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This study is based on a survey conducted as part of a doctoral dissertation defended in 2024. The results presented here constitute a summarized version intended for online publication in the IMIGRA Research Papers series.

The Serbian diaspora in France: a sociological survey

I Methodological Introduction

This survey represents an initial exploratory attempt to better understand certain characteristics of the Serbian diaspora in France, as well as its relationships with the country of origin and its integration into French society. It does not aim to provide an exhaustive analysis of the Serbian presence in France, whose history extends over more than a century and would require extensive longitudinal and interdisciplinary research.

The main objective of this study was to provide empirical insight into several dimensions of the life of the Serbian diaspora in France: its links with Serbia, its level of integration into the host society, and possible intentions to return to the country of origin.

In order to reach as wide an audience as possible within the diaspora, the questionnaire was written in both Serbian and French. This allowed participation by individuals of Serbian origin who may be more fluent in French than in Serbian.

Participation in the survey was open to adults belonging to the Serbian diaspora in France. Since the notion of diaspora can be interpreted in various ways — people born in Serbia, Serbian citizens, individuals whose parents originate from Serbia, etc. — we adopted the broadest interpretation (Filipović, 2012), according to which diaspora is primarily defined by a sense of

belonging to the Serbian people and by an emotional connection to Serbia, even when contacts and exchanges become less frequent.

The first 50 responses were collected using the so-called “snowball sampling” method, based on the circulation of the questionnaire within personal networks. After a period of stagnation in the number of responses, the questionnaire was distributed through several Facebook groups connecting members of the Serbian diaspora in France (Zajednica Srba Francuske, Srbi sa Azurne obale, Svi Srbi u Parizu). This distribution made it possible to reach a total of 153 respondents.

It should be noted that, despite the anonymous nature of the survey, a certain degree of mistrust and reluctance to provide information was observed — a phenomenon already identified in previous research on Serbian diasporas (Bošković, 2006). This mistrust is rooted in a historical context marked by the coexistence of different waves of migration — particularly the post-war political emigration and the economic emigration of the 1960s — which contributed to a certain reserve toward surveys and external actors.

The results presented below should therefore be interpreted with caution, as expressions of the experiences and perceptions of respondents at the time the survey was conducted. Nevertheless, they offer valuable insight into certain sociological and migration trends within the Serbian diaspora in France.

The following sections present the main results of the survey in graphical form, accompanied by analyses organized around several thematic areas:

- socio-demographic characteristics of respondents
- links with the country of origin
- integration into French society
- attitudes toward a possible return to Serbia.

II Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The oldest participant in the survey is a woman born in 1938, while the youngest respondent, also a woman, was born in 2001. The oldest male participant was born in 1946 and the youngest in 1999.

Women participated in the survey almost twice as much as men. Out of the 153 responses collected, 57 (37.25%) came from men and 96 (62.75%) from women. However, this difference does not necessarily indicate a higher number of women within the Serbian diaspora in France. It more likely reflects a greater willingness among women to participate in this type of research.

The respondents' years of birth show that almost all generations between 1938 and 2001 are represented, which indicates a certain continuity of arrivals in France. Among all participants, 41 were born in France, the oldest in 1965 and the youngest in 2001.

Places of birth also illustrate the diversity of migration trajectories. Five respondents were born in present-day Croatia, eight in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina, one in North Macedonia, and one in Montenegro. Two participants were born outside the territory of the former Yugoslavia or France: one in Bangladesh and the other in Switzerland. Out of the total of 153 respondents, 95 were born in Serbia, including 24 born between 1991 and 2001.

Among respondents born in Serbia, the largest number — 35 individuals — were born in Belgrade. From the oldest participant born in Belgrade (1939) to the youngest (1999), one can observe a nearly continuous representation of birth years, reflecting the persistence of migration links between Belgrade and France.

With regard to place of residence in France, the results confirm the findings of earlier studies (Čačić and Kumpes, 1990; Bošković, 2006). Thus, 34 respondents live in Paris and 61 in the surrounding region, meaning that the majority of the Serbian diaspora (95 out of 153 respondents) is settled in the Paris region.

Other areas where the Serbian presence appears significant include Provence, the Var region, and the French Riviera in southeastern France. Forty-four respondents live in this region, along with one respondent residing in Monaco.

Other regions are represented to a lesser extent: five participants live in the Lyon area, three in the centre-west region (around Nantes), three in the south-west (Occitanie), one in Burgundy, and two in the eastern regions (Alsace and Franche-Comté). These data show that the Serbian diaspora is present across a large part of French territory, although it remains particularly concentrated in the Paris region and the southeast of the country.

The Serbian presence on the French Riviera is not limited to an older population, as might be assumed due to the Mediterranean climate favorable to retirees. On the contrary, the responses indicate that this population is largely composed of economically active individuals of Serbian origin. However, it is possible that some elderly residents living in these regions were not reached by this survey.

The question addressed to respondents born outside France — *“In which year did you first settle in France for a period longer than one year?”* — also reveals a regular pattern of arrivals since the 1960s, with a slight increase after 2010. This increase may partly be explained by the arrival of Serbian students in France following the signing of the university exchange agreement between France and Serbia in 2009.

III Presentation of the Survey Results

The detailed results of the survey are presented below in the form of graphs, accompanied by the corresponding questions from the questionnaire and short comments intended to facilitate interpretation.

The questions accompanying the graphs are presented in Serbian and French, as they appeared in the original questionnaire, while their synthetic analysis is presented in the following section devoted to the summary and interpretation of the results.

Table 1 – Source: Survey on the Serbian Diaspora in France

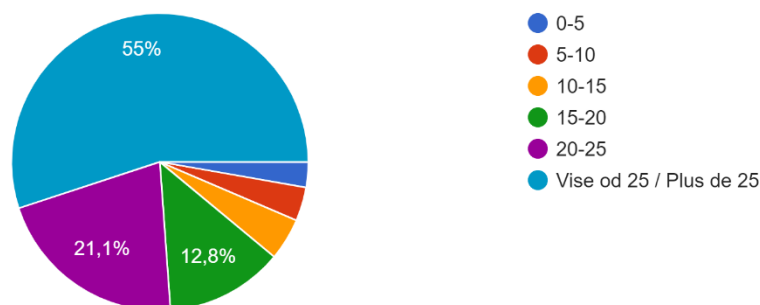
Intensity of arrivals in France / 106 responses

Year of arrival	Number of persons	Year of arrival	Number of persons
1962	3	2005	4
1965	1	2006	1
1967	1	2007	1
1973	1	2008	3
1979	1	2009	1
1986	2	2010	6
1989	1	2011	5
1990	5	2012	6
1992	1	2013	2
1994	3	2014	5
1995	5	2015	3
1997	1	2016	4
1999	1	2017	5
2000	3	2018	6
2001	4	2019	9
2003	6	2020	4
2004	1	2021	1

When respondents who were not born in France were asked how old they were when they arrived in France and settled there, the following results were obtained:

Ukoliko niste rodjeni u Francuskoj, koliko godina ste imali kad ste se tu nastanili / Si vous n'êtes pas né en France, quel âge aviez-vous lorsque vous vous y êtes installé ?

109 réponses



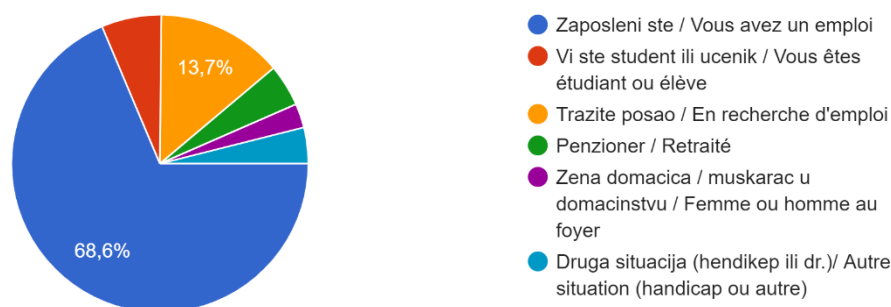
Out of 109 responses, 60 respondents (55%) arrived after the age of 25, 23 respondents (21.1%) between the ages of 20 and 25, 14 respondents (12.8%) between 15 and 20, 5 respondents (4.6%) between 10 and 15, 4 respondents (3.7%) between 5 and 10, and 3 respondents (2.8%) between the ages of 0 and 5.

These data indicate that the majority of respondents arrived in France during their economically active years.

The following question concerned the current activity status of respondents in France. All respondents (153) answered this question. The survey showed that the majority — 68.6% — are employed, 6.5% are students or pupils, 4.6% are retired, 13.7% are looking for work, 2.6% reported being homemakers, and 3.9% indicated another situation (such as disability).

Profesionalna aktivnost / Activité professionnelle

153 réponses



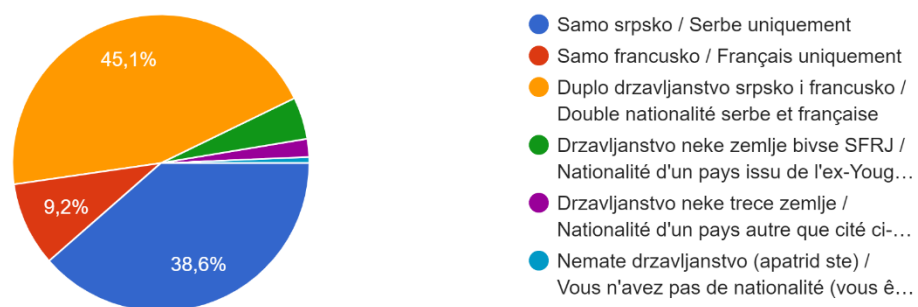
If we compare the percentage of respondents seeking employment, it appears to be significantly higher than the French national average, which was 7.9% in 2021 (INSEE, Labour Force Survey 2021).

For future research, it would therefore be useful to examine the professional structure of the Serbian diaspora, the occupational sectors in which they work, the diplomas they hold, and the possible reasons for such a relatively high unemployment rate.

The following question concerned the nationality of the respondents. All 153 respondents answered. It turned out that the largest number of them have dual nationality, Serbian and French (45.1%); 38.6% had only Serbian nationality; 9.2% only French nationality; 4.6% the nationality of a country of the former SFRY; 2% the nationality of a third country; and one person—0.7%—declared themselves as stateless.

Koja sve drzavljanstva imate ? / Quelle(s) citoyenneté(s) avez-vous ?

153 réponses



Persons who have French nationality (83) acquired it as follows:

- 23 by birth (one of the parents had French nationality)
- 51 by naturalization
- 9 through marriage to a French citizen

To the question: “What nationality did your mother have at birth?”, 152 responses were obtained, of which only two indicate French nationality of the mother, while all the others indicate the nationality of the former SFRY or of one of its republics.

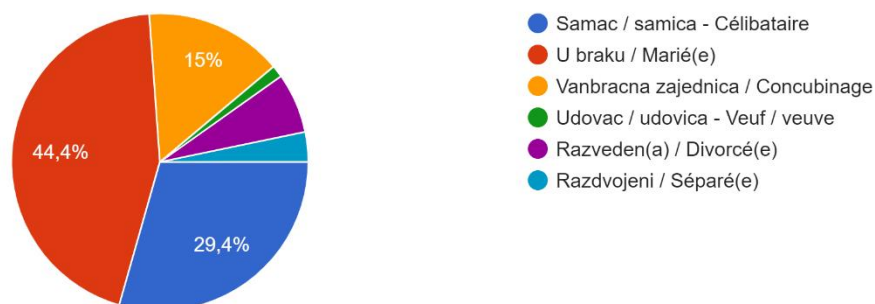
As regards the nationality of fathers at the time of their birth, 147 valid responses were obtained, of which 2 indicate French nationality, one French and Serbian nationality, one Algerian and Serbian nationality, and one Italian nationality of the father, while the others (142) indicate SFRY nationality or the nationality of one of the republics of the former SFRY.

The purpose of these questions was to attempt to determine longitudinally the extent to which population mixing has occurred, and this is continued as a question for the next generation, that is, the current respondents.

To the question of marital and family status, all 153 respondents answered, with the following results:

Vas bračni i porodični status / Votre statut marital et familial

153 réponses

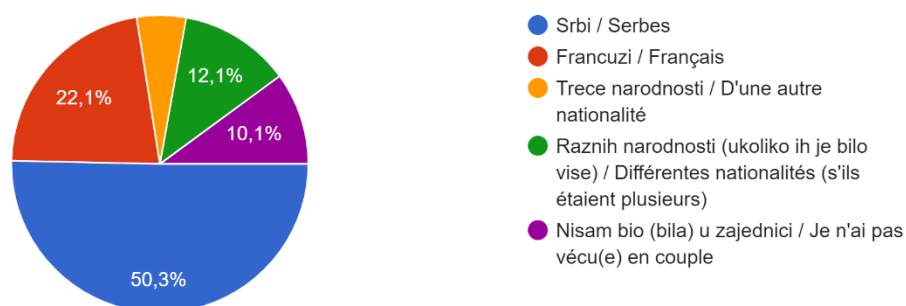


The largest number of respondents live in a marital or non-marital union (59.4%), 29.4% were single at the time of answering the survey, 9.8% were divorced/separated, and 1.3% were widowed.

In this generation as well, it is confirmed that unions are mostly (50.3%) formed with people of Serbian origin, although there are 22.1% of marriages/unions with French partners.

