

# THE PROSPECTS OF THE PRESPA AGREEMENT: PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS IN NORTH MACEDONIA AND GREECE

*Survey presentation*



# About the survey

## ➤ Greece

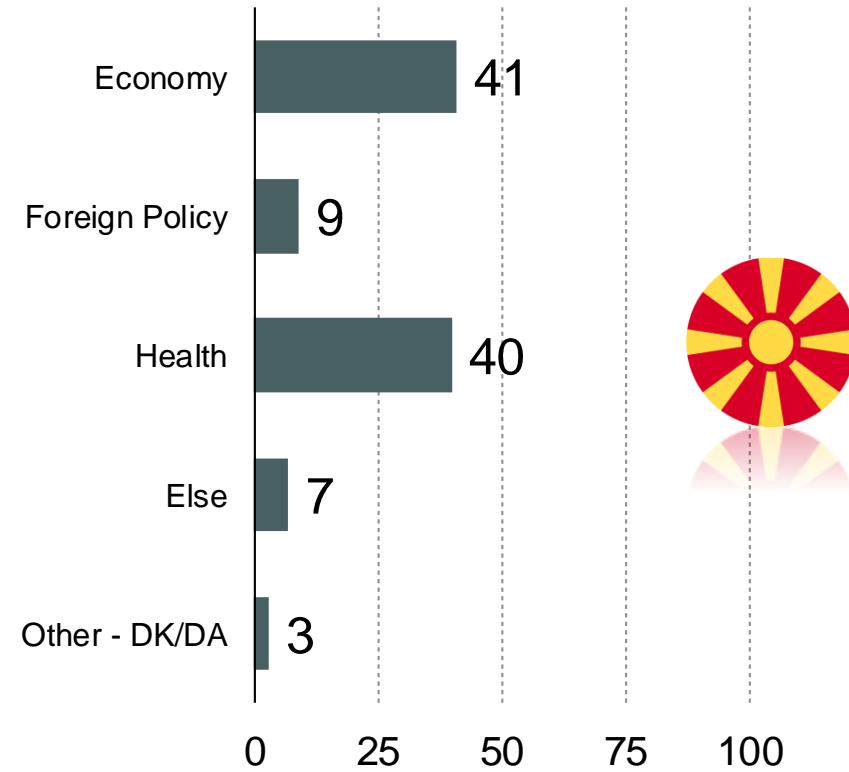
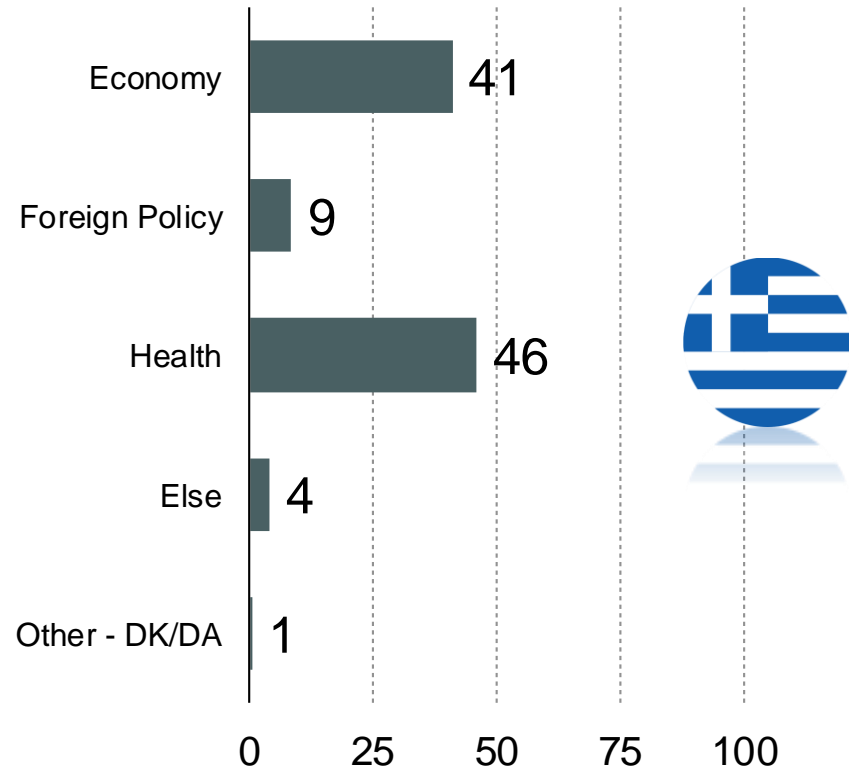
- Sample: 1056 respondents
- 18-25 May 2021
- Agency: Public Opinion Research Unit at the University of Macedonia Research Institute

