



# Kherson: direct democracy

## Results of the public opinion research held among the Kherson city residents

*The research was carried out by Charitable Organization Kherson Community Foundation "Zakhyst" within the ENGAGE public activity promotion program framework, funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Pact in Ukraine. The product content is the sole responsibility of Pact and its partners and does not necessarily reflect the views of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or the US Government.*

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# Research Background

**Methodology:** an online survey using an interactive structured questionnaire, a relevant link was sent to potential respondents from the database (online research panel of Kherson community). The sample is based on demographic indicators as of January 1, 2022. Given the indicators, the research error does not exceed 5% with a probability of 0.95. The sample includes Kherson residents residing both within the community and in other regions of Ukraine or abroad, who left Kherson after February 24, 2022. Currently, there are no official data on Kherson residents' migration, so it is not possible to assess the given respondent sample representativity, however, there are reasons to believe that the ratio of respondents still residing within the community presented is greater than de facto one, which may affect the research results.

**Research objective:** studying Kherson residents' opinion on involving citizens in the community decision-making process and using tools of direct democracy.

**Sampling scope:** 404 respondents.

**Field stage period:** February 16 – 28, 2024.

**Research client:** Kherson Community Foundation “Zakhyst”.

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*The research group carries on activities on increasing and improving the online panel of Kherson city community to align it with the general population indicators and invites all Kherson residents to join the panel. This can be done at <https://lemur.ua/sign-up>*

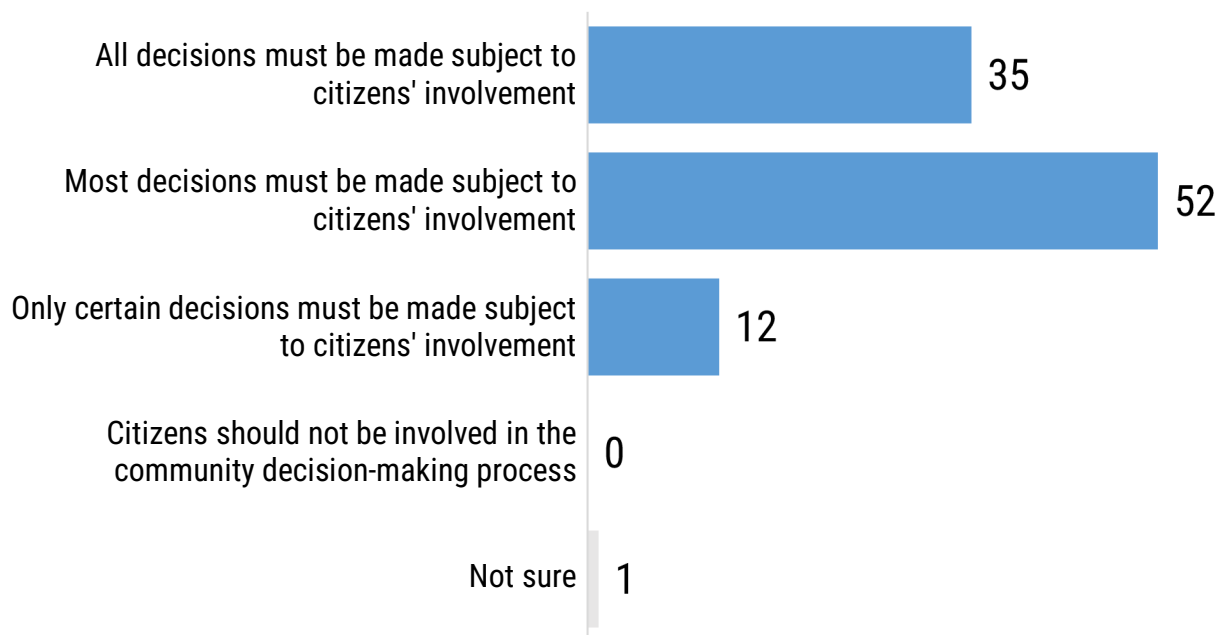
# Key Outputs

- In general, Kherson residents are positive about involving citizens in the community decision-making process. According to more than half of the respondents (52%), most community decisions should be made subject to citizens' involvement. However, given the martial law, the citizens' involvement in community decision-making should not be as comprehensive as in peacetime. 41% of respondents believe that during the war, most community decisions should be made subject to the involvement of citizens.
- The most common answer related to the selection of persons to be involved in community decision-making was any person with Kherson residence regardless of their current place of stay (37%), including IDPs (62%). However, there is a significant share of persons thinking that those who have left the community or without Kherson residence may not be involved in the community decision-making process.
- Most respondents have either a clear or a certain, though not yet crystallized, understanding of the “direct democracy” concept (85% in total) and its most common mechanisms and activities. Surveys (62%), public hearings and public consultations (62%), and petitions (55%) were identified as the most popular activities. However, given the war, surveys (64%) and petitions (61%) are considered the most relevant.
- More than half of the respondents have already participated in passive (remote) direct democracy activities, that is, in surveys and electronic petitions, both before and after the full-scale invasion began. However, only 10% of respondents participated in such direct democracy activities as public hearings before the full-scale invasion and 2% – after 24.02.2022.
- The participation of Kherson residents in the petitions was quite active, though they mostly acted as signatories. After the full-scale invasion began, 75% of respondents took part in them. Yet again, only 1% of them initiated petitions, and the rest were mere signatories.
- The most common reason for creating petitions was the issue of awarding the title Hero of Ukraine to combatants (73%). Also, a significant number of petitioners discussed various toponymic initiatives: renaming streets and settlements.
- In peacetime, the most discussed topics were designing a strategy for city development (67%), while during the war – the budget allocation (66%).
- According to 83% of respondents, the results of direct democracy activities should be made public despite the war.

