



ИНСТИТУТ  
ПО ПУБЛИЧНА  
АДМИНИСТРАЦИЯ

# Барометър на ангажираността

Шесто национално проучване  
на нагласите на служителите  
в държавната администрация

Sofia, 2024

# ENGAGEMENT BAROMETER

Sixth National Survey  
the commitment of civil servants

Sofia, 2024  
Institute of Public Administration



**Commitment** is manifested through achievement motivation, initiative, willingness to accept challenges, adaptability, persistence, and perseverance to achieve organizational goals.

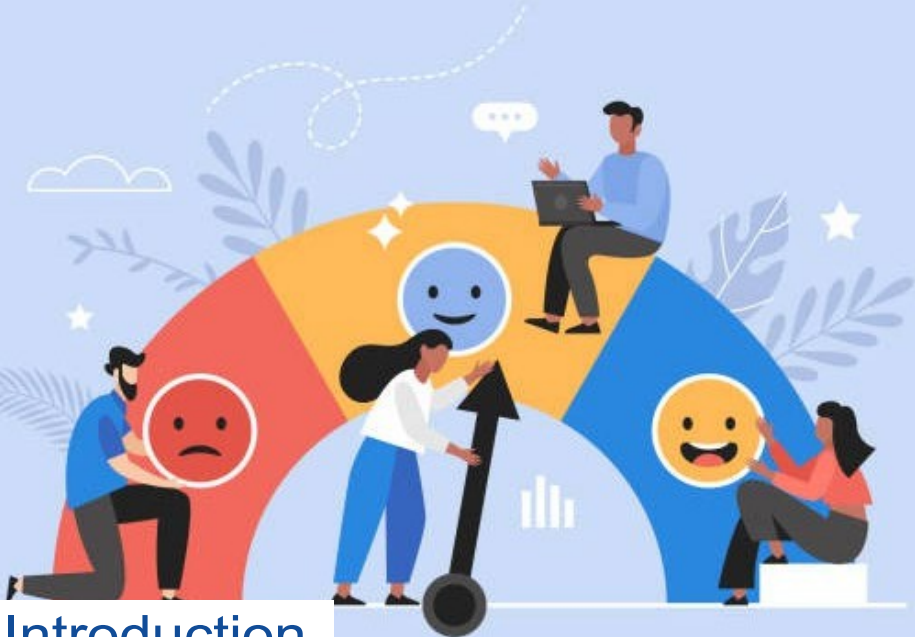
**Engaged employees** perform better and achieve higher results because their motivation is intrinsic. They find personal meaning in what they do, are more innovative and have high internal standards that do not allow them to settle for mediocre performance - either from themselves or from colleagues.

**Engaged employees** work hard and feel deeply connected to their organisation. They achieve personal fulfilment through their work. They are good professionals and know that they can best show others their strengths through the results of their work.

**Committed employees** are who believe in and identify with the organization. They do not need someone to control them to work hard. They work constantly at the top of their capabilities for , their colleagues and their managers.

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# 1. Introduction

The survey of the attitudes of the forestry employees in Bulgaria has become a tradition. For the sixth consecutive year, the "Agency Barometer" attracted thousands of participants from all Bulgarian administrations to measure the motivation and attitude of civil servants towards their work. The survey is the largest survey on the attitudes of public sector employees in the country. All administrations are invited to complete it and any civil servant can . The survey measures the satisfaction and commitment of public employees and the factors on which they depend. The anonymity of all participants is guaranteed. Special efforts have been made in the collection of demographic variables to exclude the possibility of identifying a particular employee based on the combination of demographic data provided. The only category of ponents for which the guarantee of anonymity cannot be done by the very design of an-

the , are senior officials in small administrations. , even in these cases, the IPA provides only aggregate statistics and in the six since the survey was conducted, there has not been a single report of a violation of the an- imity rule.

Periodic reporting on engagement is important. Research has shown that the motivation of employees has a direct and significant impact on the performance of organisations, determining almost 30% of their financial results<sup>1</sup>. Engagement affects pro- ductivity at work, quality of results and customer satisfaction. Evidence shows that:

- ▶ Engaged employees æ more motivated, more effective and achieve higher results. They are 43% more productive than disengaged employees.<sup>2</sup> The IES/Work Foundation believes that if companies succeed

1 Hay Group (2001). Engage employees and boost performance

2 There again

to increase the average level of employee engagement by 10%, this would result in an increase in profit of \$1,500 per employee <sup>3</sup>.

- ▶ Engaged employees are more creative and innovative. Companies like Apple, Google and Microsoft are constantly looking for ways to make their employees feel satisfied because they rely on their creativity to fight the competition in the market. Taking care of employees and keeping them satisfied is one of the values of most large companies.
- ▶ The commitment of the servants directly influences customer satisfaction. The evidence for this relationship is numerous and comes from both the business and public sectors <sup>4</sup>.

Engagement is important not for business but also for the public sector. In the UK, the engagement of civil servants has been surveyed every year since 2009 and the results are debated in Parliament because it is considered to be one of the key factors for the success of administrative reforms. In the United States, the tradition is even longer and dates back to the mid-1990s. In the beginning, the survey design in the US was almost identical to that of the Barometers, but in the last 10-15 years, many additional variables have been in the questionnaire and, as a result, the survey card

it has become considerably longer and more complex. In most European countries, in one form or another, surveys of civil servant satisfaction or engagement are also carried out, research in the UK and Bulgaria is considerably more preliminary. They are national, cover all administrations and are funded by a source independent of the participating administrations - the administration of the Council of Ministers in the UK and the Institute of Public Administration in Bulgaria.

The survey of the attitudes of civil servants in Bulgaria is based on the British model The Civil Service People Survey. The use of a common model and questionnaire ensures comparability of the Bulgarian data with the results of the UK survey and provides benchmarking opportunities. The validity of the questionnaire and its equivalence with the original British questionnaire has already been verified in the first national survey of the attitudes of civil servants in Bulgaria in .

The questionnaire contains 41 statements. They are closed questions with 5 fixed answer options. The respondent can choose only one answer by clicking on it with the mouse (radio button). If the answer is changed, the choice is automatically changed. In this way, the technology allows only one answer to be given to each question - the last answer chosen by the participant remains as the

<sup>3</sup> IES/Work Foundation report (2008). People and the Bottom Line

<sup>4</sup> Cabinet Office (2018) Civil Service People Survey: Technical Guide. London

final. The statements measure commitment and the factors that determine it - leadership, reward, team, organisational goals, direct supervisor, etc. The content of the questionnaire has not changed over the years and is identical to the initial version of the questionnaire in . This ensures comparability of the results with both the previous years and the results of the UK administration, where also the content of the questionnaire has not changed since 2009.

Traditionally in British research, the second part of the questionnaire is used to explore the views of civil servants on current policy and administrative issues. Until last year, this was also the case in Bulgaria. In the period 2020-2022, the topical issue was the emergencies caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to work remotely from home. In 2023, however, this part is dropped.

In 2022, for the first time, the supplementary section of the questionnaire included a brief assessment of subjective well-being, the PERMA index. This section was added to the original The Civil Service People Survey in 2012 at the urging of the National Statistical Office, which measures the subjective well-being of Britons. The idea is that when people feel engaged with their work, they feel happier and more fulfilled by their lives in general. The index covers 5 different aspects of well-being, and name PERMA is an acronym from the first letters in English of each of the

the aspects P (positive emotions) E (commitment) R (interpersonal relationships) M (meaning) and A (realization). The PERMA index is becoming established as a metric in the British version of the questionnaire and seems to be on its way in Bulgaria. This year we are again exploring this index.

Participation in the , as we have already stressed, is good- voluntary and anonymous. The Institute of Public Administration does not transmit any information to the administrations other than aggregated data on engagement and the factors on which it depends. The choice of demographic and organizational-administrative variables takes into account both the importance of the various demographic comparisons and analyses and the need to ensure the anonymity of the participants. Therefore, only three demographic attributes - age, gender and years of experience in public administration - were included in the study. Respondents were not required to indicate their exact age and length of service, only the age and length of service category in which they fell. There are three categories of variable age: up to 35 years, 35-50 years and over 50 years. The variable 'length of service in public administration' is structured into four categories: employees with up to 5 years' service, between 5 and 15 years' service, between 15 and 25 years' service and employees with more than 25 years' service in public administration. Guarantees to preserve the anonymity of respondents are essential to obtain reliable and non-manipulated data.

Organizational attributes for which data are collected in the study

are four: type of administration; administrative area in which the administrative structure operates; position of the respondent and type of administration. The type of administration reflects the statutory classification of administrative structures in Bulgaria. These are: ministries, state agencies, administrations of state commissions, executive agencies, administrations established by statutory instrument, specialised territorial administrations, regional administrations and municipal administrations. The respondents' posts are classified in the categories defined in the Civil Servants Act: senior civil servants, managerial staff, expert posts with analytical and/or control functions, expert posts with auxiliary functions and technical posts. By 'type of administration', two categories are distinguished: general administration and specialised administration. The administrative districts are all 28 administrative districts in the country.

Each year, the Barometer analysis report compares the data for Bulgarian civil servants with the data for UK civil servants from the previous year. This is because the British survey is conducted at the end of the year and the results are published in March of the following . The Bulgarian survey is conducted in June and the data are published in September of the same year. Each year when the survey is carried out in Bulgaria, the IPA enables all administrations to request the preparation of their own

organizationally specific to the clade. It is based on the responses of the employees of the respective administration, but has requirements for a minimum number of participants from the administration, as well as minimum quotas by position and seniority. This is done in order, on the one hand, to guarantee the anonymity of the civil servants and in the administrations that will receive their own report and, on the other hand to the correctness of the comparisons with the national data. Failure to comply with the quotas may alter the balance and make comparisons inaccurate, as statistically significant differences are observed on most demographic and organisational variables.

This year, a total of 70 administrations applied for an organisation-specific report, but only 61 of them met the minimum number of participants and quota requirements and will receive one.

The study report is structured in five chapters. This introductory chapter presents general information about the study. Chapter two presents the theoretical model of the questionnaire. Chapter three comments the sample on which the data for 2024 is based. Chapter four presents the results of the national survey in the current year. The final chapter contains conclusions, implications and recommendations.





## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Theoretical model

Engagement can be defined as a specific attitude of employees towards their work and its results. According to the level of commitment, the following groups of employees are distinguished:

- ▶ Highly committed employees work "with heart". They strive for exceptional performance and high results because they enjoy their work and feel attached to what they do and to their organisation. For them, work is a source of meaning and personal satisfaction.
- ▶ Moderately engaged employees are motivated, disciplined and responsible. Work is important to them, but it is not the most significant part of their lives. Around the world, in the public and private sectors, moderately engaged, conscious

conscientious employees prevail.

- ▶ Disengaged employees are extrinsically motivated. They are not attached to their work, do it because they need income and security.
- ▶ The negative pole of engagement is formed by actively disengaged employees. They dislike or even hate their jobs, but feel they cannot risk leaving and changing them. Actively disengaged employees are one of the main reasons for the low efficiency of organisations and the poor quality of services.

Gallup International conducts a similar global engagement survey every year. It is based on their own methodology but contains a similar classification of engagement. 's surveys

Gallup shows that the ratio between the shares of highly engaged and actively disengaged employees is essential for the productivity and financial performance of companies. In well-managed organisations, this ratio is above 14 and, in general, the higher the ratio, the better the organisational climate and the more prosperous the company<sup>5</sup>.

A similar ratio between "critics" and "promoters" is used in the methodology for assessing the strength of the employer brand (eNPS - employer Net Promoter Score). The methodology itself is based on a statement that is also included in the Barometer - "would you recommend your company as a place to work?"

