Policy Brief ———————————————————— November 2025
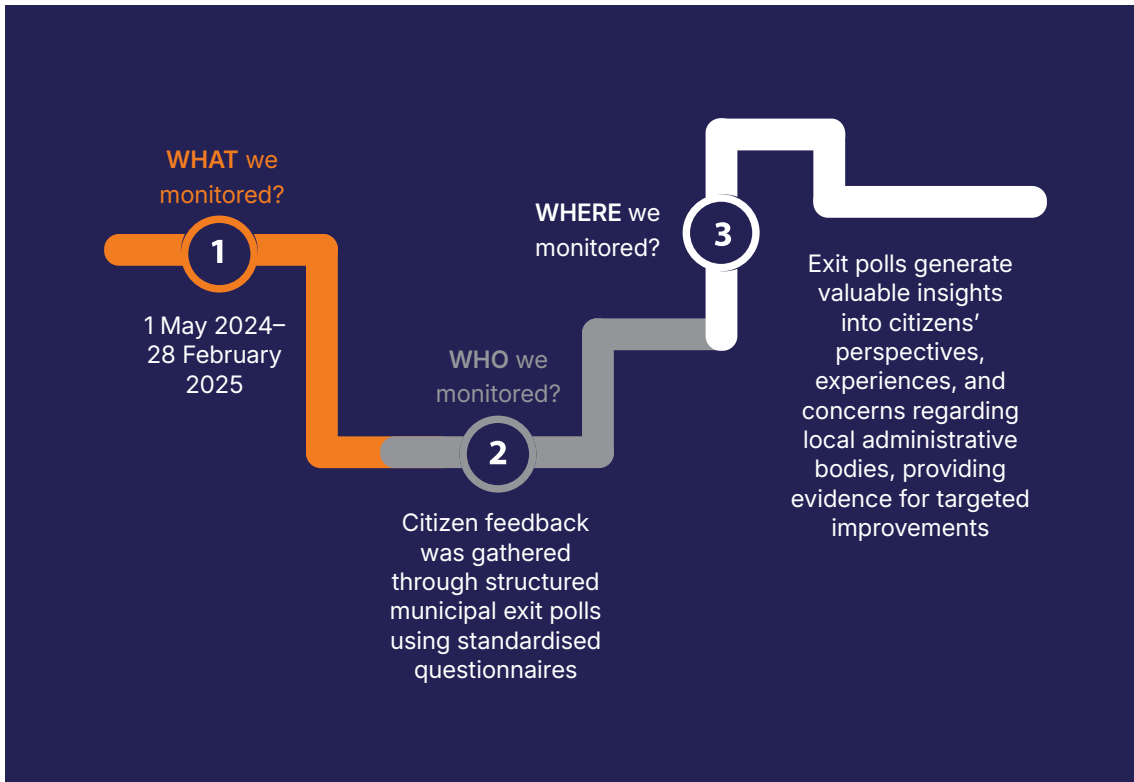

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Service Delivery in North Macedonia: Results of the Exit Polling[1]

Background information

Under the WeBER 3.0 project's Small Grant Facility, the European Policy Institute – Skopje (EPI) signed grant contracts with three civil society organisations to enhance citizen engagement in public administration reform (PAR) at the local level. The Consumers Organisation of Macedonia (COM) worked on digitalising and modernising communal services in Ohrid; Blink 42-21 developed a digital platform to improve public services in Kochani; and Pro Local focused on bringing digital municipal services closer to citizens in Bitola and on developing a digital cultural calendar for citizens there. As part of these initiatives, each organisation conducted exit polls among around 200 citizens to gather their feedback on local administrations, to inform efforts towards more transparent, accountable, and citizen-centred governance in line with EU standards.
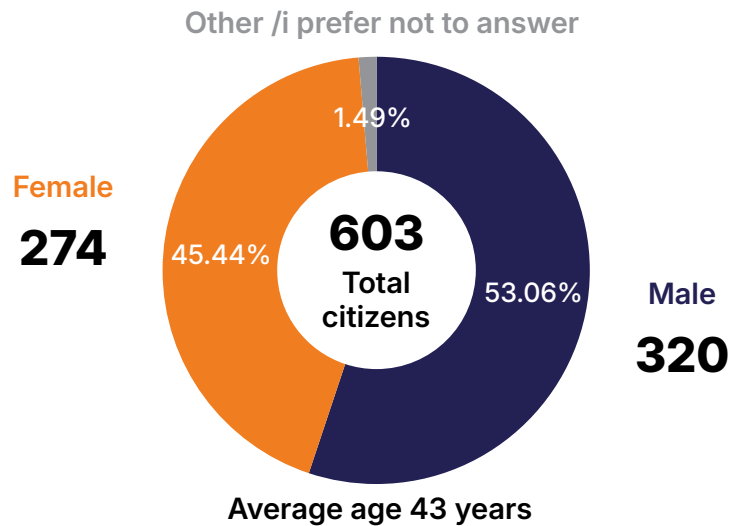
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1 In its usual application, exit polling is a method of predicting election results by surveying voters as they leave the polling station. (https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/exit-poll.) In the context of this report, exit polling refers to a method for collecting citizens' experiences regarding their level of satisfaction, waiting times, staff courtesy, and other aspects of service delivery immediately after they leave the premises of the public administration body that provided the service.