Ukoliko ste, ili ste bili u zajednici, Vasi partneri su, ili su bili : / Si vous êtes ou avez vécu en couple, vos partenaires sont-ils ou étaient-ils :

149 réponses

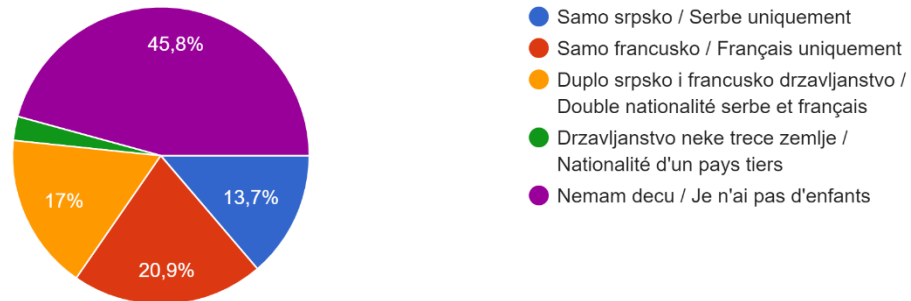


The questionnaire showed that, out of 153 respondents, 80 had children. The largest number of children had only French nationality, followed by those with dual Serbian and French

nationality, and then those with only Serbian nationality, as shown in the graph below:

Koje drzavljanstvo imaju Vasa deca / Quelle nationalité ont vos enfants

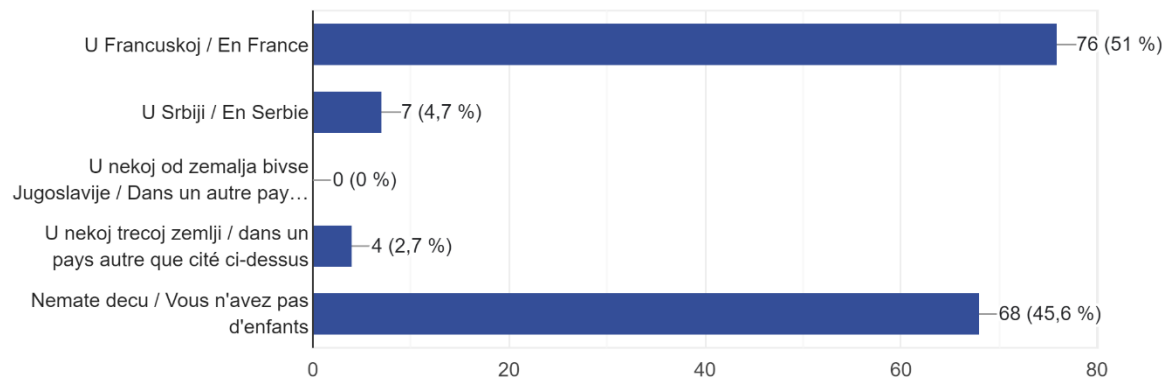
153 réponses



The largest number of children lived in France, but some lived in Serbia, and others in a third country:

U kojoj zemlji zive Vasa deca (vise mogucih odgovora) ? / Dans quel pays vos enfants vivent-ils (plusieurs réponses possibles) ?

149 réponses

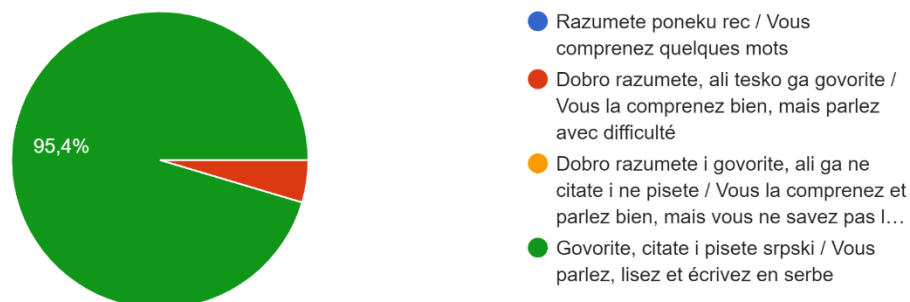


One of the most important elements of identity is language, so it was necessary to determine to what extent respondents master the Serbian language and how much they use it in everyday life.

To the question: “How well do you master the Serbian language?”, 95.4% of respondents say that they speak, read, and write Serbian, while the remaining 4.6% say that they understand it well but have difficulty speaking it.

Kako vladate srpskim jezikom ? / Quel est votre niveau de maîtrise de la langue serbe ?

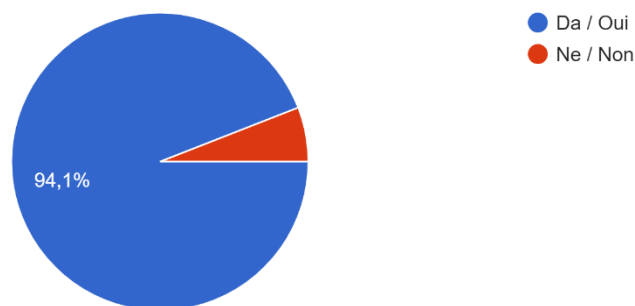
152 réponses



94.1% say that they know how to read and write Cyrillic, while 5.9% say that they do not.

Da li znate da citate i pisete cirilicu ? / Savez-vous lire et écrire en cyrillique ?

152 réponses

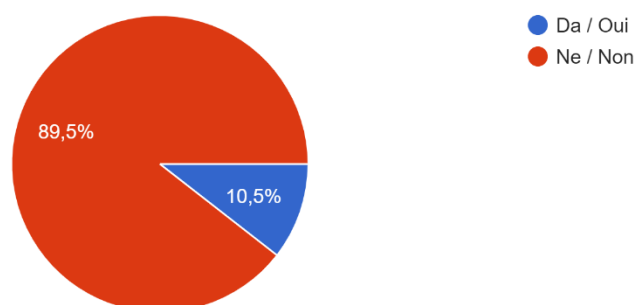


This means that the majority of respondents, according to their own assessment, have full command of the Serbian language and the Cyrillic script.

At the same time, only 10.5% have used the available opportunities to learn the Serbian language in France:

Da li ste u Francuskoj sledili kurseve srpskog jezika ? / Avez-vous suivi des cours de serbe en France ?

152 réponses

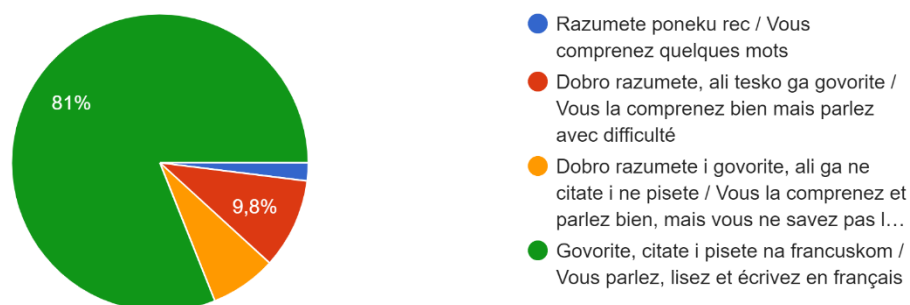


According to earlier research (Morokvasic, 1971; Bošković, 2006), Serbian immigrants have a weaker command of the French language compared to immigrants from other countries, many of whom are francophone, as they come from former French colonies or from countries under strong French influence. Therefore, we wanted to determine the level of knowledge of the French language as assessed by the diaspora itself.

The largest share (81%) stated that they speak, read, and write French. 9.8% stated that they understand it well but have difficulty speaking it, 7.2% that they understand and speak it well but do not read or write it, while 2% said that they understand a few words.

Kako vladate francuskim jezikom ? / Quel est votre niveau de maîtrise de la langue française ?

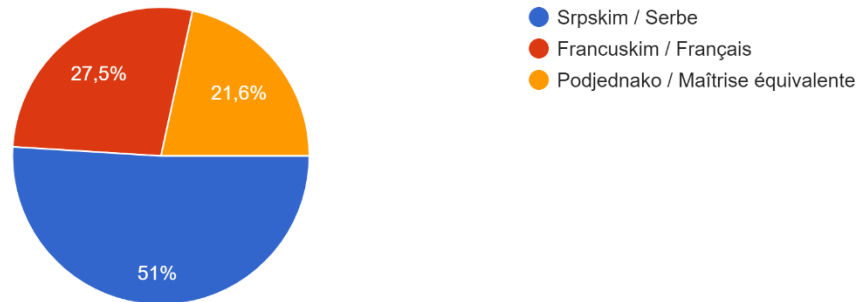
153 réponses



To the question of whether they have a better command of Serbian or French, 51% stated that they have a better command of Serbian, 27.5% that they have a better command of French, while 21.6% stated that they have an equal command of both Serbian and French.

Po Vasem misljenju, da li bolje vladate srpskim ili francuskim jezikom ? / Selon vous, est-ce que vous maitrisez mieux le serbe ou le français ?

153 réponses

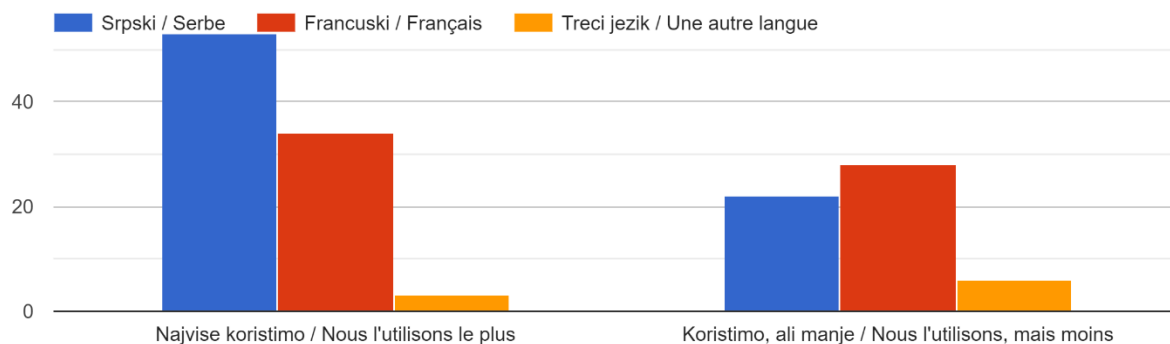


This question was further explored through questions about which language respondents use most with their partner and which language their children use among themselves, in order to assess the degree of retention and use of the Serbian language within families across generations.

It turned out that among the 114 respondents who stated that they live as a couple, 50 speak Serbian with each other, 30 speak French, 27 use both Serbian and French, while 7 speak a third language. It is clear that the Serbian language prevails over French. The assumption is that those who use French live with a foreign national, rather than someone of Serbian origin.

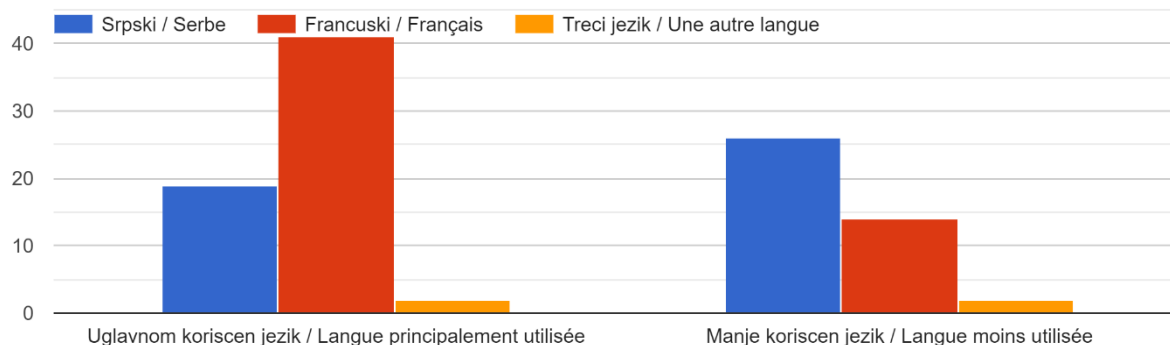
With their children, respondents also most often use the Serbian language, followed by French, and finally a third language.

Ukoliko imate decu, na kom jeziku sa njima pricate u porodici / Si vous avez des enfants, dans quelle langue vous parlez-vous le plus souvent ?



However, already in the next generation, respondents who have children say that their children mostly use the French language among themselves.

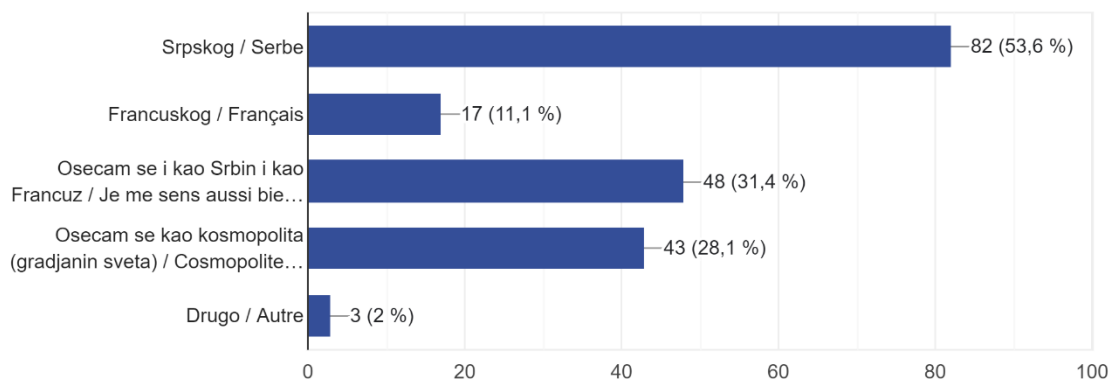
Ukoliko imate vise dece koja zive u Francuskoj, na kom jeziku ona medjusobno pricaju / Si vous avez plusieurs enfants qui vivent en France, quelle langue parlent-ils entre eux ?



The next group of questions concerned the sense of belonging and the ties that members of the Serbian diaspora have maintained with their country of origin.

They were asked directly: “To which people do you feel you belong?” and the responses showed that the majority of respondents still primarily feel Serbian.

Osecate se pripadnikom kog naroda (moguće je više odgovora) / De quelle nationalité vous sentez-vous le plus proche (plusieurs réponses sont possibles)
153 réponses

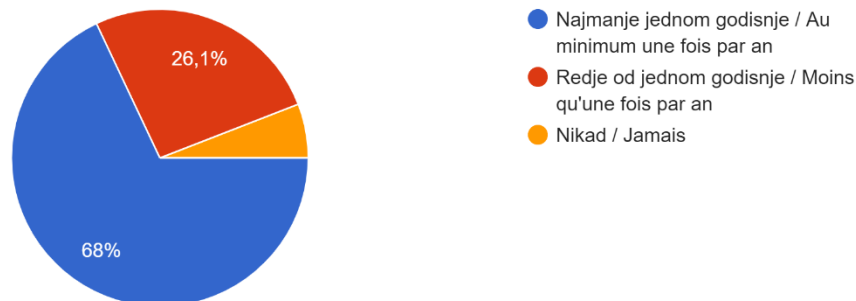


For this question, it was possible to give multiple answers. More than half of the respondents stated that they feel they belong to the Serbian people, 82 out of 153 who responded. The next largest number of responses (48) refers to the option of feeling belonging to both the Serbian and the French people, followed even by a supranational, cosmopolitan option (43). A relatively small number of respondents (only 17) stated that they feel they belong to the French people.