The "completely certain" option subtracts the sum of the shares of those who answered negatively or could not judge. If the resulting difference is a positive number, it means that most employees are engaged. If the value is between 20 and 30, the level of engagement is good. A score above 30 is more indicative of high engagement.<sup>6</sup> Because of the fewer response options in the Barometer, the application of the eNPS methodology results in slightly lower scores, but they still further support the interpretation of the data.

In The Civil Service People Survey methodology, engagement is measured by the following six statements:

1. I feel pride when I say where I work.
2. I would recommend my administration as a very good place to work.
3. I am attached to the administration where I work.
4. I refer to my administration as "we" rather than "they".
5. I have built friendly relationships with colleagues in my administration.
6. My administration motivates me to do my best.

for your relative or friend"? The difference is that the eNPS provides 10 speaking options, while the Barometer provides only 5. However, the eNPS methodology is applicable as of those responding with

These statements reflect different aspects of employees' attachment to their work and organization. Commitment is not a personality trait. People do not care about

<sup>5</sup> Gallup (2017). State of the Global Workplace. New York: Gallup Press

<sup>6</sup> Qualtrics - Calculating eNPS  
<https://www.qualtrics.com/uk/experience-management/employee/employee-net-promoter-score>

date engaged and disengaged, they develop these attitudes as a result several driving factors. The most important of these is organizational leadership. Leaders are those who set challenging and inspiring goals, manage change and encourage employees to achieve more. Strategic leadership carries much more weight than leadership at the operational level, as it provides the truly challenging and meaningful goals. Other drivers of employee engagement are: the nature of the work, the relationship with the line manager and colleagues, stress, the availability of resources, work-life balance, learning and development opportunities and fair remuneration.

These drivers of engagement, as well as the entire model on which the study is based, are borrowed from the British study. The drivers of engagement can be described as follows:

1. **Leadership and pro- mania management** - the subjective perceptions of employees related to the senior leadership of the administration - perceptions of the rightness of their judgments and decisions, their ability to manage change and set significant and inspiring goals.
2. **My work** - the respondents' subjective perceptions related to their own work and working life - to what extent employees like their work and are motivated to achieve high performance in it.

3. **Organisational goals** - to what extent the goals of the administration and the structural unit are clear and to what extent employees see a link between their own work (role) and the fulfilment of these goals.
4. **My supervisor** - employees' subjective perception of their direct supervisor as motivating, supportive, concerned about their development and giving timely feedback.
5. **Team** - employees' subjective perceptions of the quality of interpersonal and working relationships in the team, as well as the degree to which colleagues are perceived as helping, supportive and cooperative.
6. **Learning and development** - respondents' subjective perceptions of the availability of career and professional development opportunities at work, as well as perceptions of their administration as stimulating learning and supporting the development of professional competencies.
7. **Resources and workload** - employees' subjective perceptions of workload and work stress, the availability of the necessary resources and information to perform work tasks, and the ability to achieve work-life balance.
8. **Remuneration** - employees' subjective perceptions of the fairness of remuneration and satisfaction with the remuneration they receive.

## 2.2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire that engagement contains 41 statements. These are given in Annex 1. In addition to the six statements assessing engagement shown above, the questionnaire contains between four and six statements that are designed to assess each of its drivers (determinants). The statements are rated on a five-point Likert scale that includes the following responses:

- **Agree**
- **Rather agree**
- **Neither agree disagree**
- **Rather disagree**
- **Disagree**

Each statement represents one particular aspect of engagement or one of its factors. The report with the results of the first Barometer of the Nations in 2019 presents

convincing evidence the Bulgarian version of the questionnaire is conceptually and functionally equivalent to the original instrument. This means that: 1) engagement in British and Bulgarian culture has similar scope and content (i.e. engaged or disengaged employees in both countries think and behave roughly the same);

2) the factors or determinants of engagement are the same in both cultures and even their severity or importance for engagement is approximately the same; and

3) the reliability and precision of the results, respectively the statistical error of the measurement, is approximately the same.

More technical details pertaining to the psychometric properties of the instrument are provided in Appendices 4 and 5 of the Dossier, where results from factor analyses and from internal consistency checks of the scales are .

## 2.3. System of evaluation





The algorithm for calculating the results is described in detail in the technical manual of The Civil Service People Survey<sup>7</sup>. Firstly, 'agree' responses are weighted at 100%, 'disagree' responses are weighted at 100%, 'agree' responses are weighted at 100% and 'agree' responses are weighted at 100%.

"rather agree" - weight 75%, "neither agree disagree" - weight 50%, "rather disagree-weight 50%.

weight of 25%, and the answers "not agreed" - weight of 0%. Then the averages of the factors and the global index are calculated

"engagement". The same scoring algorithm was used in the study of engagement in the Bulgarian state administration.

<sup>7</sup> Cabinet Office (2018) Civil Service People Survey: Technical Guide. London

Calculation of global index scores and factors	agree	rather agree	Neither agree nor disagree	rather disagree	disagree
<b>Claims</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>0%</b>
My work is interesting.					
My work stimulates me to develop as a professional.					
I consider myself to be involved in decision-making, related to my work.					
I am attached to the administration where I work.					
I have enough freedom to decide how to perform my duties.					
Result: <i>My work</i>		$(100 + 75 + 50 + 25 + 0) / 5 = 50\%$			

The PERMA index calculations include two additional questions for which response options from 0 to 10 are provided. These are scored follows: answer 0 - 0%, answers 1, 2, 3 and 4 - 25%, answers 5 and 6 - 50%, answers 7, 8 and 9 - 75%, answer 10 - 100%.

The aggregated results for the Bulgarian administration represent the average of all respondents. The results for the different types of administrations or for the individual administrations that will receive an organisation-specific report represent the arithmetic averages of the results of the staff from these administrations.

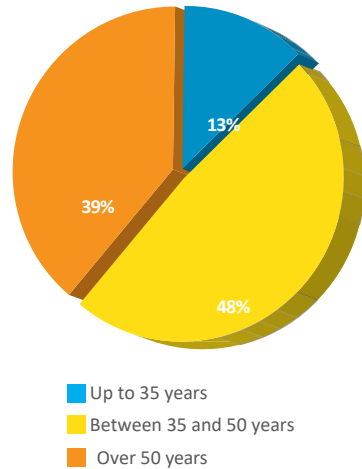
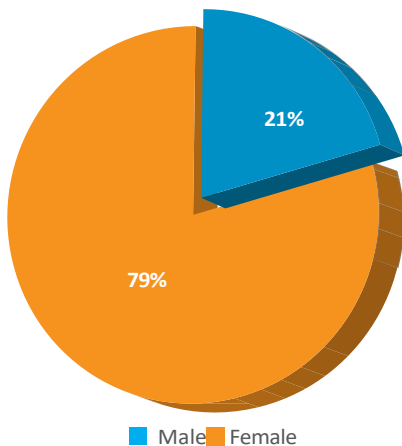


### 3. Excerpted from

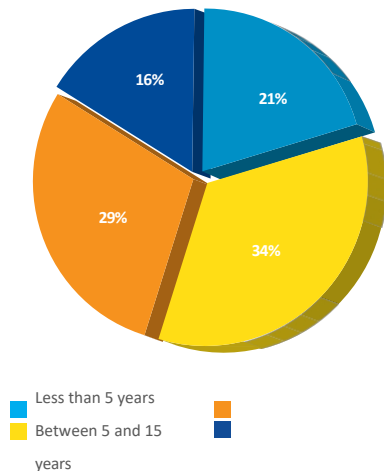
**Figure 2. Distribution of participants by age**

This year's engagement survey was conducted from 10 - 21 June 2024 by a team from the Institute of Public Administration. A total of 8,799 people took part, which is 11% more last year, but almost 30% more than in 2019, 2020 and 2021. In the following sections, the distribution of the respondents by gender, age, position and length of service in the administration.

**Figure 1. Gender distribution**



**Figure 3. Distribution of participants by internship**

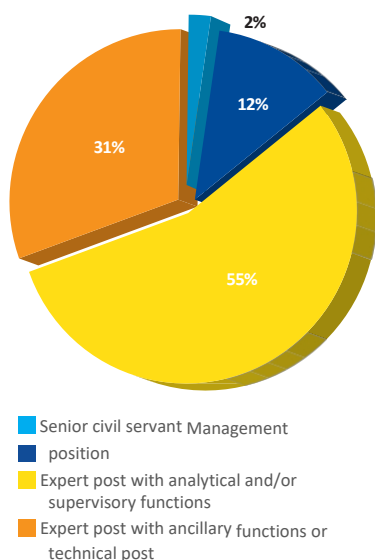


Between 15 and 25 years More than  
25 years





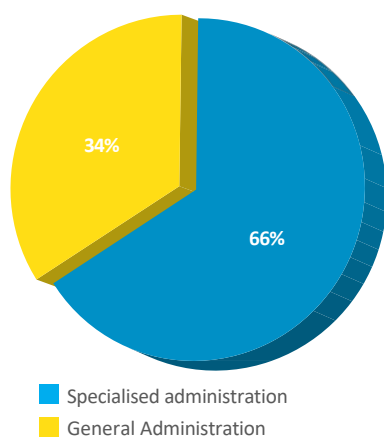
**Figure 4. Distribution of participants by position**



The distribution of respondents by the main demographic characteristics shows a close resemblance to the data from the Administrative Register and the State of the Administration Report (SOR).<sup>1</sup> The demographic characteristics have not changed significantly compared to previous surveys. The same can be said for the distributions of participants by administration, shown in the following graphs. The fact that there are many times more participants from Sofia city can be easily explained not only by the size of the district, but also by the centralised structure of the public administration in Bulgaria.

<sup>1</sup> Council of Ministers - Report on the State of the 2023, adopted by Decision No 353 of the Council of Ministers of .05.2024.