Citizen feedback is not a critique — it is a roadmap to better governance

WHAT we monitored?

1

By directly engaging residents, the project enhances participatory democracy and enables local authorities to provide more transparent, effective, and citizen-centred services

WHO we monitored?

2

Local-level administrations, evaluated based on citizens' insights, experiences, and expressed concerns

WHERE we monitored?

3

In Ohrid, Bitola, and Kochani, in the Republic of North Macedonia

WHAT we monitored?

1

1 May 2024– 28 February 2025

WHO we monitored?

2

Citizen feedback was gathered through structured municipal exit polls using standardised questionnaires

WHERE we monitored?

3

Exit polls generate valuable insights into citizens' perspectives, experiences, and concerns regarding local administrative bodies, providing evidence for targeted improvements
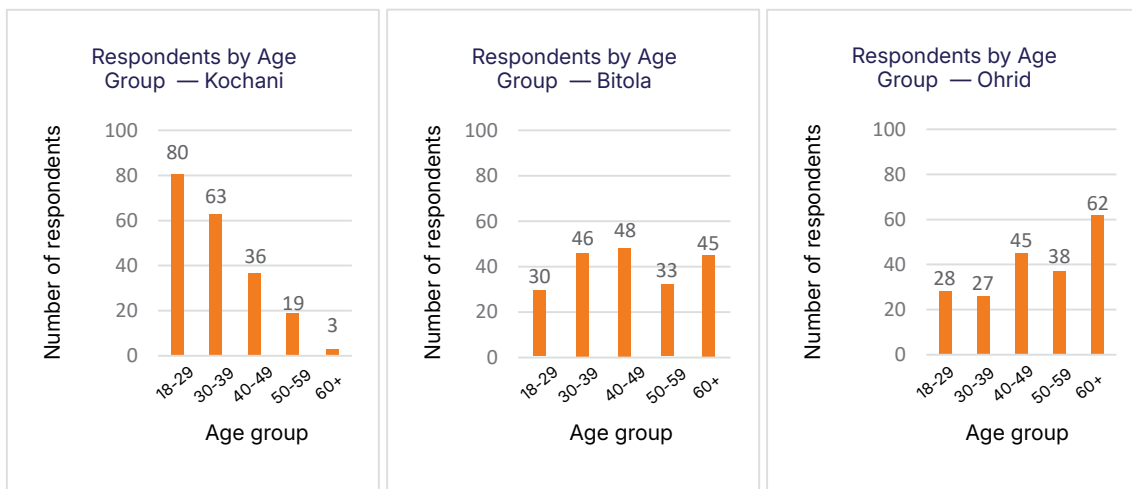
Demographic and Population Profile of Survey Respondents Across Three Municipalities

The distribution of respondents was fairly even across Kochani (201), Bitola (202), and Ohrid (200), ensuring balanced insights from each locality. Gender representation was nearly equal, with **men (53%)** slightly more represented; nine participants chose not to disclose their gender or selected 'other'.