As for visits to the country of origin, the largest number of respondents stated that they visit it at least once a year (68%), but a certain number say that they have never been to the country of origin (5.9%). The others (26.1%) visit it less than once a year.

Otkad zivite u Francuskoj, da li ste odlazili u zemlju porekla / Depuis que vous vivez en France, vous avez visité votre pays d'origine :

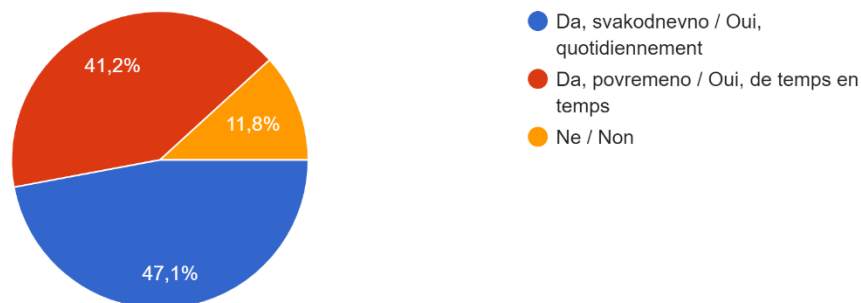
153 réponses



Regarding the monitoring of events in the country of origin through the media and social networks, almost half of the respondents (47.1%) follow events daily, 41.2% occasionally, while 11.8% do not follow them at all.

Da li citate novine i slusate i gledate vesti , odnosno pratite zbivanja na drustvenim mrezama iz zemlje porekla / Est-ce que vous suivez l'actualité ...rigrine, ou sur les réseaux sociaux du pays d'origine

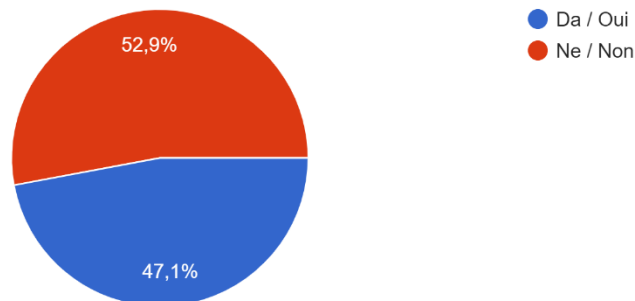
153 réponses



One of the questions that was asked concerned property, primarily real estate owned by respondents in the country of origin and in France. The results showed a fairly balanced situation when comparing the country of origin and France:

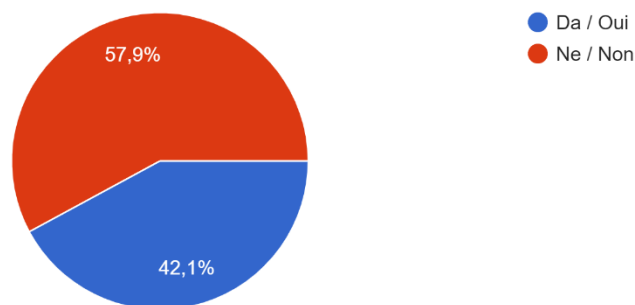
Da li ste vlasnik nepokretnosti u zemlji porekla (zemljista, kuce, stana...) / Etes-vous propriétaire d'un bien immobilier dans le pays d'origine (un terrain, une maison, un appartement...)

153 réponses



Da li ste vlasnik nepokretnosti u Francuskoj / Etes-vous propriétaire d'un bien immobilier en France

152 réponses

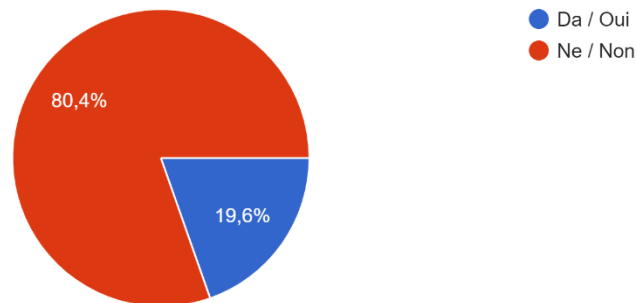


Buduci da vlada misljenje da medju pripadnicima dijaspore ima dosta takozvanih samozaposlenih, postavljeno je i pitanje da li su ispitanici vlasnici preduzeca u Francuskoj. Medjutim, samo 19,6% je odgovorilo da jeste, dok je velika vecina, 80,4% , odgovorila da nije.

Da li ste vlasnik nekog preduzeca u Francuskoj ? /
en France ?

153 réponses

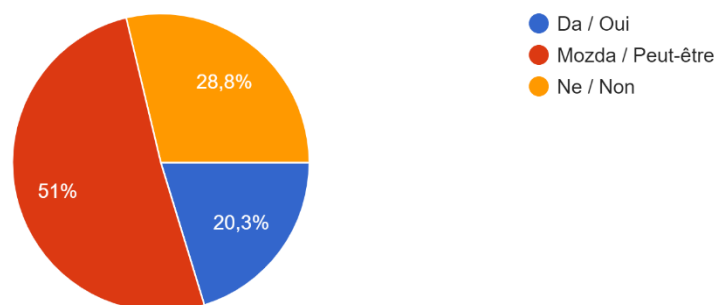
Etes-vous propriétaire d'une société basée



To the question of whether you intend one day to move from France to Serbia, the following answers were obtained:

Da li nameravate da se iz Francuske jednog dana preselite u Srbiju ? / Avez-vous l'intention de
quitter la France pour déménager en Serbie un jour ?

153 réponses

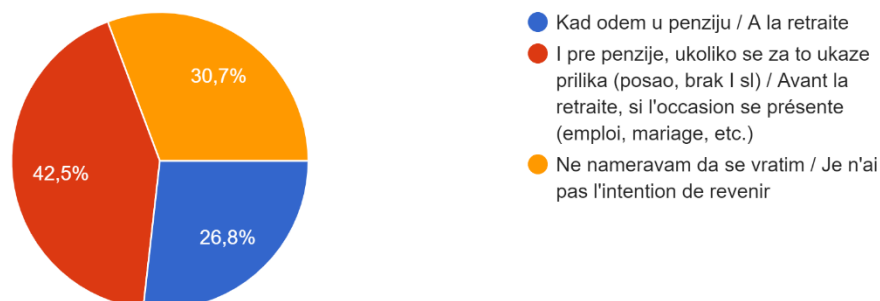


This means that only 20.3% gave a definite YES. On the other hand, 28.8% (44 out of 153) gave a definite NO. Slightly more than half (51%) do not exclude that possibility.

To the question: “At what period would you return to Serbia?”, the answers are as follows:

U kom periodu zivota biste se vratili u Srbiju / Dans quelle période de votre vie reviendriez-vous en Serbie ?

153 réponses

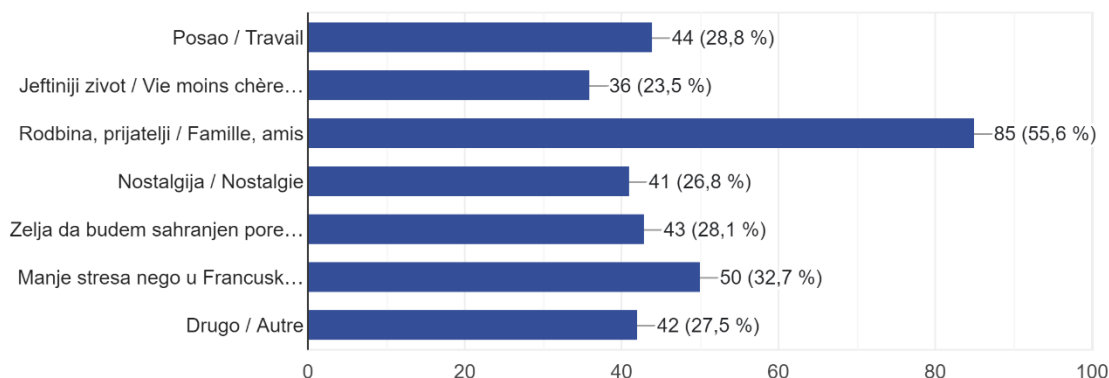


Here, as many as 30.7% of respondents (47 out of 153) stated that they do not intend to return. Among the remaining respondents, 26.8% expressed the intention to return during retirement, while 42.5% would even return before retirement if the opportunity arose.

The reasons that would lead respondents to return to the country of origin are as follows:

Sta bi bili razlozi koji bi Vas naveli da se eventualno vratite u Srbiju (moguće je navesti više razloga) ? / Quelles seraient les raisons qui vous conduiraient...rie (il est possible de cocher plusieurs options) ?

153 réponses

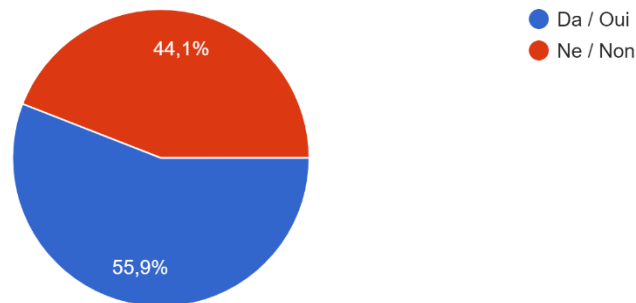


It is evident that family and friendship ties carry the greatest weight, although the next most frequent reason is: less stress than in France.

The still strong ties with relatives in the country of origin are also indicated by the fact that more than half of the survey participants stated that they have close relatives in the homeland whom they take care of.

Da li u zemlji porekla imate bliske rođake o kojima se starate ? / Avez-vous des proches dont vous vous occupez dans votre pays d'origine ?

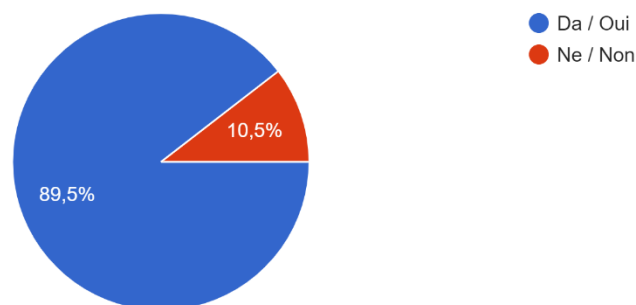
152 réponses



Respondents were also asked how satisfied they are, in general, with their life in France. Almost 90% are satisfied, which indicates their good integration into French society.

Da li ste uopsteno zadovoljni Vasim zivotom u Francuskoj ? / Êtes-vous globalement satisfait de votre vie en France ?

153 réponses

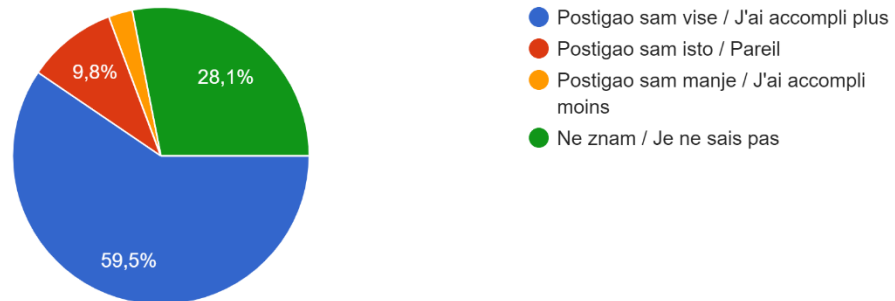


Moreover, the majority of them believe that they have achieved more in France than they would have achieved in Serbia. Only 2.6% believe that they have achieved less in France than

they would have in Serbia.

Da li mislite da ste postigli vise u Francuskoj, nego sto biste postigli da ste ostali (ili da ste se rodili) u zemlji porekla / Pensez-vous avoir accompli plus e...é (ou si vous étiez né) dans votre pays d'origine ?

153 réponses

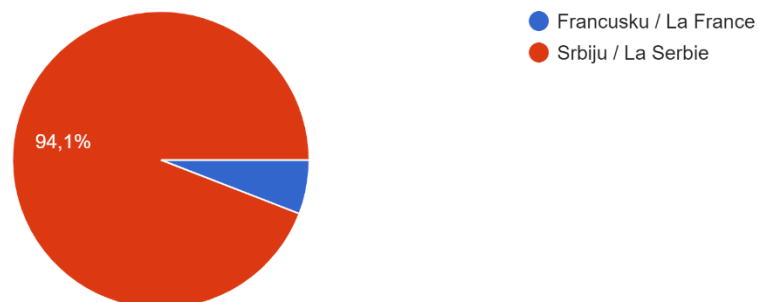


Another series of questions aimed to determine the connection with the country of origin and whether some traditional elements of cultural identity have been preserved among members of the Serbian diaspora.

To the question of whom they support during sports competitions, as many as 94.1% answered that they support Serbia, and only 5.9% France.

Kada gledate sportska takmicenja izmedju Srbije i Francuske, navijate za / Lorsque vous regardez des compétitions sportives entre la Serbie et la France, vous êtes du côté de :

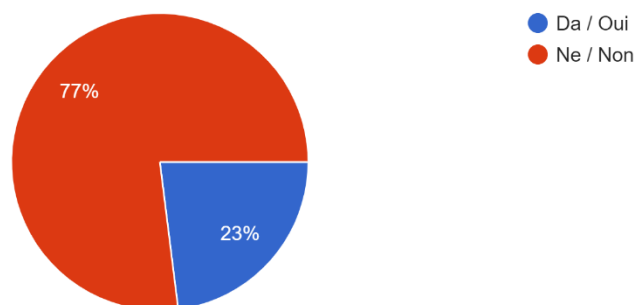
153 réponses



To the question of whether any of the respondents' close relatives are buried in France, only 23% answered positively, while 77% have no close relatives buried in France.

Da li je medju Vasim bliskim rođacima neko sahranjen u Francuskoj / Quelqu'un dans votre famille a-t-il été enterré en France ?

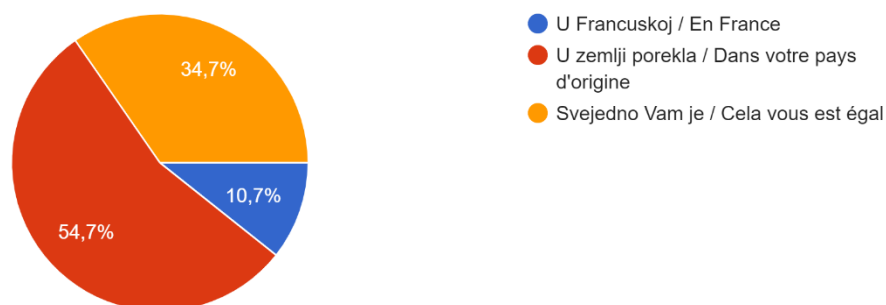
152 réponses



On the other hand, to the question of where they would like to be buried, as many as 54.7% indicated the country of origin, while only 10.7% chose France.