**Figure 5: Distribution of participants by type of administration**



**Figure 6: Distribution of participants by type of administration**

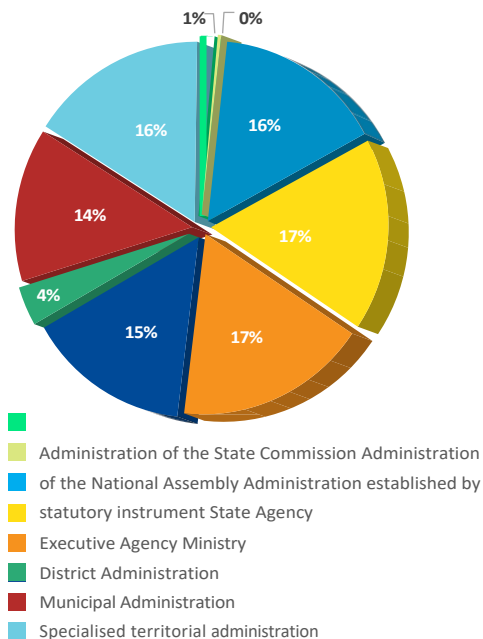
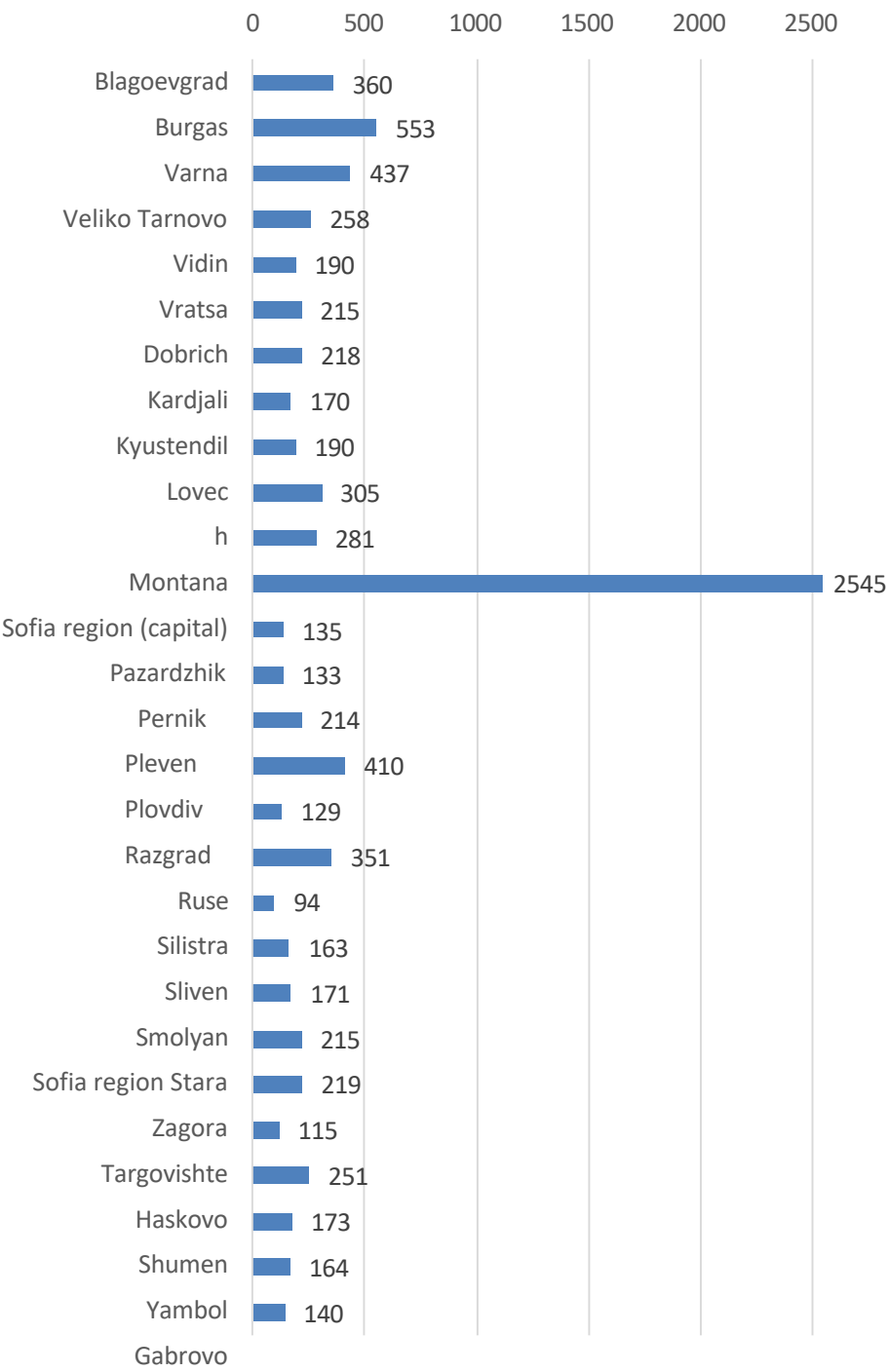


Figure 7: Distribution of participants by district (data in the graph represent numbers)





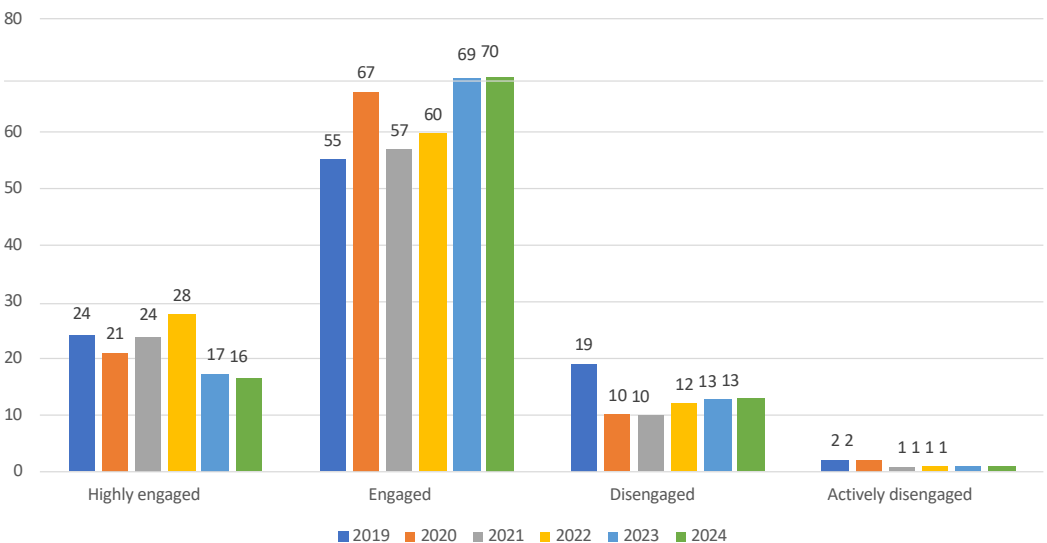
## 4. Results

### 4.1. Evaluation of engagement

The engagement of public servants is a central theme of the study. The methodology makes it possible to divide the respondents into four main groups: "highly engaged", "engaged", "disengaged",

"gyrani" and "actively disengaged". Figure 8 presents the pro- cent shares of public servants falling into each of these groups.

**Figure 8: Distribution of administrative staff by level of commitment (2019-2024) in percentages**



What is striking about the data in Figure 1 is that the results for 2024 are very similar to the results of the previous year, 2023. The only difference is that the share of highly engaged employees has decreased by 1% and the share of engaged employees has increased by 1%. These differences are within the statistical margin of error and it is more correct to say that the level of engagement of civil servants remains unchanged from last year. The proportion of highly engaged employees is again below 20%, which is worrying as this is the second year in a row that this has happened. At the same time, however, external factors, such as the ongoing political instability, the war in Ukraine, inflation and uncertainty in Europe, remain in place. In these circumstances, it is difficult to assess whether the external factors mentioned above, taken together and separately, are leading to the discouragement of some highly motivated civil servants or

The trend shows that the public administration in Bulgaria is beginning to lose its ability to inspire high motivation and commitment among civil servants. The ratio between highly engaged and actively disengaged employees remains above 14, which according to Gallup International is a good result. It gives hope that if any of the depressing external factors recede or diminish, the motivation of civil servants can and will return to an upward trend. Figure 9 presents the Global Commitment Index data for , 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. also shows that the average level of engagement of civil servants is at the 2023 level. On the one hand, this may be a positive result, as the downward trend in engagement that was seen from 2021 until last year has finally stopped, but on the other hand, there has been no improvement.

**Figure 9. Engagement index in the public administration of Bulgaria (2019 - 2024)**

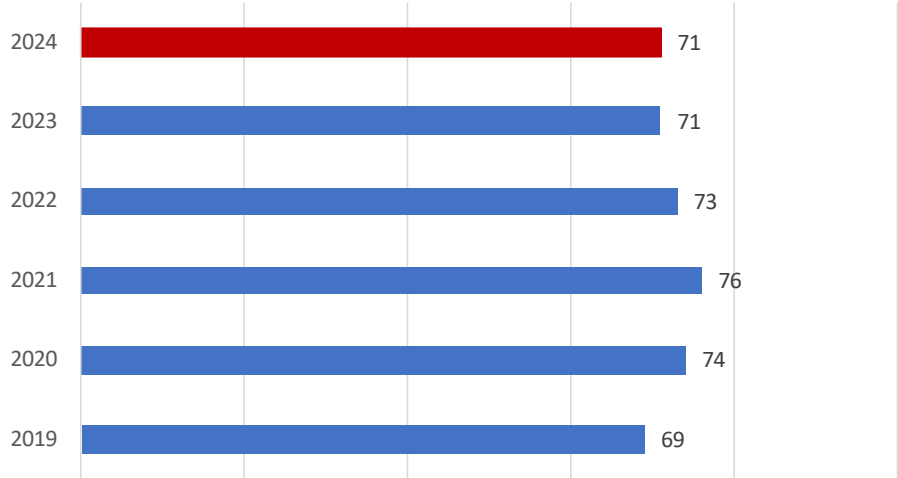
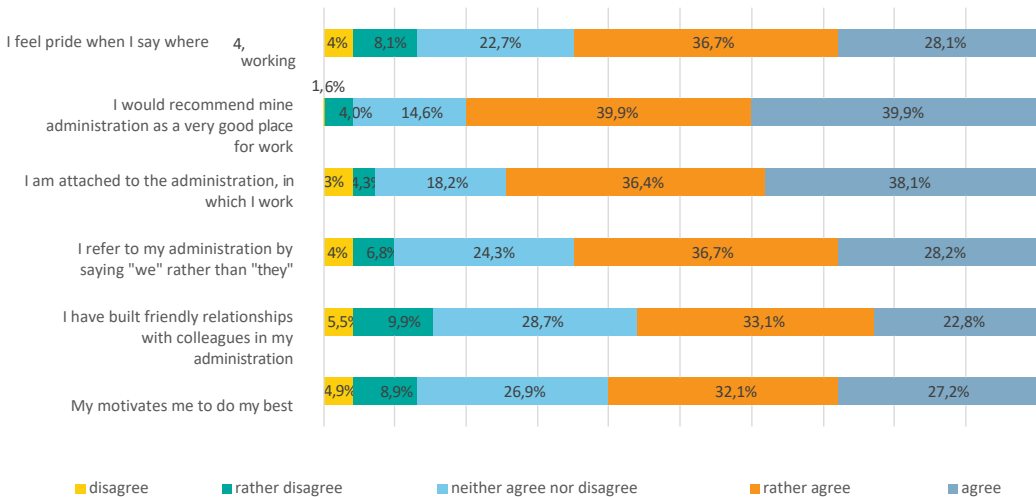


Figure 10 shows the distribution of participants' responses to the six statements measuring engagement. The detailed data show that a significant proportion of employees' engagement in the public administration is due to their identification with the institution in which they work, as well as their belief that the public administration is an attractive place to work. When asked "Would I recommend my administration as a very good place to work?", 40% of respondents said they would and the same proportion said they would rather do so, which is a very good result and a significant improvement of 30% on the result. Based on this data

it can be concluded that the state administration has begun to regain its attractiveness and competitiveness as an employer. At the same time, however, there has been a decline in social aspects of engagement such as relations with colleagues. A similar negative trend can be observed for the 'Team' factor, which is presented later in the report. A lower score than last year was also observed on the statement "My administration motivates me to do my best." This data corresponds to the decreasing share of highly engaged employees in the last two to three years and which was commented above.

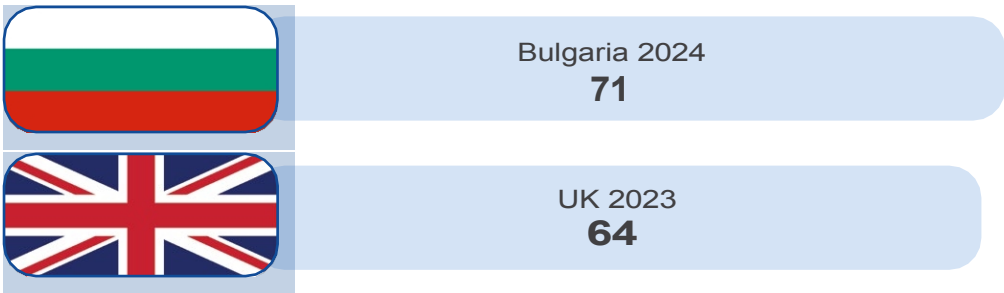
**Figure 10. Distribution of participants' responses to statements related to engagement**



As we have already pointed out, the use of the Civil Service People Survey model allows benchmarking between the results of the Bulgarian civil service and the results of the public administration of the

United Kingdom. Comparisons are presented in Figure 11. Note that the UK data are from a survey conducted at the end of 2023.

