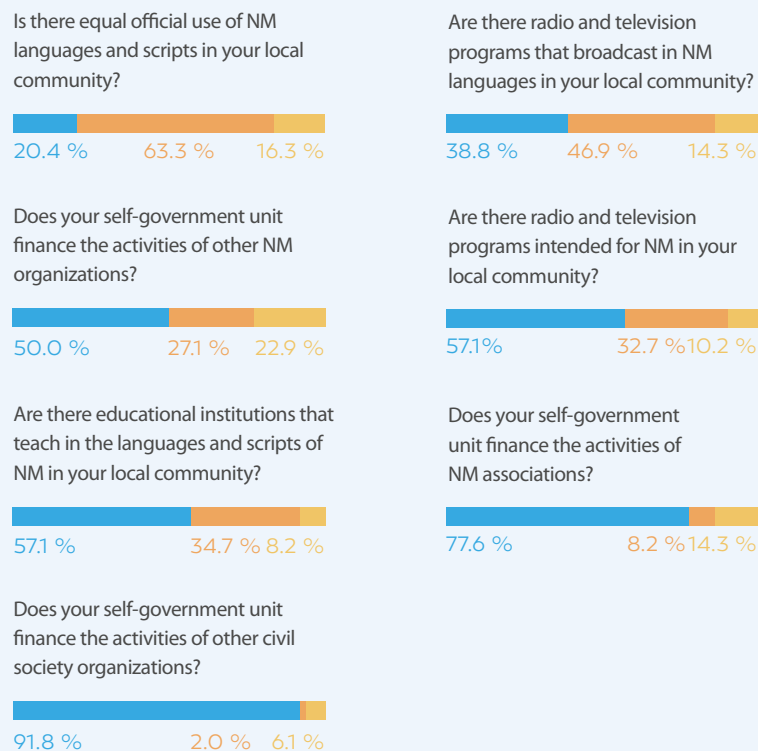
On the other hand, less than half of the questioned self-government units prescribed equal official use of language and script of NM (45%), 38% of them finance the activities of minority organizations (such as foundations, cultural institutions, scientific institutions, publishing institutions), a third of them ensured resources in their budget for educational institutions that teach in the languages and scripts of NM (33%), while a quarter of them ensured resources in their budget for co-financing radio and television station programs intended for NM (23%).

Of the questioned members of civil society organizations, 92% confirmed that the self-government unit finances the activities of non-minority CSOs, 78% of them stated that the self-government unit finances NM activities, while 50% of them stated that the self-government unit finances the activities of other minority organizations. Additionally, 57% of the questioned CSOs refer to the existence of educational institutions that teach in the language and script of NM and the existence of radio and television programs intended for NM (Figure 50). One of the least implemented NM protection mechanisms, from the perspective of CSO members, is the unequal positioning and unequal official use of the NM language and script in the local community, which was highlighted by 63% of the questioned CSOs.

In local communities i.e. in self-government units that implemented a number of mechanisms and measures to protect and improve the position of national minorities:

- there is a greater share of civil society organizations who have individual members currently carrying out the CRNM mandate,

Figure 50
Share of implemented NM protection mechanisms and measures from the perspective of CSO members



- CSO members of such local communities highly assess the cooperation between CRNM and the civil sector,
- they are more satisfied with the cooperation with CRNM,
- and they assess NM members and CRNM as less constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM.

Since there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of CRNM's acceptance by LRSGU between CSO members whose local communities i.e. self-government units implemented a larger or smaller number of mechanisms and measures to protect and improve the position of national minorities, it is assumed that a certain number of self-government units, despite the formal implementation of mechanisms and measures for the protection of NM, remain reluctant to cooperate with CRNM.

The appointment of a person or the establishment of a service responsible for communication and cooperation with the NM is only one of the indicators of the efficient implementation of CLRNM in a particular self-government unit since the units that fulfilled this obligation are also the ones where the following was noted:

- **CRNMs are more equipped to perform the advisory function, and are more active and efficient** (a larger share of those who are not carrying out the CRNM mandate for the first time, who have been nominated by NM associations, who also perform other advisory/representative/executive functions, who use computers for CRNM activities, who are more familiar with the legal framework of the CRNM institution, who largely fulfil their obligations and exercise their rights, who participate in the work of some coordination);
- **The discernible readiness of the self-government unit to cooperate with CRNM** (in such units all relevant general acts are harmonized with the CLRNM provisions, LRSGU has provided more working resources for CRNM, and CRNM's proposals of measures and general acts are more widely accepted in such self-government units);
- **CRNM are relatively satisfied** (they assess the communication with the self-government unit with a higher score, they require the implementation of monitoring to a lesser extent, they are more prone to addressing the self-government unit for information or advice, and confirm the acceptance by LRSGU).

The question is whether the described positive form of cooperation is triggered by CRNM's professional capacity for carrying out the advisory function or the openness and willingness of the self-government unit to cooperate with CRNM and NM?

Since CRNM's capacity to carry out the advisory function and the openness and readiness of the self-government unit to cooperate with CRNM and NM are the necessary preconditions for efficient implementation and application of CLRNM, based on the relevant manifest variables,²³ the latent variable "LRSGU's efficiency in the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of CRNM, and the

²³ The latent variable "LRSGU's efficiency in the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of CRNM/ openness and willingness of LRSGU to cooperate with CRNM", was constructed based on the number of resources that CRNM provided to LRSGU, the amount of monitoring carried out and the accepted proposals for measures, general acts and CRNM candidates, appointment of a person/established service responsible for communication with NM, harmonization of all LRSGU's general acts with CLRNM provisions, the frequency of notifying CRNM about sessions that discuss issues that deal with the position of NM, the frequency of submitting material from such sessions to CRNM, and seeking CRNM's opinion when preparing proposals for general acts regulating NM rights and freedoms.

openness and readiness of LRSGU to cooperate with CRNM” was constructed. For such a constructed variable, a higher score indicates greater efficiency of LRSGU in implementing CLRNM from the perspective of CRNM i.e. greater readiness of LRSGU to cooperate with CRNM.

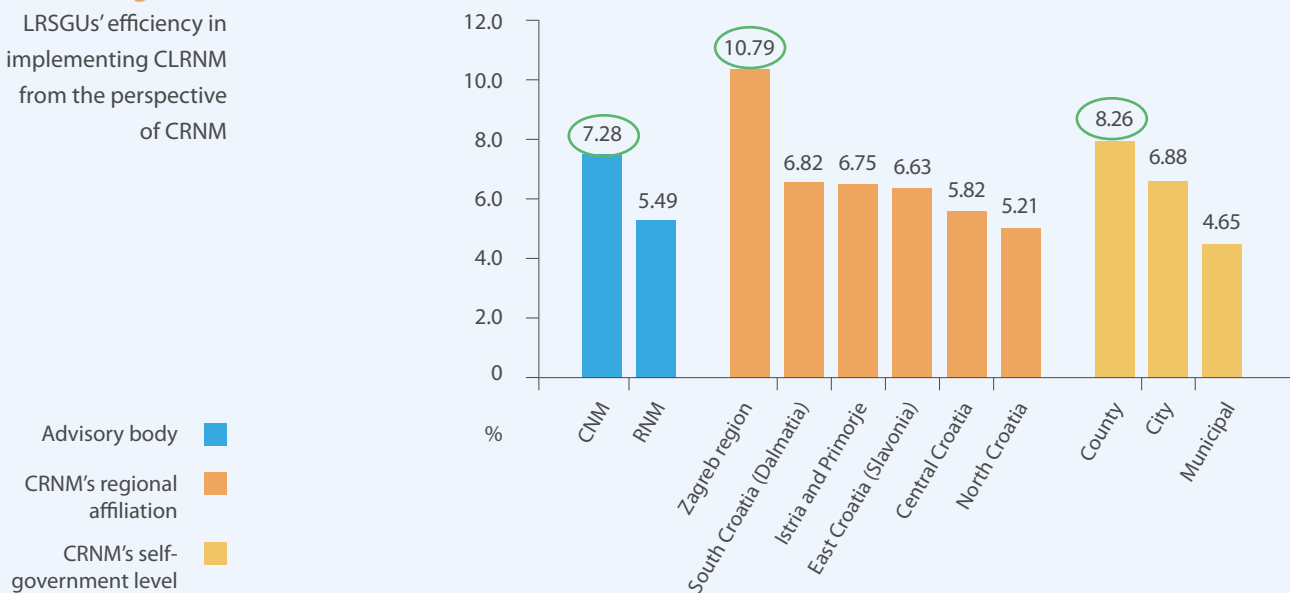
A statistically significant difference was determined on the constructed latent variable with regard to the type of minority advisory body, the regional affiliation of CRNM and the self-government level of CRNM, but not with regard to the “type” of national minority. The aforementioned indicates that self-government units that are more inclined to cooperate with NM and CRNM, and which consistently and effectively implement and apply the CLRNM provisions, do not discriminate against CRNM in view of their national affiliation.

The identified differences show that LRSGUs’ greater efficiency in implementing CLRNM i.e. LRSGUs’ greater willingness to cooperate with CRNM was expressed by: councils of national minorities, CRNM of the Zagreb region and CRNM at the county level, while less willingness to cooperate was expressed by: representatives of national minorities, CRNM of other regions in the Republic of Croatia, and CRNM at the municipal level (Figure 51).

Overall, the municipal self-government level proved to be least effective in the implementation and application of CLRNM, both in terms of CRNM’s capacity to perform the advisory function and the self-governments’ openness and willingness to cooperate with CRNM and NM. Therefore, the future focus on effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of CLRNM must take into account the systemic deficiency of this target population and identify ways that will largely affect the capability and increased capacity of this segment of the system i.e. the CRNM institution.

Figure 51

LRSGUs’ efficiency in implementing CLRNM from the perspective of CRNM



- In order to carry out the advisory function, the following are formally more equipped and qualified: councils of national minorities, CRNM at the county and city level, CRNM of “old” (traditional) and “new” minorities and CRNM from the Zagreb region, while the following are less equipped and qualified: representatives of national minorities, CRNM at the municipal level, and members of the Roma national minority.
- Based on the two constructed latent variables (“CRNM’s preparedness for performing the advisory function” and “CRNM activity/efficiency”) a statistically significant, positive but relatively weak correlation was determined ($r=0.461$). It was confirmed that the efficient implementation and application of CLRNM requires both the formal preparedness and activity of CRNM, as well as the self-government units’ willingness to cooperate with NM and CRNM.

HIGHLIGHTED

3.2.4. Constraining factors in the implementation of the Constitutional Law

3.2.4.1. Constraining factors to the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of CRNM

According to the questioned CRNM, the factors that least impede the implementation of CLRNM are conflicts between representatives and councils of different national minorities and various internal conflicts among members of the same council (Figure 52).

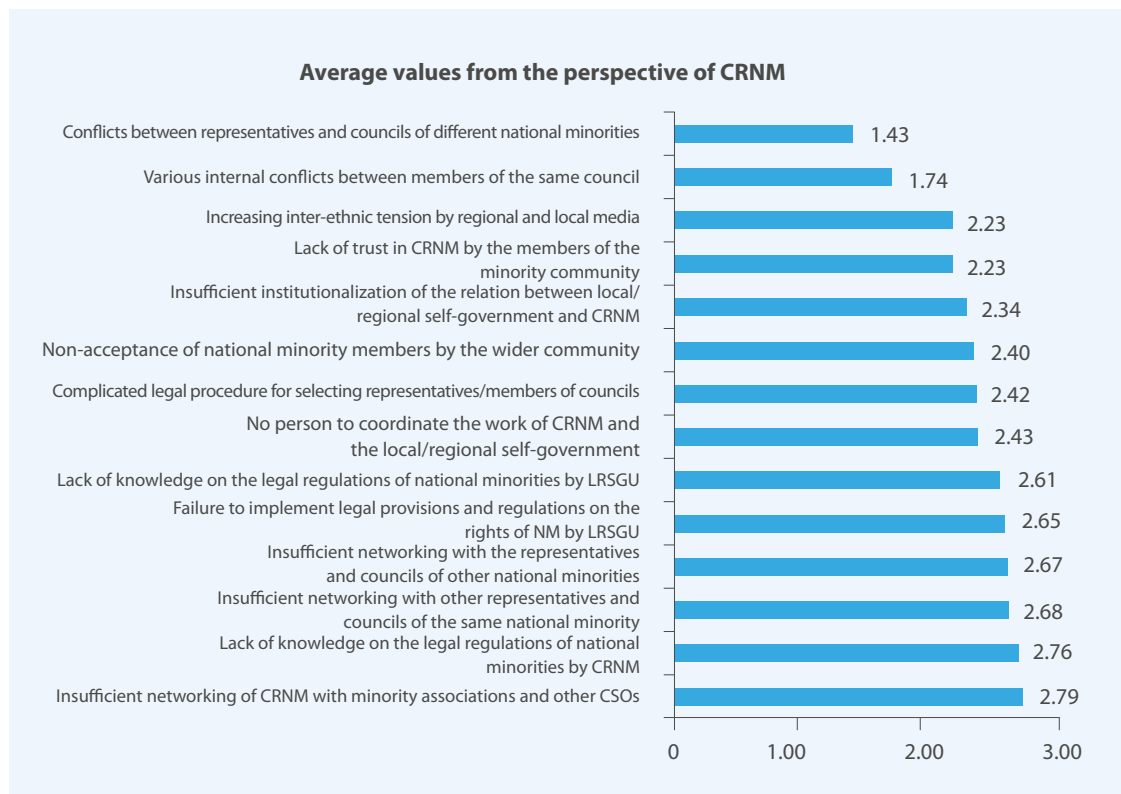


Figure 52
Factors that least impede the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of CRNM

The factors that greatly impede the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of CRNM are insufficient funds allocated to councils and representatives, and their solely advisory role (Figure 53).

After displaying the hierarchy of constraining factors, their contents were grouped into a priori categories. The factors were grouped into four categories (not formed as a result of factor analysis) but rather on the basis of similarity of the manifest contents, defined by the instrument's items.

In this way, four typical, potentially constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM, were created:

- **members of NM as a constraining factor in the implementation of CLRNM;**
- **CRNM as a constraining factor in the implementation of CLRNM;**
- **self-government units as a constraining factor in the implementation of CLRNM;**
- **the social environment as a constraining factor in the implementation of CLRNM.**

Figure 53
Factors that greatly impede the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of CRNM



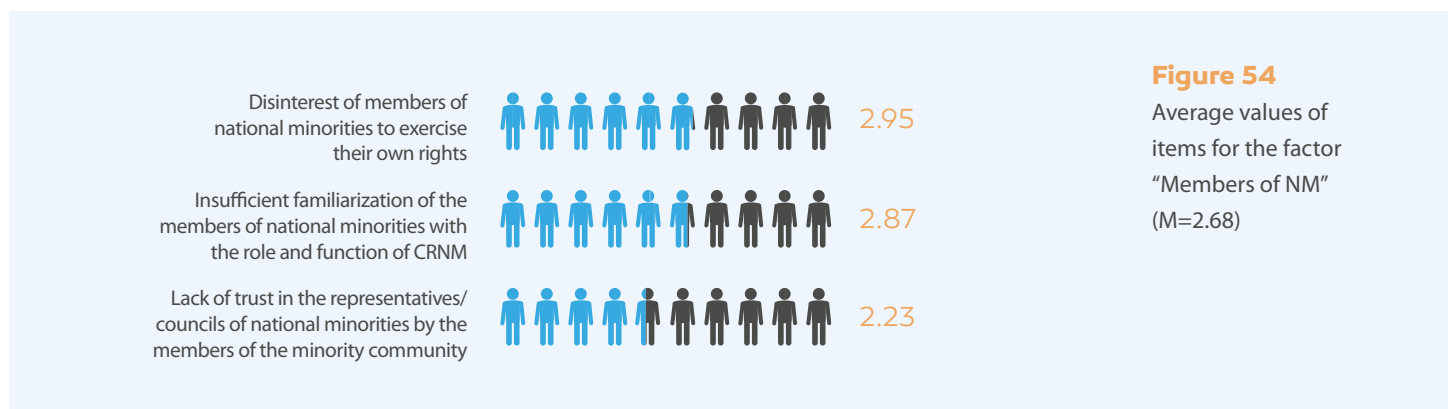


Figure 54

Average values of items for the factor "Members of NM" (M=2.68)



Figure 55

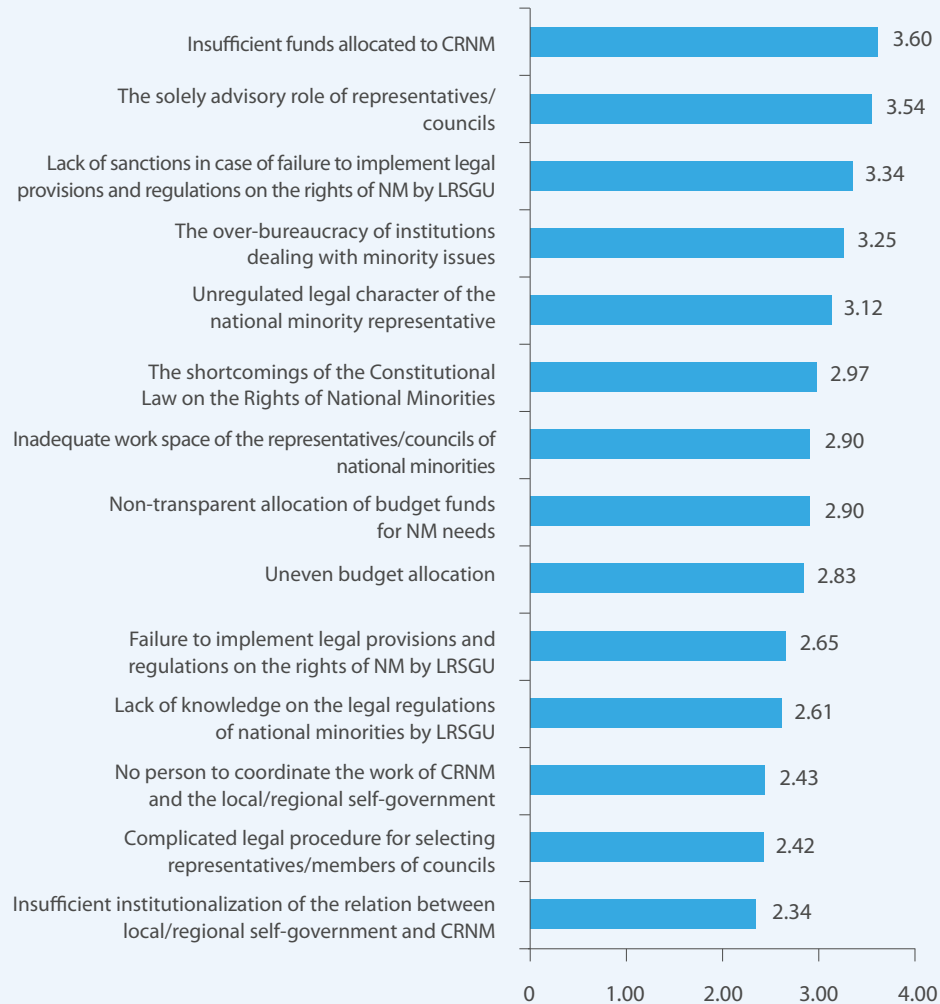
Average values of items for the factor "CRNM" (M=2.56)

* This question was answered only by CNM

All forms of insufficient networking (networking with other representatives and councils of the same national minority, networking with representatives and councils of other national minorities, and networking with the civil sector) greatly impede the implementation of CLRNM in the opinion of municipal-level CRNM, and to a lesser extent in the opinion of CRNM at the county and city levels. It has also been shown that both types of conflicts (amongst representatives and councils of different national minorities and various internal conflicts among members of the same council) greatly impede the implementation of CLRNM in the opinion of the councils and representatives of the Roma national minority, and to a lesser extent in the opinion of the councils and representatives of "new" and "old" (traditional) national minorities.

Figure 56

Average values of items for the factor “Self-government units” (M=2.91)



Self-government units greatly impede the implementation of CLRNM in the opinion of CRNM from North Croatia, and least impede in the opinion of CRNM from the Zagreb region.

In the social environment factor, a statistically significant difference was identified with regard to the regional affinity of CRNM, the self-government level of CRNM and the “type” of national minority. There-to, the social environment greatly impedes the implementation of CLRNM in the opinion of CRNM from Central Croatia, CRNM at the municipal level and members of the Roma national minority. On the other hand, the social environment least impedes the implementation of CLRNM in the opinion of CRNM from Istria and Primorje, county level bodies, and members of “old” (traditional) national minorities.

In the opinion of the questioned CRNM, the factor that impedes the effective implementation and application of CLRNM to the greatest extent are local/regional self-government units, while CRNM themselves impede the implementation and application of CLRNM to the least extent. The average value of the self-government unit factor statistically significantly deviates from the average values of the other factors (Figure 58).



Figure 57
Average values of items for the factor "Social environment" (M=2.67)

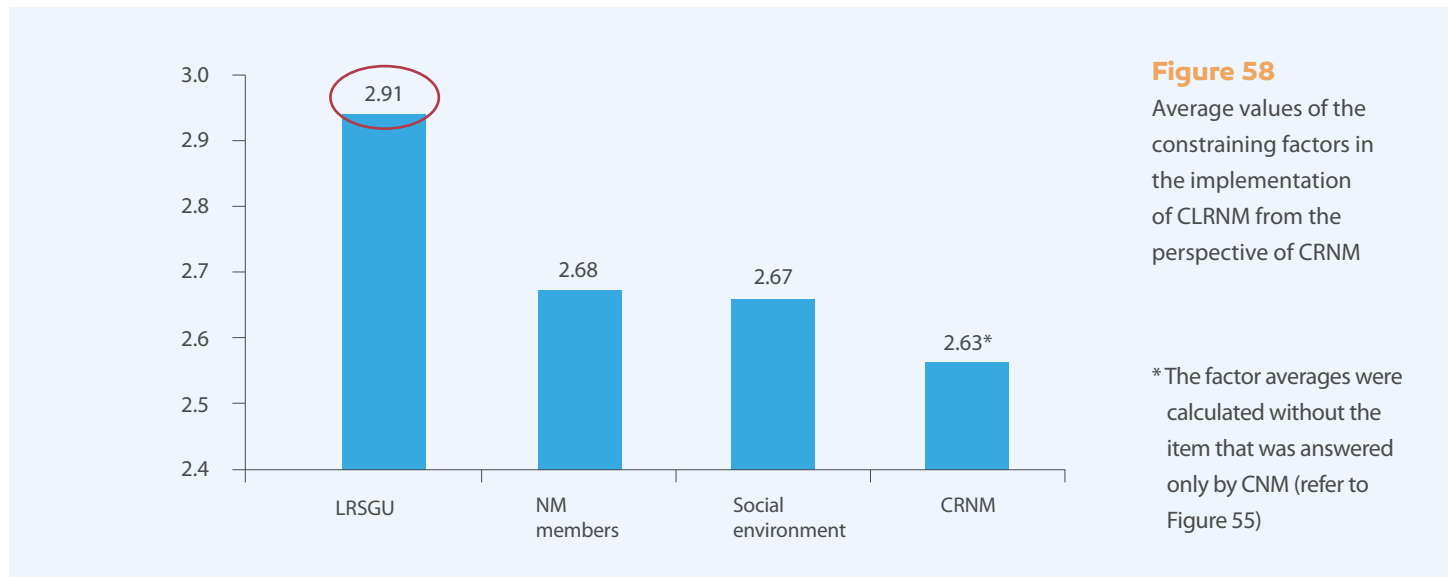


Figure 58
Average values of the constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of CRNM

*The factor averages were calculated without the item that was answered only by CNM (refer to Figure 55)

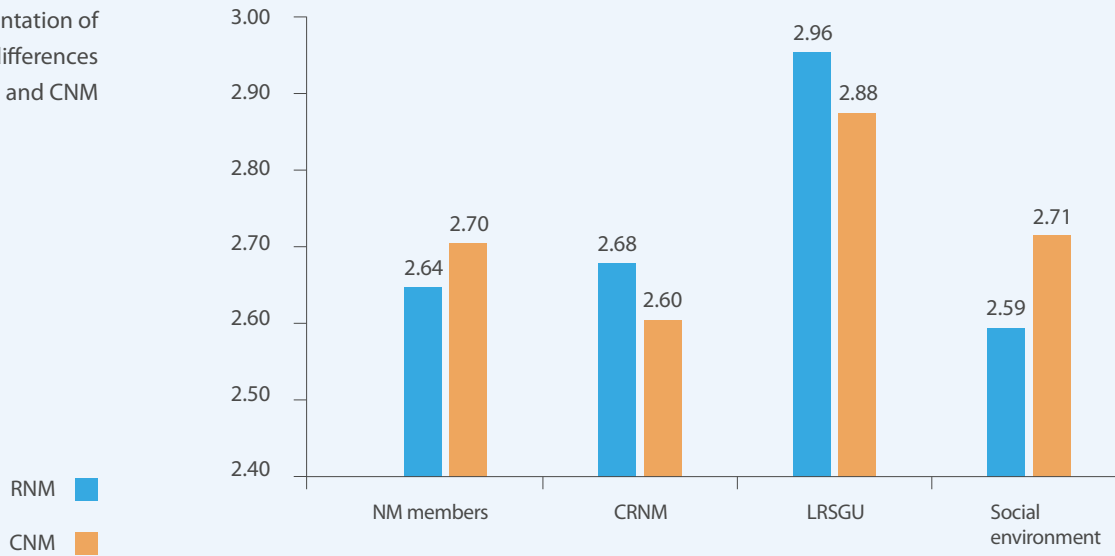
Although there was no statistically significant difference between RNM and CNM (Figure 59) when assessing the degree to which certain factors impede the efficient implementation and application of CLRNM, in the context of the analysed sample it can be seen that:

- formal structures (self-government units and CRNM) greatly impede the implementation of CLRNM in the opinion of NM representatives, and least impede in the opinion of CNM members,
- while informal structures (NM members and the social environment) greatly impede the implementation of CLRNM in the opinion of CNM members, and least impede in the opinion of NM representatives.

The aforementioned additionally confirms more efficient cooperation between CNM and the self-government unit in relation to the certain limitation of the representatives in the field of cooperation with LRSQU.

Figure 59

Average values of the constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM – differences between RNM and CNM



- HIGHLIGHTED**
- The factors that greatly impede the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of CRNM are insufficient funds allocated to councils and representatives, and their solely advisory role, while the factors that least impede the implementation of CLRNM are conflicts between representatives and councils of different national minorities and various internal conflicts among members of the same council.
 - In the opinion of the questioned CRNM, the factor that impedes the effective implementation and application of CLRNM to the greatest extent are local/regional self-government units, while CRNMs themselves impede the implementation and application of CLRNM to the least extent

3.2.4.2. Constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of CSO members

The least accepted items i.e. the factors that least impede the implementation of CLRNM in the opinion of the questioned members of civil society organizations are presented in Figure 60.

In the opinion of the questioned members of civil society organizations, the factor that impedes the implementation of CLRNM to the greatest extent is the insufficient number of active individuals among CRNM.

The most accepted items i.e. the factors that greatly impede the implementation of CLRNM in the opinion of the questioned members of civil society organizations are presented in Figure 61.

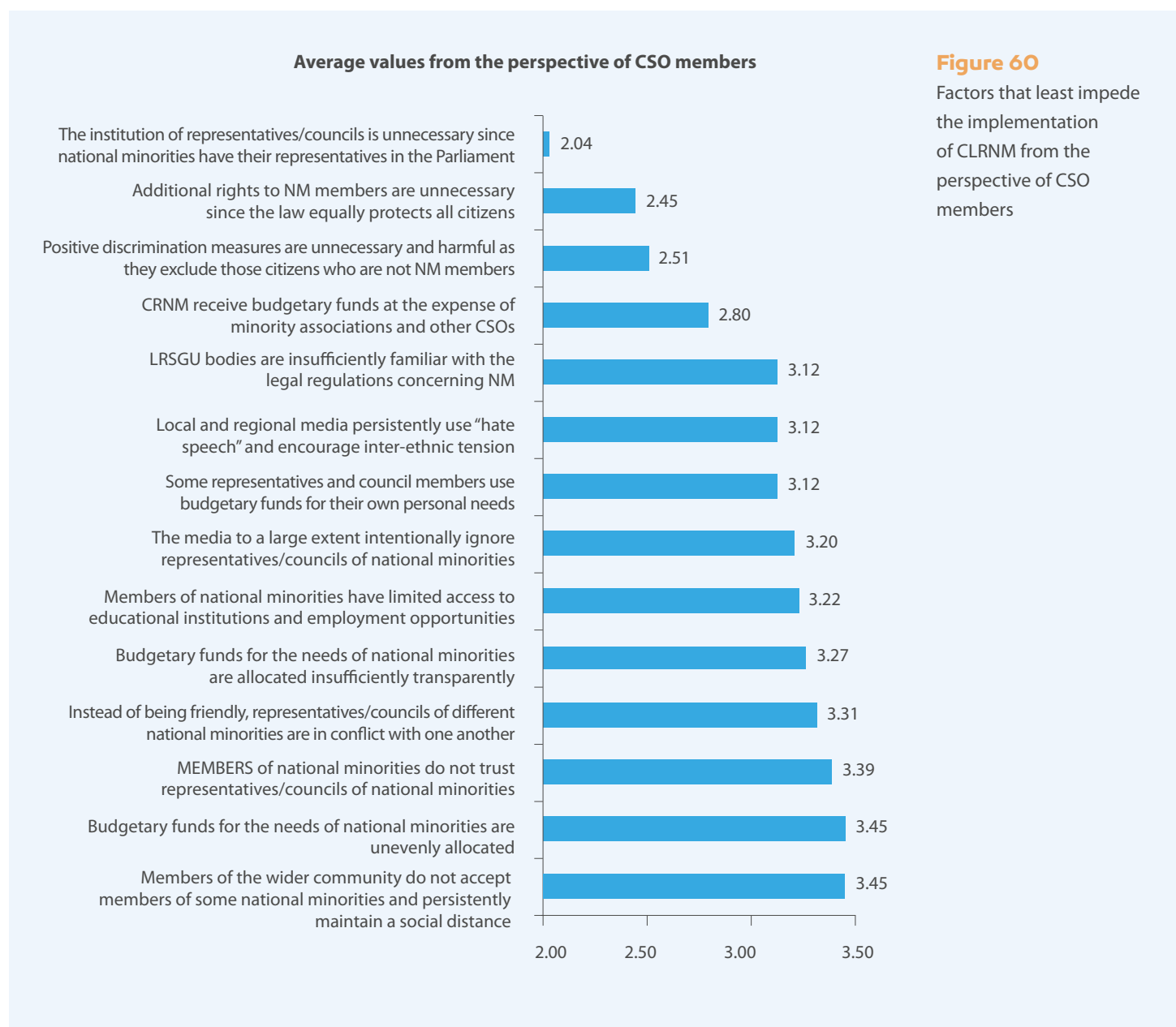


Figure 61

Factors that greatly impede the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of CSO members

Average values from the perspective of CSO members



After displaying the hierarchy of constraining factors, their contents were also grouped into a priori categories. In addition to the "Members of NM", "CRNM", "Self-government unit" and "Social environment" as constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM, a new category was made due to additional content i.e. an additional factor called "Tendency to abolish minority rights" since in the background of the named factor lies the tendency to abolish the CRNM institution and special minority rights.



Figure 62
Averages of items for the factor "Members of NM" – CSO subsample (M=3.63)

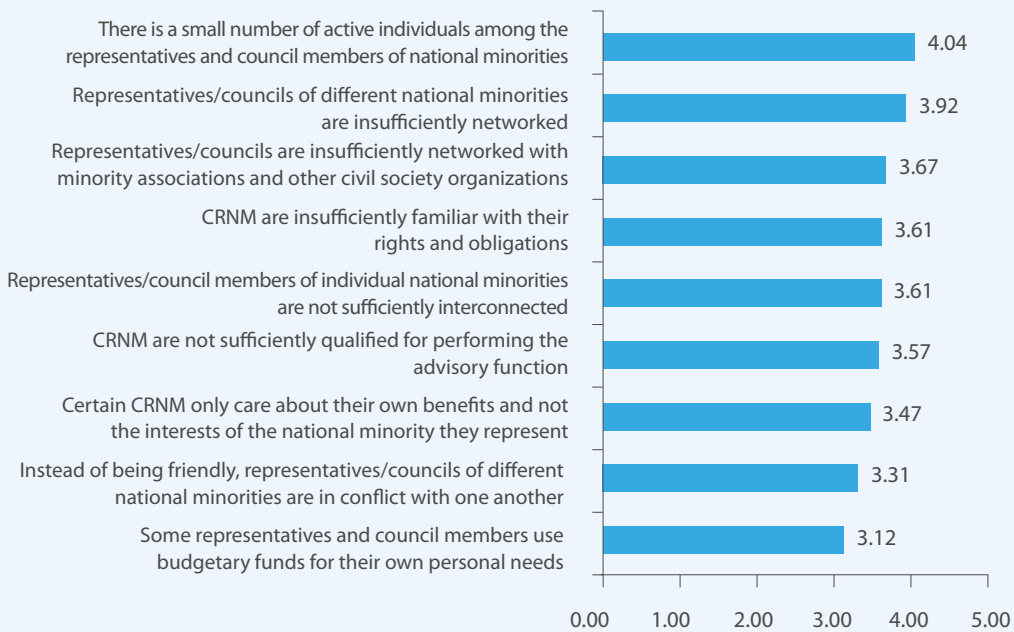


Figure 63
Averages of items for the factor "CRNM" – CSO subsample (M=3.59)

Average values of factor "CRNM" from the perspectives of members from three different CSO types



Figure 64
Averages of factor "CRNM" from the perspectives of members of three different types of CSOs

Among the three types of CSOs, a statistically significant difference was identified when assessing the degree to which the CRNM factor impedes the implementation of CLRN. Thereto, the CRNM factor impedes the implementation of CLRN to the least extent in the opinion of members of NM associations, to an average extent in the opinion of LAG members, and to the greatest extent in the opinion of members of other CSO (Figure 64).

The average values of the “Members of NM” and “CRNM” factors statistically significantly deviate from the average values of the “Social environment” and “Tendency to abolish minority rights” factors, while the average values of the “Self-government” and “Social environment” factors statistically significantly deviate from the average value of the factor “Tendency to abolish minority rights” (Figure 68).

Figure 65

Averages of items for the factor “Self-government unit” – CSO subsample (M=3.49)

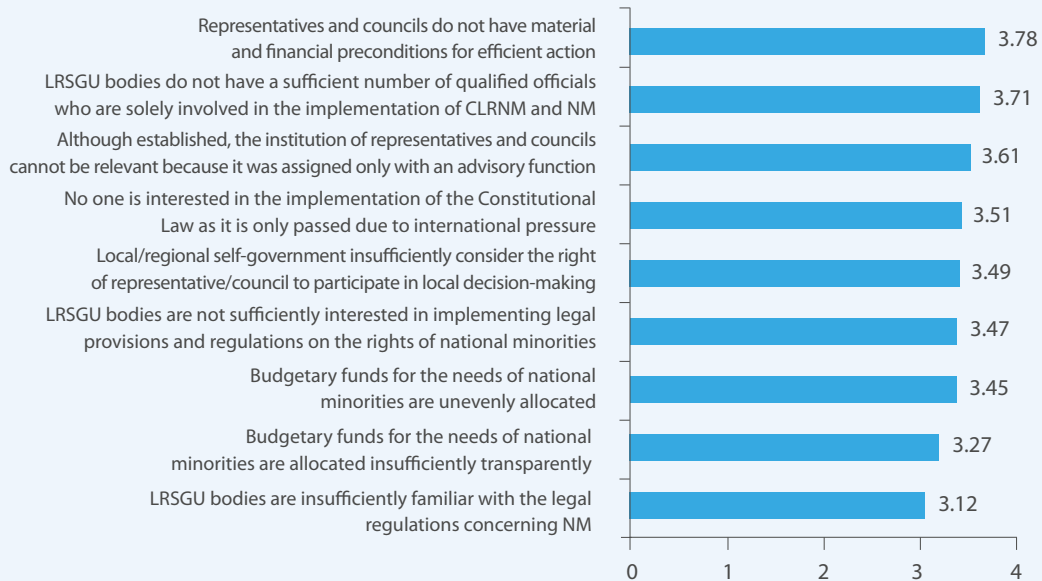
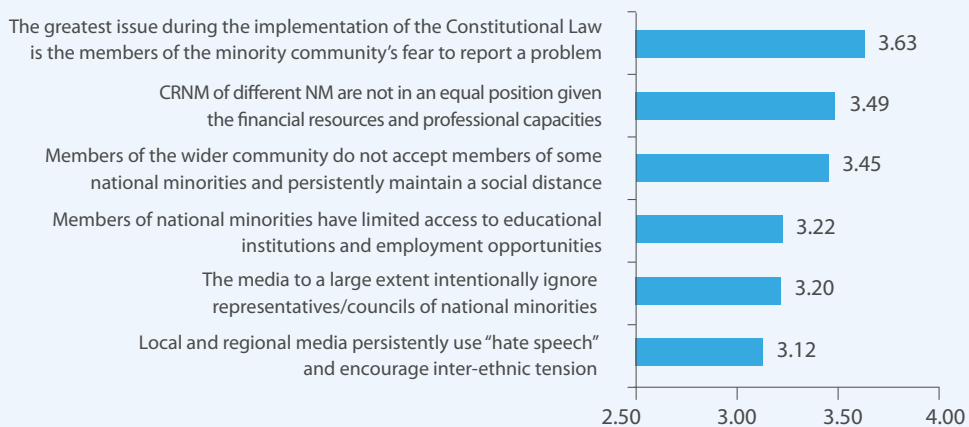


Figure 66

Averages of items for the factor “Social environment” – CSO subsample (M=3.35)



- 2.80** CRNM receive budgetary funds at the expense of minority associations and other CSOs
- 2.51** Positive discrimination measures are unnecessary and harmful as they exclude those citizens who are not NM members
- 2.45** Additional rights to NM members are unnecessary since the law equally protects all citizens
- 2.04** The CRNM institution is unnecessary since national minorities have their representatives in the Parliament

Figure 67
Averages of items for the factor “Tendency to abolish minority rights” – CSO subsample (M=2.45)

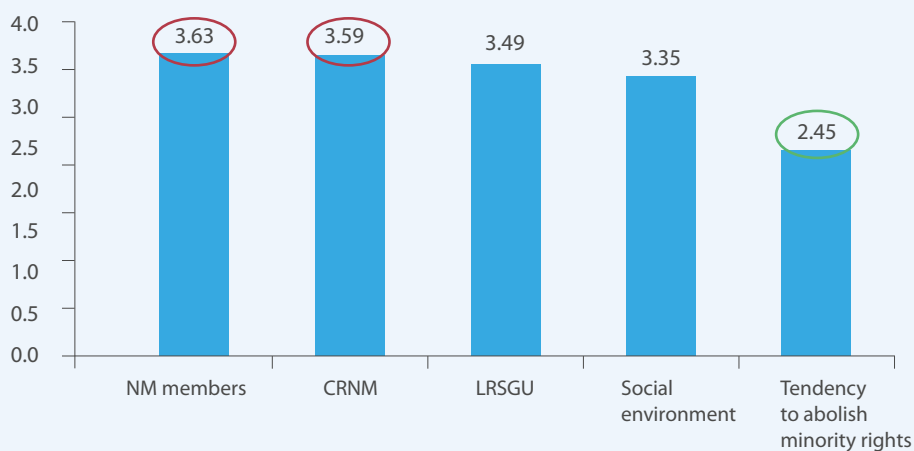


Figure 68.
Average values of the constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of CSO members

In the opinion of the members of civil society organizations, the factors that impede the implementation of CLRNM to the greatest extent are members of NM and the actual minority advisory body (CRNM), and to a lesser extent the self-government units and the social environment. Thereto, the members of civil society organizations do not express the tendency to abolish minority rights.

In addition, the members of civil society organizations who greatly assess CRNM as a constraining factor in the implementation of CLRNM also emphasize NM members and self-government units as constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM. Moreover, those who greatly assess self-government units as a constraining factor to the implementation of CLRNM, also greatly assess the social environment as a constraining factor to the implementation of CLRNM.

CRNM and members of NM impede the implementation of CLRNM to a lesser extent in the opinion of those CSO members:

- in whose organizations there are individuals who are currently carrying out CRNM mandates,
- who attribute a higher score to the cooperation between CRNM and the civil sector,

- who attribute a higher score to the cooperation between the self-government unit and the civil sector,
- who attribute a greater contribution of CRNM, NM members, NM associations and the State Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia to the efficient implementation and application of CLRNM,
- whose self-government units/local communities implemented a larger number of measures and mechanisms for the protection of NM,
- who greatly assess CRNM's familiarity with their own role and function.

The tendency to abolish minority rights is less expressed by those CSO members:

- in whose organizations there are individuals who are currently carrying out CRNM mandates,
- whose local communities have introduced equal official use of the languages and scripts of NM,
- whose organizations have offered NM associations the opportunity to cooperate in projects aimed at local community development,
- and those whose organizations have been addressed by CRNM and NM members for information or advice.

Self-government units and the social environment impede the implementation of CLRNM to a less extent in the opinion of those CSO members:

- whose self-government units, apart from NM associations, also finance the activities of other national minority organizations,
- who confirm the acceptance of CRNM by the self-government unit and the civil sector,
- who assess the cooperation between the self-government units and the civil sector with a higher score,
- who assess a higher level of use of CRNM's advisory services by self-government units,
- who assess a higher level of active participation of CRNM in decision-making process regarding issues of interest to NM,
- who attribute a greater contribution of CRNM and self-government units to the efficient implementation and application of CLRNM,
- who attribute a greater contribution of CLRNM to the position of NM members in the local community,
- who are more satisfied with the communication with the self-government unit,
- who assess that the self-government unit is more inclined to strengthening the CRNM institution,
- whose organizations were more addressed by NM members regarding complaints about discrimination or violation of minority rights.

From all of this, it is concluded that in those local communities whose self-government units are more open to cooperate with NM and CRNM, civil society organizations are also more open to cooperate with NM and CRNM, and the wider public is more inclined to accepting members of national minorities.

All of the above also implies that the perception of CRNM's efficiency from the perspective of members of civil society organizations is under strong mediator influence from their perception of LRSGU's efficiency, and on the other hand, the perception of self-government units from the perspective of members of civil society organizations is under strong mediator influence from their openness towards the CRNM institution and their tendency to cooperate with the CRNM institution. In other words,

- A more positive perception of the self-government unit's efficiency is associated with a more positive perception of the CRNM institution's efficiency, while a more negative perception of the self-government unit's efficiency is associated with a more negative perception of the CRNM institution's efficiency,
- more open self-government units (more inclined to cooperate with CRNM and with the civil sector) are more positively perceived, while more closed units (less inclined to cooperate with CRNM and with the civil sector) are perceived more negatively,
- a more negative perception of the self-government unit is associated with greater inclination to cooperate with CRNM by the civil sector, while a more positive perception of the self-government unit is associated with less inclination to cooperate with CRNM.

Overall, the situation in this area can be observed and described as the sum of the different types of behaviour which, for the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM, require the necessary activity of NM members and their networking with CRNM, as well as the networking of CRNM and civil society organizations. In addition, the acceptance of the CRNM institution by the self-government unit is an essential prerequisite for accepting members of national minorities by members of the wider community. It is reasonable to expect that the product of such behaviours and activities will lead to a better result in the implementation of CLRNM at the local level than can be expected in a situation where there is, or even dominates, the tendency to avoid activities or their mere mechanical and formal implementation in the local community.

- In the opinion of the questioned members of civil society organizations, the factor that impedes the implementation of CLRNM to the greatest extent is the insufficient number of active individuals among CRNMs, while the factor that least impedes the implementation of CLRNM is the opinion that the institution of councils and representatives is unnecessary since NMs have their representatives in the Parliament .
- In the opinion of the members of civil society organizations, the factors that impede the implementation of CLRNM to the greatest extent are NM members and the actual councils and representatives of NM, and to a less extent the self-government units and the social environment. Thereto, the members of civil society organizations do not express the tendency to abolish minority rights.
- It was shown that the perception of CRNM's efficiency from the perspective of members of civil society organizations is under strong mediator influence from their perception of self-government units' efficiency, and on the other hand, the perception of self-government units from the perspective of members of civil society organizations is under strong mediator influence from their openness towards the CRNM institution and their tendency to cooperate with the CRNM institution.
- Overall, the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM requires the necessary activity of NM members and their networking with CRNM, as well as the networking of CRNM and civil society organizations. In addition, the acceptance of the CRNM institution by the self-government unit is an essential prerequisite for accepting members of national minorities by members of the wider community.

HIGHLIGHTED

3.2.4.3. Constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of the heads of LRSU

According to the opinion of the questioned heads of the self-government units, the factors that impede the implementation of CLRNM to the least extent are non-transparent and unequal allocation of budget funds for NM needs. As the self-government units are responsible for allocating budgetary resources, this result is quite expected.

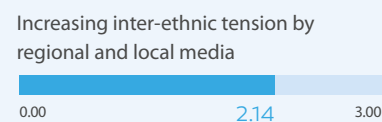
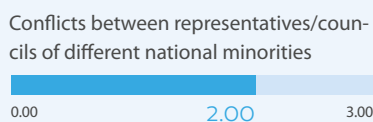
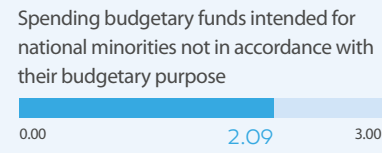
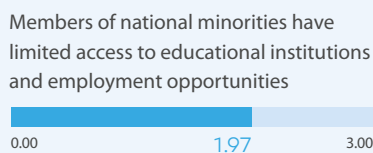
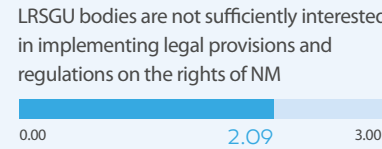
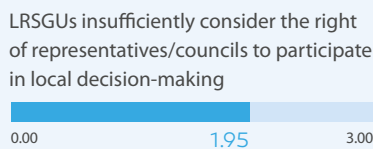
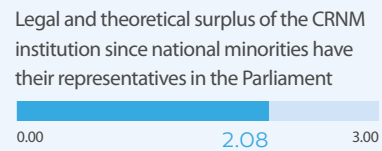
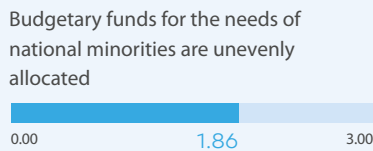
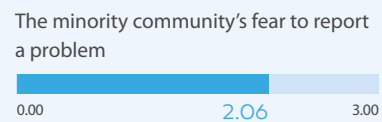
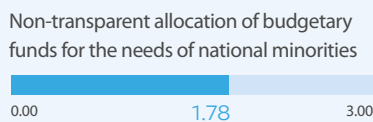
The least-accepted items i.e. the factors that impede the implementation of CLRNM to a lesser extent, in the opinion of the questioned heads of the self-government units, are shown in Figure 69.

The factors that impede the implementation of CLRNM to the greatest extent, from the perspective of the heads of self-government units, are the disinterest of members of national minorities in exercising their own rights and their insufficient familiarity with the role and function of CRNM.

The most accepted items i.e. the factors that impede the implementation of CLRNM to a greater extent, in the opinion of the questioned heads of self-government units, are shown in Figure 70.

Figure 69
Factors that least impede the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of LRSU

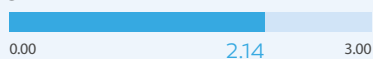
Average values from the perspective of LRSU heads/representatives



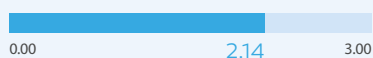
Failure to implement legal provisions and regulations on the rights of NM by LRSQU



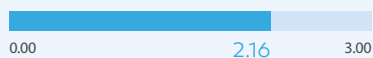
No person to coordinate the work of CRNM and the local/regional self-government



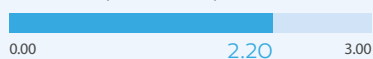
Insufficient consultation of advisory services of minority advisory bodies by individual LRSQUs



Non-acceptance of the members of some national minorities by the wider community



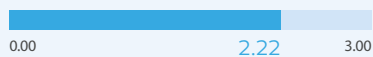
Lack of trust in CRNM by the members of the minority community



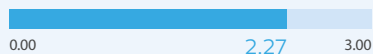
Insufficient institutionalization of the relation between local/regional self-government and CRNM



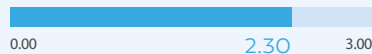
Unequal position of different national minorities given the financial resources and professional capacities of CRNM



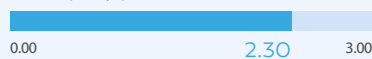
The impossibility of quality cooperation with the representatives and councils of national minorities



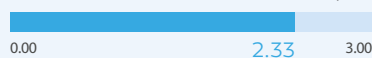
Lack of knowledge on the legal regulations of national minorities by LRSQU



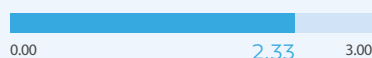
Legal and theoretical surplus of special (additional) laws of NM since the general laws equally protect all citizens



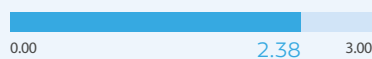
Conflicts between representatives/councils of the same national minority



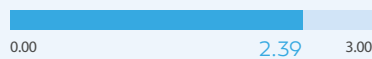
Complicated legal procedure for selecting representatives/members of councils



Insufficient media representation of minority advisory bodies



Too much international pressure to adopt and implement the Constitutional Law



Lack of sanctions for not implementing the legal provisions and regulations on the rights of NM by LRSQU

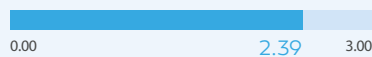


Figure 70

Average values from the perspective of LRSQU heads/representatives

Factors that most impede the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of LRSQU



Figure 71

Averages of items for the factor "Members of NM" – LRSQU subsample (M=2.75)

3.05

Disinterest of members of national minorities to exercise their own rights

3.00

Insufficient familiarization of members of national minorities with the role and function of CRNM

2.20

Lack of trust in the representatives/council of national minorities by the members of the minority community

For the purpose of analysing the self-government unit subsample, five simple additive indices (“Members of NM”, “CRNM”, “Self-government unit”, “Social environment” and “Tendency to abolish minority rights”) have also been constructed.