## ➤ North Macedonia

- Sample: 1000 respondents
- 14-28 May 2021
- Agency: Institute for Democracy "Societas Civilis"-Skopje

# Foreign Policy Issues

# Policy priorities

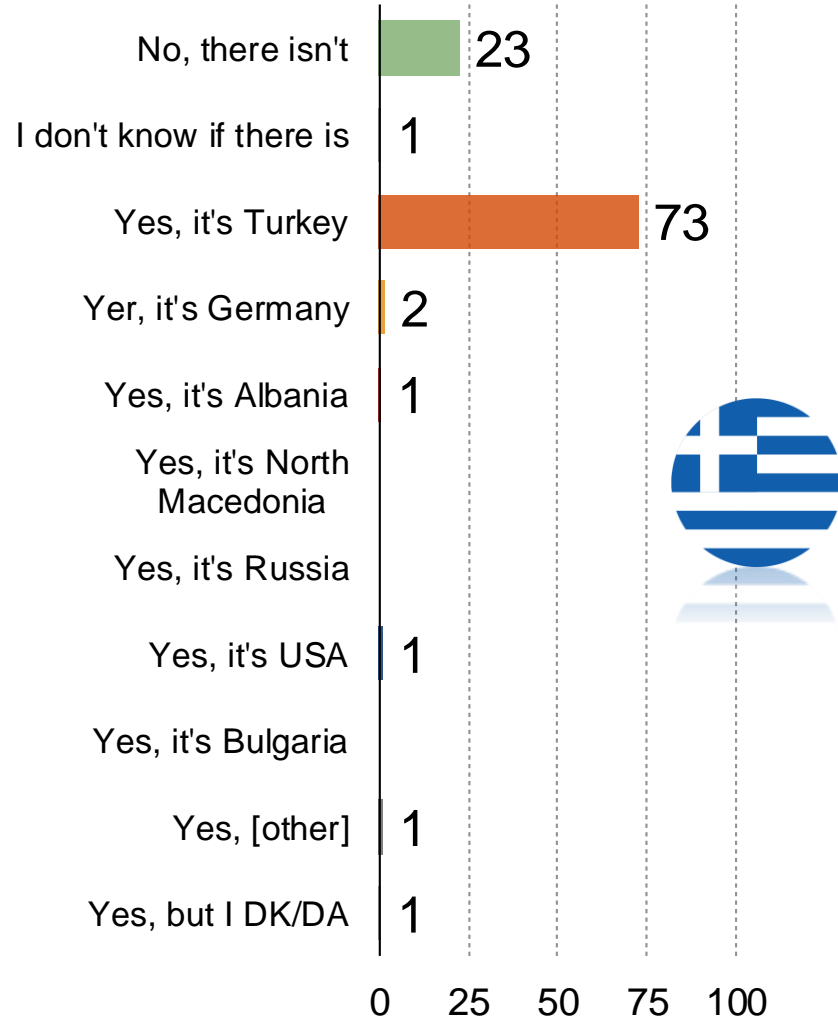


# Importance of foreign policy issues

	Greece		North Macedonia	
Relations with... (%)	Not at all important + little important	Quite important + Very important	Not at all important + little important	Quite important + Very important
Bulgaria			34	47
Turkey	6	93	/	/
Greece			29	50
North Macedonia	29	59	/	/

