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# PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN ESTONIA

**Survey conducted among the population aged 15-74 years**

**Turu-uuringute AS**

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Pärnu mnt 102, 11312  
Tallinn  
Tel 585 29 700  
[post@turu-uuringute.ee](mailto:post@turu-uuringute.ee)  
[www.turu-uuringute.eu](http://www.turu-uuringute.eu)

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## STUDY RESULTS

### 1 Structure of the content of the survey

The survey was largely a repeat of a survey conducted in 2012. This allowed changes in the responses to be mapped, and social trends monitored and analyzed.

The questions asked from respondents and the statements could be divided into two major thematic groups. The first determined the respondents' views and awareness of human rights in general. The second thematic group of questions focused on human rights in Estonia, using the responses to map the knowledge, experience and attitudes of respondents. The survey questions were not arranged in a sequence thematically, which allowed the content in the previous questions to be controlled.

The survey started out by determining the respondents' understanding of human rights in general. At first, a list of 20 potential responses was provided. This mapped the understanding of how different groups of respondents see the concept of human rights. The respondent's awareness of human rights was also controlled by the question of the universality of human rights, where each respondent was asked to identify the human rights that are applicable to all; and the question of curbs on human rights in the interests of safety, security and prevention of acts of terrorism, where the respondent had to indicate whether or not they would consent to restrictions. If they indicated they would consent to restrictions, the respondent was asked to specify what sorts of restrictions on human rights he or she was prepared to accept, with a list of five different human rights provided. The respondents' knowledge of linkage between international human rights standards and national law was mapped with the statement "*the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union takes precedence over Estonian law*, which the respondent could either agree or disagree with. The attitude toward the statement *Adherence to human rights also means the duty to respect the human rights of other individuals* provided information about the respondent's general human rights knowledge. It was also investigated whether respondents viewed human rights as important in their lives, and which human rights specifically were important to them (16 options were provided). In addition, different statements were used to gauge the respondents' values on human rights issues. The last question of the interview asked respondents for their subjective assessment of their knowledge in the field of human rights.

The other thematic group of questions mapped respondents' knowledge, experiences and attitudes toward various aspects of human rights in Estonian society. First of all, it was examined whether respondents felt that human rights are violated in Estonia. This was a general question that aimed to elicit an opinion and did not presuppose a corresponding specific experience. The answer (agree/disagree) to a statement in the second half of the questionnaire – *Violation of human rights is a problem in some countries, but is not a problem in Estonia* – controlled the same question. In the next follow-up question, people

who claimed that violation of human rights was taking place in Estonia were asked to name the corresponding human rights field. This was an open question and thus respondents' assertions were not always cases in which human rights were violated; there were also a number of claims that did not qualify as human rights violation in any way (e.g. repeating populist claims made by a specific interest group). The corresponding question thus allows the impact of propaganda on the relevant respondent group to be assessed along with the origin of the propaganda. Essentially the same question appeared in the second half of the interview, allowing the answers to be controlled for reliability. Specifically, the next question, in which a list of a dozen possible options was provided, devoted study to respondents' sources of information on human rights: school, media, friends, non-profit organizations dealing with the relevant questions and government institutions. Aspects related to the information were mapped in greater detail in the subsequent questions, which examined what information related to the field respondents needed more and which channels they preferred to use for obtaining the information. The respondents' knowledge of human rights in Estonia was also mapped by the question of where they should turn if someone's human rights were violated. Sixteen different options were provided, with only some of them being realistically appropriate.

In the following section, we will analyze the respondents' responses in more detail.

## 2 Definition of human rights

Question: *When you hear human rights being talked about, what do you make of this term?*

The question was asked in an open-ended form, with no options given. The goal of the question was to determine what respondents knew about the concept and field of human rights (and freedoms).

Respondents in Estonia advance three explanations, all with equal frequency, for the term human rights: freedom, people's rights in general and right to life (figure 2). The response most frequently seen on this occasion was freedom, (including freedom to make decisions about one's life and one's actions), which was mentioned by 7% of the inhabitants. Second came a general response: people's rights, laws, rights held by all people, which were mentioned by a total 6% of respondents. Right to life was mentioned just as often – by 6%. It was followed by freedom of speech (5%) and equal treatment of people (4%).

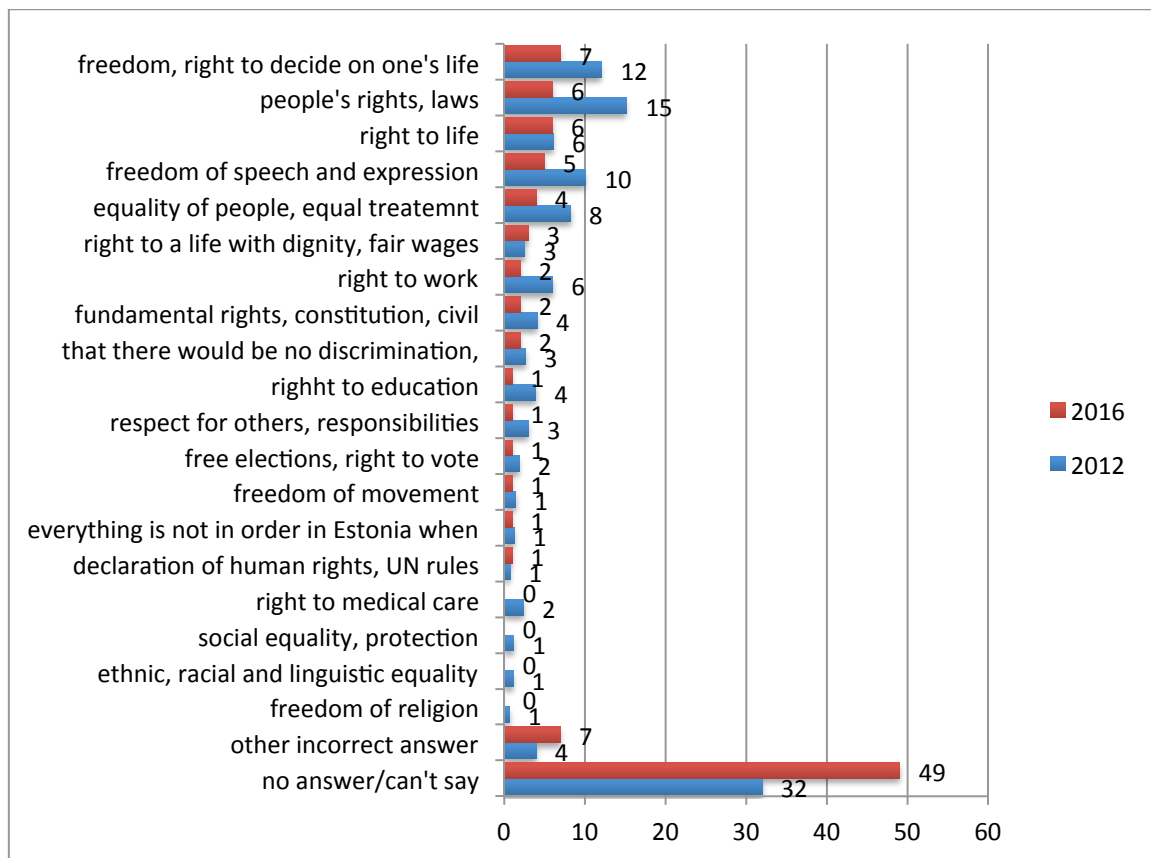
Compared to the last study, the result has not significantly changed – the five phenomena or rights most frequently mentioned were the same in this study as well.

Nearly half of the respondents (49%) could not answer the question specifically – they did not directly associate anything at all with the term “human rights”. This year as well, the number of people who did not answer was highest among the over 60-year-olds who attended school in the Soviet era, back when human rights were not on curricula. Already on the last occasion (2012), the number of those who did not answer this question was high – 30% – but now it was higher. **From this, we can conclude that the topic is not meaningful to this respondent group and that in their opinion, significant human rights violations do not exist in Estonia.**

The Russian-speaking inhabitants included significantly more people who did not answer – 56% vs. 46% of Estonians. Estonians associated human rights more often than the Russian-speaking respondents with freedom of speech and right to life.

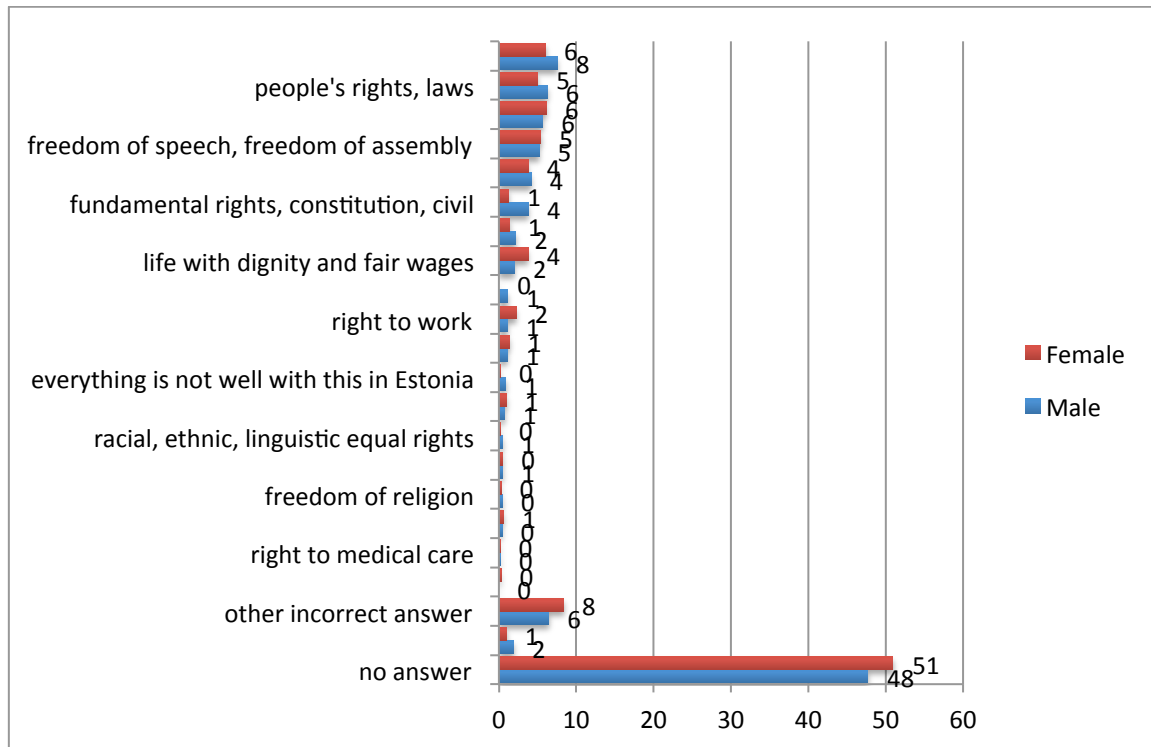
The youngest respondents more frequently mentioned the right to education and freedom of speech, which are also dealt with on the school curriculum as well. The 20-29 age group highlights freedom and fundamental rights (the Constitution) more than other age groups. People with higher education more often mention various human rights topics and there are fewer than average who did not answer – 32%; while 62% among those with basic education declined to answer. We see, then, that knowledge of human rights depends largely on the education level: in the general education system, human rights are covered in the upper secondary school curriculum.

**Figure 2. What are human rights? N=1003**



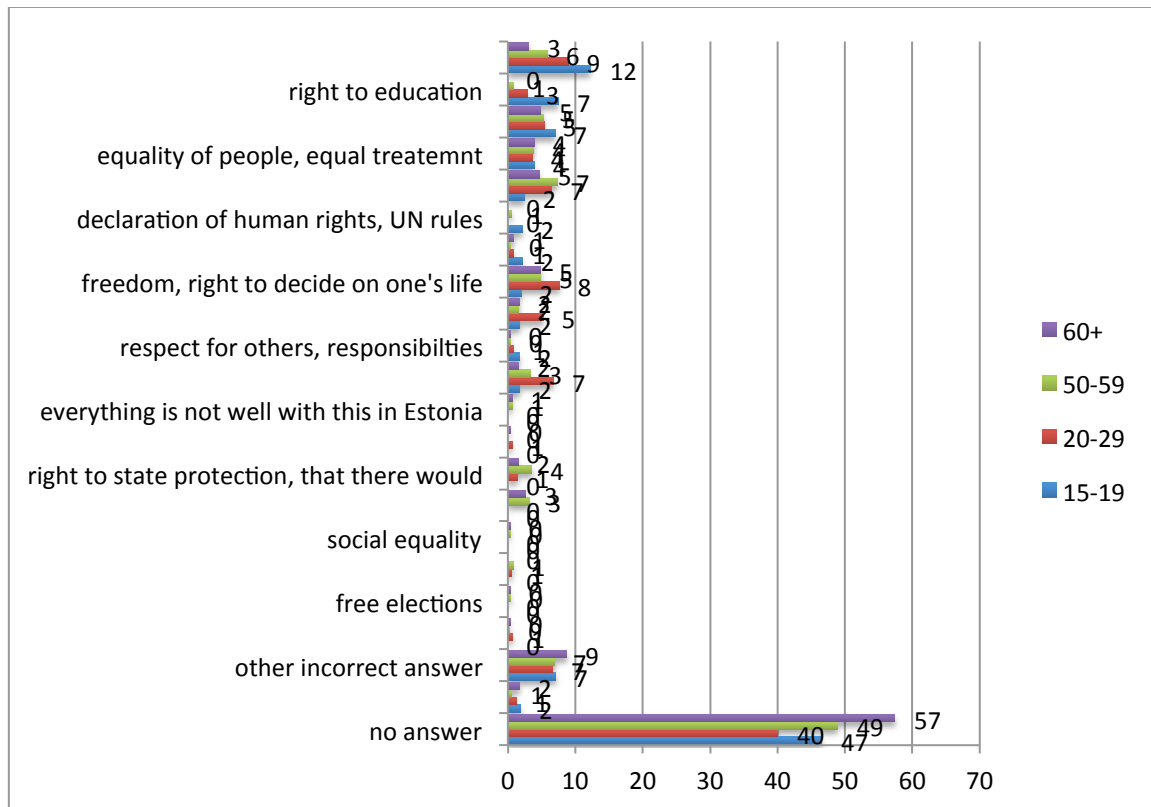
There were no material differences between the responses from men and women. Differences did exist on a quite marginal level: men tended to stress the legal basis of human rights to a greater degree, even as salary and a life with human dignity were evident from the women's responses.