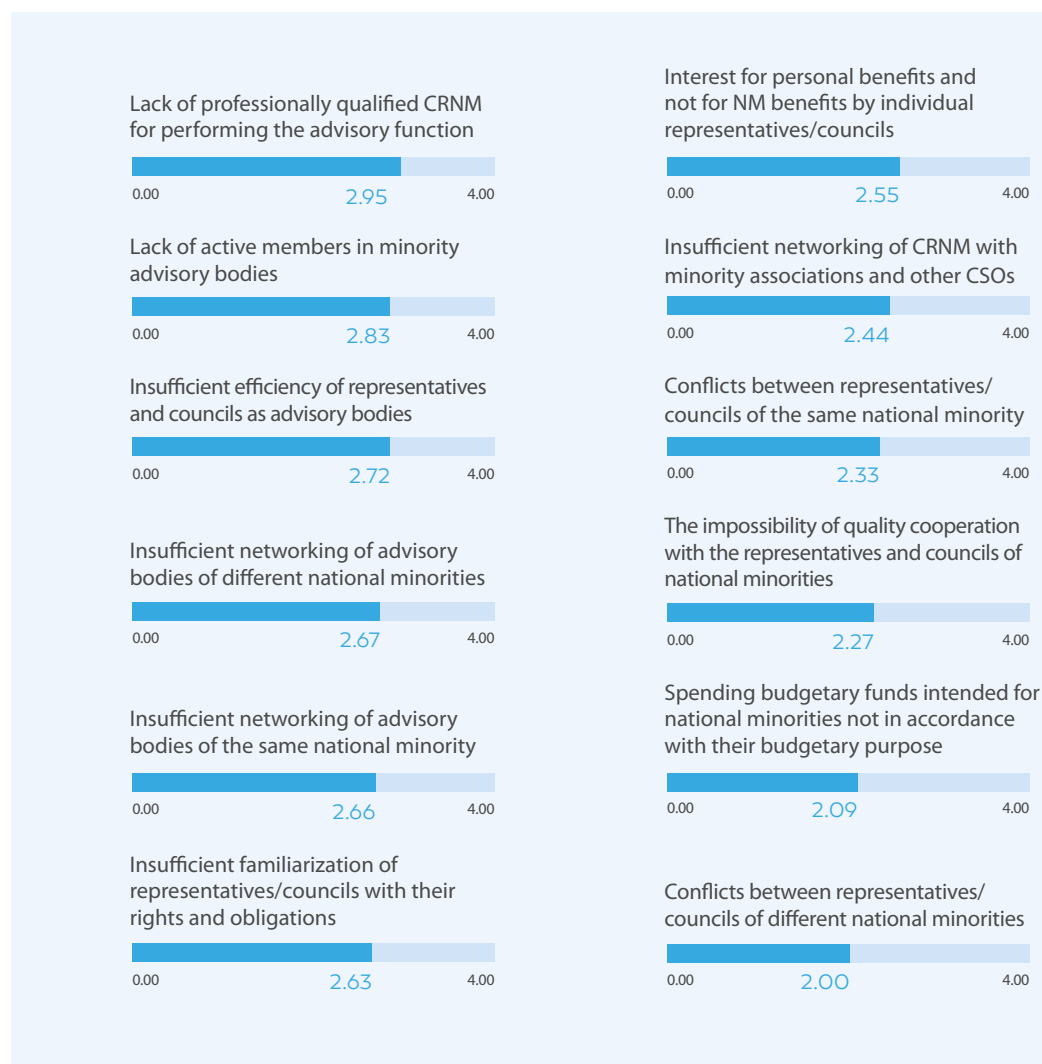


Figure 72
Averages of items for the factor “CRNM” – LRSKU subsample (M=2.51)

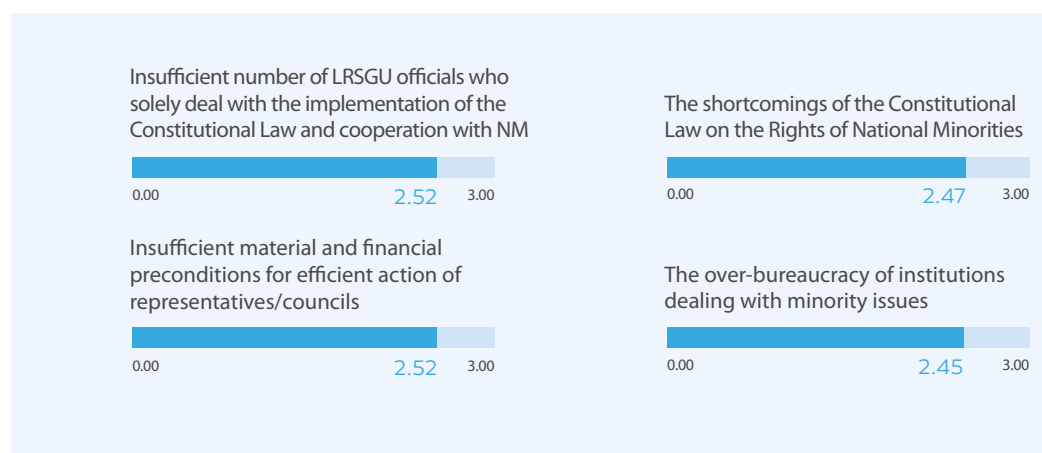


Figure 73
Averages of items for the factor “Self-government unit” – LRSKU subsample (M=2.23)

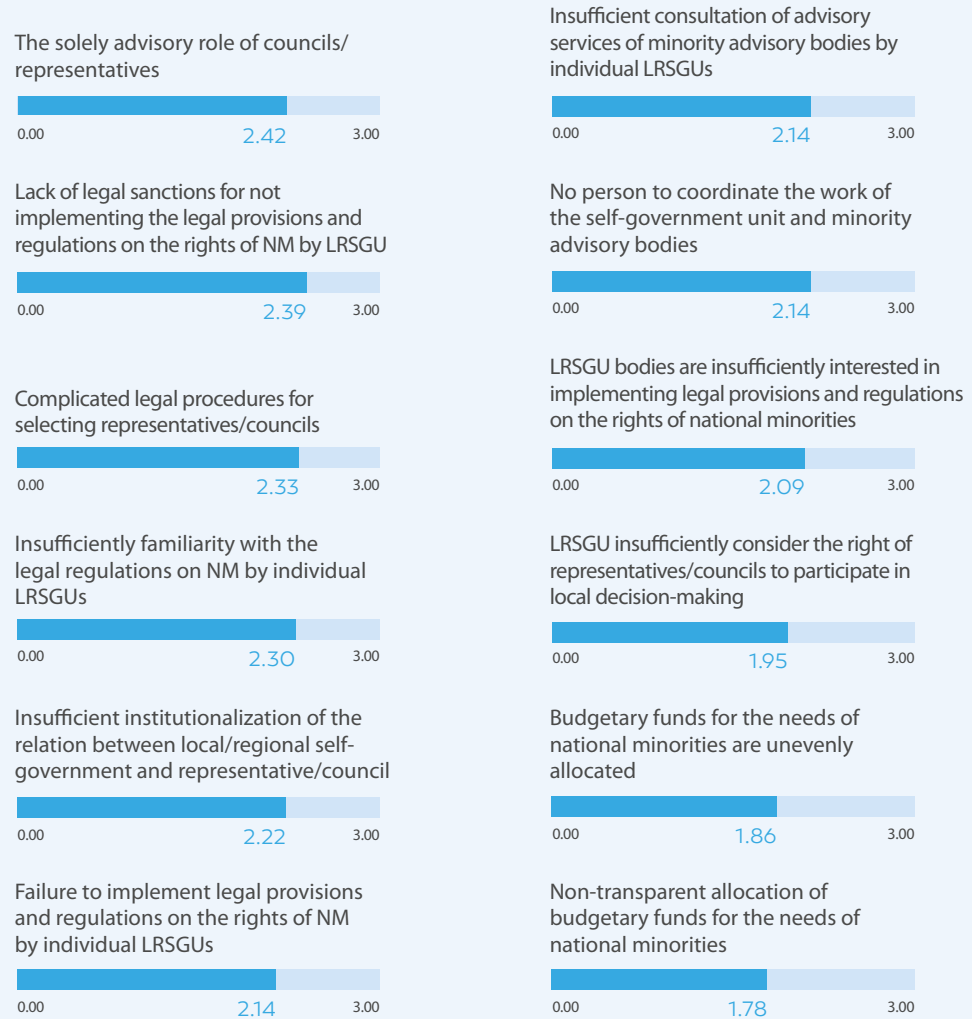
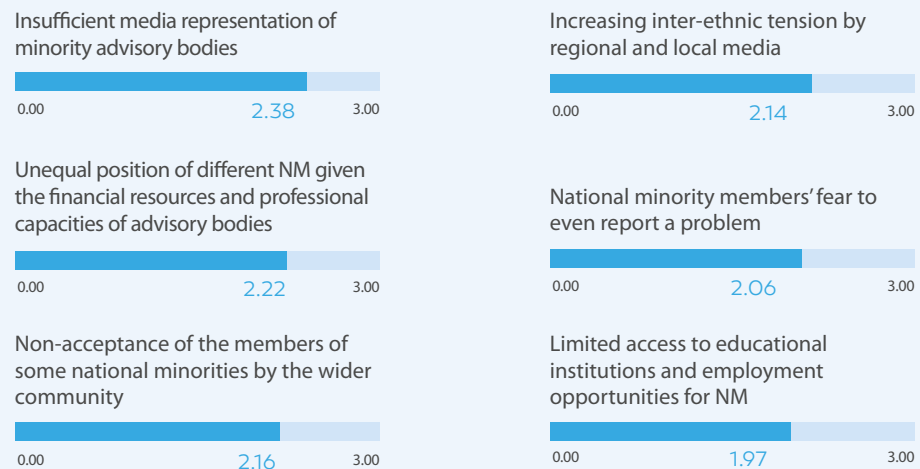


Figure 74
Averages of items for the factor “Social environment” – LRSGU subsample (M=2.15)



- 2.53** Discriminatory benefit measures when employing NM members under equal conditions, thus leaving out other citizens who are not members of national minorities
- 2.39** Too large international pressure for adopting and implementing the Constitutional Law
- 2.30** Legal and theoretical surplus of special (additional) minority rights given that general laws equally protect all citizens
- 2.08** Legal and theoretical surplus of the institution of representatives/councils since national minorities have their representatives in the Parliament

Figure 75
Averages of items for the factor “Tendency to abolish minority rights” – LRS GU subsample (M=2.32)

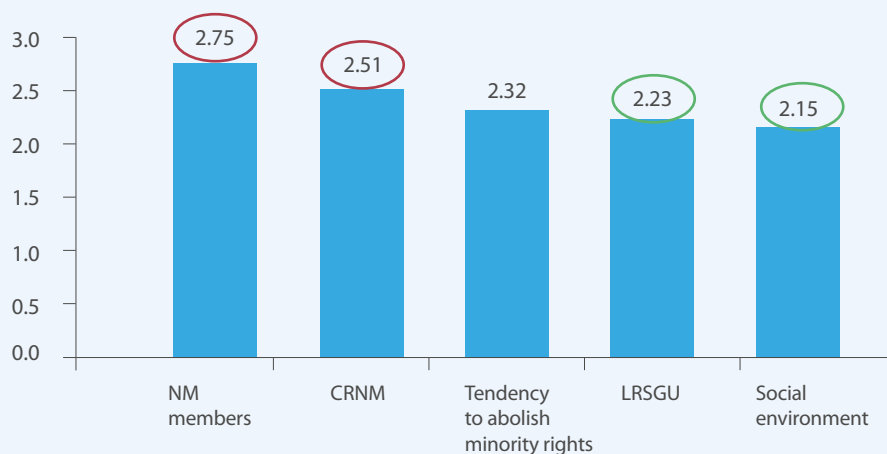


Figure 76
Average values of the constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of LRS GU

The average value of the factor “Members of NM” statistically significantly deviates from the average values of all other factors, while the average value of the factor “CRNM” statistically significantly deviates from the average values of “Self-government unit” and “Social Environment” factor.

In the opinion of the heads of the self-government units, the factor that impedes the implementation of CLRNM to the greatest extent are members of national minorities. They assess CRNM as a moderate constraining factor in the implementation of CLRNM, while the self-government units and the social environment are considered as the least constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM (Figure 76).

In the subsample of the heads of the self-government units, all five factors were statistically significantly positively correlated. In other words, the less constraining that a single factor is considered to be in terms of the implementation of CLRNM, the other factors will also be considered less constraining to the implementation of CLRNM, and the tendency to abolish minority rights is reduced. Contrary

to that, the more constraining that a single factor is considered to be in terms of the implementation of CLRN, the other factors will also be considered as more constraining in the implementation of CLRN, and the tendency to abolish minority rights increases.

CRNM and members of NM impede the implementation of CLRN to a lesser extent in the opinion of those heads of LRSUs:

- who are more satisfied with the communication with CRNM,
- in whose self-government units more than half of CRNM are present and actively participating in sessions discussing issues of interest to NM,
- who assess CRNM's familiarity with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and the information on the socio-political-minority context with a higher score,
- who assess the cooperation between CRNM and the civil sector with a higher score,
- who attribute a greater contribution of CRNM, NM members, NM associations and other minority organizations, coordinations, the State Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia and non-minority civil society organizations to the efficient implementation and application of CLRN,
- who believe that the wider public is inclined to further strengthening the CRNM institution.

The tendency to abolish minority rights is less expressed by those heads of the self-government units:

- who are more satisfied with the communication with CRNM,
- in whose self-government units more than half of CRNM are present and actively participating in sessions discussing issues of interest to NM,
- who assess CRNM's familiarity with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and the information on the socio-political-minority context with a higher score,
- who believe that the wider public is inclined to further strengthening the CRNM institution.

Self-government units impede the implementation of CLRN to a lesser extent in the opinion of those heads of the self-government units:

- who are more satisfied with the communication with CRNM,
- in whose self-government units more than half of CRNM are present and actively participating in sessions discussing issues of interest to NM,
- whose self-government units have always informed CRNM about such sessions,
- who attribute a greater contribution of non-minority civil society organizations to the efficient implementation and application of CLRN,
- who assess CRNM's familiarity with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and the information on the socio-political-minority context with a higher score,

The above also indicates that, besides CRNM's engagement and a stimulating social environment inclined to cooperate with CRNM, the efficient implementation of CLRN also requires:

- the necessary interaction between CRNM with NM members (given that in those local communities where CRNM is less active, the NM members are also less active, and vice versa, in those local communities where NM members are more active, CRNM is also more active),
- and interaction between CRNM and civil society organizations (given that the heads of the self-government units assess the cooperation between CRNM and civil society organizations with a higher score, a higher score is also attributed to CRNM's efficiency in carrying out the advisory function).

The following section shows that the perception of CRNM from the perspectives of the heads of self-government units is also under strong mediator influence of their perception of civil society organizations and vice versa, as the perception of civil society organizations is under strong mediator influence of the perception of CRNM. In other words, the heads of self-government units who positively perceive and are inclined to cooperate with CRNM, also positively perceive and are inclined to cooperate with the civil sector. Conversely, the heads of self-government units who negatively perceive and are less inclined to cooperate with CRNM, also negatively perceive and are less inclined to cooperate with the civil sector.

There was no statistically significant difference between the members of CSOs and the heads of the self-government units in terms of the tendency to abolish minority rights. On the contrary, there is a statistically significant difference in the assessment of the degree to which self-government units, CRNMs, NM members and the social environment impede the implementation of CLRNM. In the opinion of the heads of the self-government units, all of the listed factors impede the implementation of CLRNM to a lesser extent, whereas in the opinion of the members of civil society organizations, the listed factors impede the implementation of CLRNM to a greater extent (Figure 77).

A statistically significant difference was identified on the factors “Social environment” and “Self-government unit” in terms of the average results of all three subsamples, whereby the self-government unit and the social environment impede the implementation of CLRNM to the greatest extent (in the opinion of the members of civil society organizations) and to the least extent (in the opinion of the heads of self-government units). On the factors “Members of NM” and “CRNM”, the average of the members of civil society organizations statistically significantly deviates from the average results of the other two subsamples. With regard to NM members and CRNM, the members of civil society organizations assess them as highly constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM, in comparison to CRNM and the heads of self-government units, who assess them as less constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM (Figure 78).

According to the results outlined so far, it is concluded that the subsample of CSO members is the most critical group of respondents i.e. the group whose attitudes and beliefs are least influenced by their position and express socially desirable outcomes in the responses. In contrast, the heads of self-government units are the ones that are most influenced by the position and tendency to express socially desirable

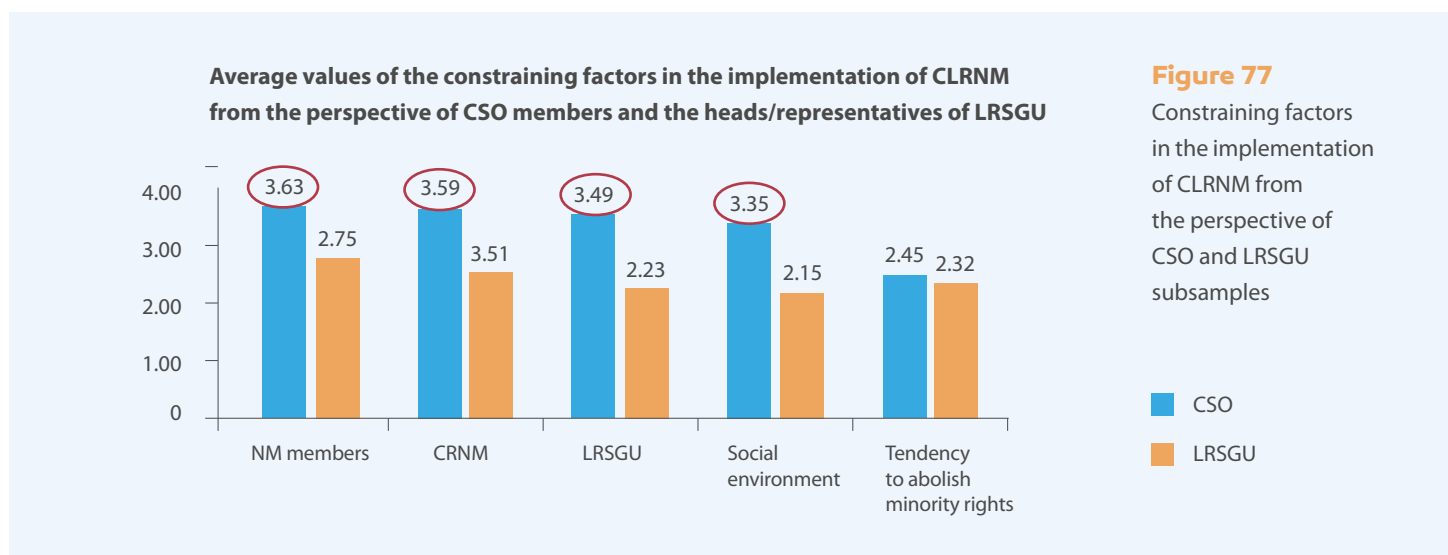


Figure 77
Constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of CSO and LRSQU subsamples

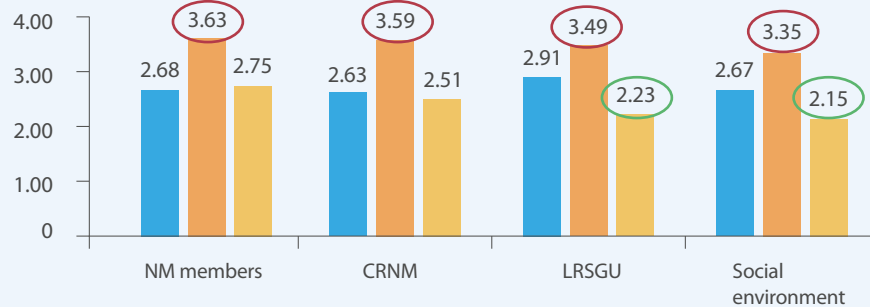
■ CSO
■ LRSQU

Figure 78

Constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of CRNM, CSO and LRSGU

Average values of the constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM from three perspectives

From the perspective of CRNM ■
From the perspective of CSO members ■
From the perspective of the heads/representatives of LRSGU ■



outcomes in the responses. This definition is best suited to the theory of organizational behaviour (Miljković, D., Rijavec, M., 2007) as a psychological social field of research which studies the influence that individuals, groups and structures have on the behaviour of people in an organization, especially the specifics of their beliefs and attitudes derived from different organizational milieus.

HIGHLIGHTED

- The factors that impede the implementation of CLRNM to the greatest extent, from the perspective of the heads of self-government units, are the disinterest of members of national minorities in exercising their own rights and their insufficient familiarity with the role and function of CRNM, while the factors that impede the implementation of CLRNM to the least extent are non-transparent and unequal allocation of budget funds for NM needs.
- In the opinion of the heads of the self-government units, the factor that impedes the implementation of CLRNM to the greatest extent are members of national minorities. They assess CRNM as a moderate constraining factor in the implementation of CLRNM, while the self-government units and the social environment are considered as the least constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM.
- It was shown that the perception of CRNM from the perspectives of the heads of self-government units is also under strong mediator influence of their perception of civil society organizations and vice versa, as the perception of civil society organizations is under strong mediator influence of the perception of CRNM. In other words, the heads of self-government units who positively perceive and are inclined to cooperate with CRNM, also positively perceive and are inclined to cooperate with the civil sector. Conversely, the heads of self-government units who negatively perceive and are less inclined to cooperate with CRNM, also negatively perceive and are less inclined to cooperate with the civil sector.
- It has been established that the heads of the self-government units are largely conditioned by the organizational position and the tendency to express the socially desirable outcomes in the responses, while the CSO members are the group of the most critical respondents whose attitudes and beliefs are least influenced by the social preference.

3.2.5. Institutions that contribute to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM

In the opinion of the questioned CRNM, councils and representatives of national minorities and national minority associations have the greatest contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of the national minority they represent (Figure 79).

Whereby:

- CRNM from the Zagreb region and members of the Roma national minority attribute the largest contribution by the coordination of national minority councils, while the least contribution is attributed by CRNMs from Central Croatia, and the members of “new” national minorities
- CRNM at the municipal level attribute the smallest contribution to CNM coordination, NM associations and other non-profit organizations and civil society organizations, and the greatest contribution is attributed by CRNMs at the county level,
- The members of “new” national minorities attribute the smallest contribution to the State Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia and NM associations, while their largest contribution is attributed by the members of “old” (traditional) national minorities.

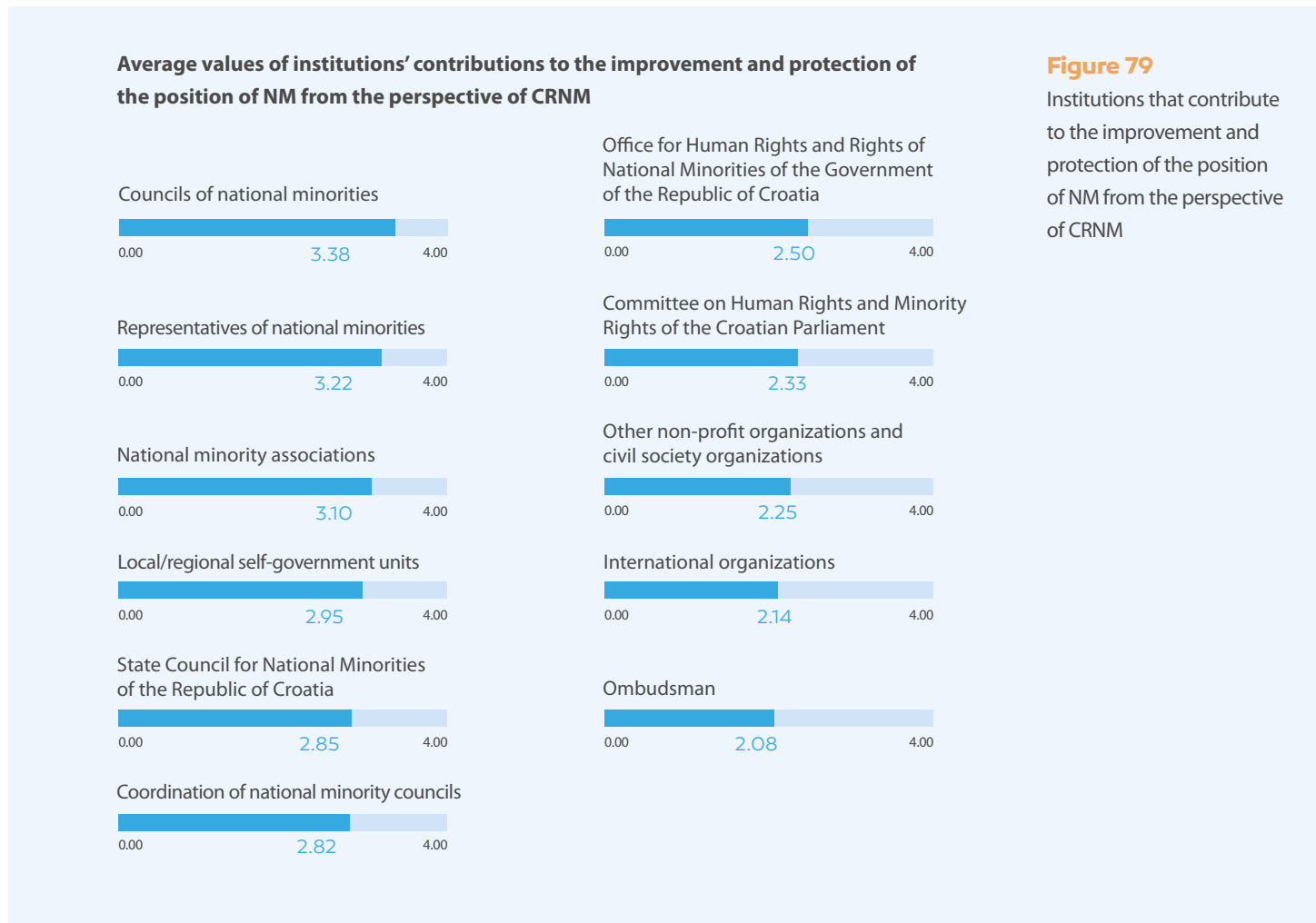


Figure 79
Institutions that contribute to the improvement and protection of the position of NM from the perspective of CRNM

Based on the results of the factor analysis, two indices have been constructed, conditionally named internal and external actors who contribute to the improvement and protection of the position of national minorities. In this regard, **the internal actors encompass:** representatives and councils of NM, self-government units, CNM coordinations, NM associations, and the State Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, while the **external actors encompass:** other non-profit organizations and civil society organizations, the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament, the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, the Ombudsman and international organizations.

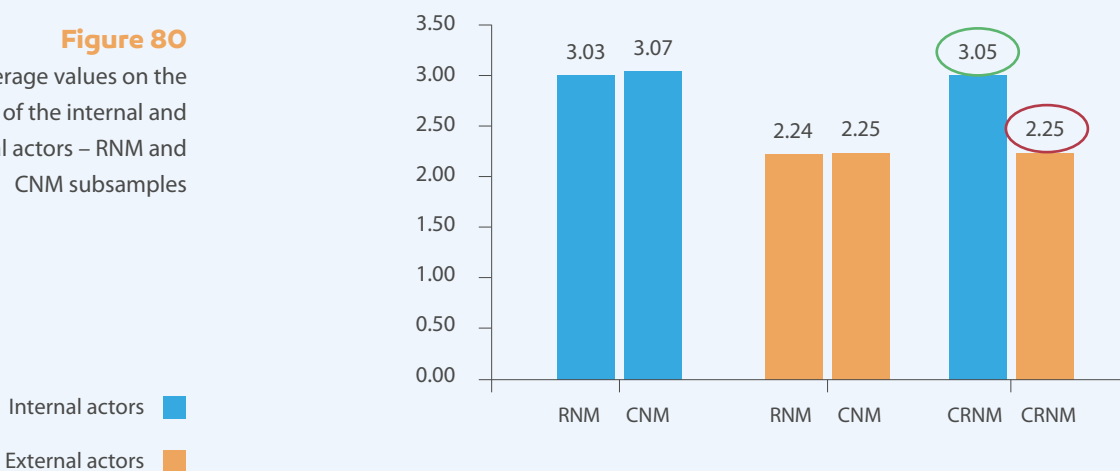
The average results of CRNM on the two constructed indices are statistically significantly different, whereby CRNM attributes a greater contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of national minorities by internal actors (Figure 80). There was no statistically significant difference between CNM and RNM's attribution to the contribution by internal and external actors.

The CRNM of "old" (traditional) and Roma national minorities, CRNM from the Zagreb region and CRNM at the county level attribute the greatest contribution of the internal actors to the improvement and protection of the position of national minorities, while their smallest contribution is attributed by CRNM from Central Croatia, members of "new" national minorities, and CRNM at the municipal level.

The external actors' contribution is assessed with the highest score by the members of the Roma national minority, and with the lowest score by the members of "new" national minorities.

In the opinion of the questioned members of civil society organizations, national minority associations have the greatest contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of national minorities (Figure 81).²⁴

Figure 80
Average values on the indices of the internal and external actors – RNM and CNM subsamples



²⁴ The formulation of the question for CRNM was: "To what extent do the following institutions contribute to the improvement and protection of the position of the national minority that you represent?"; for CSO it was: "To what extent do the following individuals and institutions contribute to the improvement and protection of the position of national minorities?"; and for LRSQU it was: "To what extent do the following individuals and institutions contribute to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM?"

Average values of institutions' contributions to the improvement and protection of the position of NM from the perspective of CSO members

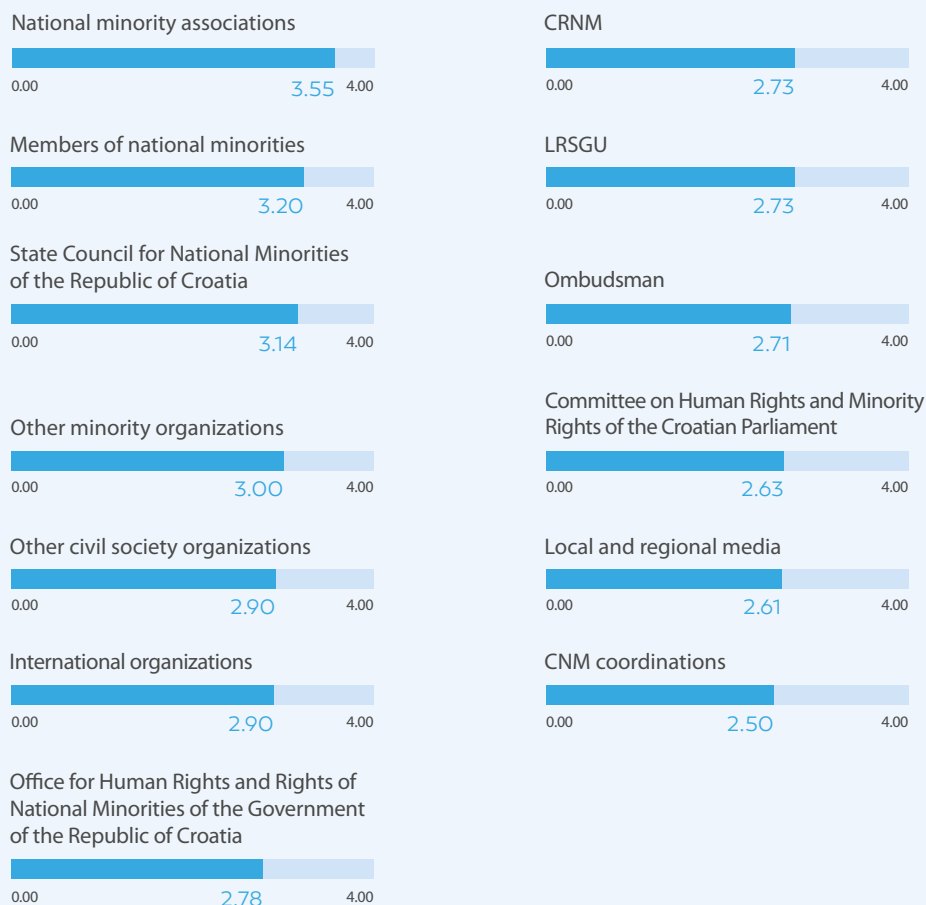


Figure 81

Institutions that contribute to the improvement and protection of the position of NM from the perspective of CSO

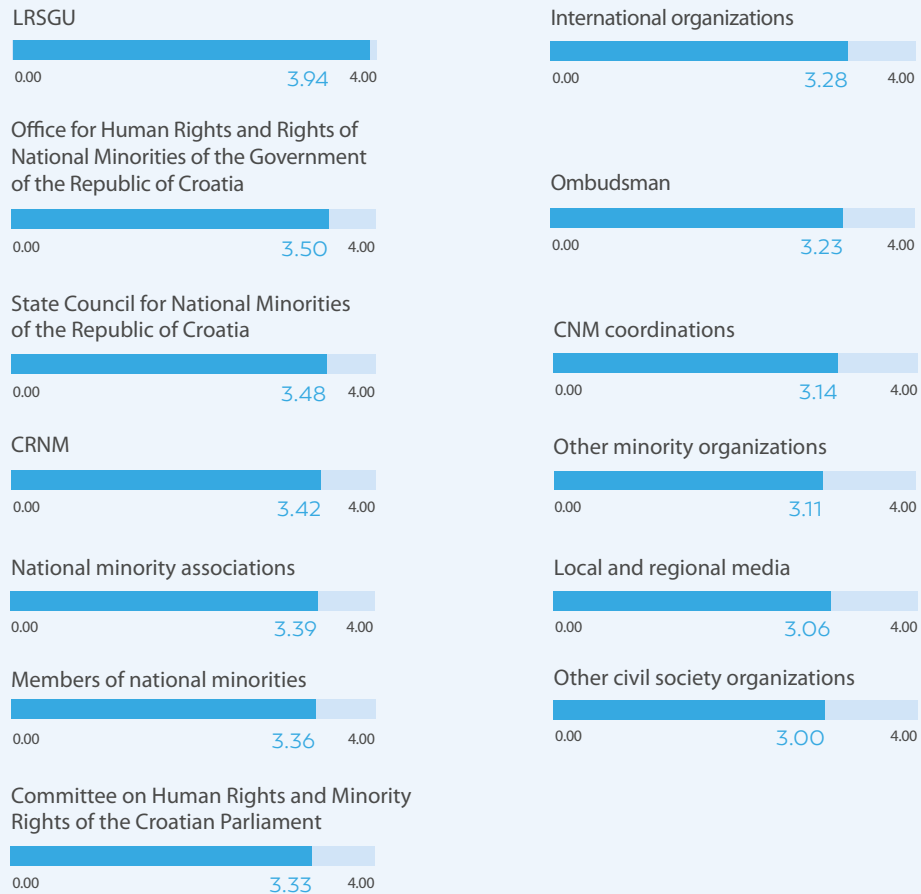
Whereby:

- The members of NM associations and the respondents from the Zagreb region attribute the smallest contribution to non-minority civil society organizations, and the largest contribution is attributed by the members of other CSOs and the Questionedci from Central Croatia,
- LAG members attribute the largest contribution to CRNM and members of NM, and the smallest contribution is attributed from the members of other CSOs,
- The members of NM associations attribute the greatest contribution to NM associations, and the smallest contribution is attributed by the members of other CSOs,
- The members of NM associations attribute the largest contribution to the State Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, and the smallest contribution is attributed by the LAG members,
- The members of NM associations attribute the smallest contribution to the Ombudsman and international organizations, and the largest contribution is attributed by the members of other CSOs.

Figure 82

Institutions that contribute to the improvement and protection of the position of NM from the perspective of LRSGU

Average values of institutions' contribution to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of the heads/representatives of self-government units



According to the questioned heads of the self-government units, the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM is largely contributed to local regional self-government units (Figure 82).

Given the subsample of the representatives of self-government units, the synergy effect is once again confirmed (positive or negative) of the form of cooperation throughout the community. In the self-government units that are more inclined to cooperate with CRNM, the social environment is also more inclined to accepting CRNM, the civil sector is more active, and CRNM is more effective in performing its advisory function.

Namely:

- the representatives of the self-government units that finance the activities of NM associations attribute a larger contribution to the efficient implementation and application of CLRNM to NM associations, as well as to local and regional media,
- the representatives of the self-government units in which there are RTV programs intended for NM attribute a larger contribution to NM associations,

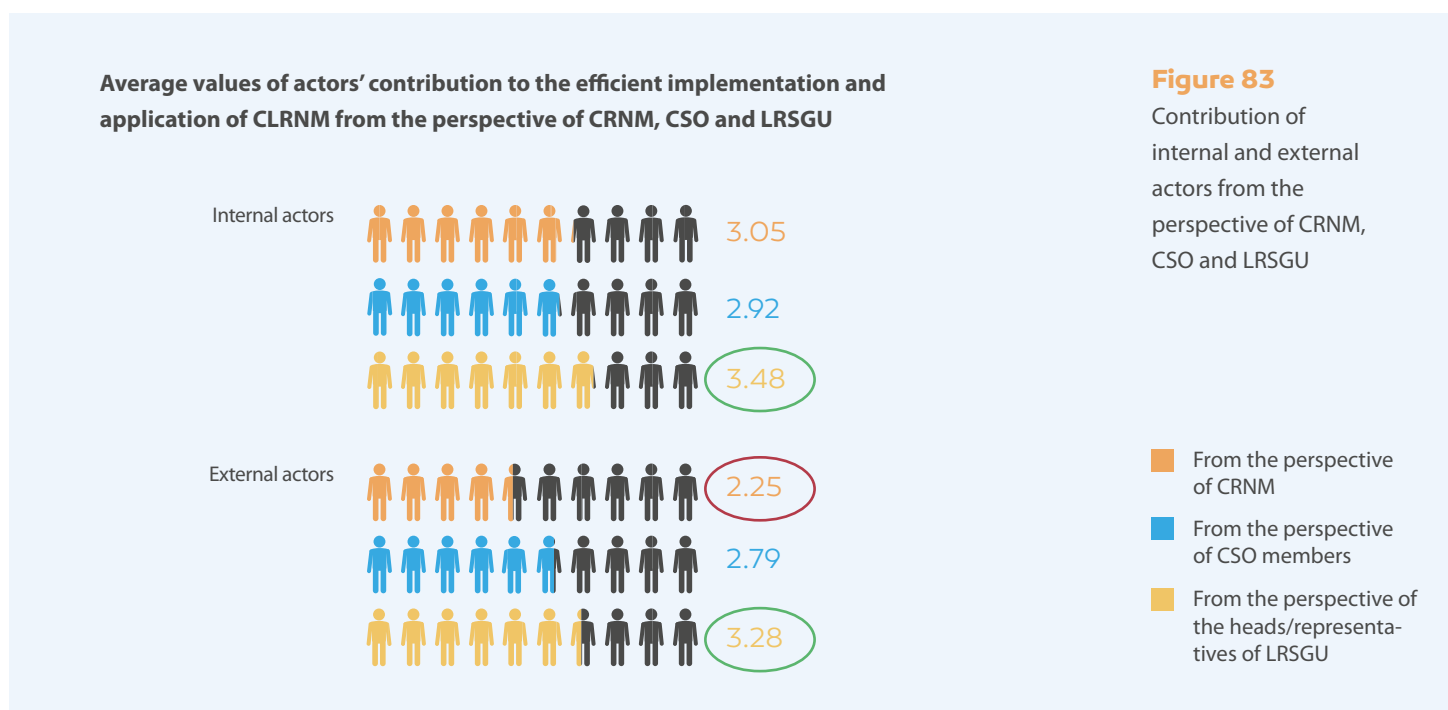
- the representatives of the self-government units in which there are programs that are broadcast in the languages of NM, attribute a greater contribution to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM to CRNM.

Among the members of civil society organizations and the heads of the self-government units, a statistically significant difference was identified when assessing the contributions of eight actors, whereby the heads of the self-government units attributed a greater contribution to the representatives and councils of national minorities, local and regional self-government units, coordinations of national minority councils, local and regional media, the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament, the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, the Ombudsman and international organizations, while a smaller contribution to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM is attributed to the mentioned actors by the members of civil society organizations.

A statistically significant difference was identified on the constructed indices, in the average results of CRNM, the members of civil society organizations and the heads of self-government units. Whereby, the heads of the self-government units attribute a greater contribution of the internal actors, while the members of civil society organizations and CRNM attributed a smaller contribution. In the external actors' index, all three subsamples differ, whereby the heads of the self-government units also attribute the greatest contribution to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM by external actors, while CRNM attribute the smallest contribution by them (Figure 83).

Given the attributed contribution of each actor in the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM:

- The members of civil society organizations attribute the smallest contribution to CRNM, while CRNM and the heads of the self-government units attribute a greater contribution;



- The representatives of self-government units attribute the greatest contribution to self-government units, the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament and the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, while CRNM and CSO members attribute a lesser contribution;
- CRNM attribute the smallest contribution to non-minority civil society organizations, international organizations and the Ombudsman, while CSO members and representatives of self-government units attribute a greater contribution;
- The members of civil society organizations attribute the smallest contribution to CNM coordinations, while self-government units attribute the greatest contribution;
- CRNM attribute the smallest contribution to the State Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, while the representatives of the self-government units attribute the greatest contribution;
- CRNM attribute the smallest contribution to NM associations, while the members of civil society organizations attribute the greatest contribution.

HIGHLIGHTED

- In the opinion of the questioned CRNM, councils and representatives of national minorities and national minority associations have the greatest contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of the national minority they represent.
- The average results of CRNM on the two constructed indices (internal and external actors) are statistically significantly different, whereby CRNM attributes a greater contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of national minorities by internal actors.
- In the opinion of the questioned members of civil society organizations, national minority associations have the greatest contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of national minorities.
- According to the questioned heads of the self-government units, the efficient application and implementation of CLRN is largely contributed to local/regional self-government units.
- A statistically significant difference was identified on the constructed indices (internal and external actors), in the average results of the subsamples. Whereby, the heads of the self-government units attribute a greater contribution of the internal actors, while they attributed the members of civil society organizations and CRNM with a smaller contribution. The heads of the self-government units also attributed the greatest contribution to the efficient application and implementation of CLRN by external actors, while they attributed CRNM with the smallest contribution.

3.3. Creating policies related to national minorities

3.3.1. Perception of the relevance of CRNM's advisory function

3.3.1.1. Acceptance of CRNM by the self-government unit

The assumption to involve CRNM in the process of creating policies related to national minorities is their acceptance as relevant partners in the local community. Therefore, the catalogue of topics covered by the research also included the verification of acceptance and openness of different stakeholders towards CRNM as relevant interlocutors in the area of creating local policies and local development.

57% of the questioned councils and representatives confirmed that LRSGU accept CRNM as relevant partners in creating policies related to national minorities (Figure 84).

There was no statistically significant difference between RNM and CNM in the perception of acceptance by the self-government units.

Regarding the acceptance of CRNM by the self-government unit, a statistically significant difference was identified with respect to the regional affiliation of CRNM and the "type" of national minority: members of the Roma national minority and CRNM from Central Croatia as well as South (Dalmatia) and North Croatia confirm the acceptance of councils and representatives from their own self-government units to a lesser extent.

The confirmation of their relevance to the self-government unit is to a greater extent expressed by those CRNMs:

- who have a greater number of office and financial resources for work,
- who were not addressed by NM members regarding complaints on the violation of minority rights,
- who participate in the work of some coordination,
- whose proposals (candidates, measures and general acts) are more often accepted by the bodies of the self-government unit,
- whose self-government units (from the CRNM perspective) appointed a person or established a service for communication and co-operation with NM, and harmonized all relevant general acts with the provisions of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities.

Bodies of local/regional self-government units accept CRNM as relevant partners in creating policies related to national minorities

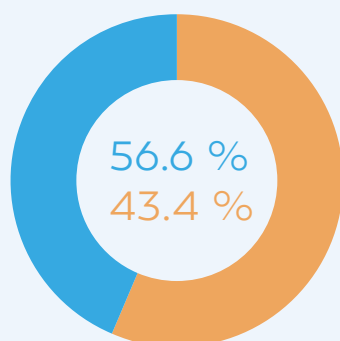


Figure 84

Acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU in creating local policies – CRNM subsample

■ Yes
■ No

79% of the questioned heads of LRSGU and members of civil society organizations confirmed the acceptance of CRNM by local/regional self-government units (Figure 85).

The perceived acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU from the perspective of members of civil society organizations and heads of the self-government units is statistically significantly different i.e. the representatives of the self-government units confirm the acceptance of CRNM in the self-government units to a greater extent, while members of civil society organizations consider this acceptance to be significantly smaller (Figure 86).

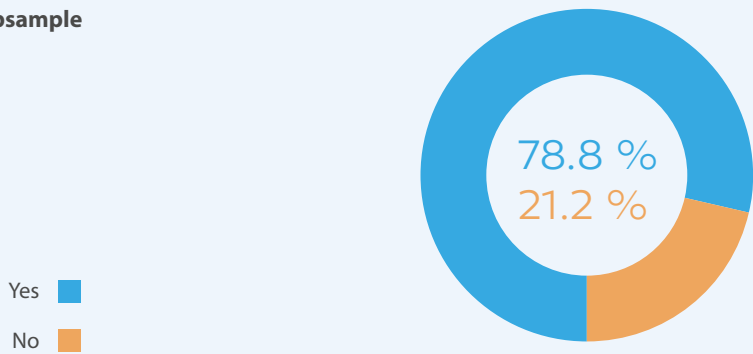
In the CSO subsample, the members of NM associations confirm the acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU to the least extent, while the members of local action groups confirm this to the greatest extent (Figure 87).

Given the nearly 100% acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU from the perspective of the actual heads of the self-government units, the CRNM subsample also statistically significantly deviates from the LRSGU subsample (Figure 88).

Figure 85

Acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU in creating local policies – CSO/ LRSGU subsample

Bodies of local/regional self-government units accept CRNM as relevant partners in creating policies related to national minorities

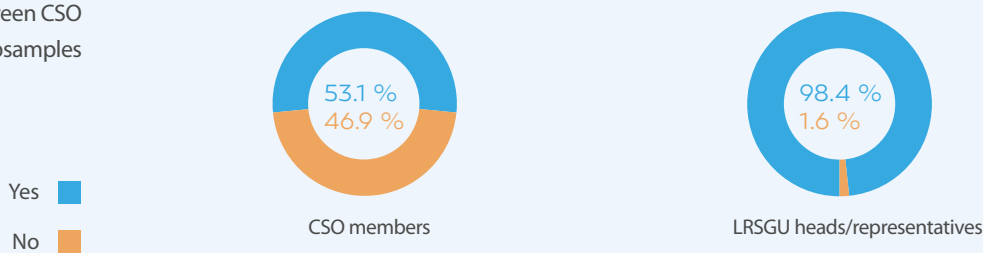


Yes ■
No ■

Figure 86

Acceptance of CRNM by the self-government units – difference between CSO and LRSGU subsamples

LRSGU bodies accept CRNM as relevant partners in creating policies related to national



Yes ■
No ■

Perception of CRNM acceptance by LRSGU from the perspective of CSO members

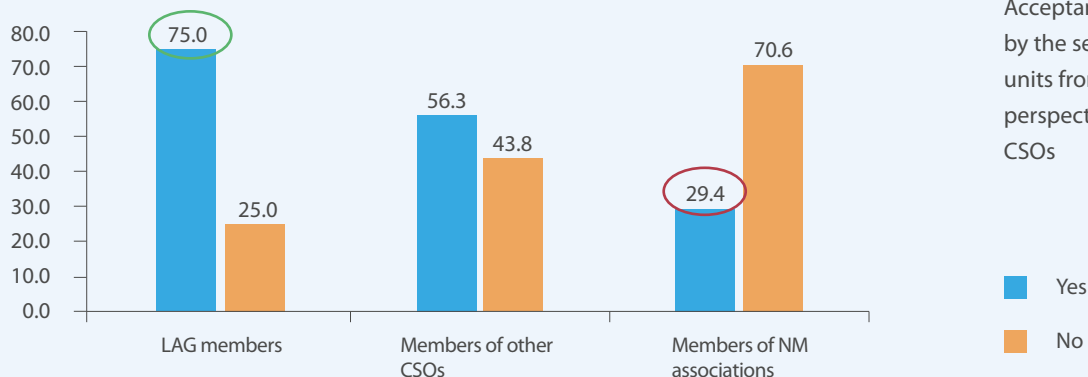


Figure 87

Acceptance of CRNM by the self-government units from the perspective of different CSOs

Share of respondents who confirmed CRNM acceptance by LRSGU

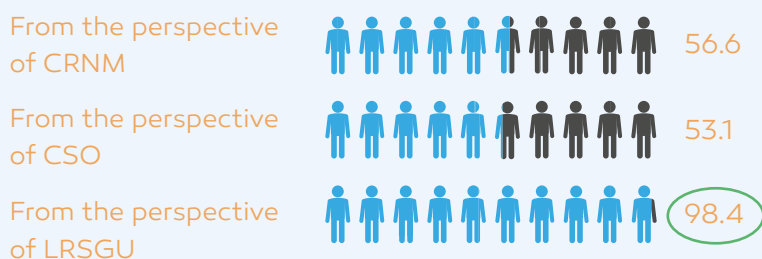


Figure 88

Acceptance of CRNM by the self-government units – CRNM, CSO and LRSGU subsamples

3.3.1.2. Use of CRNM advisory services by LRSGU from the perspective of CSO members

61% of the questioned members of civil society organizations believe that local/regional self-government units do not use the advisory services of the representatives and councils of national minorities to a sufficient extent, 25% think that such services are being used moderately and only 14% of them believe that CRNM advisory services are used to a significant extent. In addition, none of the questioned CSO members stated that the self-government unit “fully” uses CRNM advisory services (Figure 89).