# Answer Breakdown

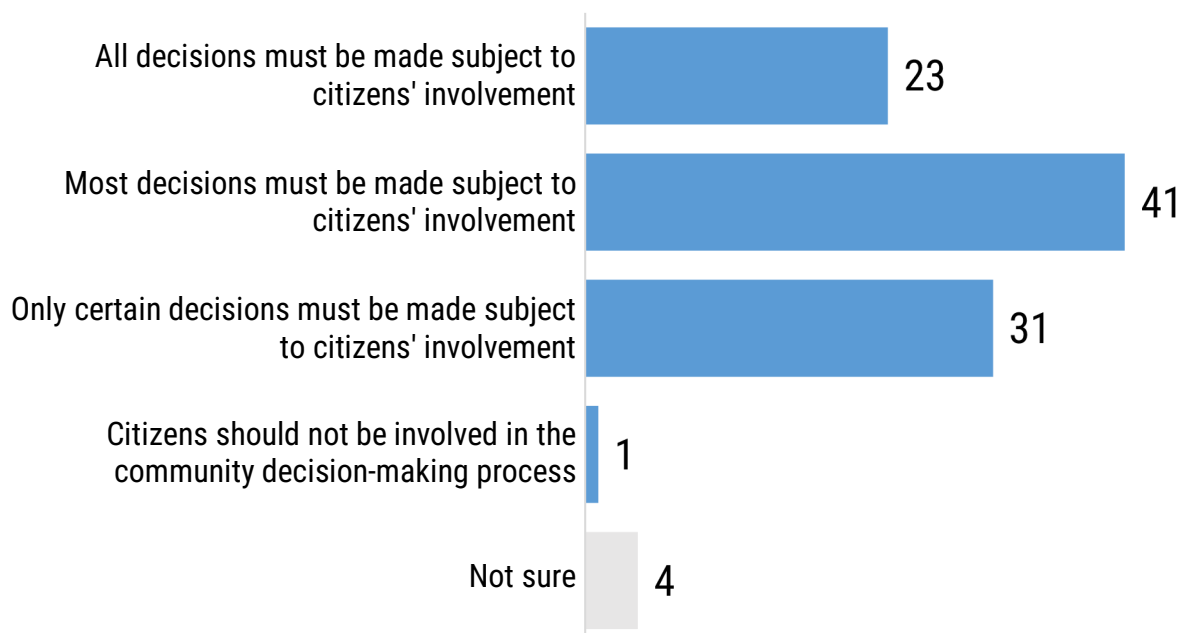
## Attitude to the citizens' involvement in the community decision-making process (N=404), %

Q.: In your opinion, to what extent should residents of Kherson city community be involved in the related decision-making process?

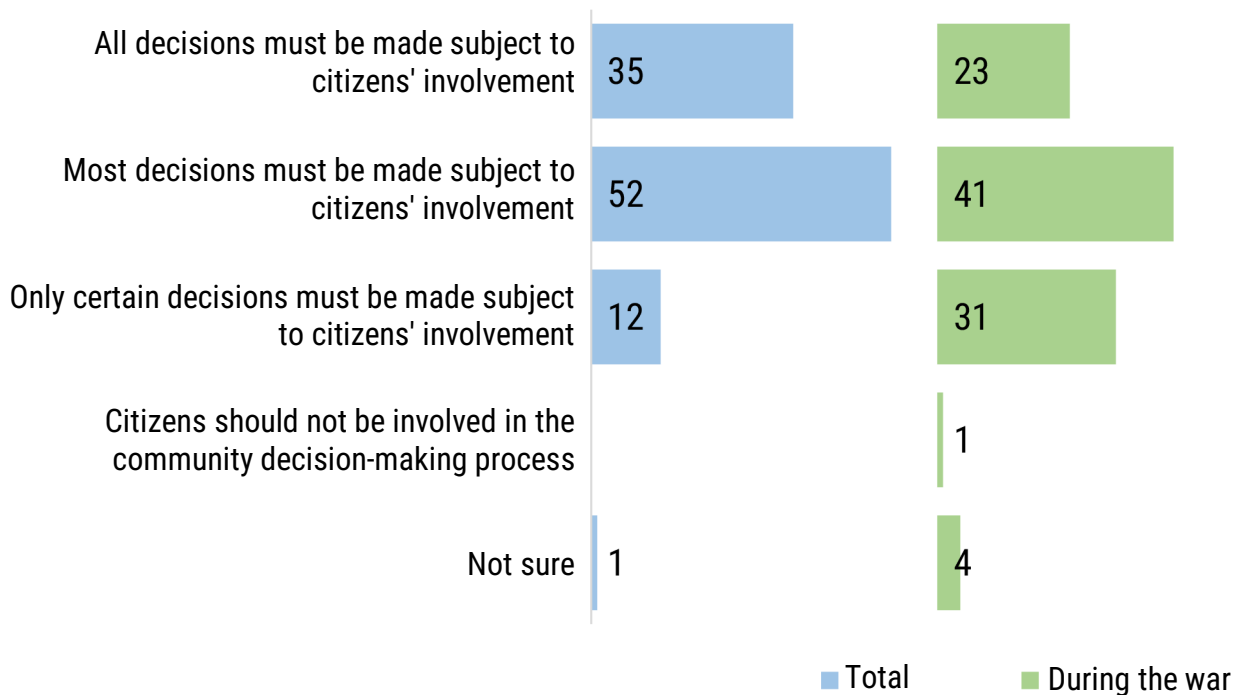


## Attitude to the citizens' involvement in the community decision-making process during the war (N=404), %

Q.: In your opinion, to what extent should residents of Kherson city community be involved in the related decision-making process during the war?

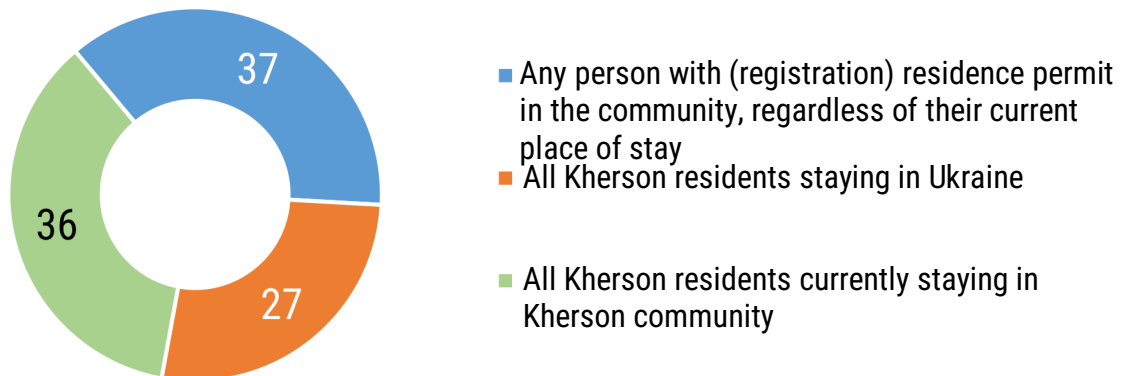


**Comparison of the attitude to the citizens' involvement in the community decision-making under different conditions (N=404), %**