Da li biste hteli da budete sahranjeni / Souhaitez-vous être enterré :

150 réponses



The following questions concerned the continuation of typically Serbian traditions in France.

To the question: “Do you celebrate slava¹?”, out of 153 responses, 44 were negative, while 109 respondents stated that they celebrate slava, of whom 42 do so according to all the rules of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Da li slavite slavu ? / Célébrez-vous la slava ?

153 réponses



As regards the celebration of the most important Christian holidays, the largest number of respondents stated that they celebrate Orthodox Christmas and Easter, while the next largest group celebrates these holidays in both Orthodox and Catholic forms.

- Orthodox 47.7%
- Both Orthodox and Catholic 46.4%
- Neither Orthodox nor Catholic 5.2%
- Catholic 0.7%

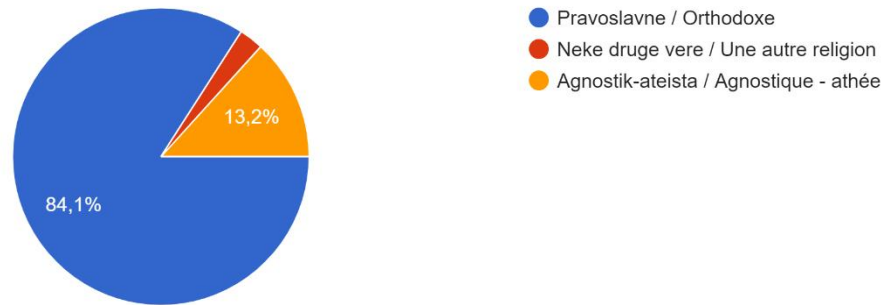
It is evident that a significant part of the diaspora still adheres to traditional Orthodox practices, although elements of Catholic influence from the host country have also been adopted in the process of acculturation.

¹ Slava is one of the most important and unique customs in Serbian culture. It is a family religious celebration dedicated to a specific patron saint, passed down from generation to generation.

To the question: “What is your religion?”, 84.1% of respondents stated that they are of the Orthodox faith, 13.2% that they are agnostic/atheist, and the remaining 2.6% that they belong to other religions.

Koje ste religije ? / De quelle religion êtes-vous ?

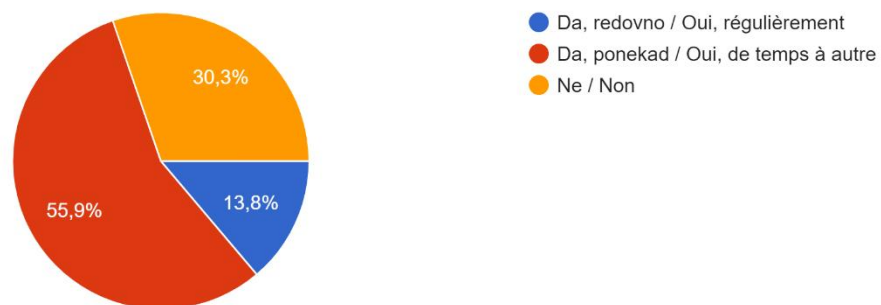
151 réponses



Only 13.8% attend Serbian churches regularly, 55.9% occasionally, while 30.3% do not go to church.

Da li odlazite u srpsku crkvu ? / Est-ce que vous allez à l'église serbe ?

152 réponses

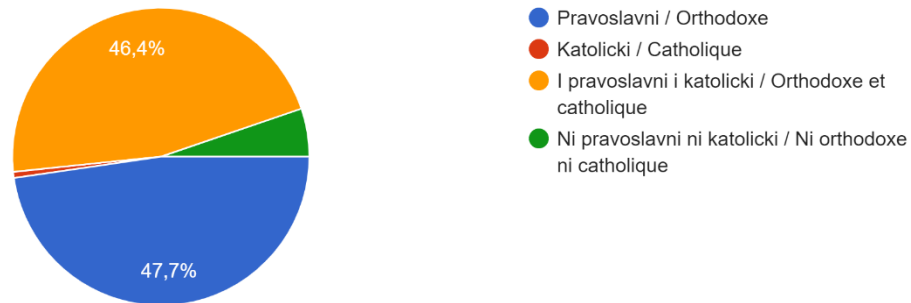


The largest number of respondents (47.7%) celebrate Orthodox Christmas and Easter, but an almost identical number celebrate both Orthodox and Catholic holidays, which is one of the indicators of acculturation, that is, the adoption of elements of the Catholic tradition of the host country. Members of the diaspora retain the culture of the country of origin, but also form a specific, hybrid identity, infused with elements of both the culture of the country of

origin and that of the host country.

Koji Božić i Uskrs obeležavate ? / Quel Noël et quelle Pâques célébrez-vous :

153 réponses

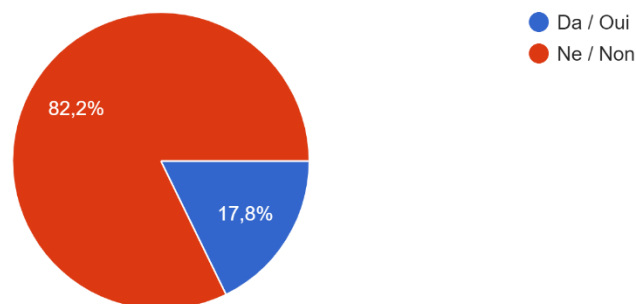


However, when the question is raised about the further connection of Serbs in France through associations and Serbian schools in France, based on the respondents' answers, it appears that there is no strong interest.

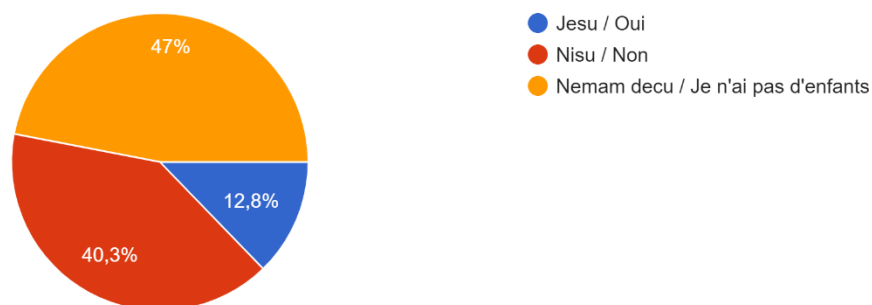
Thus, only 17.8% of respondents are members of a Serbian association in France, and nineteen children attended Serbian school (out of 79 respondents who reported having children).

Da li ste član neke asocijacije Srba u Francuskoj ? / Etes-vous membre d'une association de Serbes de France ?

152 réponses

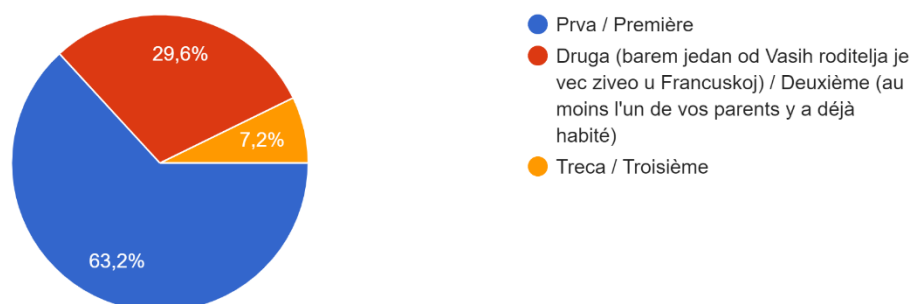


Da li su Vasa deca posecivala srpsku skolu u Francuskoj ili drugu zvanicnu ustanovu u kojoj su ucila srpski jezik ? / Vos enfants ont-ils fréquenté une éc... officielle où ils ont pu apprendre la langue serbe ?
149 réponses



The largest number of respondents belong to the first generation of Serbian immigrants in France, while 29.6% belong to the second generation and 7.2% to the third.

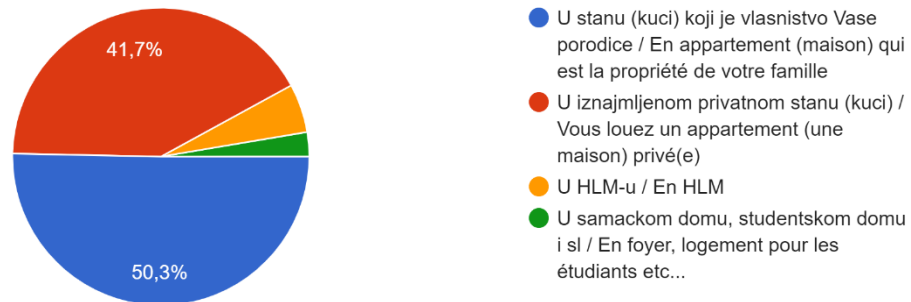
Vi ste koja generacija Srba u Francuskoj / De quelle génération de Serbes en France êtes-vous ?
152 réponses



The resolution of housing is a very important issue in France. Slightly more than half of the respondents, however, live in an apartment or house owned by their family, 41.7% in privately rented accommodation, 5.3% in social housing, and 2.6% in collective housing (hostels).

U Francuskoj stanujete : / Vous habitez en France :

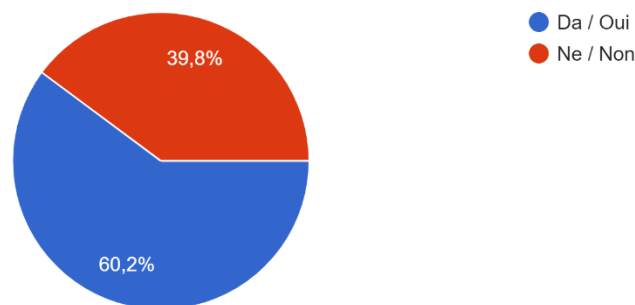
151 réponses



It is well known that France is a country with high property taxes, so the question was raised whether members of the Serbian diaspora who own property in France are aware of how burdensome the French tax system is. Although the majority responded that they are informed, the question remains to what extent they are actually able to navigate the complex French regulations.

Ukoliko imate imovinu u Francuskoj, da li ste upoznati sa francuskim fiskalnim propisima u vezi sa nasledjivanjem imovine ? / Si vous possédez un bien...ale française en matière de succession de biens ?

128 réponses

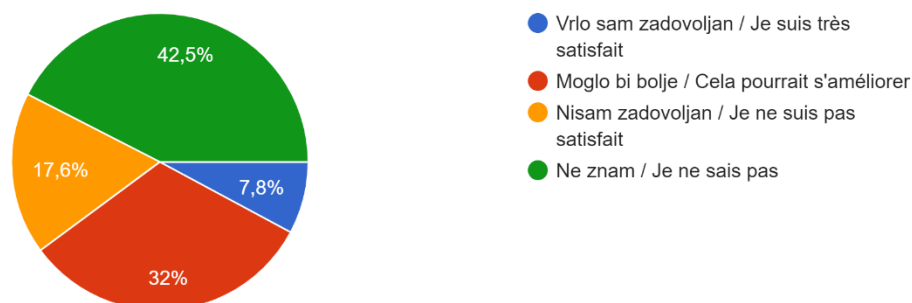


With regard to property matters, as well as other issues, it would be necessary for the services at the embassy to be much more accessible.

However, to the question of how satisfied they are with the activity of the Embassy of Serbia and the Serbian Cultural Center, only 7.8% are very satisfied, while 17.6% are dissatisfied, and 32% believe that these branches of the Serbian state could perform better.

Da li ste zadovoljni aktivnoscu ambasade i Kulturnog centra Srbije u Francuskoj ? / Êtes-vous satisfait de l'activité de l'ambassade et du Centre culturel de Serbie en France ?

153 réponses

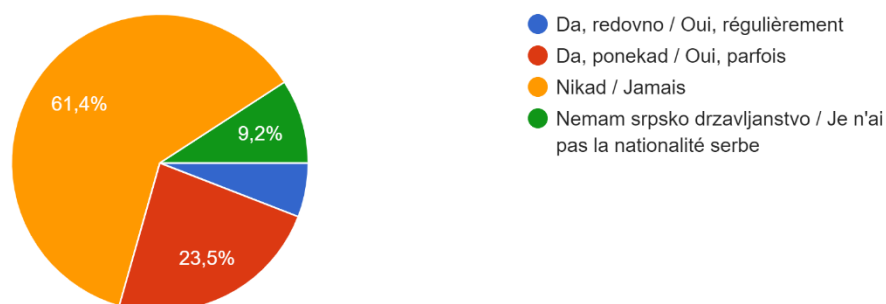


One of the questions also concerned the civic and political activity of the diaspora, both in relation to the country of origin and in the host country.

To the question of whether they vote in elections in Serbia, all respondents (153) answered. Among them, 14, or 9.2%, do not have Serbian nationality. Only 9, or 5.9%, vote regularly, 36, or 23.5%, vote occasionally, while the largest number—94, or 61.4%—never vote.

Ukoliko imate srpsko drzavljanstvo, da li glasate na izborima u Srbiji ? / Si vous avez la nationalité serbe, votez-vous aux élections serbes ?

153 réponses

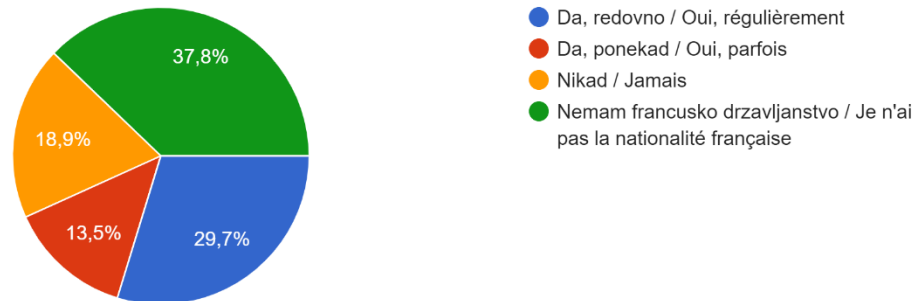


The same question was asked regarding elections in France. Here as well, the relative apolitical nature of the diaspora was evident. Out of 148 responses, 56, or 37.8%, do not have French nationality and therefore do not have the right to vote; 44, or 29.7%, vote regularly;

20, or 13.5%, vote occasionally; and 28, or 18.5%, never vote.