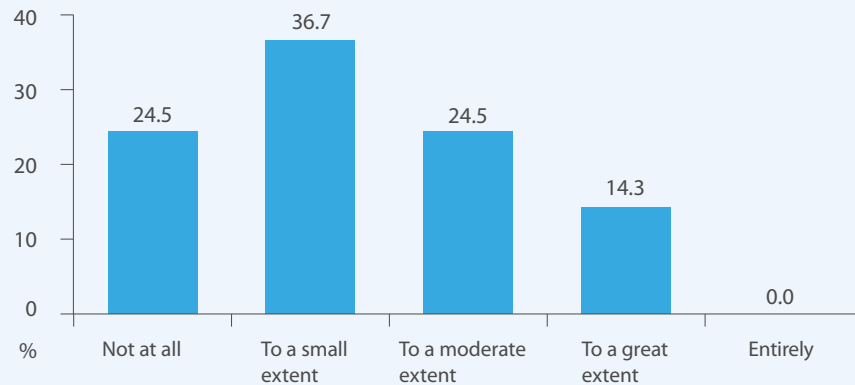
Members of civil society organizations who believe that the local/regional self-government units do not use CRNM advisory services sufficiently:

- are less satisfied with the communication with the self-government unit;
- attribute lower scores to the cooperation between LRSGU and minority associations, as well as other minority organizations;
- confirm the acceptance of CRNM by self-government units to a lesser extent;
- confirm the acceptance of CRNM by the civil sector to a lesser extent;
- attribute a smaller contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of NM to self-government units and regional and local media;
- are addressed more frequently by NM members regarding complaints in connection with discrimination and violation of minority rights

Figure 89

Use of CRNM advisory services in LRSQU from the perspective of CSOs

In your opinion, to what extent do bodies of local/regional self-government units consult the advisory services of representatives and councils of national minorities?



3.3.1.3. Perception of the relevance of the CRNM institution²⁵

60% of the questioned members of civil society organizations and representatives of the self-government units could not assess or refused to say whether the self-government unit/wider public is more inclined to abolish or to further strengthen the CRNM institution. Of those who answered, half of them believe that the self-government unit i.e. the wider public is inclined to further strengthen the CRNM institution, while the other half believed that they are more inclined to abolish it (Figure 90).

There was a statistically significant difference between members of civil society organizations and the heads of LRSQU in terms of assessing the relevance of the CRNM institution. Members of civil society organizations confirm the tendency to abolish the institution of councils and representatives to a greater extent than the self-government unit, while the representatives of the self-government units confirm the tendency to further strengthen the CRNM institution to a greater extent than the wider public of the local unit (Figure 91)

The tendency of the self-government unit to abolish the institution of councils and representatives in the CSO subsample is to a greater extent expressed by those members who assess CLRNМ’s contribution as small in terms of the improvement of the position of NM members and by those members who are less satisfied with the communication with the self-government unit.

The tendency of the wider community to abolish the CRNM institution in the LRSQU subsample is to a greater extent expressed by the representatives of the self-government units who:

- assess CLRNМ’s contribution as small in terms of the improvement of the position of NM members;
- attribute a lesser contribution by CRNM, NM members, other minority organizations, non-minority

²⁵ For CSO, the question was: “Given the wider and professional public opinion on the efficiency of the representatives and council members as advisory bodies, can you assess whether the LOCAL/REGIONAL SELF-GOVERNMENT is more inclined to abolish or further strengthen the institution of representatives/ councils?”. For LRSQU, the question was: “Given the wider and professional public opinion on the efficiency of the representatives and council members as advisory bodies, can you assess whether THE WIDER PUBLIC OF YOUR LOCAL UNIT is more inclined to abolish or further strengthen the institution of representatives/councils?”

Keeping in mind the opinion of the wider and expert public on the efficiency of CRNM as advisory bodies, can you assess whether the wider public of your local/regional self-government unit is more inclined to abolish or further strengthen CRNM?

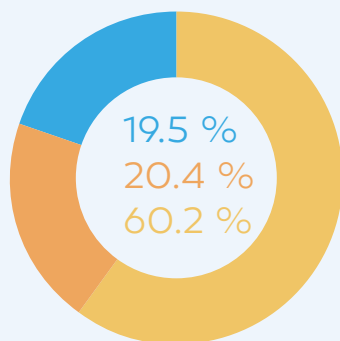


Figure 90

Assessment of the relevance of CRNM – CSO/LRSGU subsample

- Tendency to abolish
- Tendency to further strengthen
- I cannot assess

Keeping in mind the opinion of the wider and expert public on the efficiency of CRNM as advisory bodies, can you assess whether the wider public of your local/regional self-government unit is more inclined to abolish or further strengthen the institution of representatives/councils?



Figure 91

Assessment of the relevance of CRNM – difference between CSO and LRSGU subsamples

- CSO members
- LRSGU heads/representatives

civil society organizations, coordinations, the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament, and international organizations to the efficient implementation and application of CLRNM;

- are less satisfied with the communication with CRNM.

All of the above points to the argument that CSO members perceive the CRNM institution's efficiency through LRSGU's relation towards CRNM and the civil sector, while the heads of the self-government units' assessment of the efficiency of the institution of councils and representatives is perceived in two ways. On the one hand, in local communities that are not inclined to cooperate with CRNM,

their efficiency, from the perspective of representatives, is based on their tendency to cooperate with CRNM, while on the other hand, in the more open social environments, the assessment of efficiency seems to be based on objective indicators in performing the CRNM advisory function.

HIGHLIGHTED

- 57% of the questioned councils and representatives confirmed that LRSGU accept CRNM as relevant partners in creating policies related to national minorities.
- 79% of the questioned heads of LRSGU and members of civil society organizations confirmed the acceptance of CRNM by local/regional self-government units.
- The perceived acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU from the perspective of members of civil society organizations and the heads of the self-government units is statistically significantly different i.e. the representatives of the self-government units confirm (98%) the acceptance of CRNM in the self-government units to a greater extent, while members of civil society organizations consider this acceptance to be significantly smaller (53%).
- 61% of the questioned members of civil society organizations believe that local/regional self-government units do not use the advisory services of the representatives and councils of national minorities to a sufficient extent.
- 60% of the questioned members of civil society organizations and representatives of the self-government units could not assess or refused to say whether the self-government unit/wider public is more inclined to abolish or to further strengthen the CRNM institution.
- Members of civil society organizations confirm (31%) the tendency to abolish the institution of councils and representatives to a greater extent than the self-government unit, while the representatives of the self-government units confirm (23%) the tendency to further strengthen the CRNM institution to a greater extent than the wider public of the local unit.

3.3.2. CRNM's qualification for performing the advisory function

3.3.2.1. Experience in carrying out CRNM mandates

More than half of the questioned participants (57%) have experience in carrying out CRNM mandates (Figure 92).

Although the questioned council members were slightly more represented in the group with experience in CRNM mandates, there was no statistically significant difference between the representatives and members of national minority councils in view of their previous experience in carrying out their mandate (Figure 93).

A statistically significant difference in the number of councils and representatives' mandates so far has been determined with regard to the self-government level. At the municipal level, the largest share are those members who are carrying out the mandate of councils and representatives for the first time. At the county level there is a noticeably higher share of those with experience in carrying out the CRNM mandate (Figure 94).

How many times have you carried out the mandate of representative/council of a national minority?

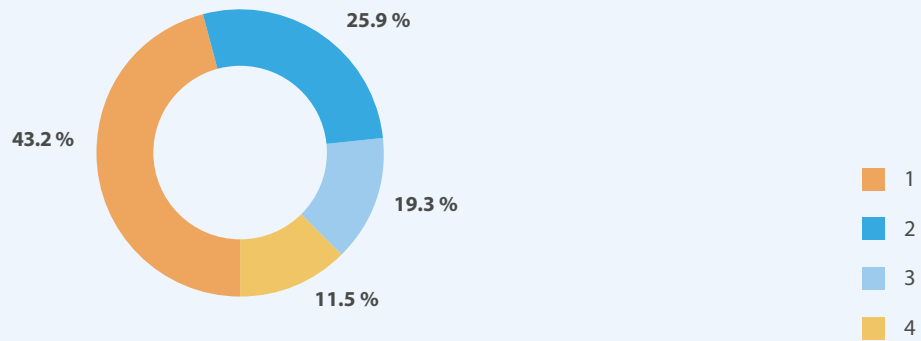


Figure 92
Number of CRNM mandates

How many times have you carried out the mandate of representative/council of a national minority?

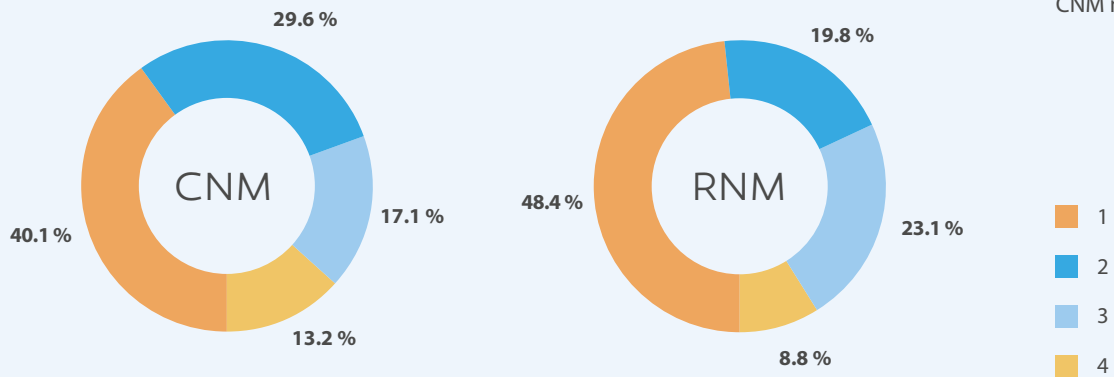


Figure 93
Number of RNM and CNM mandates

Is this the first time that you are carrying out the mandate of representative/council of a national minority?

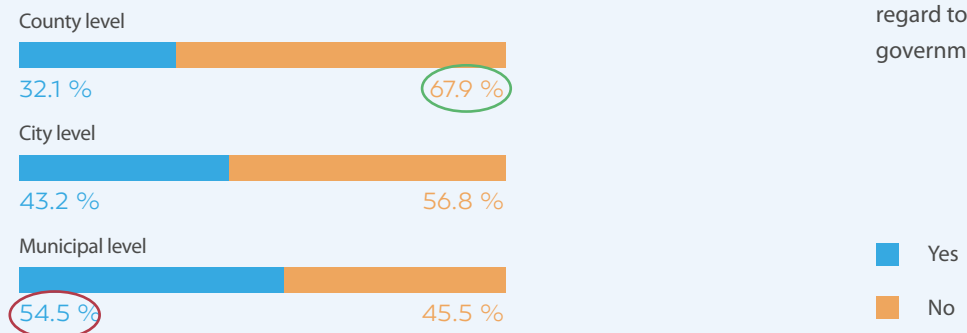


Figure 94
CRNM mandates with regard to the self-government level

3.3.2.2. CRNM nomination

At the last elections, the largest number of CRNM members were nominated by national minority associations (Figure 95).

Figure 95
Origin of CRNM
nomination

Who nominated you as a representative/council of a national minority at the last elections?

National minority associations

67.1 %

Members of national minorities

28.8 %

Someone else

7.8 %

Although there was no statistically significant difference between RNM and CNM in relation to the share of nominations initiated by NM associations, it was determined that:

- associations suggest candidates at the municipal level to a lesser extent, and more candidates are suggested at the city and county levels, while NM members suggest candidates at the municipal level to a greater extent, and less at the county level;
- NM associations nominate more members of “old” (traditional minorities), while NM members nominate more members of “new” minorities and of the Roma national minority;
- NM associations suggest candidates who are carrying out the CRNM mandate for the first time to a lesser extent and nominate those with experience in carrying out the CRNM mandate to a far greater extent, while NM members suggest candidates who are carrying out the mandate of councils and representatives for the first time to a greater extent.

3.3.2.3. Experience in performing advisory, representative or executive functions at the state/regional/local level

Although most of the respondents have experience in the mandate of councils and representatives, less than one third of them currently perform some other advisory, representative or executive function at the state/regional/local level (Figure 96).

Among those who perform additional functions along with the CRNM mandate, it was found that CNM members perform other advisory, representative or executive functions at the state/regional/local level to a significantly greater extent than RNM (Figure 97).

Some other advisory, representative or executive functions at the state/regional/local level are largely performed by those whose current CRNM mandate is not their first mandate.

Apart from the mandate of representative/council of a national minority, do you currently perform some functions in advisory, representative or executive bodies at the state/regional/local level?

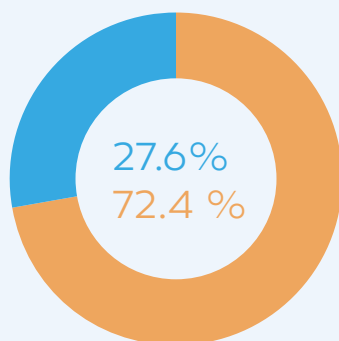


Figure 96

Performance of additional functions along with the CRNM mandate



Apart from the mandate of representative/council of a national minority, do you currently perform some functions in advisory, representative or executive bodies at the state/regional/local level?

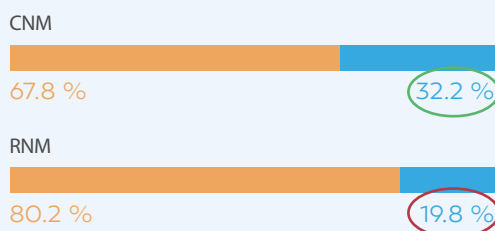


Figure 97

Performing additional functions along with the CRNM mandate – difference between CNM and RNM



3.3.2.4. Use of computer and electronic mail

In performing the activities of a representative or councillor of a national minority, 86% of the representatives use a computer, while 77% of the questioned councillors stated that the members of their council use a computer. In performing NM representative/councillor activities, 82% of the representatives use electronic mail, while 76% of councillors stated that the members of their council use electronic mail (Figures 98, 99). Considering the use of computers and e-mail, no statistically significant difference was found between the the RNM and CNM subsamples.

The use of computers and e-mails for the purpose of performing activities of councils and representatives has shown some statistically significant differences and correlations. Computers and electronic mail are mostly used by:

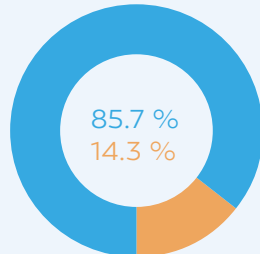
- members of “old” (traditional) national minorities, and significantly less by members of the Roma national minority;

Figure 98

Use of a computer within the scope of CRNM activities

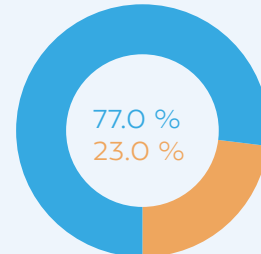
Yes ■
No ■

Carrying out the activities of a representative, do you use a computer?



RNM

Carrying out the activities within the scope of a council, do the members of your council use a computer?



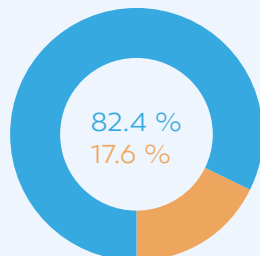
CNM

Figure 99

Use of electronic mail within the scope of CRNM activities

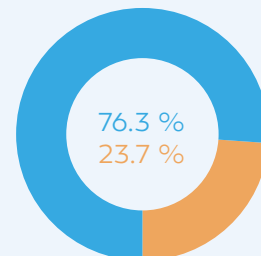
Yes ■
No ■

Carrying out the activities of a representative, do you use electronic mail?



RNM

Carrying out activities within the scope of a council, do the members of your council use a computer?



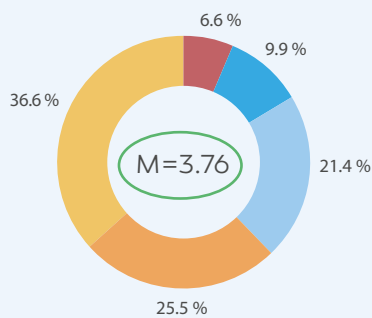
CNM

Figure 100

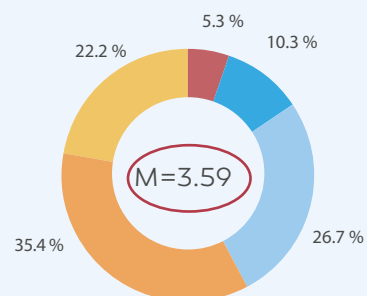
Self-assessment of computer and electronic mail skills

1 ■
2 ■
3 ■
4 ■
5 ■

On a grading scale of 1-5, how would you assess:



Electronic mail skills



Computer skills

- councils and representatives in the Zagreb region, in relation to the significantly less use by CRNM from Central Croatia;
- CRNM at the county level, and to the least extent by CRNM at the municipal level;
- members who are not carrying out the CRNM mandate for the first time, who were nominated by NM associations and who have more resources for work.

Assessing their own computer and electronic mail skills, it was shown that CRNM assessed their own skill of using electronic mail with a higher score, and a lower score for their skill of using a computer (Figure 100).

While there was no statistically significant difference between RNM and CNM in the self-assessment of computer and electronic mail skills, it was identified in terms of regional affiliation and the CRNM's self-government level. Computer and electronic mail skills were assessed highest by CRNM at the county level and CRNM from the Zagreb region, and least by CRNM at the municipal level and CRNM from Central Croatia.

A higher score for computer and electronic mail skills was attributed by those councils and representatives:

- who were nominated by NM associations,
- have been provided with more financial resources and a larger amount of resources for work in general,
- who have younger age groups,
- who have a higher education level.

CRNM that describe their own computer and electronic mail skills with a higher score:

- frequently use a computer and electronic mail for performing CRNM activities,
- assess themselves as being more familiar with the legal framework of the CRNM institution,
- largely keep a formal record of respecting NM rights,
- prefer a written and formal form of communication with the self-government unit,
- they largely address the self-government for information or advice,
- they attribute a greater contribution by local actors in the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM,
- are more actively involved in the sessions of the self-government unit in decision-making processes regarding issues of interest to the national minority they represent,
- provide more opinions and suggestions on radio and television station programs intended for national minorities or on programs related to minority issues,
- fulfil their obligations towards the self-government unit to a greater extent.

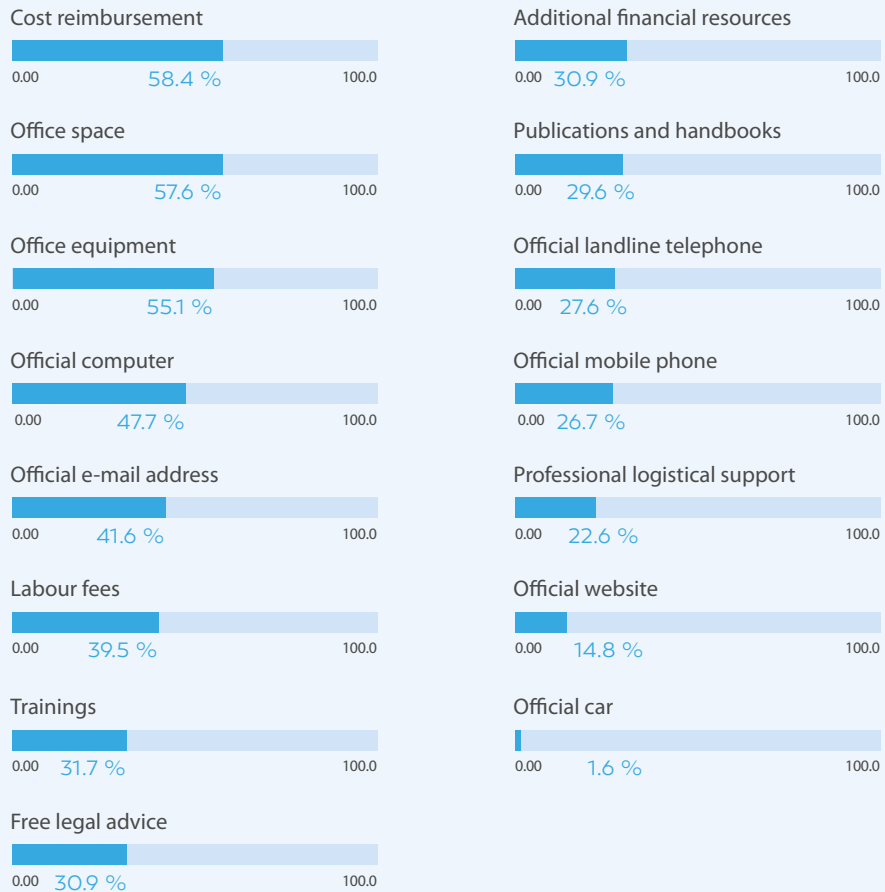
3.3.2.5. Disposal of resources and services for CRNM activities

More than 55% of the questioned CRNM receive cost reimbursement, have an office space and office equipment. On the other hand, 60% do not receive cost reimbursement, 58% do not have an official email address, 52% do not have an official computer, 45% do not have office equipment, while 42% do not have an office space nor do they receive cost reimbursement (Figure 101).

Even though the questioned CNM members dispose all the resources and services (apart from publications and handbooks, professional logistical support and labour fees) to a much greater extent than

Figure 101
Available resources and services for carrying out CRNM activities

Share of questioned CRNM who have resources and services at their disposal for carrying out CRNM activities



the questioned RNMs, a statistically significant difference was identified in 5 parts: office space, office equipment, landline telephone, computer, free legal advice, which the CNM members use to a much greater extent in comparison to representatives of national minorities (Figure 102).

RNM and CNM do not differ statistically significantly in the possession of a car, an official mobile phone, an official e-mail address, an official website, additional financial resources for the implementation of specific activities, trainings, publications and handbooks, professional logistical support, cost reimbursement and labour fees.

Regional affiliation has led to a statistically significant difference between the CRNM in terms of the number of work resources that they have, whereby the councils and representatives of the Zagreb region are in the lead as they have the largest amount of resources needed for work.

Share of respondents who have resources and services at their disposal for carrying out CRNM activities

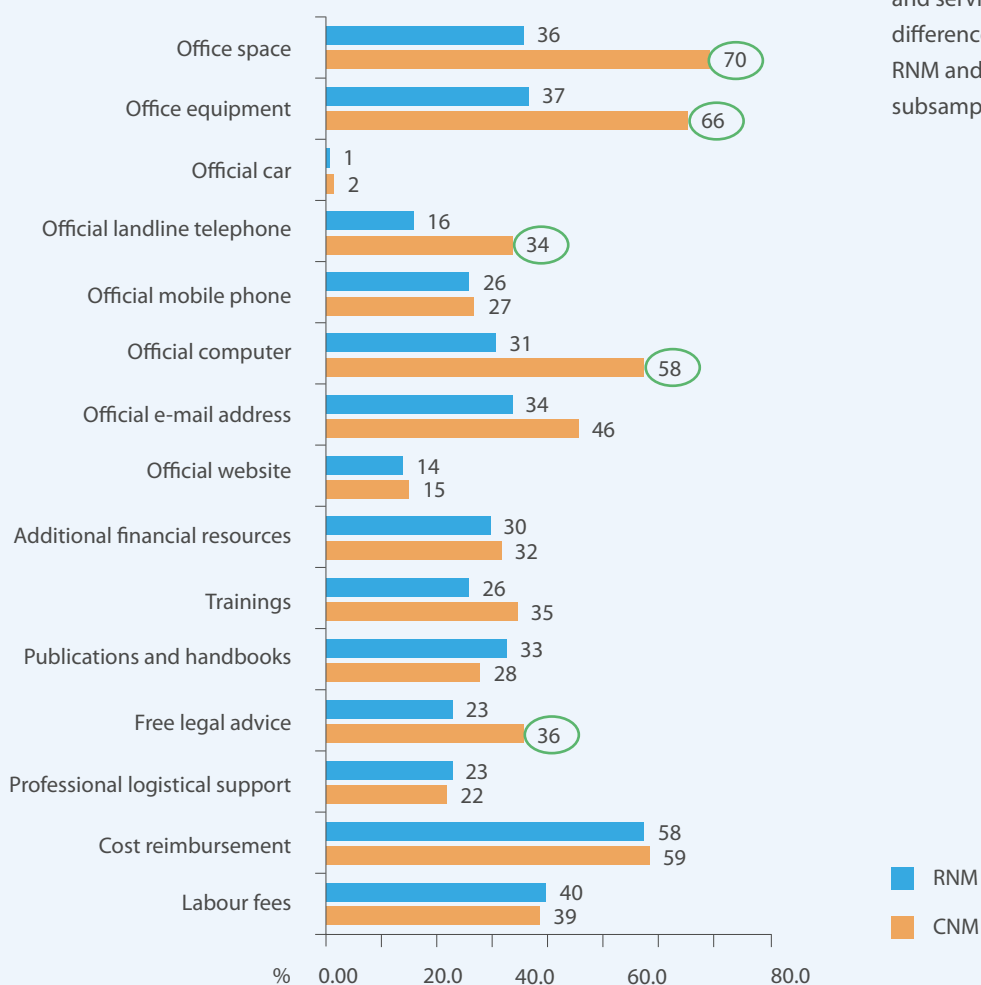


Figure 102
Disposal of resources and services for work – difference between RNM and CNM subsamples

Whereby:

- office equipment (office space, office equipment, official landline telephone, official mobile phone, official computer, official email address and official website) is mostly owned by the CRNM in the Zagreb region;
- logistic resources (trainings, publications and handbooks, free legal advice and professional logistical support) are mostly owned by CRNMs in the Zagreb region and in North Croatia;
- financial resources (additional financial resources for the implementation of specific activities, cost reimbursement and labour fees) are mostly owned by CRNMs in the Zagreb region, South Croatia (Dalmatia), and Istria and Primorje.

A statistically significant difference was also determined with regard to the self-government level of the CRNM and the “type” of national minority, whereby:

- CRNM at the municipal level have the smallest amount of resources, while councils and representatives at the county level have the largest amount of all three types of resources: office equipment, logistic and financial resources;
- Members of the Roma national minority have the lowest access to official computers and cost reimbursement, while the members of “old” (traditional) national minorities use these mentioned resources to the greatest extent.

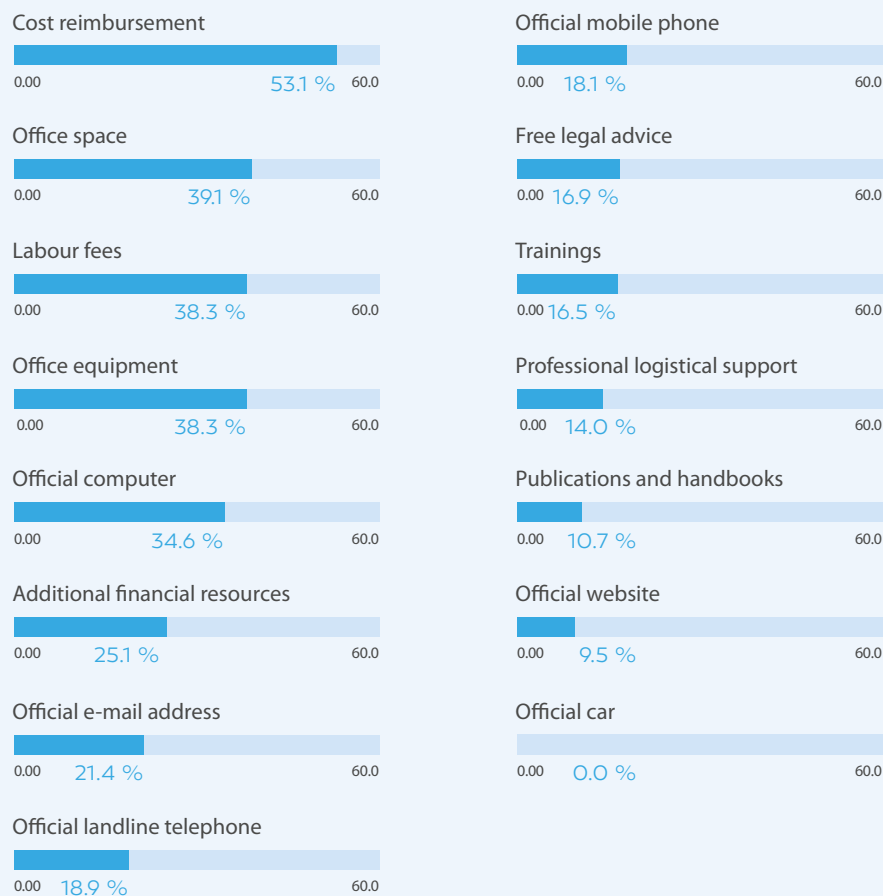
All of the resources, apart from the publications and handbooks, are largely provided to CRNM by self-government units, and to a lesser extent by NM associations and/or someone else.

The self-government unit budget and the state budget provided cost reimbursement for 53% of the respondents, and the office space, office equipment and labour fees for nearly 40% of the respondents. On the other hand, the self-government unit budget and the state budget did not provide cost reimbursement for 47% of the questioned CRNM, and office space for 61% of the questioned CRNM, and labour fees for 62% of the questioned CRNM (Figure 103).

Figure 103

Resources and services for CRNM, provided from the state budget and self-government unit budget

Share of resources and services provided to the questioned CRNM by LRSGU and the state budget



Almost 60 percent of the questioned CRNM have some office and work space. Self-government units provided office space for 38% of the questioned CRNM (Figure 104).

In the context of the analysed sample, the self-government units largely provided the work space to the NM councils, and less so to the NM representatives (Figure 105).

The work space for “old” (traditional) national minorities is mostly provided by NM associations, while the work space for “new” national minorities is mostly provided by the self-government units.

Those CRNMs who have been provided a larger amount of resources by self-government units:

- fulfil their obligations towards LRSGU to a greater extent;
- are more satisfied with the communication with the self-government unit;

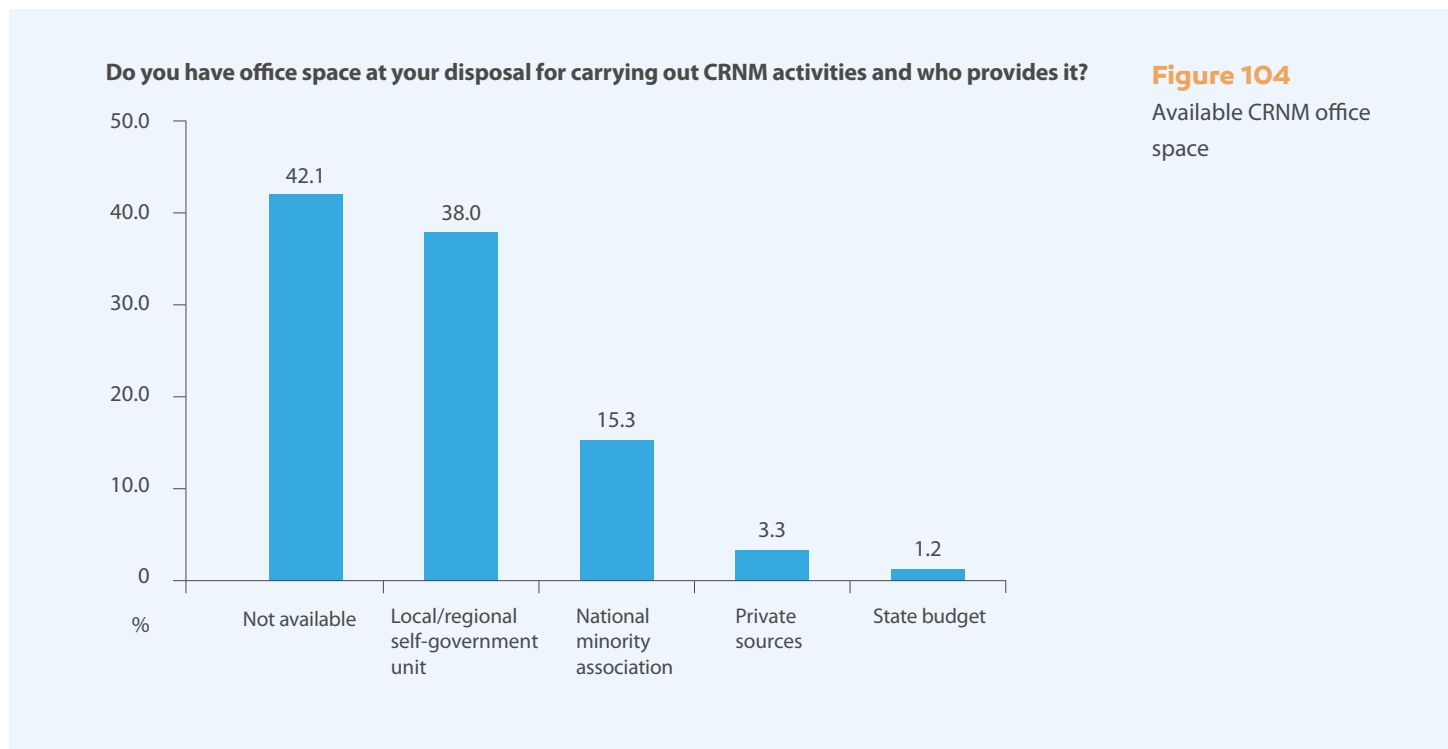


Figure 104
Available CRNM office space

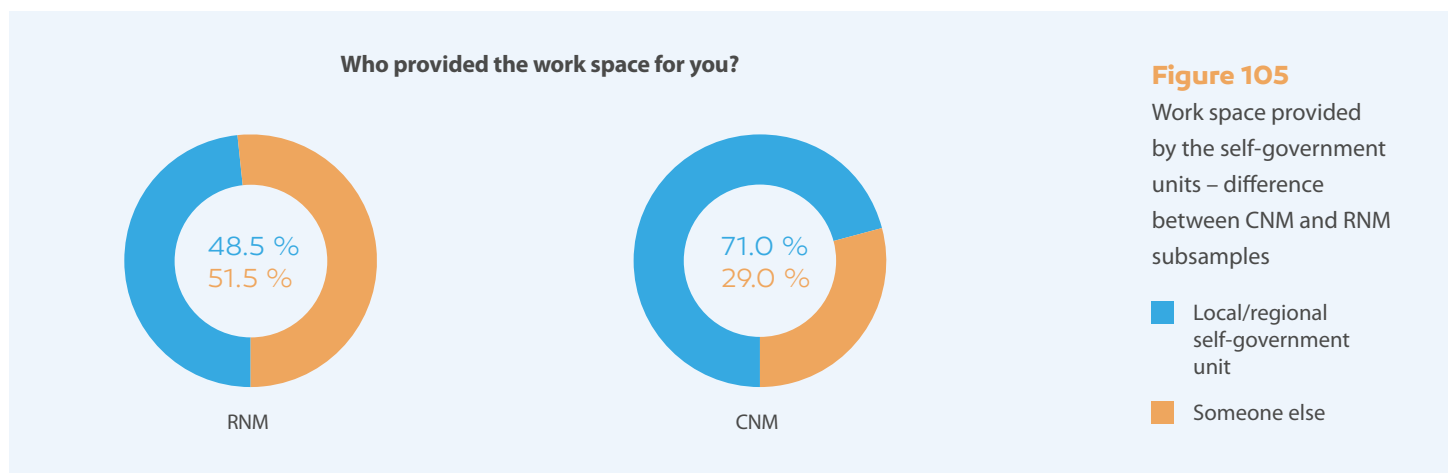


Figure 105
Work space provided by the self-government units – difference between CNM and RNM subsamples

- Local/regional self-government unit
- Someone else

- consider themselves to be well familiarised with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and well-informed on the social-political and minority context;
- participate in the work of some CNM coordination;
- assess CRNM, self-government units and the social environment as less constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM;
- largely confirm the acceptance of CRNM by the self-government units and the civil sector;
- largely attend and actively participate at the sessions of local/regional self-governments when issues regarding the position of the national minority they represent are on the agenda;
- largely cooperated with the civil sector on projects related to local community development;
- are more satisfied with the cooperation with the self-government unit, and with the general and local actors.

On the other hand, the self-government units that provided CRNM with more resources:

- largely appointed a person or established a service responsible for the communication and co-operation with national minorities, and harmonized all the relevant general acts with the provisions of CLRNM;
- largely seek the opinion of CRNM when preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of national minorities;
- frequently notify CRNM about sessions where issues on the position of NM are discussed, and they frequently deliver materials to them from such sessions;
- largely accept CRNM's proposals for general acts regulating issues of interest for national minorities.

Since there was no difference between the amount of resources provided by the self-government units and the "type" of national minority, it was once again confirmed that those units that are more open to cooperate with CRNM do not discriminate against the councils and the representatives based on their national affiliation.

In the heads of LRSGU subsample, 95% of them stated that their self-government unit provided financial resources to the current representatives and councils of the national minorities that were founded in their area, while 81% of them stated that their self-government unit provided the current CRNM with an office space and free legal advice (Figure 106).

Whereby, almost half of the questioned heads of the self-government units (47%) stated that LRSGU allocated all of the resources based on the request of NM representatives and councils, while only 27% of them stated that the ensured resources and services were self-initially allocated by the self-government unit (Figure 107).

Of those self-government units that provided the current CRNMs with a work space, 90% of them (N=47) provided a work space for all the representatives/councils founded in the LRSGU area. Of those self-government units that provided the current CRNMs with financial resources, 100% of them (N=61) provided financial resources to all the representatives/councils founded in the LRSGU area.

Considering the opinion of the questioned councils and representatives that insufficient funding for CRNM is a factor that greatly impedes the implementation of CLRNM, the question arises as to the appropriateness of the amount of financial resources allocated and the question as to whether the financial resources are granted once or on a continuous basis.

Share of resources and services provided to current CRNM by the questioned LRSU

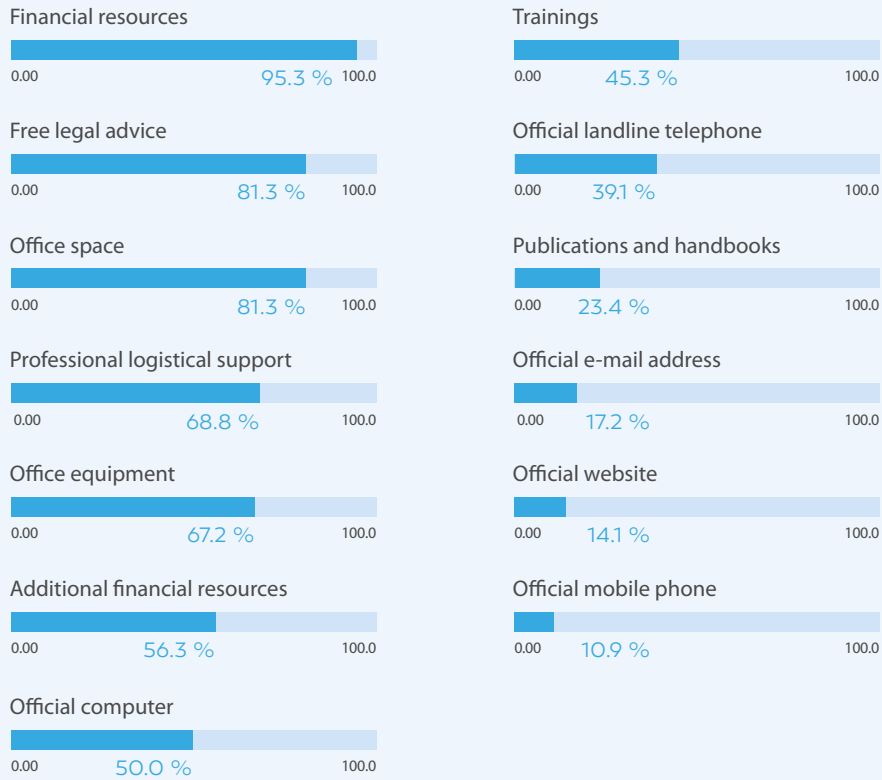


Figure 106

Disposal of CRNM resources and services from the perspective of LRSU

Did the self-government unit allocate the provided resources and services on their own initiative?

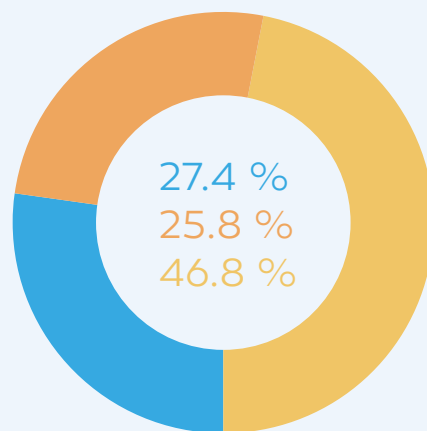


Figure 107

Initiative in allocating resources and services for CRNM

- All resources were allocated at their own initiative
- Part of the provided resources were allocated at their own initiative
- All resources were allocated based on the request from representatives/councils

Considering the manner in which CRNM is funded, 72% of the questioned self-government units (N = 46) made a formal decision to regulate the manner of funding the representatives and members of national minority councils (Figure 108).

Whereby, those self-government units that adopted the decision to regulate the manner of funding the representatives and members of national minority councils, have provided more financial resources for the current CRNM.

Of those self-government units that provided financial resources and/or additional funding to the representatives and councils for the implementation of specific activities, 89% (N = 54) controlled the means of spending the allocated budget funds (Figure 109). Moreover, there were three cases in which non-dedicated means of spending the allocated budget funds was identified.

Figure 108 Did your self-government unit make a decision regarding the manner of funding representatives and councils of national minorities?
Decision on the manner of funding CRNM

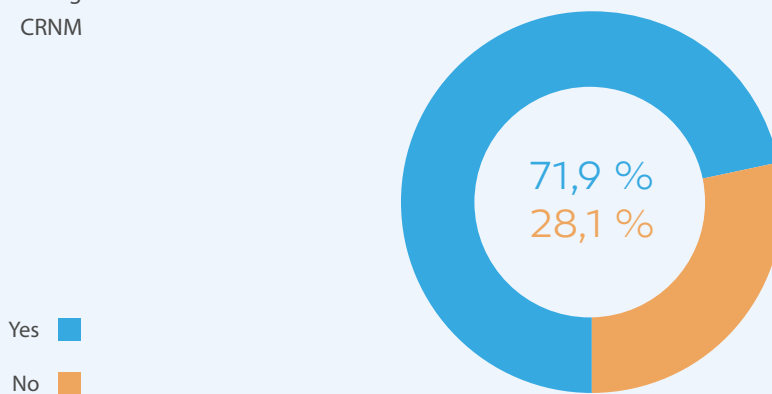


Figure 109. Did the competent authorities of your self-government unit control whether the means of spending the allocated funds was in accordance with their budgetary purpose?
Monitoring the spending of allocated funds



- More than half of the questioned participants (57%) have experience in carrying out CRNM mandates.
- A statistically significant difference in the number of councils and representatives' mandates so far has been determined with regard to the self-government level. At the municipal level, the largest share are those members who are carrying out the mandate of councils and representatives for the first time. At the county level there is a noticeably higher share of those with experience in carrying out the CRNM mandate.
- Although most of the respondents have experience with the mandate of councils and representatives, less than one third of them currently perform some other advisory, representative or executive function at the state/regional/local level. Among those who perform additional functions along with the CRNM mandate, it was found that CNM members perform other advisory, representative or executive functions at the state/regional/ local level to a significantly greater extent than RNM.
- In performing the activities of a representative or councilor of a national minority, 86% of the representatives use a computer, while 77% of the questioned councilors stated that the members of their council use a computer. In performing NM representative/councilor activities, 82% of the representatives use electronic mail, while 76% of councilors stated that the members of their council use electronic mail.
- A higher score for computer and electronic mail skills was attributed by those councils and representatives: who were nominated by NM associations, who have been provided with more financial resources and a larger amount of resources for work in general, who have younger age groups, and who have a higher education level.
- Regional affiliation has led to a statistically significant difference between CRNM in terms of the number of work resources that they have, whereby the councils and representatives of the Zagreb region predominate as they have the largest amount of resources needed for work (office, logistic and financial resources).
- Almost 60 percent of the questioned CRNM have some office and work space. Self-government units provided office space for 38% of the questioned CRNM .
- In the heads of LRSGU subsample, 95% of them stated that their self-government unit provided financial resources to the current representatives and councils of the national minorities that were founded in their area, while 81% of them stated that their self-government unit provided the current CRNM with an office space and free legal advice.

HIGHLIGHTED

3.3.3. Participation of CRNM in creating policies related to NM

One of the strategies for creating local policies related to national minorities should be based on creating links between local actors and their expected benefits. In this case, the targeted groups of participants involved in the development of local policies should clearly identify the key advantages and benefits of networking with other participants and have a content-specific area of self-action in relation to the common goal. Therefore, the first step in the research was to identify the direction i.e. the extent to which CRNM is involved in the creation of policies related to the national minorities, on the one hand, and on the other hand, weighing the fulfilment of the self-government units' obligations towards the councils and representatives of NM. In this way, the following is shown:

- More than half of the questioned CRNMs (65%) stated that the self-government unit informs them on the sessions that deal with issues of interest to NMs and submits materials to them from these sessions (60%), while less than half of the respondents (49%) stated that the self-government seeks their opinion when preparing proposals for general acts regulating issues of interest to NM.
- With regard to their own engagement, more than half of the questioned CRNMs (59%) stated that they attend and actively participate (54%) at the sessions of the self-government unit when issues regarding the position of the national minority they represent are on the agenda (Figure 110).
- It has been shown that those councils and representatives that the self-government units inform on the sessions that deal with issues regarding the position of the NM, and to whom they submit materials from such sessions, and seek their opinion when preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of the NM, also greatly attend and actively participate in the LRSGU sessions when issues regarding the position of the national minority they represent are on the agenda.

On the other hand, 45% of the questioned CRNMs indicated that local/regional self-government units did not seek their opinion when preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of national minorities, while one third are not informed on sessions that deal with issues related to the position of national minorities (29%) and the materials from such sessions are not submitted to them (33%).

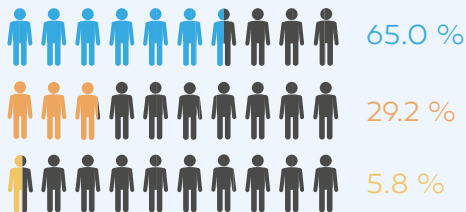
There was no statistically significant difference between RNM and CNM in terms of their engagement (attendance and active participation at the sessions of local/regional self-government when issues regarding the position of the national minority they represent are on the agenda), nor in their assessments regarding the fulfilment of obligations by LRSGU.