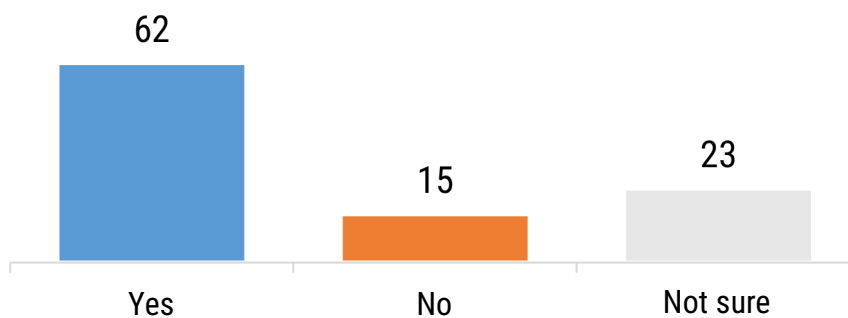
**Participants to the decision-making process in Kherson (N=404), %**

Q.: In your opinion, who should be involved to decision-making process in Kherson city community?



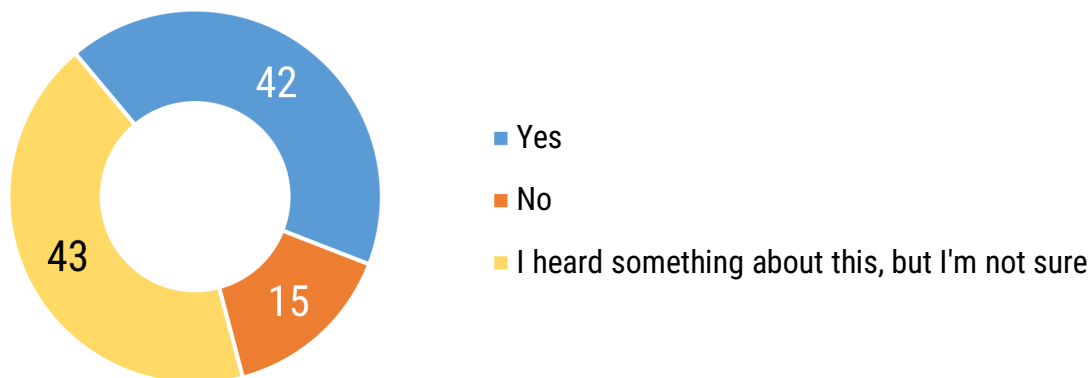
**IDPs participation to the decision-making process in Kherson (N=404), %**

Q.: Should IDPs registered in Kherson be involved in decision-making process in Kherson city community?



### Understanding the “direct democracy” concept (N=404), %

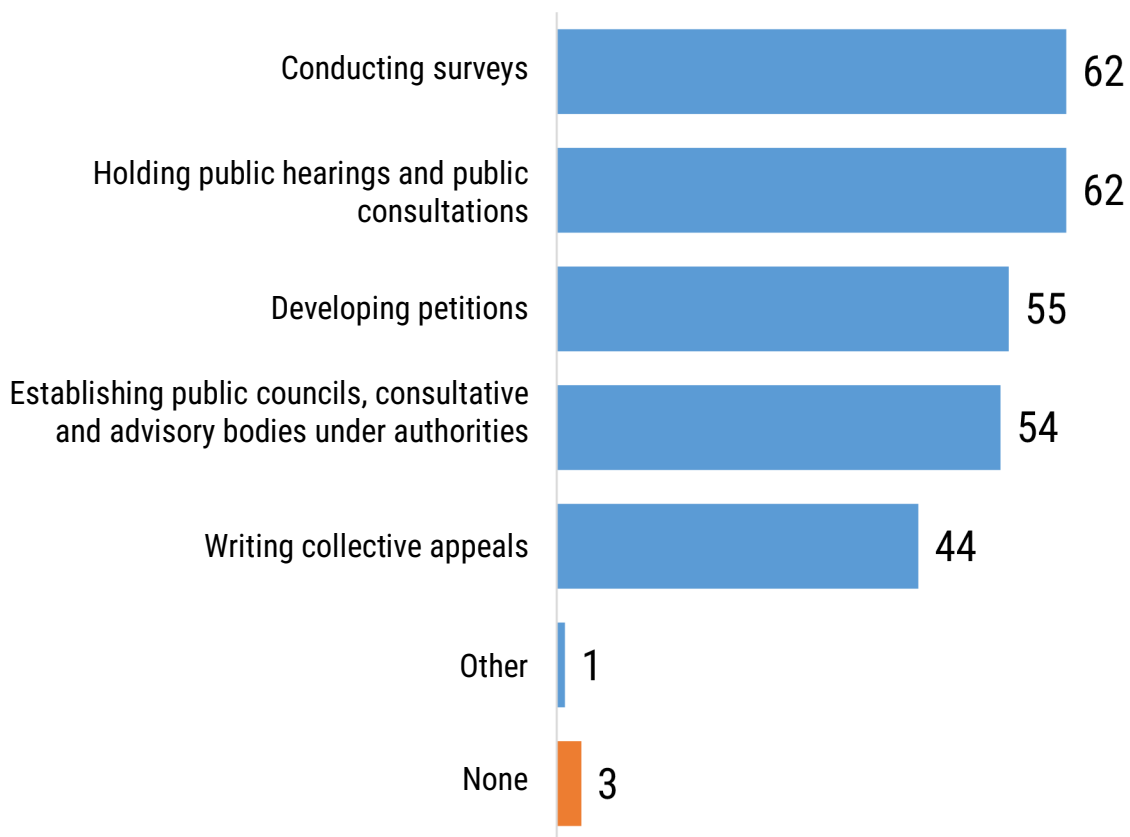
Q.: Do you know what the “direct democracy” is?



