

Open Government Partnership Monitoring Report

Public Opinion Trends 2013-2014

Center for Research and Policy Making

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Open Government

Monitoring Report 2014

The aim of the Open Government initiative is to promote and improve transparency and accountability of the public sector. The possibility for evaluation of the political, administrative, fiscal, and social accountability of governments is dependent on the availability of information on their work. That is the reason why the Open Government initiative has focused on both the public availability of information concerning the work of the government, and the public sector, as well as the citizens' perceptions regarding government's work.

As part of the Project: Advocacy for Open Government – Civil society agenda setting and monitoring of implementation of action plans, the Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM) conducted two surveys which reflect the public perceptions regarding the work of the government. The first survey was conducted in April 2013, on a sample of 1104 respondents. This survey collected information regarding the citizens' trust in public institutions, as well as politicians in the country. The second one was conducted in July 2014, with a sample size of 1100 respondents, representative of the residential Macedonian population. This survey also focused on the citizens' perceptions of the public institutions in the country. In the following part of the report, the comparative results of the surveys will be presented, as well as the tentative conclusions we can draw from the presented data.

Trust in Government

The study looked at three different categories that make the Government: institutions, services and civil society. We looked at domestic and international institutions, and services that provided and managed both publicly and privately, and finally civil society which includes media and political parties.

1. Trust in Institutions

The surveys conducted in 2013 and 2014 allow us to compare the levels of trust that the Macedonian citizens express towards the central political institutions in the country. As Tables from 1 to 4 indicate, there is a general improvement in the general levels of trust expressed by the citizens in 2014, as compared to 2013, although the levels of trust remain relatively low.

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Table 1. Trust in Government of Macedonia in 2013 and 2014.

year	2014		2013	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
I have no trust	253	23.0	400	36.2
Basically I do not trust	243	22.1	228	20.7
Basically I trust	262	23.8	213	19.3
I have great trust	251	22.8	176	15.9
I do not have an opinion	91	8.3	87	7.9
Total	1100	100.0	1104	100.0

Table 1 indicates citizens' confidence in the Macedonian government. In 2013, 15.9% of the respondents said that they have great trust in the government, while 36.2% said that they have no trust at all. The percentages of these two responses in 2014 are 22.8% and 23%, accordingly. **The drop of the percentage of respondents who expressed no trust at all in the government from 2013 to 2014 is dramatic and noteworthy.**

In Table 2 we observe the **confidence** levels expressed by the citizens **towards the institution of the President**. Here as well **we note an improvement** in the levels of trust, however, not so dramatic as in the case of the government. Namely, in 2013, 21.6% of the respondents expressed great trust in the president, while 30.1% reported no trust at all. In 2014 the numbers are approximately reversed, since 29.5% expressed great trust, while 21.3% reported no trust at all.

Table 2. Trust in the President of Macedonia in 2013 and 2014.

year	2014		2013	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
I have no trust	234	21.3	332	30.1
Basically I do not trust	150	13.6	167	15.1
Basically I trust	310	28.2	246	22.3
I have great trust	325	29.5	238	21.6
I do not have an opinion	81	7.4	121	11.0
Total	1100	100.0	1104	100.0

The levels of confidence that the citizens' reported for the Macedonian Parliament are presented in Table 3. In 2013, 30.1% of the respondents said that they have no trust at all, while in 2014, this percent declined to 21.3%. In contrast, the percentage of respondents who said that they have great trust in the parliament grew from 21.6% in 2013, to 29.5% in 2014.

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Table 3. Trust in Parliament of Macedonia in 2013 and 2014.

year	2014		2013	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
I have no trust	324	29.5	425	38.5
Basically I do not trust	238	21.7	258	23.4
Basically I trust	256	23.3	202	18.3
I have great trust	214	19.5	122	11.1
I do not have an opinion	67	6.1	97	8.8
Total	1099	100.0	1104	100.0

The judiciary seems to be the least trusted institution among the main political institutions in the country. As Table 4 indicates, in 2013 only 8.7% of the respondents said that they have trust in this institution, while 38.7% said that they have no trust at all. Nevertheless, we note a rise in the trust towards the judiciary in 2014 by few percentage points, since 14.3% of the respondents reported that they do have great trust in this institution.