With regard to the involvement of CRNM in creating policies related to NM:

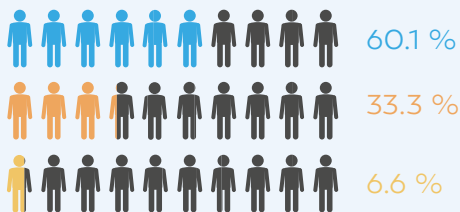
- local/regional self-government units in preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of NM seek, to a greater extent, seek the opinion of those CRNMs who are not carrying out the mandate for the first time;
- those CRNMs that are carrying out the mandate for the first time and CRNMs at the municipal level are less informed on sessions that deal with issues related to the position of national minorities, while those CRNMs that have experience in carrying out the mandate and CRNMs at the county and city level are more informed;

During your current mandate:

Does the local/regional self-government unit notify you on sessions discussing issues related to the position of national minorities



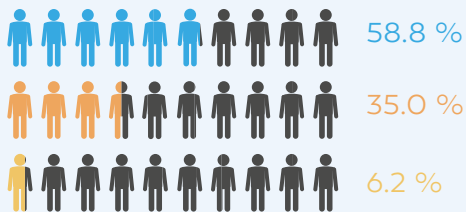
Does the local/regional self-government unit submit materials from such sessions to your council



Does the local/regional self-government unit seek your opinion when preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of national minorities



Have you attended sessions of local/regional self-governments when issues regarding the position of the national minority you represent are on the agenda



Did you actively participate at such sessions?

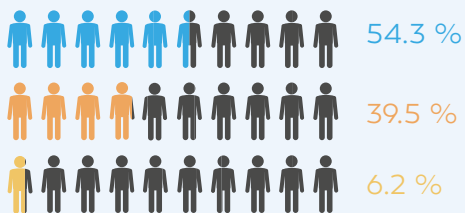
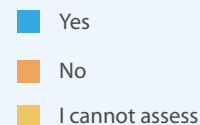


Figure 110

Involvement of CRNM in creating local policies from the perspective of the CRNM subsample



- The self-government units submit the materials from such sessions to the least extent to CRNMs at the municipal level;
- LRSKU in South Croatia (Dalmatia) informed CRNM to the least extent regarding sessions that deal with issues related to the position of national minorities and they least sought their opinion in preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of national minorities.

With regard to the engagement of CRNM:

- the sessions of the local/regional self-governments that deal with issues regarding the position of the national minorities are less attended by the CRNM in South Croatia (Dalmatia) and more attended by CRNM in the Zagreb Region and East Croatia (Slavonia);
- the mentioned sessions are least attended by CRNM at the municipal level, and most attended by CRNM at the county level, and to a greater extent by CRNM that were nominated by NM associations;
- those CRNMs that have a larger number of work resources, that use a computer and electronic mail to carry out activities for CRNM purposes, and those who assess themselves with higher values on all three familiarity/information indices, attend and actively participate in these sessions to a greater extent.

CRNM's activity and engagement, at least partially, depend on the self-government unit initiating cooperation and this is shown by the following indicators:

- Those CRNMs, from whom the self-government units seek advice, inform and submit materials from the sessions, attend and actively participate in them to a greater extent;
- implementation of monitoring is to a great extent requested by CRNM whose opinion is not sought by the self-government units, who is not informed about sessions and who does not receive materials from these sessions;
- in those self-government units that seek the opinion of CRNMs and inform them on sessions, CRNMs are more actively involved in creating policies related to NMs i.e. they exercise a greater number of constitutional rights (suggest measures, candidates and acts);
- in those self-government units where a person is appointed or a service is established for communication and cooperation with NM, and all relevant acts are harmonized with CLRNM, CRNM attend and actively participate in the sessions that deal with issues related to the position of NM to a greater extent;
- in those self-government units that seek the opinions of councils and representatives when preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of national minorities, and that inform CRNM of the sessions and submit materials to them from such sessions, the bodies local/regional self-government units largely accept CRNM proposals (candidates, measures and general acts).

A large number of the heads of the self-government units stated that the sessions of the self-government units on issues related to the position of NM are attended (and actively participated) by slightly less than half of the members of CRNMs that are established in the area of self-government unit, while almost a third of the LRSGU representatives could not assess the number of NM councillors and representatives who respond and actively participate in the work of the sessions (Figure 111).

It has been shown that there is a difference in the nature of assurance and the perception of the involvement of CRNM in the decision-making process on issues of importance to the NM and the creation of policies related to national minorities from the perspective of LRSGU heads and NM representatives themselves. Guided by the subjective norms, both of the questioned groups assessed the mentioned issues of CRNM involvement and participation in creating local policies in a different manner i.e. the assessment of the self-government unit representatives on CRNM involvement is higher than the perception of involvement from the CRNM perspective. Namely, more than 80% of the questioned heads of the self-government units stated that in drafting proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of national minorities, the self-government units frequently (often and

At the sessions of your self-government unit that discuss issues regarding the position of national minorities, on average, how many representatives and council members:

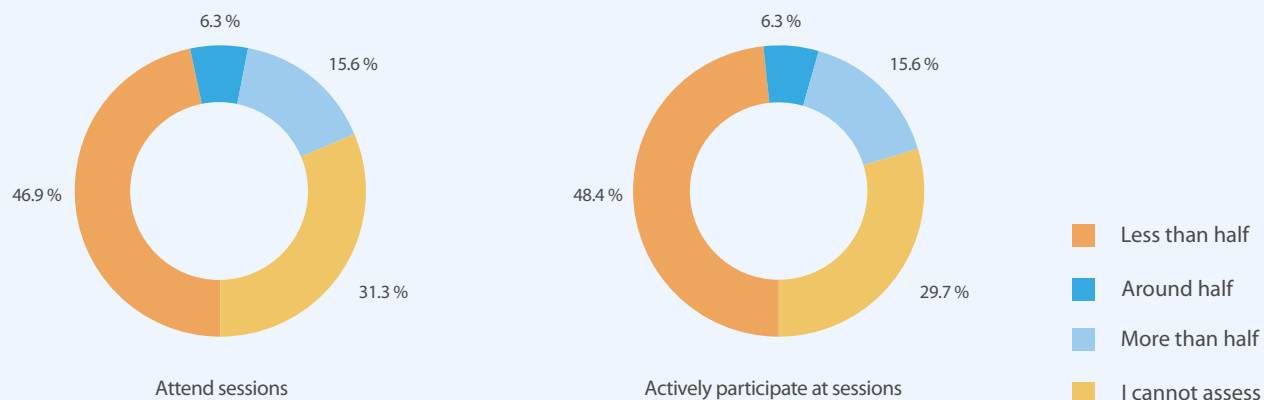


Figure 111
Attendance of CRNM
at LRSU sessions –
LRSU subsample

always) seek the opinion and/or proposals of CRNM, they inform them on sessions that deal with issues of importance to national minorities, and they submit the materials from such sessions to them.

In doing so, 69% of the questioned self-government units always seek the opinions and/or proposals of CRNMs in preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of national minorities; 70% of them always inform about sessions that deal with issues of importance to national minorities, while 77% always submit materials from such sessions to the representatives and councils (Figure 112).

The LRSU heads, whose self-government units largely involve CRNM in creating policies related to national minorities:

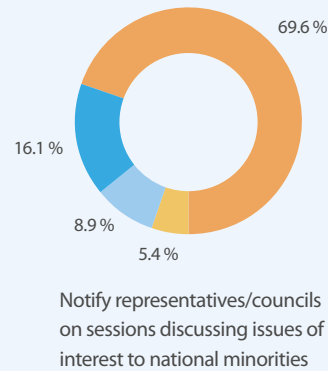
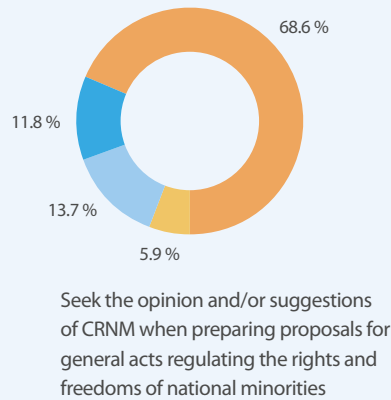
- are more satisfied with the communication with CRNM;
- attribute a greater contribution of CRNM to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM;
- highly assess the familiarity of LRSU bodies with the role and function of CRNM and the laws related to NM;
- have provided CRNM trainings to a greater extent, as well as more resources for work in general.

Since there was no link between the level of involvement of CRNMs in the creation of policies related to NMs and the assessed level of CRNM's familiarity with CLRNM and other laws related to NM, its role and function, and the obligations of local/regional self-governments towards councils and representatives (from the perspective of self-government unit representatives), it is assumed that the level of involvement in the creation of policies related to NM is to a lesser extent influenced by their formal preparedness and efficiency, and to a greater extent by the self-government's openness and willingness to cooperate with CRNM.

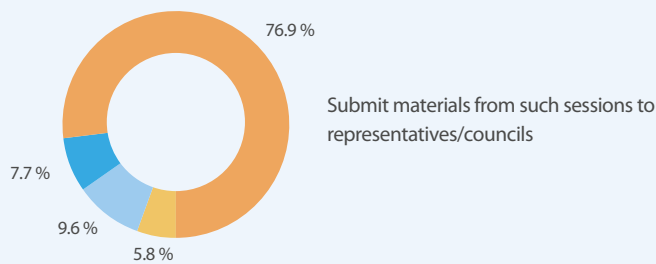
Figure 112

Involvement of CRNM in creating local policies from the perspective of LRSGU subsample

During their current mandate, how often did your self-government unit:



- Never ■
- Rarely ■
- Frequently ■
- Always ■



Furthermore, it is assumed that such self-government units are more open and willing to cooperate with both CRNM and the civil sector. Consequently, it is considered that the civil sector’s activity in them is also greater.

The assessment of CRNM’s involvement in the decision-making process on issues related to NM is lesser from the perspective of civil society organization members than from the perspective of LRSGU representatives. Namely, between the members of civil society organizations and the heads of the self-government units, a statistically significant difference was found when assessing the active participation of CRNM in decision-making processes on issues of interest to NM (Figure 113). At the same time, the members of civil society organizations assess the level of active participation of councils and representatives in decision-making processes on issues of interest to NM with a lower score (average = 2.49) while the heads of the self-government units assess it with a higher average value (average = 3.55).

It is indicative that none of the questioned CSO members stated that CRNM “entirely” actively participated in the decision-making processes regarding issues of interest to NM. At the same time, the low level of active participation of CRNM, from the perspective of CSO members, can be understood in two ways: as an assessment of CRNM’s low advisory efficiency, as well as criticism of the self-government unit in terms of insufficient involvement of CRNM in decision-making processes regarding issues of interest to NM.

In your opinion, to what extent do CRNM actively participate in decision-making processes related to issues of interest to NM (Question for CSO) / On a grading scale of 1-5, how would you assess CRNM's level of active participation in decision-making processes related to issues of interest to NM (Question for LRSGU)

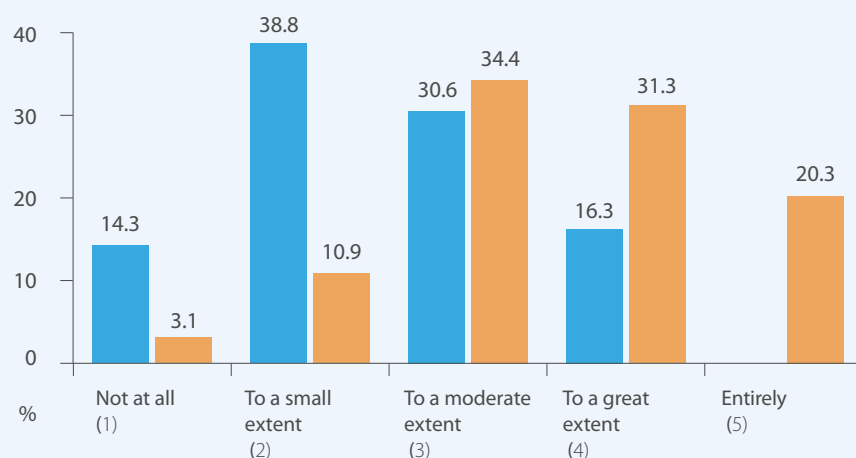


Figure 113

Involvement of CRNM in issues of interest to NM – differences between CSO and LRSGU subsamples

A greater level of active participation of CRNM in decision-making processes regarding issues of interest to NM is largely confirmed by those CSO members and heads of self-government units who:

- also confirm the acceptance of CRNM by the self-government units and the civil sector;
- attribute a greater contribution by all of the actors encompassed in the questionnaire to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM/improvement and protection of the position of NM;
- assess the contribution of CLRNM to improving the position of NM members with a higher score;
- confirm that CRNM addressed them for information or advice, and for providing suggestions or advice;
- consider that the self-government unit/wider public is more inclined to strengthen the CRNM institution.

In a CSO members subsample, a greater level of active participation of CRNM in decision-making processes regarding issues of interest to NM, is largely confirmed by those members of civil society organizations who:

- are more satisfied with the communication with the self-government unit;
- assess the cooperation between self-government units and the civil sector with a higher score;
- attribute a higher contribution by CRNM, NM members, NM associations and other minority organizations, other non-minority civil society organizations and international organizations to the improvement and protection of the position of NM;
- assess the cooperation between CRNM and the civil sector with a higher score.

Contrary to that, the level of active participation of CRNM in decision-making processes regarding issues of interest to NM is to a lesser extent confirmed by CSO members whose organizations have been addressed by NM members for complaints about discrimination or violation of minority rights.

It is shown that CSO members' assessment of the active participation of CRNM is based on the assessment of CRNM's efficiency, as well as on the perception of the self-government unit i.e. the level of its openness for cooperation with CRNM and the civil sector. In this respect, it is concluded that in those local communities that are less open and willing to cooperate, CRNM's efficiency is also lower. This phenomenon is confirmed by the statistically significant, positive and relatively high correlation ($r = 0.692$) of the level of using CRNM advisory services by the self-government unit and the level of active participation of CRNM in decision-making processes regarding issues of interest to national minorities from the perspective of CSO members.²⁶

In the subsample of LRSGU representatives, the level of active participation of CRNM in decision-making processes regarding issues of interest to NM was assessed with a higher score by those heads of self-government units in which:

- self-government units provided more logistical resources (trainings, publications and handbooks), and generally more resources for the work of CRNM;
- self-government units finance the activities of NM associations;
- self-government units always notify CRNM on sessions that deal with issues of interest to NM and always submit materials from such sessions;
- self-governments, in preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of national minorities, always seek the opinions and/or proposals from the councils and representatives;
- attribute a greater contribution by all of the actors encompassed in the questionnaire to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM;
- are more satisfied with the communication with CRNM.

As a result of this, CRNMs can be expected to be more efficient in those surroundings that are more open and willing to cooperate with councils and representatives of NMs.

²⁶ Questions for CSO: "In your opinion, to what extent do the bodies of local/regional self-government units use the advisory services of representatives and councils of national minorities?" "In your opinion, to what extent do the representatives and members of national minority councils actively participate in decision-making processes regarding issues of interest to national minorities?"

- More than half of the questioned CRNMs (65%) stated that the self-government unit informs them on the sessions that deal with issues of interest to NMs and submits materials to them from these sessions (60%), while less than half of the respondents (49%) stated that the self-government unit seeks their opinion when preparing proposals for general acts regulating issues of interest to NM.
- More than half of the questioned CRNMs (59%) stated that they attend and actively participate (54%) at the sessions of the self-government unit when issues regarding the position of the national minority they represent are on the agenda.
- A large number of the heads of the self-government units stated that the sessions of the self-government units on issues related to the position of NM are attended (and actively participated) by slightly less than half of the members of CRNMs that are established in the area of self-government unit, while almost a third of the LRSGU representatives could not assess the number of NM councilors and representatives who respond and actively participate in the work of the sessions.
- Namely, more than 80% of the questioned heads of the self-government units stated that in drafting proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of national minorities, the self-government units frequently (categories often and always) seek the opinion and/or proposals of CRNM, they inform them on sessions that deal with issues of importance to national minorities, and they submit the materials from such sessions to them.
- Between the members of civil society organizations and the heads of the self-government units, a statistically significant difference was found when assessing the active participation of CRNM in decision-making processes on issues of interest to NM. At the same time, the members of civil society organizations assess the level of active participation of councils and representatives in decision-making processes on issues of interest to NM with a lower score (average = 2.49) while the heads of the self-government units assess it with a higher average value (average = 3.55).
- It is concluded that in those local communities that are less open and willing to cooperate, CRNM's efficiency is also lower. This phenomenon is confirmed by the statistically significant, positive and relatively high correlation ($r = 0.692$) of the level of using CRNM advisory services by the self-government unit and the level of active participation of CRNM in decision-making processes regarding issues of interest to national minorities from the perspective of CSO members.
- The level of CRNM involvement in the creation of policies related to NM is to a lesser extent influenced by their formal preparedness and efficiency, and to a greater extent by the self-government's openness and willingness to cooperate with CRNM and the civil sector in general.

3.4. Cooperation between local development stakeholders

3.4.1. Types and quality of stakeholder cooperation

3.4.1.1. Communication within CRNM

75% of the questioned representatives hold informal meetings with other representatives and councils of national minorities (Figure 114).

Informal meetings are largely held by city and county level representatives who have experience in carrying out the representative mandate, who were nominated by NM associations, who have a larger number of work resources and who use a computer to carry out activities for CRNM purposes;

NM representatives who hold informal meetings with other CRNM members are mostly addressed by NM members for the purpose of seeking advice or information, and for providing proposals or advice.

Almost all of the questioned CNM hold council meetings (Figure 115). The largest number of questioned CNM hold meetings once every three months (Figure 116). Whereby, 94% stated that more than half of the council members attend these meetings (Figure 117).

Figure 114

Informal meetings of representatives with other RNM and CNM

Yes ■
No ■

*Question for RNM

Do you hold informal meetings with other representatives and/or councils of national minorities? *

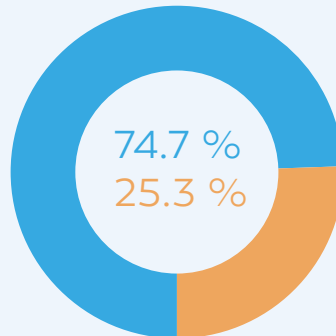


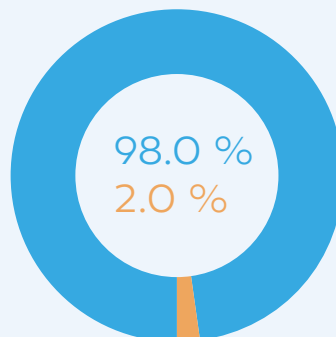
Figure 115

Holding CNM meetings

Yes ■
No ■

*Question for CNM

Do you hold council meetings? *



How often do you hold council meetings?

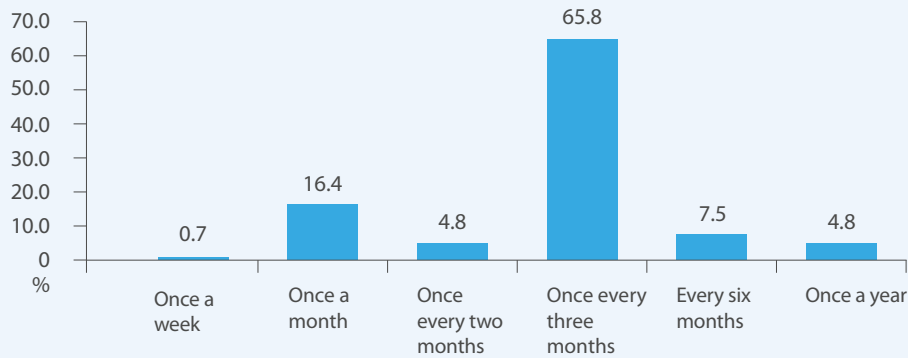


Figure 116
Frequency of holding CNM meetings

How many members, on average, participate at council meetings?

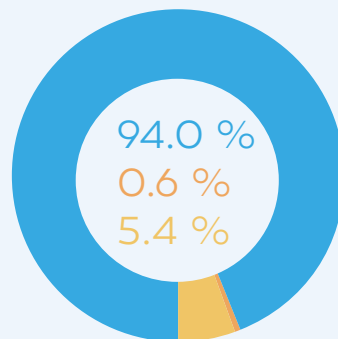


Figure 117
Average number of members present at CNM meetings

- More than half
- Around half
- Less than half

3.4.1.2. Interaction of CRNM, CSO and LRSGU with NM members

More than 80% of the questioned CRNM stated that, during the current mandate, they were addressed by members of the national minority they represent in order to seek information or advice, and to provide suggestions or advice, while almost half (48%) of the respondents stated that, during the current mandate, they were addressed by members of the national minority they represent due to complaints on the violation of minority rights (Figure 118).

There was no statistically significant difference between RNM and CNM in terms of the frequency of being addressed by members of the national minority they represent.

For the purpose of seeking and providing information, proposals and advice, the members of national minorities mostly address:

- CRNM at the county level;

- those who have office equipment (landline and mobile telephone, computer, e-mail address, website), as well as a larger amount of logistic and financial resources;
- those who use a computer and e-mail address to carry out activities for CRNM purposes.

Due to complaints on the violation of minority rights, NM members mostly address:

- councils and representatives of “new” and Roma national minorities, and less to CRNM of “old/traditional” national minorities;
- CRNM from North Croatia, and least to CRNM from Istria and Primorje;
- members who are not carrying out the CRNM mandate for the first time;
- those who, in addition to the CRNM mandate, are also performing other advisory/representative/executive functions;
- CRNMs who are provided with trainings and free legal advice;
- those who are assessed as more familiarised with the legal framework of the CRNM institution

The complaints on the violation of minority rights that NM members address to CRNM are largely concerned with the employment of NM members. Those CRNMs that are addressed by NM members for complaints on the violation of minority rights widely assess the social environment and self-government units as constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM.

NM members also frequently addressed CSO and self-government units in order to seek information or advice, and to provide suggestions or advice, and less due to complaints regarding discrimination or the violation of minority rights (Figure 119).

However, 40% of the questioned CSO members and 6% of the heads of LRSGU stated that their organizations i.e. self-government units were addressed by NM members for complaints on discrimination or the violation of minority rights.

Between civil society organizations and self-government units, a statistically significant difference was identified with regard to the frequency of NM members addressing complaints on discrimination or violation of minority rights, whereby NM members addressed self-government units to a small extent and addressed civil society organizations significantly more (Figure 120).

The members of those CSOs and the heads of those self-government units:

- who were addressed by NM members due to seeking and providing information or advice, attribute a greater contribution to the efficient implementation and application of CLRNM i.e. a greater contribution to the improvement of the position of NM by NM associations and other minority organizations, other civil society organizations, coordinations, the State Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament, the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, and the Ombudsman,
- while those whose organizations and self-government units were addressed by NM members due to complaints on discrimination or violation of minority rights, attribute a smaller contribution by local and regional media, self-government units, NM members and CRNM. In addition to this, the members of such organizations i.e. the heads of such self-government units, assess the contribution of CLRNM to the improvement of the position of NM members as smaller.

During the current mandate, were you addressed by the members of the national minority that you represent for the following reasons:

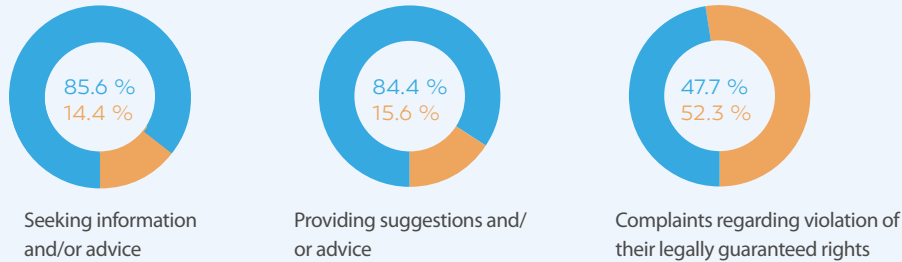
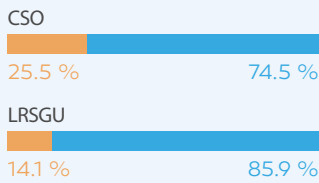


Figure 118
Reasons for CRNM interaction with the members of the NM they represent

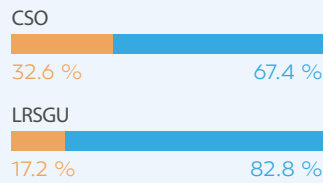
■ Yes
■ No

In the past year, have you been addressed by members of national minorities for the following reasons

Seeking information and/or advice



Providing suggestions and/or advice



Complaints regarding violation of their legally guaranteed rights

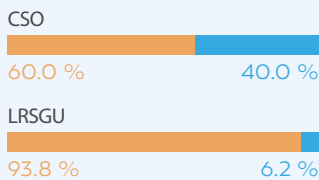


Figure 119
Frequency and reasons for members of national minorities addressing CSO and LRSQU

■ Yes
■ No

In the past year, how many times was your organization/self-government unit addressed by NM members for complaints regarding discrimination or violation of minority rights?

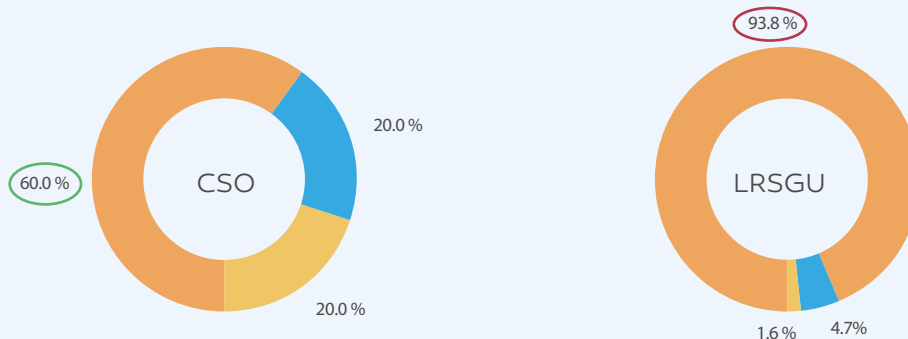


Figure 120
Frequency of NM members addressing CSO and LRSQU due to the violation of minority rights

■ Never
■ Rarely
■ Frequently

With regard to the questioned members of civil society organizations:

- NM members address their complaints on discrimination or violation of minority rights more frequently to NM associations and other types of civil society organizations, and less to LAGs,
- and when seeking information or advice, they address more frequently those civil society organizations among whose members there are individuals who are currently carrying out the CRNM mandate.

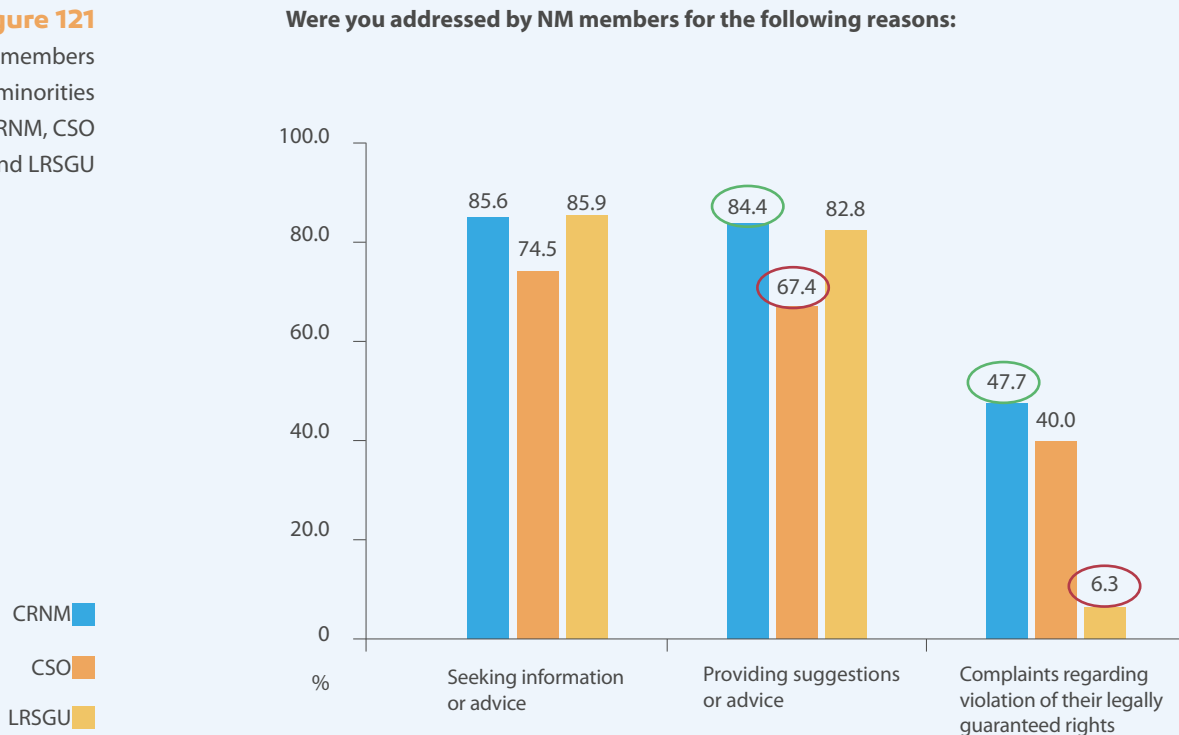
Members of civil society organizations whose organizations were addressed by NM members due to discrimination or violation of minority rights:

- are less satisfied with the communication with the self-government unit,
- confirm the acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU and civil society organizations to a lesser extent,
- attribute a lower contribution by NM members to the improvement and protection of the position of NM.

While there was no difference between CRNM, CSO and LRSGU in terms of the frequency of NM members addressing them for information or advice, the difference was determined in terms of the frequency of NM members addressing them in order to provide suggestions or advice and to make complaints. Whereby, NM members addressing in order to provide suggestions or advice was largely confirmed by CRNM, and least by civil society organizations, while NM members addressing due to complaints on the violation legally guaranteed rights was also largely confirmed by CRNM and least by the self-government units (Figure 121).

Figure 121

Reasons for members of national minorities addressing CRNM, CSO and LRSGU



- 75% of the questioned representatives hold informal meetings with other representatives and councils of national minorities.
- Almost all of the questioned (98%) CNM hold council meetings. The largest number of questioned CNM hold meetings once every three months (66%). Whereby, 94% stated that more than half of the council members attend these meetings.
- More than 80% of the questioned CRNM stated that, during the current mandate, they were addressed by members of the national minority they represent in order to seek information or advice, and to provide suggestions or advice, while almost half (48%) of the respondents stated that, during the current mandate, they were addressed by members of the national minority they represent due to complaints on the violation of minority rights.
- 40% of the questioned CSO members and 6% of the heads of LRSGU stated that their organizations i.e. self-government units were addressed by NM members for complaints on discrimination or the violation of minority rights.
- Regarding complaints on discrimination or violation of minority rights, NM members addressed self-government units to a small extent (6%), and significantly more to civil society organizations (40%).

HIGHLIGHTED

3.4.1.3. Interaction of CRNM, CSO and LRSGU

Interaction of CRNM and self-government units from the perspective of CRNM

By analysing particular forms of communication, it was indicated that more than 60% of the questioned CRNMs do not have a recognizable or specific feature of a specific form of communication with the self-government unit. Considering the suggested forms, it was shown that the councils and representatives most often choose to answer that they communicate equally in both verbal and written communication (65%), formally and informally (69%), privately and publicly (61%), and individually and in groups (67%) with their LRSGU (Figure 122). In addition, the analysis did not determine the difference in the form and manner of communication between NM representatives and councils.

The difference was determined with regard to the self-government level of CRNM. It was noted that CRNM at the municipal level largely prefers and uses informal, "local" or "verbal" communication forms (verbal, informal, private and individual), while CRNM at the county level prefers and uses a more formal, "professional" form of communication (written, formal, public, group communication).

The analysis of the means i.e. information channels and the ways in which CRNM address the self-government units shows that the largest number of respondents, almost half, use personal encounters i.e. verbal communication, followed by some form of electronic or written communication (26%), while telephones or mobile devices are used to a lesser extent (18%) (Figure 123). As in the previous analysis of the form, neither the analysis of the means i.e. the information channels did not distinguish between RNM and CNM in terms of what they use when communicating with LRSGU.

Figure 122

Forms of communication between CRNM and LRSGU from the perspective of CRNM

How do you most frequently communicate with the self-government unit, in terms of:

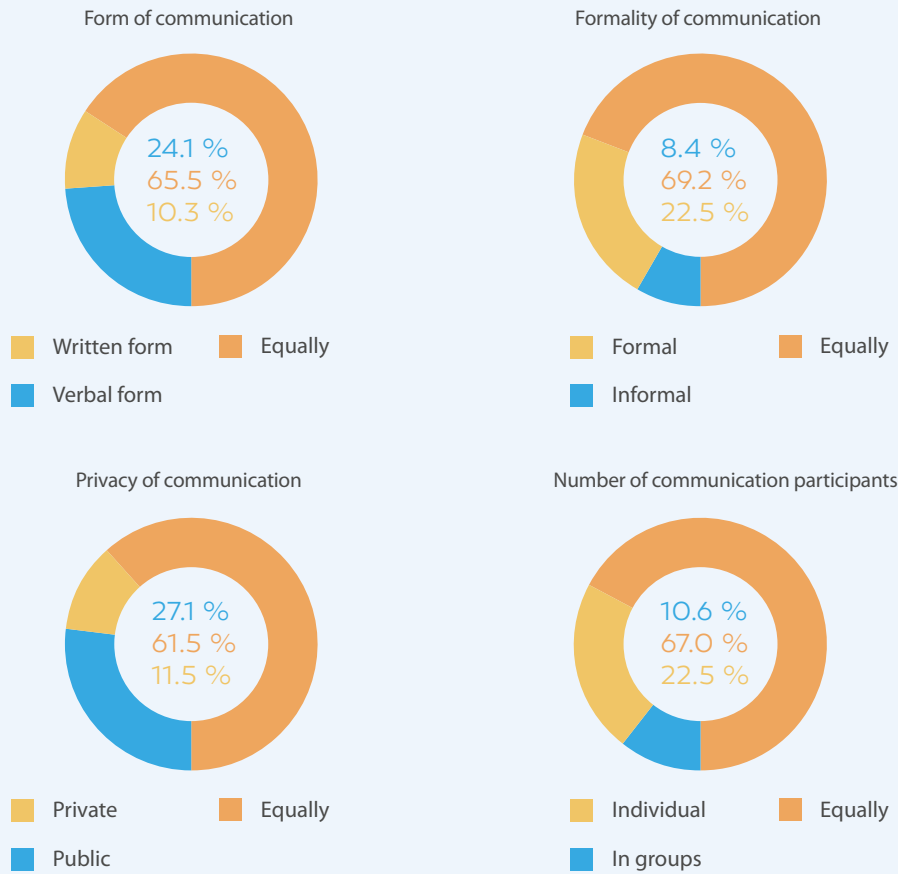
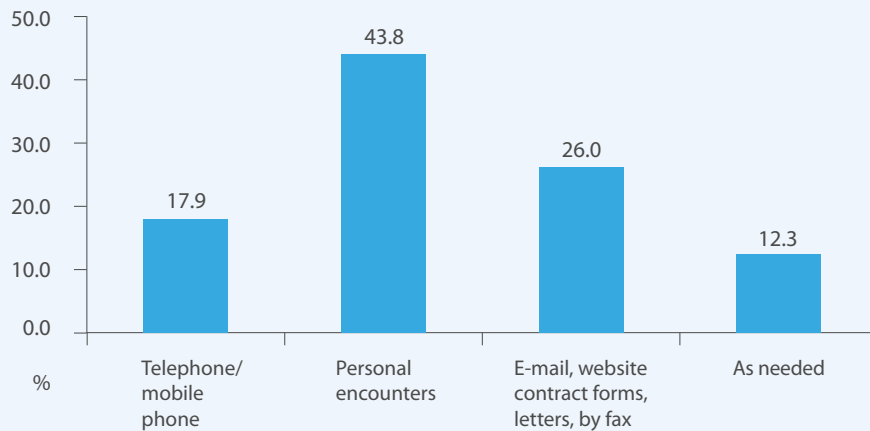


Figure 123

Means of communication between CRNM and LRSGU from the perspective of CRNM

How do you mostly communicate with the bodies of local/regional self-governments?



During the current mandate, did you ADDRESS the bodies of local/regional self-government units for the following reasons:



Figure 124
CRNM's reasons for addressing LRSU bodies

Among the reasons of CRNM addressing the local (regional) self-government units, in more than 80 percent of cases it was related to seeking or providing information, advice and suggestions, but there was also a pronounced number of those (69%) who addressed due to complaints, objections and criticism (Figure 124). In addition, there was a statistically significant difference between RNM and CNM in terms of addressing the self-government unit from which it is apparent that representatives address LRSU more frequently to seek information or advice. For the same reasons, seeking and/or providing information, advice and suggestions to self-government units are mostly addressed by CRNM at the county level.

To make complaints, objections and criticism, the self-government units were mostly addressed by:

- CRNM from North and Central Croatia, and least from Istria and Primorje;
- CRNM who are not carrying out the mandate for the first time;
- those who, in addition to the CRNM mandate, are also performing other advisory/ representative/ executive functions;
- those who keep a formal record of complaints addressed to them by NM members;
- those who were most frequently addressed by the members of the NM they represent due to complaints on the violation of minority rights.

The necessity of NM members' interaction with CRNM as a precondition for the efficient implementation of CLRN is indicated by the finding which shows that the councils and representatives that were most frequently addressed by NM members for certain reasons, also greatly addressed the self-government units for the same reasons. Thus, the more frequent communication of NM members with CRNM, in most cases leads to a more frequent interaction of CRNMs with the self-government unit.

By assessing different aspects of communication with the self-government unit, it was shown that the questioned councils and representatives assessed almost all of them with a relatively high average score (average value = 3.69). Nevertheless, courtesy and professionalism are at the forefront as the aspects that are valued with the highest score (Figure 125).

Figure 125

Scores of the different aspects of communication with LRSGU from the perspective of CRNM

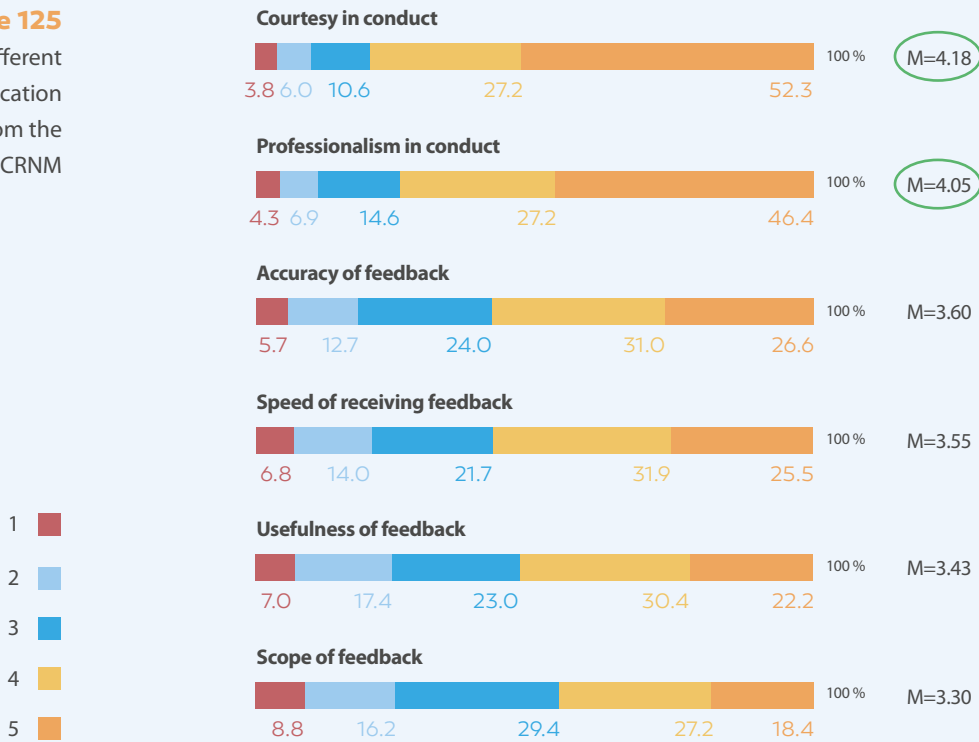
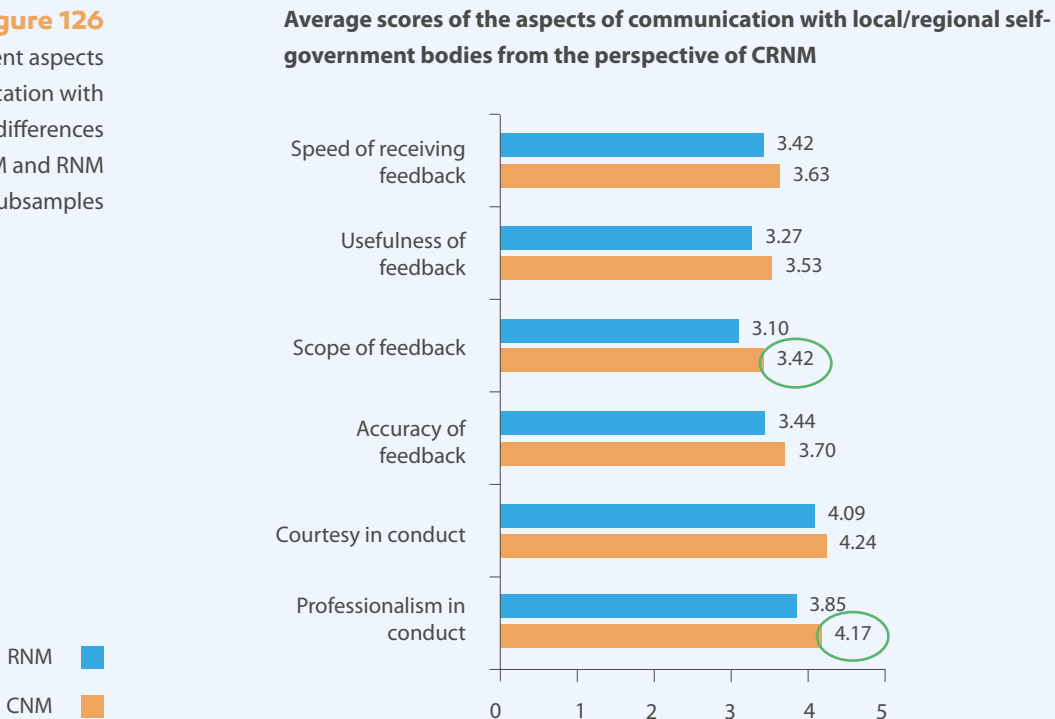


Figure 126

Scores of different aspects of communication with LRSGU – differences between CNM and RNM subsamples



A statistically significant difference was found between RNM and CNM, whereby CNM assessed professionalism in conduct and scope of feedback from LRSU with the highest core, while RNM assessed it with a lower score (Figure 126).

In the index of overall satisfaction with the communication with the self-government unit, no statistically significant difference was identified between RNM and CNM.

- By analyzing particular forms of communication, it was indicated that more than 60% of the questioned CRNMs do not have a recognizable or specific feature of a specific type of communication with the self-government unit.
- The analysis of the means i.e. information channels and the ways in which CRNM address the self-government units shows that the largest number of respondents, almost half, use personal encounters i.e. verbal communication, followed by some form of electronic or written communication (26%), while telephones or mobile devices are used to a lesser extent (18%).
- By assessing different aspects of communication with the self-government unit, it was shown that the questioned councils and representatives assessed almost all of them with a relatively high average score (average value = 3.69). Nevertheless, courtesy and professionalism in conduct (average value = 4.05) are at the forefront as the aspects that are valued with the highest score.

HIGHLIGHTED

Interaction of self-government units and CRNM from the perspective of the heads of LRSU

By analysing particular forms of communication, it was indicated that over 70% of the questioned LRSUs do not have a recognizable or specific feature of a specific form of communication with CRNM. Considering the suggested forms, it was shown that the self-government units most often choose to answer that communicate equally in both verbal and written communication (71%), formally and informally (89%), privately and publicly (80%), and individually and in groups (78%) with CRNM, as shown in Figure 127.

Almost half of the questioned heads of LRSU most frequently communicate with the councils and representatives of NMs through personal encounters i.e. verbal communication, a third of them use a telephone or mobile device, while 17% of them most commonly communicate with CRNM electronically and in writing (Figure 128).

By assessing different aspects of communication with CRNM, it was shown that almost all of the questioned LRSU assessed them with a high average score (average value = 4.09). Whereby, as in the perspective of CRNM, courtesy and professionalism in conduct are at the forefront as the aspects that are valued with the highest score (Figure 129).

By comparing the two subsamples, CRNM and LRSU, a statistically significant difference was found in certain aspects of communication as well as in the overall index of satisfaction with the communication. If we exclude courtesy and professionalism in conduct, which both subsamples value with a higher score, the average values of the heads of self-government units in all other aspects, including the overall index of satisfaction with communication, are significantly higher than the average CRNM

Figure 127

Forms of communication between LRS GU and CRNM from the perspective of LRS GU

How does your self-government unit most frequently communicate with representatives/councils of national minorities, in terms of:

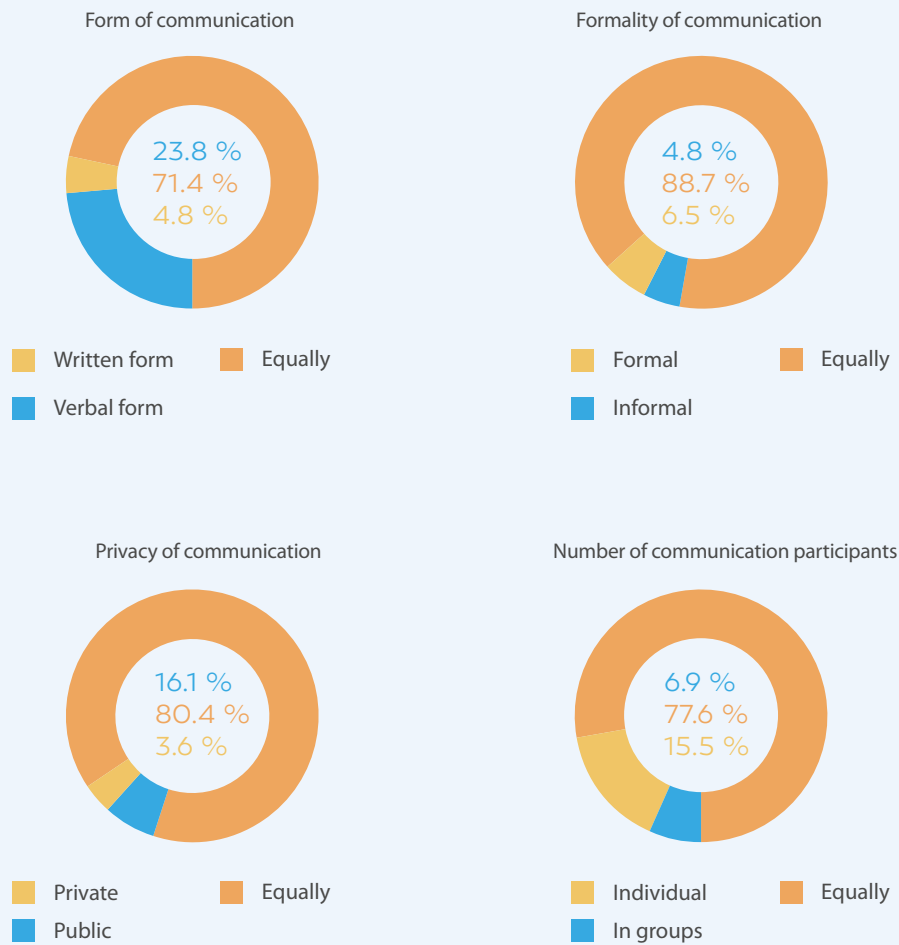


Figure 128

Means of communication between LRS GU and CRNM from the perspective of LRS GU

How do you mostly communicate with representatives and councils of national minorities?

Telephone/mobile phone

31.3 %

E-mail, website contract forms, letters, by fax

17.2 %

Personal encounters

45.3 %

As needed

6.3 %

values. Simply put, the heads of the self-government units express greater satisfaction with the communication with CRNM, while the councils and representatives of NM are less satisfied with the communication with the self-government units.