Other /i prefer not to answer

1.49%

Female
274
45.44%

603
Total citizens

53.06%

Male
320
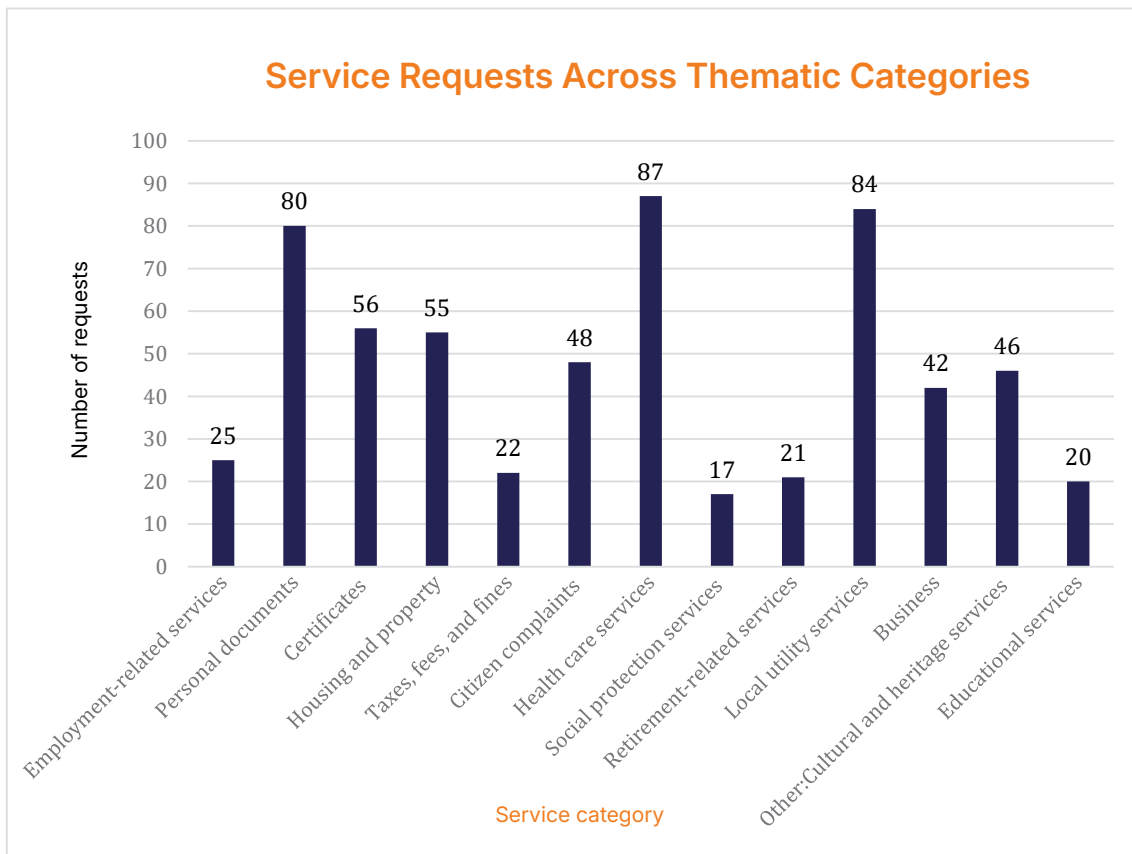
Average age 43 years

Public services are accessed by people of all ages, yet the age composition varies significantly across the three municipalities. **Kochani** had a predominantly young population (18–39 years old) with an **average age of 34**, indicating a comparatively youthful demographic. **Ohrid** displayed many respondents aged **50+** and an **average age of 49**, reflecting an ageing community. **Bitola** fell in between, featuring a balanced mix of age groups, although respondents aged 30–49 were the most common, with an **average age of 46**. The overall average age of respondents was **43 years**. These variations highlight differences in community needs, priorities, and socioeconomic dynamics across municipalities.

Respondents by Age Group — Kochani

Age group	Number of respondents
18-29	80
30-39	63
40-49	36
50-59	19
60+	3

Respondents by Age Group — Bitola

Age group	Number of respondents
18-29	30
30-39	46
40-49	48
50-59	33
60+	45

Respondents by Age Group — Ohrid

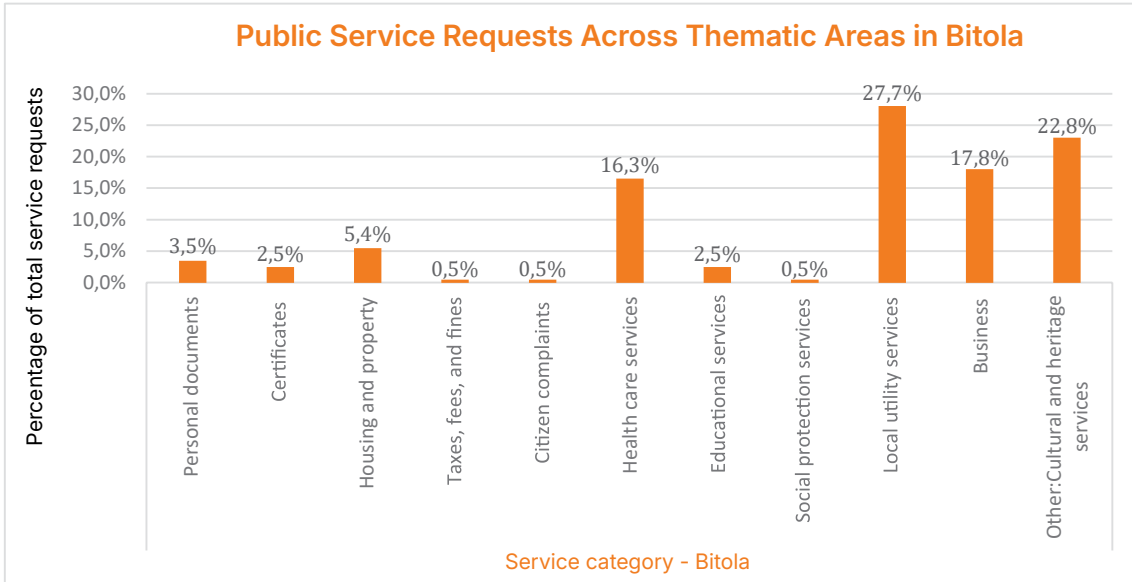| Age group	Number of respondents
18-29	28
30-39	27
40-49	45
50-59	38
60+	62

ANALYSIS OF THE COLLECTED DATA

Analysis of 603 service requests across thirteen categories (see the table below) shows that health care services, local utilities, and personal documents are the most frequently requested, reflecting citizens' essential priorities. Certificates, housing and property services, citizen complaints, and business-related services also make up a substantial number of requests. In contrast, social protection, retirement, taxes and fees, education, employment, and cultural and heritage services receive comparatively lower engagement.