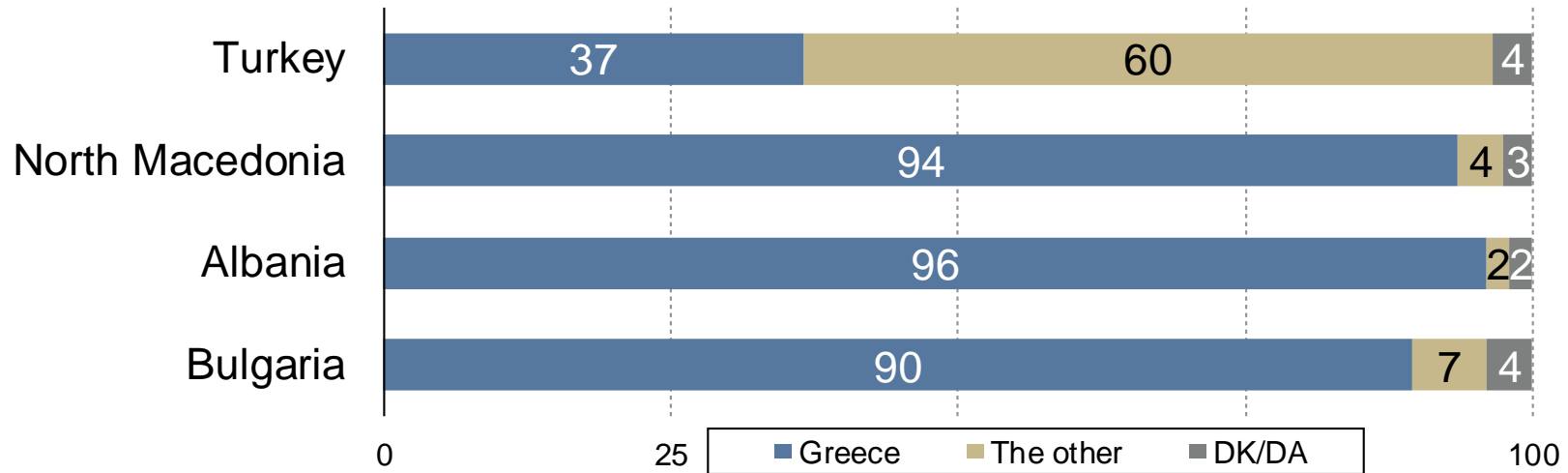
# Threat from other states

Overall - Including the option of "no threat"