### Perception of direct democracy activities (N=404), %

Q.: Direct democracy is a form of governance when executive decisions are made subject to participation of all citizens. What direct democracy activities do you believe relevant (in general) for Kherson city community?

\*Multiple choice

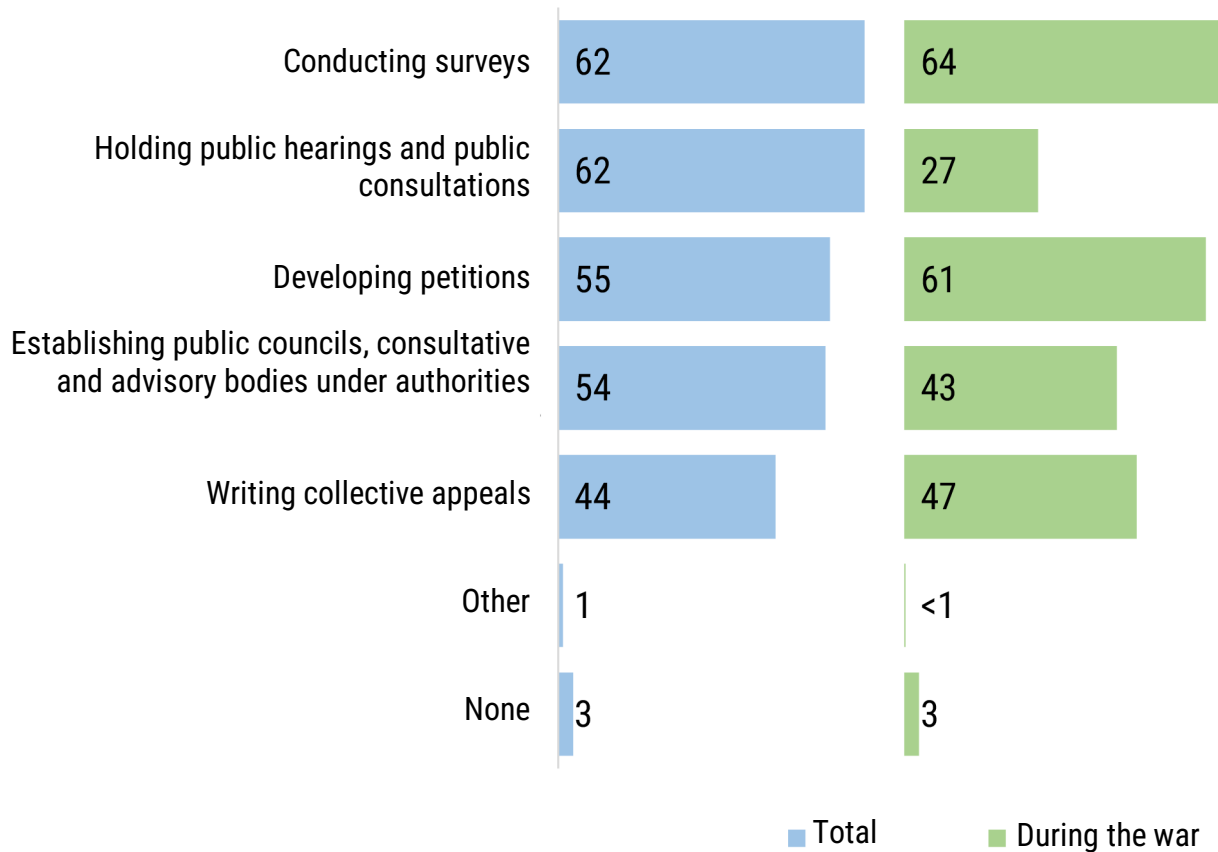


**Other answers:** public examinations, public monitoring; there must be options for remote participation in public discussions, for example, surveys with Diia-based registration; direct influence on the authorities' decisions.

**Comparison of the way direct democracy activities are perceived under different conditions (N=404), %**

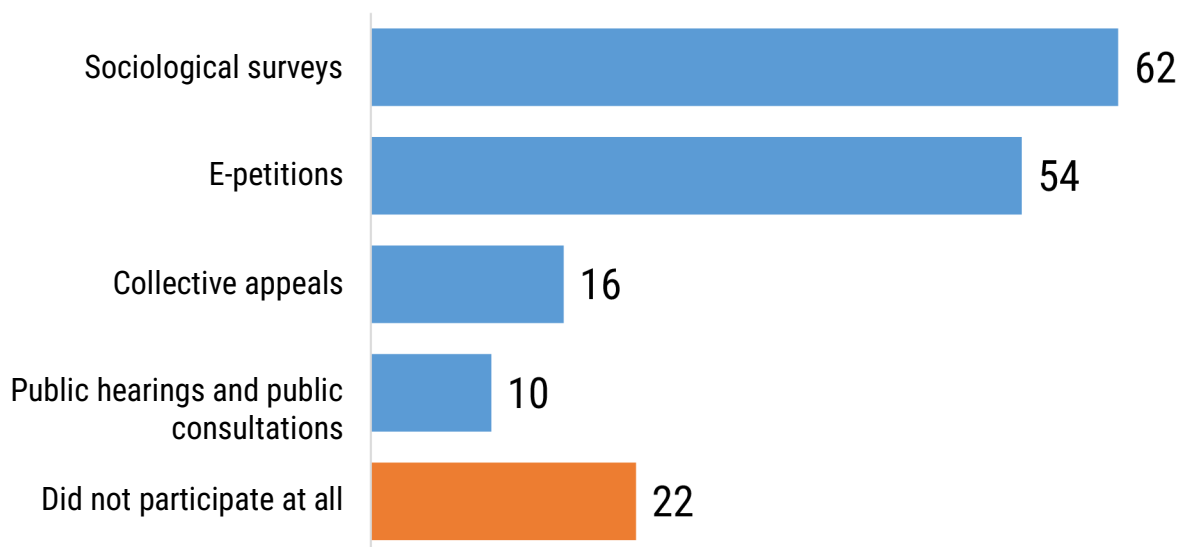
Q.: What kind of activities do you believe relevant for Kherson city community during the war?