The distribution indicates that citizens rely heavily on public administration for basic and essential services. Lower demand in certain categories may indicate barriers to access, limited awareness, or simply less frequent need. These findings underscore opportunities for policymakers to optimise high-demand services for greater efficiency while improving accessibility and communication for underutilised services, thereby promoting more equitable access. Understanding these patterns of citizen engagement is crucial for strategic planning, resource allocation, and the design of interventions to strengthen service delivery and increase overall citizen satisfaction.
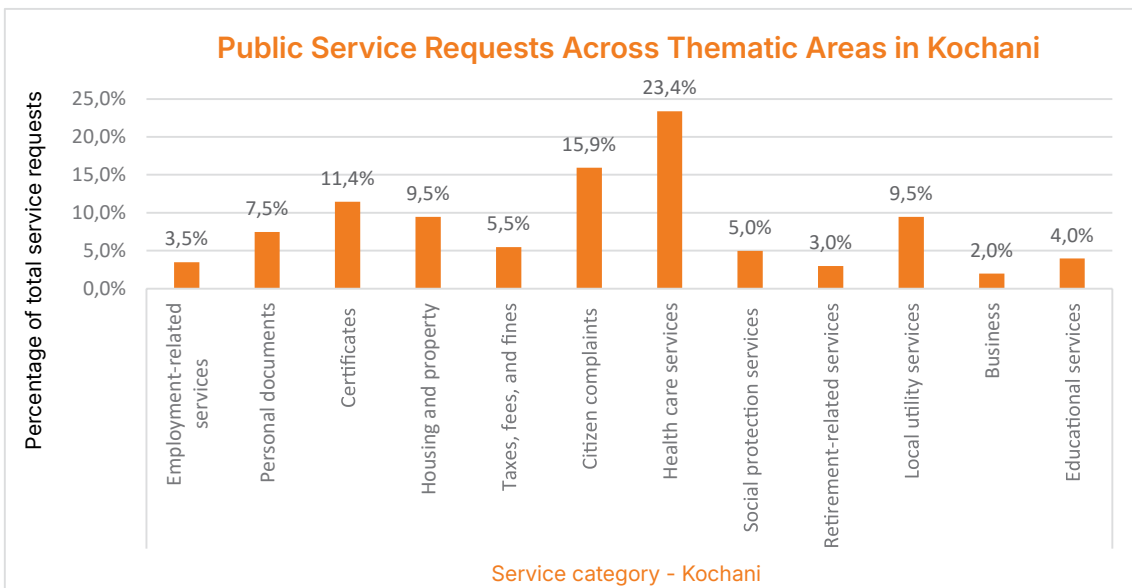
Service Requests Across Thematic Categories

Note: Personal documents (e.g. ID, passport, driving licence, etc.); Certificates(e.g. certificate of citizenship, residence, register of birth, marriage, death etc.);Taxes, fees, and fines (e.g. paying tax on the transfer of absolute rights, seeking VAT return, paying a traffic violation ticket, etc.); Health care services (e.g. registering/ requesting healthcare card, check-up appointment etc.); Social protection services (e.g. applying for social aid, child support, etc.);Educational services (e.g. kindergarten, school or faculty enrollment, etc.); Retirement-related services (e.g. applying for a disability pension, determining years of services, etc.); Employment-related services (e.g. registration of unemployed person, searching for a job, etc.); Business (e.g. registration of the business, applying for subsidies, etc.); Housing and property (e.g. registration of real estate, applying for construction or other permits, etc.); Citizen complaints (e.g. reporting noise disturbances, environmental or traffic misdemeanour, etc.); Local utility services (e.g. water supply, waste management, postal services, etc.); Other: Cultural and heritage services.
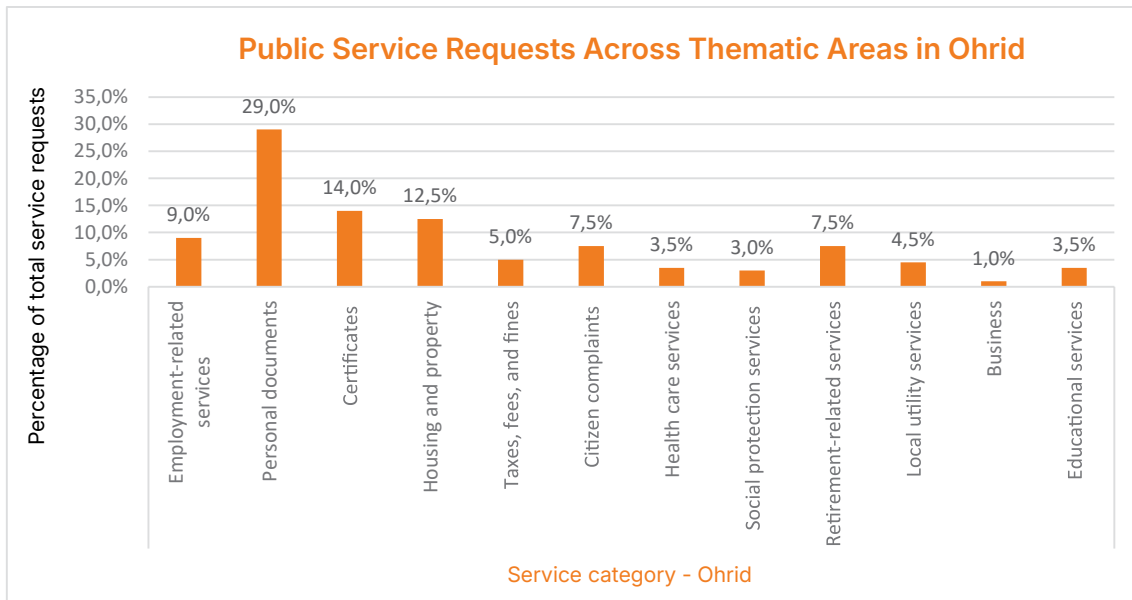
In **Bitola**, among 202 recorded requests, local utility services, cultural and heritage services, and business registration generated the highest demand, indicating that citizens rely strongly on municipal infrastructure, essential services, and cultural offerings. Requests related to health care services and housing were also notable, while social protection, taxes, and citizen complaints showed minimal engagement.