Table 4. Trust in the Macedonian Judiciary in 2013 and 2014.

year	2014		2013	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
I have no trust	368	33.5	427	38.7
Basically I do not trust	278	25.3	269	24.4
Basically I trust	226	20.6	217	19.7
I have great trust	157	14.3	96	8.7
I do not have an opinion	70	6.4	95	8.6
Total	1099	100.0	1104	100.0

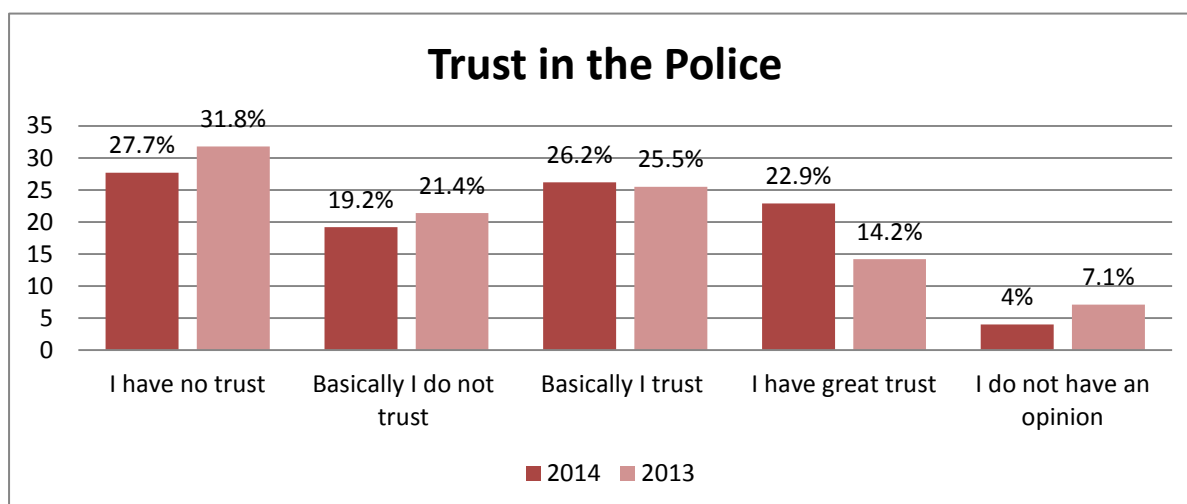
Although still generally low, the levels of trust that the citizens express towards the central institutions in the country are improving, as the presented data indicates. In the following part, the collected data on the expressed trust the other institutions in the country are presented.

2. Trust in Public Services

Regarding the confidence that citizens hold for the public services in Macedonia, the surveys conducted by CRPM collected data about the Macedonian police and army, as well as for the health and educational systems.