\*Multiple choice



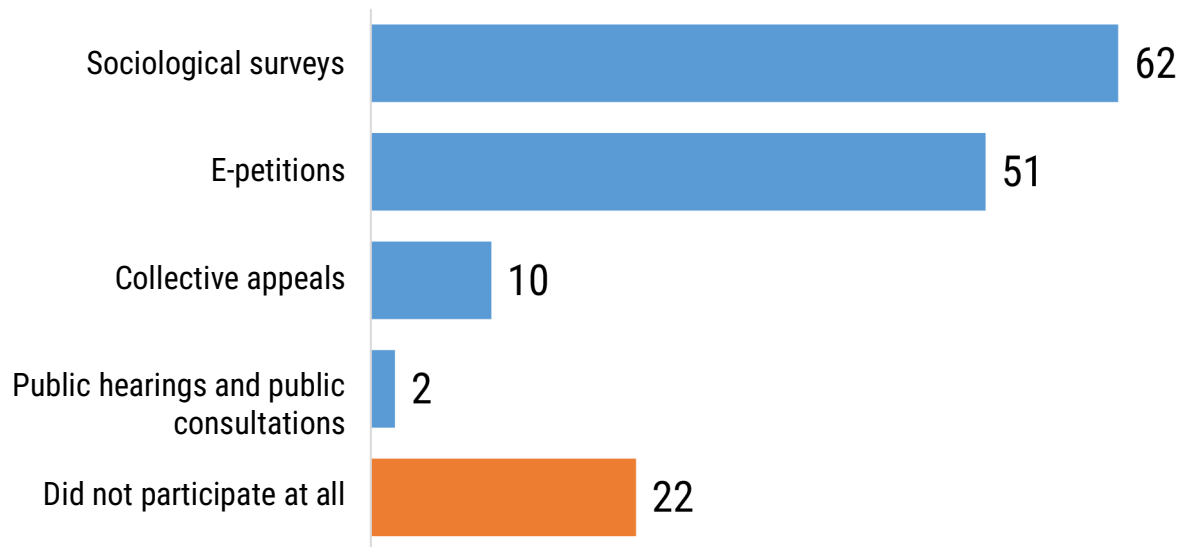
**Experience of participation in direct democracy activities (N=404), %**

Q.: Did you participate in the following activities (initiatives) related to Kherson community before February 24, 2022?

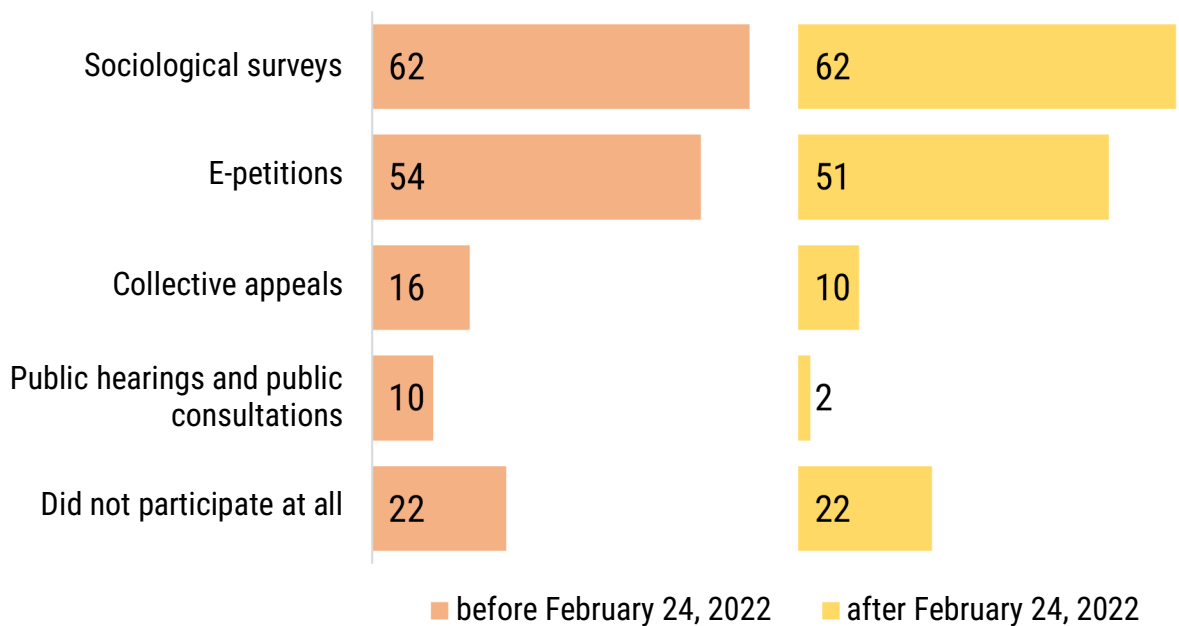


**Experience of participation in direct democracy activities after February 24, 2022 (N=404), %**

Q.: Did you participate in the following activities (initiatives) related to Kherson community after February 24, 2022?



**Comparison of experience of participation in direct democracy activities before and after February 24, 2022 (N=404), %**