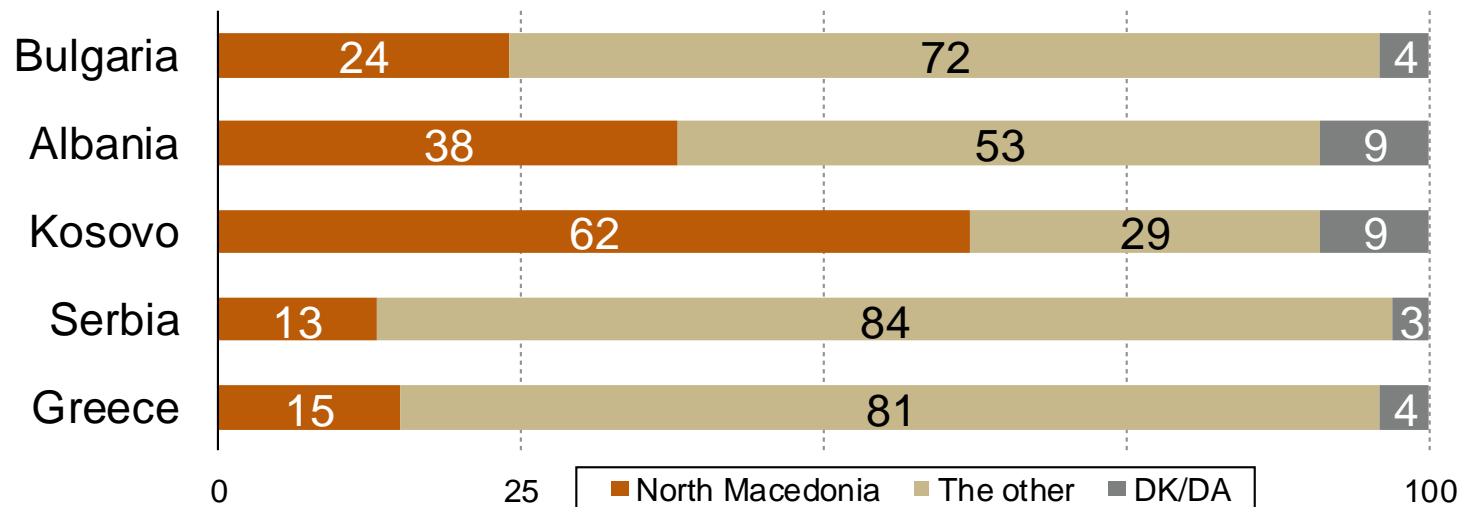


# Relative international strength and relations with neighboring countries

If we compare **Greece** with the following neighbouring countries, which would you say is stronger...