Figure 11. Comparison between Bulgaria and the UK on the engagement index



In all the years since the Engagement Barometer has been conducted in Bulgaria, the performance of the Bulgarian state administration has been higher than that of the British administration. This is also the case this year. While in Bulgaria the engagement of civil servants has remained at the 2023 level, in the UK it has dropped marginally by 1 index point, increasing the gap from 6 to 7 points.

The demographic and organizational-administrative variables included in the survey allow for analysis of engagement by various statistical and demographic indicators. Comparisons on organizational variables are presented first, followed by demographic variables.

Figure 12 presents data on engagement by type of administration. There are small but statistically significant differences. Employee engagement is highest in municipal administrations, at 74 points, while motivation is lowest in state agencies, at 67 points. Unlike last year, there were no large differences, although the ones just cited were statistically significant. For reasons that are still unclear, in most of the years for which we have survey data, employee engagement in municipal administrations has been above the average, while employee engagement in state agencies has been below average.

**Figure 12. Engagement index by administration type**

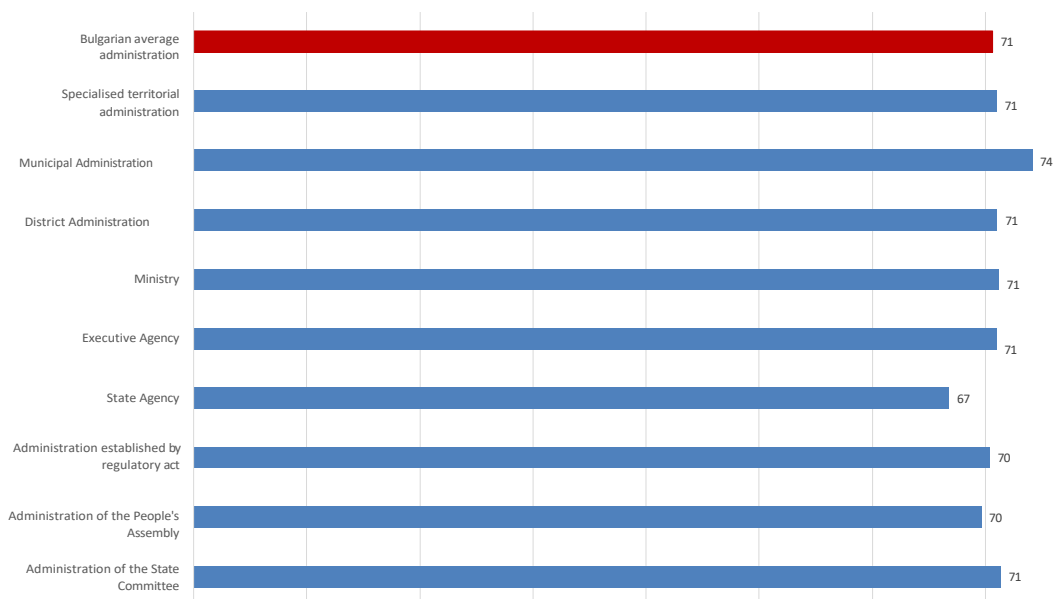


Figure 13 presents a comparison of employee engagement in the different areas. Here, too, statistically significant differences are observed. The highest levels of commitment are reported in Pernik and Kyustendil (75 points), Haskovo, Pazardzhik, Montana, Vratsa and Dobrich (74 points), while the lowest are in Pleven (66) and Gabrovo (67). The interpretation of the data itself is . On the one hand, the differences can be attributed to differences in average incomes by district. One of the aspects of engagement is related to the remuneration received, and satisfaction with it depends on comparisons with remuneration in the business and non-governmental sectors.

fertilizer. There a definite tendency in the data presented in Figure 6 for lower-income districts to register higher satisfaction with the opportunity to work in public administration. In Sofia, Varna, Plovdiv and Veliko Tarnovo the engagement index is below the national average, which also supports the conclusion. On the other hand, however, the data in Figure 13 may be related to the previous ones and reflect to some extent the fact that employees in municipal administrations are among the most highly engaged.

**Figure 13. Engagement index by district**

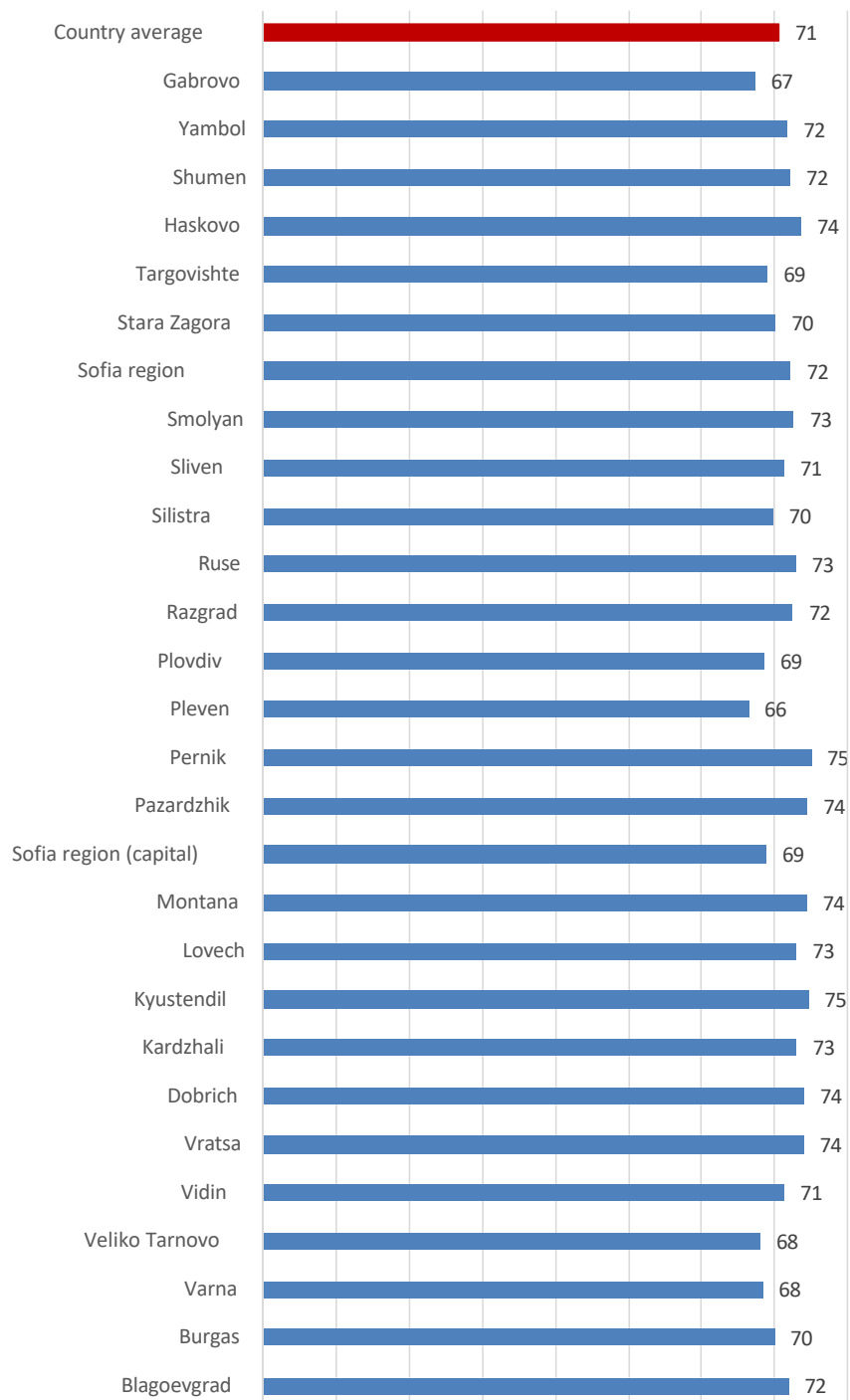
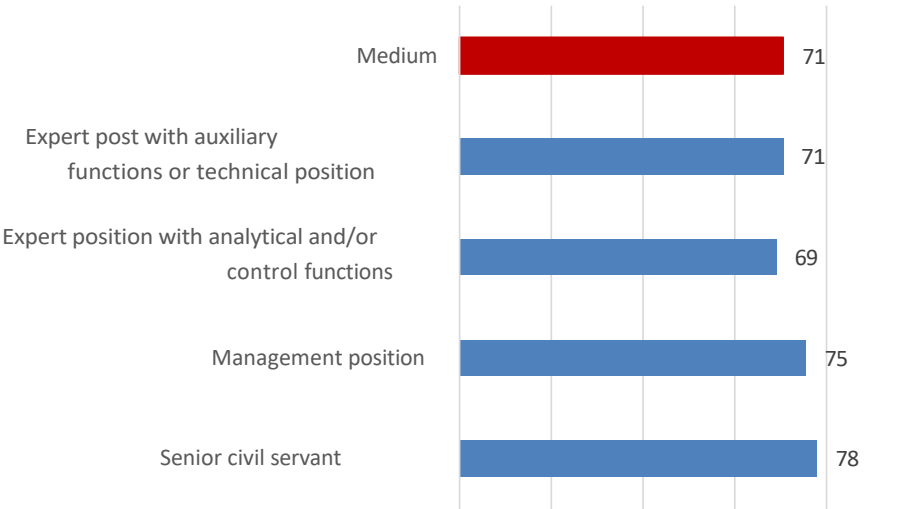




Figure 14 presents comparisons of employee engagement levels by type of position held.

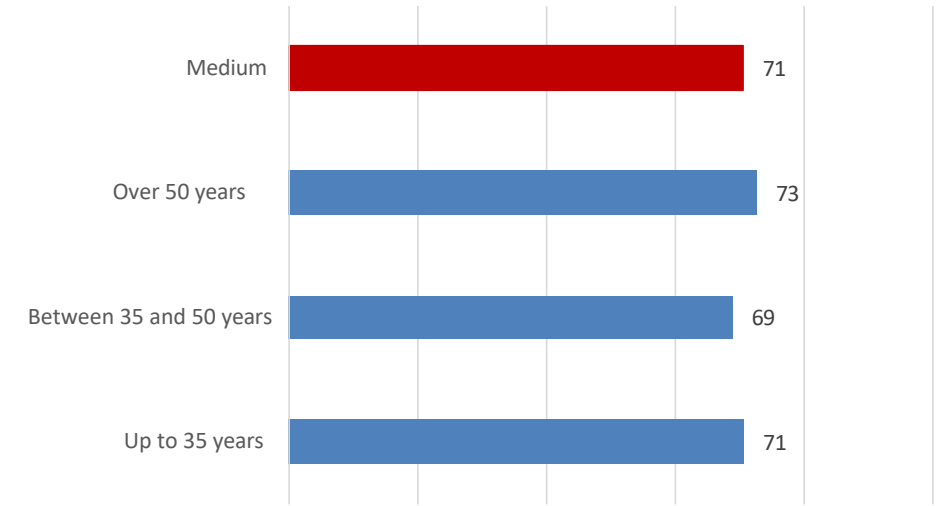
Figure 14. Engagement index by respondent's job title



The observed differences in the level of engagement by job title are significant and statistically significant. As expected, the most engaged are senior civil servants and employees in managerial positions. Similar results were found in all previous surveys. Senior civil servants and managers are more engaged than experts as they are more actively involved in processes and in the management of their own administrations. Statistically significant differences were also observed by age. They are presented in Figure 15. As in previous studies, the youngest and oldest employees appear to be more engaged than employees. The youngest employees are motivated because they are still