Ukoliko imate francusko drzavljanstvo, da li glasate na izborima u Francuskoj ? / Si vous avez la nationalité française, votez-vous aux élections en France ?

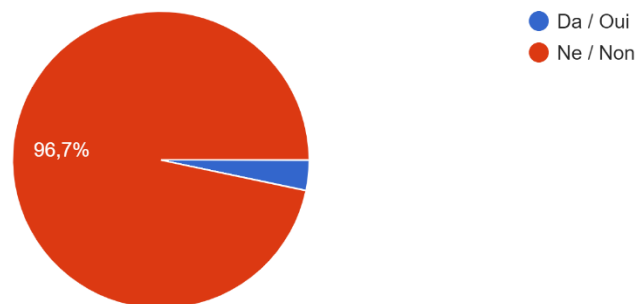
148 réponses



Only 3.3% of respondents are members of a political party in France, which means that as many as 96.7% are not affiliated with any party.

Da li ste član neke političke partije u Francuskoj ? / Est-ce que vous êtes membre d'un parti politique en France ?

151 réponses

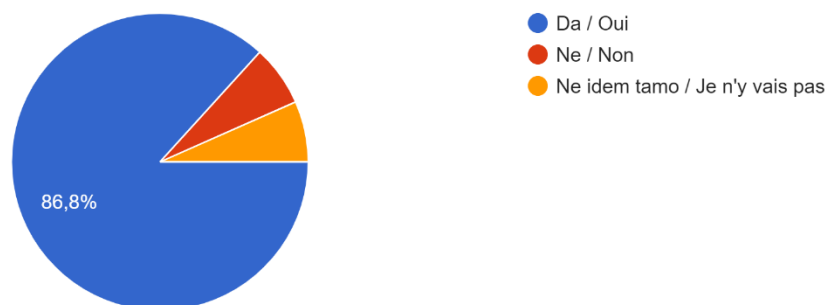


The next group of questions attempts to make a comparison between the sense of attachment to Serbia and to France.

To the question of whether they feel comfortable in Serbia when they visit it, 151 responses were given, of which 86.8% confirmed that they feel comfortable; however, 6.6% clearly stated that they do not feel comfortable, and 6.6% said that they do not go there.

Da li se u Srbiji osećate prijatno kad je posećujete ? / Vous sentez-vous à l'aise en Serbie lorsque vous êtes là-bas ?

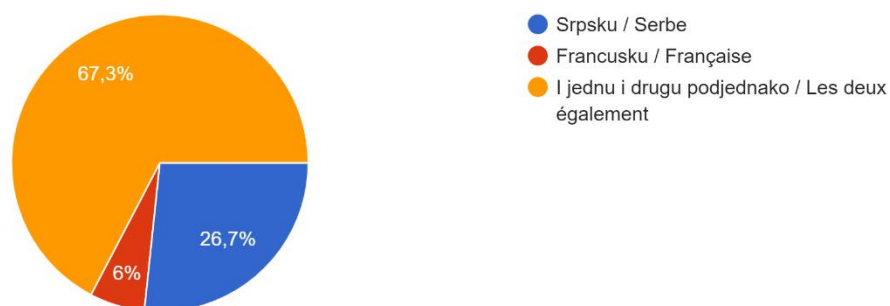
151 réponses



Na pitanje koju hranu više vole – srpsku, ili francusku, 67,3% je izjavilo da vole i jednu i drugu podjednako, 26,7% da više vole srpsku hranu, a 6% da više vole francusku hranu.

Da li više volite srpsku ili francusku hranu ? / Préférez-vous la cuisine serbe ou la cuisine française ?

150 réponses

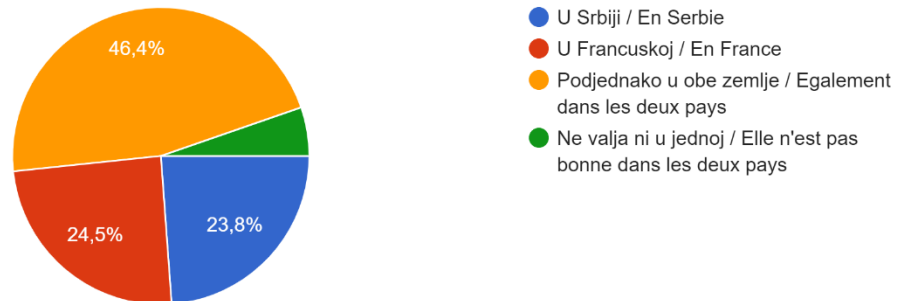


The question: “Do you think life is more pleasant in Serbia or in France?” showed a “dead heat” between the two countries. 46.4% of respondents considered life to be equally pleasant in both countries, 24.5% that it is more pleasant in France, 23.8% that it is more pleasant in

Serbia, and 5.3% that it is not good in either.

Da li mislite da je zivot prijatniji u Srbiji ili u Francuskoj ? / Pensez-vous que la vie est plus agréable en Serbie ou en France ?

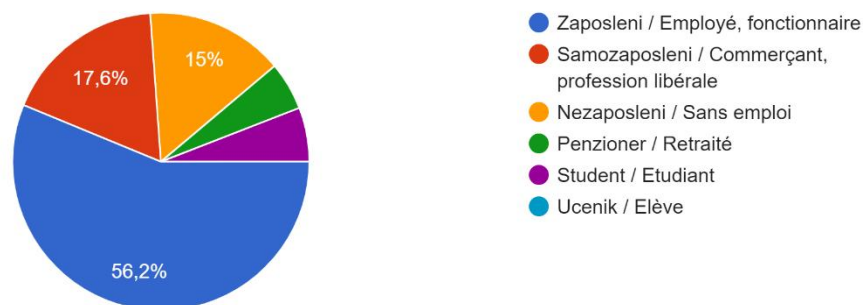
151 réponses



An important issue is the professional situation of members of our diaspora in France. Out of 153 responses received, 56.2% were employed in companies (in private firms or the public sector), 17.6% were self-employed, 5.9% students, 5.2% retirees, and 15% unemployed. This again shows a high unemployment rate, almost twice as high as the national average in France for 2021, which confirms previous research on the higher unemployment of immigrants compared to the native population.

U Francuskoj ste: / En France vous êtes :

153 réponses

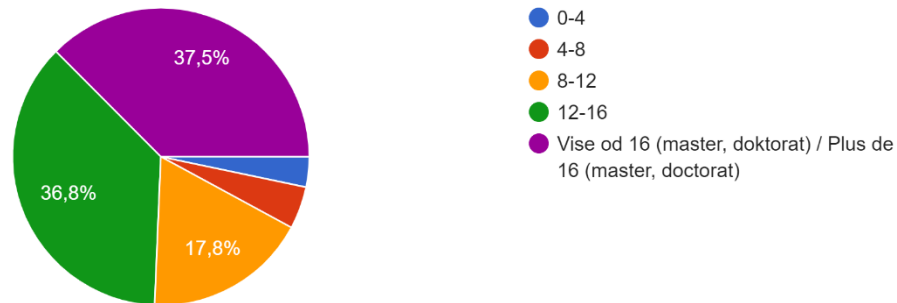


Such a high unemployment rate points to the need to examine the educational level of the diaspora, since employment is closely determined by the level and type of diploma. However, it is surprising here that there is a high level of education, as the largest number of respondents, 37.5%, state that they have more than 16 years of schooling (master's or doctorate), followed by the next largest group, 36.8%, who have between 12 and 16 years of schooling; 17.8% have between 8 and 12 years of schooling; 4.6% have between 4 and 8

years of schooling; and 3.3% have between 0 and 4 years of schooling.

Koliko godina skole imate ? / Combien d'années de scolarité avez-vous suivi ?

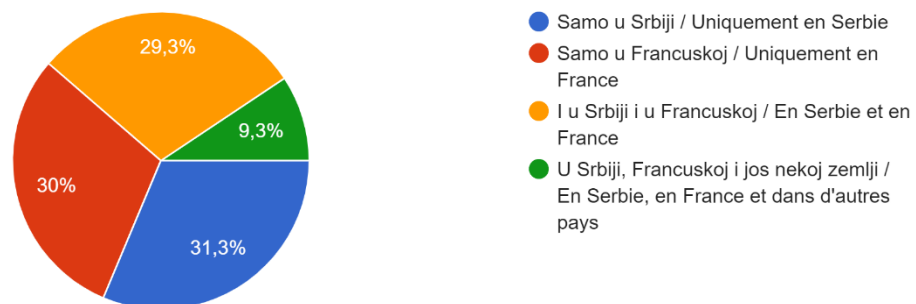
152 réponses



To the question of where they were educated, 31.3% answered that they were educated only in Serbia, 30% only in France, 29.3% in both Serbia and France, and 9.3% in Serbia, France, and another country.

Gde ste se skolovali ? / Où étiez-vous scolarisé ?

150 réponses

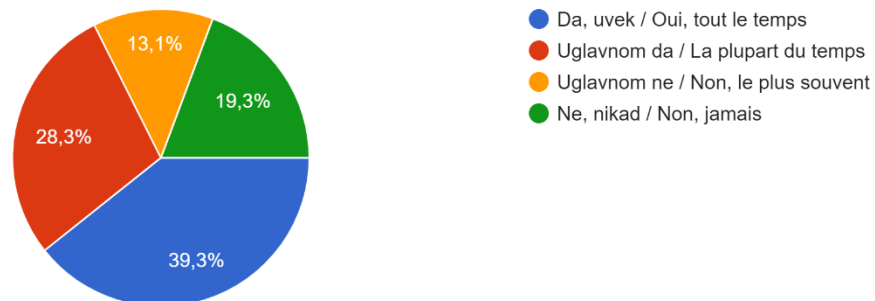


To the question *Whether you have performed jobs in France in accordance with your qualifications*, the following responses were obtained (145):

- 39.3% — yes, always
- 28.3% — mostly yes
- 19.3% — no, never
- 13.1% — mostly no

Da li ste u Francuskoj obavljali poslove u skladu sa Vasim kvalifikacijama i diplomama? / Est-ce que vos emplois en France correspondaient à vos qualifications et votre niveau de diplômes ?

145 réponses



To the question of how long they have lived in France, we obtained 101 valid responses indicating the presence of our people in France for more than 60 years, as well as the continuous replenishment of this population with new immigrants.

Koliko dugo zivite u Francuskoj (u godinama) / Depuis combien d'années vivez-vous en France ?:

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TTL : 101

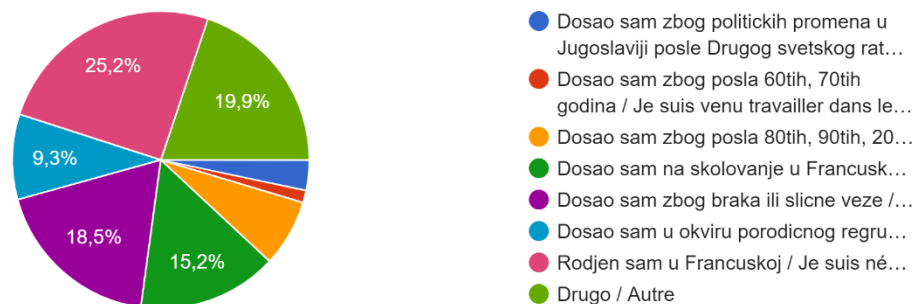
To the question concerning the reason why respondents chose France as a place of residence, we obtained the following responses (151):

- 25.2% – I was born in France
- 18.5% – I came due to marriage or a similar relationship
- 15.2% – I came to pursue studies and stayed
- 9.3% – I came as part of family reunification
- 7.3% – I came to work in the 1980s / 1990s / 2000s
- 3.3% – I came due to political changes in Yugoslavia after the Second World War
- 1.3% – I came to work in the 1960s / 1970s
- 19.9% – other

100%

Razlog zbog kojeg ste se nastanili, odnosno zivite u Francuskoj / La raison pour laquelle vous vous êtes installé ou vivez en France

151 réponses

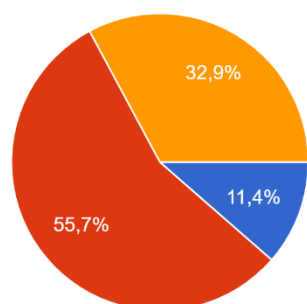


It can be observed, in connection with the French policy of restricting labor immigration and, on the other hand, granting the right to family reunification, that the largest share—27.8%—came due to marriage and family reunification. However, what is also significant is that 15% of respondents came to France for education and remained there, in connection with the policy of “selective immigration” through which France meets its needs for skilled labor.

One of the questions was whether respondents had secured a job in France before going there.

Pre nego sto sam dosao u Francusku / Avant de venir en France

140 réponses



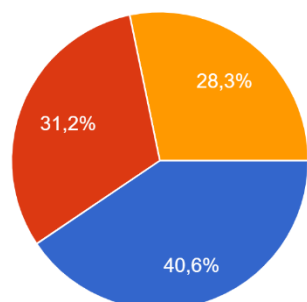
- Imao sam obezbedjen posao u Francuskoj / J'avais un emploi déjà assuré en France
- Trazio sam posao po dolasku u Francusku / J'ai cherché un emploi après mon arrivée en France
- Ne odnosi se na mene (ja sam rodjen u Francuskoj) / Non concerné (je suis né en France)

It can be seen that among the respondents who answered, and who were not born in France, only a small number had a secured job in France before going there.