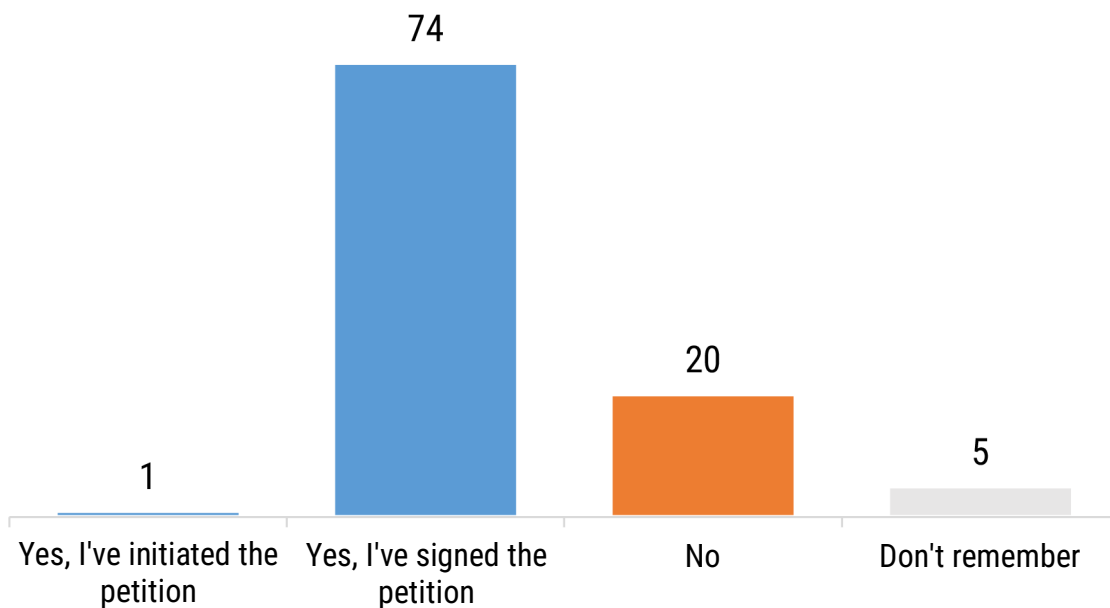




## Experience of participation in petitions (N=404), %

Q.: Nowadays, e-petitions have gained popularity among citizens. Did you participate in petitions after February 24, 2022?

\*Multiple choice



## Content of petitions

Q.: What were these petitions aimed at?

\*Multiple choice

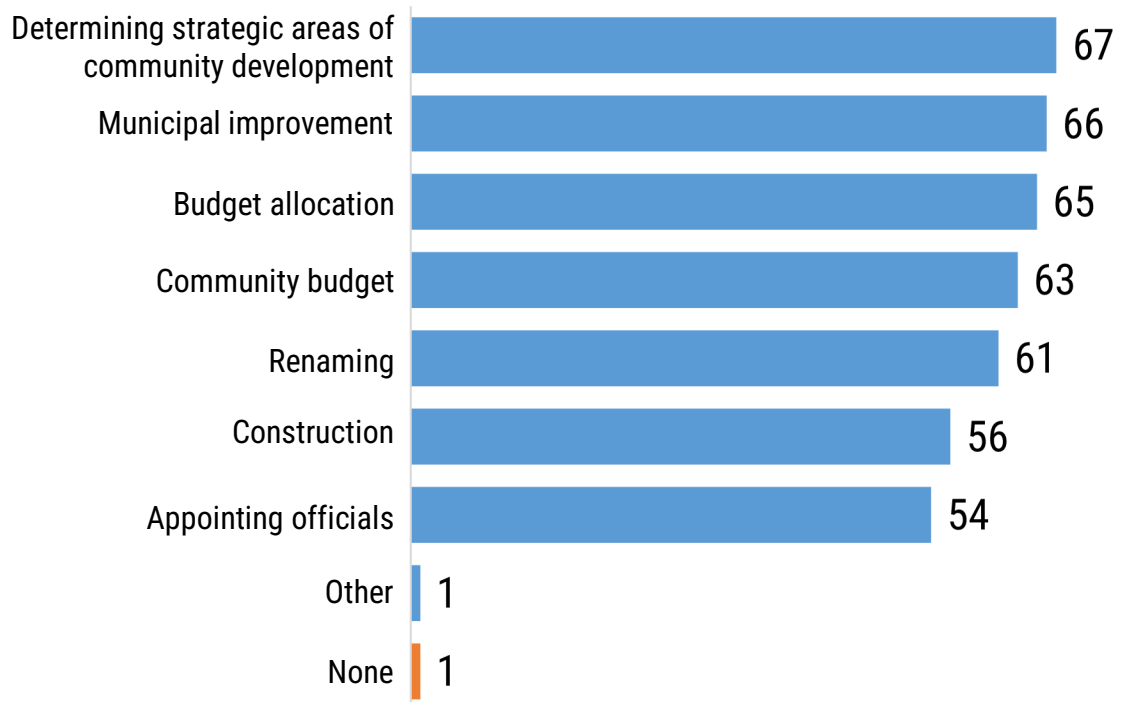


**Other answers:** vaccination; dismissal of officials; corruption prevention; re-allocation of budget funds (to the Armed Forces of Ukraine); maintaining IDP payments, etc.

### Topics of public discussions and consultations

Q.: In your opinion, what issues must local authorities refer to discussions/consultations (in general)?