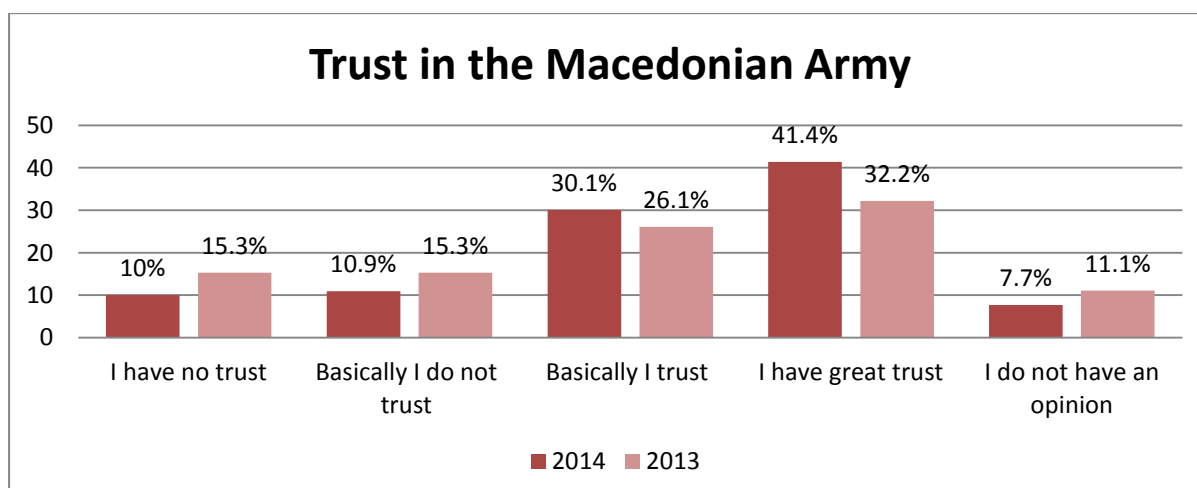
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Chart 1. Trust in the Macedonian Police in 2013 and 2014.



As the data presented in Chart 1 indicates, **the trust citizens' expressed in the police shows improvements from 2013 to 2014**. Specifically, in 2013, 14.2% of the respondents said that they had great trust in the police, while in 2014, this percent has grown to 22.9%. This upwards trend of expressed trust is also present in the case of the Macedonian army as it can be seen on Chart 2. In particular, there is a rise of the percentage of respondents who expressed great trust in the army from 32.2% in 2013, to 41.4% in 2014. As compared to all the analyzed institutions so far, it seems that the army enjoys the greatest trust from the Macedonian citizens.

Chart 2. Trust in the Macedonian Army in 2013 and 2014.



Charts 3 and 4 present the levels of confidence Macedonian citizens expressed towards the healthcare system and the educational system in 2013 and 2014. The charts indicate similar

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trends in these two cases. In particular, more citizens expressed trust than distrust in these two institutions, and the percentage of respondents who reported that they trust the healthcare system and the educational system has increased from 2013 to 2014.

Chart 3. Trust in the Macedonian Health System in 2013 and 2014.