Conversely, among those who answered, the majority had a job in their country of origin:

Pre nego sto sam dosao u Francusku / Avant de venir en France

138 réponses



- Imao sam posao u zemlji porekla / J'avais un emploi dans mon pays de provenance
- Nisam imao posao u zemlji porekla / Je n'avais pas d'emploi dans mon pays de provenance
- Ne odnosi se na mene (ja sam rodjen u Francuskoj) / Non concerné (je suis né en France)

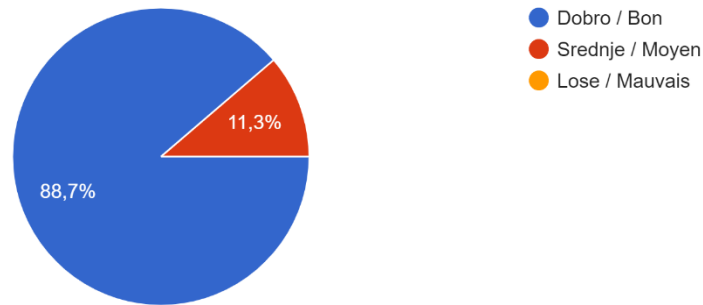
Based on this, it could be concluded that for a large number of respondents, the reason for coming to France was the desire to improve the standard of living they had in their country of origin. This implied making a migration decision even in a situation where they had a job in their homeland, and going to France despite not having secured employment there at the time of departure.

One of the important elements of quality of life is health status and the possibilities for meeting healthcare needs. In this regard, France holds a high position among European countries, known for its generous welfare state, which, unfortunately, has been losing some of its strength in recent decades, under pressure from high public debt, budget deficits, an increasingly aging population, and a shortage of medical personnel, particularly outside major urban centers.

We asked survey participants about their health status. 88.7% of respondents answered that they are in good health, and 11.3% in average health. No respondent stated that they are in poor health.

Kakvo je Vase zdravstveno stanje ? / Quel est votre état de santé ?

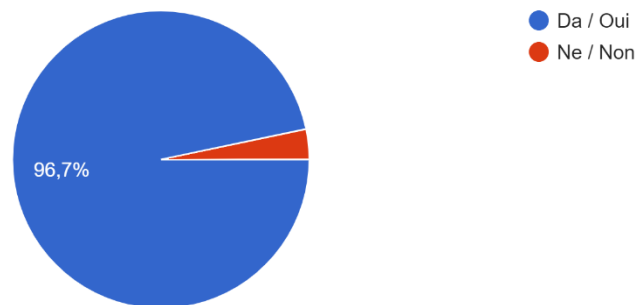
151 réponses



To the question of whether they are covered by basic health insurance, 96.7% of respondents answered positively, while 3.3% did not have basic health insurance.

Da li ste pokriveni osnovnim zdravstvenim osiguranjem ? / Etes-vous couvert par l'assurance maladie ?

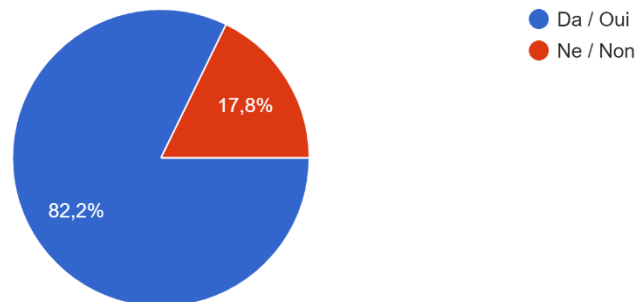
152 réponses



As many as 82.2% of respondents also have supplementary health insurance (private insurance—*mutuelle*), while 17.8% do not.

Da li imate dopunsko zdravstveno osiguranje (mutuelle) ? / Avez-vous une assurance maladie complémentaire (mutuelle) ?

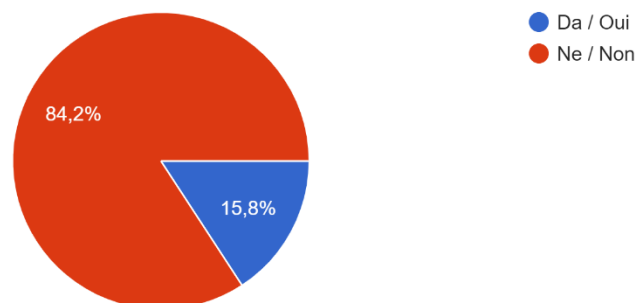
152 réponses



It is evident that regular medical care is generally accessible to respondents, as can be concluded from the following answers:

Da li ste u poslednjih 24 meseci odustali od lecenja (imali ste potrebu za lekarom ili zubarom, ali ste odustali od ideje da ga konsultujete) ? / Au cours d... d'un dentiste, que vous avez renoncé à consulter ?

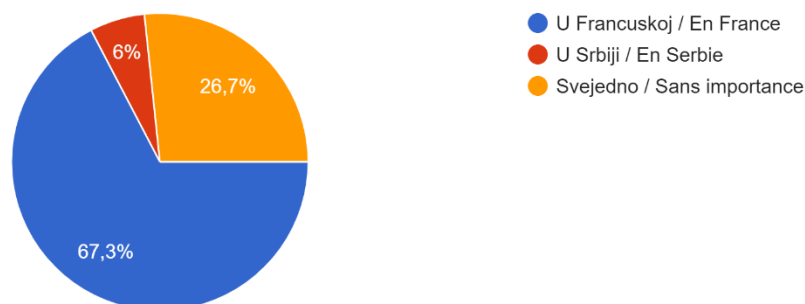
152 réponses



67.3% of respondents prefer to receive treatment in France, only 6% prefer to be treated in Serbia, and 26.7% make no difference—they consider it the same.

Sto se lekarskih usluga tice, vise volite da se lecite : / En ce qui concene les srvices médicaux, vous préférez être soigné:

150 réponses

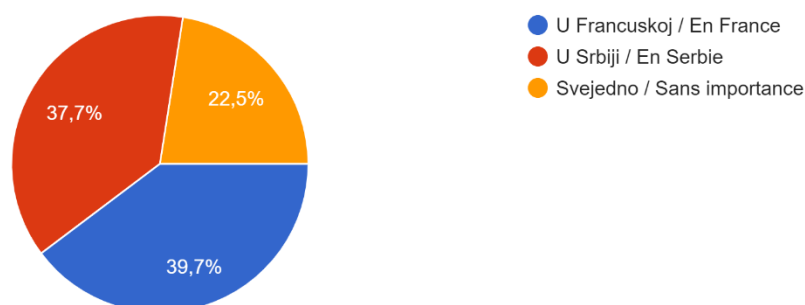


The situation is somewhat different when it comes to dental services, as they are very expensive and less covered by social insurance in France than medical services.

However, the majority of respondents still prefer to receive treatment in France—39.7% of them—while 37.7% prefer treatment in Serbia, and the remaining 22.5% are indifferent.

Sto se zubarskih usluga tice, vise volite da se lecite : / En ce qui concerne les soins dentaires, préférez-vous être soigné :

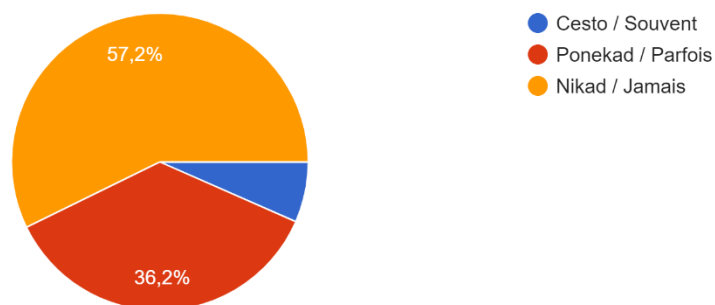
151 réponses



The fact that the Serbian community is well integrated into French society is also shown by the responses to the question of whether they believe they have been victims of discrimination or unequal treatment.

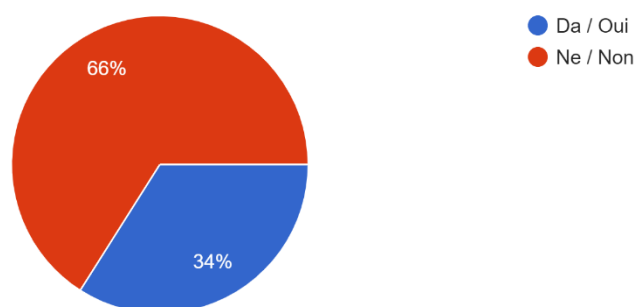
57.2% of respondents stated that they have never been victims of discrimination, 36.2% that they have sometimes been victims of discrimination, and 6.6% that this has been a frequent occurrence.

Da li mislite da ste bili zrtva diskriminacije ili neegalitarnog tretmana u Francuskoj (po pitanju zaposlenja, odnosa na poslu, stanovanja, škole, odn...avec l'administration, à la banque, dans la rue...) ?
152 réponses



Moreover, as many as 66% of respondents stated that they have never been victims of insults or prejudice related to their origin.

U toku Vaseg zivota u Francuskoj, da li ste bili zrtva vredjanja i predrasuda u vezi sa Vasim poreklom ? / Au cours de votre vie en France, avez-vous été victime d'insultes et de préjugés liés à votre origine ?
150 réponses

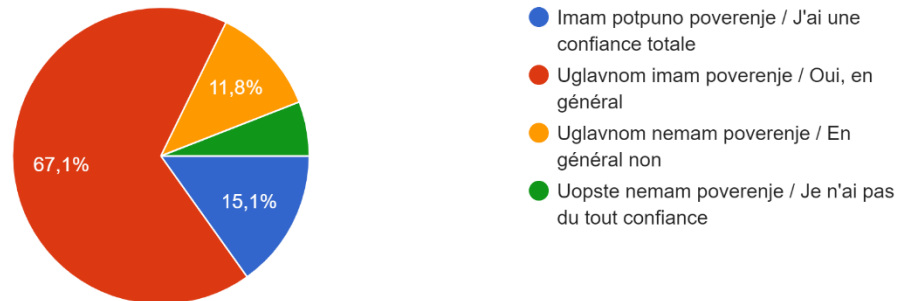


To the question of whether they have trust in French institutions, only 15.1% of respondents answered that they have complete trust, 67.1% that they generally trust them, 11.8% that they

generally do not trust them, and 5.9% that they have no trust at all.

Imate li poverenja u francuske institucije (pravosudje, policija, skola...) / Faites vous confiance aux institutions françaises (justice, police, école...)?

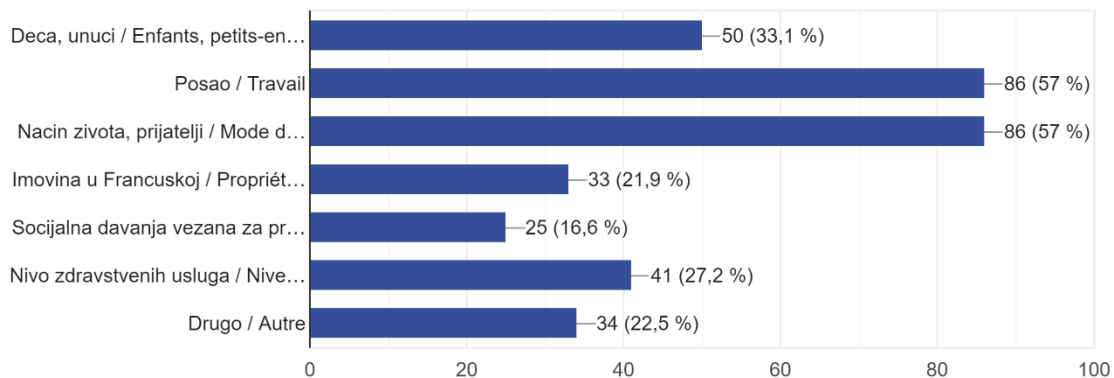
152 réponses



To the question *What binds you most to France*, to which multiple answers could be given, respondents answered as follows:

Sta Vas najviše vezuje za Francusku (moguće je više odgovora) / Qu'est ce qui vous lie le plus à la France (plusieurs réponses possibles)

151 réponses



It is evident that the largest number of respondents, 57%, are connected to France through work, but also through friends and their way of life, which indicates their integration into French society. This, in turn, raises the question of their intentions to leave France at some point in their lives (when they are no longer tied by work?) and return to their homeland.

And finally, we gave respondents who wished to do so the opportunity to address a personal message to the authorities regarding the diaspora and its ties with the country of origin.

We cite here some of them (the responses are in Serbian or in French):

1.

“Poštovani, Poručio bih da naš narod i Srbija, može da računa na nas, jer u Francuskoj ima dosta srba u svim generacijama, zabrinutih svakodnevno za situaciju i dešavanja u našoj državi. Tu smo uvek da pomognemo, posebno zbog naših mlađih generacija i novih naraštaja, da bi izbegli seobu kao naši preci koji su morali da se sele daleko od svojih porodica, zarad nekog boljeg života, nego da u našu zemlju dovedemo taj bolji život koji će pružiti sansu i nama koji smo otišlo daleko da se vratimo i mladima da ostanu na svojoj rodnoj grudi i u otadžbini”

2.

“Je ne leur recommanderai rien. Je suis personnellement un citoyen français. Je considère donc que nous ne sommes pas citoyen serbe et que nous n'avons pas de "compte à rendre" à la Serbie, ni la Serbie à nous (la diaspora). C'est le pays dans lequel nous sommes à qui nous devons exposer nos recommandations. Cela dit, cela ne veut pas dire que je ne me sens pas lier à mes origines et à la Serbie. Je dis juste que je pense qu'il n'y a pas de sens, pour moi, d'exposer des recommandation à la Serbie en tant qu'appartenant à la diaspora, car je n'appartiens pas à la communauté politique et citoyenne de la Serbie et par conséquent, la Serbie n'a pas de lien a priori avec moi ou la diaspora. Appartenir à une diaspora (si on se sent appartenir à celle-ci) ne veut pas dire appartenir à la communauté politique ou citoyenne serbe. Donc je ne leur recommanderais rien. C'était un plaisir de répondre à tes questions. [*Ne bih im nista porucio. Ja sam, licno, francuski gradjanin. Smatram, dakle, da nismo srpski drzavljan i da ne treba racune da polazemo Srbiji, niti ona nama (dijaspori). Nase preporuke treba da izlozimo zemlji u kojoj se nalazimo. To ne znaci da ne osecam vezanost sa mojim poreklom i Srbijom. To samo znaci da nema smisla, po meni, davati preporuke Srbiji kada pripadas dijaspori, jer ne pripadam politickoj i gradjanskoj zajednici Srbije, pa s tim u vezi, Srbija nema a priori veze sa mnom, ili sa dijasporom. Pripadati dijaspori (ukoliko se osecamo kao da joj pripadamo) ne znaci pripadati srpskoj politickoj i gradjanskoj zajednici. Dakle, ne bih im nista porucio. Bilo je zadovoljstvo odgovarati na tvoja pitanja (prevod LB)]. Srećno za doktorat, i samo napred, vjeruj u sebe (kao što si vjerovatno primjetila, pričam jekavicu, zanci da su mi roditelji iz bosne. Srbi iz bosne). Pozz :) »*

3.

«Soutenez les écoles serbes à l'étranger. Je voudrais bien savoir parler le serbe mieux » [*Podrzite srpske skole u inostranstvu. Voleo bih da mogu bolje da govorim srpski (prevod LB)»*]

4.

“Se rendre disponible “[*Budite dostupni (prevod LB)*]

5.

«Renseignements à l'ambassade plus clairs ou qu'elle soit accessible » [*Jasnija obavestjenja i dostupnost ambasade (prevod LB)*]

6.

« Da administrativne poslove budu lakše izvršene »

7.

« Што више и што боље повезивање са нашим људима у дијаспори јер се отварају незамисливе могућности сарадње са француским народом и францусом државом на свим нивоима, јер се свака сарадња и напредак у билатералним односима заснивају на личним контактима. »

8.

« De défendre les serbes (prise de parole reuter) lorsque ceux ci sont pointés négativement dans les medias occidentaux » [*Da brane Srbe kada su napadnuti u zapadnim medijima* (prevod LB)]

9.

« Vise brige o dijaspori, u svakom smislu »

10.

« De nous pas nous traiter comme des "mi-étrangers" » [*Da se ne odnose prema nama kao prema polu-strancima* (prevod LB)]

11.

« Da nas ne zaborave »

12.

« Да само СПЦ окупља Србе у дијаспори и да уместо бесловесне уведу словесну дипломатију. »

13.

Organisation d'un regroupement annuel [*Organizovanje godisnjih okupljanja* (prevod LB)]

14.

“Imati predstavnika dijaspore ataše za dijasporu pri ambasadi”

15.

“Krivi ste zato sto smo ovde!!!”

16.

Évoquer plus souvent la Serbie autre que pour djokovic ou anciennement la guerre. Elle possède une histoire riche , des écrivains, des inventeurs, etc... [*Pominjati cesce Srbiju i iz drugih razloga, a ne samo zbog Djokovica i ranije ratova. Ona poseduje bogatu istoriju, pisce, pronalazace i dr...*(prevod LB)]

17.

« Sto bolje i vise da drži dijasporu na okupu. »

18.

« Promena politike, naći način da se mladi zadrže »

19.

« Poručila bih da Francuska ne može da nam pridje ni po ponašanju, ni po hrani, ni po vaspitanju, ni po obrazovanju. Samo da se malo pametnije vodi država i ne ugledamo se na pojedince bili bi smo jedna od najboljih država za život. »

20.

« Postojimo, finansiramo vas, poštujujte to.»

21.

« Da smo njihova snaga, potencijal »

22.

“Poboljšati saradnju sa visokokvalifikovanim stručnjacima srpskog porekla koji žive i rade u inostranstvu.”

23.

“Da ambasada u Parizu služi svojim građanima u inostranstvu”

24.

“Da vrate kredite u bankama za naše ljude u inostranstvu”

25.

“Poručila bih im da nam obezbede pravo glasanja na daljinu ili s punomoćem, jer nismo u mogućnosti da putujemo 1000 km do Pariza da ostvarimo naše biračko pravo, kao i da prestanu da se služe našim nikad datim glasovima.”

26.

“Koliko ima dobrih strana, toliko ima i loših, i u Srbiji i u Francuskoj. Bitno je da ko dodje na određen period ili ostane kao i ja sto sam ostao, jer sam se ovde oženio, da nekako uspe da vidi i prihvati one dobre strane i Srbije i Francuske. Ima mnogo toga da se vidi i nauči, i ovde i kod nas u Srbiji. Vlastima nemam ništa da poručim, jer oni su tu gde jesu, i nikada se ne odriču vlasti, i ne verujem da bi shvatili kad bih im nešto poručio. Uglavnom, za normalne ljude, život je lep svuda na planeti, ali naravno nikad ne treba da se zaboravi odakle potiče, i treba da predstavljate svoju zemlju i svoj narod i svoju kulturu na najbolji mogući način. Hvala za ovu anketu !!! Veliki pozdrav ! »

27.

“Srećno u radu ka boljem sutra za sve nas”

28.

“Faites nous revenir!” [*Vratite nas nazad!* (prevod LB)]

29.

“Da olakša proceduru za glasanje na izborima, tj da omogući onima koji ne žive u Parizu (ambasada) i Strazburu (konzulat) podjednake uslove da ostvare svoje građansko pravo.”

30.

« De promouvoir la cohésion de la diaspora via plus d’associatif, d’événements et de projets culturels ou sociaux » [*Promovisati koheziju dijaspore putem vise rada u asocijacijama, kulturnim i društvenim zbivanjima i projektima* (prevod LB)]

31.

« Essayer d’imiter la stratégie d’israel pour structurer la diaspora ou du moins essayer de la faire dans les principaux pays et permettre à chaque serbe ethnique d’obtenir la nationalité sans que ce soit un parcours impossible. » [*Pokusati primeniti strategiju Izraela za struktuiranje dijaspore, ili barem pokusati to u glavnim zemljama i omoguciti svakom etnickom Srbinu da dobije drzavljanstvo, a da to ne bude nemoguca misija* (prevod LB)]

32.

« La diaspora n’est pas présente uniquement à Paris » [*Dijaspora nije prisutna samo u Parizu!* (prevod LB)]

IV Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

The questions in the questionnaire can be classified into several groups:

A)

a) Period of arrival in France and distribution across French territory

b) Nationality, marital and family status, level of education and employment, assets in Serbia and in France

c) Language used, sense of belonging and connection with the country of origin, activity of the Embassy of Serbia in France

Aa) Period of arrival in France and distribution across French territory

The survey, although based on a limited sample, showed a regularity of arrivals in France, with a slowdown between 1979 and 1986, which corresponds to the period following France’s closure to labor immigration and, in parallel, to a period of relative prosperity and openness in Serbia. From the 1990s onward, a continuity of arrivals reappears, with a particular intensification from 2010, after the abolition of Schengen visas for Serbian citizens in 2009, as

well as the signing, in the same year, of an agreement allowing the sending of Serbian students to pursue their studies in France.

The people who were not born in France (109) arrived, in a very large majority, at working age: 55% after the age of 25, 21.1% between 20 and 25, and 12.8% between 15 and 20. It clearly appears that the majority of respondents, namely 57%, are connected to France through work, but also through friends and way of life, which testifies to their integration into French society and leads one to question their possible desire to one day leave France to return to their country of origin, when work will no longer constitute a factor of anchoring. Only a small percentage (11.1%) arrived during childhood.

The respondents are distributed as follows: 63.2% in the first generation of immigrants in France, 29.6% in the second, and 7.2% in the third. Only a small number of them (23%) have a close relative buried in France.

As in previous research (Čačić-Kumpes, 1990; Bošković, 2006), the survey showed that the highest concentration of people of Serbian origin is first in the Paris region, then in the Provence–Côte d’Azur region, which testifies to the attractive role of Serbian migration networks long established in these regions. But it also appears that Serbs are settled across almost the entire French territory, gravitating in particular around industrial centers such as Lyon and Nantes.

Ab) Nationality, marital and family status, level of education and employment

The question of nationality showed that the majority of respondents (45.1%) hold dual nationality, Serbian and French. This fact reflects, on the one hand, the duration of the Serbian presence on French soil, since acquiring French nationality requires certain conditions that take time. The acquisition of French nationality above all makes it possible to circumvent administrative obstacles—particularly the restrictions related to the visa regime that applied to Serbian nationals before 2009—and to obtain the freedom of movement and employment recognized for citizens of European Union countries. Although Serbs were, in the 1990s, a “stigmatized nation,” the fact that the majority retain Serbian nationality (45.1% have dual nationality and 38.6% only Serbian nationality) reflects their attachment to the country of origin. Among the respondents holding French nationality, 23 acquired it by birth (born in France to two foreign parents, or with one French parent), 53 by naturalization, and 9 by marriage. Although the number of naturalizations may appear high, it does not reflect a renunciation of previous nationality or origin, but rather a pragmatic solution in a situation of “double life,” involving strong mobility and equal access to French institutions.

The question of marital and family status showed that 59.4% of respondents live as a couple, 9.8% are divorced or separated, and only 1.3% are widowed. Marriages and unions are mainly formed with persons of Serbian origin (50.3%), but mixed unions with French partners also represent 22.1%. The high number of unions with persons of Serbian origin shows that our diaspora continues to evolve within “circles of compatriots” where familiar values and modes of behavior are maintained. However, the relatively significant proportion of marriages with French partners also indicates integration into French society and the acceptance of a dual Serbian-French model.

The questionnaire showed that, out of 153 respondents, 80 had children. A worrying fact is that 38.56% of the children had only French nationality. Dual Serbian and French nationality

concerned 31.37% of the children, while 25.28% had only Serbian nationality. One thus observes, in the following generations, a lower level of commitment to maintaining Serbian nationality or, at least, a certain neglect on the part of parents regarding the registration with Serbian authorities of their children born in France. The majority of the children lived in France, but a small number lived in Serbia, and another small number in a third country.

The question of professional activity in France showed that 68.6% of respondents were employed, 6.5% were students or pupils, 4.6% were retired, and 2.6% were homemakers or men taking on domestic tasks. No less than 13.5% were in a job-seeking situation, a rate almost twice as high as the French national average, which stood at 7.9% in 2021 (Insee, 2021). The situation of people of Serbian origin in France thus confirms the results of research on unemployment among immigrant populations: immigrants are in a more disadvantaged position than native French people in terms of access to employment and job retention.

Further in the questionnaire, another question relating to professional status in France was asked, with slightly different response options. It showed that 73.8% of respondents have a job, whether as employees of a company, civil servants, or self-employed workers. The number of unemployed appears even higher: 15% (homemakers were not listed as a separate category, which likely led to their grouping with the unemployed). Students represent 5.9% here, compared to 6.5% in the first question; retirees 5.2%, compared to 4.6% previously. Despite these differences, the trends are clear: the majority—56.2%—work in companies or services, and 17.6% are self-employed, that is, they have created their own business or registered their professional activity. This represents in total more than 70% of respondents having a professional activity. Unfortunately, the high level of unemployment is confirmed, almost twice the French average.

As has already been noted, it is nevertheless surprising that respondents report a high level of education. The largest proportion, namely 37.5%, have completed more than 16 years of education (master's or doctorate), and 36.8% between 12 and 16 years. Unfortunately, we were not able to examine the type of diploma nor the link between the level and nature of education, on the one hand, and unemployment or chances of access to employment, on the other. On the basis of these responses, one could nevertheless conclude in general that there is a certain incompatibility between the education acquired and the real needs of the French labor market. It should be added that 31.3% of respondents were educated only in Serbia, 30% only in France, 29.3% both in Serbia and in France, and 9.3% in Serbia, in France, and in a third country.

19.6% of respondents declared that they are owners of a business in France. It should be specified, however, that these are most often small businesses created in order to enter the labor market under the status of “self-employed worker,” the individuals concerned having had difficulties being hired by French companies.

Ac) Language used, sense of belonging and connection with the country of origin, assets in Serbia and in France, activity of the Embassy of Serbia in France

Since language is a fundamental element of cohesion, it was important to determine to what extent members of the Serbian diaspora master (according to their own assessment) the Serbian language and the Cyrillic alphabet.

95.4% declare that they speak, read, and write Serbian, and 94.1% know how to read and write in Cyrillic. However, only 10.5% have used the available opportunities to learn Serbian in

France (schools, courses). Considering that 44 respondents were born in France and that 12 arrived during childhood (i.e., about 37% of the total), one can conclude that the Serbian community in France attaches importance to preserving its language and script, since more than 90% declare possessing these skills. As only a minority learned Serbian through schooling or courses available in France, it follows that families have played an important role in the intergenerational transmission of essential identity elements.

To the question of whether they have a better command of Serbian or French, 51% of respondents stated that they master Serbian better, 27.5% French, and 21.6% consider that they master both languages equally.

This question was further explored by another one concerning the language used with the partner and with children. The responses show that 41.32% of respondents use Serbian in communication with their partner, 30.59% French, 22.35% both languages, and 5.74% a third language.

The responses showed that, in exchanges between parents and children, Serbian is the most used language, followed by French. By contrast, the next generation—children among themselves—uses French more than Serbian, although the latter remains present. Acculturation therefore produces its effects, but the family continues to constitute the core of the preservation of Serbian identity, as also appears through other traditional Serbian values.

The sense of belonging to the country of origin was tested through several questions. To the direct question: “To which people do you feel you belong?”, 53.6% of respondents answered that they feel Serbian, 31.4% both Serbian and French, and 11.1% French. This result does not confirm previous research (TeO 1, 2009), according to which 56% of immigrants surveyed feel and declare themselves French. It is possible that the differences are due to whether the interviewer is perceived as representing France or as representing the Serbian diaspora.

The majority of respondents, 68%, travel to the country of origin at least once a year; 26.1% go less than once a year, and 5.9% never go.

47.1% of respondents follow daily news from the country of origin, 41.2% follow it occasionally, while 11.8% do not follow the media or social networks of the country of origin at all.

Based on these data, one could conclude that the diaspora is more physically present in the country of origin than interested in its current affairs, being primarily drawn by the family and friendly ties it maintains there (55.9% have relatives in the country of origin whom they care for), and to a lesser extent by political and economic issues.

However, the mental and emotional orientation of the diaspora toward the country of origin is also manifested in the fact that, during sports competitions between Serbia and France, 94.1% of respondents support Serbia, compared to only 5.9% supporting France.

The question relating to the “final destination” of emigrants also showed a symbolic link with the country of origin: 54.7% of respondents declared that they wish to be buried in the country of origin, compared to only 10.7% in France.

A series of questions sought to determine whether the Serbian diaspora continues to practice typically Serbian traditions which, together with language, constitute markers of its identity.

To the question on religion, 84.1% of respondents declared themselves to be of Orthodox faith, 13.2% identified as agnostic, and 2.7% belonged to other religions.

However, only 13.8% regularly attend Serbian churches, 55.9% go sometimes, and 30.3% do not go. 71.2% of respondents celebrate the slava in France, of which 27.5% according to all the rules of the Serbian Orthodox Church. It is evident that a large number of members of the diaspora strive to preserve and transmit the main Serbian traditions, and thus to maintain their Serbian identity despite inevitable acculturation. Thus, to the question regarding Christmas and Easter that they celebrate, almost as many respondents declared celebrating only Orthodox holidays (47.7%) as those who celebrate both Orthodox and Catholic holidays (46.4%). It can, however, be observed that 94.1% of respondents, if these two groups are considered, celebrate Orthodox holidays, nearly half of them adding their Catholic variant, as a form of adaptation to the country in which they live and whose influences they experience.

If one considers associative life among Serbs, contrary to earlier periods—particularly the interwar period, when the small Yugoslav community maintained rich cooperation in various associations—it seems that today there is not much interest in this domain. Thus, only 17.8% of respondents are members of a Serbian association in France. Among those who have children, only 24.11% have sent them to Serbian schools. The main driving force of Serbian community activities remains the Serbian Church, within which there is also a school for Serbian children, in addition to those established by the Serbian state. Thus, the parish hall of the church in Paris also hosts events related to the Serbian community that are not exclusively religious. Recently, however, there has been a revival of activity and the creation of new associations, in addition to the Association of Serbs of France, which for a long time constituted the main framework for gathering Serbs in the Paris region. One can also observe increasing activity on social networks, where several groups connect people of Serbian origin, as well as the activity of Serbian associations in other regions of France (Nice, Bordeaux, Lyon, etc.).

We asked the question of ownership of real estate in Serbia and in France in order to see to what extent respondents are linked to the country of origin or to their “country of adoption,” and whether they would immediately have housing in case of return. It appeared that the percentages are almost identical: 47.1% of respondents own property in the country of origin and 42.1% in France.

In their large majority, members of the Serbian diaspora in France do not vote in elections in Serbia. Among those who have Serbian nationality, only 6.43% vote regularly and 25.6% vote sometimes. A large majority—67%—never vote in elections in Serbia. This can be interpreted as a certain depoliticization of the diaspora in general, and even more so with regard to the country of origin: the Serbian diaspora “takes care of its own affairs” in the host country, without engaging significantly on civic and political levels in the country of origin. This lack of political activity had already been noted by Bošković (2006). Another possible explanation for the low participation rate could be insufficient information provided by the Embassy of Serbia and other state institutions, the small number of polling stations, their limited accessibility, and unsuitable opening hours. It clearly appears that the voice of the diaspora carries little weight and that it exerts limited influence on political events in the country of origin.

To the question concerning the degree of satisfaction with the activity of the Embassy of Serbia and the Serbian Cultural Center, only 7.8% of respondents declared themselves very satisfied, 32% considered that it could be improved, and 17.6% stated that they were not satisfied.

Finally, in this group of questions, we mention the following: “Do you feel comfortable in Serbia when you visit it?” If one excludes those who declare that they never go there (6.6%), a very large majority of the others (93%) answer that they feel comfortable there, while 7% state that they do not feel well there.

B)

- a) Reasons for choosing France as a place of residence
- b) Integration into French society
- c) Health status and access to healthcare services in France
- d) Discrimination in France

Ba) Reasons for choosing France as a place of residence

For this question, the diversity of responses was great, probably due to the too large number of options proposed in the questionnaire. What can be retained, in summary, is that 25% of respondents were born in France and live there, while the second largest category is that of people who arrived following a marriage or family reunification (27.8%). Those who came to pursue their studies in France represent 15%, and those who came for work 9.6%.

It can therefore be observed, in connection with the restrictive French policy on labor immigration and, conversely, with the policy of family reunification, that the majority of Serbian immigrants came following a marriage or family reunification. It is nevertheless significant that 15% came to France for their studies—a category that finds its place relatively easily on the French labor market after obtaining a diploma.

What is particularly interesting is that only 17% of those who came to France had a job secured before their arrival, while 83% looked for a job after their settlement. On the other hand, 56.55% of respondents already had a job in their country of origin before coming to France. One could therefore conclude that, for a large number of them, migration to France is explained by the desire to improve the standard of living they had in their country of origin, without forgetting the wars of the 1990s, which forced many people to “manage on their own” abroad.

Bb) Integration into French society

The responses relating to the length of stay in France show that among the respondents there were people who had been living in France for 60, 59 or 55 years, and that a large number have been residing there for more than 15 years, which confirms earlier findings concerning the particularly long duration of stay of our migrants in France, longer than in any other immigration country.

According to previous research, the Serbian diaspora has a weaker command of the French language than migrants from other countries, many of whom are francophone because they

come from former French colonies or from countries strongly marked by the cultural and political influence of France.

According to their own assessment, the majority of respondents—81%—declare that they speak, read, and write French; 7.2% say they understand and speak it well but do not read or write it; 9.8% understand it well but speak it with difficulty; 2% understand a few words. As already indicated, 51% of respondents stated that they master Serbian better, compared to 27.5% French; the others consider that they master both equally. Insufficient knowledge of French constitutes a significant handicap, particularly affecting first-generation migrants who were not educated in French schools. However, for certain categories of employment, a good command of French is not essential, especially within the range of so-called “3D” jobs—dirty, difficult, and dangerous—generally found within migration networks.

To the question of whether they have held jobs in France corresponding to their qualifications, the largest share of respondents (39.3%) answered that this had always been the case, and 28.3% that it had generally been the case. This therefore gives a positive assessment, even if 19.3% state that they have never held a job corresponding to their qualifications, and 13.1% say that this has generally not been the case. Thus, around 70% of respondents consider that they have worked in accordance with their qualifications, but one should not forget the high number of people seeking employment.

42.1% of respondents declare that they own real estate in France. As the French tax system is one of the heaviest in Europe, including in terms of inheritance duties, we asked whether respondents were familiar with French tax rules; 60.2% (out of 128 responses obtained) answered positively. This means that a significant proportion of our compatriots do not really know these rules and therefore do not take in time the necessary legal measures to assist their heirs in this matter. For all property-related issues concerning our nationals abroad, it would be desirable for the Embassy of Serbia and its consular services to play a much more active, accessible, and preventive role in providing information and raising awareness, rather than intervening only on a case-by-case basis.

A little more than half of the respondents (50.3%) indicated that they live in France in housing belonging to their family, while 41.7% live in privately rented housing. Only 5.3% live in social housing of the HLM type, which can be very comfortable but is difficult to obtain. One can conclude that the Serbian population in France manages rather well in resolving the housing issue, which reflects its integration into French society, as well as a certain degree of settlement.

Is the Serbian diaspora more politically active in France than in its country of origin?

Only 3.3% of respondents are members of a political party in France. Regarding participation in elections in France, those who do not have French nationality (37.8%) cannot vote. Among those who have French nationality, 47.82% vote regularly, 21.74% vote sometimes, and 30.43% never vote. One observes here a stronger political activity than with regard to the country of origin, although the engagement of people of Serbian origin remains relatively limited. The fact that more people vote in France than in Serbian elections can be interpreted in several ways: as a greater interest in the situation in the country where they live, but also as the result of better practical voting conditions (number of polling stations, information, etc.).

To the question of whether they trust French institutions (justice, police, school...), 15.1% of respondents answered that they fully trust them, and 67.1% that they generally trust them. A

smaller share, 5.9%, answered that they have no trust at all, and 11.8% not really any trust. The same question was not asked regarding Serbian institutions, although a comparison would have been interesting.

The last question in this group—whether they are, in general, satisfied with their life in France—gave a very telling result. All respondents answered it, and 89.5% gave a positive response, while only 10.5% stated that they are not satisfied. This naturally raises the question of the necessity and the desire to change this situation through a possible return to the country of origin.

Bc) Health status and access to healthcare services in France

The question of the respondents' health status was introduced into the questionnaire with a view to a possible return to the country of origin, in order to see whether such a return would represent a burden on the Serbian healthcare and social protection system. Nearly 90% of respondents (88.7%) consider themselves to be in good health, and 11.3% in average health. None declared being in poor health, although the group includes elderly persons.

It must be acknowledged that a large part of this result is also due to the French healthcare system. 96.7% of respondents benefit from basic health insurance, and 82.2% also have complementary insurance (*mutuelle*). The first figure is not surprising, since any person in a regular situation in France benefits from basic coverage. What is particularly positive, however, is that more than 80% also have complementary coverage, paid for either by their employer or by themselves. This indicates both a high level of awareness and care regarding their health, and constitutes another indicator of good integration into the French model.

Thus, 67.3% of respondents prefer to be treated in France, only 6% prefer to be treated in Serbia, and 26.7% make no difference.

The difference is less clear when it comes to dental care, as it is very costly in France and poorly reimbursed by social insurance. This has led, over recent decades, to the development of a particular form of tourism specifically organized to provide dental care to emigrants, not only in Serbia but also in other countries. Nevertheless, slightly more respondents—39.7%—prefer to receive dental care in France, compared to 37.7% in Serbia, the others being indifferent.

Bd) Discrimination in France

A large part of research on the status of immigrants in France has focused on the issue of their discrimination in different segments of social life. However, this research has mainly concerned immigrants from African countries or so-called “visible” immigrants, and it has indeed shown more or less latent forms of discrimination toward these categories of population.

People of Serbian origin belong to the category of “invisible immigrants” and form a relatively small community in France, which does not exert any particular influence on the social dynamics of the host country. Apart from the 1990s, when all attention was focused on them due to the wars in the former Yugoslavia, they have, since the 2000s, returned to a certain anonymity, with only rare public expressions mainly concerning their country of origin.

More than half of respondents (57.2%) declared that they have never been victims of discrimination in France, and 66% have never been victims of prejudice or insults related to their origin.

Their main handicap remains an insufficient command of French, at least for the first generations of immigrants, as well as a certain mismatch between their diplomas and the French labor market; however, these difficulties are generally compensated for within community networks.

C)

- a) Comparison of life in Serbia and in France and what attaches them most to France
- b) Intentions regarding a return to the country of origin

Ca) Comparison of life in Serbia and in France

To the question of whether life is more pleasant in Serbia or in France, the responses show a near equality between the two countries, with a slight advantage for France. Thus, 24.5% of respondents consider that life is more pleasant in France, and 23.8% that it is in Serbia. The largest share, namely 46.4%, considers that it is equally pleasant in both countries. 67.3% of respondents like Serbian cuisine as much as French cuisine, 26.7% prefer Serbian cuisine, and only 6% prefer French cuisine.

An important question for respondents was whether they think they have achieved more in France than they would have if they had remained—or if they had been born—in the country of origin. 59.5% think they have achieved more, which means that a majority considers that departure or life in France has had a positive influence on their life trajectory; one can indirectly deduce that they consider their migration decision, or that of their parents, to have been a good choice.

To the question of what attaches them most to France, several answers could be selected. The results show that what binds our compatriots to France is:

- work — 57%
- way of life, friends — 57%
- children and grandchildren — 33.1%
- level of healthcare services — 27.2%
- assets in France — 21.9%
- social benefits linked to residence in France — 16.6%
- other — 22.5%

The fact that 57% cite the way of life in France as an element of attachment to this country raises the question of whether they would be willing to leave France to return to their country of origin.

Cb) Intentions regarding return to the country of origin

To the question of whether they intend, one day, to leave France to settle in Serbia, only 20.3% clearly stated that they have this intention. 28.8% clearly answered that they do not plan to settle in Serbia, while 51% do not exclude this possibility. Asked about the period of life at which they would possibly return to Serbia, it is interesting to note that 42.5% declared that they would

return even before retirement, if the opportunity arose, while 26.8% would return at the time of retirement.

Thus, despite good integration in France, a significant proportion of our compatriots would not be opposed to a return to Serbia if an opportunity arose (employment, marriage, etc.).

To the question of the reasons that could encourage them to possibly return to Serbia, several answers could be chosen. The responses were as follows:

- family, friends — 55.6%
- less stress than in France — 32.7%
- work — 28.8%
- the wish to be buried near their ancestors — 28.1%
- nostalgia — 26.8%
- a lower cost of living — 23.5%
- other — 27.5%

It therefore clearly appears that there is a lasting connection with the country of origin, above all through personal, family, and friendly relationships, even if respondents have also shown that they appreciate in France the way of life and the friendships they have built there. A lower level of stress constitutes the second factor of attraction, followed by work in the country of origin and by a lower cost of living. Added to this are reasons of a patriotic or romantic nature, such as the wish to rest near one's ancestors, as well as nostalgia.

It should not, however, be forgotten that only 20.3% have categorically declared their intention to settle in the country of origin, while the mass of undecided respondents—51%—could be encouraged and attracted to settle there for one of the reasons mentioned above.

V Conclusion

This exploratory sociological survey on the Serbian diaspora in France highlights several important characteristics of this population. It first confirms the long-standing nature and continuity of Serbian migration to France, as well as its geographical concentration in the Paris region and in the southeast of the country.

The results also show a generally satisfactory level of integration into French society, particularly in terms of housing, access to social services, and participation in the labor market, even though the observed unemployment rate remains higher than the national average.

At the same time, members of the diaspora continue to maintain strong cultural, family, and symbolic ties with their country of origin. The Serbian language, religious traditions, and certain cultural practices remain widely present within families, while regular visits to Serbia testify to the persistence of transnational relations.

All these elements suggest that the Serbian diaspora in France is developing forms of hybrid identity, combining integration into French society with the maintenance of cultural references linked to the country of origin.

VI Limitations of the research

Like any exploratory survey based on a voluntarily distributed questionnaire, this study presents certain methodological limitations that should be highlighted.

First of all, the sample of 153 respondents cannot be considered statistically representative of the entire Serbian diaspora in France. The results should therefore be interpreted as indications of sociological trends rather than as an exhaustive description of the population studied.

Secondly, the sampling method used—combining the so-called “snowball” technique and the dissemination of the questionnaire on social networks—may have favored the participation of individuals already integrated into certain social or digital networks. It is therefore likely that part of the population, particularly older individuals or those less present on social networks, remained outside the scope of the survey.

Furthermore, the data are mainly based on respondents’ self-reports, which implies an inevitable degree of subjectivity in the evaluation of certain dimensions, such as the sense of belonging, the level of language proficiency, or the perception of social integration.

Finally, the survey does not allow for an in-depth exploration of certain important aspects of diaspora life, such as the detailed structure of professional trajectories, the recognition of diplomas obtained abroad, or forms of associative and transnational engagement.

These limitations, however, do not diminish the exploratory value of this study, which provides a first empirical insight into several important dimensions of the Serbian presence in France and opens the way for further, more in-depth research, based in particular on larger-scale quantitative surveys or complementary qualitative approaches.

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