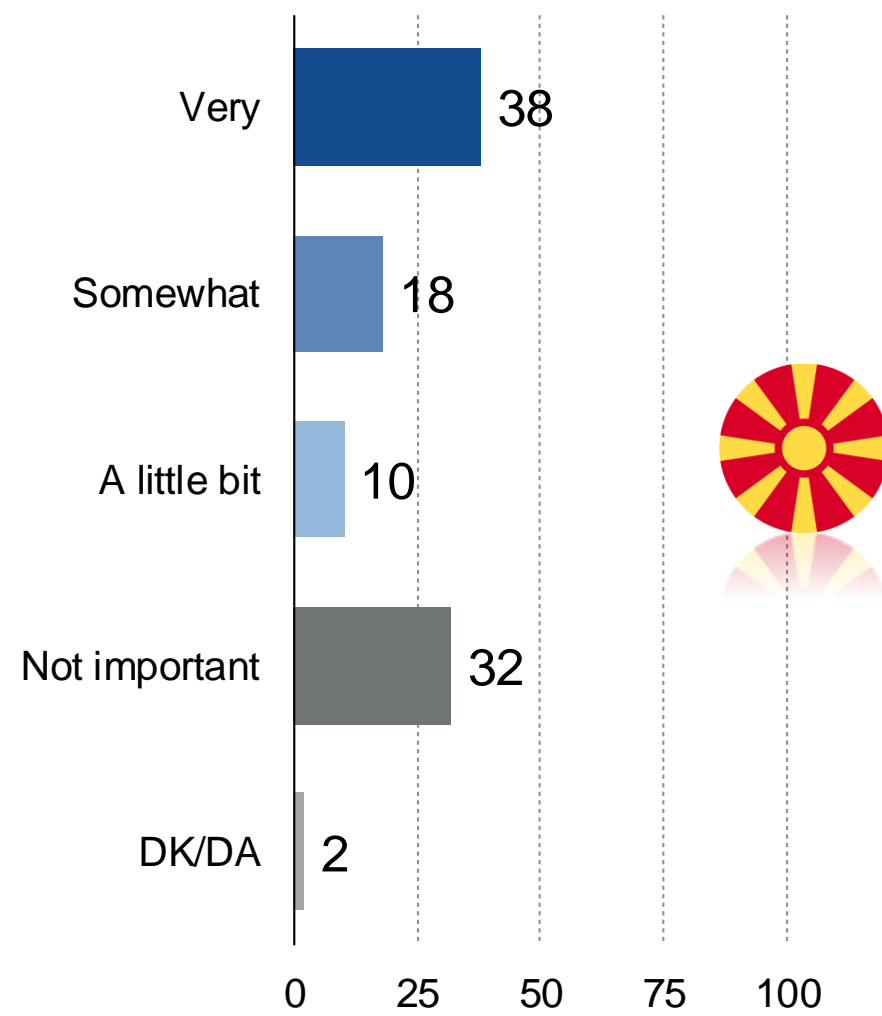
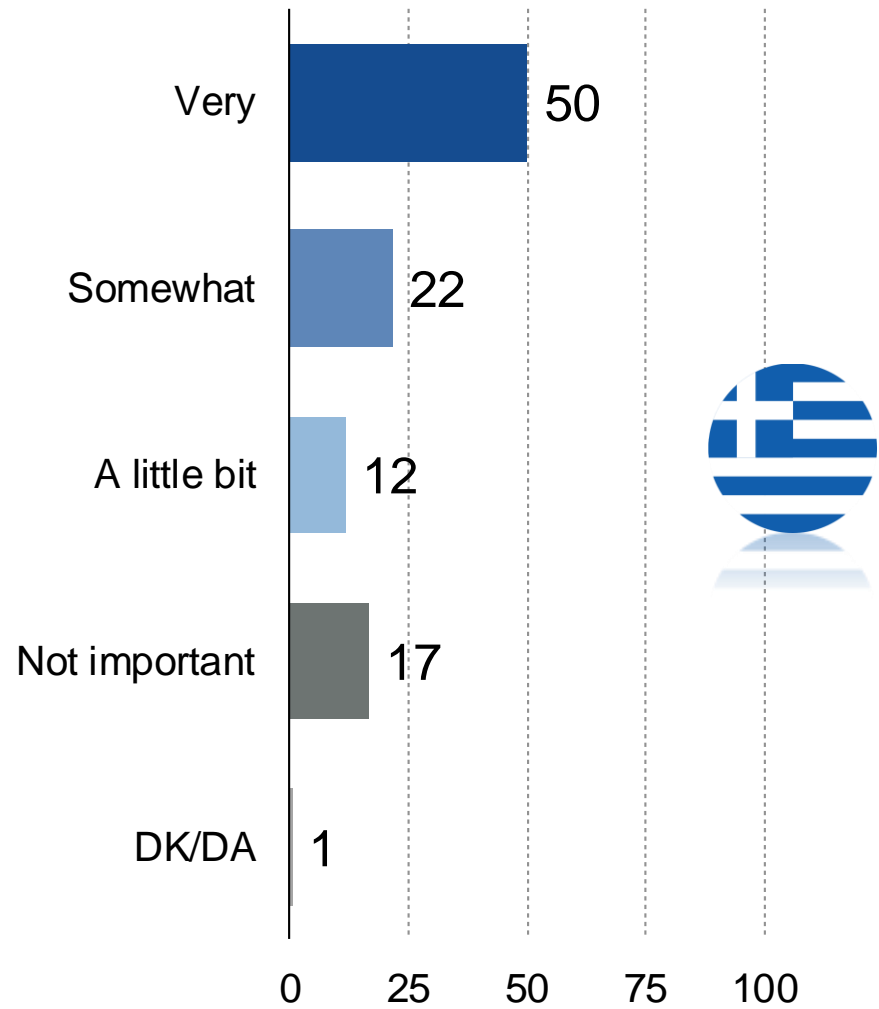
If we compare **North Macedonia** with the following neighbouring countries, which would you say is stronger...