\*Multiple choice

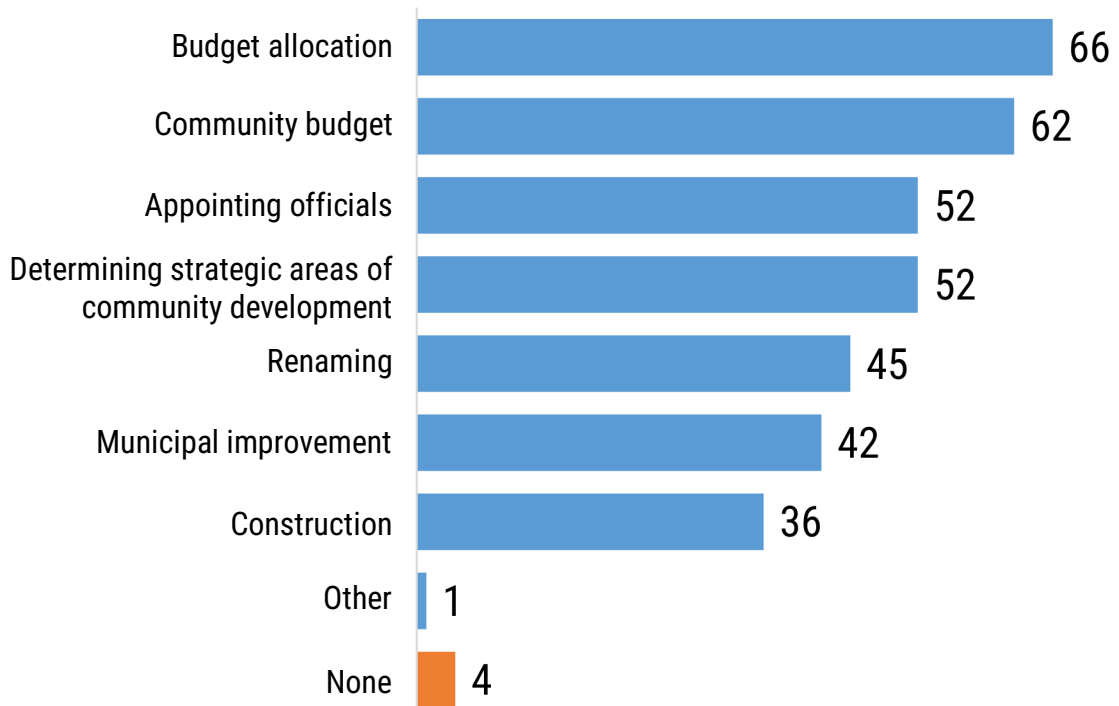


**Other answers:** restoring destroyed buildings; all issues related to the community and citizens.

### Topics of public discussions and consultations during the war

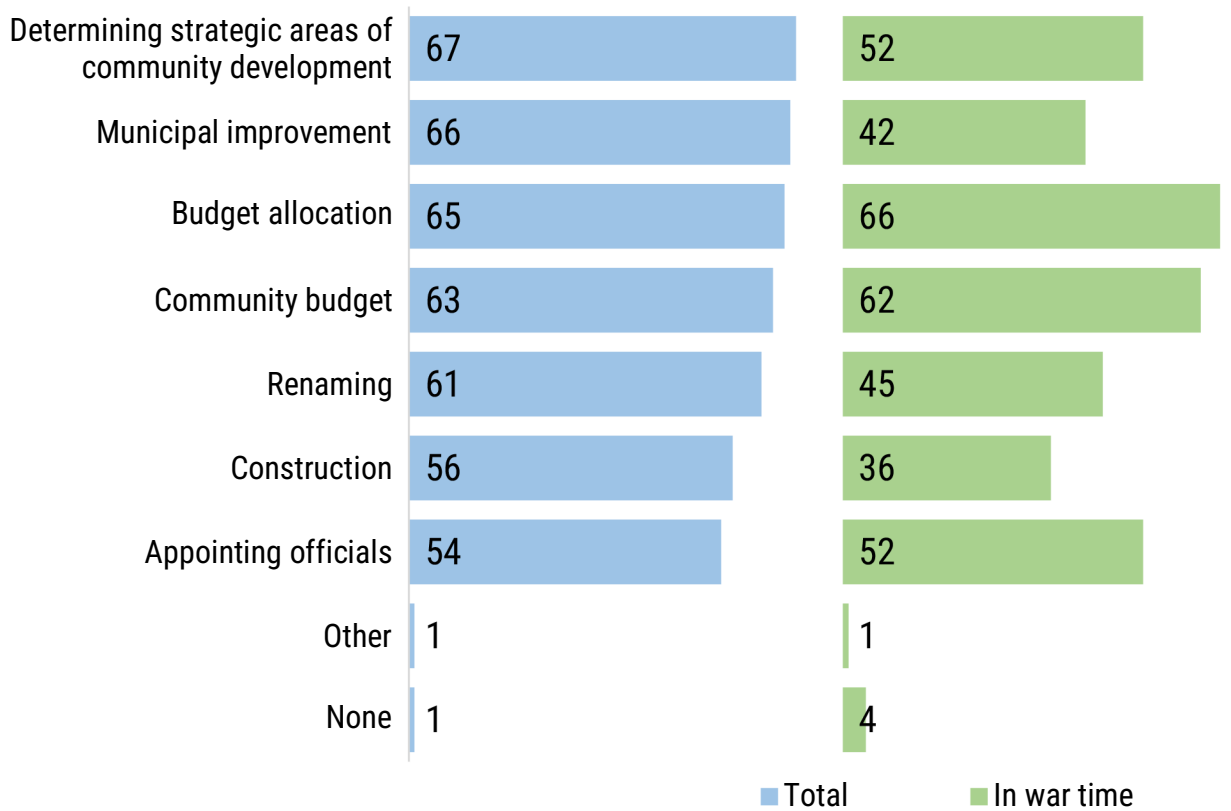
Q.: In your opinion, what issues must local authorities refer to discussions/consultations during the war?

\*Multiple choice



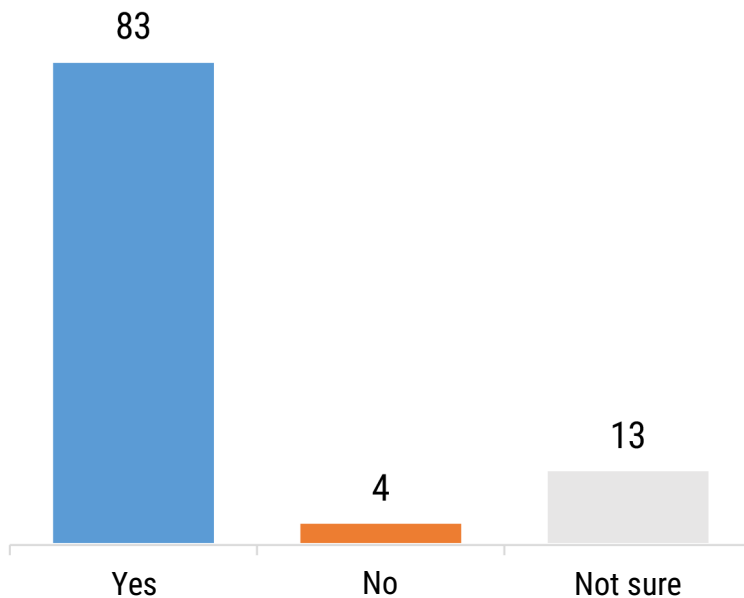
**Other answers:** City reconstruction after shelling; all issues but military-related ones.