Public Service Requests Across Thematic Areas in Bitola

Kochani registered 201 requests, with health care, citizen complaints, certificates, and housing services accounting for the majority of interactions. This pattern points to a strong focus on personal and regulatory needs, as well as active reporting of issues affecting local quality of life. Lower engagement in business registration and local utilities suggests differences in service priorities or availability when compared with Bitola.

Public Service Requests Across Thematic Areas in Kochani

Ohrid received 200 requests, most of which concerned personal documents, certificates, and housing services. Health care and local utilities were less requested, while citizen complaints and taxes showed moderate levels of engagement. This indicates a distinct municipal profile where citizens place greater emphasis on documentation and property-related needs.

Public Service Requests Across Thematic Areas in Ohrid

Service category	Percentage
Employment-related services	9,0%
Personal documents	29,0%
Certificates	14,0%
Housing and property	12,5%
Taxes, fees, and fines	5,0%
Citizen complaints	7,5%
Health care services	3,5%
Social protection services	3,0%
Retirement-related services	7,5%
Local utility services	4,5%
Business	1,0%
Educational services	3,5%

Service category - Ohrid

Overall, the data show that citizen priorities differ considerably across municipalities. **High-demand services**—such as health care, local utilities, personal documentation, and housing—highlight the need for efficient, timely, and accessible service delivery. In contrast, **low engagement** in areas such as social protection, taxes, and citizen complaints may point to barriers to access, limited awareness, or a lower perceived necessity.

> **41% of respondents** were first-time users of the service, while **59% had used the service before**

> **Simplify the design of public services and their underlying processes, ensuring users do not need to understand the internal structure of the public sector**
>
> **(**OECD Good Practice Principles for Public Service Design and Delivery in the Digital Age)
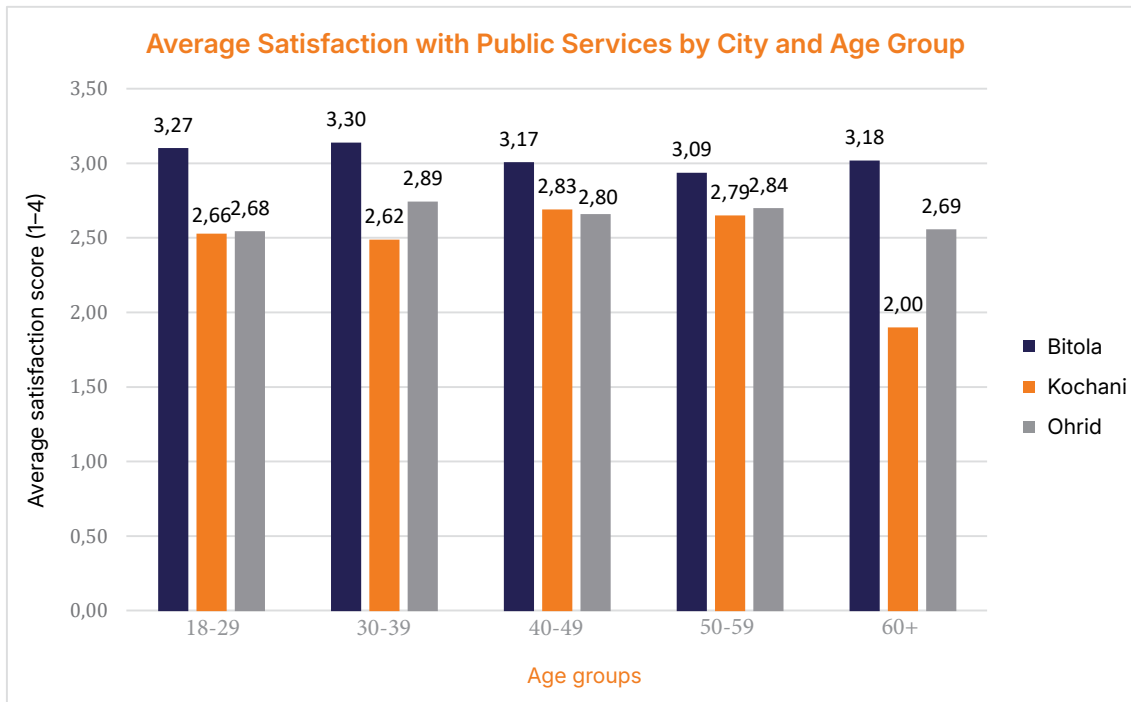
Citizen awareness of which level of government (central or local) delivers a service is crucial for transparency and accountability. Survey findings show **that 348 out of 603 respondents (approximately 58%)** identified services as being provided by the **national government**, while **255 (approximately 42%)** identified **local authorities** as responsible. However, misclassification of competences and responsibilities at the national and local levels was common—some local services were perceived as national, and vice versa—pointing to a clear need for better communication of institutional roles.