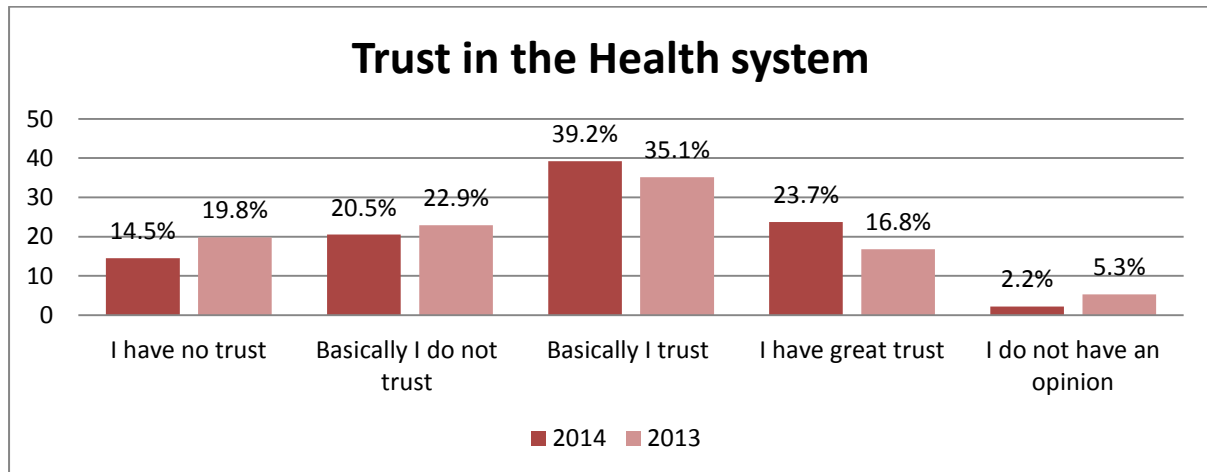
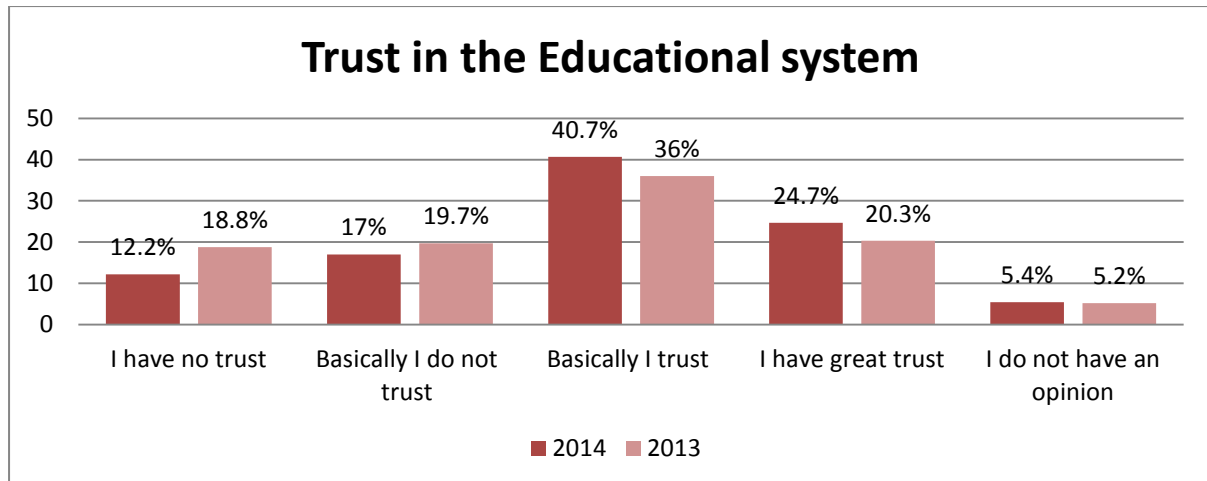


Chart 4. Trust in the Macedonian Educational System in 2013 and 2014.



3. Trust in Civil Society

The data collected on the expressed levels of trust towards the institutions in the civil society paints a different picture than the one we observed in the case of the political institutions, and the public services. Namely, as Chart 5 indicates, the **general levels of trust towards the political parties in the country are very low**: only 7.2% of the respondents expressed great deal of trust in the political parties in 2013, and 7.7% in 2014.

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Chart 5. Trust in Political Parties in Macedonia in 2013 and 2014.