**Comparison of topics of public discussions and consultations at different times**



**Attitudes to publishing public discussions and consultations outcomes during wartime**

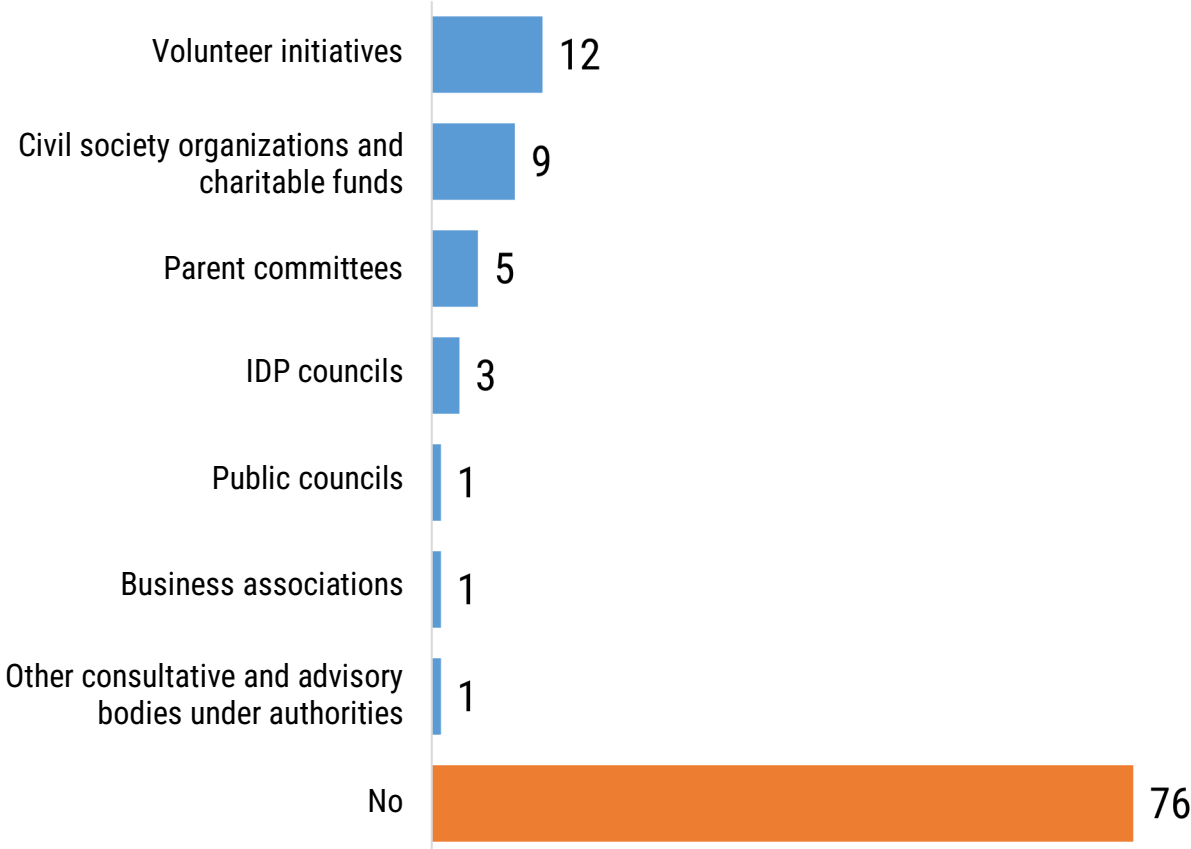
Q.: *Should the outcomes of direct democracy activities be published during the war?*



**Experience of participation in civil society organizations**

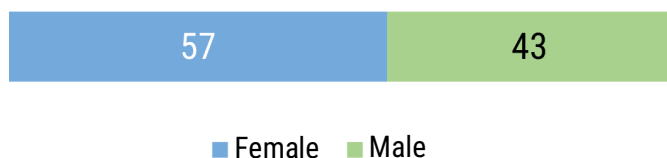
Q.: Are you currently a member of the following citizen groups?

\*Multiple choice

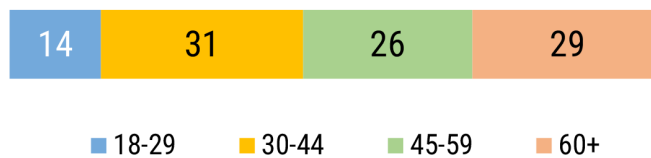


# Respondents' profile

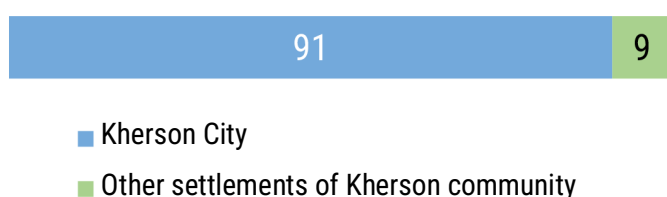
**Gender, %**



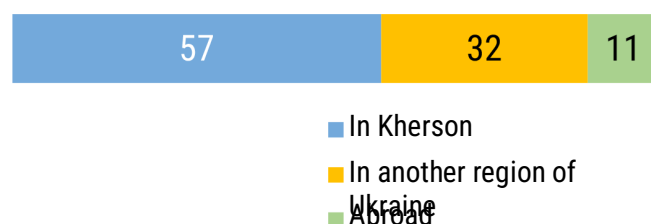
**Age, %**



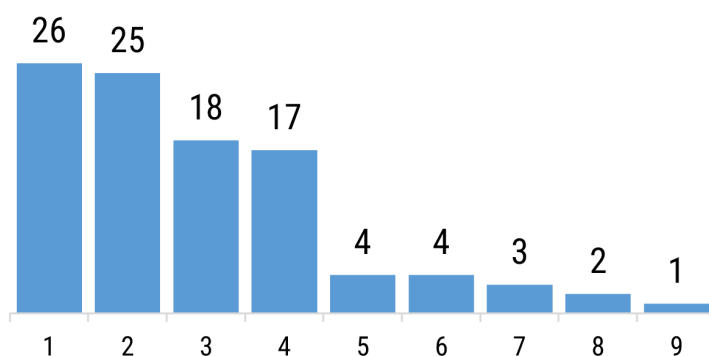
**Residing before 24.02.2022, %**



**Currently residing, %**



**Current type of employment, %**



1. Retired people
2. Unemployed, involved in housekeeping, children care
3. Employed in a PUBLIC or MUNICIPAL enterprise / institution / organization
4. Employed in a PRIVATE company / enterprise / organization
5. Freelancers / self-employed
6. Students
7. Entrepreneurs
8. Volunteers
9. Other

**IDPs in other regions of Ukraine, %**

Odesa	9
Kyiv City	4
Kyiv	4
Dnipropetrovsk	3
Vinnitsia	3
Mykolaiv	3
Rivne	2
Cherkasy	1
Ivano-Frankivsk	1
Lviv	1
Other regions	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>

**IDPs abroad, %**

Poland	3
UK	2
Germany	2
Romania	1
Czechia	1
Other countries	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>