At the same time, many citizens prioritise efficiency and reliability over knowing which institution is responsible. OECD research[2] confirms that users should not need to have internal knowledge of government structures or be taken on journeys that involve separate websites, call centres, or service delivery locations. Furthermore, from a user perspective, accessible, dependable, and well-delivered services often matter more than institutional awareness. Still, clarity regarding institutional responsibility is crucial for governance, accountability, and functional complaint-handling mechanisms. Public institutions **should place citizens at the centre of service design**, ensuring that needs, lived experiences, and user feedback inform continuous improvement. This aligns with broader trends toward responsive, transparent, and user-oriented public administration.[3]
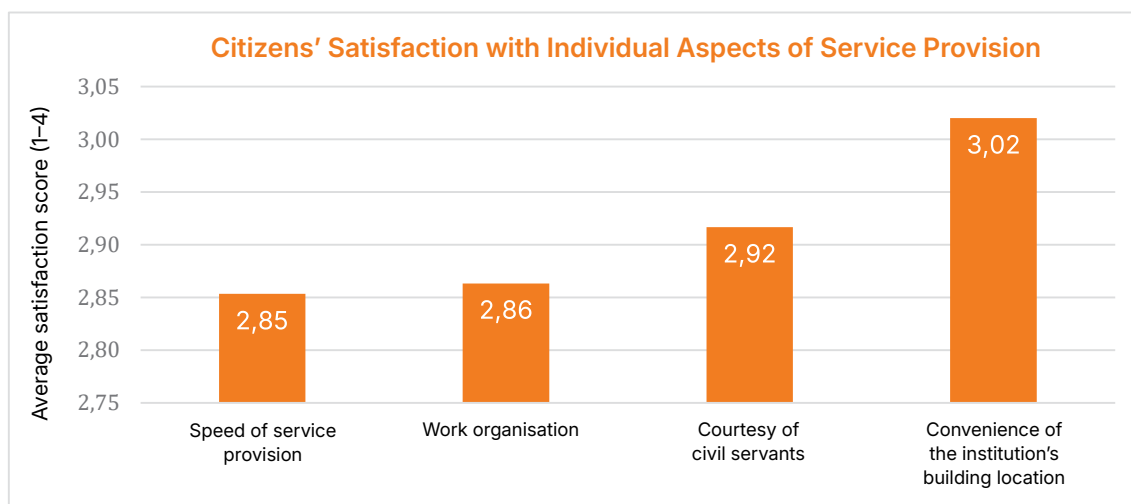
2 OECD. 2022. Designing and Delivering Public Services in the Digital Age. Available at: https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2022/03/designing-and-delivering-public-services-in-the-digital-age_8a90fb7d/e056ef99-en.pdf. Accessed 19 November 2025.

3 World Bank. 2018. Indicators of Citizen-Centric Public Service Delivery. Available at: https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/775701527003544796/pdf/126399-WP-PUBLIC-CitizenCentricGovernanceIndicatorsFinalReport.pdf. Accessed 19 November 2025.