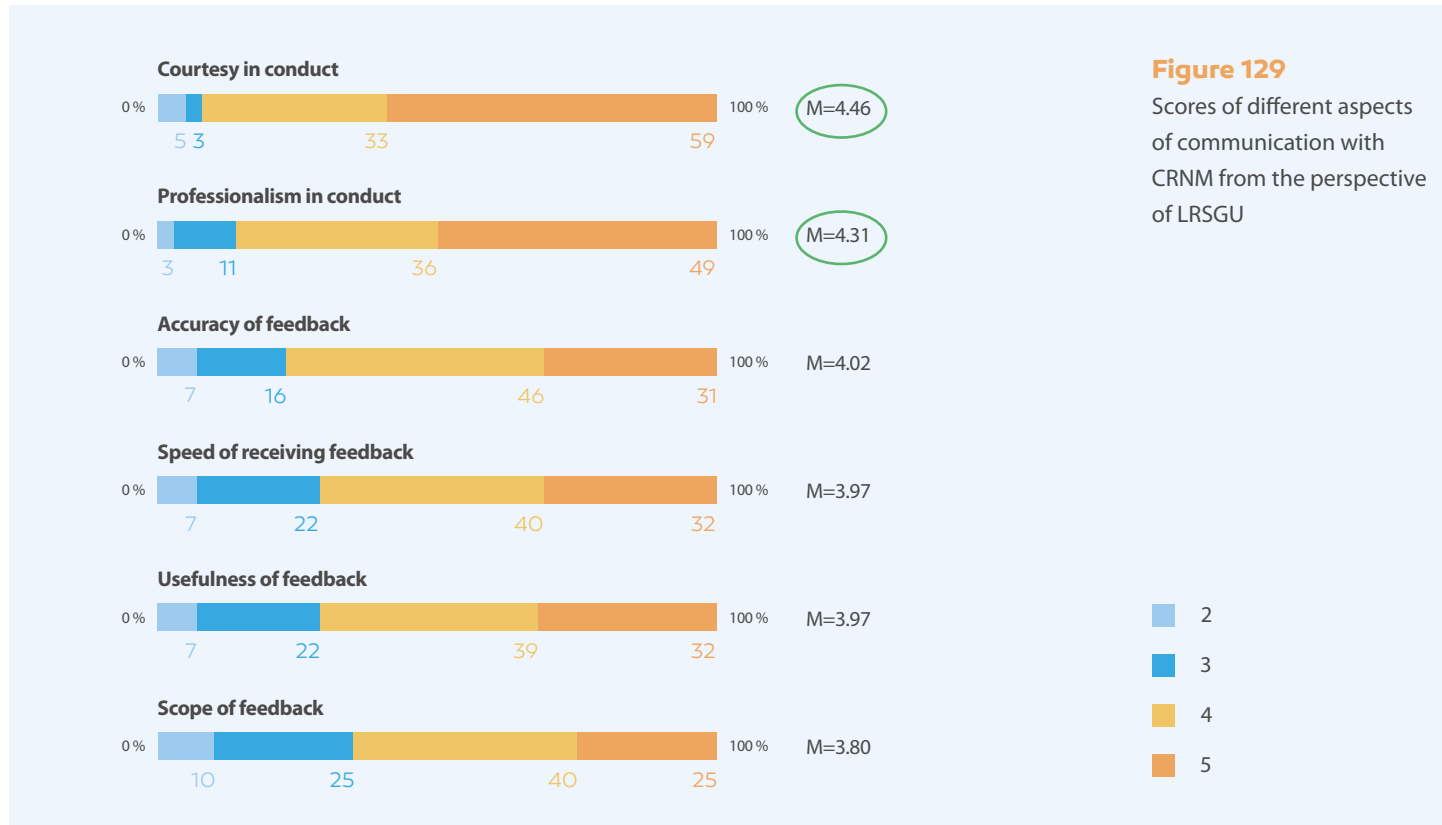


Figure 129
Scores of different aspects of communication with CRNM from the perspective of LRSU

- By analyzing particular forms of communication, it was indicated that over 70% of the questioned LRSUs do not have a recognizable or specific feature of a specific form of communication with CRNM.
- Almost half of the questioned heads of LRSU most frequently communicate with the councils and representatives of NMs through personal encounters i.e. verbal communication, a third of them use a telephone or mobile device, while 17% of them most commonly communicate with CRNM electronically and in writing.
- By assessing different aspects of communication with CRNM, it was shown that almost all of the questioned LRSU assessed them with a high average score (average value=4,09). Whereby, as in the perspective of CRNM, courtesy (average value=4,46) and professionalism in conduct (average value=4,31) are at the forefront as the aspects that are valued with the highest score.

HIGHLIGHTED

Interaction of CSO and self-government units from the perspective of CSO members

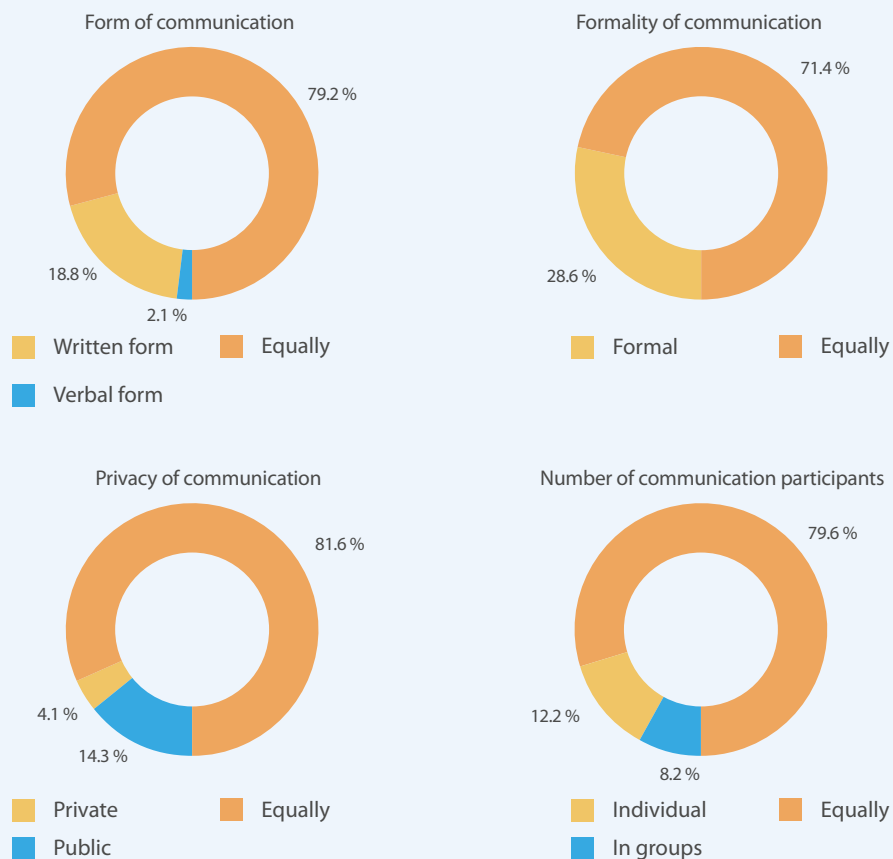
As in the previous cases of the CRNM and LRSU subsamples, the CSO subsample does not relate to recorded specificities and does not deviate from the recognized form of the two already analysed subsamples. It is also shown that more than 70% of the questioned civil society organizations do not have a recognizable or specific feature of a specific form of communication with the heads of self-government units. Considering the suggested forms, it was shown that the CSO members most often choose to respond equally in both verbal and written communication (79%), formally and informally (71%), privately and publicly (82%), and individually and in groups (80%) with self-government units, as shown in Figure 130.

The overall communication with LRSU has also been assessed with a relatively high average score (average value=3.46), where, as in the case of the CRNM subsample, courtesy and professionalism in conduct were assessed with the highest score (Figure 131).

The assessments of courtesy and professionalism in conduct in the self-government unit from the perspective of CRNM and CSO members are statistically significantly different i.e. CRNMs assess courtesy and professionalism in LRSU with a higher score while CSO members assess it with a lower score.

Figure 130
Forms of communication between CSO and LRSU from the perspective of CSO

How does your organization most frequently communicate with the local/regional self-government unit, in terms of:



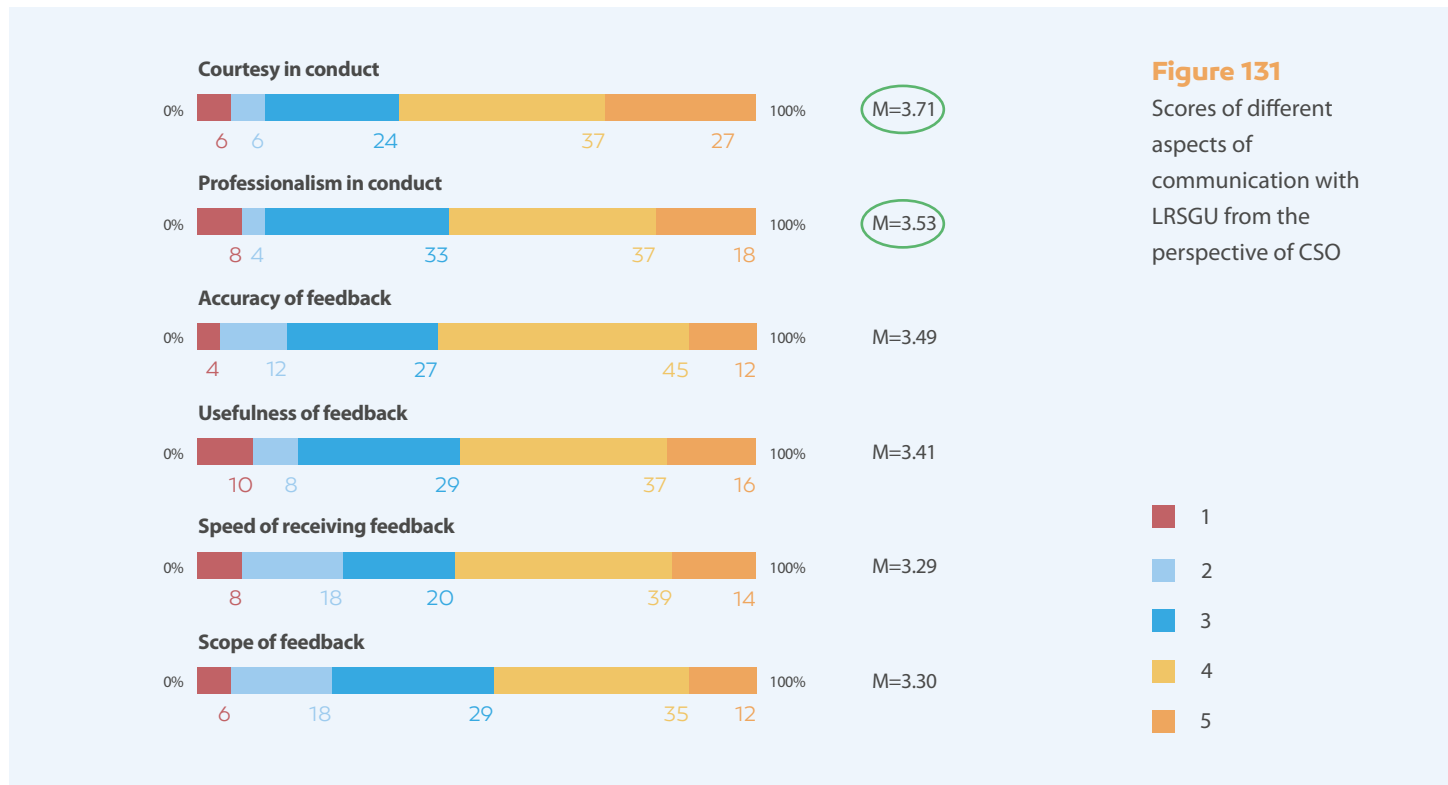


Figure 131
Scores of different aspects of communication with LRSQU from the perspective of CSO



Figure 132.
Average satisfaction with communication – difference between the three subsamples

The following indicate that LRSQU’s openness and willingness to cooperate with CRNM is the mediator of LRSQU assessment from the perspective of CSO members:

- CSO members that confirm the acceptance of CRNM by the self-government unit are statistically significantly more satisfied with the communication with the self-government unit (all aspects of communication as well as with the total satisfaction with the communication);
- CSO members who are more satisfied with the communication with the self-government unit at the same time attribute a higher contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of NM by LRSQU.

Given the comparison of the three subsamples, the average satisfaction with the communication with CRNM from the perspective of the heads of the self-government units, statistically significantly deviates from the average satisfaction with communication of the other two subsamples. In other words, the heads of the self-government units express a higher level of satisfaction with the communication with CRNM, while CSO members and CRNM are less satisfied with the communication with the self-government units (Figure 132).

Due to their importance in the process of gathering information and exposure to different aspects and forms of influence arising from the flow of information, communication processes are often at the centre of the interests of public opinion researchers. The previous analysis and discussion showed that interest in certain communication aspects was present and included in this research, focusing mainly on three problem areas: forms of the communication process, resources and information channels, and the average satisfaction with certain aspects of communication.

Of course, all three problem areas have been observed from the perspective of the three different subsamples, hypothetically expecting that there is a recognizable or specific feature of a specific form of communication. Considering the suggested forms and the presented results, it was not possible to identify a specific form in the type of communication that was expressed by the questioned CRNM, CSO members and LRSGU representatives.

However, although partially imprecise, it is evident and can be of use as a relatively rough simplification of the general form of the communication process in the interaction of the questioned subsamples. Verbal communication is a fundamental aspect of interaction and transfer of information between CRNM, CSO members and LRSGU representatives. Namely, research has shown that nearly half of the respondents most often communicate through personal encounters i.e. verbal communication, while all other forms of interaction are present, but to a lesser extent.

- HIGHLIGHTED**
- It was indicated that over 70% of the questioned civil society organizations do not have a recognizable or specific feature of a specific form of communication with the heads of self-government units.
 - The overall communication with LRSGU has also been assessed with a relatively high average score (average value=3.46), where, as in the case of the CRNM subsample, courtesy (average value=3,71) and professionalism (average value=3,53) in conduct were assessed with the highest score.
 - The assessments of courtesy and professionalism in conduct in the self-government unit from the perspective of CRNM and CSO members are statistically significantly different i.e. CRNMs assess courtesy and professionalism in LRSGU with a higher score while CSO members assess it with a lower score.
 - Given the comparison of the three subsamples, the average satisfaction with the communication with CRNM from the perspective of the heads of the self-government units, statistically significantly deviates from the average satisfaction with communication of the other two subsamples. In other words, the heads of the self-government units express a higher level of satisfaction with the communication with CRNM, while CSO members and CRNM are less satisfied with the communication with the self-government units.
 - Considering the suggested forms and the presented results, it was not possible to identify a specific form in the type of communication that was expressed by the questioned CRNM, CSO members and LRSGU representatives. However, although partially imprecise, it is evident and can be of use as a relatively rough simplification of the general form of the communication process in the interaction of the questioned subsamples. Verbal communication is a fundamental aspect of interaction and transfer of information between CRNM, CSO members and LRSGU representatives. Namely, research has shown that nearly half of the respondents most often communicate through personal encounters i.e. verbal communication, while all other forms of interaction are present, but to a lesser extent.

Interaction of CRNM with LRSGU and CSO

74% of the questioned members of civil society organizations and representatives of the self-government units stated that their organizations i.e. self-government units were addressed by CRNM for information or advice, 68% stated that they were addressed to provide suggestions or advice, while a fifth mentioned complaints regarding discrimination or violation of minority rights (Figure 133).

There was a statistically significant difference between the civil society organizations and the self-government units with regard to the frequency and the reasons behind CRNMs addressing them. Like the already observed attitudes and behaviours, here it is also evident that councils and representatives are more inclined to address the self-government units in order to seek information or advice and to provide suggestions or advice, and they address civil society organizations more for complaints about discrimination or violation of minority rights (Figure 134).

In the past year, were you addressed by representatives and councils of national minorities for the following reasons:



Figure 133
CRNM's reasons for addressing CSO and LRSGU – CSO/LRSGU subsample

Share of CSO/LRSGU who were addressed by CRNM in the past year for the following reasons:

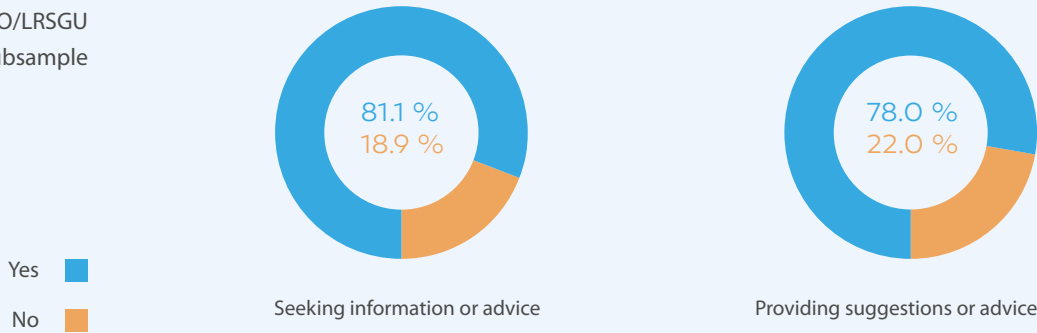


Figure 134
CRNM's reasons for addressing CSO and LRSGU – differences between CSO and LRSGU subsamples

Figure 135

CSO and LRSGU's reasons for addressing CRNM – CSO/LRSGU subsample

In the past year, did your organization/self-government unit address representatives and councils of national minorities for the following reasons:

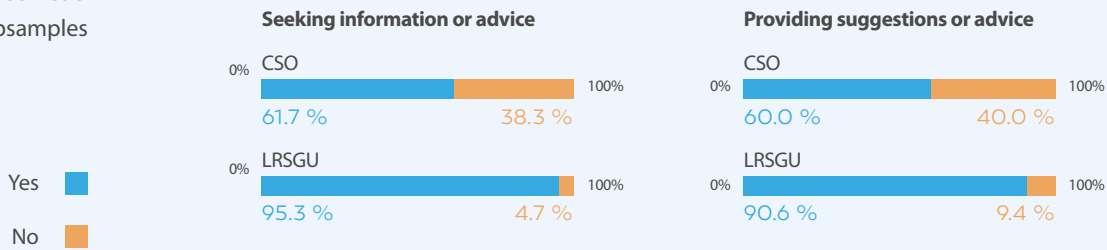


Yes ■
No ■

Figure 136

CSO and LRSGU's reasons for addressing CRNM – differences between CSO and LRSGU subsamples

Share of civil society organizations/self-government units that addressed CRNM for:



Yes ■
No ■

Figure 137

Complaints related to violation of minority rights – CSO subsample

In the past year, did your organization address CRNM for complaints regarding discrimination or violation of minority rights?



Never ■
Rarely ■
Frequently ■

In that regard, the CSO members and heads of self-government units whose organizations and self-government units were not addressed by CRNM for complaints about discrimination or violation of minority rights largely confirm the acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU and civil society organizations.

On the other hand, the members of civil society organizations and heads of self-government units whose organizations and self-government units were addressed by CRNM due to complaints about discrimination or violation of minority rights attribute a lower contribution to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM/improvement and protection of the position of NM by local and regional media, and self-government units.

Given the frequency of civil society organizations and self-government units addressing CRNM, 81% of the questioned CSO members and heads of LRSGU stated that their organizations and self-government units addressed CRNM to seek information or advice, while 78% stated that they addressed them in order to provide suggestions or advice (Figure 135).

As in a number of previous examples, there was a statistically significant difference between civil society organizations and self-government units in terms of their frequency in addressing CRNM. The tendency to seek information or advice and to provide suggestions or advice is expressed to a greater extent by LRSGU bodies and less so by members of civil society organizations (Figure 136).

A third of the questioned civil society organizations have rarely or frequently addressed CRNM due to complaints about discrimination or violation of minority rights in the past year (Figure 137).

The frequency of CRNM addressing civil society organizations and the frequency of CSO addressing councils and representatives of NM is statistically significant. In other words, the greater interaction of CRNM towards CSO results in a greater interaction of CSO towards CRNM. The featured model shows a two-way flow of information in which the respondents are equally transmitters and recipients of information (complaints, advice, suggestions, etc.). Therefore, the more CRNM address CSOs for a number of reasons e.g. as complaints related to violation of minority rights, so too the CSO members will address CRNM to a greater extent for the same reasons they received.

The feedback on the communication form was not determined with regard to the interaction between CRNM and the self-government units.

In the subsample of CSO members:

- CRNM were addressed to a great extent by those CSO (in all three problem areas of communication) who offered the current CRNM cooperation on projects aimed at local community development;
- CRNM were addressed, in order to seek proposals or advice, to a greater extent by those CSO among whose members there are individuals currently carrying out the CRNM mandate and organizations whose members assess the cooperation between self-government units and minority associations with a higher score;
- CRNM were addressed, due to complaints regarding discrimination or violation of minority rights, by those CSO whose members were less satisfied with the communication with the self-government unit, who consider that the self-government unit does not use CRNM's advisory services to a sufficient extent, who highly assess the self-government unit as a constraining factor in the implementation of CLRNM, who confirm the acceptance of CRNM by self-government units to a lesser extent, and who attribute a lower contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of NM by the media.

On the other hand, almost 40% of the questioned heads of LRSGU stated that the bodies of their self-government units addressed CRNM due to making complaints, objections and criticisms (Figure 138).

The heads of the self-government units that addressed CRNM for making complaints, objections and criticism, to a greater extent assessed CRNM and NM members as constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM, and attributed a higher contribution to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM by self-government units.

Figure 138
LRSGU's complaints
and criticisms towards
CRNM – LRSGU
subsample

In the past year, how frequently did your self-government unit address CRNM for complaints, objections and criticisms?



HIGHLIGHTED

- 74% of the questioned members of civil society organizations and representatives of the self-government units stated that their organizations i.e. self-government units were addressed by CRNM for information or advice, 68% stated that they were addressed to provide suggestions or advice, while a fifth mentioned complaints regarding discrimination or violation of minority rights.
- The research determined that councils and representatives are more inclined to address the self-government units in order to seek information or advice and to provide suggestions or advice, and they address civil society organizations more for complaints about discrimination or violation of minority rights.
- The greater interaction of CRNM towards CSO results in a greater interaction of CSO towards CRNM. The featured model shows a two-way flow of information in which the respondents are equally transmitters and recipients of information (complaints, advice, suggestions, etc.). Therefore, the more CRNM address CSOs for a number of reasons e.g. as complaints related to violation of minority rights, so too the CSO members will address CRNM to a greater extent for the same reasons they received.
- The feedback on the communication form between CRNM and CSO was not determined with regard to the interaction between CRNM and the self-government units.

3.4.1.4. Frequency and quality of cooperation between the key stakeholders in the efficient implementation and application of CLRNM

It was shown that 10 to 15% of the questioned CRNM have not yet cooperated with the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament, non-minority civil society organizations, ministries responsible for national minorities, the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, and the State Council for National Minorities (Figure 139).

Given the importance they possess as distinctive features for cooperation among individual institutions, CRNM's satisfaction with the past cooperation with key stakeholders in the implementation of CLRNM was verified. The largest number of questioned CRNM highly appreciated the past cooperation they had with the representatives and councils of the national minority they represent and with national minority associations, while they least appreciated the past cooperation with the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament (Figure 140).

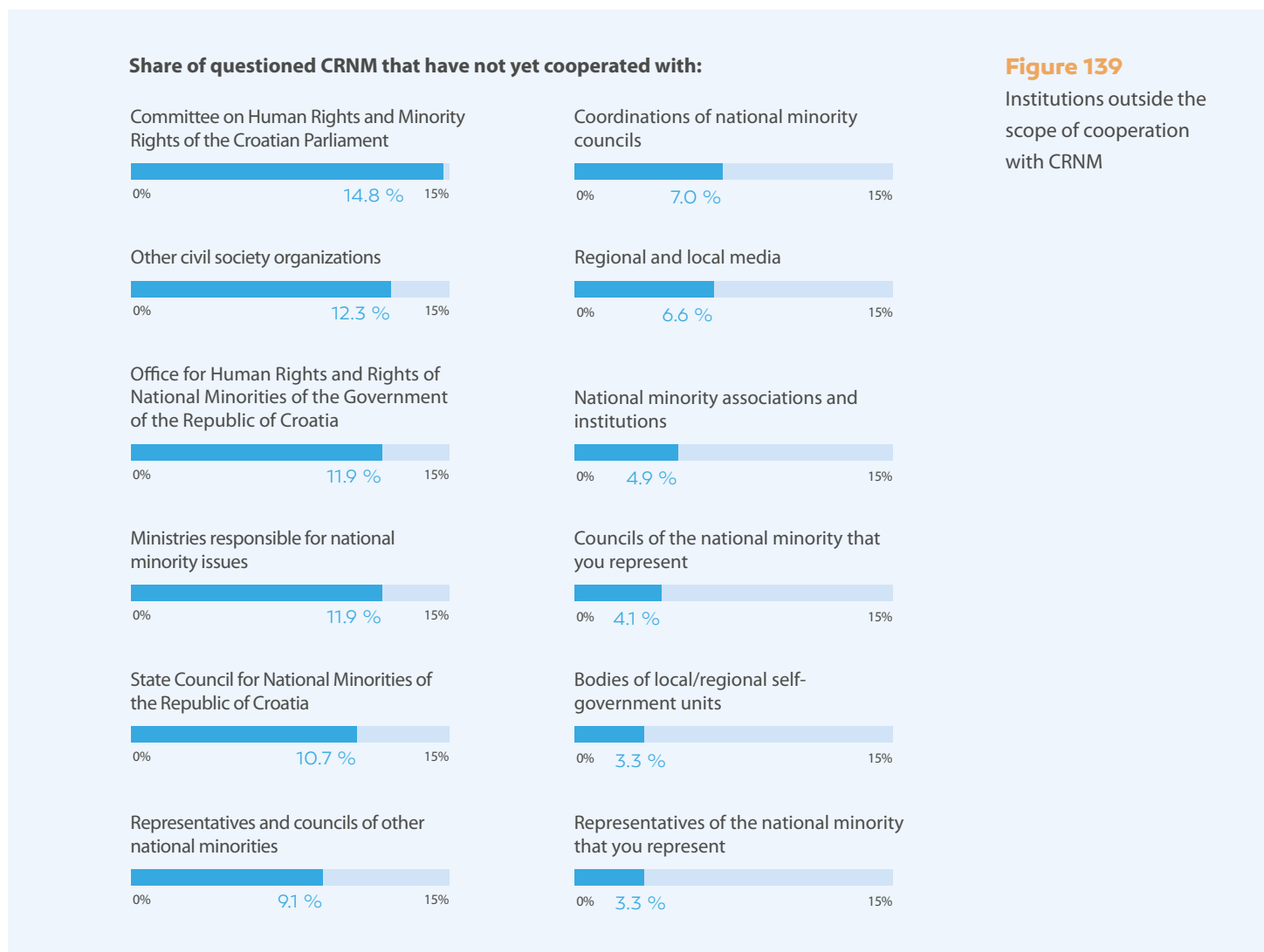
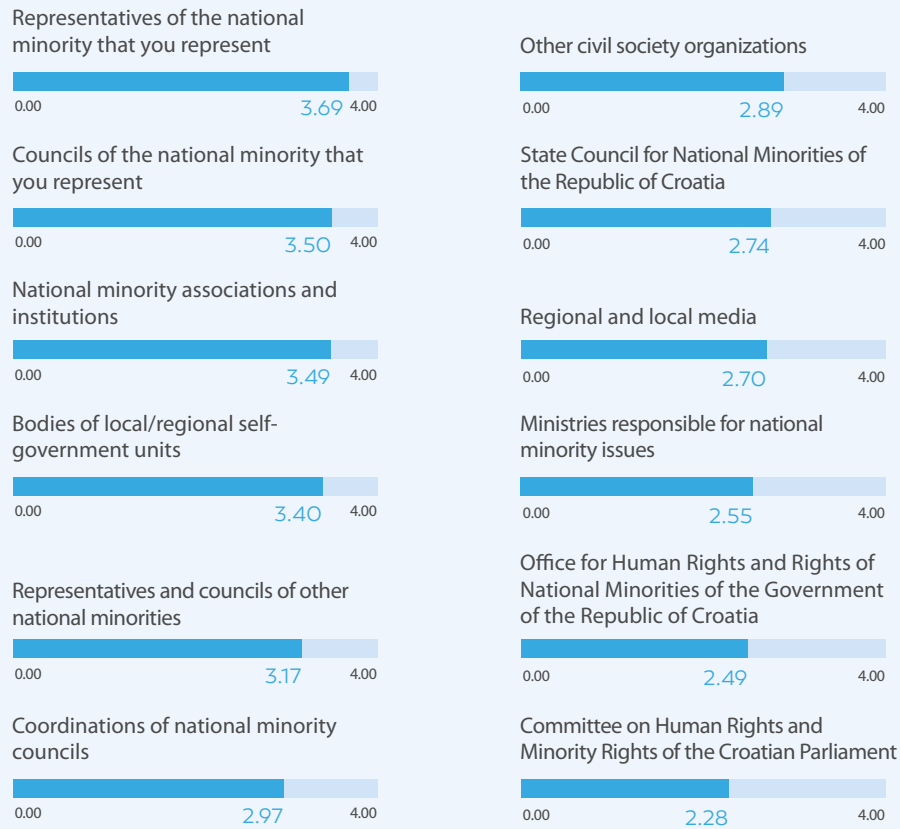


Figure 140

CRNM's satisfaction regarding the cooperation with key stakeholders in the implementation of CLRNM

Average values of satisfaction regarding CRNM's past cooperation with:



RNM and CNM are statistically significantly different in terms of their satisfaction with the cooperation with the representatives of national minorities, the local/regional self-government units and non-minority civil society organizations, whereby CRN members were more satisfied with the cooperation with the various stakeholders.

With regard to the type of national minority, a statistically significant difference was identified in terms of the satisfaction with the cooperation with NM associations and institutions, whereby the members of "old" (traditional) NMs were more satisfied with the cooperation and the members of "new" and Roma national minorities were less satisfied.

Based on the results of the factor analysis, two indices were constructed: conditionally named as general and local actors. Local actors include: other representatives and councils of the national minorities represented by the respondents, CRNM of other national minorities, bodies of local/regional self-government units, NM associations and institutions, and coordinations of national minority councils. General actors include: other civil society organizations, ministries responsible for issues concerning national minorities, the State Council for National Minorities, regional and local media, the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament and the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

The questioned CRNM were more satisfied with the cooperation with the local actors i.e. less satisfied with the cooperation with the general actors (Figure 141). No statistically significant difference was found between RNM and CNM in terms of the satisfaction with the cooperation with local and general actors.

CRNM in the Zagreb region and at the county self-government level were most satisfied with the cooperation with the local actors, while CRNM from Central Croatia and CRNM at the municipal level were least satisfied.

The CSO subsample was largely satisfied with the cooperation with the bodies of the local/regional self-government units, and least satisfied with the coordinations of the councils of national minorities (Figure 142).

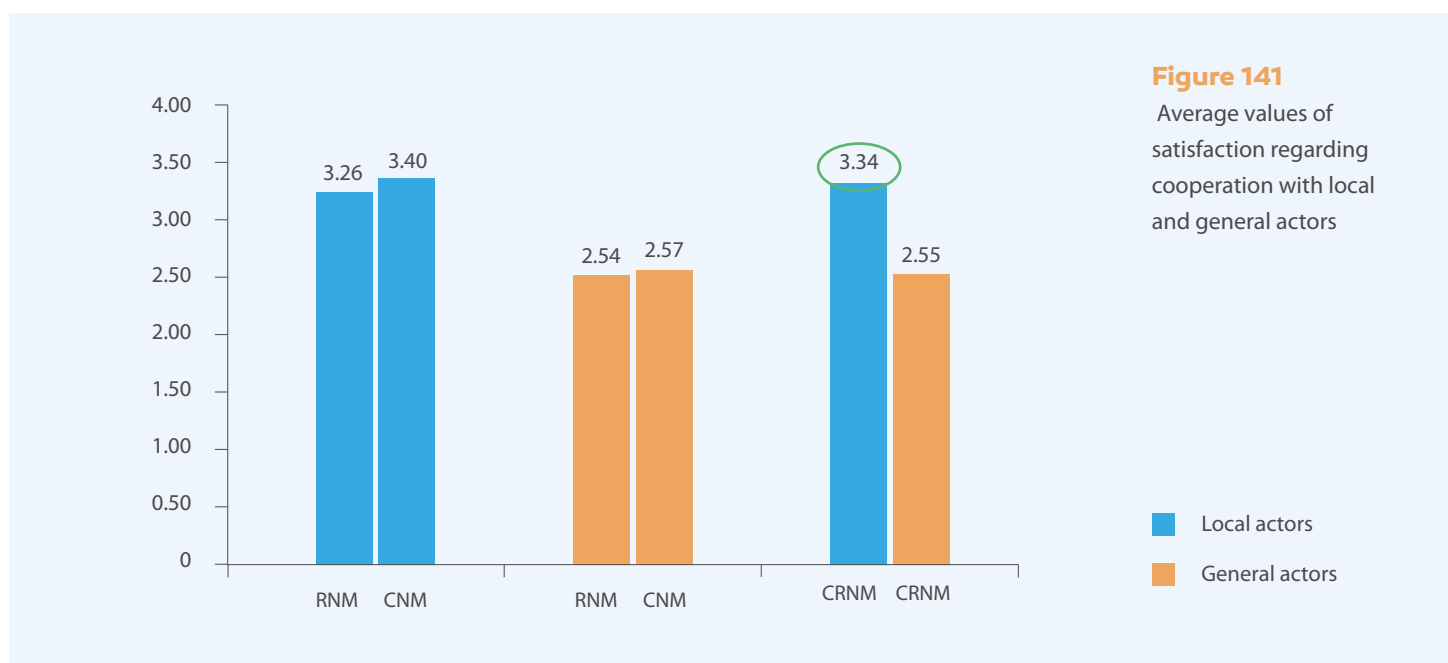
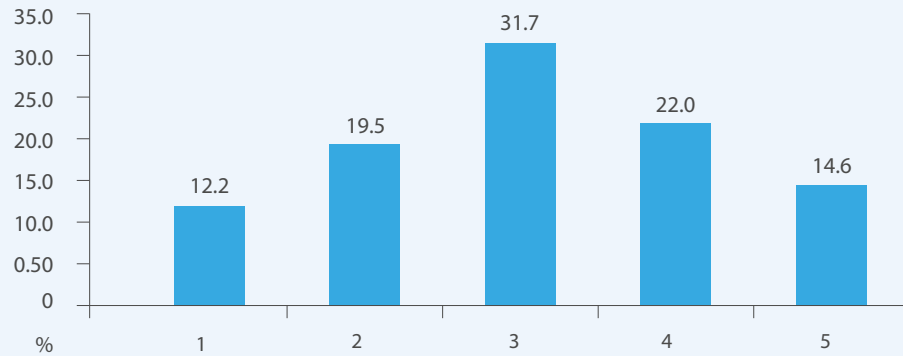


Figure 143

Satisfaction regarding the frequency of past cooperation between CSO and CRNM – CSO subsample

On a grading scale of 1-5, how would you assess the frequency of past cooperation between your organization and the representatives and councils of national minorities?



Assessing the frequency of cooperation between civil society organizations and CRNMs in the past, the questioned CSO population was fundamentally divided into thirds: a third of the questioned members assessed the frequency as unsatisfactory (31.7%), a third as average satisfactory (31.7%), while slightly more than one third of CSO members (37%) assessed the frequency of cooperation with CRNM as satisfactory (Figure 143).

The average scores of the quality as well as the frequency of cooperation with CRNM, from the perspective of CSO members, did not differ statistically significantly (the average value of both variables was 3.07).

However, a statistically significant, relatively high and positive correlation was determined between the two variables ($r = 0.852$). According to it, the higher the frequency of cooperation between CSO and CRNM, the higher is its quality in the opinion of the CSO members i.e. if the cooperation between CSO and CRNM is of a high quality, it will also be more frequent. It can be implied that the relationship of frequency and quality of cooperation, as in the model of the communication form, is two-way and in reality appears in the form of the described relation between the frequency and quality of cooperation between the stakeholders. Indeed, such findings are important and should be emphasized as efficiency-enhancing mechanisms in designing the necessary prerequisites and conditions for a more efficient implementation of CLRN.

The frequency of the past cooperation with CRNM was assessed with a higher score by those members of civil society organizations:

- in whose organizations there are individuals who currently carry out the CRNM mandate;
- whose organizations offered the current CRNM the opportunity to cooperate on projects aimed at local community development;
- who assessed the cooperation between CRNM and the civil sector with a higher score;
- who assessed CRNM's familiarity with the legal framework of the CRNM institution with a higher score;
- who assessed CRNM and NM members as less constraining factors in the implementation of CLRN;
- who expressed a lower tendency to abolish minority rights;

- who were largely addressed by CRNM for seeking/providing information/advice and members of those organizations who were largely addressed by CRNM for the same reasons;
- who assessed the past cooperation between their organization and the State Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia and NM coordinations with a higher score;
- who attributed a higher contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of NM by CRNM, NM members, NM associations, the State Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia and OHRRNM;
- who assessed the contribution of CLRNM to the improvement of the position of NM with a higher score.

The heads of the self-government units expressed more satisfaction regarding the cooperation with less formal and less binding structures, and lower satisfaction with formal and binding structures. Among the offered actors, the questioned representatives of the self-government units were mostly satisfied with the cooperation with the civil sector (non-minority CSOs, NM associations and other minority organizations) and with CRNM (Figure 144).

In the heads of LRSU subsample, it was determined that:

- regarding the past cooperation with all of the above mentioned actors, the more satisfied heads of the self-government units were the ones who were at the same time more satisfied with the communication with CRNM and whose self-government units provided CRNM with a greater number of logistical (trainings, publications and handbooks, free legal advice) and general resources for work, as well as those who exercised a higher amount of constitutional obligations and implemented a greater number of mechanisms and measures for the protection of NM;
- the representatives of self-government units that provided CRNM with a larger amount of financial resources were more satisfied with the past cooperation of the self-government unit with NM associations, other civil society organizations and coordinations;

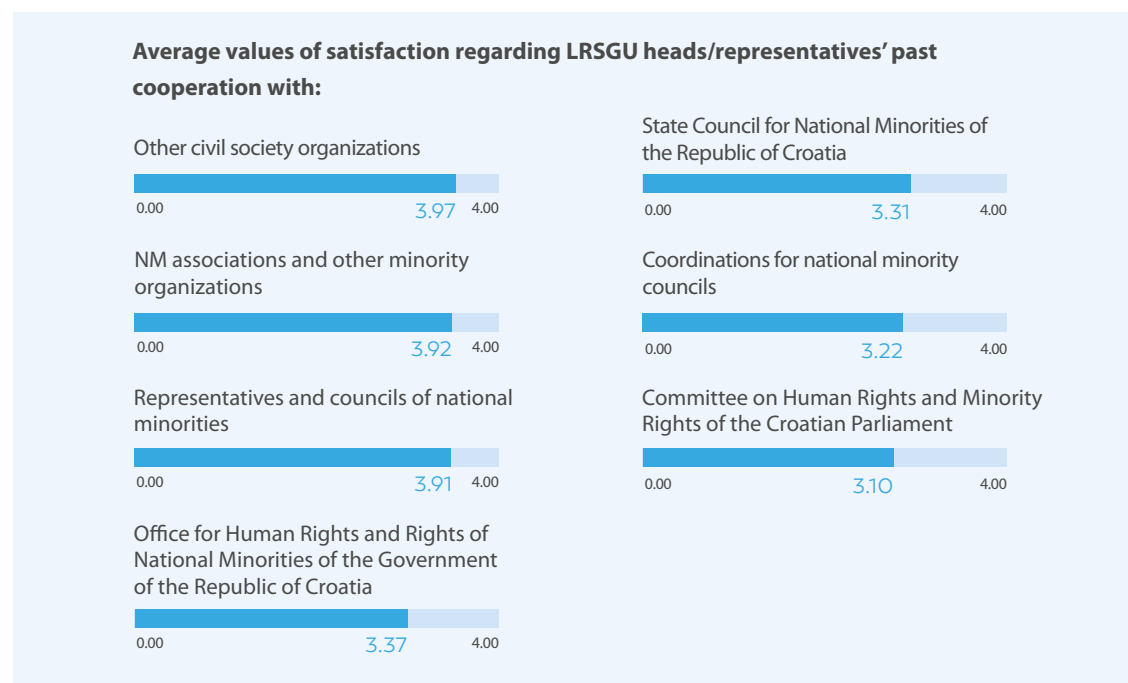


Figure 144
LRSU's satisfaction regarding past cooperation with key stakeholders in the implementation of CLRNM

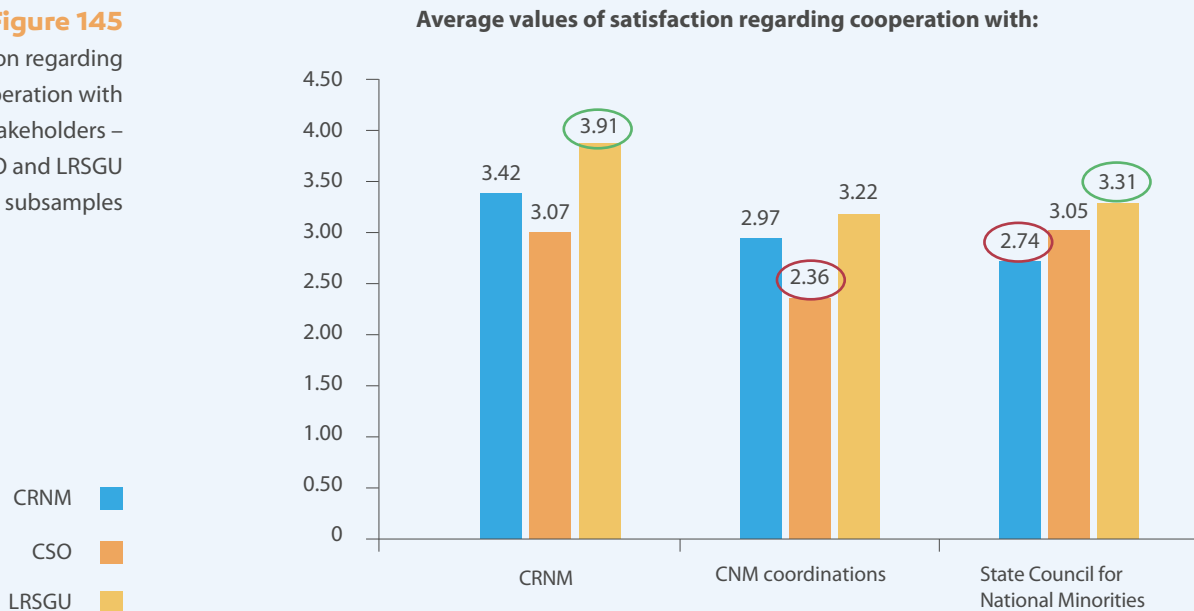
- regarding the past cooperation with CRNM, the more satisfied heads of the self-government units were the ones who frequently informed CRNM about sessions that deal with issues of importance to national minorities, who frequently submitted materials from such sessions to them, and who frequently sought their opinion or suggestions when preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of NM;
- the heads of LRSU who were more satisfied with the past cooperation with CRNM assessed the councils and representatives, as well as NM members as less constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM and express a lesser tendency to abolish minority rights.

When assessing the satisfaction regarding the previous cooperation with CRNM, CNM coordinations and the State Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia a statistically significant difference was found between the respondents of the three subsamples (Figure 145).²⁷

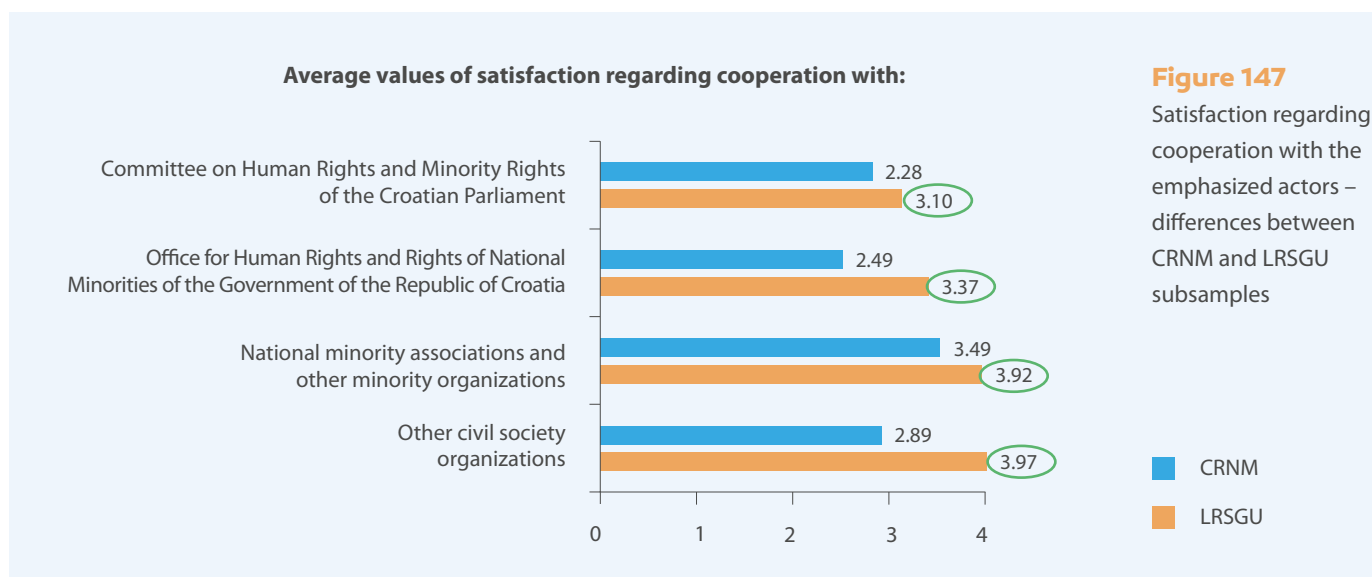
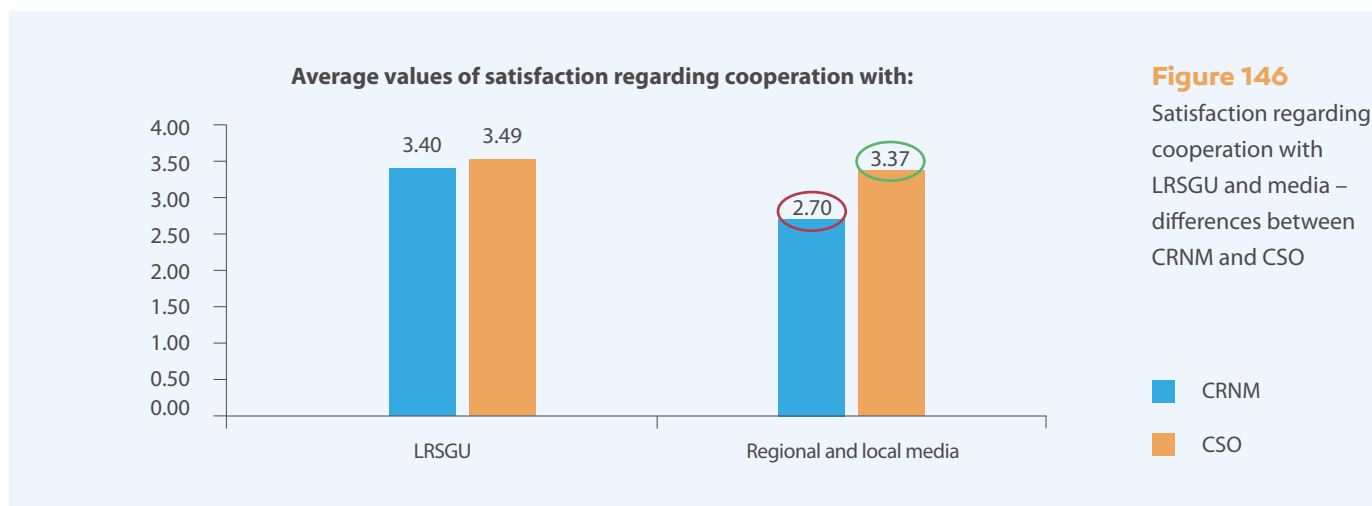
Whereby:

- the heads of the self-government units were most satisfied with the past cooperation with CRNM, while CRNM and CSO members were less satisfied;
- the CSO members were less satisfied with the past cooperation with CNM coordinations, while CRNM and the heads of the self-government units were more satisfied;
- the representatives of the self-government units were most satisfied with the past cooperation with the State Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, while CRNM were least satisfied.

Figure 145
Satisfaction regarding cooperation with CLRNM stakeholders – CRNM, CSO and LRSU subsamples



²⁷ The average score of the satisfaction of individual CRNMs with other members was calculated taking into account the level of satisfaction with the past cooperation with the representatives of the same NM, the councils of the same NM and CRNM of other national minorities.



CRNM and CSO members also assessed the satisfaction regarding the past cooperation with the self-government unit and the regional and local media. While there was no statistically significant difference in the assessment of the past cooperation with the self-government unit, it was identified in the assessment of cooperation with regional and local media. It was noted that CSO members were more satisfied with the past cooperation with local and regional media, while CRNM were significantly more dissatisfied (Figure 146).

CRNM and the heads of the self-government units assessed the satisfaction regarding the past cooperation with the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament, the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, NM associations and other minority organizations and non-minority civil society organizations, whereby their scores were statistically significantly different. The heads of the self-government units were more satisfied regarding the cooperation with the mentioned actors, while CRNM were less satisfied (Figure 147).

CSO members assessed the cooperation of CRNM and the self-government units with minority associations, other minority organizations and other CSOs. It was shown that CRNM's cooperation (average value = 2.95) as well as the self-government units' cooperation with the civil sector (average value = 2.97) were assessed as realistically low by CSO members and no statistically significant difference was found in the average values (Figure 148).

Whereby, the cooperation between the self-government units and the civil sector was assessed to the greatest extent by CSO members in North Croatia and Istria and Primorje, and to the least extent in East Croatia (Slavonia).

Below it is shown that the score regarding the cooperation of LRSGU and each type of CSO, from the perspective of CSO members, is statistically significantly different. Whereby, CSO members attribute lower scores to the cooperation of the self-government unit with minority associations and other minority organizations, while they attribute higher scores to the cooperation of the self-government unit with other CSOs (Figure 149).