**Figure 2A What are human rights? N=1003, results by gender**

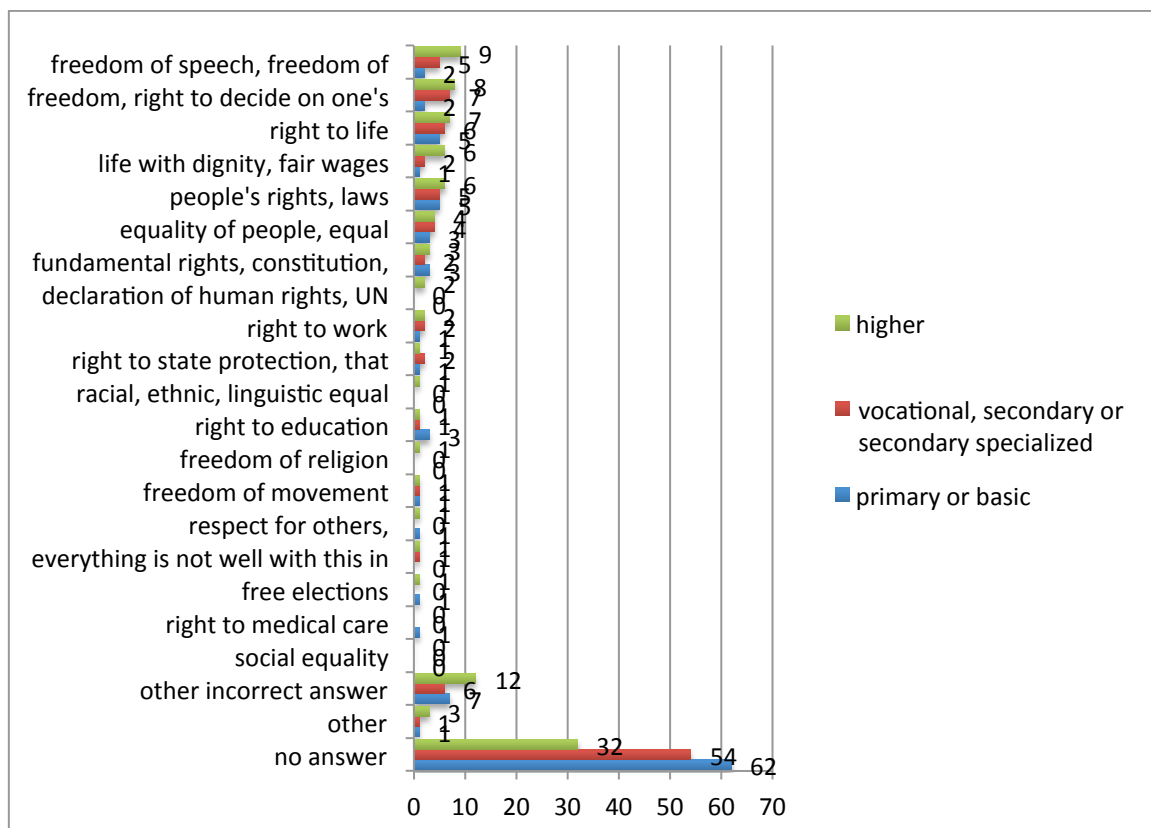


By age group, the differences in the substantiveness of the responses were significant: the younger age groups, who had acquired their education already during the re-independent Republic of Estonia era, knew much more about human rights than did the average respondent, while pensioners who went to school in the Soviet period either left the question unanswered or said something that was only indirectly or narrowly connected to human rights.

**Figure 2B What are human rights? N=1003, youngest and oldest age groups**



**Figure 2C What are human rights? N=1001, educational attainment**



## 3 The human rights situation in Estonia

### 3.1 Protection for human rights

Question: *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that all people are born free and equal in terms of their dignity and rights and everyone has the same rights and freedoms and also the same responsibilities. Do you think Estonia upholds human rights?*

**Sixty-eight percent of Estonian inhabitants feel that everything is in good order when it comes to human rights in the country, while 14% feel that this is not the case. Last time (2012), the result was 54% and 29%, respectively; the situation has thus, in the opinion of the respondents, improved significantly (see figures 3 and 3a).**

The younger age groups see the human rights situation in a more positive light than do the older groups. The 20-39 age group sees the human rights situation in the most positive light; last time it was the 15-19 age group who had the most positive view.

It is noteworthy that the opinion of the older people has improved the most – last time, 31% of the 60-74 age group felt their human rights were being violated, but this time only 14% of the over 60 group said they felt that way.

There is a great difference between the opinions of the Estonian and Russian-speaking respondents: for example, 74% of Estonians feel that everything is in order in terms of human rights, and 12% find that they are being violated; on the other hand, 54% of the Russian-speaking population feels **there are no problems but 18% feel there are problems. The result last time was 45% vs. 36% – the result for the Russian-speaking inhabitants in particular has thus improved markedly.**

The topic is still an unfamiliar one for many Russian-speaking respondents – 28% of them did not answer the question. Of people with higher education, 79% believe that there are no problems with human rights in Estonia, while 57% of respondents with primary or basic education believes the same and 27% did not answer the question.

The opinion regarding whether human rights are upheld also depends on the respondent's income. Respondents with a monthly income of up to 400 euros are more likely than average to feel that human rights are violated in Estonia. A similar result came out of the last study. This most likely attests to a certain dissatisfaction with the quality of life.

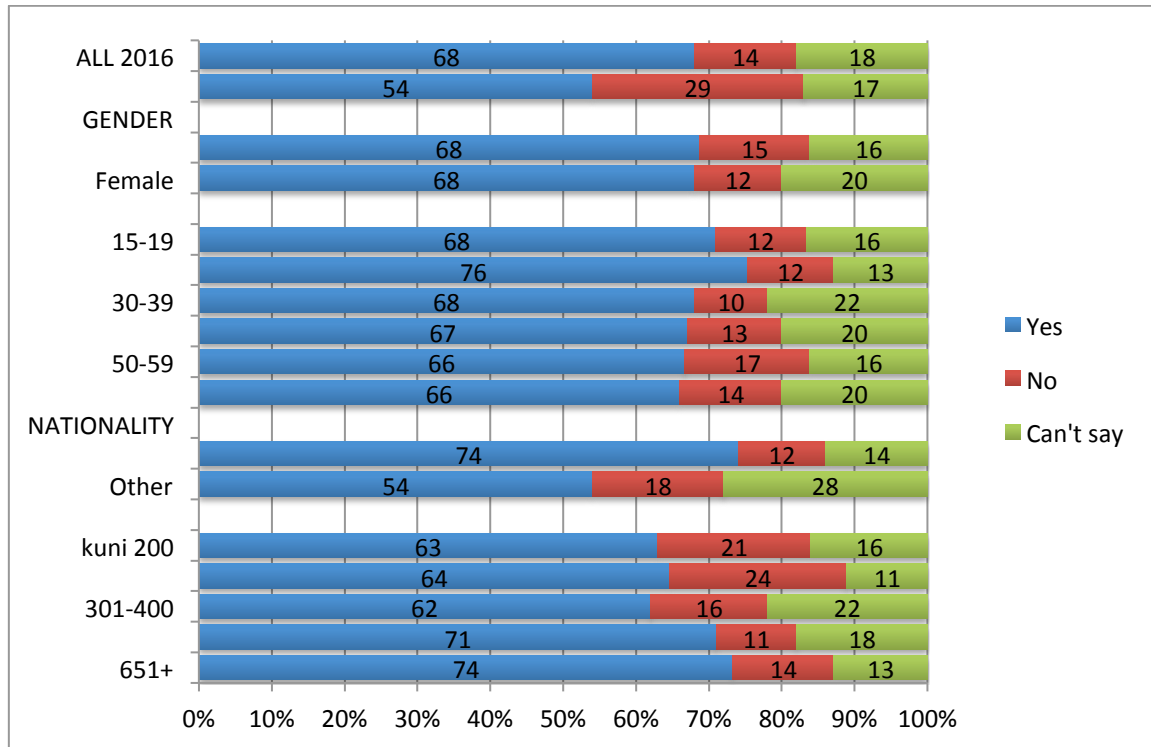
Looking at Estonia's different regions, we see that Ida-Viru County inhabitants have the greatest split on the issue of human rights (figure 3a). 47% say that human rights are being upheld and 23% say they see problems. But the situation has improved markedly in this area compared to the previous study – the adherents of both positions were an equal 37%.

It also turned out that among the respondents who do not use the Internet, fewer than the average number took a positive view – 63% – and there were a greater number than who did not state an opinion. During the previous study, the responses also varied based on respondent's citizenship, but this time the result did not diverge from the average.

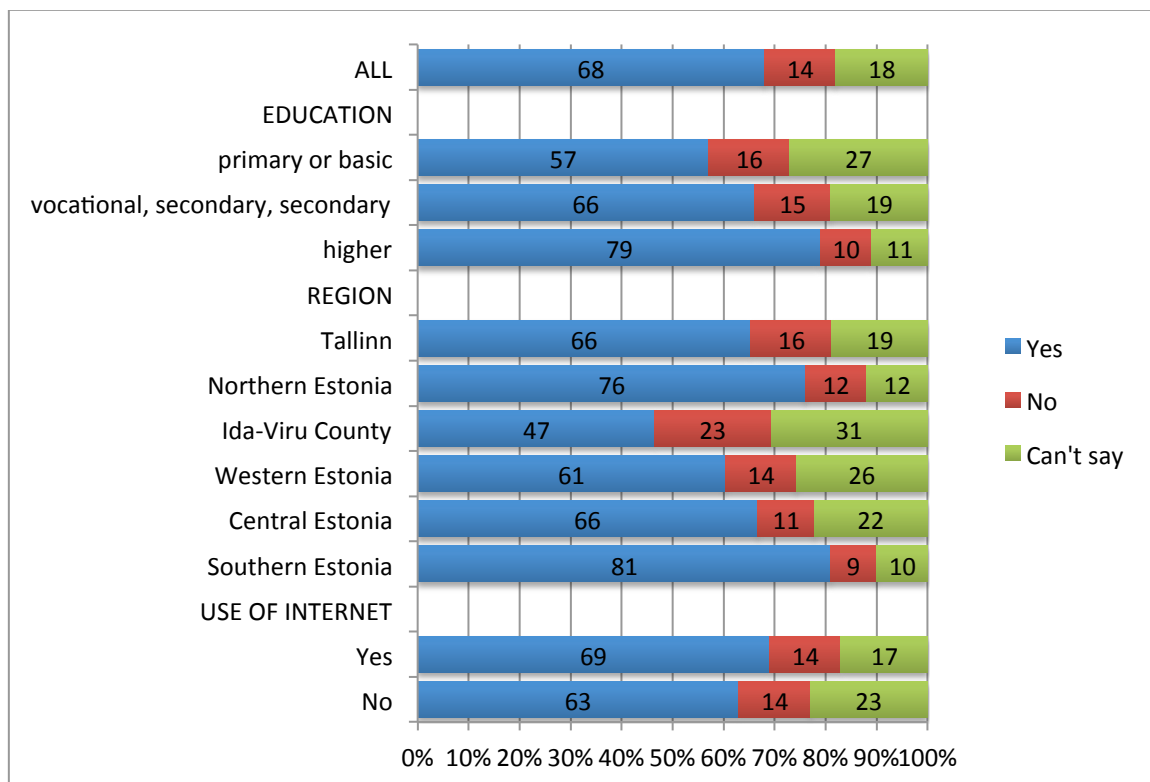
People's opinions about human rights are thus significantly influenced by the language in which they habitually communicate **(Estonian or Russian) and the ethnicity correlated with that language, educational level (often related to Estonian proficiency) and income and to some extent, place of residence as well** (in largely Russian-speaking

Ida-Viru county, close to one-quarter (23%) of the respondents found that human rights were not upheld in Estonia, while under half had a positive view (47%). On the basis of this, we can make the generalization that the main cause behind the difference might be Estonian proficiency (both those who use it as language of communication and as an acquired second language in the case of higher education) and living in an Estonian-speaking community and media/information space.

**Figure 3. Do you feel that human rights are protected in Estonia? n=1003**





**Figure 3A. Do you feel human rights are protected in Estonia? n=1003**

### 3.2 Which human rights are violated

Question: *What are the human rights that are violated in Estonia?* The question was asked in open-ended form only to those who said they felt human rights were violated in Estonia. The responses were consolidated into thematic fields.

It turned out that in addition to criticism about failure of the state to provide equal treatment or to meet obligations, some of the respondents also brought out aspects related to relationships between people. For example, racial and age-related discrimination or disparagement is encountered specifically in people's own communication in everyday situations and in Internet comment sections. The same holds true for disparagement or exclusion for ethnic reasons.

In the last study, respondents most frequently cited aspects related to the socioeconomic situation and low standard of living as examples of human rights violations, this time, the same themes came up equally often and the issue of obtaining citizenship for non-citizens was also mentioned as a problem – by 14% and 12% of respondents, respectively (figure 5). In addition, problems were noted with regard to lack of education available in their native language and lack of information in languages other than Estonian as well as discrimination at the workplace. It is possible that their opinions are influenced by a misconception disseminated by the Russian Federation – that members of this social group have the right to Estonian citizenship even if they do not meet the requirements (the Estonian state has

allegedly deprived or “stripped” them of citizenship) as well as by the personal inability to receive Estonian citizenship due to low language proficiency.

On the last occasion, discrimination was mentioned by 19% of Russian-speaking respondents and socioeconomic topics by 23%; thus the degree to which socioeconomic issues are categorized as human rights has clearly decreased. In general, some of the topics of the last study repeated this year, but the pay gap between men and women has decreased and there was less mention of inequality in general. The wage gap topics were more prominent during the last study in 2012, and during the time this study was conducted, they were discussed less; this might be the reason that the topic was not mentioned as much.