Average Satisfaction with Public Services by City and Age Group

Note: Average score on a 4-point scale (1 = Very negative, 4 = Very positive)
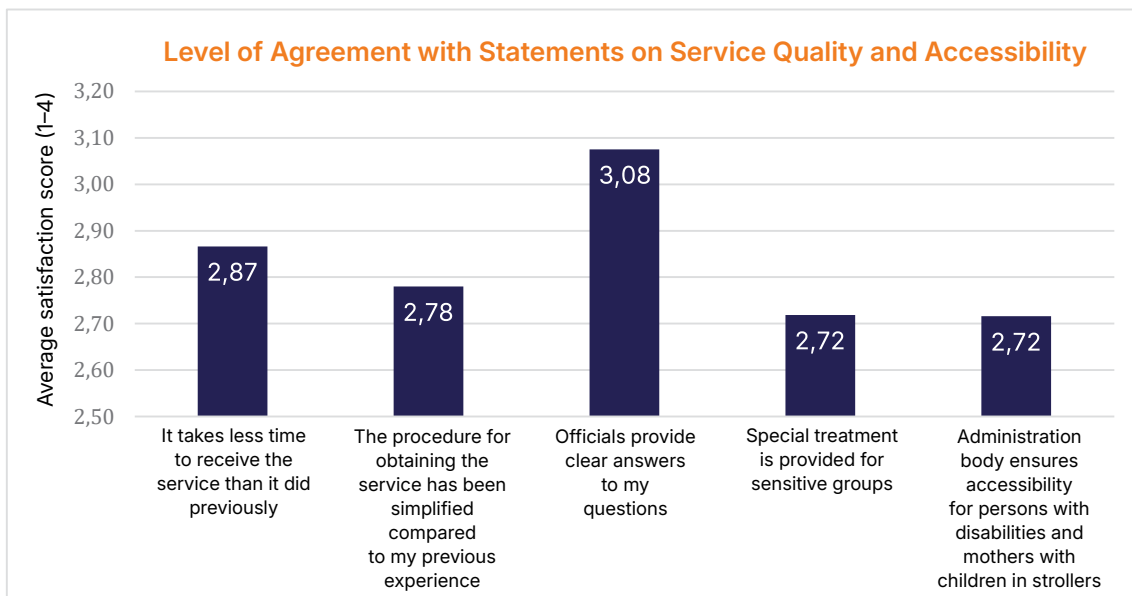
Satisfaction with public services varies by municipality and age: **Bitola** leads with an overall score of 3.20, though older residents report slightly lower satisfaction, indicating minor accessibility challenges. **Kochani** scores lowest at 2.68, with the 60+ age group particularly dissatisfied, highlighting an urgent need for improvements across all age groups. **Ohrid** is moderate at 2.77, showing some improvement among older residents compared to **Kochani**, but there is still room for enhancement. These patterns underscore the **importance of accessible, efficient, and age-tailored public services** to ensure all citizens' needs are met.

Citizens' Satisfaction with Individual Aspects of Service Provision

Note: Scores are based on a 4-point scale (1 = Very dissatisfactory; 4 = Very satisfactory).

Citizens place a high value on **staff courtesy and convenient service locations**. However, there is clear potential to **improve service speed and work organisation** to ensure more efficient, responsive public service delivery.
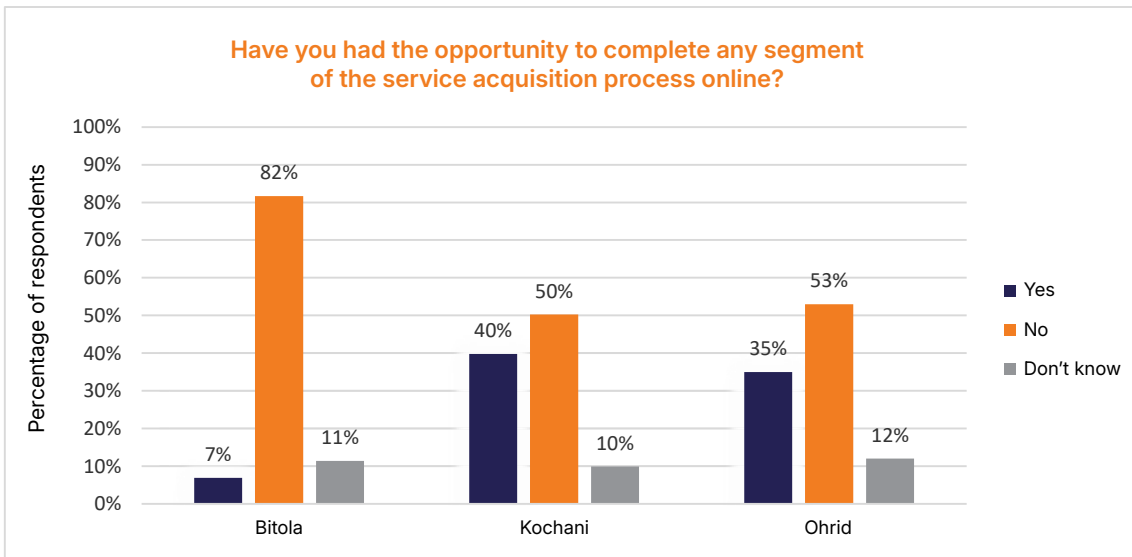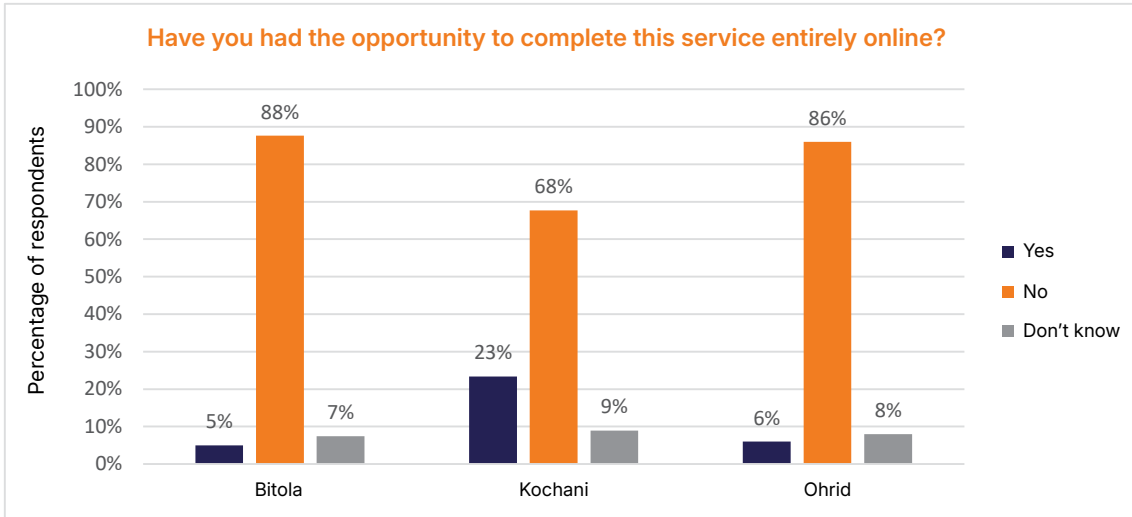
"Administration should be faster at delivering services."