Figure 148

Assessment of cooperation in the local community – perspective of CSO members

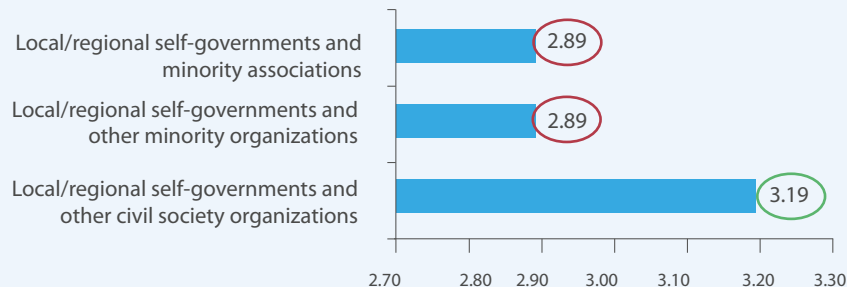
Average values of cooperation in the local community, from the perspective of CSO members, between:



Figure 149

Cooperation of LRSGU and the civil sector from the perspective of CSO members

Average scores of cooperation between LRSGU and the civil sector from the perspective of CSO members



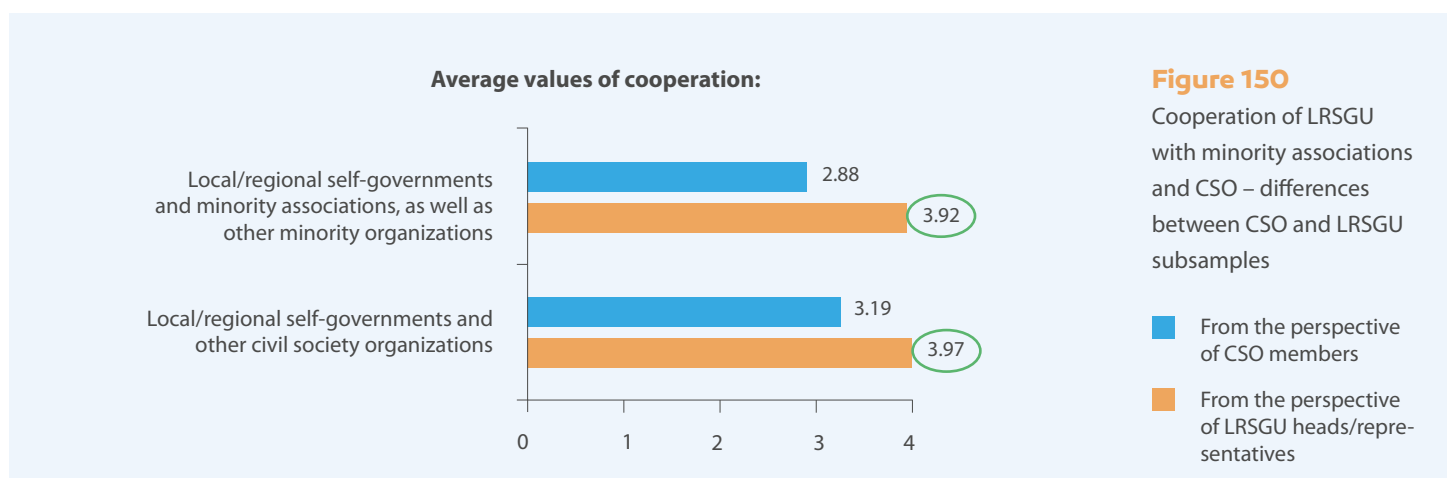
Whereby:

- the cooperation of the self-government unit and the civil sector is assessed with a higher score by those CSO members who are more satisfied with the communication with the self-government unit, who confirm the acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU and who attribute a greater contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of NM by CRNM, NM members and associations, coordinations, other CSOs, local/regional self-government units, OHRRNM and international organizations;
- the cooperation of the self-government units with minority associations and other minority organizations is assessed with a higher score by those CSO members whose LRSGU finance the activities of NM organizations;
- the cooperation of LRSGU with minority associations is assessed with a higher score by those CSO members who attribute a greater contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of NM by CRNM, NM members, NM associations, other minority organizations, coordinations, other CSOs and local/regional self-government units, and those who consider that the self-government unit is inclined to further strengthen the CRNM institution;
- the cooperation of the self-government unit with minority organizations is assessed with a higher score by those CSO members who attribute a greater contribution to the improvement and protection of NM by CRNM, NM members, NM associations, minority organizations, coordinations and the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament.

The scores regarding the cooperation of LRSGU with minority associations and other minority organizations, and LRSGU with other civil society organizations from the perspective of CSO members and the heads of self-government units are statistically significantly different. In both cases, the CSO members assessed the cooperation with a visibly lower score, while the heads of the self-government units confirmed a higher score (Figure 150).

Cooperation with minority associations, and other minority organizations and CSOs was assessed with a higher score by those representatives of LRSGU:

- who are more satisfied with the cooperation with CRNM;
- whose self-government units provided the current CRNM with more logistical and financial resources, and more resources for work in general;



- who consider CRNM to be more familiar with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and the local problems of the NM that they represent, and more connected with their electorate;
- whose self-government units were addressed by NM members and CRNM in order to seek information or advice;
- who are more satisfied with the communication with CRNM;
- who assess CLRNM's contribution to improving the position of NM members to a greater extent;
- who assess CRNM's qualification for performing the advisory function to a greater extent;
- whose self-government units exercised a higher amount of constitutional laws and implemented a greater number of mechanisms and measures for the protection of NM;
- whose self-government units always seek the opinion and/or suggestions of CRNM when preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of national minorities.

The assessment of cooperation between CRNM and CSO from the perspective of three subsamples: CRNM, CSO members and the heads of the self-government units are statistically significantly different. The heads of the self-government units assessed the cooperation between CRNM and CSO to the greatest extent while CRNM and CSO members assessed it to a lesser extent (Figure 151).

The cooperation of the councils and representatives of national minorities with civil society organizations in the local community was assessed positively by those heads of LRSGU:

- who are more satisfied with the communication with CRNM;
- who attribute a greater contribution to the efficient implementation and application of CLRNM by CRNM, NM members, local and regional media, other minority organizations, other civil society organizations and the State Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia.

In assessing the cooperation of CRNM with minority associations and other minority organizations, a statistically significant difference was found between the two subsamples i.e. CRNM and CSO members. The questioned CSO members view this cooperation as inconclusive and attribute a lower score, while the councils and representatives of NM attribute it with a higher score. In contrast, the assessments of the cooperation of CRNM and other (non-minority) civil society organizations from the perspective of the two examined subsamples are not statistically significantly different (Figure 152).

It is noted that the assessment of the cooperation between CRNM, minority associations and other minority organizations, and the assessment of the cooperation between CRNM and other CSOs from the perspective of CSO members are not statistically significantly different. On the other hand, CRNM are more satisfied with the cooperation with minority associations and other minority organizations, while they are less satisfied with the cooperation with other CSOs.

The assessment of the cooperation of CRNM and LRSGU from the perspective of all three subsamples is statistically significantly different, whereby the noted differences are an expression of the previously described conceptual or organizational nature. Constantly embedded in their own organizational perspectives, this cooperation is assessed with the lowest score by the CSO members and with the highest score by the heads of the self-government units (Figure 153).

40% of the questioned CSO members are not entirely satisfied with the quality of cooperation between CRNM and LRSGU, 31% of them consider the cooperation as moderate, while 29% of the CSO members assessed the quality of cooperation of CRNM with LRSGU as satisfactory (Figure 154).

Average values of cooperation between CRNM and CSO:

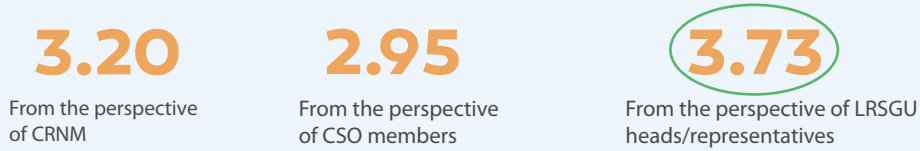


Figure 151
Assessment of cooperation between CRNM and CSO – differences between CRNM, CSO and LRSU subsamples

Average scores of CRNM's cooperation with:

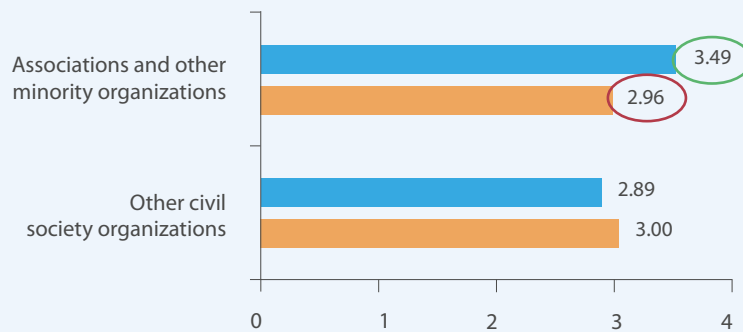


Figure 152
Cooperation of CRNM with minority and other CSOs – differences between CRNM and CSO subsamples

- From the perspective of CRNM
- From the perspective of CSO members

Average scores of cooperation between CRNM and LRSU:



Figure 153
Assessment of cooperation between CRNM and LRSU – differences between CRNM, CSO and LRSU subsamples

Quality of cooperation between CRNM and LRSU from the perspective of CSO members:

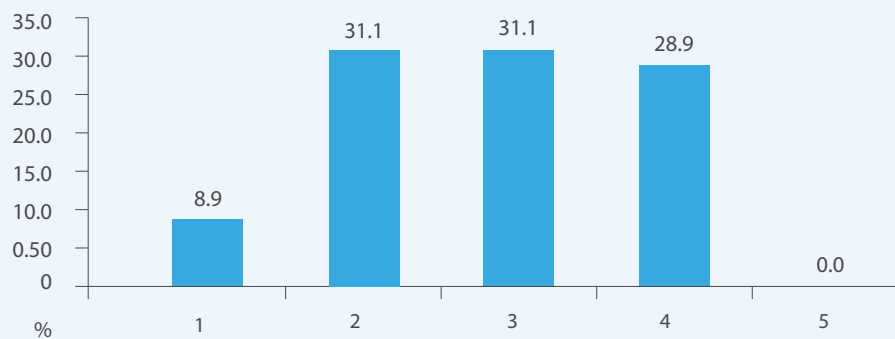


Figure 154
Quality of cooperation between CRNM and LRSU from the perspective of CSO members

Whereby, the quality of such a cooperation is assessed to a greater extent by the members of local action groups, and to a lesser extent by the members of NM associations and by the members of other types of civil society organizations.

In the wider sense, the quality of the cooperation between CRNM and LRSGU is assessed with a higher score by those CSO members:

- who are more satisfied with the communication with LRSGU and more satisfied with the past cooperation with CRNM;
- who assess the cooperation between CRNM and the civil sector, and the cooperation between LRSGU and the civil sector, with a higher score;
- who assess the self-government's level of using CRNM's advisory services and the level of CRNM's active participation in creating policies related to NM with a higher score;
- who assess the councils and representatives of NM as well familiarised with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and the local problems of NM as well as more connected with their electorate;
- who assess the social environment and the self-government unit as less constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM;
- who assess LRSGU's familiarity with the laws concerning NM and their interest in passing laws concerning NM with a higher score;
- who assess the involvement of LRSGU in the life of minority communities through informal and family relations with a higher score;
- who confirm the acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU and the civil sector;
- who attribute a greater contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of NM by CRNM, NM members, self-government units, local and regional media, NM associations and other minority organizations and coordination;
- who assess CLRNM's contribution to improving the position of NM members with a higher score;
- who assess that the self-government unit is more inclined to strengthen the CRNM institution.

Like all of the forms described so far, the past cooperation of civil society organizations and self-government units is equally assessed from an already well-known organizational form: the CSO members assess the cooperation with the self-government units with a lower score, while the heads of LRSGU assess it with a higher score (Figure 155).

The impact of organizational (environmental) determinants on the judgement of their membership is shown in Figure 156. The representatives of the self-government units were more satisfied with the cooperation with CRNM while the CSO members were less satisfied. In this regard, the heads of the self-government units assess the cooperation of CRNM and CSO with a higher score than the CSO members, while CSO members assess the cooperation of CRNM and LRSGU with a lower score than the heads of LRSGU.

There was no statistically significant difference between CRNM and CSO members in terms of the assessment of satisfaction with the past cooperation with the self-government unit (Figure 157).

On the other hand, a statistically significant difference was found between CRNM and LRSGU, when assessing the satisfaction with the past cooperation with the civil sector: the heads of the self-government units assessed the cooperation with the civil sector with a higher score, while CRNM assessed it with a lower score (Figure 158).

Average scores of cooperation between CSO and LRSGU

3.49

From the perspective of CSO members

3.93

From the perspective of LRSGU heads/representatives

Figure 155

Assessment of cooperation between CSO and LRSGU – differences between CSO and LRSGU subsamples

Average scores of cooperation with CRNM

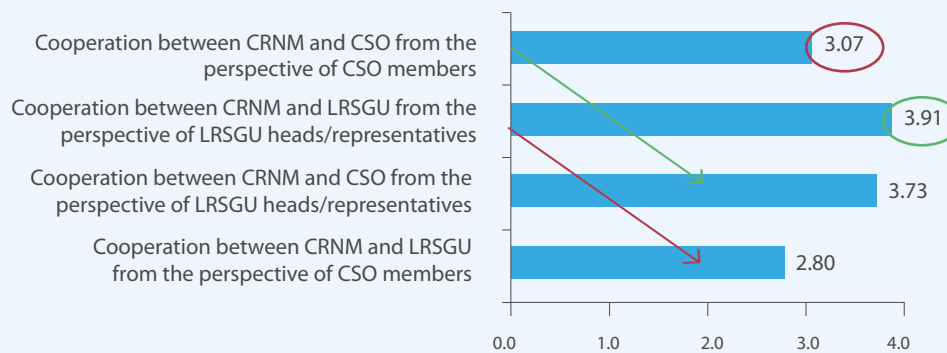


Figure 156

Assessment of cooperation with CRNM from the perspective of CSO and LRSGU

Average scores of cooperation with LRSGU

3.40

Cooperation between CRNM and LRSGU from the perspective of CRNM

3.49

Cooperation between CSO and LRSGU from the perspective of CSO

Figure 157

Assessment of cooperation with LRSGU from the perspective of CRNM and CSO

Average scores of cooperation with CSO

3.20

Cooperation between CRNM and CSO from the perspective of CRNM

3.93

Cooperation between LRSGU and CSO from the perspective of LRSGU

Figure 158

Assessment of cooperation with CSO from the perspective of CRNM and LRSGU

HIGHLIGHTED

- The largest number of questioned CRNM highly appreciated the past cooperation they had with the representatives and councils of the national minority they represent and with national minority associations, while they least appreciated the past cooperation with the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament.
- The CSO subsample was largely satisfied with the cooperation with the bodies of the local/regional self-government units, and least satisfied with the coordinations of the councils of national minorities.
- The questioned representatives of the self-government units were mostly satisfied with the cooperation with the civil sector (non-minority CSOs, NM associations and other minority organizations) and with CRNM, and least satisfied with the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament.
- A statistically significant, relatively high and positive correlation ($r = 0.852$) was determined between two variables – quality and frequency of cooperation. According to it, the higher the frequency of cooperation between CSO and CRNM, the higher is its quality in the opinion of the CSO members i.e. if the cooperation between CSO and CRNM is of a high quality, it will also be more frequent. It can be implied that the relationship of frequency and quality of cooperation, as in the model of the communication form, is two-way and in reality appears in the form of the described relation between the frequency and quality of cooperation between the stakeholders.
- The scores regarding the cooperation of LRSGU with minority associations and other minority organizations, and LRSGU with other civil society organizations from the perspective of CSO members and the heads of self-government units are statistically significantly different. In both cases, the CSO members assessed the cooperation with a visibly lower score, while the heads of the self-government units confirmed a higher score.
- The assessment of cooperation between CRNM and CSO from the perspective of three subsamples: CRNM, CSO members and the heads of the self-government units are statistically significantly different. The heads of the self-government units assessed the cooperation between CRNM and CSO to the greatest extent while CRNM and CSO members assessed it to a lesser extent.
- The past cooperation of CSO and LRSGU is equally assessed from an already well-known organizational form: the CSO members assess the cooperation with the self-government units with a lower score, while the heads of LRSGU assess it with a higher score.
- The heads of the self-government units were more satisfied with the cooperation of CRNM, while CSO members were less satisfied. Whereby, the heads of the self-government units assessed the cooperation between CRNM and CSO with a higher score than CSO members, while CSO members assess the cooperation between CRNM and LRSGU with a lower score than the heads of LRSGU.
- Almost all of the assessments of individual forms of cooperation between different stakeholders (actors) show the influence of organizational (environmental) determinants on the judgement of their membership.

3.4.2. Networking of stakeholders

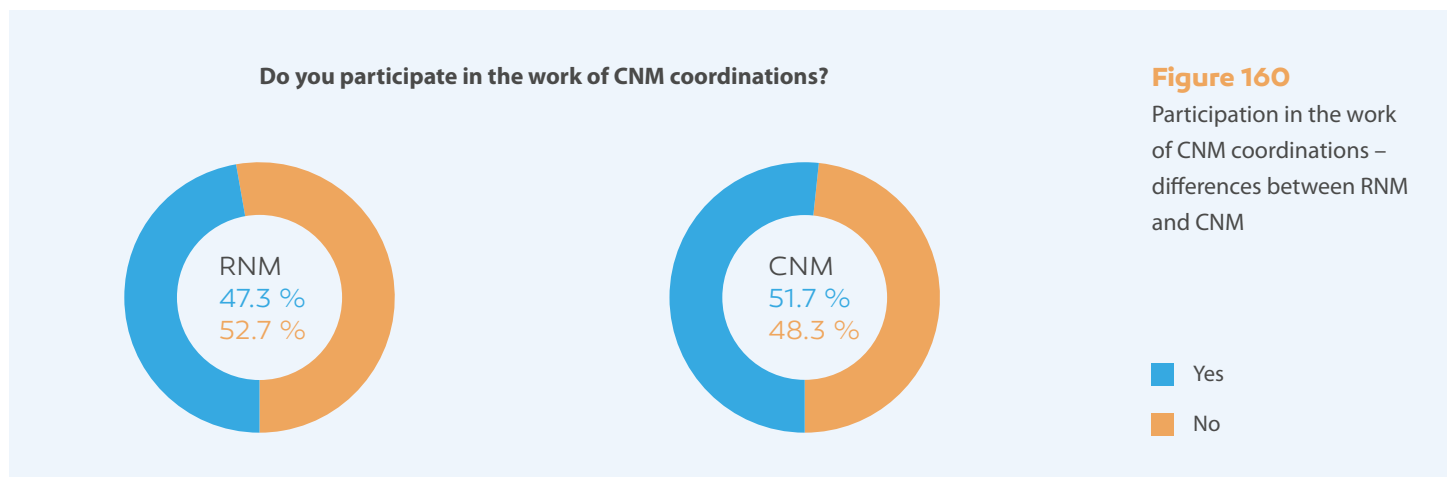
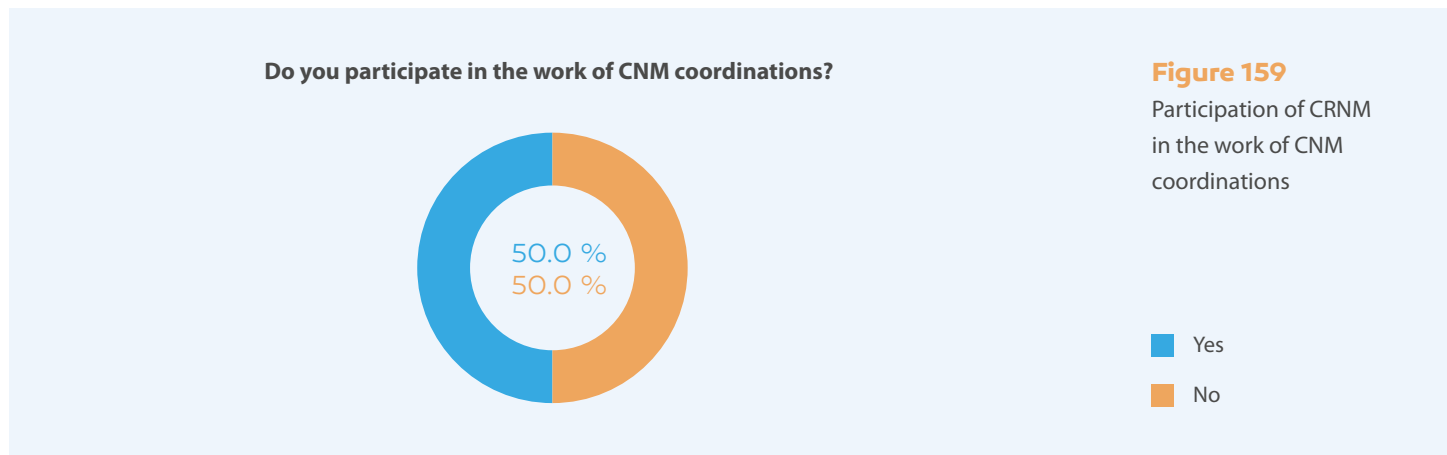
3.4.2.1. Networking with CNM coordinations

50% of the questioned CRNM stated that they participated in the work of some coordination, while 50% stated that they did not participate (Figure 159).

47% of the questioned RNM and 52% of the questioned CNM were involved in the work of coordinations (Figure 160). There was no statistically significant difference between RNM and CNM regarding the involvement of national minorities councils in the work of coordinations.

In the work of a coordination, the following councils of national minorities participate to the greatest extent:

- CRNM at the county level, while CRNM at the municipal level participate to the least extent;
- members who are not carrying out the CRNM mandate for the first time;
- those who were nominated by NM associations;
- CRNM who have available all types of work resources;
- who use a computer and e-mail to carry out CRNM activities;
- who assess themselves with higher scores in all three familiarity/information indices.



3.4.3. Participation in local community development

3.4.3.1. Networking of CRNM and CSO

Out of the 17 questioned NM associations, 16 proposed candidates for the election of representatives and/or members of the councils of national minorities at the last elections in 2015. Among the respondents, apart from NM associations, the Joint Council of Municipalities also proposed candidates at the last election of representatives and members of the councils of national minorities.

The questioned NM associations and the *Joint Council of Municipalities* proposed 455 CRNM candidates. CRNM at the municipal level was nominated to the least extent, while CRNM at the county level was nominated to the greatest extent while representatives were nominated to a lesser extent, and members of national minority councils to a greater extent (Table 14).

Out of the total number of questioned civil society organizations, 43% (N = 21) of them have individuals who are currently carrying out the mandate of a representative or member of a national minority council, whereby 319 members of the questioned CSOs currently carry out the mandate of a representative and/or member of the national minority council (Figure 161).

Table 14

Number of nominated NM representatives and councils according to the self-government level

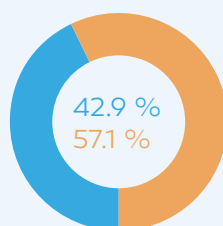
Number of nominated:	NM representatives	CNM members	Without a response	Total
CRNM at the municipal level	8	4	-	12
CRNM at the city level	28	144	-	172
CRNM at the county level	6	263	-	269
Without a response	-	-	2	2
Total	42	411	2	455

Figure 161

CSO membership and carrying out the CRNM mandate

Yes ■
No ■

Are there any individuals among the members of your organization who are currently carrying out the CRNM mandate?



In this regard, there is a larger share of individuals currently carrying out the CRNM mandate among the members of minority associations, while this share is smaller among members of local action groups and other types of CSOs.

Out of the total number of questioned civil society organizations, in 80% (N = 39) of them there are members of individual national minorities i.e. there are 4863 members of national minorities among the members of the questioned civil society organizations.

3.4.3.2. Perception of CRNM acceptance by the civil sector

The premise for involving CRNM in projects aimed at local community development is their acceptance as relevant civil society partners. Nearly 3/4 of the questioned CRNMs stated that minority associations and other civil society organizations accept them as a relevant partner in local community development projects (Figure 162).

There was no statistically significant difference between the representatives and councils of NM in the perception of acceptance by the civil sector. Acceptance by minority associations and other civil society organizations is confirmed to the least extent by members of the Roma national minority and CRNM at the municipal level, and confirmed to the greatest extent by members of “old” (traditional) NM and CRNM at the county level.

On the other hand, 83% of the questioned heads of the self-government units and members of civil society organizations confirmed CRNM’s acceptance by the civil sector (Figure 163).

There is a statistically significant difference in terms of the perception of CRNM’s acceptance by the civil sector from the perspective of CSO members and the representatives of the self-government units. CRNM’s acceptance by minority associations and other CSOs was entirely confirmed by the heads of the self-government units, and to a lesser extent by the members of civil society organizations (Figure 164).

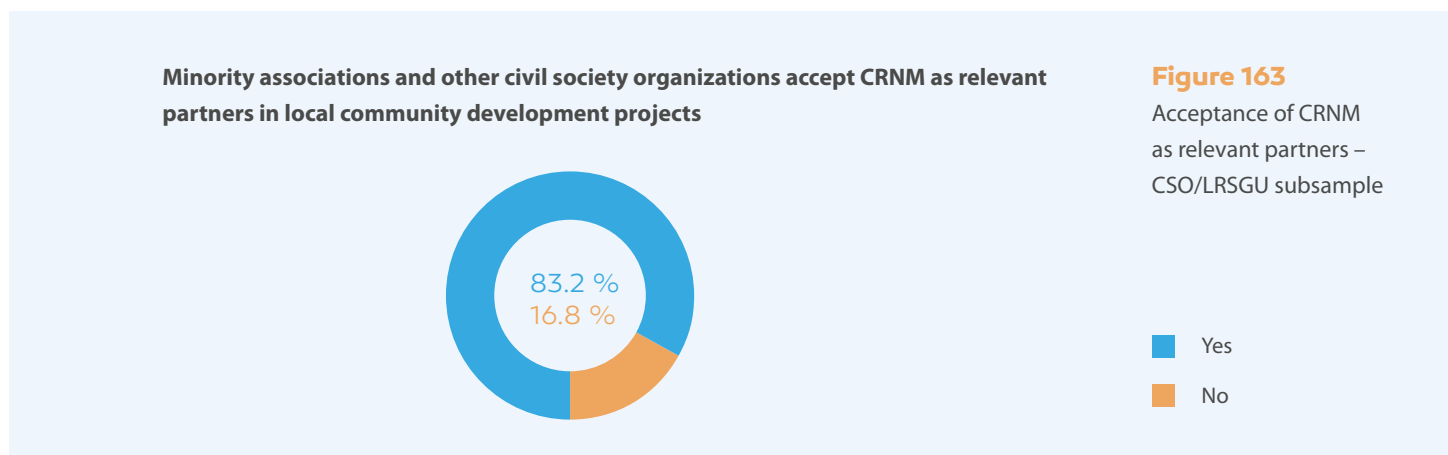
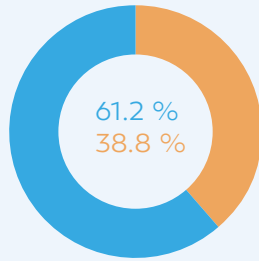


Figure 164

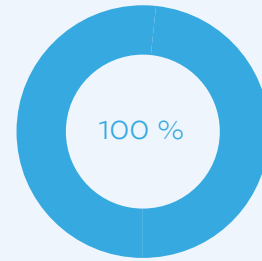
Acceptance of CRNM as relevant partners – difference between CSO and LRSGU subsamples

Yes ■
No ■

Minority associations and other CSO accept CRNM as relevant partners in local community development projects



From the perspective of CSO members



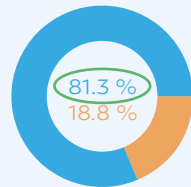
From the perspective of LRSGU heads/representatives

Figure 165

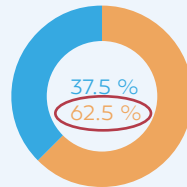
Acceptance of CRNM as relevant partners from the perspective of the three types of CSO

Yes ■
No ■

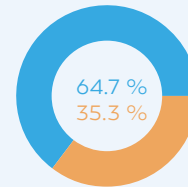
Perception of CRNM's acceptance by CSO from the perspective of three CSO types



LAGs



Other CSOs



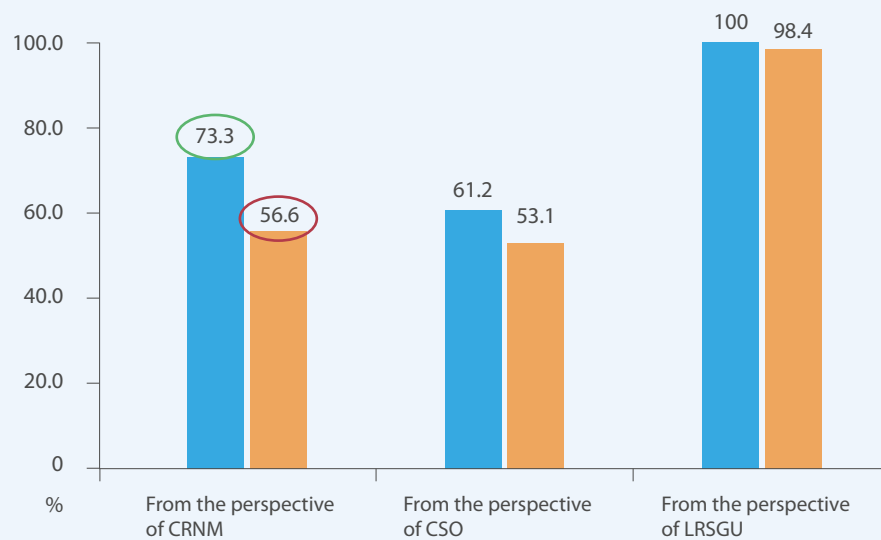
NM associations

Figure 166

Acceptance of CRNM from the perspective of CRNM, CSO and LRSGU

CRNM's acceptance by CSO ■
CRNM's acceptance by LRSGU ■

Perception of CRNM's acceptance



In the questioned CSO subsample, the acceptance of CRNM by minority associations and other civil society organizations is mostly confirmed by members of local action groups, and to a lesser extent by members of other civil society organizations (Figure 165).

The acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU and the civil sector from the perspectives of CSO members and the heads of the self-government units does not differ statistically significantly. In contrast to this, the acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU and the civil sector from the perspective of the actual CRNMs is statistically significantly different. CRNMs attribute a higher degree of acceptance to minority associations and other civil society organizations, and a lower degree of acceptance to self-government units (Figure 166).

The perceptions of CRNM’s acceptance by LRSGU and CSOs are interconnected. In other words, the greater the perception of CRNM’s acceptance by the self-government unit, the greater the perception of CRNM’s acceptance by the civil sector from the perspective of CRNM and CSO subsamples.

3.4.3.3. Participating in projects aimed at local community development

Although 73% of the questioned CRNM believe that minority associations and other civil society organizations accept them as relevant partners in projects aimed at local community development, only 27% of the questioned CRNMs cooperated with civil society organizations on local projects during the current mandate (Figure 167).



Only 11% of the questioned CRNM cooperated with CSOs whenever there was a chance for such cooperation (Figure 168).

The following largely cooperated with CSOs on projects aimed local community development:

- CRNM who were nominated by NM associations;
- those who also perform some other advisory/representative/executive functions;
- who have more work resources;
- who participate in the work of a CNM coordination;
- CRNM who are also more active in creating policies related to NM.

On the other hand, in the past year only 28% of the questioned CSOs (N = 9) offered NM associations the opportunity to cooperate on projects aimed at local community development (Figure 169).²⁸

Of the questioned civil society organizations, 41% (N = 20) of them offered the current CRNMs the opportunity to cooperate on projects aimed at local community development (Figure 170).

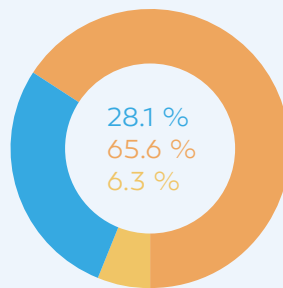
The current representatives and councils of national minorities were offered to cooperate on projects aimed at local community development:

- to the least extent by LAGs, and to the greatest extent by NM associations;
- to a greater extent by CSO among whose members there are individuals who are currently carrying out the CRNM mandate;
- to a greater extent by CSO who are less satisfied with the communication with LRSGU;
- to a greater extent by those CSOs who were addressed by CRNM in order to seek information or advice and to provide suggestions or advice.

Figure 169
CSO's offered cooperation to NM associations

In the past year, did you offer NM associations the opportunity to cooperate on local community development projects?

- Yes ■
- No ■
- No response ■



²⁸ This question was not posed to NM associations.

During CRNM's current mandate, did you offer any of them the opportunity to cooperate on local community development projects?

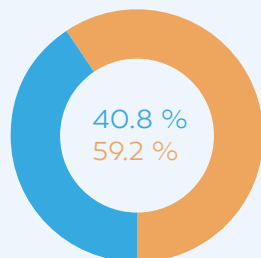
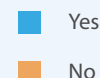


Figure 170

CSO's offered cooperation to CRNM



- 50% of the questioned CRNM stated that they participated in the work of some CNM coordination, while 50% stated that they did not participate. 47% of the questioned RNM and 52% of the questioned CNM were involved in the work of a coordination.
- Nearly 3/4 of the questioned CRNMs stated that minority associations and other civil society organizations accept them as a relevant partner in local community development projects.
- On the other hand, 83% of the questioned heads of the self-government units and members of civil society organizations confirmed CRNM's acceptance by the civil sector.
- There is a statistically significant difference in terms of the perception of CRNM's acceptance by the civil sector from the perspective of CSO members and the representatives of the self-government units. CRNM's acceptance by minority associations and other CSOs was entirely confirmed by the heads of the self-government units, and to a lesser extent by the members of civil society organizations.
- Although 73% of the questioned CRNM believe that minority associations and other civil society organizations accept them as relevant partners in projects aimed at local community development, only 27% of the questioned CRNMs cooperated with civil society organizations on local projects during the current mandate.
- On the other hand, in the past year only 28% of the questioned CSOs (N = 9) offered NM associations the opportunity to cooperate on projects aimed at local community development. Moreover, only 41% (N=20) of the questioned CSOs offered the current CRNM the opportunity to cooperate on projects aimed at local community development.

HIGHLIGHTED

CHAPTER SUMMARY

It is sociologically encouraging to analyze and describe the sociodemographic structure of the population observed since social, demographic and economic aspects are the determinants of certain differences in attitudes, motivation, values and behavior of particular social groups. In this way, the survey shows that of the examined councils and representatives of national minorities, the following prevailed: more male respondents (74%), aged above 50 (almost 60%), tertiary education (48%), and secondary education (46%). Moreover, there is a markedly low representation of the young population up to 30 years (6%) and women (26%). It is quite clear that for achieving a specific goal, such as a high level of IT support, this socio-demographic structure of CRNM is not entirely satisfactory. Moreover, bearing in mind the value systems of younger and older age groups, as well as gender representation and socialization models for assigning social roles, there is an evident need for a certain turnaround to additionally activate women and the younger population amongst representatives and councils of national minorities due to social and institutional well-being and long-term sustainability of CRNM institutions at the local level.

The majority of the research problem of the project Support to the Councils of National Minorities at the Local Level is the monitoring and evaluation of the exercise of minority rights and freedoms in the Republic of Croatia. This is also the fundamental objective and purpose of the project: developing and implementing the GAP analysis in order to gain a wider insight into the current preparedness and ability of the councils and representatives of national minorities to exercise the guaranteed special rights and freedoms provided to them by the Republic of Croatia by means of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and other special laws, relevant strategic documents and programs aimed at protecting and exercising minority rights. For this reason, in the research conceptualization and development of measuring instruments, the deliberation of the research problem and information gathering was divided into three target areas: monitoring the implementation of CLRN, creating policies related to national minorities and cooperation with other local development stakeholders.

Monitoring the implementation of CLRN included a group of questions which gathered information on respecting the rights of national minorities, the key problems facing members of national minorities, knowledge on and exercise of rights and obligations based on CLRN, and the constraining factors related to the implementation of CLRN.

Creating policies related to national minorities included a group of questions that gathered indicators on the level of participation of NM councils and representatives in the creation of minority development and local policies, the perception of the relevance of the advisory role of NM councils and representatives, material and professional preparedness of NM councils and representatives for the advisory role and the forms of their mutual cooperation.

Cooperation with other local development stakeholders included a group of questions that gathered indicators on the frequency and quality of cooperation between NM councils and representatives with other local development stakeholders, their networking and participation in projects aimed at local community development.

Bearing in mind the complexity of the research conducted, it can be generally concluded that at this moment, fifteen years after the application of CLRNM, there are markedly more constraining factors than the ones that would help CRNM to be a developed, functional and highly respected institution, and CLRNM, a comprehensive and consistent law whose provisions are fully respected. This, of course, does not mean that there has not been some progress made since the councils and representatives of national minorities were presented and elected, and the law was put into effect.

The functioning and organization of the councils and representatives is not based solely on their characteristics and procedures. It is largely based on compliance with the provisions arising from the Constitutional Law, followed by the understanding and the need of local authorities to accept CRNM and civil organizations in general. In addition, the assessment of the work of the councils and representatives brings forth the need to demarcate their purpose and existence from the role of other national minority associations, as it may reflect favorable or unfavorable inter-ethnic relations at the local and/or national level. Moreover, in some self-government units, though in a smaller number, the councils and representatives are already functioning relatively well, whilst the same cannot be noted in other units. Furthermore, there are differences in the functioning of the councils and representatives of the so-called "old/traditional" and "new" national minorities, etc. Bearing in mind all this, it is clear that any form of generalization about the organization and necessary changes to the CRNM institution runs the risk of possible simplification and predicting different and specific influences affecting the work of minority institutions.

However, in spite of this institution's complex organization, there are some aspects that have been identified through research and deemed universal i.e. those that, despite the local specificities, have a more general character that is appropriate for all. For example, it is shown that if local authorities express greater understanding for the acceptance of the civil sector and the CRNM, and if they meet all of their obligations under the CLRNM towards the councils and representatives, their efficiency and activity will significantly improve. It should certainly be kept in mind that the self-government units' failure to fulfill some of their obligations towards the CRNM is to a significant extent a result of their own lack of capacity, both financial and material, as well as human.

In addition, although the CRNM funds are secured from the funds of self-government units, the Constitutional Law failed to standardize any sanctions and responsibilities for those units that fail to do so. In this way, the executive heads of the self-government units are offered an instrument i.e. a mechanism of good will to regulate the work of CRNM. This is certainly not a desirable form of action and ultimately, as depicted by the research results, it causes a huge imbalance between self-government units and ways of meeting the goals related to the rights and freedoms of national minorities through their elected bodies – the councils and representatives.

The research also shows that, in order to achieve better or more desirable results, the councils and representatives of national minorities have to focus on having a more comprehensive understanding and application of the relevant CLRNM provisions in practice, regular submission of statutes, financial plans and final accounts to the competent bodies of the self-government units, as well as systematically building the need for a better understanding of the CRNM institution among members of national minorities and less active CRNM members. In addition, the mutual cooperation between CRNM should be strengthened, as well as encouraging work through the coordination of national minorities and constantly aiming to increase the activities and interest of members of national minorities in exercising their own rights. These are mainly instruments and ways of meeting the goals of achieving long-term sustainability and the purpose of the CRNM institution.

The research further points to several specific findings related to CRNM functioning, performance, and efficiency in co-creating local policies. For example, CRNM's level of involvement in creating local policies related to national minorities is less influenced by them being formally equipped and efficient, and more influenced by the openness and willingness of self-government units to cooperate with councils and representatives, and the civil sector in general. The discrepancy of this finding is present in the conclusion that in local communities that are less open and willing to cooperate, the CRNM's efficiency is lower. Conversely, in local communities with greater openness and initiative for collaboration with CRNM and the civil society, the CRNM's efficiency is higher. Furthermore, the councils and representatives are more active and more efficient where there is greater interaction with members of national minorities. Moreover, in the self-government units that are more open to cooperation with the CRNM, members of national minorities predominantly address the CRNM for information (seeking information or advice and providing suggestions or advice), and less for complaints regarding violations of their legally guaranteed rights and freedoms.

Overall, the research undoubtedly shows that efficient implementation of the Constitutional Law requires the activity of members of national minorities and their connection with the councils and representatives, as well as the connection of CRNM with civil society organizations. In addition, the acceptance of the institution of councils and representatives by self-government units is an essential prerequisite for accepting members of national minorities among members of the wider local community. Thus, increased activity and cooperation of all categories of stakeholders at the local level solely makes up the mechanism of direct impact on attitudes and behavior, and on the sensitivity to the issues of the rights and freedoms of national minorities.

However, research has shown that cooperation among local development stakeholders is relatively weak, and negligible in some cases. In the past year, only 28% of the questioned CSOs offered NM associations the opportunity to cooperate on projects aimed at local community development. Of the questioned civil society organizations, 41% of them offered the current CRNMs the opportunity to cooperate on projects aimed at local community development.

In such an environment, civil society organizations, CRNMs and self-government units can certainly be well engaged, but the overall progress will not be noted by the influence of just one reference group regardless of its persistence in this area. Creating more opportunities to foster cooperation and build mutual trust among local development stakeholders can therefore be one of the tasks of civil society, as well as of all other stakeholders interested in the development of the local community and beyond.

4

SYNTHESIS OF ANALYSIS RESULTS – CRNM, CSO AND LRSGU SUBSAMPLES

4 SYNTHESIS OF ANALYSIS RESULTS – CRNM, CSO AND LRSGU SUBSAMPLES

4.1. Synthesis of analysis results – CRNM subsample

Based on the relevant manifest (directly visible and measured) variables of the CRNM subsample, seven latent (hidden, background) variables were constructed:

- The latent variable **“CRNM’s qualification for performing the advisory function i.e. CRNM’s advisory capacity”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: the number of CRNM mandates to date; experience in performing other advisory/representative/executive functions; number of provided work resources; use of a computer and electronic mail within the scope of carrying out CRNM activities; computer and e-mail skills; level of familiarity with the legal framework of the CRNM institution; level of information on the socio-political-minority situation; level of education achieved; CRNM’s participation in the work of some CNM coordination.
- The latent variable **“Interaction with NM members”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: frequency of CRNM being addressed (during the current mandate) by members of national minorities in order to seek information or advice, to provide suggestions or advice and due to complaints regarding violation of their legally guaranteed rights.
- The latent variable **“Interaction with the civil sector”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: the level of satisfaction with the past cooperation with NM associations and institutions, as well as the satisfaction with other civil society organizations and minority associations as CRNM candidate nominators.
- The latent variable **“Interaction with the self-government unit”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: the level of satisfaction with the past cooperation and communication with the self-government unit and the frequency of CRNM addressing the self-government unit in order to seek information or advice.
- The latent variable **“The civil sector’s openness towards CRNM (from the perspective of CRNM)”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: the contribution of NM associations and other non-profit organizations and civil society organizations to the improvement and protection of the position of national minorities; the acceptance of CRNM by minority associations and other civil society organizations as relevant partners in projects aimed at local community development.
- The latent variable **“The self-government unit’s openness towards CRNM and fulfilment of LRSGU’s obligations)”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: the number of provided work resources for the current CRNM by LRSGU; the frequency of monitoring that took place as requested by CRNM and/or the measures taken against the inappropriate and unlawful conduct of LRSGU bodies; the frequency of accepting CRNM proposals (measures for the improve-

ment of the NM position, proposal of candidates for duties in state administration bodies and LRSGU bodies, proposals for general acts regulating issues of interest to NM); the acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU as relevant partners in creating policies related to NM; appointing a person or establishing a service responsible for the communication and cooperation with NM; the harmonization of all LRSGU relevant general acts with the provisions of CLRNM; the frequency of seeking the opinion of CRNM when preparing proposals for general acts regulating NM rights and freedoms; the frequency of informing CRNM about sessions that deal with issues concerning the position of NM; the frequency of submitting materials to CRNM from such sessions and the attributed contribution of LRSGU to the improvement and protection of the position of national minorities from the perspective of CRNM.

- The latent variable **“CRNM activity/efficiency”** was constructed on the basis of the following directly measured variables: carrying out CRNM obligations (regular submission of work plan and program, financial plan and final account to the competent local/regional self-government bodies); keeping a formal record of complaints addressed to CRNM by NM members; the frequency of seeking monitoring and/or taking measures against inappropriate and unlawful conduct of LRSGU bodies; proposing measures to improve the position of NM; proposing candidates for duties in state administration bodies and bodies of local/regional self-government units; providing proposals for general acts regulating issues of interest to NM; providing opinions and suggestions on radio and television station programs intended for NM or programs related to minority issues; attendance and active participation at the sessions of self-government units when issues regarding the position of the national minority they represent are on the agenda, and the frequency of addressing the self-government unit in order to provide suggestions or advice, and to file complaints, objections and criticisms.

Figure 171 shows the interconnection (intercorrelation) between the predictive variables and the criterion, whereby the statistically significant correlations are marked in red.

A regression analysis²⁹ was carried out on the latent variables, in which the variable “CRNM activity/efficiency” was the criterion while the rest were latent predictive variables. The predictor circuit was statistically significant in predicting the CRNM activity/efficiency, whereby the correlation of the predictor circuit and the criterion was 0.597.

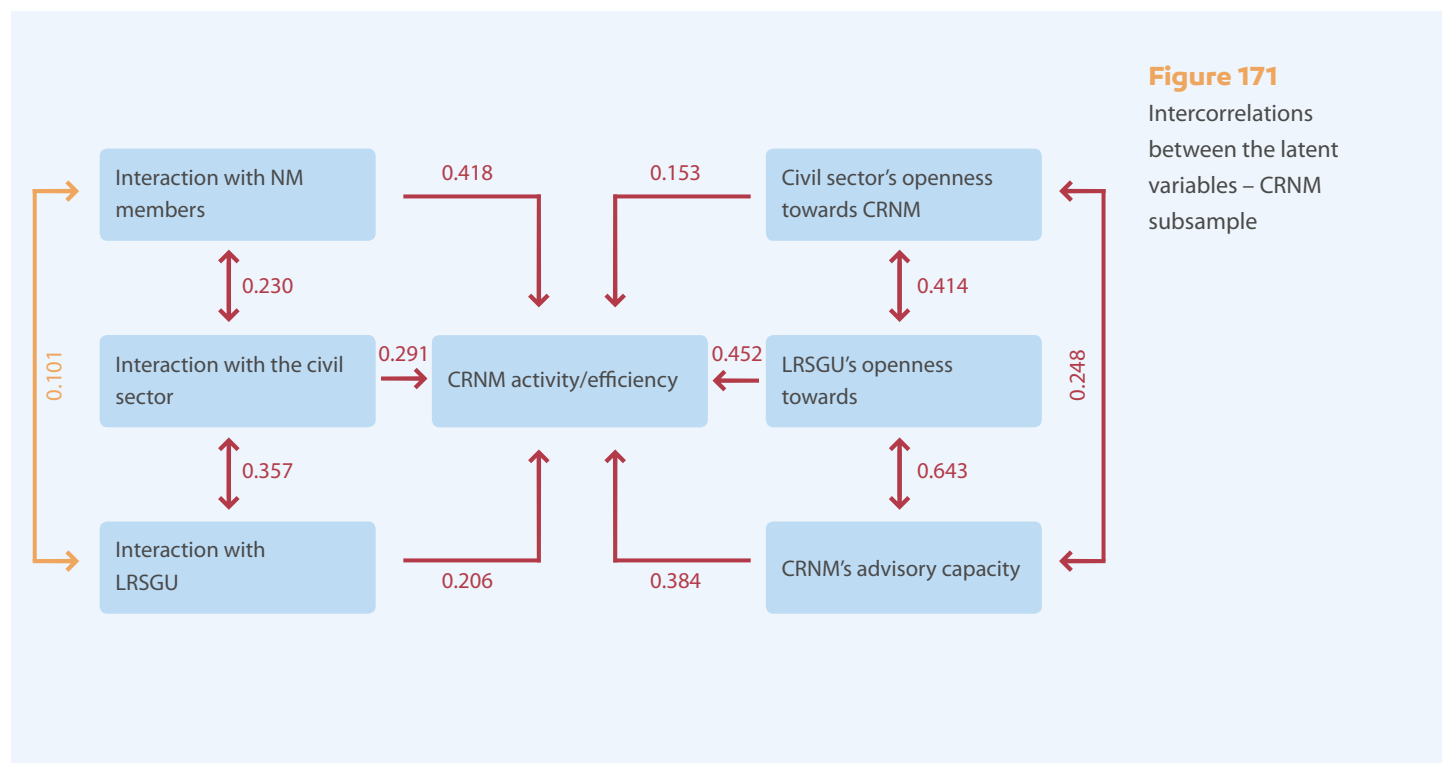
The level of interaction between CRNM and NM members, the level of interaction and satisfaction with the self-government unit, and the openness of the self-government unit towards CRNM have been identified as statistically significant predictors of CRNM activity/efficiency.