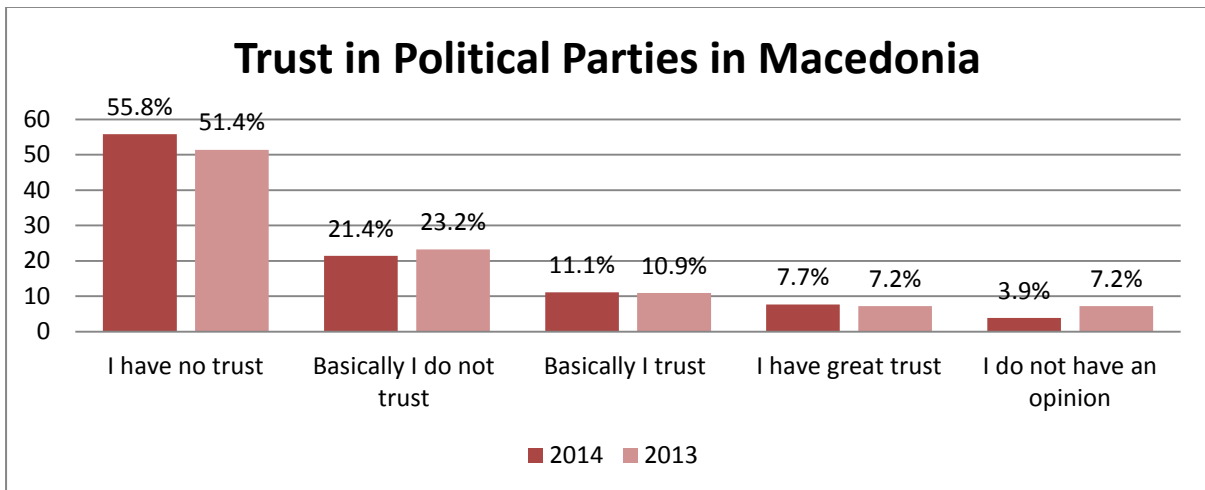
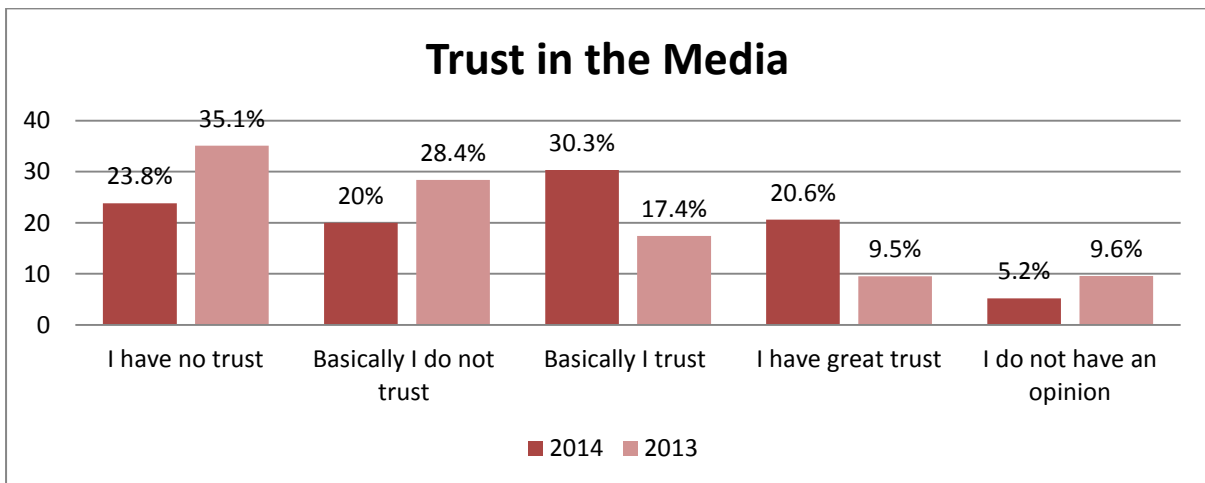


Chart 6 indicates a slightly more optimistic situation regarding citizens' **trust in the media**. Namely, the trust levels **significantly improved from 2013 to 2014**, from 9.5% to 20.6% of the respondents indicating that they have great trust, and from 35.1% to 23.8% of respondents expressing no trust in the media.

Chart 6. Trust in the Media in Macedonia in 2013 and 2014.



In the case of non-governmental organizations, in contrast to all previous institutions, **there seems to be no significant change between 2013 and 2014**. In addition, the respondents are approximately split in half based on whether they have trust or not in the Macedonian NGOs.

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Chart 7. Trust in Macedonian NGOs in 2013 and 2014.