Level of Agreement with Statements on Service Quality and Accessibility

Note: 4-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 4 = strongly agree; x = don't know).

Citizens report that officials generally provide clear answers. Yet, there is a need to **reduce service time**, **simplify procedures**, and improve **specialised treatment and accessibility** for vulnerable groups to ensure a fully inclusive and efficient service experience.

Digital adoption in public services varies across municipalities and reflects differences in population age. **Kochani's predominantly young population (18–39 years) favoured digital solutions**, as reflected in higher e-service adoption: 23% completed services fully online and 40% used partial electronic processes. **Bitola's balanced adult population (30–49 years) relied on a mix** of in-person and digital options, with only 5% completing services fully online and 7% partially online. In **Ohrid, the population over 50 years** favoured more **face-to-face interactions**, with 6% able to complete services fully online and 35% using partial e-processes. These findings indicate that age-tailored approaches and expanded digital options are essential to ensure inclusive, accessible, and effective public service delivery.

Have you had the opportunity to complete this service entirely online?

Percentage of respondents

	Bitola	Kochani	Ohrid
Yes	5%	23%	6%
No	88%	68%	86%
Don't know	7%	9%	8%

Have you had the opportunity to complete any segment of the service acquisition process online?

Percentage of respondents

	Bitola	Kochani	Ohrid
Yes	7%	40%	35%
No	82%	50%	53%
Don't know	11%	10%	12%

Highlights from the Public Feedback

E -Services / Digitalisation

- Citizens repeatedly requested fully electronic processes:
  - » "The process for submitting requests and scheduling appointments should be used more often electronically; often the network fails, the system doesn't work, and this problem needs fixing."
  - » "Online services should be prioritised and the system should function properly to avoid queues and wasted time."
  - » "Allow requests to be submitted online or by email to avoid stress and queues in offices."
- **Key takeaway:** There is a high demand for **fully functional e-services**, which reduce in-person visits and increase efficiency.

Service Efficiency / Responsiveness

- Many comments highlighted slow service or bureaucratic delays:
  - » "Administration should be faster in delivering services."
  - » "Ensure timely responses to citizen requests."
  - » "Implement a one-stop-shop system in state administration."
- **Key takeaway:** Citizens value **speed and efficiency**, especially for routine services like documentation, housing, and employment registration.

Staff Accountability and Professionalism

- Citizens emphasised the proper conduct and qualifications of staff:
  - » "Employees should be present at their workplace during working hours."
  - » "Better trained staff, more professional and engaged."
  - » "Enforce strict penalties for employees exhibiting rude behaviour or engaging in bribery."
- **Key takeaway: Professionalism, adherence to rules, and accountability** are key to citizen trust.

Access and Inclusivity

- Some feedback stressed inclusivity and service accessibility:
  - » "They should care more about older citizens when providing services."
  - » "More consideration towards the Roma population."
- **Key takeaway:** Services need to be **inclusive and responsive to vulnerable groups.**

Cost of Services

- Specific requests related to affordability:
  - » "Public enterprises should reduce service prices."
  - » "Reduce the cost of a new connection."
- **Key takeaway:** Cost is a **relevant factor in citizen satisfaction and access.**

Recommendations

- There should be fully online access to all key municipal and state services; one-stop shops or simplified service points (physical and online) should be established.
- Networks and systems should function reliably; the interoperability platform, Population Register, and database connections should be fully integrated to accelerate and streamline service delivery.
- Municipal services should be included on the national e-services portal with mobile and email submission options made available.
- Municipal websites should be unified and regularly updated.
- Procedures should be simplified for all citizens across all age groups and processing times reduced.
- Services should be accessible for older citizens, marginalised communities, and vulnerable groups.
- At least two annual information sessions and outreach activities should be organised for citizens.
- Municipalities should open information centres for citizens.
- It should be clearly communicated which level of government provides each service.
- Service provision should be monitored and adjusted based on citizen feedback.
- Guidance should be available for complaints, appeals, and feedback mechanisms.
- Submission channels for complaints, suggestions, and proposals should be simplified, with clear feedback mechanisms provided.
- Office hours should be extended/in shifts or made more flexible, with increased appointment availability.
- Civil servants should be properly trained and qualified.
- Civil servants should adhere to working hours and ethical standards.
- Clear penalties for misconduct (e.g. rude behaviour, corruption) should be defined and enforced.