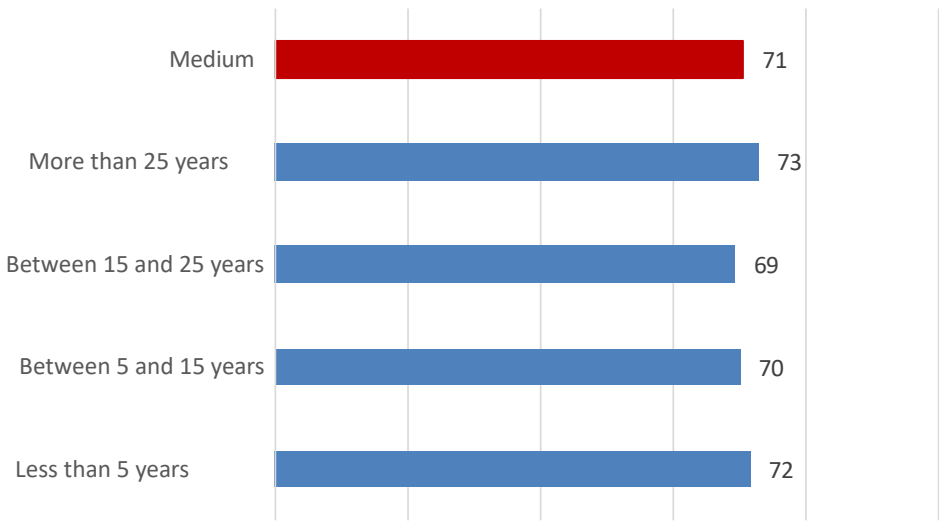
are at the stage of being established in the work. They strive to do their best in any task they are given and show that they can be relied upon. This motivation gradually diminishes as the establishment process is completed and 40s are often a period of 'plateauing' in career motivation. At the end of a career, motivation increases again. This happens because employees feel confident in their professional knowledge and skills and want to demonstrate this and pass on their experience and knowledge to younger people. However, the fact that by the mid-50s, most parents' children are growing up and many of them, both in business and in administration, are devoting themselves entirely to their work, seeking their personal fulfilment in it.

Figure 15. Engagement index by age group



The comparisons between groups by seniority in Figure 16 reflect the same dynamics. Again, we see that employees with the least and most seniority are the most engaged, which is related to the reasons just listed.

Figure 16. Engagement index by seniority



Data on differences in employee engagement by type of administration - general or specialised - are inconsistent. Some studies find statistically significant differences, others do not. The differences, when at all, are always between one and two points (see Figure 17), and their static significance is due much more to the large sample size and the correspondingly many degrees of freedom than to any causal differences. Against the background of these

circumstances, it is more correct to interpret them as trivial and insignificant, despite the fulfilment of the criterion for statistical significance. Similar weak differences are observed by gender. The data are shown in Figure 18. As in the previous studies, there is a tendency for women to be slightly more ang- gested than men. Typically, the difference in motivation varies between 1 and 2 points, which is statistically significant but not significant.

Figure 17. Engagement index by type of administration

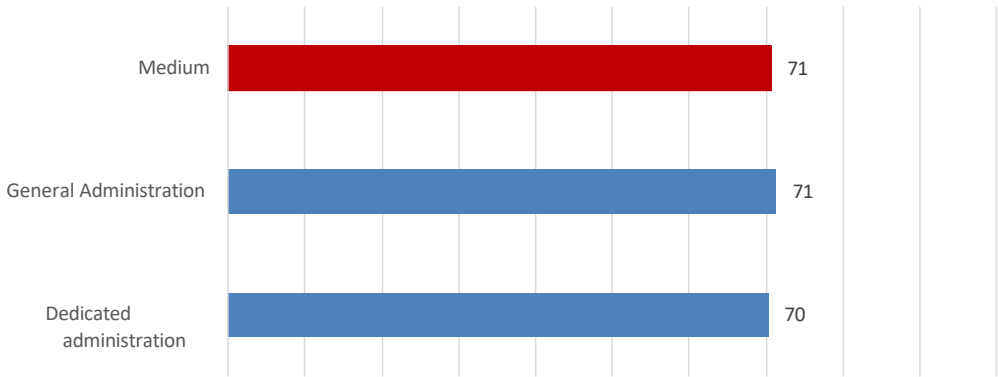
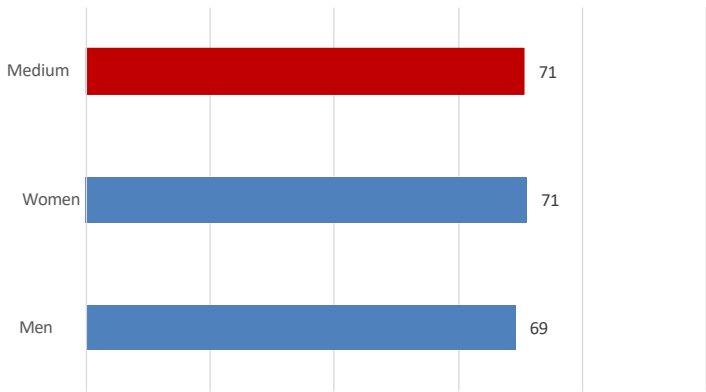


Figure 18. Engagement index by employee gender



## 4.2. Analysis of the main factors

The research design presented in the introductory chapter shows that the sample includes not only a measurement of engagement, but also an assessment of the underlying factors on which it depends. These factors or determinants are: strategic leadership (the management of the administration), organisational goals, the job itself, the line manager, the team, learning and development opportunities, the resourcing of the job and employee satisfaction with the remuneration received. Previous research has provided numerous and consistent lines of evidence from regression analyses that these factors significantly

degree determine the variation of engagement. We believe that it is redundant to continue to present these statistics in each subsequent study, since the regression coefficients are stable and hardly change over time, and debiasing them requires a knowledge of statistics that not every reader possesses. Therefore, we proceed directly to presenting the results on the individual factors of engagement. These are summarized in Table 1. It compares estimates from 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. This is valid. It is important to be able to track the variation in scores for each of the factors.

Table 1. Indices of factors determining engagement by year

Factor	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Difference with previous year
Leadership	67	74	74	73	70	69	-1
My work	75	79	80	76	75	74	-1
Team	75	79	80	79	76	75	-1
Remuneration	37	45	49	38	39	44	+5
Resources and workload	76	75	75	72	70	69	-1
Learning and Development	60	67	70	67	67	66	-1
Organizational goals	90	92	92	92	90	89	-1
Direct supervisor	74	78	79	78	75	74	-1

Table 1 shows that, compared to last year, there are slight decreases of 1 point in all factors except for "Remuneration", which in turn saw an increase of 5 points. These data provide a good explanation for why civil servant engagement has remained at the same level since 2023. There have been almost no changes in the organizational and work environment, if one excludes the increased satisfaction with job rewards. At the same time, if we compare data for the entire period since 2019, we find that workload and stress have steadily increased over the years. Some time ago we attributed this decline to the COVID-19 scores, but it is now apparent that the causes are more systemic, and that they are likely related to rising

efficiency requirements for the public administration.

The biggest dynamics over the whole period were observed in the satisfaction with the salaries. As can be seen from the data, it significantly determines the dynamics of engagement, as the other factors change much less. Particularly small changes are found in the high scores on organisational goals. This is a very positive note and proof that the Bulgarian public administration is well organised and aware of its functions and tasks, regardless of political turbulence.

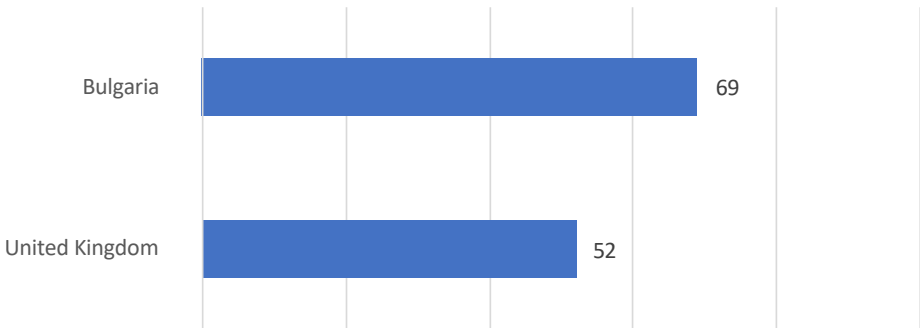
In the following sections of this section, we will examine the results on the individual determinants of engagement in more detail.

## Leadership and Change Management

Figure 19 compares the ratings of Bulgarian and British officials for the senior management of their administrations. Both the Bulgarian and the British

survey is slightly lower - in Bulgaria it is 1 point, while in the UK it is about 2 points.

**Figure 19. Scores on the factor "Leadership and change management"**

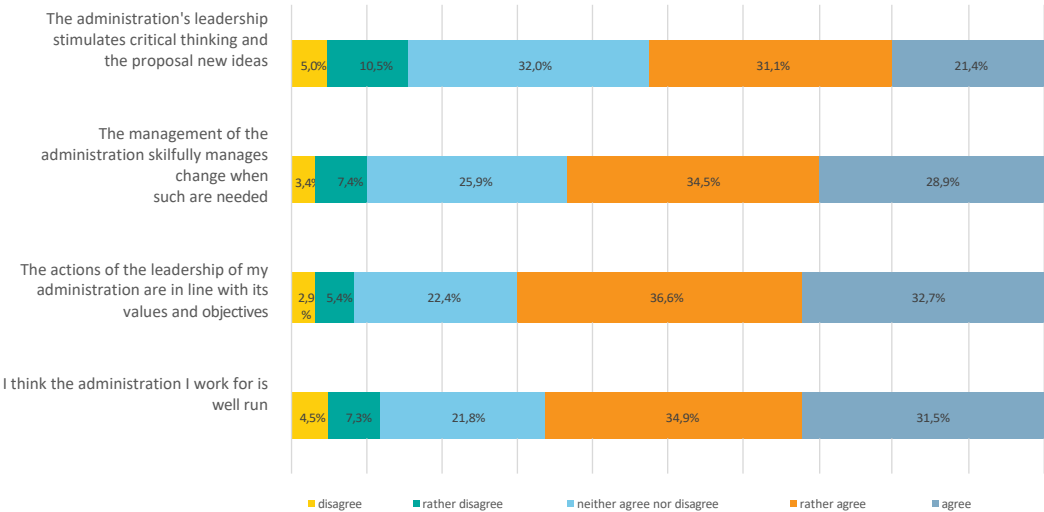


Although the Leadership and Change Management score is down for the third in a row, it is still good and, as Figure 19 shows, significantly higher than the UK public sector's Strategic Management score. This continues to be the factor on which the largest differences between Bulgarian and British civil servants are observed, and which contributes most to the better engagement scores of Bulgarian civil servants.

Figure 20 lays out the

the distribution of the respondents' answers to the individual statements. Positive evaluations prevail - about 60 percent of Bulgarian employees believe that the leaders of their administrations make the right decisions, manage change skillfully, have a vision and lead their organisations well. A relative weakness of leaders in the Bulgarian civil service remains that they do not stimulate enough critical thinking and innovative thinking. These results are almost identical last year.

**Figure 20. Distribution of survey participants' responses "Engagement barometer" on leadership and change management claims**



## My work

The second most important factor on which commitment depends is the co - behaviour or the very nature of the work performed. It is associated with a sense of professionalism and professional fulfilment. In the an- cete card it is called 'My job'.

bots." The data are presented in Figure 21. The scores of civil servants in Bulgaria are weaker compared to their British counterparts. Compared to last year, the Bulgarian administration's

falls by 1 point, while in Great Britain it increases by 3 points, reaching its historical maximum. Although lower than their UK counterparts, 74 points on the My Work factor is good score. Intrinsic motivation continues to be one of the pillars of the commitment of

Bulgarian civil servants. Many of them have chosen to work in the public sector precisely because they like their work, and this is a very important fact, as it is the basis of a long-term, sustainable and development-oriented professional motivation.