# **Views on the Name Dispute and the Prespa Agreement**

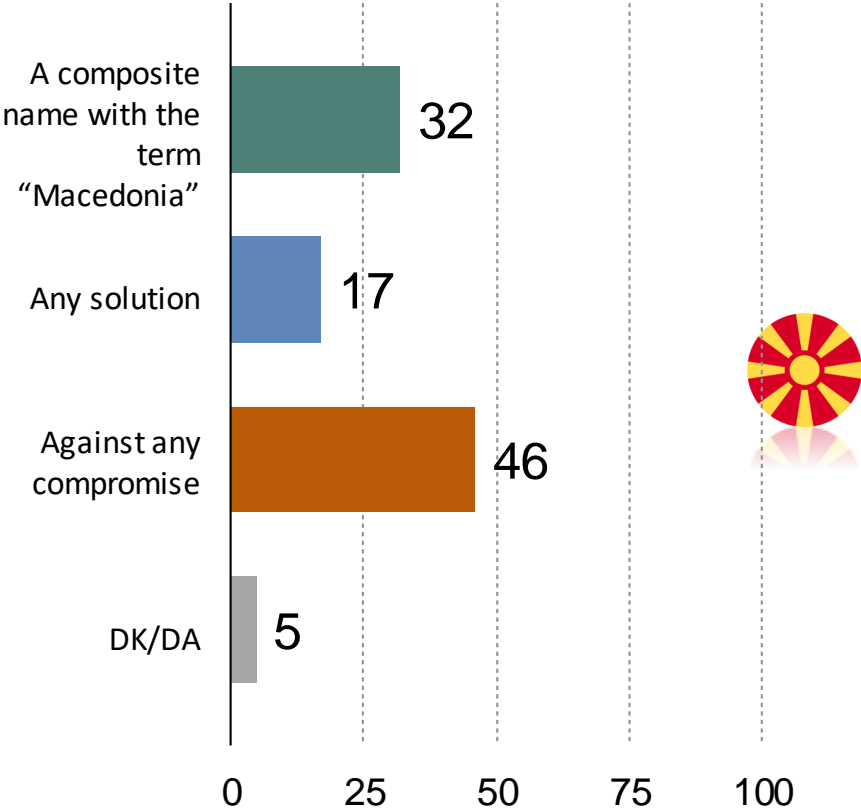
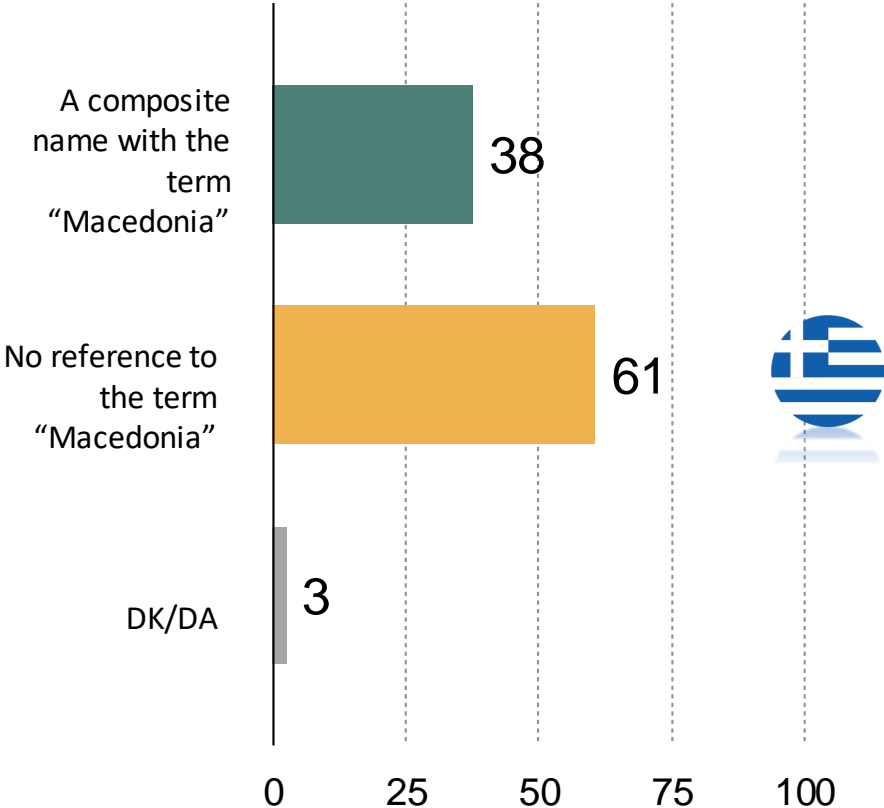