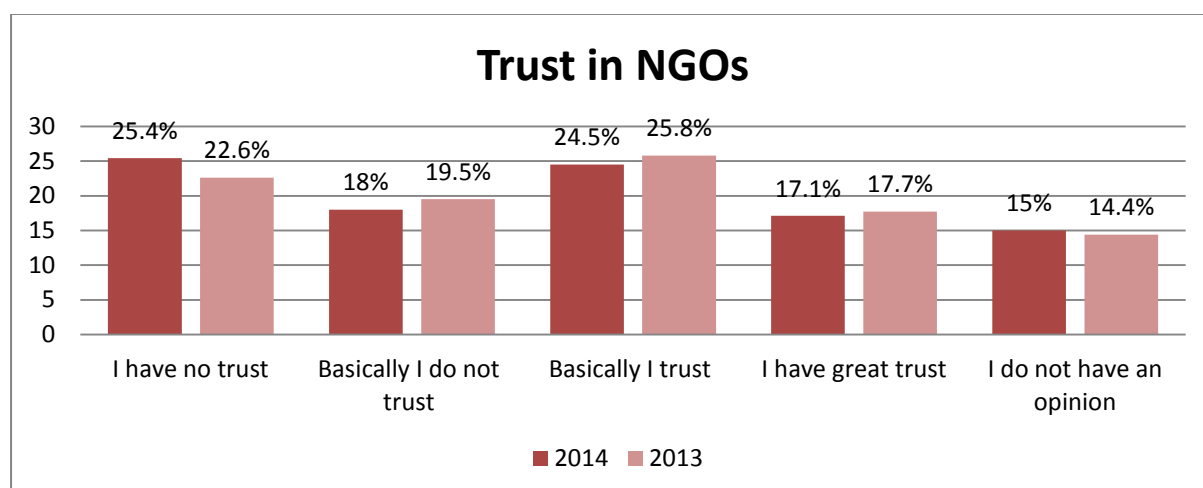


Table 5. Trust in the Macedonian Orthodox Church in 2013 and 2014.

year	2014		2013	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
I have no trust	314	28.7	328	29.7
Basically I do not trust	104	9.5	134	12.1
Basically I trust	211	19.3	178	16.1
I have great trust	333	30.4	251	22.7
I do not have an opinion	133	12.1	213	19.3
Total	1095	100.0	1104	100.0

Table 6. Trust in the Islam Religious Community in Macedonia in 2013 and 2014.

year	2014		2013	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
I have no trust	234	21.4	253	22.9
Basically I do not trust	99	9.1	137	12.4
Basically I trust	228	20.9	128	11.6
I have great trust	187	17.1	202	18.3
I do not have an opinion	345	31.6	384	34.8
Total	1093	100.0	1104	100.0

Regarding the religious institutions in the country, as we can note from Table 5 and Table 6, there has been also a rise in the expressed trust levels from 2013 to 2014 in both cases. However, the picture is less clear in these two cases, since a non-negligible part of the sample was reluctant to express their opinion regarding these two institutions.

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From this analysis of the developments of trust levels in the civil society, we move on to the presentation of the results from the survey questions regarding international organizations.

4. Trust in International Organizations

Charts 8 and 9 indicate the trust levels which Macedonian citizens expressed **towards the European Union and the NATO** in 2013 and 2014. We can observe similar trends in both cases. Although the general opinion of the citizens remains positive regarding these two international organizations, **we can note a slight drop in the confidence levels from 2013 to 2014.**

Chart 8. Trust in the European Union in 2013 and 2014.