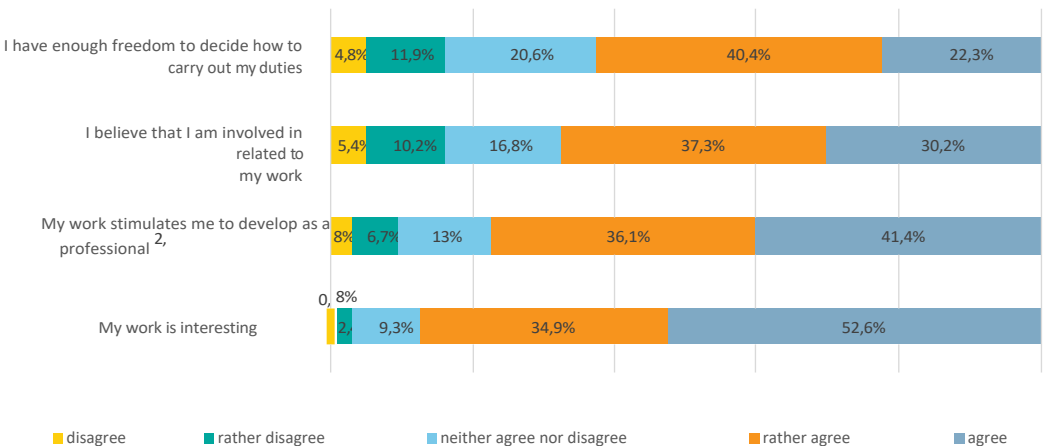
Figure 21. Scores on the factor "My job"



The detailed distribution of responses presented in Figure 2. The majority of employees in the Bulgarian state administration find their work interesting (85%) and believe that it develops them as professionals.

(77%). More respondents reported that they are "involved in the decision-making processes that concern their work" (67%) and have the freedom to decide exactly how to carry out their duties (62%).

Figure 22. Distribution of survey participants' responses "Engagement barometer" on work-related statements and work routines



# My team

In all the studies so far, the "My Team" factor has been one of the few on which the results of British civil servants consistently outperform those of the Bulgarian ones. The scores both are good, but the team relations among the British administrative

strata seem to be even more do- brie. As the years go by, the gap not only does not diminish, it increases. In the last two years, the score for this factor of the Bulgarian wood administration has decreased by 4 points, which is a cause for reflection.

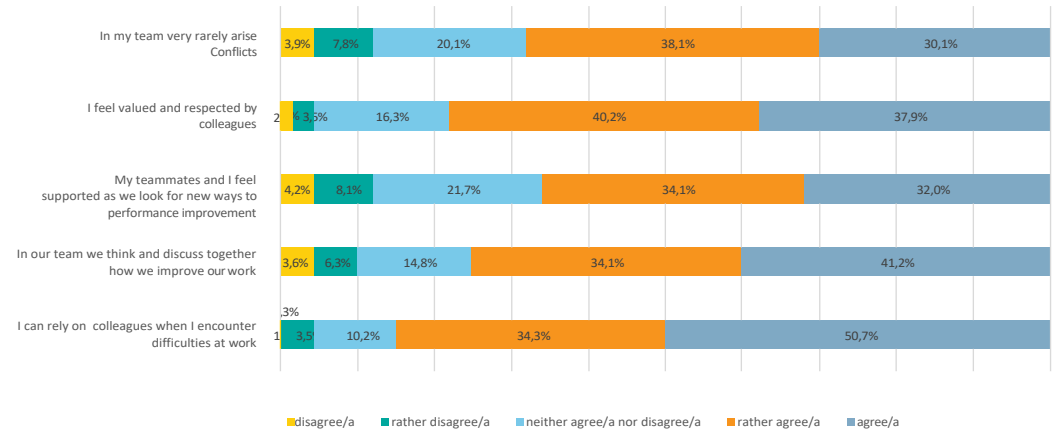
Figure 23. Results by factor "My team"



The distribution of respondents' answers to statements from this factor is presented in Figure 24. It shows that the main reason for the lower score of the Bulgarian state administration is the fact that still the managers in Bulgaria rarely use their teams to look for innovative solutions and opportunities for improvement. According to this indicator, the share of those agreeing in Bulgaria

(agree or rather agree) is about 66%, while in the UK it is 85%. This problem was already identified in the first Barometer survey, but it is still an . There is ample evidence in favour of a team approach in the search for improvement and innovation, but still some managers in Bulgarian administrations prefer to ignore them

Figure 24. Distribution of survey participants' responses "Engagement barometer" on claims related to teamwork





## Resources and workload

Resource availability and workload are related to job stress. This is one of the factors why the scores of employees in the Bulgarian state administration are also consistently lower than those of their British counterparts. The data are presented in Figure

25. In Bulgaria there has been a 1 point decrease compared to last year, while in Great Britain it has slowly but steadily improved over the years to reach the current gap of 6 points, which is the largest ever observed.

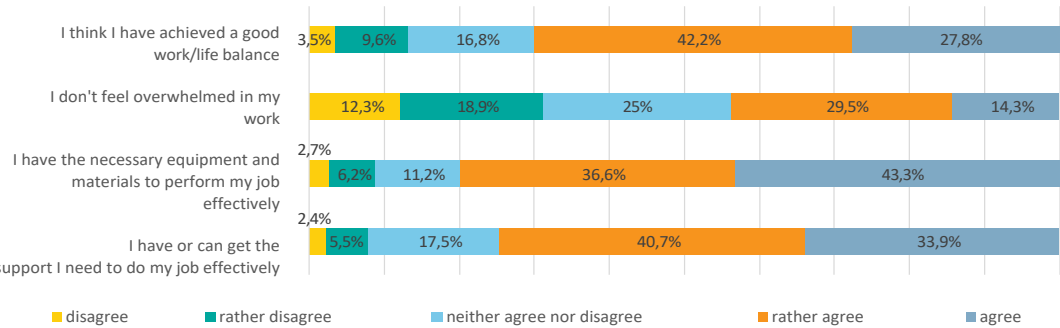
Figure 25. Resource and workload factor results



Figure 26 shows the distribution of responses by statements of this factor. The lowest rated of these is the perception of workload, with over 30% of respondents in Bulgaria saying they feel overworked at job. Compared to last year, there has been a further increase in this proportion, but still, against the background of the data, when the proportion of employees feeling overworked was even above 45%, things are not

look dramatic. There has also been a decline in the proportion of civil servants who feel they have achieved a good work-life balance. This year it is 69%, while last year it was 72%. The benchmark on the same indicator for British civil servants is even 74%. Clearly, stress and high workload are increasingly becoming an important issue for Bulgarian civil servants.

Figure 26. Distribution of survey participants' responses "Engagement barometer" on claims related to availability and workplace stress



## Learning and Development

Since the survey has been in Bulgaria, the scores of the Bulgarian public administration on this factor have been consistently better than those of the British public sector. Bulgarian civil servants attend more and more varied training. In addition, in all previous years except the current one, the IPA has found a way to offer a large number of training courses funded by European projects, which were free of charge for Bulgarian administrations.

This further increased the training opportunities and the accessibility of the trainings themselves. The combination of free trainings and the growing popularity of distance trainings is the main reason for the relatively high score of the Bulgarian administration on this indicator, but it should be noted that in the last two years the trend has been negative and the score has slightly but consistently decreased.

Figure 27. Scores on the "Learning and Development" factor

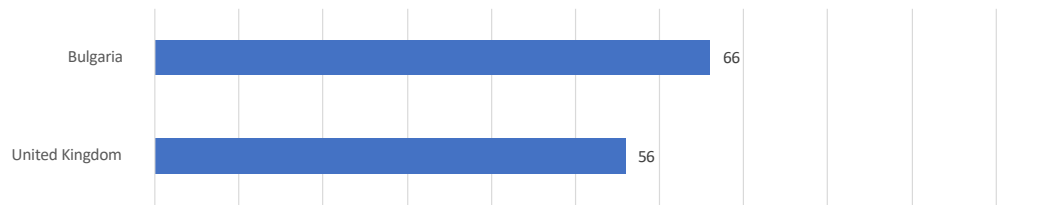
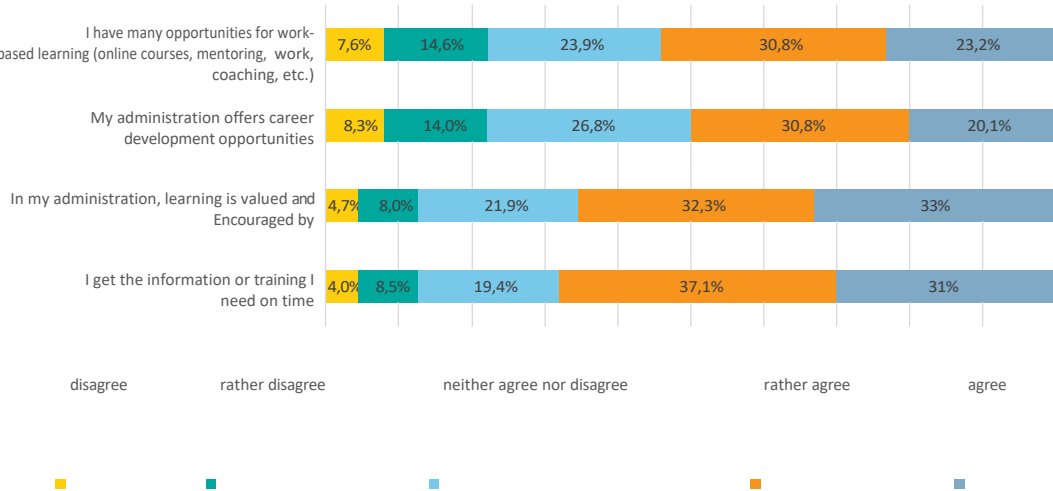


Figure 28. Distribution of survey responses 'Engagement barometer' on learning and development claims



The distribution of responses questions on this factor is more telling of areas for improvement. This is, on the one hand, the need to improve career prospects by creating career paths and mechanisms for

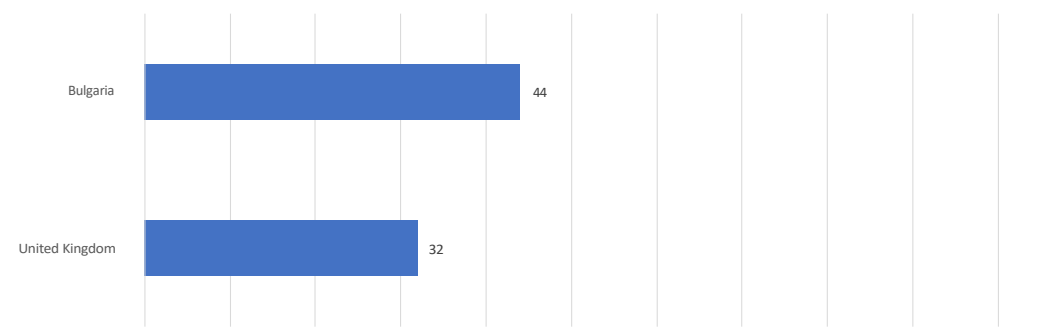
career progression, and on the other - the need to increase learning opportunities at work through the introduction of mentoring, coaching and intelligent AI-based systems.

## Remuneration

In this indicator, Bulgaria has seen the most changes over the years. When the Barometer was launched, satisfaction with remuneration was very low. The results of the surveys in 2020 and 2021 showed a significant increase in the indicator, which was somewhat objective, as it was linked to real salary increases for civil servants in those . 2020 and 2021 it was this factor that largely determined the increase, which also marked the global engagement index in Bulgaria, but in 2022 it fell dramatically and became

the main reason for its decrease. This year, inflation has literally "melted" wage increases and brought wage satisfaction back to the 2019 level. As in most years, satisfaction with remuneration in the Bulgarian public sector is significantly higher than in the UK administration. The data are presented in Figure 29.