Taking into account the content of latent variables i.e. the statistical significance of predictors, CRNM proved to be more active and efficient:

- the greater the interaction of CRNM with NM members;
- the lesser the satisfaction with the cooperation and communication with the self-government unit;
- the more open the self-government units is towards NM and CRNM i.e. more willing to cooperate with CRNM.

In this manner, no statistically significant difference was determined on the constructed CRNM activity/efficiency indicator between RNM and CNM, between CRNM of different regional affiliation and

²⁹ Multipla linearna regresijska analiza provedena je enter metodom.



PREDICTOR VARIABLES:	CRITERION VARIABLE: CRNM activity/efficiency			
	Beta weight amount	Significance of beta weight	Correlation coefficient amount	
			Including the influence of other variables	Excluding the influence of other variables
CRNM advisory capacity	0.032	0.660	0.384	0.029
Interaction with NM members	0.352	0.000	0.418	0.385
Interaction with the civil sector	0.097	0.136	0.291	0.097
Interaction with LRSGU	-0.148	0.029	0.206	-0.142
Openness of the civil sector towards CRNM	-0.111	0.075	0.153	-0.116
Openness of LRSGU towards CRNM	0.479	0.000	0.452	0.352

Table 15
Predictors and criterion in the regression analysis – CRNM perspective

between different “types” of national minorities, while a difference was determined with respect to CRNM’s self-government level. According to it, the smallest activity and efficiency is expressed by CRNM at the municipal level, and the highest by CRNM at the county level.

Since CRNM's formal qualification level for carrying out the advisory function did not show a statistically significant predictor of CRNM activity and efficiency, and the insight into beta ponders showed that the latent variable "Openness of LRSGU towards CRNM" is the most predictable for CRNM activity i.e. efficiency,³⁰ it is concluded that CRNM's passivity is less a consequence of their inefficiency and/or disability, and is more influenced by the openness and readiness of self-government units to cooperate with national minorities and CRNMs.

The amount of influence of the other predictor circuit variables has shown that there are some other determinants in this area:

- CRNMs are more qualified and active in performing the advisory function in self-government units that are more open to cooperate with them.
- CRNMs that are more qualified to perform the advisory function are, to a greater extent, nominated by NM associations, are more satisfied with the cooperation with the civil sector and their interaction with NM members is higher.
- CRNMs that are satisfied with the cooperation with the self-government unit perceive the social environment, LRSGU and CRNM as less constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM.
- The greatest satisfaction with the cooperation and communication with the self-government unit is expressed by CRNM at the county level, and the least by CRNM at the municipal level.
- The greater openness of the self-government units towards CRNM is confirmed by members of NM councils, CRNM of the Zagreb region and CRNM at the county Level, and less by NM representatives, CRNM in North and Central Croatia, as well as CRNM at the municipal level.
- In those self-government units that are more open to cooperate, CRNM are more satisfied with the interaction with LRSGU (more satisfied with the communication and cooperation with LRSGU, they attribute a greater contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of NM by CRNM, coordinations, the State Council for National Minorities, OHRNM, the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament, the Ombudsman and international organizations.
- In the self-government units that more open to cooperate with CRNM, NM members are more inclined to address them for information (seeking information or advice, and providing suggestions or advice), and less for complaints regarding the violation of legally guaranteed rights.
- The greater the satisfaction and interaction of CRNM with the self-government unit, the satisfaction and interaction with the civil sector is also relatively greater.
- The greater the openness of the self-government unit towards cooperation with CRNM, the openness of the civil sector towards CRNM is also relatively greater.
- The greater the openness of the civil sector towards CRNM, the interaction and satisfaction with the civil sector is also relatively greater.
- A higher level of interaction and satisfaction with the cooperation with the civil sector is expressed by more formally qualified CRNM, mostly by members of "traditional" NMs and least by members of "new" NMs, and mostly by CRNM at the county level and least by CRNM at the municipal level.

³⁰ It is shown that the openness of self-government units and the willingness to cooperate with CRNM is a key factor in the efficiency of the CRNM institution.

- Although, from the perspective of CRNM, interaction and satisfaction with the cooperation with the civil sector and the level of the civil sector's openness towards them have not shown them to be predictable for CRNM activity and efficiency, those more satisfied with the cooperation with the civil sector assess CRNM as a constraining factor in the implementation of CLRNM to a far lesser extent.

A separate regression analysis was carried out in view of the key CRNM differentiating parameters: the type i.e. division of representatives and councils, the regional affiliation, the self-government level and the type of national minority. Ultimately, it showed what kind of effect could be derived from the results analysed with the support of the listed divisions.

With regard to the type of CRNM i.e. the division of councils and representatives:

- The representatives of national minorities are more active and efficient if their interaction with NM members is more present and the more open their self-government unit is towards CRNM.
- The councils of national minorities are more active and efficient if their interaction with NM members is more present, the more open their self-government is towards CRNM, the lesser the satisfaction with the cooperation and communication with the self-government unit, and the greater the interaction and satisfaction with the past cooperation with the civil sector.

With regard to the regional affiliation of CRNM:

- It was shown that CRNM from the Zagreb region are more active and efficient the greater the satisfaction with the cooperation and communication with the self-government unit, and the greater the openness of the civil sector towards CRNM.
- CRNM of North and South Croatia (Dalmatia) are more active and efficient the more open the self-government unit is towards CRNM.
- CRNM of East Croatia (Slavonia) are more active and efficient the higher their level of interaction with NM members and the more open the self-government unit is towards CRNM.
- CRNM Istria and Primorje are more active and efficient the higher their level of interaction with NM members, the more open the self-government unit is towards CRNM, and the lesser the satisfaction with the cooperation and communication with the self-government unit.
- For the efficiency and activity of CRNM Central Croatia, none of the latent variables proved to be a statistically significant predictor.

Statistically significant predictors of CRNM activity and efficiency of all three self-government levels (county, city and municipal) are: interaction with NM members and the level of openness of the self-government unit towards CRNM. The established predictors of the three self-government levels reveal the problem and the issue of how to explain the low level of activity and efficiency of the CRNM at the municipal level, which was repeatedly pointed out when analysing the results of this research?

The obtained results give it the right to assume that the lowest activity and efficiency of the CRNM at the municipal level can be explained by the inadequate interaction of the CRNM at the municipal level with NM members and/or insufficient openness of municipal self-government units towards cooperation with CRNM. The observed risk of insufficient openness and CRNM and LRSGU activities, particularly at the municipal level, should be overcome by raising awareness of the need to actualize a culture based on respect

for human and minority rights and raising general tolerance and acceptance of diversity in the sense of increasing tolerance towards national minorities and CRNM.

With regard to the type of national minority:

- CRNM of “old” (traditional) national minorities are more active and efficient the more open the self-government unit is towards CRNM.
- CRNM of “new” national minorities are more active and efficient the more open the self-government unit is towards CRNM, the greater the interaction of CRNM with NM members, the lesser the satisfaction with the cooperation and communication with the self-government unit, and the lesser the openness of the civil sector towards CRNM.
- It was shown that the statistically significant predictor for the activity and efficiency of CRNM of the Roma national minority was the level of their qualifications to perform the advisory function. Hence, the higher the level of formal qualifications of councils and representatives of the Roma national minority, they are relatively more active and efficient when performing the advisory function. The observed lack of capacity of Roma CRNM is the basis for articulating the minority agenda which needs to take more care in overcoming the encountered difficulties and encourage the creation of mechanisms related to raising the advisory capacity of a particular CRNM.

According to all of the above, it has been shown that CRNM do not represent a uniform or quality uniform group. Instead, it deals with different situational and organizationally conditioned behaviours that have certain regularities that have been consistently analysed and described in accordance with the gathered responses and different perspectives of the respondents. In the background of such an approach, it is possible, of course, to expect that public policies aimed at increasing the activity and efficiency of CRNM should take into account those aspects that are universal or common to everyone, as well as their specifics i.e. what differentiates them. In order to get acquainted with a part of the overall CRNM profile, here there are several determinants in which they differ in terms of: the self-government level, regional affiliation, type i.e. division of representatives and councils, and the type of national minority that the CRNM represents.

Taking into account the initial hypothetical analytical scheme, it has been shown that for the efficient implementation and application of CLRN, apart from the advisory capacity of CRNM i.e. their formal qualification to perform the advisory function and the willingness of self-government units to cooperate with CRNM, CRNM's actual activity as well as the active engagement and cooperation of NM members is also necessary.

Given the level of participation of CRNM in local development policies, protection of human rights and NM rights, a manifest variable³¹ was taken as an indicator which measures the frequency of active participation of CRNM at sessions of the self-government units in decision-making processes on issues of interest to national minorities. In addition, a regression analysis was carried out with a manifest variable as a criterion, while the predictor circuit consisted of constructed latent variables.

³¹ “During the current mandate, how many times did you actively participate in decision-making processes on issues of interest to the national minority you represent?”

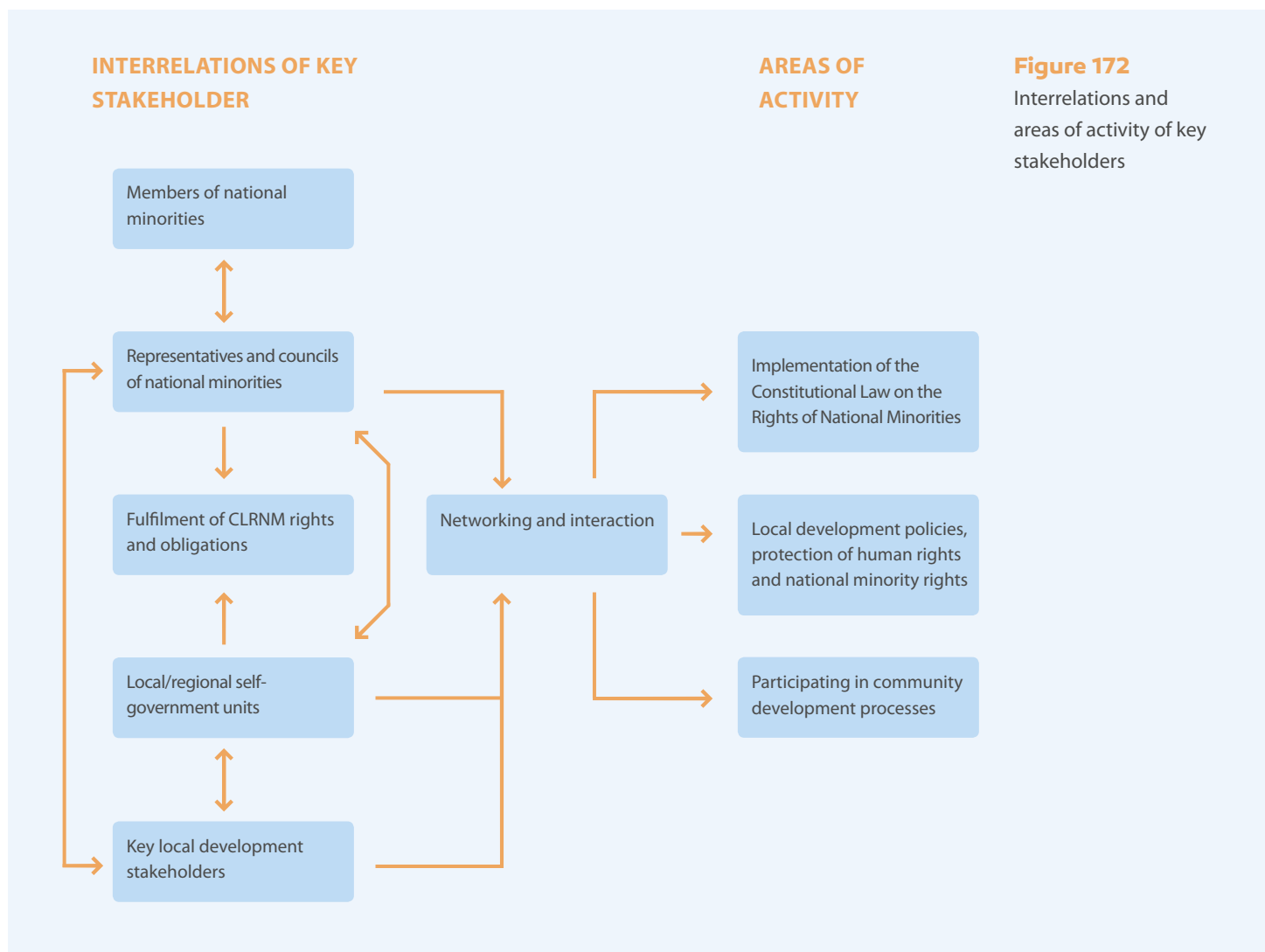


Figure 172
 Interrelations and areas of activity of key stakeholders

It was shown that the statistically significant predictor of the active participation of CRNM at sessions of LRSGU in decision-making processes on issues of interest to national minorities was the level of activity and efficiency of CRNM. In other words, the greater the activity or efficiency of CRNM, the higher their level of participation in the creation of policies related to NMs.

Whereby it was determined that CRNM at the county level were involved in the creation of policies related to national minorities to the greatest extent.

Additionally, those CRNMs that were more actively involved in creating minority policies:

- assessed councils and representatives of NM, as well as NM members, as less constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM;
- attributed a greater contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of NM by CRNM, coordinations and the State Council for National Minorities;

- were more satisfied with the cooperation with CRNM, coordinations and the State Council for National Minorities, regional and local media and the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament;
- were largely addressed by NM members due to all of the examined communication content.

A manifest variable³² which measures the frequency of cooperation between CRNM and CSOs on projects aimed at local community development was used as an indicator of CRNM's level of participation in community development processes. In addition, a regression analysis was carried out with a manifest variable as a criterion, while the predictor circuit consisted of constructed latent variables.

It was determined that statistically significant predictors of CRNM's level of participation in community development processes include: the interaction of CRNM with the civil sector and CRNM activity and efficiency.

More active and efficient councils and representatives of NM have, to a greater extent, cooperated with civil society organizations in projects aimed at local community development. Moreover, CRNMs that cooperated with the civil sector on local projects, were more satisfied with the cooperation with the civil sector. Further, being more satisfied with the cooperation with the civil sector, they were also more satisfied with the past cooperation with CRNMs of other NMs, other NMs, coordinations, ministries responsible for NM issues, local and regional media, OHRRNM and the Committee on Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Croatian Parliament.

4.2. Synthesis of analysis results – CSO subsample

Based on the relevant manifest variables, eight latent variables were constructed:

- The latent variable **“Interaction with CRNM”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: the existence of CSO members currently carrying out the CRNM mandate; the frequency of CRNM addressing civil society organizations and the frequency of CSO members addressing the councils and representatives of NM due to examined content in the mutual communication (seeking information or advice, providing suggestions or advice, complaints regarding discrimination or violation of minority rights).
- The latent variable **“Interaction with NM members”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: the existence of NM members among CSO members; the frequency of NM members addressing civil society organizations due to examined content in the mutual communication (seeking information or advice, providing suggestions or advice, complaints regarding discrimination or violation of minority rights).
- The latent variable **“Openness of the civil sector towards CRNM”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: acceptance of CRNM as relevant partners to minority associations and other CSOs on local community development projects; the attributed contribution of NM associations, minority organizations and other CSOs in the improvement and protection of the position of national minorities; the assessment of the cooperation between CRNM and minority associations, minority organizations and other civil society organizations in the local community.

³² “During the current mandate, did you cooperate with civil society organizations on projects aimed at local community development?”

- The latent variable “Satisfaction with the cooperation with CRNM” was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: satisfaction with the frequency of the past cooperation with CRNM; satisfaction with the quality of the cooperation with CRNM.
- The latent variable **“CRNM’s efficiency from the perspective of CSO members”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: CRNM’s contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of NM from the perspective of CSO members; CRNM’s level of familiarity with its role and function, the laws concerning national minorities and familiarity with the local problems of the national minority they represent from the perspective of CSO; the level of connection of CRNM with its electorate from the perspective of CSO; assessment of the general level of efficiency of the representatives and councils of national minorities as advisory bodies from the perspective of CSO.
- The latent variable **“Fulfilment of the self-government’s obligations and its openness towards CRNM”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: the contribution of LRSGU to the improvement and protection of the NM position; the number of exercised constitutional rights and implemented mechanisms and measures for the protection of NM (existence of educational institutions with instruction in the languages and scripts of NM, radio and television programs intended for NMs and the existence of radio and television programs broadcast in NM languages in the local community, introduction of equal official use of the languages and scripts of NM, financing the activities of NM associations and other minority organizations by the self-government unit); acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU as a relevant partners in creating policies related to NMs; use of CRNM’s advisory services by LRSGU; assessment of LRSGU’s familiarity with the laws concerning NM and the local problems of NM, their interest in passing laws concerning NM; the level of involvement of LRSGU in the life of minority communities through family and informal relations; the tendency of LRSGU to additionally strengthen the CRNM institution.
- The latent variable **“Cooperation of LRSGU and (CR)NM”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: assessment of the cooperation of self-government units with CRNM, minority associations and other minority organizations.
- The latent variable **“Satisfaction with the self-government unit”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: the level of satisfaction of CSO members with the past cooperation and communication with the self-government unit.

Further analysis included the manifest variable **“Cooperation of LRSGU with the civil sector”** which presents an assessment of the cooperation between LRSGU and non-minority civil society organizations from the perspective of CSO members.

Figure 173 shows the interconnection (intercorrelation) between the predictive variables and the criterion, whereby the statistically significant correlations are marked in red.

The level of interaction of CSOs with members of national minorities, CSOs’ satisfaction with the cooperation with CRNM, the cooperation between the self-government units and CRNM and the cooperation between LRSGU and the civil sector have been identified as statistically significant predictors of activity / efficiency of councils and representatives of national minorities (Table 16)

Figure 173
 Intercorrelations
 between the latent vari-
 ables – CSO subsample

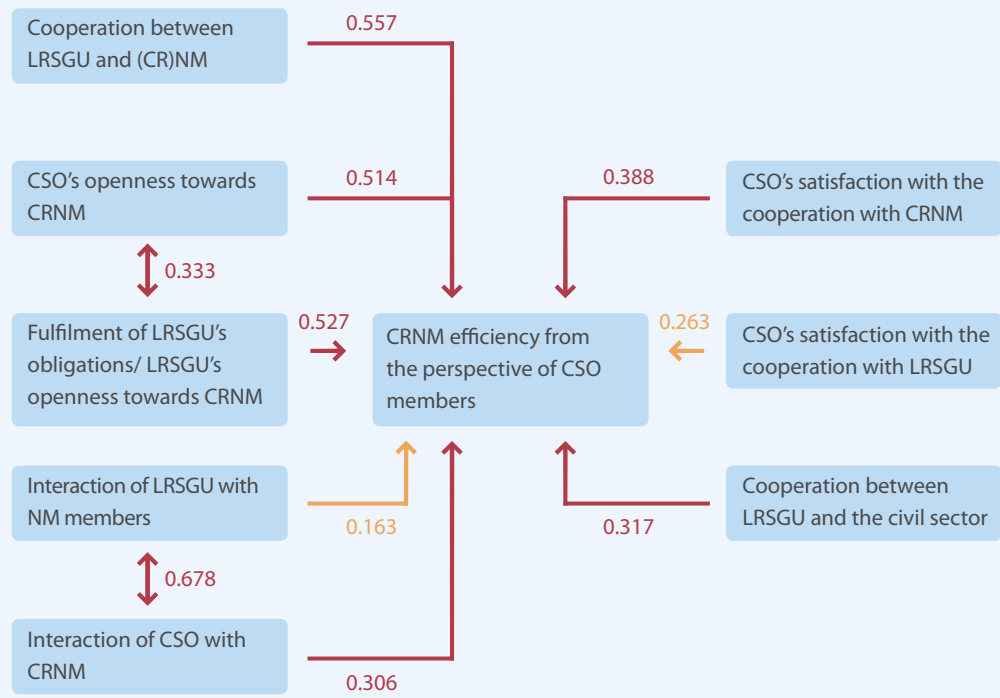


Table 16
 Predictors and criterion
 in the regression
 analysis – CSO
 perspective

PREDICTOR VARIABLES:	CRITERION VARIABLE: CRNM activity/efficiency from the perspective of CSO members			
	Beta weight amount	Significance of beta weight	Correlation coefficient amount	
			Including the influence of other variables	Excluding the influence of other variables
Interaction of CSO with CRNM	0.215	0.300	0.306	0.183
Interaction of CSO with NM members	0.032	0.856	0.163	0.032
Openness of CSO towards CRNM	0.212	0.230	0.512	0.212
Satisfaction of CSO with the cooperation with CRNM	0.034	0.848	0.388	0.034
Fulfilment of LRSGU obligations / openness of LRSGU towards CRNM	0.213	0.259	0.527	0.199
Cooperation between LRSGU and (CR)NM	0.311	0.080	0.557	0.304
Satisfaction of CSO with the cooperation with LRSGU	-0.043	0.800	0.263	-0.045
Cooperation of LRSGU with the civil sector	0.107	0.490	0.317	0.123

Taking into account the content of the latent variables i.e. the predictors that are statistically significantly related to the criterion, the following was observed:

- From the perspective of the members of civil society organizations, CRNM are more efficient if the self-government units and the civil sector are more open towards them.
- CRNM's efficiency is assessed more positively by those CSO members who have a greater number of interactions with CRNM and who are more satisfied with the cooperation with the councils and representatives of NM.
- Those CSO members who assess CRNM as efficient, also give a higher score to the cooperation between the self-government unit and CRNM, and the self-government units and the civil sector.

With regard to the other latent variables, the following was also observed:

- Those CSO members who have more interaction with NM members also have more interaction with CRNM, whereby the members of NM associations have the largest number of interactions with NM members and CRNM, while LAG members have the lowest.
- The higher their interaction with CRNM, the more satisfied they will be with the cooperation with CRNM, which will result in them assessing CRNM as more efficient and as a less constraining factor in the implementation of CLRNM.
- In cases when they assess the cooperation between LRSGU and the civil sector with a lower score, they also assess the cooperation between LRSGU and CRNM with a lower score while the civil sector's openness towards CRNM is assessed more positively.
- The more they are addressed by CRNM due to information content in the communication, the lower they will assess the cooperation between CRNM and LRSGU.
- Those CSO members whose organizations were addressed by NM members and CRNM due to complaints regarding discrimination or violation of minority rights, are less satisfied with the cooperation with the self-government unit and they greatly assess the social environment and LRSGU as constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM.
- The less satisfied they are with the cooperation with the self-government unit, they will assess the cooperation between LRSGU and the civil sector, between LRSGU and CRNM, and the self-government unit's openness towards CRNM with a lower score.

Based on these features, it can be concluded that the civil sector is also not a uniform group. It can be assumed that the cooperation between the civil society and CRNM is doubly motivated. On the one hand, although CRNM does not have adequate project capacity and even though CRNM and CSO deal with different content, the minority civil society organizations are oriented towards CRNM due to the very nature of belonging to the minority groups, regardless of CRNM's activity/efficiency. On the other hand, non-minority civil society organizations do not have the inherent need to cooperate with CRNM, not only because of their national sign, but also because of the different content they deal with and considering CRNM's lower project capacities in general, especially if the non-minority CSOs are not inclined toward NMs, as well as in the context of the openness of the self-government unit towards the civil sector i.e. the satisfactory cooperation of the civil sector with LRSGU.

Potentially, the cooperation between CRNM and non-minority CSOs can also be shaped in the context of highly closed units where CSOs share a marginalized position with CRNM, and in the context of highly

open units, in which case the probability of non-minority CSOs cooperating with CRNM will be based more on the assessment of CRNM's efficiency by the civil society, and less on the need to associate CSOs with marginalized CRNM.

The current CRNM, with regard to their participation in community development processes, were offered cooperation on projects aimed at local community development mainly by those CSO who are more satisfied with the cooperation with CRNM and who achieve a larger number of interactions with CRNM and NM members.

Regarding CRNM's participation in the creation of policies related to NM,³³ it was observed that CSO members who assess CRNM as more efficient, who assess the openness of the civil sector and the self-government unit towards CRNM with a higher score, who are more satisfied with the cooperation with the self-government unit and who attribute a higher score to the cooperation between self-government units and CRNM and between self-government units and the civil sector, assess CRNM's level of active participation in creating policies related to NM with a higher score.

4.3. Synthesis of analysis results – LRSGU subsample

Based on the relevant manifest variables, eight latent variables were constructed:

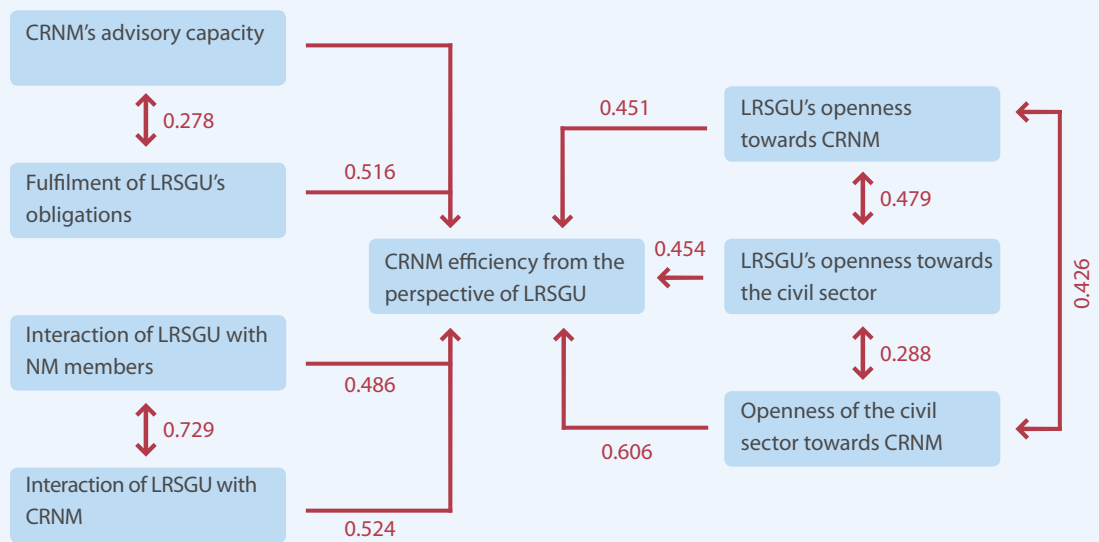
- The latent variable **“Interaction with CRNM”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: the frequency of CRNM addressing the self-government unit; the frequency of the self-government unit addressing CRNM due to information content in the communication (seeking information or advice and providing suggestions or advice).
- The latent variable **“Interaction with NM members”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: the frequency of NM members addressing the self-government unit due to information content in the (seeking information or advice and providing suggestions or advice).
- The latent variable **“CRNM's qualification for performing the advisory function”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: assessment of CRNM's financial and material work conditions; assessment of CRNM's advisory capacities; level of CRNM's connection with their electorate; level of CRNM's familiarity with CLRNM and other laws concerning NM, their own role and function, the local problems of the national minority they represent and LRSGU's obligations towards CRNM as advisory bodies, all from the perspective of the heads of LRSGU.
- The latent variable **“CRNM's efficiency from the perspective of the heads of LRSGU”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: CRNM's contribution to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM from the perspective of the heads of LRSGU; assessment of CRNM's general level of efficiency as advisory bodies; the frequency of exercised rights of CRNM (seeking to implement monitoring and/or taking measures against inappropriate and unlawful conduct of LRSGU, proposing measures to improve the position of national minorities, proposing candidates for duties in state administration bodies and/or bodies of LRSGU, proposing

³³ Question for CSO: “In your opinion, to what extent do representatives and members of national minority councils actively participate in decision-making processes on issues of interest to national minorities?”, besides CRNM's efficiency, it also measures the level of CRNM's involvement in the creation of minority policies by LRSGU.

general acts regulating issues of interest to NM); fulfilment of CRNM obligations (regularly submitting reports on its work and their financial plans and expenditure reports of the financial resources provided by the budget of the self-government unit); the number of CRNM members who attend and actively participate at the sessions of the self-government unit regarding issues concerning the position of national minorities.

- The latent variable **“Fulfilment of LRSGU’s obligations”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: the number of provided work resources for CRNM, the manner of allocating the provided resources (self-initiative or based on CRNM request); financing educational institutions with instruction in the languages and scripts of NM, radio and television programs intended for NM and the activities of NM associations and other minority organizations; prescribing equal official use of NM languages and scripts, and the use and way of using flags and other symbols of national minorities; the harmonization of all relevant general acts with the provisions of CLRNM; establishing an administrative department or service/appointing a person responsible for the communication and cooperation with NM; keeping a formal record of respecting the rights of NM; the number of implemented monitoring that were sought by CRNM and the accepted CRNM proposals (measures to improve the position of national minorities, candidates for duties in state administration bodies and/or bodies of local/regional self-government units and general acts regulating issues of interest to national minorities); the frequency of informing CRNM on sessions dealing with issues of interest to NM; submitting materials from such sessions; seeking the opinion of CRNM when preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of NM; making a formal decision on how to finance NM.
- The latent variable **“Openness of LRSGU towards CRNM”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: the contribution of LRSGU to the efficient implementation and application of CLRNM; the acceptance of CRNM by LRSGU as relevant partners in creating policies related to NM; the familiarity of LRSGU bodies with CLRNM and other laws concerning national minorities, the local problems of NM, LRSGU’s obligations towards CRNM, international reports on the status of minority rights, the role and function of CRNM; the level of their involvement in the life of minority communities through family and informal relationships; the level of satisfaction with the communication with CRNM; the level of satisfaction with the past cooperation with CRNM, NM associations and other minority organizations.
- The latent variable **“Openness of LRSGU towards the civil sector”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: financing the activities of non-minority civil society organizations; the level of satisfaction with the past cooperation with non-minority civil society organizations.
- The latent variable **“Openness of the civil sector towards CRNM from the perspective of the heads of LRSGU”** was constructed based on the following directly measured variables: acceptance of CRNM by the civil sector; assessment of the cooperation of CRNM and the civil sector in the area of the local community; the contribution of the civil sector to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM.

Figure 174
 Intercorrelations of the latent variables – LRSGU subsample



Tablica 17
 Predictors and criterion in the regression analysis – LRSGU perspective

PREDICTOR VARIABLES:	CRITERION VARIABLE: CRNM's efficiency from the perspective of LRSGU			
	Beta weight amount	Significance of beta weight	Correlation coefficient amount	
			Including the influence of other variables	Excluding the influence of other variables
CRNM's advisory capacity	0.168	0.200	0.510	0.171
Fulfilment of LRSGU's obligations	0.283	0.017	0.516	0.312
Interaction of LRSGU with NM members	0.138	0.322	0.486	0.132
Interaction of LRSGU with CRNM	0.091	0.558	0.524	0.079
Openness of LRSGU towards CRNM	-0.108	0.403	0.451	-0.112
Openness of the civil sector towards CRNM	0.350	0.004	0.606	0.373
Openness of LRSGU towards the civil sector	0.157	0.134	0.454	0.199

Figure 174 shows the interconnection (intercorrelation) between the predictive variables and the criterion, whereby the statistically significant correlations are marked in red.

From the perspective of the heads of the self-government units, the statistically significant predictors of CRNM's efficiency were: the level of the civil sector's openness towards CRNM and the fulfilment of LRSGU's obligations, whereby CRNM's efficiency is assessed to a greater extent if the civil sector is more open to CRNM, and if the self-government unit has fulfilled more obligations towards CRNM.

With regard to the other latent variables, the following was observed:

- the more obligations that the self-government fulfils, the more it will be addressed by CRNM due to information content in the communication, and the less obligations that it fulfils, the more it will be addressed by CRNM due to filing complaints, objections and criticisms;
- the higher it assesses the advisory capacity of CRNM, LRSGU, CRNM and NM members are assessed as less constraining factors in the implementation of CLRNM;
- the more they were addressed by CRNM for filing complaints, objections and criticisms, they assess the social environment to a greater extent as a constraining factor to the implementation of CLRNM.

The level of CRNM's active participation in decision-making processes on issues of interest to national minorities³⁴ is assessed greater by those heads of the self-government units that assess CRNM's efficiency with a higher score and who assess LRSGU and the civil sector's openness towards CRNM with a higher score.

³⁴ Question for LRSGU: "On a grading scale from 1 to 5, how would you assess the level of active participation of representatives and council members in decision-making processes on issues of interest to national minorities?"

5

FINAL CONSIDERATION WITH KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5 FINAL CONSIDERATION WITH KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After four election cycles, the so-called “minority elections” from 2003 to 2015, the high normative level of legally guaranteed rights and freedoms of the members of national minorities, and the observed shortcomings and constraints in the implementation of the legal provisions and the established practice regarding the work of the council and representatives of national minorities, the Government of the Republic of Croatia through its Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities launched a support project for CRNM at the local level (February 2016). The project is part of the European Union Programme for Croatia within the IPA 2012 I item, which refers to assistance in transition and strengthening institutions in order to harmonize them with the EU acquis. For this purpose, the project Support to the Councils of National Minorities at the Local Level is programmed to include research, analytical and educational activities and activities related to the design, establishment and testing of a web-based interface for monitoring the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities. The value of the project is reflected in the overall effort to act on the detected institutional weaknesses so that the planned activities in the project seek to provide the prerequisites for the active participation of CRNM in the monitoring and implementation of CLRN and in the development of its own local communities in the Republic of Croatia.

The GAP analysis presented here is an integral part of the mentioned project and was conducted with the aim of assessing the capacities of the councils and representatives of national minorities to exercising their statutory roles at the local and regional level. As a strategic tool for identifying deviations and gaps between the objectives set by CLRN and other special laws aimed at protecting and exercising minority rights from the current state, and for the purpose of its improvement and proper implementation of the legal provisions, an integrated approach to the GAP analysis was applied. This approach to the monitoring and assessment of exercising minority rights and freedoms is carried out on the basis of multiple sources i.e. from different perspectives. Therefore, the following analytical views were included in this analysis:

- The Government of the Republic of Croatia i.e. secondary analyses of annual reports on the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities;
- the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe i.e. secondary analyses of the Committee’s Opinion on Croatia – i.e. periodic reports on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities submitted by the Government to the Council of Europe;
- EU CARDS 2003 project reports, as well as some other projects in this area;
- Councils and representatives of national minorities (CRNM), civil society organizations (CSO) and local and regional self-government units (LRSGU) i.e. analysis of results obtained by empirical research – as a basis for integrated GAP analysis.

Bearing in mind the draft of the research conducted, it can be generally concluded that at this moment, fifteen years after the application of CLRN, there are markedly more constraining factors than the ones that would help CRNM to be a developed, functional and highly respected institution, and CLRN, a

comprehensive and consistent law whose provisions are fully respected. This, of course, does not mean that there has not been some progress made since the councils and representatives of national minorities were presented and elected, and the law was put into effect. Therefore, it is entirely justified to point out that the underlying framework for understanding the CRNM institution in the applied analysis, in addition to emerging (current) and processual (situational), occupied by identifying and understanding the processes (changes) that lie in the background of individual research collected data. Briefly, the key findings of the GAP analysis are presented below in relation to CRNM's three areas of activity.

5.1. Key findings of the GAP analysis in relation to CRNM's three areas of activity

5.1.1. MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL LAW ON THE RIGHTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

CONTRIBUTION OF CLRNM TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE POSITION OF NM IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- More than half (56%) of the questioned CSO and LRSGU attributed a moderate or significant contribution of CLRNM to improving the position of national minorities in the local community.
- Whereby members of civil society organizations assessed CLRNM's contribution to improving the position of national members in the local community lower (average value=2.67) in relation to the heads of local and regional self-government units who assessed it higher (average value=3.31).
- Hence, when assessing CLRNM's contribution to improving the position of national minorities in the local community, a positive correlation can be noticed between the questioned subsamples in the area of its application in favour of the better position of NM. However, it has also been observed that LRSGU representatives predominate in this assessment, attributing a higher contribution than CSO members, among which there is an equal number of those who attributed a certain contribution (41%) and those who emphasized that CLRNM's contribution to the improvement of the NM position is low or none (39%).

RESPECTING THE RIGHTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

- It was shown that keeping a formal record of respecting the rights of NM and of the complaints filed for their violation was relatively rare in the questioned subsamples. The councils and representatives of national minorities have a significantly higher level of keeping formal record (31%) of the complaints addressed to them by members of the national minority they represent, while local and regional self-government units keep significantly less formal record (11%) on respecting the rights of national minorities.
- In addition to the high number of complaints (48%) in connection with discrimination or violation of minority rights that were submitted to CRNMs in the past year, a significant number of complaints were also submitted to civil society organizations (40%). On the other hand, only 6% of the questioned LRSGU respondents stated that members of national minorities had addressed their self-government units in the past year for complaints about discrimination or violation of minority rights.

- Members of national minorities, as well as CRNM, showed a higher tendency to address civil society organizations with regards to complaints about discrimination or violation of minority rights, and a significantly lower tendency to address local and regional self-government units.
- According to the questioned CRNM and CSO, the minority right that is least respected is the right to representation in representative bodies at the state and local level, and in administrative and juridical bodies. According to the opinion of the questioned heads of LRSGU, the national minority right which is least respected in the local community is the right of access to the media and public information services (receiving and disseminating information) in the language and script of the national minority.

KNOWLEDGE AND EXERCISE OF THE RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS BASED ON CLRNM

- All average values on the items (contents) of the general information tool on specific legal and the content of narrower and wider communities indicate a relatively high self-expressed level of familiarity and information of the questioned CRNM.
- Overall, CRNM are more informed about the social, political and minority context (average value=3.59), in comparison to the slightly lower familiarity with the legal framework of the CRNM institution (average value=3.29).
- On the additive indices: familiarity with the legal framework of the CRNM institution and information on the social, political and minority context, as well as on the aggregate index of information, there was a significantly higher level of self-assessed familiarity and information of the council members in relation to the lower level expressed by the representatives of national minorities.
- The disparity of the two subsamples, although it may be due to different reasons, is likely to be the outcome of better organizational, personnel, working and material conditions in the work of CNM in compared to the more modest capabilities of RNM in this respect.
- CRNM at the municipal level are least familiar with the legal framework of their own institution, while CRNM at the county level are most familiar with it.
- Members of civil society organizations and the heads of self-government units assess CRNM's familiarity with their own role and function with the lowest score (average score=3,31), and gave the highest score to CRNM's familiarity with LRSGU's obligations towards them as advisory bodies (average=3,82).
- By summing up the broader scope of CRNM's familiarity with different contents and topics in three perspectives i.e. three average scores, it is noticeable that their degree of familiarity was most often assessed with higher scores by the representatives of LRSGU (average=3.86), slightly lower by the councils and representatives of NM (average=3.71), while the lowest scores were attributed by members of civil society organizations (average=2.99).
- CRNM have been shown to be more active and efficient in a stimulating social environment i.e. in those local communities where LRSGU bodies, as well as civil society organizations are more open to cooperate with CRNM.
- The questioned representatives of LRSGU and members of civil society organizations assessed the highest degree of familiarity of local and regional self-government units with CLRNM and other laws concerning NM.

- A higher degree of familiarity of LRSGU bodies with CLRNM and other laws concerning national minorities, the local problems of national minorities, and their level of involvement in the life of minority communities through family and informal relations was expressed by the representatives of the self-government units, while the members of civil society organizations assessed them with a lower average score.
- Members of civil society organizations attribute a higher degree of familiarity with the local problems of NM to CRNM, and a lower degree of familiarity to LRSGU bodies.
- One of the indicated correlations suggested that those local self-government units that are more open to cooperate with the civil sector, are also more open to cooperate with CRNM.
- More than 80% of the questioned CRNM carry out their obligations towards LRSGU in terms of regular submission of the work plan and program, financial plan and final accounts to the competent bodies of local/regional self-governments.
- All of the mentioned obligations are carried out by the councils in a statistically significantly greater degree than by the representatives of national minorities.
- On the other hand, 64% of the questioned heads of self-government units stated that, during the current mandate, all of the councils and representatives established within the area of the self-government unit regularly submitted reports on their work, while 70% stated that all councils and representatives regularly submitted their financial plans and expenditure reports of the financial resources provided by the budget of the self-government unit.
- It was observed that the two most frequent activities carried out during the CRNM mandate were proposals and meetings. Namely, 61% of the questioned CRNM, during the current mandate, proposed to the bodies of local/regional self-measures to the bodies of local/regional self-government units for improving the position of the national minority, and they actively participated in sessions and decision-making processes regarding issues of interest to national minorities.
- During the CRNM mandate, the least carried out activity was the implementation of monitoring and/or taking measures against inappropriate and unlawful conduct of the bodies of local/regional self-government units in respect of legally guaranteed laws and freedoms of national minorities – only 17% of the questioned CRNM sought this measure.
- In order to carry out the advisory function, the following are formally more equipped and qualified: councils of national minorities, CRNM at the county and city level, CRNM of “old” (traditional) and “new” minorities and CRNM from the Zagreb region, while the following are less equipped and qualified: representatives of national minorities, CRNM at the municipal level, and members of the Roma national minority.
- Based on the two constructed latent variables (“CRNM’s preparedness for performing the advisory function” and “CRNM activity/efficiency”) a statistically significant, positive but relatively weak correlation ($r=0.461$) was determined. It was confirmed that the efficient implementation and application of CLRNM requires both the formal preparedness and activity of CRNM, as well as the self-government units’ willingness to cooperate with NM and CRNM.

CONSTRAINING FACTORS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CLRNM

- The factors that greatly impede the implementation of CLRNM, from the perspective of CRNM, are insufficient funds allocated to councils and representatives, and their solely advisory role, while the factors that least impede the implementation of CLRNM are conflicts between representatives and councils of different national minorities and various internal conflicts among members of the same council.
- In the opinion of the questioned CRNM, the factor that impedes the efficient implementation and application of CLRNM to the greatest extent are local/regional self-government units, while CRNM themselves impede the implementation and application of CLRNM to the least extent.
- In the opinion of the questioned members of civil society organizations, the factor that impedes the implementation of CLRNM to the greatest extent is the insufficient number of active individuals among CRNMs, while the factor that least impedes the implementation of CLRNM is the opinion that the institution of councils and representatives is unnecessary since NMs have their representatives in the Parliament.
- In the opinion of the members of civil society organizations, the factors that impede the implementation of CLRNM to the greatest extent are NM members and the actual councils and representatives of NM, and to a less extent the self-government units and the social environment. Thereto, the members of civil society organizations do not express the tendency to abolish minority rights.
- It was shown that the perception of CRNM's efficiency from the perspective of the members of civil society organizations is under strong mediator influence of their perception of self-government units' efficiency, and on the other hand, the perception of self-government units from the perspective of members of civil society organizations is under strong mediator influence from their openness towards the CRNM institution and their tendency to cooperate with councils and representatives of NM.
- Overall, the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM require the necessary activity of NM members and their networking with CRNM, as well as the networking of CRNM and civil society organizations. In addition, the acceptance of the CRNM institution by the local and regional self-government units is an essential prerequisite for accepting members of national minorities by members of the wider community.
- The factors that impede the implementation of CLRNM to the greatest extent, from the perspective of the heads of the self-government units, are the disinterest of members of national minorities in exercising their own rights and their insufficient familiarity with the role and function of CRNM, while the factors that impede the implementation of CLRNM to the least extent are non-transparent and unequal allocation of budget funds for NM needs.
- In the opinion of the heads of the self-government units, the factor that impedes the implementation of CLRNM to the greatest extent are members of national minorities. They assess CRNM as a moderate constraining factor to the implementation of CLRNM, while the self-government units and the social environment are considered as the least constraining factors to the implementation of CLRNM.

- It was shown that the perception of CRNM from the perspectives of the heads of self-government units is also under strong mediator influence of their perception of civil society organizations and vice versa, as the perception of civil society organizations is under strong mediator influence of the perception of CRNM. In other words, the heads of self-government units who positively perceive and are inclined to cooperate with CRNM, also positively perceive and are inclined to cooperate with the civil sector. Conversely, the heads of self-government units who negatively perceive and are less inclined to cooperate with CRNM, also negatively perceive and are less inclined to cooperate with the civil sector.
- It has been established that the heads of the self-government units are largely conditioned by the organizational position and the tendency to express the socially desirable outcomes in the responses, while the CSO members are the group of the most critical respondents whose attitudes and beliefs are least influenced by the social preference

INSTITUTIONS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE EFFICIENT APPLICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CLRNM

- In the opinion of the questioned CRNM, councils and representatives of national minorities and national minority associations have the greatest contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of the national minority they represent.
- The average results of CRNM on the two constructed indices (internal and external actors) are statistically significantly different, whereby CRNM attributes a greater contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of national minorities by internal actors (CRNM, LRSGU, CNM coordinations, NM associations and the State Council for NM).
- In the opinion of the questioned members of civil society organizations, national minority associations have the greatest contribution to the improvement and protection of the position of national minorities
- According to the questioned heads of the self-government units, the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM is largely contributed to local/regional self-government units.
- A statistically significant difference was identified on the constructed indices (internal and external actors) in the average results of the subsamples. Whereby, the heads of the self-government units attribute a greater contribution of the internal actors, while they attributed the members of civil society organizations and CRNM with a smaller contribution. The heads of the self-government units also attributed the greatest contribution to the efficient application and implementation of CLRNM by external actors, while they attributed CRNM with the smallest contribution.

5.1.2. CREATING LOCAL POLICIES RELATED TO NATIONAL MINORITIES

PERCEPTION OF THE RELEVANCE OF CRNM'S ADVISORY ROLE

- 57% of the questioned councils and representatives of NM confirmed that LRSQU accept CRNM as relevant partners in creating policies related to national minorities.
- 79% of the questioned heads of LRSQU and members of civil society organizations confirmed the acceptance of CRNM by local/regional self-government units.
- The perceived acceptance of CRNM by LRSQU from the perspective of members of civil society organizations and the heads of self-government units is statistically significantly different i.e. the representatives of the self-government units confirm (98%) the acceptance of CRNM in the self-government units to a greater extent, while members of civil society organizations consider this acceptance to be significantly smaller (53%).
- 61% of the questioned members of civil society organizations believe that local/regional self-government units do not use the advisory services of the representatives and councils of national minorities to a sufficient extent.
- 60% of the questioned members of civil society organizations and representatives of the self-government units could not assess or refused to say whether the self-government unit/wider public is more inclined to abolish or to further strengthen the CRNM institution.
- Members of civil society organizations largely confirm (31%) the tendency to abolish the institution of councils and representatives from the local/regional self-government unit, while the representatives of the self-government units largely confirm (23%) the tendency to further strengthen the CRNM institution by the wider public in the local community.

CRNM'S QUALIFICATION FOR PERFORMING THE ADVISORY ROLE

- More than half of the questioned participants (57%) have experience in carrying out CRNM mandates.
- A statistically significant difference in the number of councils and representatives' mandates so far has been determined with regard to the self-government level. At the municipal level, the largest proportion are those members who are carrying out the mandate of councils and representatives for the first time. At the county level there is a noticeably higher proportion of those with experience in carrying out the CRNM mandate.
- Although most of the respondents have experience with the mandate of councils and representatives, less than one third of them currently performing some other advisory, representative or executive functions at the state/regional/local level. Among those who perform additional functions along with the CRNM mandate, it was found that CNM members perform other advisory, representative or executive functions at the state/regional/local level to a significantly greater extent than RNM.
- In performing the activities of a representative or councillor of a national minority, 86% of the representatives use a computer, while 77% of the questioned councillors stated that the members of their council use a computer. In performing NM representative/councillor activ-

ities, 82% of the representatives use electronic mail, while 76% of councillors stated that the members of their council use electronic mail.

- A higher score for computer and electronic mail skills was attributed by those councils and representatives: who were nominated by NM associations, who have been provided with more financial resources and a larger amount of resources for work in general, who have younger age groups, and who have a higher education level.
- Regional affiliation has led to a statistically significant difference between CRNM in terms of the number of work resources that they have, whereby the councils and representatives of the Zagreb region predominate as they have the largest amount of resources needed for work (office, logistic and financial resources).
- Almost 60 percent of the questioned CRNM have some office and work space. The local and regional self-government units provided office space for 38% of the questioned CRNM.
- In the heads of LRSGU subsample, 95% of them stated that their self-government unit provided financial resources to the current representatives and councils of the national minorities that were founded in their area, while 81% of them stated that their self-government unit provided the current CRNM with an office space and free legal advice.

PARTICIPATION OF CRNM IN CREATING POLICIES RELATED TO NM

- More than half (65%) of the questioned CRNMs stated that the self-government unit informs them on the sessions that deal with issues of interest to NMs and submits materials to them from these sessions (60%), while less than half of the respondents (49%) stated that the self-government unit seeks their opinion when preparing proposals for general acts regulating issues of interest to NM.
- More than half of the questioned CRNM (59%) stated that they attend and actively participate (54%) at the sessions of the self-government unit when issues regarding the position of the national minority they represent are on the agenda.
- A large number of the questioned heads of the self-government units stated that the sessions of the self-government units on issues related to the position of NM are attended and actively participated by slightly less than half of the members of CRNMs that are established in the area of the self-government unit, while almost a third of the LRSGU representatives could not assess the number of NM councillors and representatives who respond and actively participate in the work of the sessions.
- More than 80% of the questioned heads of the self-government units stated that in drafting proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of national minorities, the self-government units frequently (categories often and always) seek the opinion and/or proposals of the councils and representatives of NM, they inform them on sessions that deal issues of importance to national minorities, and they submit the materials from such sessions to them.
- Between the members of civil society organizations and the heads of the self-government units, a statistically significant difference was found when assessing the active participation

of CRNM in decision-making processes on issues of interest to NM. At the same time, the members of civil society organizations assess the level of active participation of councils and representatives in decision-making processes on issues of interest to NM with a lower score (average=2.49), while the heads of the self-government units assess it with a higher average value (average=3.55).