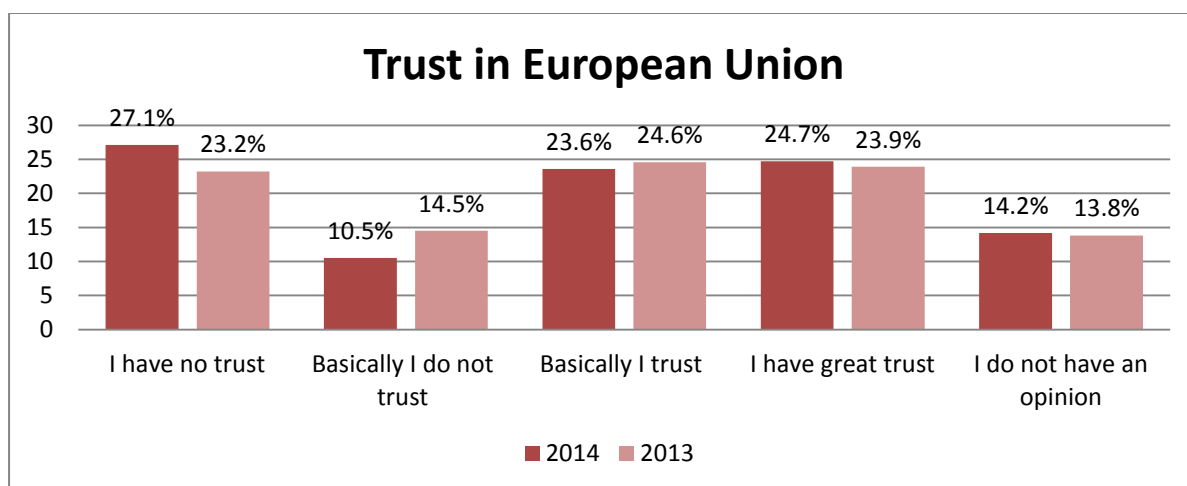
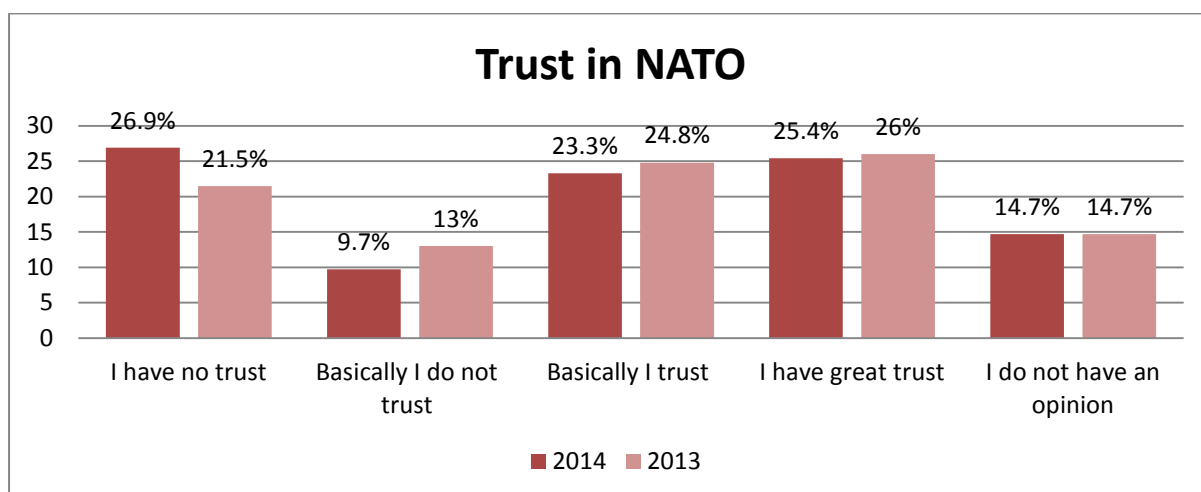


Chart 9. Trust in NATO in 2013 and 2014.



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Conclusion

From the data presented above few tentative conclusions can be drawn. The rise of trust from 2013 to 2014 in the Government, President, Parliament and judiciary is positive and noteworthy. It indicates an important movement towards the ideal of shaping open and trustworthy government. This rise of trust might be a part of a longer, more stable trend of citizens' increased satisfaction with the political institutions in the country, however, that remains to be observed in the future developments of the trust trend.

In contrast, the strong negative opinions expressed towards the political parties in the country are worrying, and call for a serious reconsideration of the image political parties project in the public space. Furthermore, although there are improvements in the trust levels towards the media from 2013 to 2014, the general level of trust is not at a satisfactory level.

Finally, regarding the trust expressed towards the international organizations, regardless of the slight drop of the levels of trust from 2013 to 2014, the general level remains quite high, which indicates the strong and persistent Euro-Atlantic orientation of the Macedonian citizens.

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