## Importance of the name dispute before the Prespa agreement



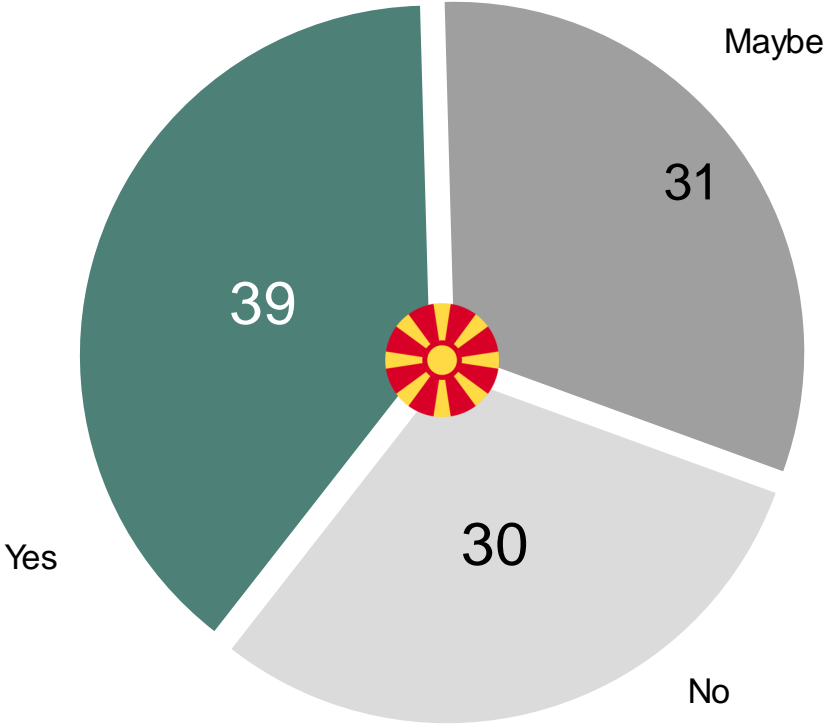
# Acceptance of compromise

If the Prespa Agreement had not been signed, which solution would you accept for the name of our neighboring country?