**Similarly to the 2012 result, the Russian-speaking community cites Estonian language proficiency requirements as a violation of human rights.** However, it would be a rights violation if proficiency in the official language were not required. The requirement of proficiency in the official language in many positions is a legal question, as everyone in Estonia has the right to conduct business in the official language, and the state is required to guarantee this by requiring public servants and service personnel to speak the official language. **If the state did not require proficiency in the official language, precisely that would be a violation of rights.**

Human rights-related topics most frequently mentioned were violation of gender and age-related rights (4%), inequality in the workplace (4%), rights of the injured party in connection with unfair administration of justice (4%), and failure to comply with state obligations (4%). Notably, the share of those who did not answer the question has grown, to 22% on this occasion. The respondents may have answered the preceding questions about violations of rights superficially and when asked to specify, were not able to provide specific evidence for their answer.

**The opinions of Estonians and Russian-speaking respondents proved quite different from those from the last study** (figure 5A). **Estonians most frequently brought out problems related to low standard of living (17%) followed by government’s failure to meet its obligations (7%) and gender and age-related inequality (6%).**

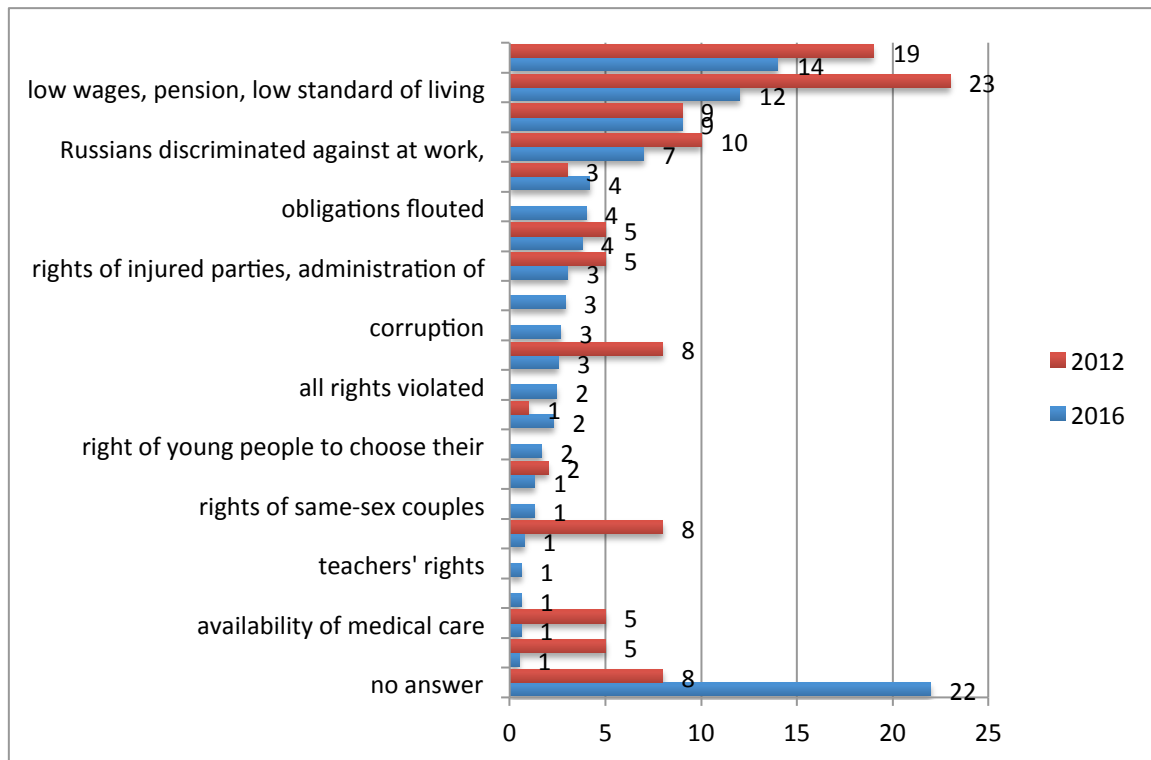
The Russian-speaking population continues to mention the problem of citizenship (29%) and linguistic discrimination against non-Estonians, as it is not possible to acquire an education in another language or use another language for conducting business (15%). Inequality (6%) and discrimination at work (5%) appear to fall into the same category. These topics are erroneously considered a violation of human rights and the result is similar to the previous study.

The respondents with the lowest educational level mention aspects related to low standard of living more often than other respondents, followed by gender and age-related inequality and the problem of education in the native language (figure 5B). among higher education people, the problem of citizenship, race and religion related verbal abuse and government failure to meet responsibilities are mentioned more often.

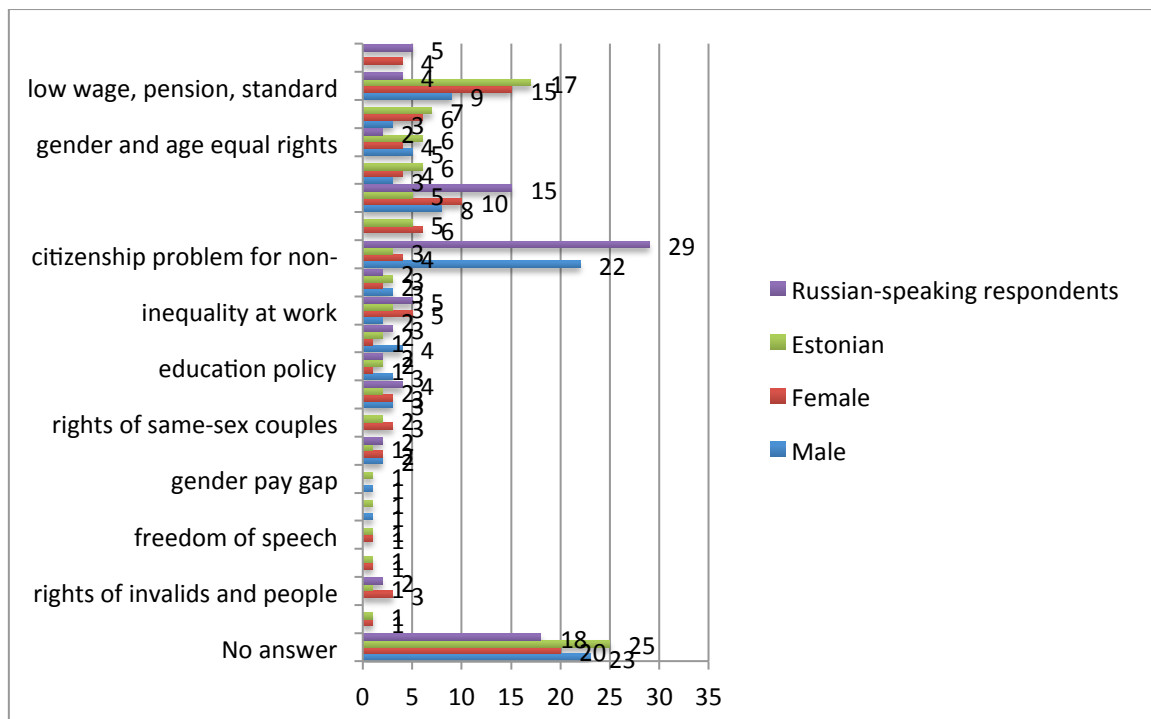
To sum up, only about one-fifth of the problems mentioned by people could be categorized under human rights topics. The rest of the responses are not directly related to the human rights, but to legal issues and social welfare.

In the last survey, human rights topics were mentioned in one-third of the answers to this question.

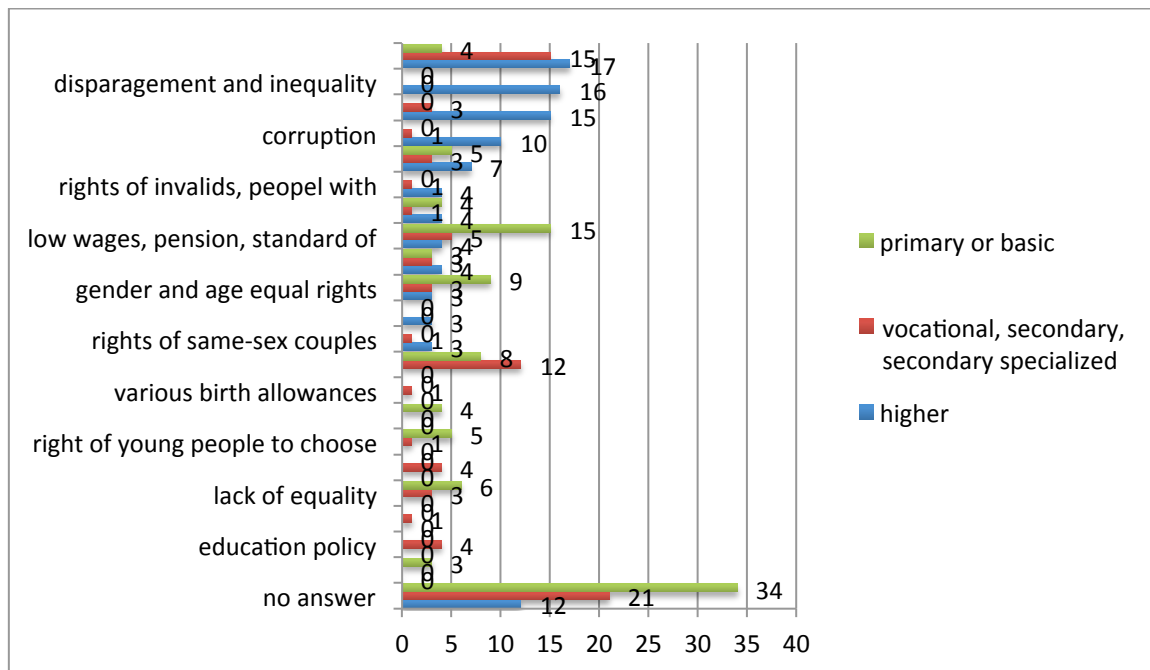
**Figure 5. What kinds of rights are violated in Estonia? N=138, those who feel that human rights are violated (%)**



**Figure 5A. What kinds of rights are violated in Estonia? N=138, those who feel that human rights are violated, gender and ethnicity (%)**



**Figure 5B. What kinds of rights are violated in Estonia? N=138, those who feel that human rights are violated, education (%)**



### Violation of the human rights of the respondent or their acquaintance

To determine whether the opinion as to human rights violation was of a general nature or based on a specific experience, the following was asked: Have your human rights or those of an acquaintance of yours been violated? Please describe the concrete situation. The question was asked of the respondents who said that human rights were violated.

In the results, we see that 43% of respondents who felt that human rights are violated in Estonia answered that their rights or those of an acquaintance had been violated. 57% of respondents now responded in the negative, however (figure 6).

**During the last study, the indicator was 48%; the result has thus improved.** The result shows that on the level of popular discussion, there is a widespread opinion that human rights are violated in Estonia, although many lack any specific experience to refer to.

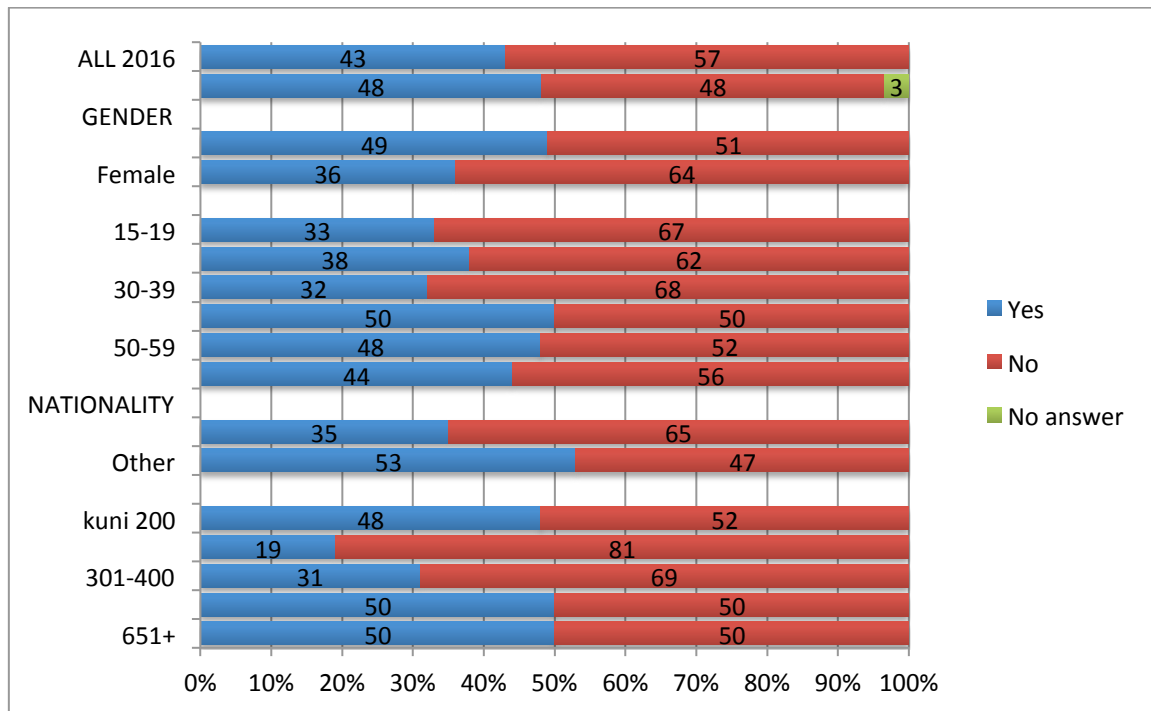
**If we view the result in terms of all respondents (of 1000 respondents) it can be said that 6% feel their human rights or those of their acquaintance have been violated. The figure was 13% the last time.**

Let us now look more closely at the respondents who feel that their human rights or those of an acquaintance have been violated.

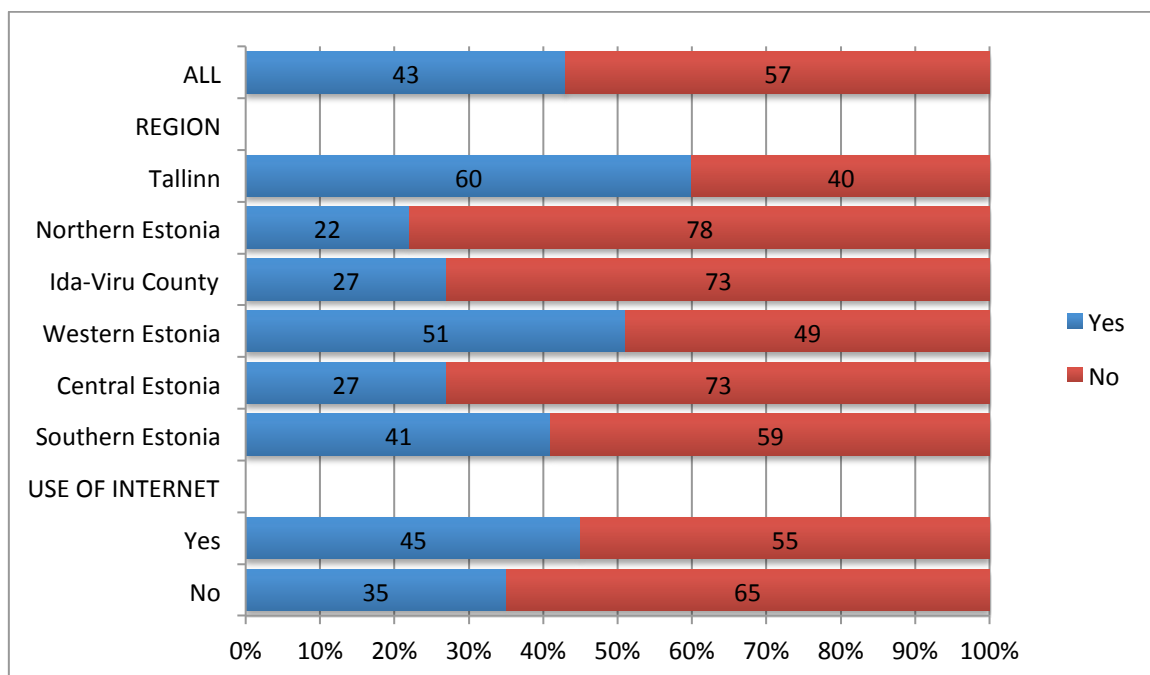
- Among Russian-speaking respondents, there were more such respondents – 53% (compared to 35% for Estonians).

- There were more of them among males – 49% – and fewer among the women (36%).
- There were fewer among people with primary or basic education – 26%
- There were fewer among inhabitants of northern Estonia – 22%, more in Tallinn (60%)
- There were also fewer of them among rural dwellers – 23%

**Figure 6. Have your human rights or those of an acquaintance been violated in Estonia? N=138, those who feel that human rights are violated (%)**



**Figure 6a. Have your human rights or those of an acquaintance of yours been violated in Estonia? N=138, those who feel that human rights are violated (%)**



### Cases cited as human rights violations

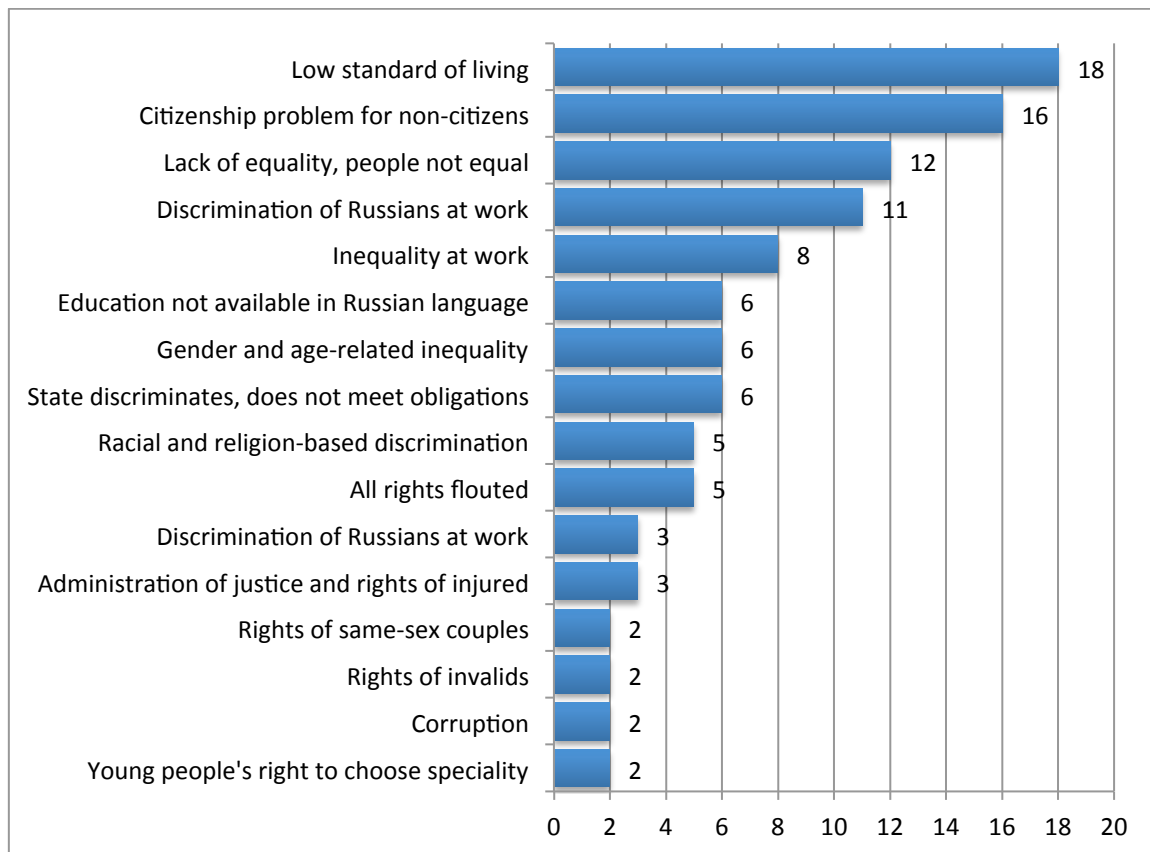
Respondents who said their rights or those of an acquaintance had been violated were asked to describe the specific situation. The question was in open-ended form, the responses were coded and consolidated into narrower thematic fields. We see the results on figure 7, where absolute figures were set out on this occasion.

During the last study, the cases most mentioned were, equally, work discrimination and the non-Estonians' citizenship problem, but this time, low standard of living and the citizenship problem were mentioned more often – 18 and 16 mentions, respectively. These were followed by the general appraisal that people are not equal, that there is inequality (12 occasions), and that inhabitants of other ethnicities are discriminated against (11 times). On eight occasions, inequality at the workplace was mentioned. The topics are the same ones that were already generally mentioned in the case of the previous question in this study. Discrimination against blacks was cited on several occasions in the racial discrimination category.

As evidence for inequality at the workplace, respondents cited unequal wages, layoffs, gender wage disparity and the fact that employers allegedly always prevail in disputes.

Responses on a very wide range of topics were consolidated under the category "Other." People mentioned everything that bothered them – *consumer rights are violated; people should be ensured an average wage; new immigrants have a higher wage (than local inhabitants); freedom of speech; e-voting constitutes a violation of the Constitution; people are starving; cannabis users are discriminated against; medical care is not always available; right to work is not guaranteed; parental rights are violated; education policy does not work; teachers' rights are violated in schools; bailiff has frozen the bank account.*

**Figure 7. Cases of human rights violations (as illustrated by the respondent or acquaintance), n=120, absolute figures**



**To sum up, it can be said that people often categorize topics under human rights violation that should not actually belong there.** Only a small part of the violations are actually related to human rights or fundamental rights topics. Two problems that have emerged are inequality at the workplace and low standard of living, in regard to which some among the population are troubled by social inequality.

### 3.3 Rights where protection is problematic in Estonia

Question: *What are the human rights where protection is the most problematic in Estonia?* Choose the one or two most important ones. The question was asked of all respondents this time – also of those who said they saw no problems with human rights protection. Ten options were given.

Here, too, social inequality ranked as the biggest perceived problem (31%). Figure 8. As evident from the above, respondents also considered low standard of living as well as inequality. Racial, ethnic and linguistic inequality ranked second; the rights of the disabled came third.

Compared to the last study, the ranking order of the responses has not changed, but the frequency of mention of various factors decreased this time, attesting to an improvement in the situation. In addition, the share of respondents who feel Estonia has no problems with human rights has increased by 8%.

The opinions given to the question by respondents again vary according to language of communication. Estonian-speaking respondents more often list the following as problematic – social equality, inequality of disabled people, age-related, gender-related and racial/ethnic inequality (figure 9). The Russian-speaking population most often cite ethnic/linguistic equality (32%), followed by social equality (29%) and free elections (17%), i.e. the fact that non-citizens cannot vote in parliamentary elections. Of this list, only social equality issues could be regarded as a human rights issue.

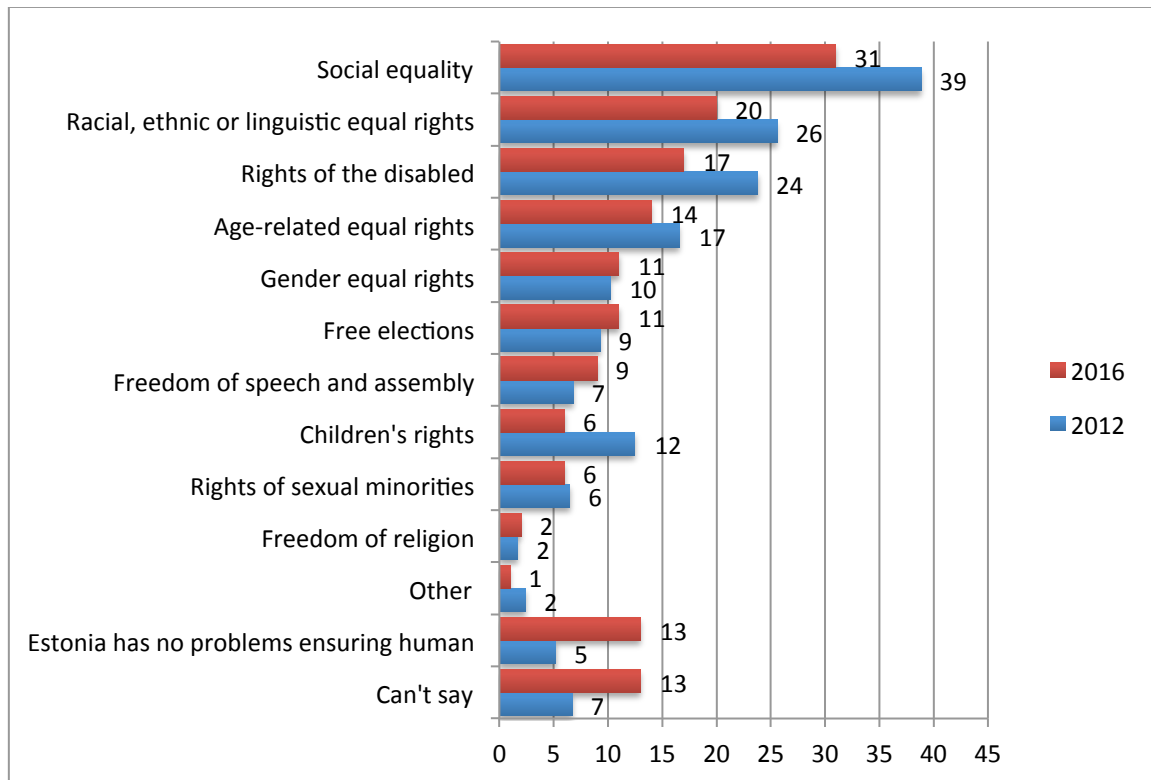
Compared to the last study, Estonians more infrequently cited lower social equality, rights of the disabled, age-related equality and children's rights as problems. The share of respondents who feel Estonia has no problems with human rights or who can't say has increased significantly.

Russian-speaking respondents made less mention of racial and ethnic problems and problems in the field of children's rights. The share of those who did not answer the question has also grown.

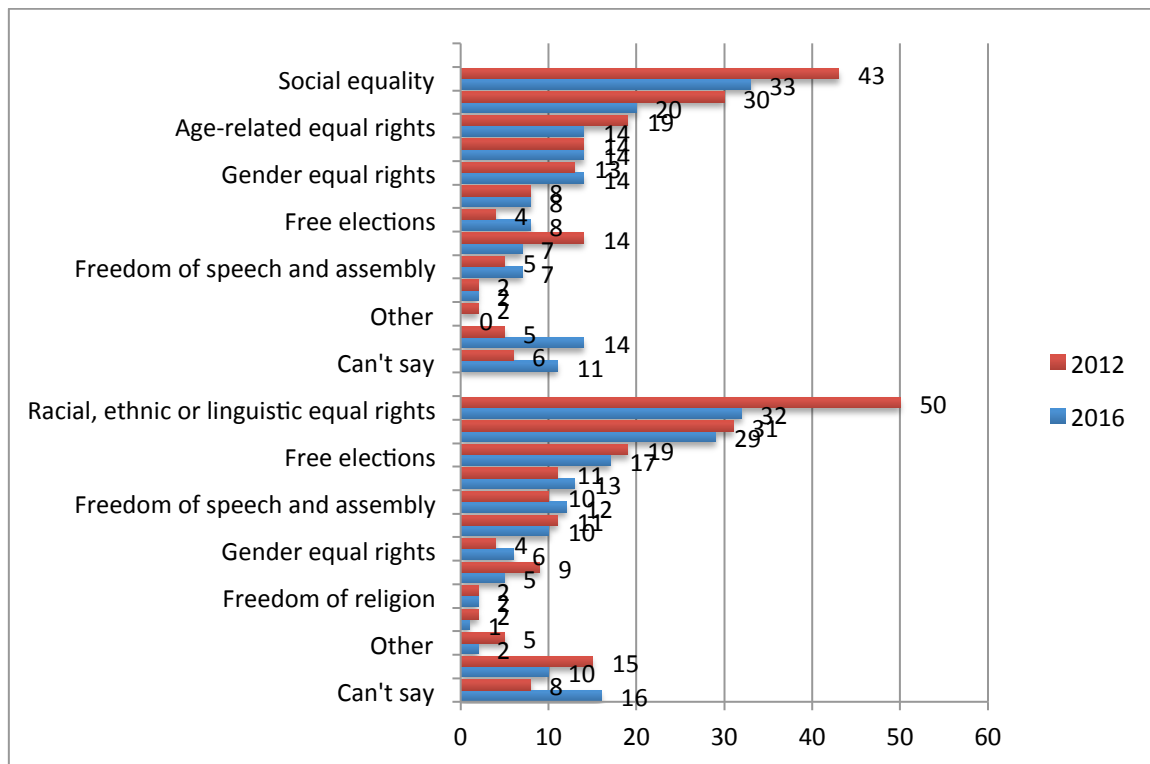
The younger respondent groups continue to devote more attention than average to the rights of sexual minorities and children, as they are covered on the school curriculum. Logically enough, members of the oldest age group are more likely to see age-related equality as a problem.



**Figure 8. Fields in which human rights protection is problematic, n=1003**



**Figure 9. Fields with problems with human rights protection, by ethnicity 2012 AND 2016, n=1003**



## 4 Sources of information and amount of information

Question: *What sources have you received information about human rights from?*

Similarly to the previous study, the main information source for the population has been the media – 64% – which is strikingly different in the case of respondents depending on whether they use Estonian or a different language to communicate. The media is followed by the Internet (41%) and school and university (35%) (figure 10). Thirteen percent of respondents did not specify where they obtain information.

Among other sources, the following were mentioned: free legal aid, relatives abroad, European Court of Human Rights decisions, social media and everyday life.

Compared to the last study, the share of media and friends as an information source has decreased while the share of the Internet and school and university has increased.

A noteworthy finding is that 68-72% of the two youngest age groups (15-29 and 20-29) and 94% of working university students specified school or university as information source. We can thus conclude that the human rights topic is covered in current school/university curricula and hopefully the level of knowledge is improving.

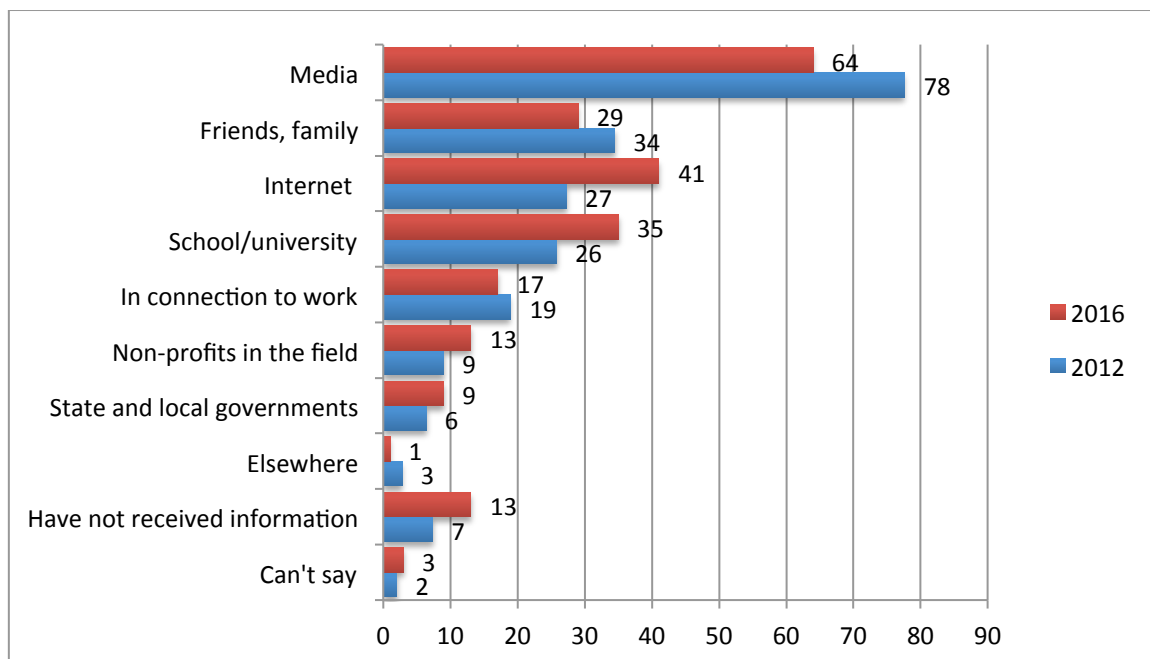
Let us look at the results by age group. School and the Internet continue to be significantly more important sources of information for the two younger age groups – the under 30-year-

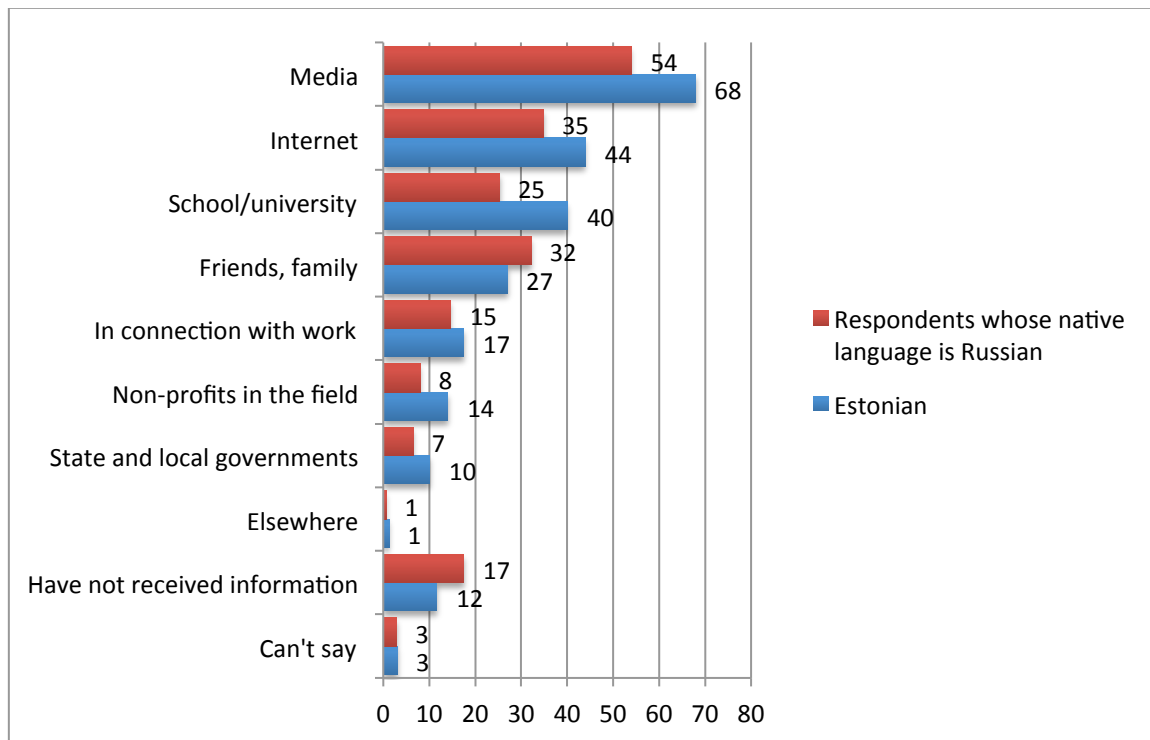
olds. The youngest respondents receive less information from the media than do all other groups (39% vs. the average of 64%). The share of the media among the information sources for the younger respondents has fallen compared to the last study – the media’s share was still 51% for this group the last time.

Next we will compare the information sources for Estonian and Russian-speaking respondents. Figure 11. The main information source for both respondent groups is the media. There are no major differences in the rankings of the most important information sources. It is noteworthy that Russian-speaking inhabitants get significantly less information about human rights from school than do Estonians (25% vs. 40%). The Russian-speaking community also obtains information less from the Internet. They are also more likely than Estonians to obtain information from friends and family (32% vs. 27%).

As it is common knowledge that the Estonian-language and Russian-speaking media (predominantly from the Russian Federation) send out different information on the topic of human rights, the results for the preceding questions are quite logical. **Russian state propaganda constantly emphasizes that the human rights of Russian-speaking inhabitants in Estonia are being violated, and propaganda has created a set of so-called pseudo-human rights that are not actually connected to people’s basic rights**, such as the right to citizenship without language requirements, right to use other languages than Estonian for communication and official business in government institutions, right to an education in languages besides Estonian etc. Estonians predominantly do not follow Russian media channels, and this is the source of different views and opinions.

**Figure 10. Main information sources, n=1003**



**Figure 11. Main information sources by ethnicity, n=1001**

#### 4.1 Amount of information

Question: *Has there been sufficient information on the topic of human rights?*

Most respondents consider the amount of information on the human rights topic to be generally sufficient or somewhat sufficient – 62%. Only 21% of inhabitants say it is completely sufficient. Twenty-four percent say there is too little information. 15% say they are not interested in the topic or did not answer (figure 12). Compared to the last study, the result has not changed.

**In a situation where people are not completely clear on what human rights are, the finding that 62% consider it sufficient or somewhat sufficient cannot be deemed reflective of the actual situation. The finding most likely is not a reflection of inadequate knowledge but rather the fact that the human rights issue is unimportant for the respondent, due to which they are sufficiently satisfied with the current situation.**

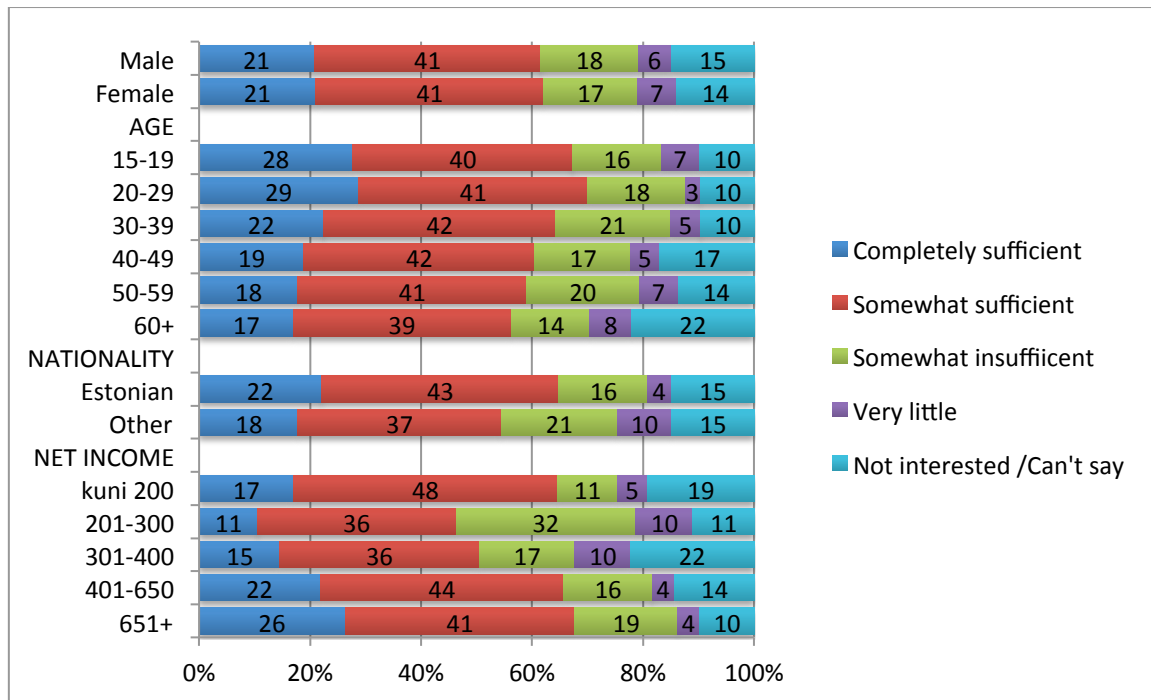
The members of the two younger age groups continue to be better informed; they obtained information already in the course of their studies. The oldest age group displays the least interest in the topic: 22% are not interested at all and can't say.

65% of Estonians say they are well-informed on the topic of human rights; the figure is 55% for Russian-speaking respondents. 10% of Russian-speaking inhabitants says there is very little information on human rights.

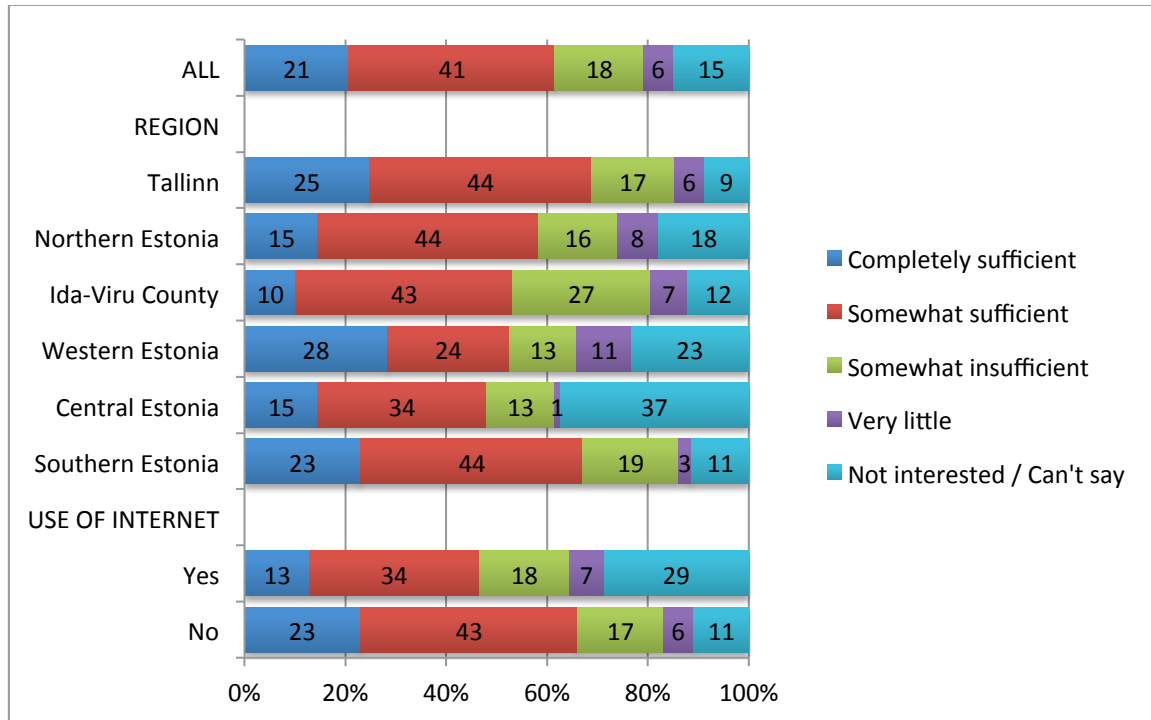
We see that the respondents with the highest incomes are better informed than average: 67% say there is sufficient information available. Ida-Viru County residents are more likely

than others to consider the amount of human rights related information to be insufficient (figure 13). Logically enough, internet users are better informed on the human rights topic than other non-users. We see lack of interest more often among non-users – 29% are not interested or cannot assess whether the information is sufficient or not.

**Figure 12. Amount of information, n=1003**



**Figure 13. Amount of information, n=1003, region**



## 4.2 Fields with little information

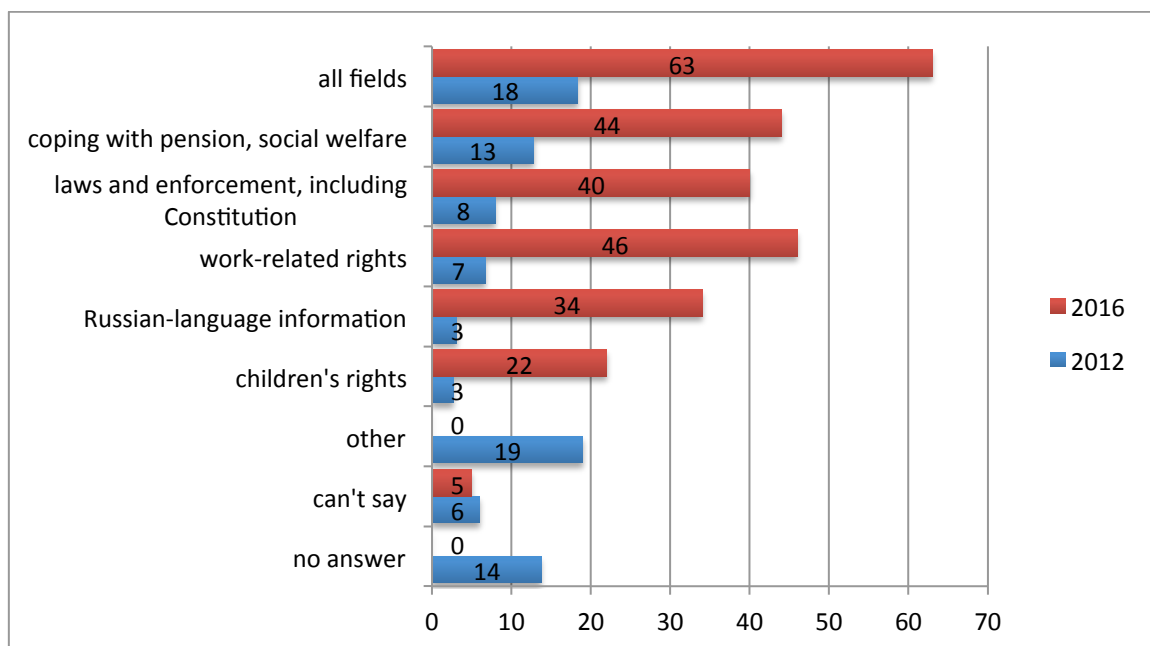
Question: *In what field could there be more information? The question was asked of those who feel there is little information.*

As to fields about which additional information was desired, it turned out that the human rights topic was mentioned most often in general terms – i.e. “all fields” – 63% (figure 15). This was followed by the topic of work-related rights (46%), how to cope with pensions and other social topics – 44%. There was also interest in learning more about laws and compliance with law, including the Constitution.

In the figure, these findings are compared to those from the previous study, although a direct comparison would not be valid – the last study used open-ended questions and this time the respondents were given multiplied-choice options.

As expected, the members of the two oldest age groups expect additional information on social topics, such as coping with pensions.

**Figure 15. Fields about which additional information is desired, n=236, those who feel there is not enough information**



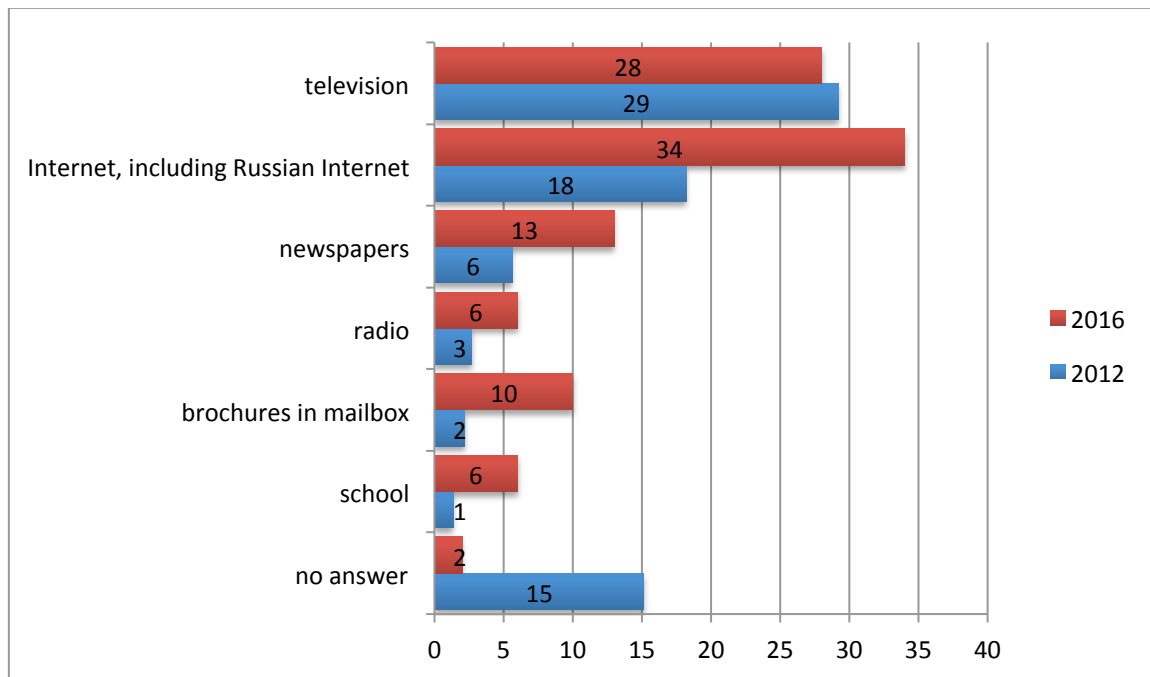
### 4.3 Preferred information channels

Question: *Through what channels would you prefer to obtain information? The question was asked of those who feel there is little information.*

Whereas during the last study the most preferred information channel was television, it is now the Internet – 34% (figure 15). Television (28%) and newspapers (13%) come next.

The clear preference of the youngest age group is school (50%), while over-60 respondents prefer television (44%), then newspapers (18%) and brochures in the mailbox (13%). Of the members of the 50-59 age group, 29% prefer newspapers as information source but television (30%) and Internet (27%) are important as well.

Television is more important to Russian-speaking respondents than it is to Estonians – 19% obtain additional information about human rights from TV. The members of this respondent group are more likely than others to obtain information from the internet (40%) and some also prefer mailed brochures (15%). This finding may be related to the fact that respondents cannot conceive of television as a channel for introducing the human rights topic. Russian channels do not do so and Russian-speaking inhabitants do not watch so much Estonian channels. The availability of legal texts is important to them, and these can be found online.

**Figure 15a. Preferred information channels. N=236.**

## 5 Knowledge about human rights, their importance

Question: *In your opinion, which of the following rights are human rights that are universal to all people?* Please select five rights you consider the most important.

It turned out that right to life – 92% – was the best-known human right. Right to work (83%) and to education (82%) were also well-known. Right to equality before the law was mentioned by 82% (figure 16). About 70-80% of the population knew of most of the other rights mentioned.

The option included as a control question – “right to average income guaranteed by the state” also proved quite popular – 49% of respondents considered this a human right (52% last time).

These results confirm that the population’s knowledge of human rights is better in assisted form, even though predominantly they are unable to explain the term if they are not prompted.

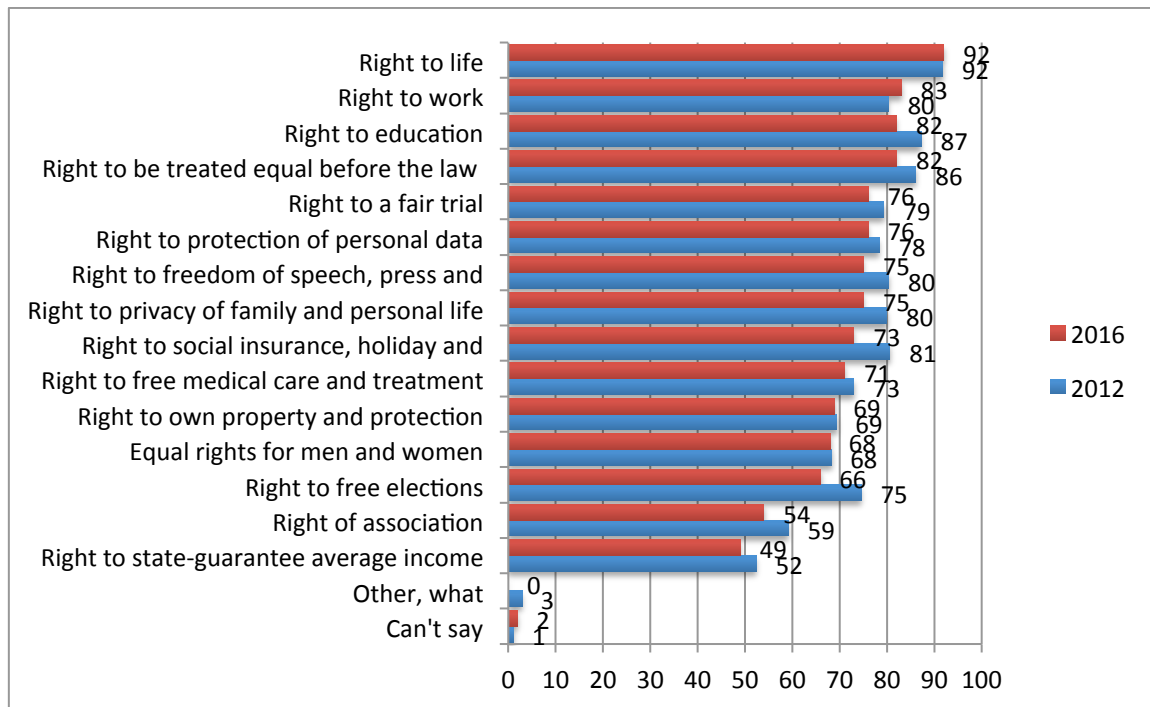
No significant change has taken place compared to the previous study – the changes are mainly within the percentage of error, and awareness has tended to decrease in the case of some rights rather than improving.

For the most part, Estonians are more able to name human rights than their Russian-speaking ilk (figure 17). But in the case of two rights, Russian-speaking inhabitants are better up to date – right to social insurance, holiday and pension and right to free medical care and treatment. In addition, the Russian-speaking population more often mentioned the right to an average income – the extra control question.



As expected, the population considers the most important human right to be the right to life (83%), followed by right to work (51%), the right to free medical care (50%) and the right to equality in the eyes of the law (49%) (figure 18). The right to form associations was considered the least important, being mentioned by only 1% of respondents.

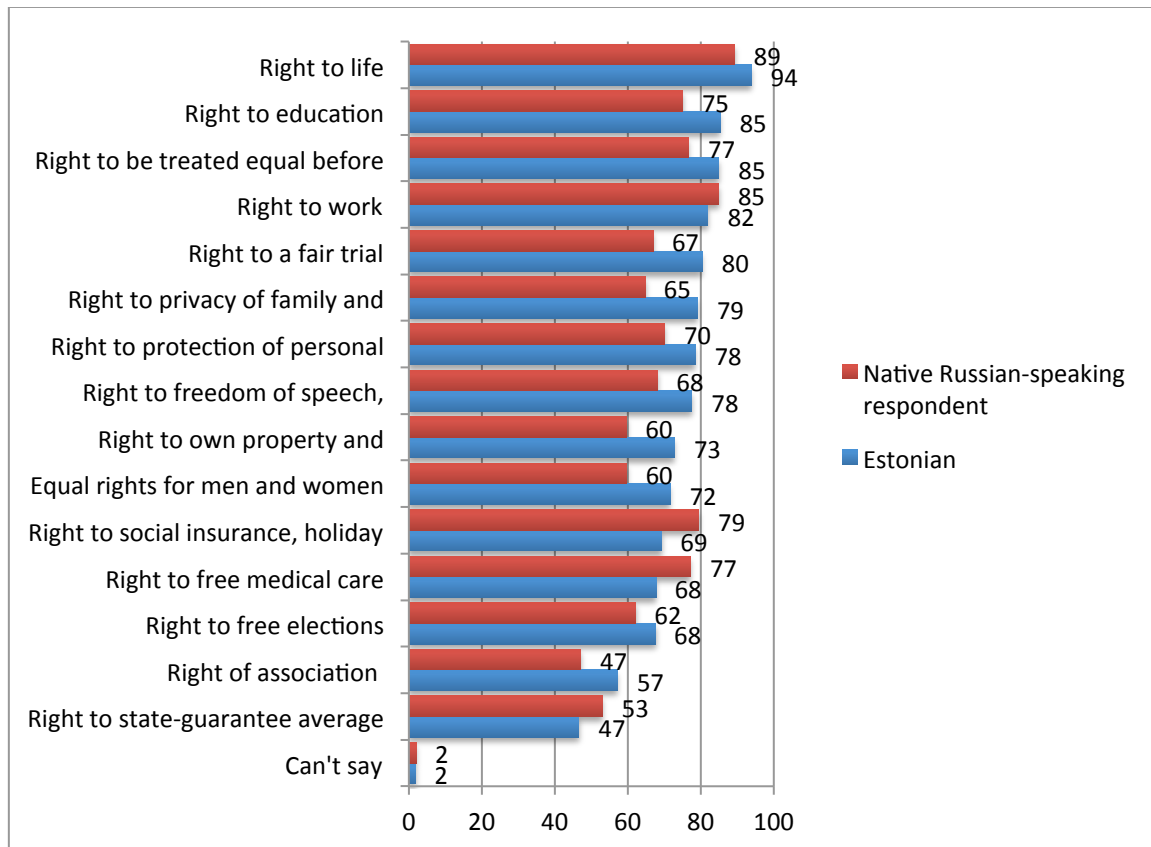
**Figure 16. Knowledge about human rights, N=1003**



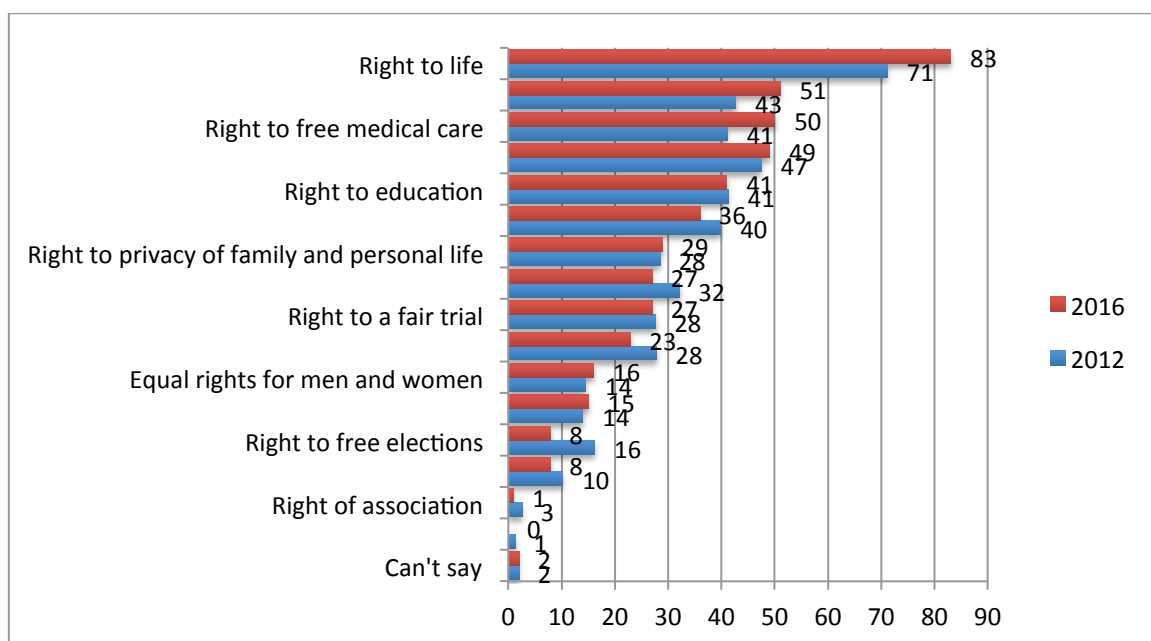
Russian-speaking respondents consider the right to work and social security more important than do Estonians, and similarly to the previous study, the right to protection of personal data as well (figure 19). As a positive aspect, it can be noted that the differences between Estonians and Russian-speaking inhabitants in the case of these issues are not noteworthy. It seems that the outlook of the Estonians and Russian-speaking inhabitants are quite similar if one leaves aside the political and linguistic topics.

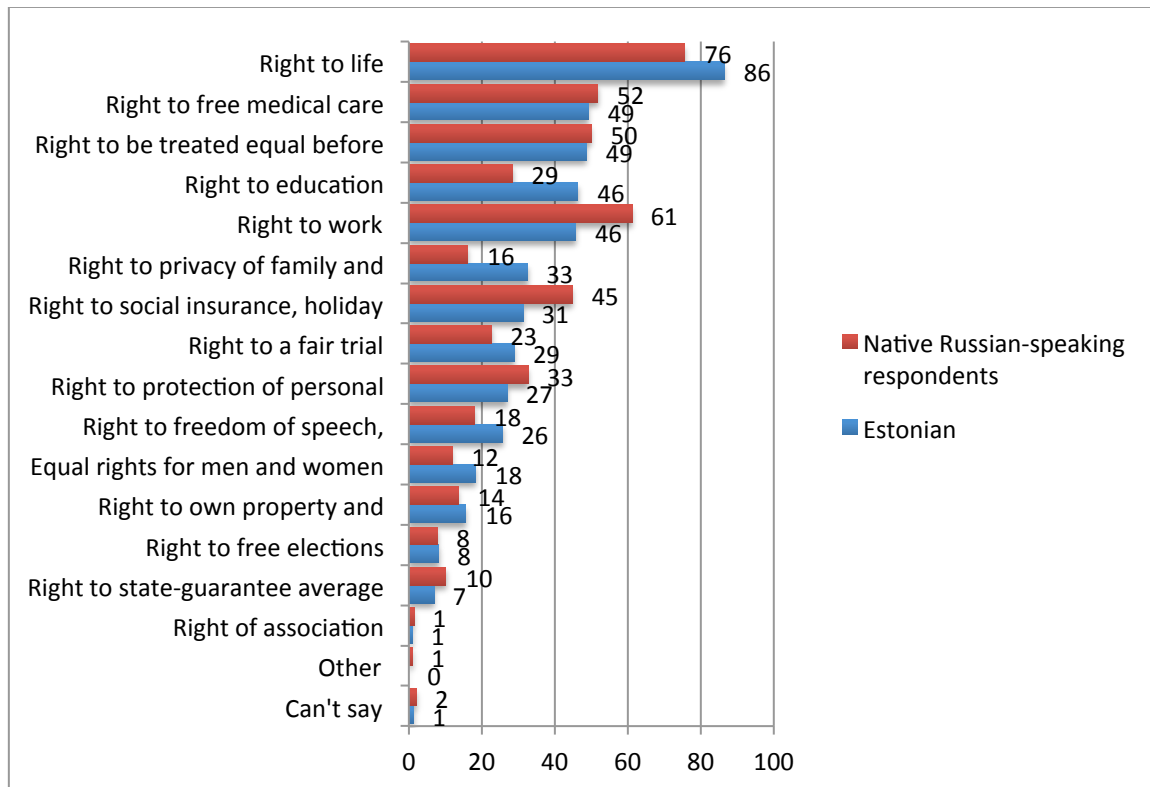
Similarly to the previous study, different age groups also prioritize rights in different ways. Thus right to education is more important for younger respondents, and they consider right to social security, holiday or pension less important than average. The latter topics (plus free medical care) are, on the other hand, very important to the older age group. For its part, the older age group places less importance on equal gender rights, protection of personal data, right to education and privacy. To sum up, we can say that there was no significant change on this topic compared to the previous study.

**Figure 17. Knowledge about human rights by ethnicity, n=1003**



**Figure 18. Most important human rights, N=1003**



**Figure 19. Most important human rights by ethnicity, n=1003**

## 5.1 Importance of human rights and attitudes

Question: *To what extent do you agree with the following statements?* Respondents were given seven statements to determine their attitudes with regard to human rights. The responses are shown in figure 20.

Although inhabitants cannot precisely define the term human rights and also lump other topics among human rights, they generally understood that it is an important topic. Only 24% find that human rights are not important to them in their everyday lives, and 58% do not think so.

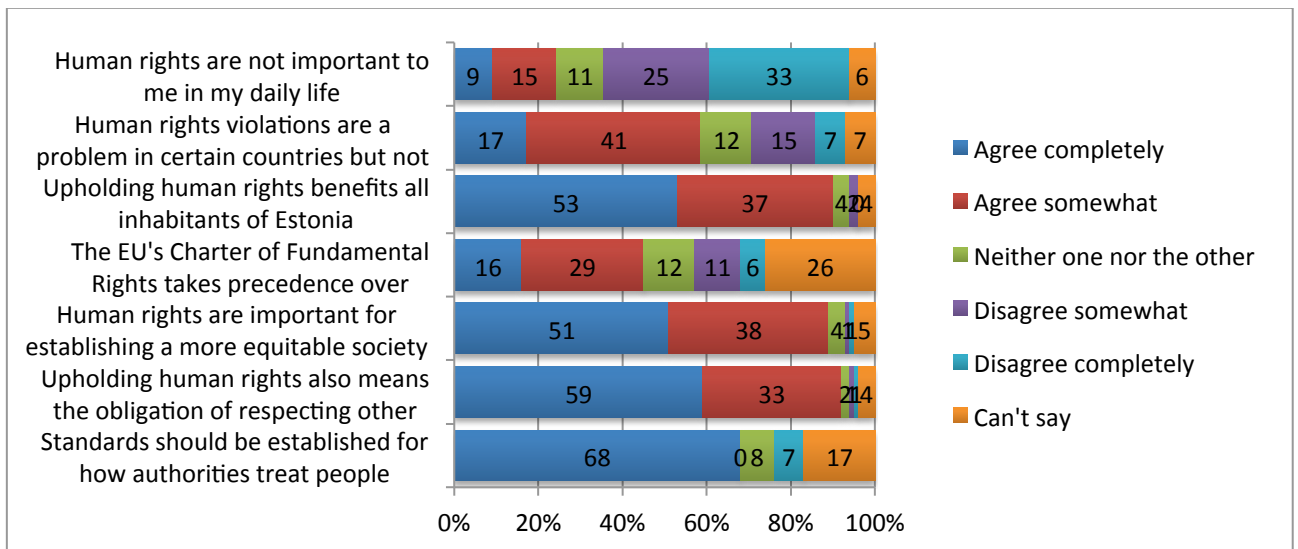
68% believe that compared to other countries, Estonia does not have problems with human rights, while 22% do not agree with this statement.

A total of 45% of inhabitants know that the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU takes precedence over Estonian law, while 17% do not know this, and 26% stated no opinion. This is an important principle when it comes to implementation of human rights protections and the fact that under half of respondents answered correctly is indicative of insufficient competence on human rights issues.

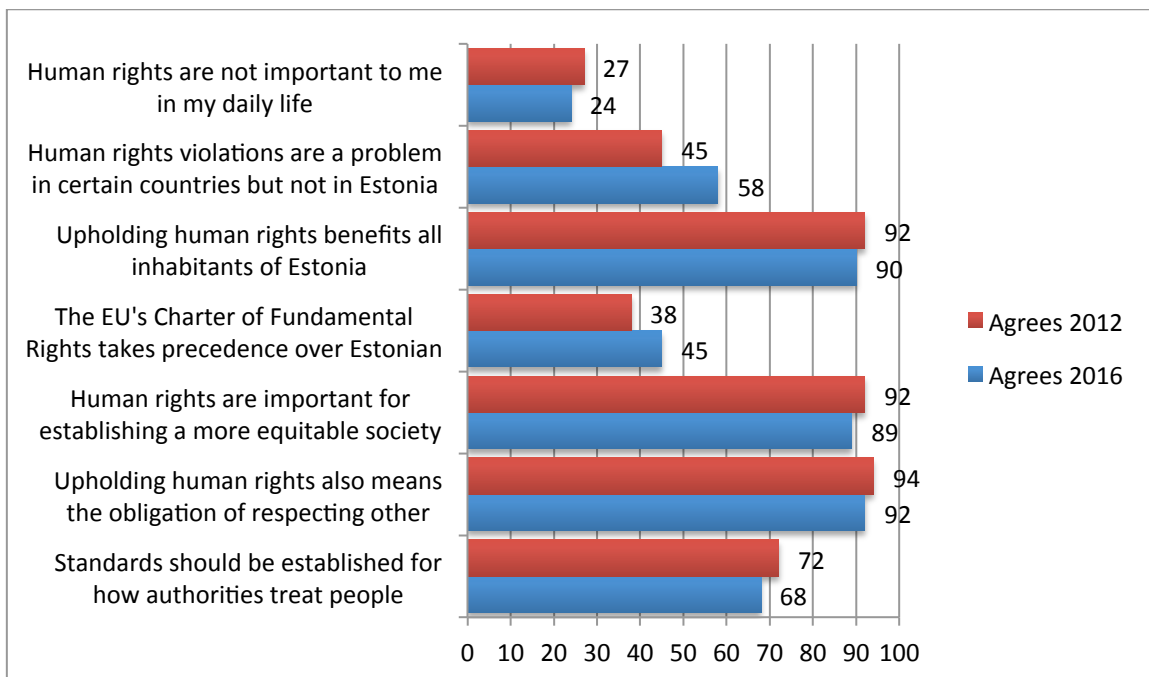
Also attesting to the importance of the topic is the fact that 90% of inhabitants agree that human rights protection benefits all inhabitants of Estonia. 89% agree that human rights help to create a more just society in Estonia. 92% agree that upholding human rights also means respecting the rights of other citizens. In addition, 68% of respondents feel standards should be established regarding how the public authorities treat people.

Compared to the previous study, the opinion of the human rights situation in Estonia has improved and awareness of the Charter of Fundamental Rights (figure 20A) has increased.

**Figure 20. Agreement with statements, n=1003**



**Figure 20A. Agreement with statements, n=1003**



## 6 Recourse in the event of violation of rights

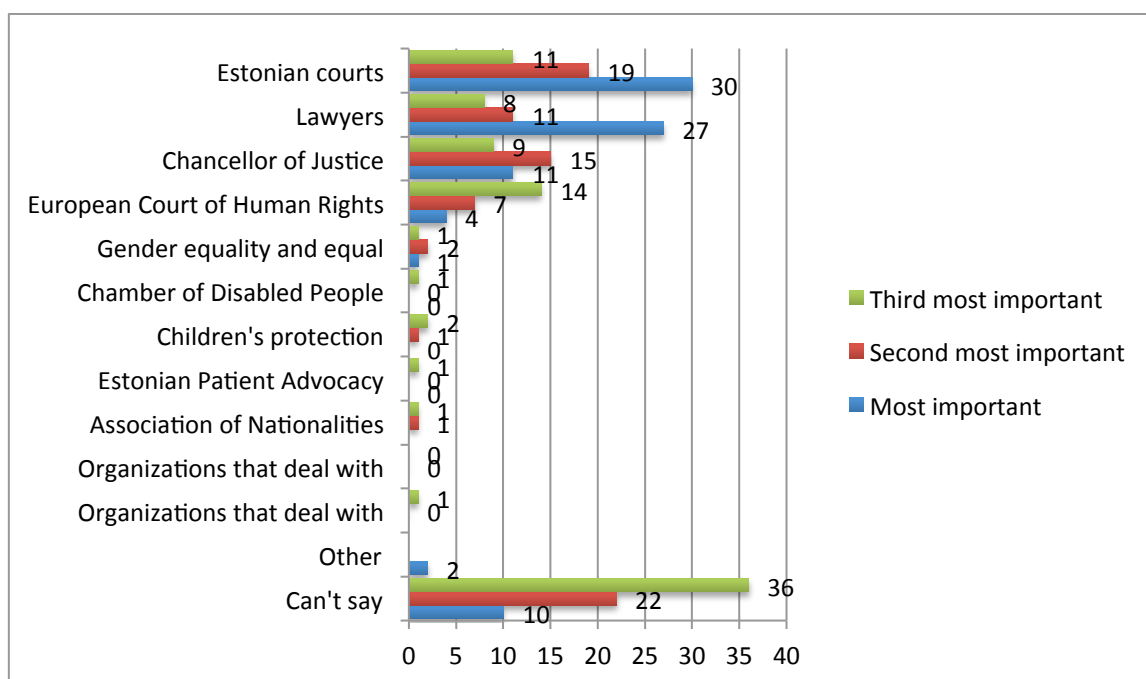
Question: *If you believed your human rights had been violated, where would you turn to first?* Rank the three most important. Respondents were given a list of possible answers.

The majority of inhabitants (60%) would turn to the Estonian court system in case of suspicion of human rights violation. Figure 21. 30% would turn to the courts first, 19% second and 11% third. A total of 46% of respondents would turn to a lawyer and 27% would do so first. The chancellor of justice was ranked third.

The European Court of Human Rights was mentioned among the three most important by 25% of respondents this time. 4% of respondents would contact them first. 14% of respondents mentioned the European Court of Human Rights as their third option. The share of people who would contact the European Court of Human Rights first was thus not all that noteworthy.

Compared to the previous study, the rankings of the institutions and the percentages of each response have largely remained the same. No significant change has taken place during the time since the last study.

**Figure 21. Recourse in the event of violation of rights. N=1003**



The responses from Estonians and Russian-speaking respondents are once again somewhat divergent. For instance, Russian-speaking inhabitants less frequently mention the chancellor of justice and lawyers as a recourse. They would be more likely to turn to the European Court of Human Rights as their first option (which is in fact not an immediate option) – 7% vs. 2% of Estonians.

Yet courts (31%) and lawyers (30%) were also the most frequent options in the Russian-speaking respondents' answers.

## 7 Restrictions on human rights in connection with the threat of terrorism

Question: *Would you agree to some people's rights being restricted in the interests of safety, security or prevention of an act of terrorism?* What restrictions would you consent to?

Here the respondents were polled for their opinion on measures that would be in conformity with human rights and which are implemented in various countries fairly frequently and extensively. The response thus indicates people's awareness of human rights in general.

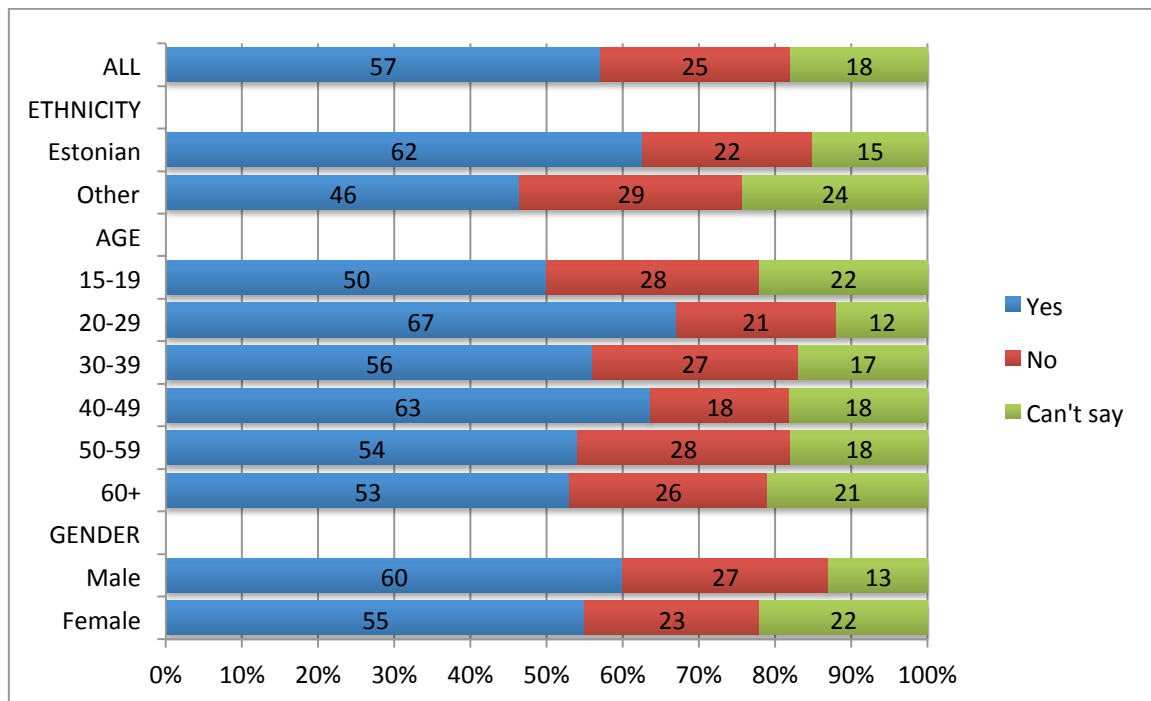
57% of inhabitants would agree to some restrictions of their rights to prevent acts of terrorism. 25% would not consent to this and 18% could not say (figure 22).

62% of Estonians would consent to restrictions on rights compared to 46% of Russian-speaking respondents. The greatest number of those in agreement were in the 20-29 and 40-49 age groups. There is around 20% of the population who could not make a determination. Among men, there are more of both the proponents and opponents, while women more frequently did not venture an opinion.

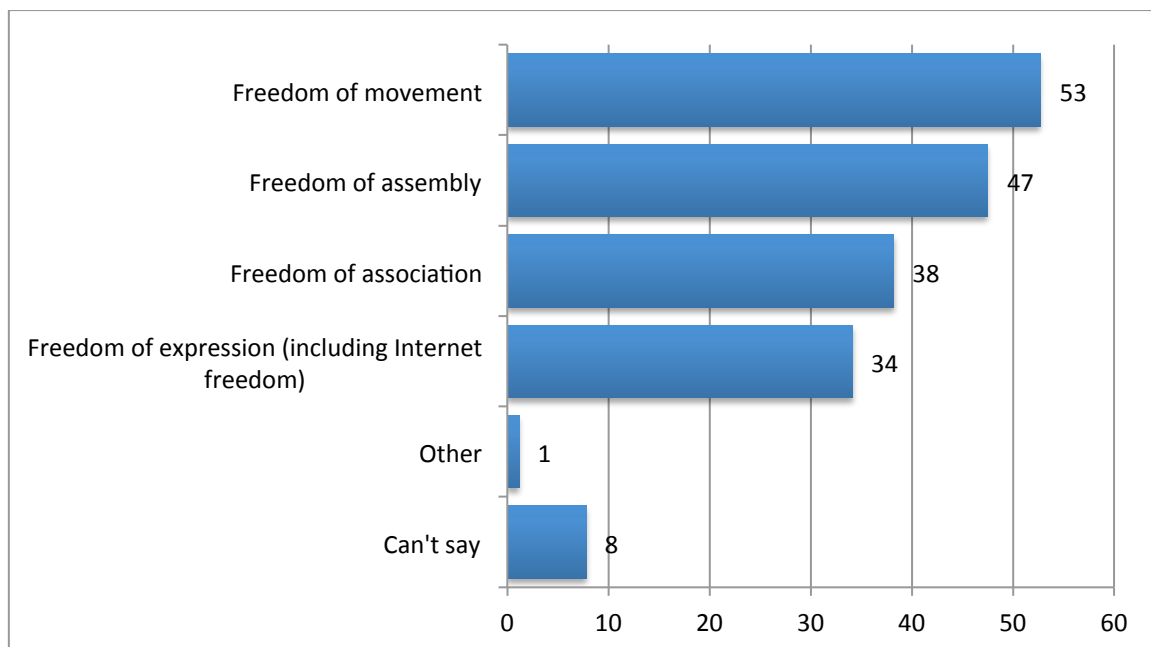
In general, people oppose any sorts of restrictions on rights but in this case we see a surprisingly different picture. Such a result attests to the fact that people have a keen perception of changes in the international situation in Estonia and new threats. People are willing to sacrifice their rights if needed in order to prevent terrorism, as safety and security are one of the most important values people seek to safeguard.

Respondents are most likely to consent to restrictions on freedom of movement (53%) and freedom of assembly (47%) (figure 23) but many would also consent to restrictions on freedom of association and freedom of expression.

**Figure 22. Would you agree to some people’s rights being restricted in the interests of safety, security or prevention of an act of terrorism, n=1003, %**



**Figure 23. Which restrictions on rights would you consent to? n=1001, %**



## 8 Relations with countries where rights are violated

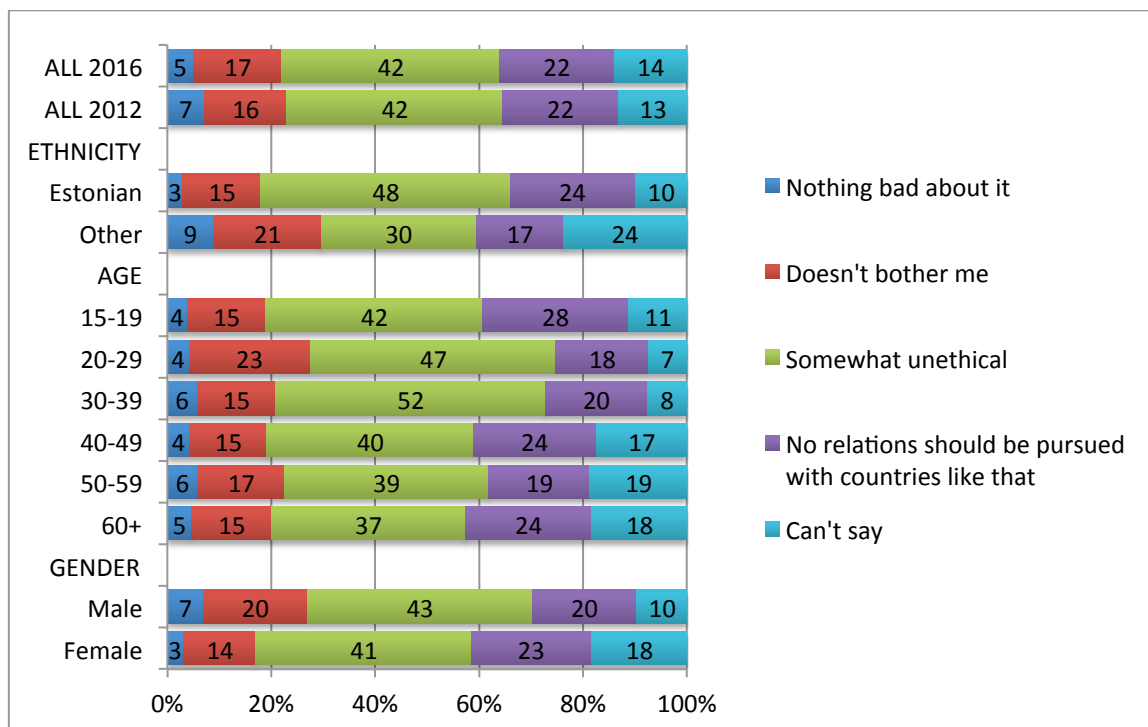
Question: *Is it ethical for Estonia to pursue relations with countries that blatantly violate human rights?*

The predominant majority of inhabitants continue to consider dealings with such countries to be unethical (42%). 22% believe there should be no relations at all with such countries. 5% see no problem in it, and 17% would not be bothered by it (figure 24). 14% of inhabitants were unable to answer. Compared to the previous study, the result has not changed much.

In this study as well, Estonians are also more likely to consider relations with such countries unethical than are respondents of other nationalities (72% and 47%, respectively). There are also fewer indifferent people among the Estonians (10% vs. 24%).

The members of the 20-29 age group is somewhat more neutral on this issue than older group members. Males are more likely than women to say that foreign relations with such countries would pose a problem; women are more likely to not answer

**Figure 24. Relations with countries where human rights are violated, n=1003**





## 9 General level of information about human rights

Question: *How much did you know about the human rights topic before this interview?*

The results show that 46% consider themselves to be generally or well informed but 49% are not particularly or at all up to date with the topic (figure 25). 5% did not provide an answer. Compared to the previous study, the result has not changed much.

The oldest age group is least up to date with the topic (40%).

The result shows yet again that the topic is not considered important by Estonian inhabitants. Fundamental rights are often confused with other topics on which respondents have strong feelings and when a problem arises, some inhabitants tend to bring up human rights, even though the context is incorrect.

**Figure 25. Keeping abreast of the topic of human rights, n=1003**