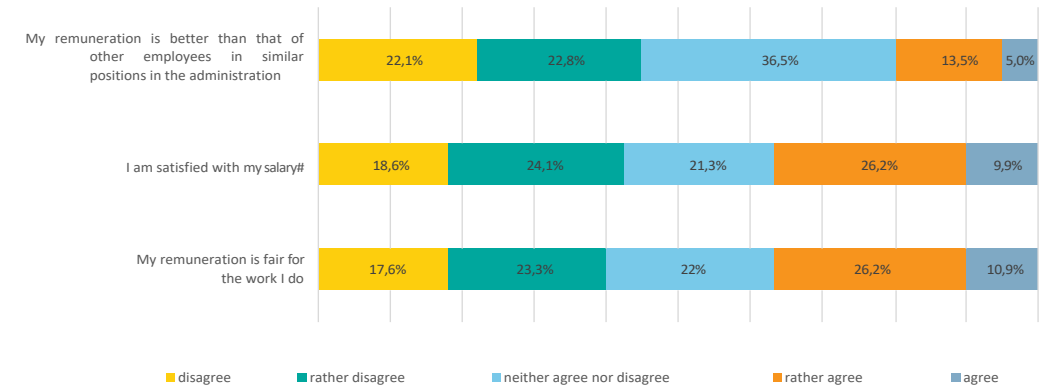
Figure 29. Results by factor "Remuneration"



The following figure shows the distribution of scores on the three remuneration-related statements. If in 2021 almost half of the respondents were satisfied with their salaries, in 2024 their share has melted to about 35 percent. However, this is a full 10 per cent more than last year, and this is an ax-

The new reason for the assessment of this factor to be higher compared to . As in the last year, only 1/3 of the respondents think that the remuneration they receive is fair for the work they do. However, there is a growing negative perception of the differences between salaries for the same job in different administrations.

Figure 30. Distribution of survey responses 'Engagement barometer' on pay-related claims



## Organizational goals

Clear objectives and good organisation of work are a sustainable strength of the Bulgarian administration. Consistently, this is the factor that receives the highest score in all studies so far. This is also the case this . Although the score is 1 point lower compared to the

tion with 2023, it is significantly better than the UK administration's score (5 points difference), despite the fact that clarity of objectives is also a strength of the UK public sector.

Figure 31. Scores on the factor "Organizational goals"

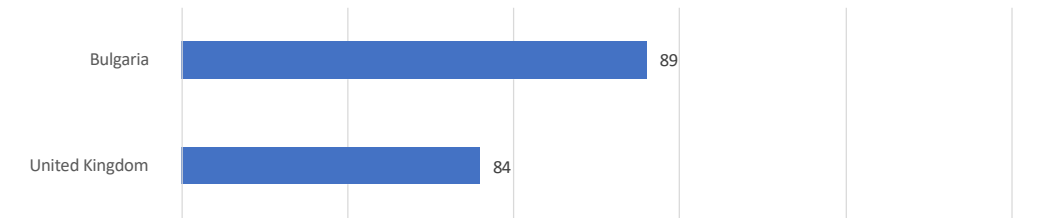
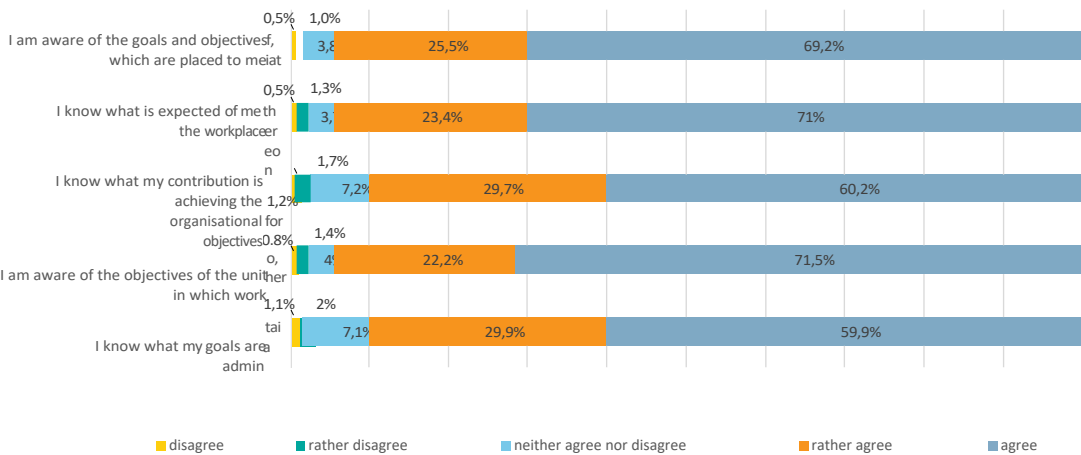


Figure 32. Distribution of survey responses  
"Engagement barometer" on claims related organizational goals



The distribution of responses presented in Figure 32 shows that on all indicators of this factor, over 90% of respondents in the affirmative. Bulgarian

the civil servants are aware of their goals and objectives, the goals of the structural unit in which they work and the goals of their administration.

My direct supervisor

Figure 33 presents the benchmarking data on this factor between the civil servants of Bulgaria and the UK. The scores of Bulgarian civil servants are good, but the scores of their British counterparts are even better.

There have been no significant changes in this indicator in Bulgaria over the years, while in the United Kingdom in 2020 there is a significant increase in the indicator and remains at this high level in the following years.

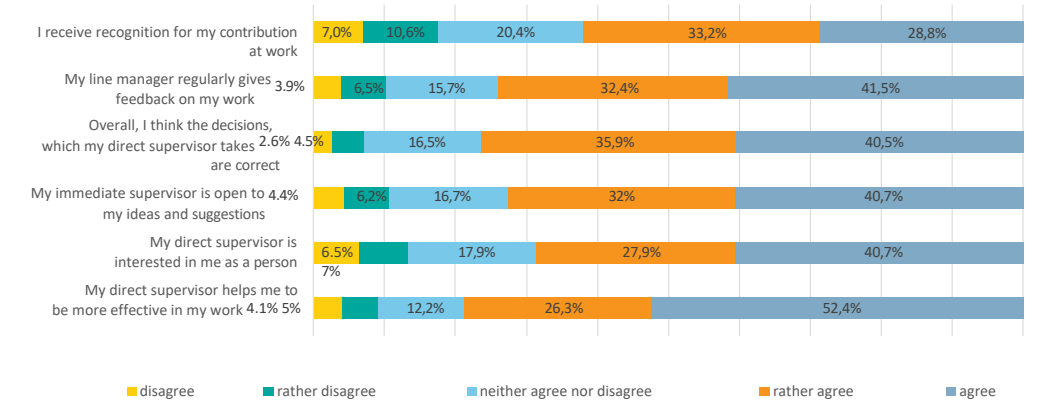
Figure 33. Results by factor "My direct supervisor"



Figure 34 shows the distribution of participants' responses to the statements included in this factor. Positive ratings predominate on all items, with satisfaction ranging between 70% and 80%. As areas

for improvement could be the recognition of co-workers' contributions to the achievement of performance goals/outcomes and the openness of line managers to employees' ideas and suggestions.

**Figure 34. Distribution of survey responses**  
**'Engagement barometer' on allegations relating to line manager conduct**



## Index of well-being

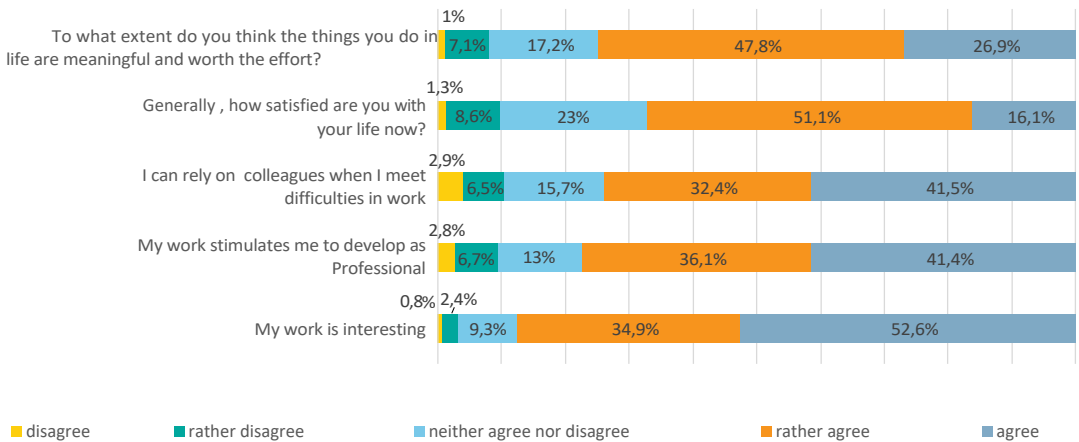
The Well-being Index was introduced in the British Survey of Public Service Engagement in 2012 at the urging of the Office for National Statistics, which measures the subjective well-being of Britons. The idea is when people feel engaged with their work, they feel happier and more satisfied with their lives in general. In 2022, the PERMA index was also introduced in the Bulgarian Engagement Barometer. Figure 35 presents a comparison between the

but welfare of Bulgarian and British civil servants. The sense of well-being among Bulgarian civil servants is slightly higher, but the difference is only 1 point. It is very small and in practice within the statistical error. Compared to last year, there is a slight decrease of 1 point. The detailed distribution of responses by statement is shown in Figure 36.

Figure 35. PERMA well-being index



Figure 36. Distribution of survey responses  
"Engagement barometer" on claims related subjective well-being



The results in Figure 37 show that almost 75% of the employees in the Bulgarian state administration believe that the things they do in their lives are meaningful and worth the effort. Among British civil servants, 67% of respondents think so. In terms of overall life satisfaction, however, the results are reversed. 70% of British civil servants are satisfied with their lives, while 66% of Bulgarian counterparts are. On the aspects of subjective well-being related to work, the results are quite similar: 87% of Bulgarian and 90% of British civil servants find working

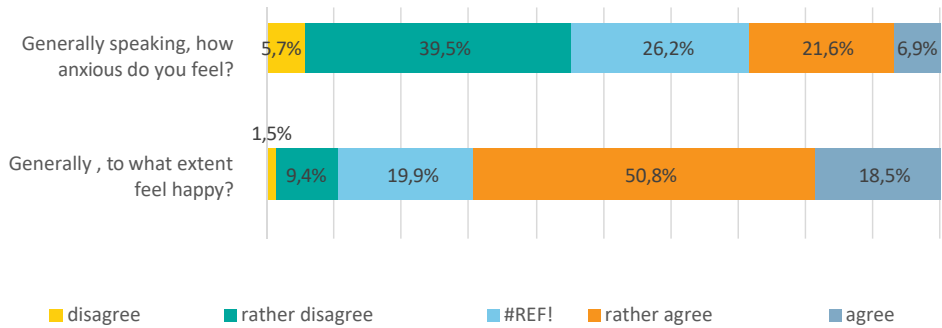
77% of Bulgarian and 82% of British civil servants find their work stimulating.

However, there is a relatively large difference in perceptions of social support at work. While 87% of British civil servants say they can rely on colleagues for help in difficult situations, only 64% of Bulgarian civil servants said so. This is an increase of almost 9 points in the UK and a decrease of 12 points in Bulgaria within a year. On the basis of the data available at the moment, it is not possible to give reasons for this drastic change, but if

the trend towards a deterioration of the climate in the teams in the Bulgarian administrations has continued, this process deserves to be studied in greater depth. The questionnaire also contains several do-

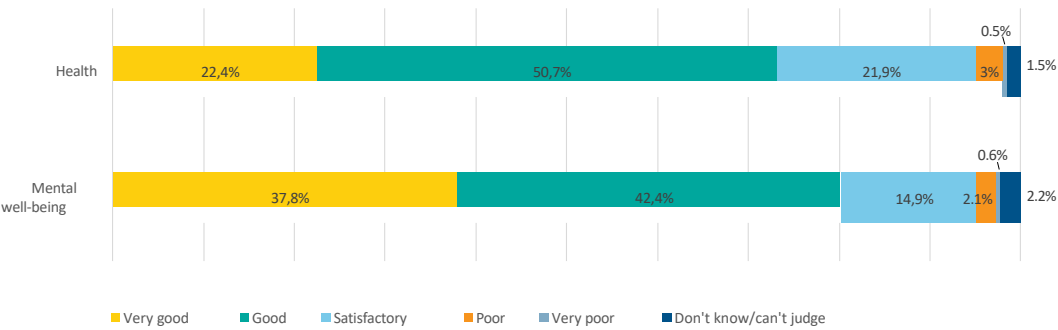
filler questions that relate to subjective well-being but that do not enter the PERMA index. The distribution of responses to these is given in Figures 37 and 38.

Figure 37. Distribution of responses to questions related emotional experiences



In terms of happiness, 61% of British and 69% of Bulgarian civil servants feel happy, while 28% of Bulgarian and 34% of British civil servants are worried about the future.

Figure 38. Distribution of responses to health and mental well-being questions



Regarding the subjective perception of mental and emotional health - 80% of Bulgarian and 72% of British civil servants rate their mental health as good or very good. The picture is similar in of subjective perceptions of somatic health - 79% of British

garian and 72% of British woodworkers rate their health as good or very good. On these two indicators, however, a deterioration in the scores in both administrations can be expected given the rapid ageing of civil servants in both Bulgaria and UK.





## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

After each national engagement survey, the dynamics and trends in the administration become clearer, and the conclusions and findings come more easily. At the beginning, in the first national engagement barometer, the high proportion of engaged civil servants and especially the positive comparisons with the British administration were unexpected and met with scepticism. Some looked for flaws in the methodology, others in the sample, others in the way the survey information was disseminated through the HR units of the administrations. However, more annual Barometer surveys followed, and it became that the 2019 data was not so good, because in 2020 and 2021 all the engagement indicators, and the level of engagement became even higher. Then followed the political crisis, the war in Ukraine, inflation, and it was seen that the negative events also had an impact. It became clear that the barometer of engagement was

complex and sensitive tool, but also that it works. Moreover, many more patterns and trends can be detected through comparisons with historical data on the Bulgarian administration than through benchmarking with UK data.

Six consecutive surveys seem to be enough to some strengths and weaknesses in the motivation of Bulgarian civil servants. This is because some of the factors of engagement have remained relatively constant over these years, while others have changed a lot and it has been seen how both affect engagement.

One of the indicators with a large weight that remained relatively constant during the period is the intrinsic motivation of the civil servants or the motivation coming from the nature of the work itself. Civil servants overwhelmingly like their work. They have chosen to work in the public sector not only because of the salaries and economic

, but because they find meaning in their work and because they believe that through it they can fulfil themselves as individuals and professionals. In this respect, Bulgarian and British civil servants are similar, and this factor, as we can see, is not changed by external circumstances - crises, political instability, economic woes or upturn - and is one of the main drivers of engagement. For a number of reasons, intrinsic motivation is very important. Neither in Bulgaria nor in the UK is the public sector able to provide business-competitive remuneration, but the public administration in both Bulgaria and the UK is able to attract people with causes and give them the chance to work towards them. This is a valuable and indelible competitive advantage of public administration over most business organisations.

Another constant factor that underpins the commitment of civil servants is the setting of clear organisational goals. This is true for both Bulgaria and Great Britain. Civil servants know their work, their expectations, quality standards and their personal area of responsibility very well. Professional roles and work processes are well established and clear. Specifically for the Bulgarian administration, it can be concluded that it is well organised and orderly, but conservative and distrustful of new ideas and innovations. The latter conclusion is based on the consistent results of another large-scale study, the "Learning Organisation", which in

after a year shows that the Bulgarian state administration is one of the most conservative in Europe. The Barometer data show that this conservatism may have its strengths - orderliness, predictability, reliability and resilience in the face of political instability.

The third strength, on which the motivation of Bulgarian civil servants is based, is training and opportunities. On no other factor of engagement are there such large and consistent differences between the Bulgarian and British civil service as on training opportunities. Perhaps a lesser-known fact is that about 15 years ago the British Institute of Public Administration was closed down in a reform aimed at optimising sector spending, and since then the administrations themselves have sought and recruited training providers with the budgets allocated to them for this purpose. Perhaps something in this mechanism is not working so well, because since 2009 the evaluation of the factor

"learning and development" in Great Britain has not exceeded 55 points, while the score of the same factor in Bulgaria has not fallen below 60 points since 2019. The Barometer data show that training in public administration in Bulgaria is both more accessible and more timely. This is due not only to the free trainings financed by the Good Governance Operational Programme, which the IPA offered until recently, but also to the large number of distance trainings.

Although in both the last two or three studies it was observed

some decline in the confidence of civil servants in Bulgaria in their senior management, it remains at a good level and is one of the two factors on which the Bulgarian Barometer data are consistently better than the British, and this over all six years of benchmarking. This is a somewhat difficult result to grasp, given all the political uncertainty in the country and the prevailing negative talk in the media about leadership in public administration. From the latter, almost all of us are left with the conviction that most, if not all, senior civil servants in Bulgaria are people with no leadership and professional qualities, who have been appointed to high positions only because of their loyalty to a ruling political party. Obviously, however, this is not case with public servants. The majority of respondents each year to an anonymous survey such as the Barometer show that they like and value their leaders, and this is particularly pleasing as the data from the regression analyses show strategic leadership is the that most heavily conditions the motivation and commitment of civil servants themselves. One of the most central themes in all engagement studies so far has been remuneration. The available evidence shows that remuneration satisfaction strongly influences the motivation of civil servants. The importance of this factor became clear in 2020 and , when several subsequent and real salary increases raised the overall engagement score by several points. In 2022, however, a se-

a significant drop in satisfaction with remuneration by as much as 11 index points and it was seen that this had a very negative impact on engagement. Remuneration may not be the most important determinant of work motivation, but it is a significant factor and the longer dissatisfaction with low remuneration or inadequate performance grows, the more the other pillars of commitment will be put under strain.

Now a few words about the weaknesses, for which we also have consistent data. For another year, one of the factors on which the Bulgarian state administration scores lower than the British administration is . The main reason for this tends to be leadership and organisational - leaders in the Bulgarian civil service still rarely involve their teams in key decision-making or in seeking opportunities for improvement and innovation. This problem was already identified in the first Barometer, but it is still relevant today. This year, however, a new one has been added - alienation and a lower willingness to support a colleague in a difficult situation. The reasons for this change are as yet unknown. It is also unclear whether this is a persistent trend or something situational, but it is definitely something that requires attention and perhaps more in-depth research.

Another negative trend that has been steadily observed over the years is the increasing stress and strain at work. The barometer data on the so-called PERMA index are good, but the dissatisfaction

of stress and workload has been steadily increasing since 2019. In the beginning, we attributed the increasing stress to the COVID-19 epidemic, but it is now clear that the main cause of stress and overwork is the increasing efficiency demands on administration. It is imperative to increase the pace of digitisation of the administration, as this is the only way for the administration to meet the challenges of the times without leading to overload and fatigue for employees.

Based on the Barometer data, the following measures can be recommended in 2024:

- ▶ Systematic efforts should be made to improve the quality and speed of decisions, to stimulate critical thinking and innovative thinking through a more effective introduction of team organisation. Leaders in administrations need to recognise the value of involving teams in addressing important issues, planning reforms and seeking opportunities for improvement and innovation. Problems are becoming more complex and the working context more dynamic. Under these conditions, it is difficult for anyone to make good and quick decisions alone. The Barometer data shows that one of the things in the British administration excels the Bulgarian administration is in the use of teams to solve complex problems. This problem has recurred over the years but does not yet seem to have found its solution.
- ▶ The capacity of the administration to implement modern forms of learning needs to be developed. The process

of learning is , and the line between learning and work is increasingly blurred. More and more work tasks require information acquisition and learning to be successfully solved. Knowledge needs to be available as soon as it is needed, not months or years later. The wide possibilities for using artificial intelligence, online learning or information exchange between administrations must be fully exploited to increase the productivity and efficiency of public administration.

- ▶ It is necessary to continue and accelerate the automation of work processes and the digitalisation of the administration. Data from the Barometer show that the efficiency demands on the administration are increasing, and without the introduction of workflow automation this leads to overload, stress and overwork for civil servants. Moreover, the slow pace of digitisation of the public administration makes it an unattractive place to work for creative, innovative and ambitious young people. Young but ineffective civil servants are neither a positive thing for society nor for the civil servants themselves.
- ▶ The civil service needs to expand and open up career development opportunities for ambitious, intelligent and knowledgeable civil servants. Managers rarely think to celebrate achievements, and the system itself does not offer sufficiently fast-track professional and career development paths.

# Annex: Questionnaire

## My work

1. My work is interesting.
2. My work stimulates me to develop as a .
3. I consider myself to be involved in decisions related to my work.
4. I have enough freedom to decide how to perform my duties.

## Organizational goals

5. I know what the goals of my are.
6. I am aware of the objectives of the unit in which I work.
7. I know what my contribution is to achieving organisational goals.
8. I know what is of me in the workplace.
9. I am aware of the goals and objectives that are for me.

## My direct supervisor

10. My direct supervisor helps me to be more effective in my work.
11. My direct supervisor is interested in me as a person.
12. My supervisor is open to my ideas and suggestions.
13. In general, I think that the decisions that my line makes are the right ones.
14. My line manager regularly gives feedback on my work.
15. I receive recognition for my contribution to the work.

## Team

16. I can rely on my colleagues when I encounter difficulties in my work.
17. In our team we think and discuss together how we can improve our work.
18. My teammates and I feel supported as we look for new ways to improve performance.
19. I feel valued and respected by my colleagues.
20. Conflicts very rarely arise in my team.

## Learning and Development

21. I get the information or training I need in a timely manner.
22. In my administration, learning is valued and encouraged.
23. My administration offers opportunities for career development.
24. I have many opportunities for work-based learning (online courses, mentoring, project work, coaching, etc.)

## Resources and workload

25. I have or can get the support I need to do my job effectively.
26. I have the necessary equipment and materials to do my job effectively.
27. I don't feel overwhelmed in my work.
28. I think I have achieved a good work/life balance.

## Remuneration

29. My remuneration is fair for the work I do.
30. I am satisfied with salary.
31. My remuneration is better than that of other employees in similar positions in the administration.

## Leadership and Change Management

32. I think the administration I work for is well run.
33. The actions and values of my administration are in line its values and goals.
34. The administration's leadership skillfully manages change when change is needed.
35. The administration's leadership stimulates critical thinking and the proposal of new ideas.

## Engagement

36. I feel pride when I say where I work.
37. I would recommend my administration as a very good place to work.
38. I am attached to the administration where I work.
39. I refer to my administration as "we" rather than "they".
40. I have built friendly relationships with colleagues in my administration.
41. My administration motivates me to do my best.

## Workplace Health and Wellbeing Section

1. Generally , how satisfied are you with your life now?
2. To what extent do you think the things you do in your life are meaningful and worth the effort?
3. Generally , how happy do you feel?
4. Generally , how anxious do you feel?
5. Overall, how would you rate your mental ?
6. Overall, how would you rate your physical health?



# Institute of Public Administration

1000 Sofia Str. Serdika 6-8

Tel. 02/ 940 2556

E-mail: [ipa@ipa.government.bg](mailto:ipa@ipa.government.bg)

[www.ipa.government.bg](http://www.ipa.government.bg)