- It is concluded that in those local communities that are less open and willing to cooperate, CRNM's efficiency is also lower. This phenomenon is confirmed by the statistically significant, positive and relatively high correlation ($r=0.692$) of the level of using CRNM advisory services by the self-government unit and the level of active participation of CRNM in decision-making processes regarding issues of interest to national minorities, from the perspective of CSO members.
- The level of CRNM involvement in the creation of policies related to NM is to a lesser extent influenced by their formal preparedness and efficiency, and to a greater extent by the self-government's openness and willingness to cooperate with CRNM and the civil sector in general.

5.1.3. COOPERATION BETWEEN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS

TYPES AND QUALITY OF STAKEHOLDER COOPERATION

- 75% of the questioned representatives hold informal meetings with other representatives and councils of national minorities.
- Almost all of the questioned CNM (98%) hold council meetings. The largest number of questioned CNM hold meetings once every three months (66%). Whereby, 94% stated that more than half of the council members attend these meetings.
- More than 80% of the questioned CRNM stated that, during the current mandate, they were addressed by members of the national minority they represent in order to seek information or advice, and to provide suggestions or advice, while almost half (48%) of the respondents stated that, during the current mandate, they were addressed by members of the national minority they represent due to complaints on the violation of minority rights.
- 40% of the questioned CSO members and 6% of the heads of LRSGU stated that their organizations i.e. self-government units were addressed by NM members for complaints on discrimination or violation of minority rights.
- Regarding complaints on discrimination or violation of minority rights, NM members addressed self-government units to a small extent (6%), and significantly more to civil society organizations (40%).
- By analysing particular forms of communication, it was indicated that over 70% of the questioned LRSGUs do not have a recognizable or specific feature of a specific form of communication with CRNM.

- Almost half of the questioned heads of LRSGU most frequently communicate with the councils and representatives of NMs through personal encounters i.e. verbal communication, a third of them use a telephone or mobile device, while 17% of them most commonly communicate with CRNM electronically and in writing.
- By assessing different aspects of communication with CRNM, it was shown that almost all of the questioned LRSGU assessed them with a high average score (average value=4,09). Whereby, as in the perspective of CRNM, courtesy (average value=4,46) and professionalism in conduct (average value=4,31) are valued with the highest score.
- It was indicated that over 70% of the questioned civil society organizations do not have a recognizable or specific feature of a specific form of communication with the heads of self-government units.
- The overall communication with LRSGU has also been assessed with a relatively high average score (average value=3,46), where, as in the case of the CRNM subsample, courtesy (average value=3,71) and professionalism (average value=3,53) in conduct were assessed with the highest score.
- The assessments of courtesy and professionalism in conduct in the self-government unit from the perspective of CRNM and CSO members are statistically significantly different i.e. CRNMs assess courtesy and professionalism in LRSGU with a higher score while CSO members assess it with a lower score.
- Given the comparison of the three subsamples, the average satisfaction with the communication with CRNM from the perspective of the heads of the self-government units, statistically significantly deviates from the average satisfaction with communication of the other two subsamples. In other words, the heads of the self-government units express a higher level of satisfaction with the communication with CRNM, while CSO members and CRNM are less satisfied with the communication with the local and regional self-government units.
- Considering the suggested forms and the presented results, it was not possible to identify a specific form in the type of communication that was expressed by the questioned CRNM, CSO members and LRSGU representatives. However, although partially imprecise, it is evident and can be of use as a relatively rough simplification of the general form of the communication process in the interaction of the questioned subsamples: verbal communication is a fundamental aspect of interaction and transfer of information between CRNM, CSO members and LRSGU representatives. Namely, research has shown that nearly half of the respondents most often communicate through personal encounters i.e. verbal communication, while all other forms of interaction are present, but to a lesser extent.
- 74% of the questioned members of civil society organizations and representatives of the self-government units stated that their organizations i.e. self-government units were addressed by CRNM for information or advice, 68% stated that they were addressed to provide suggestions or advice, while a fifth mentioned complaints regarding discrimination or violation of minority rights.

- The research determined that councils and representatives are more inclined to address the self-government units in order to seek information or advice and to provide suggestions or advice, and they address civil society organizations more for complaints about discrimination or violation of minority rights.
- The greater interaction of CRNM towards CSO results in a greater interaction of CSO towards CRNM. The featured model shows a two-way flow of information in which the respondents are equally transmitters and recipients of information (complaints, advice, suggestions, etc.). Therefore, the more CRNM address CSO for a number of reasons e.g. as complaints related to violation of minority rights, so too the CSO members will address CRNM to a greater extent for the same reasons they received.
- The feedback of the communication form between CRNM and CSO was not determined with regard to the interaction between CRNM and the self-government units.
- The largest number of questioned CRNM highly appreciated the past cooperation they had with the representatives and councils of the national minority they represent and with the national minority associations, while they least appreciated the past cooperation with the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament.
- The CSO subsample was largely satisfied with the cooperation with the bodies of the local and regional self-government units, and least satisfied with the cooperation with coordinations of the councils of national minorities.
- The questioned representatives of the self-government units were mostly satisfied with the cooperation with the civil sector (non-minority CSOs, NM associations and other minority organizations) and with CRNM, and least satisfied with the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament.
- A statistically significant, relatively high and positive correlation ($r=0.852$) was determined between two variables – quality and frequency of cooperation. According to it, the higher the frequency of cooperation between CSO and CRNM, the higher is its quality in the opinion of the CSO members i.e. if the cooperation between CSO and CRNM is of a high quality, it will also be more frequent. It can be implied that the relationship of frequency and quality of cooperation, as in the model of the communication form, is two-way and in reality appears in the form of the described relation between the frequency and quality of cooperation between the stakeholders.
- The scores regarding the cooperation between LRSQU with minority associations and other minority organizations, and LRSQU with other civil society organizations from the perspective of CSO members and the heads of self-government units are statistically significantly different. In both cases, the CSO members assessed the cooperation with a visibly lower score, while the heads of the self-government units confirmed a higher score.
- The assessment of cooperation between CRNM and CSO from the perspective of three subsamples: CRNM, CSO members and the heads of the self-government units are statistically significantly different. The heads of the self-government units assessed the cooperation between CRNM and CSO to the greatest extent while CRNM and CSO members assessed it to a lesser extent.

- The past cooperation of CSO and LRSGU is equally assessed from an already well-known organizational form: the CSO members assess the cooperation with the self-government units with a lower score, while the heads of LRSGU assess it with a higher score.
- The heads of the self-government units were more satisfied with the cooperation with CRNM, while CSO members were less satisfied. Whereby, the heads of the self-government units assessed the cooperation between CRNM and CSO with a higher score than CSO members, while the CSO members assess the cooperation between CRNM and LRSGU with a lower score than the heads of LRSGU.
- Almost all of the assessments of individual forms of cooperation between different stakeholders (actors) show the influence of organizational (environmental) determinants on the judgement of their membership, thus it is possible to discuss the influence of organizational culture on attitudes and behaviours.

NETWORKING OF STAKEHOLDERS

- 50% of the questioned CRNM stated that they participated in the work of some CNM coordination, while 50% stated that they did not participate. 47% of the questioned RNM and 52% of the questioned CNM were involved in the work of a coordination.
- Nearly 3/4 of the questioned CRNMs stated that minority associations and other civil society organizations accept them as a relevant partner in local community development projects.
- On the other hand, 83% of the questioned heads of the self-government units and members of civil society organizations confirmed CRNM's acceptance by the civil sector.
- There is a statistically significant difference in terms of CRNM's acceptance by the civil sector from the perspective of CSO members and the representatives of the self-government units. CRNM's acceptance by minority associations and other CSOs was entirely confirmed by the heads of the self-government units, and to a lesser extent by the members of civil society organizations.

PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Although 73% of the questioned CRNM believe that minority associations and other civil society organizations accept them as relevant partner in projects aimed at local community development, only 27% of the questioned CRNM cooperated with civil society organizations on local projects during the current mandate.
- On the other hand, in the past year only 28% of the questioned CSOs (N=9) offered NM associations cooperation on projects aimed at local community development while 41% (N=20) offered the current CRNM cooperation on projects aimed at local community development.

5.2. Guidelines for improving the work and efficiency of CRNM

Situational PEST analysis with recommendations and guidelines for action (based on the use of multiple data sources).

IDENTIFICATION (DIAGNOSIS) OF THE SITUATION	GUIDELINES FOR ACTION
Insufficient knowledge and application of relevant CLRNM provisions in practice.	Plan and organize further training of all actors with the legal framework and content of CLRNM and the work of the CRNM institution in practice.
Incomplete and irregular submission of statutes, financial plans and final accounts to the competent bodies of self-government units.	Plan and organize further administrative training of CRNM and NM members on ways of fulfilling obligations towards LRSGU. Establish and formalize administrative keeping of records and business cooperation between all involved actors.
Insufficient knowledge of the reporting methodology on the expenditure of funds provided by the state budget and drafting annual work plans and requests for funding from the budget.	Plan and organize further training of NM associations and institutions on the reporting methodology and ways of using state budget funds.
All relevant CLRNM acts not harmonized at the local and regional level.	Strengthen the central monitoring mechanisms over the harmonization of all relevant acts of the self-government units and establish a system of responsibilities and sanctions for failure to meet statutory obligations.
Insufficient knowledge and/or deliberate ignorance of relevant CLRNM provisions among local officials.	Strengthen the monitoring mechanisms over the implementation of relevant CLRNM provisions and establish a system of additional consultations and seminars necessary to fulfil the obligations of LRSGU.
Insufficient and/or incomplete understanding of the CRNM institution among NM members and CRNM members.	Plan and organize further training to improve and better understand the CRNM institution in practice.
Extremely low voter turnout at the CRNM elections.	Make additional efforts and contribute to raising public awareness of the need to participate in the elections and the importance of selecting their candidates in the representation of minority interests at the local and regional level. Consider the possibility of legislative harmonization i.e. holding CRNM elections at the same time as regular elections for representatives of self-government units.



IDENTIFICATION (DIAGNOSIS) OF THE SITUATION	GUIDELINES FOR ACTION
Unevenness of opportunities, expertise and qualifications between RNM and CNM.	<p>Consider the options and further engage in equalising the status of RNM in relation to the more favourable work circumstances and status of CNM.</p> <p>Advocate for a proportional status of representatives and councils of NM (status of non-profit legal entities).</p>
Absence of legally-imposed sanctions in cases of failure to implement certain CLRN provisions.	Indicate the need to improve or amend certain provisions of the Constitutional Law, which concern the proportionate and equitable definition of obligations and responsibilities between self-government units and the councils and representatives of national minorities.
The solely advisory nature of the CRNM institution (lack of executive authorities).	Refer to good practice examples that show that CRNM are more efficient in those self-government units that frequently use the advisory services of minority representatives.

E
ECONOMIC FACTORS

IDENTIFICATION (DIAGNOSIS) OF THE SITUATION	GUIDELINES FOR ACTION
Problems of insufficient funding, provision of an office space, logistical support and systematic strengthening of the CRNM institution.	<p>Invest additional effort to increase the work resources and support to CRNM at the local, regional and central level.</p> <p>Inform, educate and encourage CRNM on the possibilities and forms of gathering alternative, additional resources in carrying out CRNM activities.</p>
LRSU's unwillingness and insufficient capacities to cooperate with the members of NM and CRNM.	Ensure adequate financial, logistical and personnel support to those local and regional self-government units that do not have sufficient capacities to meet the relevant CLRN provisions.
Economic and educational problems of the Roma and minority populations.	<p>Plan and achieve targeted investments in the infrastructure of Roma settlements and create employment opportunities for members of Roma and non-Roma minority groups.</p> <p>Continually work on increasing the opportunities for Roma children to attend pre-school education programs and compulsory primary education.</p>

S
**SOCIO-
 CULTURAL
 FACTORS**

IDENTIFICATION (DIAGNOSIS) OF THE SITUATION	GUIDELINES FOR ACTION
<p>The unfavourable sociodemographic structure of CRNM (poor representation of young people up to 30 years and women).</p>	<p>Improve the opportunities for women and young people to actively participate as integrated NM members in decision-making processes and activities at the local, regional and central level.</p>
<p>Unfavourable social environment and inter-ethnic tensions.</p>	<p>Systematically and timely condemn all occurrences of nationalistic and anti-minority rhetoric in public and political speech, as well as in the media.</p> <p>Ensure the inclusion of minority topics in school curricula and textbooks, and organize and conduct trainings and workshops on tolerance and acceptance of diversity.</p> <p>Develop a comprehensive ethno-cultural justice strategy for promoting inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation in society.</p>
<p>Insufficient understanding of local authorities for the acceptance of the civil sector and CRNM.</p>	<p>Contribute to the representation of associations and civil society organizations and the specifics of national minorities, and to intensify mutual cooperation in the public, political, economic and cultural life of the local community.</p>
<p>Insufficient acceptance of CRNM as relevant partners in making plans and decisions related to NM at local levels.</p>	<p>Actively participate in legitimate treatment and involvement of CRNM in plans and decisions related to NM issues and topics at local levels.</p>
<p>Relative institutionalization of local authority relations with CRNM.</p>	<p>Work on the networking of the informal and formal institutional relations in the work of local authorities and CRNM.</p> <p>Advocate and contribute to strengthening the perception and behaviours in order to protect the public interest and common good of individual interest.</p>
<p>Disinterest of NM members in the exercise of their own rights.</p>	<p>Work harmoniously and permanently to increase the activity and interest of NM members in exercising their own rights.</p> <p>Further empower and point to the need to express one's national affiliation in order to preserve their identity, culture and tradition.</p>
<p>Lack of active members among the representatives and councils of national minorities.</p>	<p>Consider legal and other options to encourage CRNM activity.</p>

IDENTIFICATION (DIAGNOSIS) OF THE SITUATION	GUIDELINES FOR ACTION
Insufficient interactivity of CRNM, especially at the municipal level, with NM members.	Consider the possibility of increasing funds for the work of county and city levels with the appropriate obligation to strengthen interactivity and cooperation with the municipal level and NM members.
Insufficient mutual cooperation between CRNM and cooperation with NM members.	Develop and implement mechanisms for strengthening cooperation and sharing capacities of minority institutions and communities. Encourage the work of CRNM coordinations in achieving mutual cooperation and common interests.
Insufficient recognition, visibility and weak representation of minority topics and CRNM in local media.	Make additional efforts to exercise NM rights to access the public media and to integrate minority topics into regular programs, content and overall public, cultural, economic and political life in the Republic of Croatia.

T
TECHNOLOGICAL
FACTORS

IDENTIFICATION (DIAGNOSIS) OF THE SITUATION	GUIDELINES FOR ACTION
Contact database not updated.	Establish and continuously maintain up-to-date databases with all relevant CRNM information from the central to the local level.
Lack of IT knowledge.	Plan and organize work on the web-based interface intended for CRNM and encourage and organize further trainings for work on computers, especially among younger users.
Insufficient computerization in work and lack of IT equipment.	Consider opportunities for raising the IT standard between CRNM and other minority institutions.

- P**olitical Factors
- E**conomic Factors
- S**ocio-cultural Factors
- T**echnological Factors

GENERAL GUIDELINE

Ethnocultural justice as an integral part of social justice.

Put additional effort and strengthen the work of sensitizing both the minority and the majority population to the problems of national minorities since the exercise, protection and development of minority rights and interethnic tolerance are important prerequisites for stability, democratization and progress of each society, including the Croatian one.

REFERENCES

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1. Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (OG 85/10 – refined text and 05/14.);
2. Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities (OG 155/02, 47/10, 80/10 and 93/11);
3. Law on the Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities in the Republic of Croatia (OG 51/2000 and 56/2000);
4. Law on Personal Identity Card (OG 62/15);
5. Law on Upbringing and Education in the Language and Script of National Minorities in the Republic of Croatia (OG 51/00 and 56/00);
6. Law on Upbringing and Education in Primary and Secondary Schools (OG 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 901/11, 16/12, 86/12, 126/12, 94/13, 152/14 and 07/17);
7. Law on the Legal Position of Religious Communities (OG 83/02 and 73/13);
8. Electronic Media Act (OG 153/09, 84/11, 94/13 and 136/13);
9. Law on Croatian Radio-Television (OG 137/10, 76/12 and 78/16);
10. Act on Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament (OG 120/11 – refined text, 19/15 and 104/15);
11. Act on the State Administration System (OG 150/11, 12/13, 93/16 and 104/16);
12. Law on Local and Regional Self-government (OG 60/01 – credible interpretation, 129/05, 109/07, 125/08, 36/09, 150/11, 144/12, 19/13 and 137/15);
13. Local Elections Act (OG 144/12 and 121/16);
14. Law on the Election of Members of Representative Bodies of Local and Regional Self-Government Units (OG 33/01, 10/02, 155/02, 45/03, 43/04, 40/05, 44/05 – refined text and 109/07) – only the provisions governing the election of councils and representatives of national minorities shall apply;
15. Civil Servants Act (OG 92/05, 107/07, 27/08, 49/11, 150/11, 34/12, 49/12, 37/13, 38/13, 01/15 and 138/15);
16. Law on Civil Servants and Employees in Local and Regional Self-Governments (OG 86/08 and 61/11);
17. Judiciary Act (OG 28/13, 33/15, 82/15 and 82/16);
18. The Act on the State Attorney's Office (OG 76/09, 153/09, 116/10, 145/10, 57/11, 130/11, 72/13, 148/13, 33/15, 82/15 and 82/16);
19. Anti-Discrimination Act (OG and 112/12);
20. Gender Equality Act (OG 82/08);
21. Social Welfare Act (OG 157/13, 152/14, 99/15, 52/16 and 16/17);
22. Criminal Code (OG 144/12, 56/15 and 61/15);
23. Act on the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Croatia in 2011 (OG 92/10);
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25. National Roma Inclusion Strategy for the Period 2013-2020;
26. Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy for the Period 2013 – 2015.

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- 29.** Fourth Opinion on Croatia, Report of the Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, November 2015.
- 30.** Report on Implementation of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities in the Period 2011-2013, Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2012.
- 31.** Report on the Implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and the Expenditure of Funds Secured in the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia for 2014 for National Minorities (and other available reports for the years 2003/2004 to 2004-2013).
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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 Questionnaire for members of national minority councils*

Appendix 2 Guide for semi-structured interviews and focus groups

*Four variants of the questionnaire were used in the research, where the same thematic issues were adapted to different groups of respondents: for example, councils of national minorities, representatives of national minorities, local and regional self-government units and civil society organizations, thus only a version for councils of national minorities is attached.

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MEMBERS OF NATIONAL MINORITY COUNCILS



This project is funded by
the European Union



This project is co-financed by
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities

Project

Support to the Councils of National Minorities at the Local Level

2016 survey

Dear Sir / Madam,

There is an ongoing research on the capacities and needs of councils and representatives of national minorities within the project "Support to the Councils of National Minorities at the Local Level".

This project is funded by the European Union and co-financed by the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

Selection of interlocutors:

- Your council, as one of the councils of national minorities, has been randomly selected to participate in this research and we kindly ask that the **president, vice president or a council member completes the questionnaire** on behalf of the council.*
- Your participation in this research is entirely **voluntary**.*
- The questionnaire is entirely **anonymous**, and your responses are strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to individuals, organizations or institutions, but will be analyzed and presented in bulk together with the responses of the other participants.*

*We kindly ask that you express your opinion freely and honestly in order for us to receive the most accurate and precise overview of the **key issues facing the members of your council**. We would also like to note your suggestions for improving cooperation with other stakeholders as well as examples of previous good practice.*

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project!

Council of the _____ national minority

County: _____

Level: 1. county 2. city 3. municipality

Name of the self-government unit: _____



1. What is your function in the council of the national minority?

1. president of the council
2. vice president of the council
3. council member

2. How many times have you carried out the mandate in the council of the national minority?

1. 2. 3. 4. times

3. Can you state who nominated you in the council of the national minority at the last elections?

1. national minority association (Please provide the name of the association): _____

2. members of the national minority
3. someone else (Please state who): _____

4. Apart from the mandate in the council of the national minority, do you currently perform some functions in representative or executive bodies at the state/regional/local level?

1. No
2. Yes→Please state which functions you are currently performing: _____

5. If your council is not registered in the Register of Councils, Coordinations of Councils and Representatives of National Minorities please state why it is not.

6. Does your council have the following resources and services at their disposal for carrying out their activities and who provides them?

Show card for question 6

	Local / regional self-government unit	State budget	Private sources	National minority association	Not available
office space	1	2	3	4	5
office equipment	1	2	3	4	5
official car	1	2	3	4	5
official landline telephone	1	2	3	4	5
official mobile phone	1	2	3	4	5
official computer	1	2	3	4	5
official e-mail address	1	2	3	4	5
official website	1	2	3	4	5
additional financial resources for carrying out specific activities	1	2	3	4	5
trainings	1	2	3	4	5
publications and handbooks	1	2	3	4	5
free legal advice	1	2	3	4	5
professional logistical support	1	2	3	4	5
cost reimbursement	1	2	3	4	5
labour fees	1	2	3	4	5

7. Carrying out the activities within your national minority council, how often do the members of your council use:

	Never	Rarely	Frequently
computer	1	2	3
electronic mail	1	2	3

8. Please assess your degree of familiarity with:

Show card for question 8

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Entirely
Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities	1	2	3	4	5
the role and function of the council of a national minority	1	2	3	4	5
handbooks for councils of national minorities	1	2	3	4	5
the local problems of the national minority they represent	1	2	3	4	5
obligations of the local / regional self-government unit towards the council as an advisory body	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Entirely
problems of the wider community in which you reside	1	2	3	4	5
current political events in the country	1	2	3	4	5
international reports on the status of minority rights	1	2	3	4	5

9. Does your council carry out the following activities:

	Yes	No
regularly submit the work plan and program to the competent local/regional self-government bodies	1	2
regularly submit the financial plan to the competent local/regional self-government bodies	1	2
regularly submit the final accounts to the competent local/regional self-government bodies	1	2

10. How often do you hold council meetings?

1. we do not hold meetings
2. once a week
3. once a month
4. once every three months
5. once every six months
6. once a year
7. some other frequency _____

If the answer to the previous question = 1 → skip question 11

11. How many members, on average, participate at council meetings?

1. less than half
2. around half
3. more than half

12. National minorities have certain rights guaranteed by law. Of the listed rights, please list the three (3) that are LEAST RESPECTED in your local community in terms of your national minority. Then sort them according to the degree of systematic and frequent violation. The right

that is violated to the highest degree is assigned rank 1, followed by rank 2, and last by rank 3.

Show card for question 12

Rights of national minorities	rank / order
the right to freely express their national affiliation	
the right to use the family name and first name(s) in the language of national minorities	
the right to have identity cards printed in the language and script of national minorities	
the right to freely use the language and script of national minorities in public and in official use	
the right to upbringing and education in the language and script of national minorities	
the right to use signs and symbols of national minorities	
the right to achieve cultural autonomy and preserve and protect the cultural heritage and tradition of national minorities	
the right to practice religion and establish religious communities	
the right to access media and public information services (receiving and disseminating information) in the language and script of national minorities	
the right to self-organize and associate in pursuance of common interests	
the right to representation in representative bodies at the state and local level, and in administrative and juridical bodies	
the right to practice in public life and local self-government through representative/councils of national minorities	
the right to protection from any activities jeopardizing or potentially jeopardizing the existence and the exercise of national minority rights and freedoms	

13. During the current mandate, how often was your council ADDRESSED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL MINORITY THAT YOU REPRESENT for the following reasons:

	Nikad	Rijetko	Često
seeking information and/or advice	1	2	3
providing suggestions and/or advice	1	2	3
complaints regarding violation of their legally guaranteed rights	1	2	3

If no complaints were received i.e. if the answer to the third part of question 13 = 1 → skip question 14.

14. For which legally guaranteed right did you receive the largest number of complaints? _____

15. Vodite li u vijeću formalnu evidenciju o pritužbama s kojima Vam se obraćaju pripadnici nacionalne manjine koju predstavljate?

1. Yes
2. No

16. How do you most frequently communicate with the local/regional self-government unit?

Mark the appropriate answer with X

Form of communication		
Written form <input type="checkbox"/>	Equally written and verbal form <input type="checkbox"/>	Verbal form <input type="checkbox"/>
Formalnost komunikacije:		
Formal <input type="checkbox"/>	Equally formal and informal <input type="checkbox"/>	Informal <input type="checkbox"/>
Privatnost komunikacije:		
Private <input type="checkbox"/>	Equally private and public <input type="checkbox"/>	Public (at meetings, through media) <input type="checkbox"/>
Brojnost komunikacijskih sudionika:		
Individual <input type="checkbox"/>	Equally individual and in groups <input type="checkbox"/>	In groups <input type="checkbox"/>

17. How do you mostly communicate with the bodies of local/regional self-governments? t

1. telephone / mobile phone
2. personal encounters
3. e-mail, website contact forms, letters, by fax
4. some other way: _____

18. During the current mandate, how often did the MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL ADDRESS the bodies of local/regional self-government units for the following reasons:

	Never	Rarely	Frequently
seeking information and/or advice	1	2	3
providing suggestions and/or advice	1	2	3
making complaints, objections and criticisms	1	2	3

19. On a grading scale of 1 to 5, how would you assess the communication with local/ regional self-government units, keeping in mind:

speed of receiving feedback	1	2	3	4	5
usefulness of feedback	1	2	3	4	5
scope of feedback	1	2	3	4	5
accuracy of feedback	1	2	3	4	5
courtesy in conduct	1	2	3	4	5
professionalism in conduct	1	2	3	4	5

20. Does your council participate in the work of councils of national minorities (CNM) coordinations?

1. Yes → Ask question 21
2. No → Ask question 22

21. Within which coordinations does your council participate? _____

22. Why doesn't your council participate in the work of some coordination?

23. To what extent do the following reasons complicate the work and functioning of your council?

Show card for question 23

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Entirely
insufficient familiarization of the members of national minorities with the role and function of councils	1	2	3	4	5
lack of knowledge on the legal regulations of national minorities by the members of the councils of national minorities	1	2	3	4	5
lack of knowledge on the legal regulations of national minorities by local/regional self-governments	1	2	3	4	5
failure to implement legal provisions and regulations on the rights of national minorities by local / regional self-governments	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Entirely
insufficient funds allocated to councils of national minorities	1	2	3	4	5
Inadequate work space of councils of national minorities	1	2	3	4	5
lack of active members in minority advisory bodies	1	2	3	4	5
insufficient expertise of the members of minority advisory bodies	1	2	3	4	5
lack of trust in the councils of national minorities by the members of the minority community	1	2	3	4	5
insufficient networking of councils with other councils and representatives of the same national minority	1	2	3	4	5
insufficient networking of councils with councils and representatives of other national minorities	1	2	3	4	5
complicated legal procedure for selecting council members	1	2	3	4	5
non-transparent allocation of budgetary funds for the needs of national minorities	1	2	3	4	5
budgetary funds for the needs of national minorities are unevenly allocated	1	2	3	4	5
Conflicts between representatives and councils of different national minorities	1	2	3	4	5
Insufficient institutionalization of the relation between local/ regional self-government and council	1	2	3	4	5
No person to coordinate the work of councils and the local/regional self-government	1	2	3	4	5
Insufficient representation of councils of national minorities in the media	1	2	3	4	5
The solely advisory role of councils	1	2	3	4	5
The shortcomings of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities	1	2	3	4	5
lack of sanctions in case of failure to implement legal provisions and regulations on the rights of national minorities by local/ regional self-government	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Entirely
Disinterest of members of national minorities to exercise their own rights	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing inter-ethnic tension by regional and local media	1	2	3	4	5
Non-acceptance of national minority members by the wider community	1	2	3	4	5
Members of national minorities have limited access to educational institutions and employment opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
The over-bureaucracy of institutions dealing with minority issues	1	2	3	4	5
Various internal conflicts between members of the same council	1	2	3	4	5
insufficient networking of councils with minority associations and other civil society organizations	1	2	3	4	5

24. During the current mandate, how many times has your council:

	Never	From 1 to 5 times	From 6 to 10 times	More than 10 times
sought implementation of monitoring and/or took measures against inappropriate and unlawful conduct of local / regional self-government unit bodies regarding legally guaranteed rights and freedoms of national minorities	1	2	3	4
proposed measures to the bodies of local / regional self-government units for improving the position of the national minority	1	2	3	4
proposed candidates for duties in state administration bodies and bodies of local / regional self-government units	1	2	3	4
provided proposals for general acts which address issues of interest to the national minority they represent to the competent bodies that enforce them	1	2	3	4
given opinions and suggestions on radio and television station programs intended for national minorities or on programs related to minority issues	1	2	3	4

	Never	From 1 to 5 times	From 6 to 10 times	More than 10 times
actively participated in sessions on decision-making processes regarding issues of interest for the national minority they represent	1	2	3	4

If the answer to the previous question on parts 1, 2, 3 or 4 was greater than 1 → ask question 25 for each such part.

25. Given the total number of activities that your council has undertaken as an advisory body, how many times:

	Never	From 1 to 5 times	From 6 to 10 times	More than 10 times	I cannot assess
was the monitoring that your council sought implemented and/or measures taken against inappropriate and unlawful conduct of local/regional self-government unit bodies regarding legally guaranteed rights and freedoms of national minorities	1	2	3	4	5
was your council's proposal of measures to improve the position of national minorities accepted	1	2	3	4	5
was your council's proposal of candidates for duties in state administration bodies and bodies of local/regional self-government units accepted	1	2	3	4	5
was your council's proposal for general acts which address issues of interest to the national minority they represent accepted	1	2	3	4	5

26. To what extent do the following institutions contribute to the improvement and protection of the position of the national minority that your council represents?

Show card for question 26

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Entirely
Representatives of national minorities	1	2	3	4	5
Councils of national minorities	1	2	3	4	5
Local / regional self-government unit	1	2	3	4	5
Coordination of national minority councils	1	2	3	4	5
State Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia	1	2	3	4	5
National minority associations	1	2	3	4	5
Other non-profit organizations and civil society organizations	1	2	3	4	5
Committee on Human Rights and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament	1	2	3	4	5
Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia	1	2	3	4	5
Ombudsman	1	2	3	4	5
International organizations and international legal regulations	1	2	3	4	5

27. Do you agree with the following statements?

	Yes	No
Bodies of local/regional self-government units accept councils of national minorities as relevant partners in creating policies related to national minorities.	1	2
Minority associations and other civil society organizations accept councils of national minorities as relevant partners in local community development projects.	1	2

28. Please assess the following:

	Yes	No	I cannot assess
did the local/regional self-government unit appoint a person or establish a service responsible for communication and cooperation with national minorities?	1	2	3
are all relevant general acts of the local/regional self-government unit harmonized with the provisions of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities?	1	2	3

29. During your council's current mandate, how often:

	Nikada	Rijetko	Često	Uvijek	I cannot assess
does the local/regional self-government unit seek your council's opinion when preparing proposals for general acts regulating the rights and freedoms of national minorities	1	2	3	4	5
does the local/regional self-government unit notify your council on sessions discussing issues related to the position of national minorities	1	2	3	4	5
do members of your council attend sessions of local/regional self-governments when issues regarding the position of the national minority you represent are on the agenda	1	2	3	4	5
do members of your council actively participate at such sessions	1	2	3	4	5
does the local/regional self-government unit submit materials from such sessions to your council	1	2	3	4	5

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

Show card for question 30

	I do not agree at all	I do not agree	I do not agree or disagree	I agree	I completely agree
Some council members only care for their personal benefits and not for the interests of the minority community they represent.	1	2	3	4	5
Some council members are insufficiently familiar with their rights and obligations.	1	2	3	4	5
Some council members carry out their duty formally and are actually not active.	1	2	3	4	5
The registration procedure in the Register of Councils, Coordinations of Councils and Representatives of National Minorities is complicated and lengthy.	1	2	3	4	5

	I do not agree at all	I do not agree	I do not agree or disagree	I agree	I completely agree
The greatest issue during the implementation of the Constitutional Law is the members of the minority community's fear to report a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
The funds which some councils receive from the local or state budget are not spent in accordance with their budgetary purpose.	1	2	3	4	5
Most members of some councils do not maintain a constant connection with their electorate.	1	2	3	4	5
Most members of some councils do not inform their electorate about their work in a timely manner.	1	2	3	4	5

31. How satisfied are you with the cooperation of your council so far with:

Show card for question 31

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Entirely	So far there has been no cooperation
Other councils of the national minority that you represent	1	2	3	4	5	6
Representatives of the national minority that you represent	1	2	3	4	5	6
Councils and representatives of other national minorities	1	2	3	4	5	6
Bodies of local/regional self-government units	1	2	3	4	5	6
National minority associations and institutions	1	2	3	4	5	6
Other civil society organizations						
Coordinations of national minority councils	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ministries responsible for national minority issues	1	2	3	4	5	6
State Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Not at all	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Entirely	So far there has been no cooperation
Regional and local media	1	2	3	4	5	6
Committee on Human Rights and National Minority Rights of the Croatian Parliament	1	2	3	4	5	6
Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia	1	2	3	4	5	6

32. Can you provide examples of SUCCESSFUL COOPERATION in your local community between:

a) Councils of national minorities and local / regional self-government unit: _____

b) Councils of national minorities and civil society organizations: _____

c) Local/regional self-government units and civil society organizations: _____

33. In which areas is the council's cooperation in the local community unsatisfactory with:

a) local / regional self-government? Please provide an example _____

b) minority associations and other civil society organizations? Please provide an example: _____

34. What is the main reason for the council's unsatisfactory cooperation with:

a) local / regional self-government?

b) minority associations and other civil society organizations?

35. How could the existing cooperation be improved with:

a) local / regional self-government?

b) minority associations and other civil society organizations?

36. During this mandate, did your council cooperate with civil society organizations on local community development projects?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Frequently
4. Whenever there was a chance for such cooperation

If the answer to question 36 = 2, 3 or 4 → question 37

37. Please state the titles of the projects and organizations with which you have cooperated in local community development projects?

Civil society organization	Project title

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA

D1. Please mark the participant's gender

1. Male
2. Female

D2. How old are you?

D3. What is the highest level of education you have achieved?

1. Unfinished primary school (less than 8 grades)
2. Primary school completed (8 grades of primary school)
3. Completed two-year or three-year vocational secondary school
4. Completed four-year secondary school or grammar school
5. Completed a college program
6. Undergraduate program completed (University Bachelor's degree)
7. Graduate program completed (University Master's degree)
8. Postgraduate program completed

D4. On a grading scale of 1-5, how would you assess:

your computer skills	1	2	3	4	5
your electronic mail skills	1	2	3	4	5

D5. What is your current employment status?

1. Employed (by a private or state employer)
2. Self-employed (I hire just myself)
3. Employer (I hire myself and other people or just other people)
4. Retired
5. Student
6. Unemployed
7. Završen fakultet (Diplomski studij – magistar struke)
8. Završen poslijediplomski studij

If the answer to the previous question = 1, 2, 3 or 4 → ask question D6. If the answer = 1, 2 or 3 → ask about their current occupation, and if the answer = 4 → ask about their last occupation:

D6. What is your current occupation / What was your last occupation? _____

If the answer to question D5 = 5 or 6 → ask question D7

D7. Have you ever been employed?

1. No → Go to question D9
2. Yes → Go to question D8

D8. What was your last occupation?

D9. Who owns the space in which your council carries out its activities?

D10. How would you describe your financial situation?

1. Much worse than most
2. Somewhat worse than most
3. Neither better nor worse than most
4. Somewhat better than most
5. Much better than most

D11. Please assess which gender, age and level of education are the LARGEST NUMBER OF YOUR COUNCIL MEMBERS?

Gender	Age group	Level of education
1. Male	1. Up to 30 years	1. Primary
2. Female	2. From 30 to 50 years	2. Secondary
	3. Over 50 years	3. Tertiary

THANK YOU FOR AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH

APPENDIX 2
GUIDE FOR
SEMI-STRUCTURED
INTERVIEWS AND
FOCUS GROUPS

Guide for semi-structured interviews and focus groups:

- councils, coordinations of councils and representatives of national minorities
- local and regional self-government units
- local development associations
- national minority associations

All of the discussions held with the research participants are discussed within the aforementioned thematic units and the questions are adapted to their specific role in the process of national minorities participating in the community's public life. Focus groups with coordination members are focused on topics related to the activities of the coordination.

Topics/ questions:

Selection and registration

1. President or council member ? Is this your first mandate as CRNM, if not, which one is it?
2. Who suggested you as a candidate?
3. Did you have any doubts about accepting the candidacy, if yes, why?
4. What was your personal motive in running for the minority elections, what encouraged you?
5. We noticed that some of the proposed candidates did not receive any votes, what could be the reason for this, in your opinion?
6. Did you face any problems during the elections in your community, were there enough candidates, were there any irregularities in the work of the electorate, incomplete voting records, was there a low voter output etc.?
7. For council members – has the number of council members remained the same since May last year?
8. Are you in the Register? If no, why?
9. How did the registration process go, speed, complexity of the procedure...?
10. Do you know why some CRNM are not registered?

CRNM activities

1. It will be almost one year since you have been elected, what would be your greatest achievement to date?
2. What could not be achieved without CRNM?
3. What could have been achieved but has not? In which areas did you come across any problems? Describe...
4. What would you like to achieve in the following period until the end of your mandate, what needs to be achieved in the long term?
5. How many times has your council held formal sessions? How often do you meet informally and discuss the current issues in your community?
6. Have you submitted your financial plans and final accounts to LRSGU? If no, why?
7. What are the sources of funding you as a representative or council of NM?
8. Do you think there aren't enough young people in CRNM, what should be done to increase the motivation of young people to participate?
9. Do you have any suggestions for improving the work of CRNM....

Coordinations

1. Are you a member of a coordination? Which one? When was it founded? When was it registered?
2. In your opinion, are coordinations even necessary? Can you provide some of the benefits of the work of CRNM in a coordination in relation to individual activities?
3. What are some of the challenges and drawbacks in the functioning of a coordination? Should the legal regulation, working methods be changed..?
4. In relation to the legal framework and practice, do you think some of the possible forms of coordinations are not actually necessary, which type of coordination do you consider to be the most useful for organizing minority communities...one national minority/multiple minorities...city/county/state level ?
5. How is your coordination funded? Are you satisfied with the method and amount of funding?
6. Can you suggest some ways of increasing the coordination's efficiency?

Capacity for monitoring the implementation of CLRNM and information

1. Are you familiar with the content of the Constitutional Law?
2. Have you participated in trainings related to monitoring CLRNM? When, how many times and who organized them? Were they useful?
3. What type of support do you need in the coming period to help you monitor the implementation of CLRNM? Workshops, trainings..?

Monitoring the implementation of CLRNM

1. In your work so far related to the monitoring of the implementation of the Constitutional Law, which problems did you encounter in the exercise of minority rights? Which rights and who prevented their application? (use of language and script, right of access to the media and public information services, education in the language of the national minority, employment advantage ... to list a few)
2. How did you report on the violation of NM rights? What did you do?
3. What do you assess to be the greatest problem of your national minority at the local and state level? Has progress been made in solving this problem in the last 5 to 10 years? Have any new problems emerged that you did not face before?

Cooperation with the State Council for National Minorities and OHRRNM - reporting

1. In what way do you cooperate with the State Council for National Minorities? With OHRRNM?
2. In the prior period, have you submitted any suggestions, complaints, reports of any kind to the State Council for National Minorities or OHRRNM? Or some other institution? Ombudsman, Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and National Minority Rights, Parliamentary representative..?
3. Do you have any suggestions on how to strengthen the cooperation with the State Council for National Minorities?

Cooperation between CRNM and local and regional self-governments

1. In what way do you cooperate with LRSGU? Describe the cooperation over the past period..
2. Have you been invited to sessions that discuss issues of interest to national minorities, did you participate? Why not? Do you participate in other sessions that are not related to a specific minority topic?
3. Do you cooperate with LRSGU executive authorities, administrative departments responsible for the rights of national minorities, for example? In what way?

4. Did LRSQU provide you with a working space and resources? If not, in what space do you work? How is your work funded?
5. Have you received any cost reimbursement and/or labour fees from LRSQU? Did you experience any difficulties, was the fee adequate....?
6. Have you formally submitted some suggestions for improving local policies and practices or filed some complaints for exercising minority rights to LRSQU?
7. Did you get a response and what were the outcomes of your activities towards LRSQU?
8. What would be needed to improve the cooperation between CRNM and LRSQU?

Cooperation with other stakeholders/ visibility in the local community

1. Do you cooperate with other stakeholders in the local, regional community or at the state level? Minority associations, cultural-artistic societies and institutions, local action groups, community development associations.....state and describe the forms of cooperation...
2. Did you initiate cooperation with some organizations but they were not interested? Which ones? What should have been the goal of the cooperation?
3. Do you see some stakeholders in the local community who might be your future partners? Who? Will you contact them in the following period and suggest cooperation? Would you like to participate in joint community development projects?
4. In your opinion, are CNM members sufficiently active in initiating cooperation in the local community?
5. Have you communicated with public information services – given an interview with local newspapers, been a guest on radio and TV shows, wrote for web portals...? Have you encountered any obstacles to access media and public information services because you are a member of a national minority?
6. Have you participated in a round table or presented at a public gathering at the local or state level? What was the topic and who were the participants?
7. In the end, do you have any suggestions on how to improve the cooperation of interested stakeholders at the local level...?

Examples of good practice (key issue for all participants)

1. Can you provide examples of good practice in terms of cooperation at the local level? Cooperation between local authorities and associations, local self-governments and central authorities in achieving local goals, implementing joint projects of associations and local self-governments, specific projects that improved the quality of life of national minorities and the entire community?
2. If we were to ask you what you are generally proud of in your local community, what would you point out?

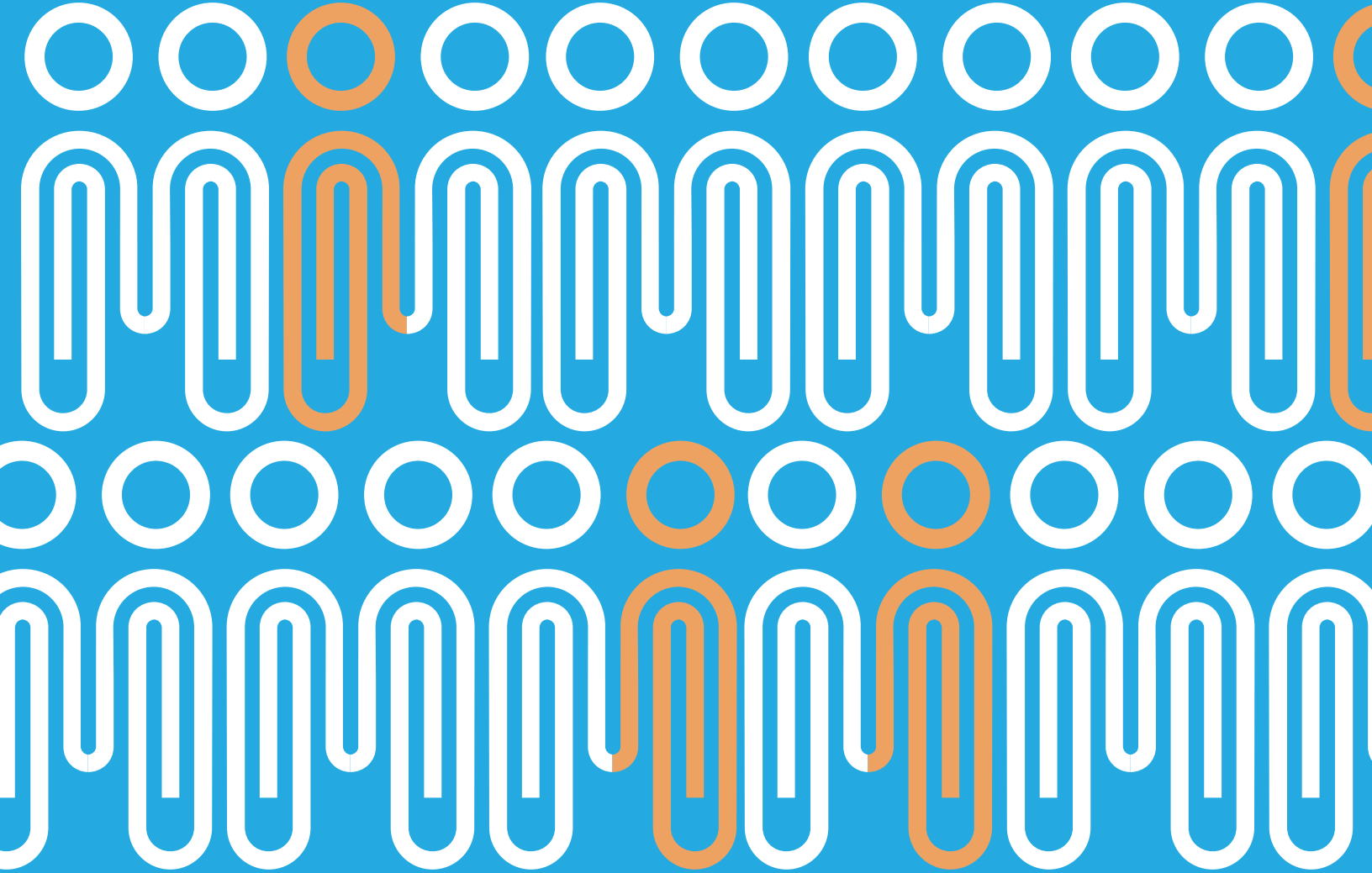
Specific questions for LRSQU members – Cooperation with CRNM

1. In what way do you cooperate with CRNM? Describe the cooperation over the past period...
2. Did you invite CRNM to sessions that discuss issues of interest to national minorities, did you participate? Why not? Does CRNM participate at other sessions that are not related to a specific minority topic?
3. Do the LRSQU administrative departments responsible for the rights of national minorities cooperate with CRNM? In what way?
4. Did you provide a working space and resources for CRNM? If not, in what space do they work? How is their work funded?
5. Have you so far paid reimbursement costs and/or labour fees for CRNM work? Did you have any difficulties in securing the funds for that purpose, was the fee adequate....?

6. Have you received some formal suggestions for improving local policies and practices or received some complaints for exercising minority rights from CRNM?
7. Did you respond to their queries and complaints and what were the outcomes of these CRNM activities?
8. What would be needed to improve the cooperation between CRNM and LRSGU?
9. Do you think that CRNM are sufficiently active in participating in public affairs and in the life of the local community? If not, what do you think is the reason for inactivity?
10. What can you state as the main obstacles to achieving more efficient cooperation with CRNM?
11. Can you suggest ways to improve the cooperation between CRNM and LRSGU, as well as other key stakeholders in your local community development.....

General questions for key stakeholders in the community: national minority associations, local action groups and other civil society organizations

1. What are your organization's goals?
2. Are you familiar with the activities of representatives and councils of national minorities in your area?
3. Did it cooperate in any way with the representatives and council members of national minorities? Describe....for example, did you suggest participation in the implementation of joint projects, were they interested, why wasn't the cooperation initiated?
4. Did you implement some project in partnership with minority associations? If so, please briefly describe the project's objective and whether you succeeded in achieving the desired results?
5. Did you implement some project in partnership with a local and/or regional self-government? If so, please briefly describe the project's objective and whether you succeeded in achieving the desired results?
6. Do you think that the representatives and council members of national minorities (CRNM) contribute to the exercise of the rights of the national minority they represent?
7. How do you see the role of CRNM in the life of your community?
8. How much does CRNM's work fit into wider local community development efforts?
9. In what areas have you recognized the effectiveness of CRNM's work and in which areas were they ineffective? Describe using examples...
10. Do you have an insight into the violation of national minority rights in your community? Which ones specifically?
11. Do you have an insight into the cooperation between CRNM and LRSGU? At what level is it achieved and is the cooperation successful or insufficient, how do you see the interest in cooperation on both sides, describe..
12. If cooperation is unsuccessful or insufficient, what are the reasons for this?
13. How do you assess the representation of CRNM and specific topics related to national minorities in local and national media (newspapers, radio, television, local portals...)
14. Do you think that minority community issues could be successfully solved by strengthening cooperation in joint development projects in the local community?
15. Can you provide an example of good practice in implementing such a joint project? If we were to ask you what you are particularly proud of in your local community, what would you point out?
16. Are you planning to propose projects in partnership with minority associations in the coming period?
17. In your opinion, how would you improve cooperation within your local community and encourage more active participation in joint development activities?



This project is funded by the European Union and co-financed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia