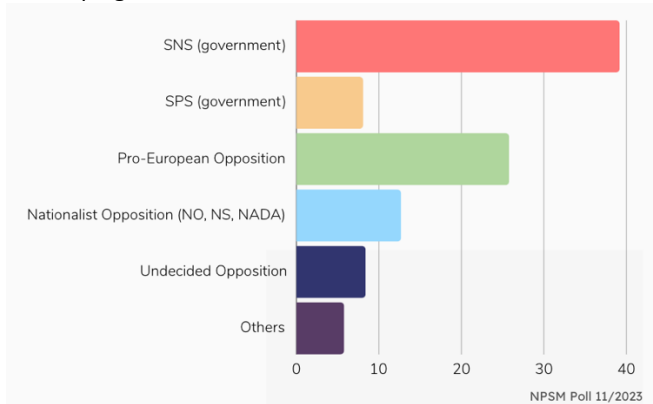
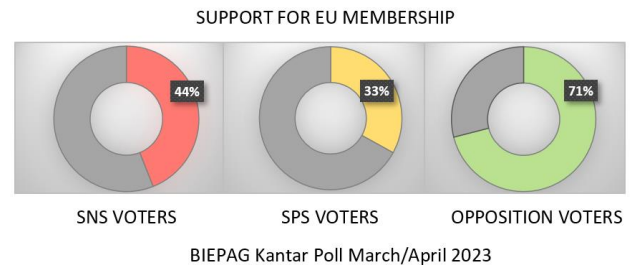


- **17 December 2023: extraordinary parliamentary elections**, local elections in 65 municipalities, including Belgrade.
- **4th early parliamentary elections** triggered by ruling SNS since coming to power in 2012 (2014, 2016, 2022). Regular elections took place only 2020.
- First elections with a **united pro-European opposition** (Serbia against Violence) and separate nationalist lists. First elections with a huge mobilization of civil society and GOTV campaigns.



- Ruling SNS for the first time runs in coalition with the far-right Serbian Radical Party (led by convicted war criminal Vojislav Šešelj & party from which SNS broke away in 2008) in several local elections, including in Belgrade.

- **Mass protests** every year since 2016 (2016 against Belgrade waterfront, a controversial urban renewal project; 2018/19, 1 of 5 million against government repression; 2020 against lockdown; 2021/2 against lithium mining, 2023 Serbia against violence). 2023 was the largest protest movement since fall of Slobodan Milošević in 2000, with hundreds of thousands taking the streets across the country.



- In Serbia overall, more support to join BRICS than EU. There is **no majority for EU membership**, as several opinion polls show. This is the direct result of 10 years of state-controlled media. The voters of opposition are clearly pro-EU than ruling parties and overall population
- Serbia marks a **continuous decline in state of democracy** and human rights since 2014/2015. (Freedom House 2023: Partially Free, Transitional or Hybrid Regime).

Key take-aways

Opposition unlikely to win due to complete media-control, a controlled voting mechanism through 700.000 party members, pressures to vote SNS through all state institutions.

Opportunities:

- **Victory in local elections** for the opposition is possible in some municipalities (Kragujevac, Šabac and, less likely, Belgrade)
- Strong presence of a **united pro-European opposition** in parliament

Challenges:

- keeping up **opposition unity** after the elections
- addressing **further repression** and incidents (including in Kosovo)

A strong showing of opposition might trigger responses by ruling SNS:

- Attempts to **coopt** opposition
- Increasing **repression**, already taking place through physical attacks & smear campaigns
- Change in key government positions (replacing Ana Brnabić as PM)

Further resources

Serbia Elects:

<https://serbiaelects.europeanwesternbalkans.com>

CRTA: <https://crt.rs/en/>

BiEPAG further reading and policy briefs:

<https://biepag.eu/publications/>