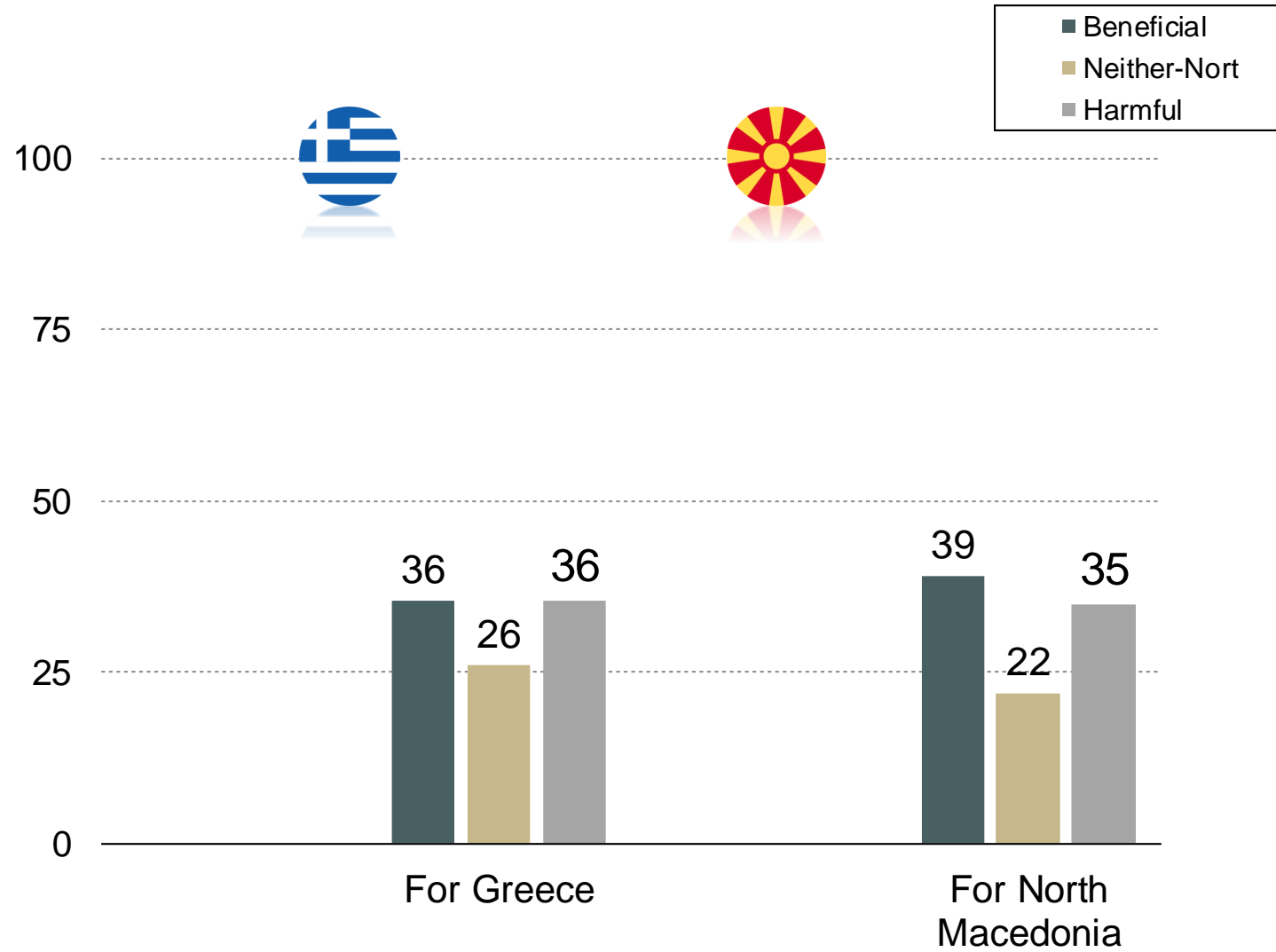


# Effects of the latest deadlock in the EU accession negotiations with North Macedonia on the support for the Prespa agreement

Only respondents from North Macedonia

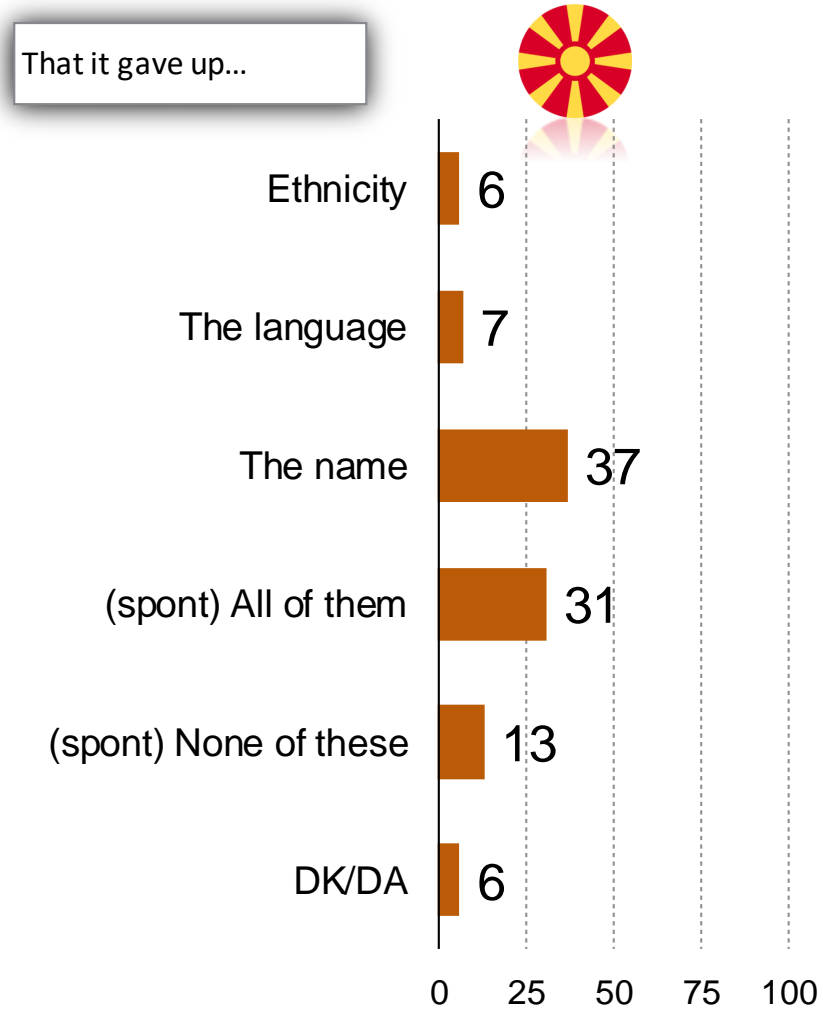
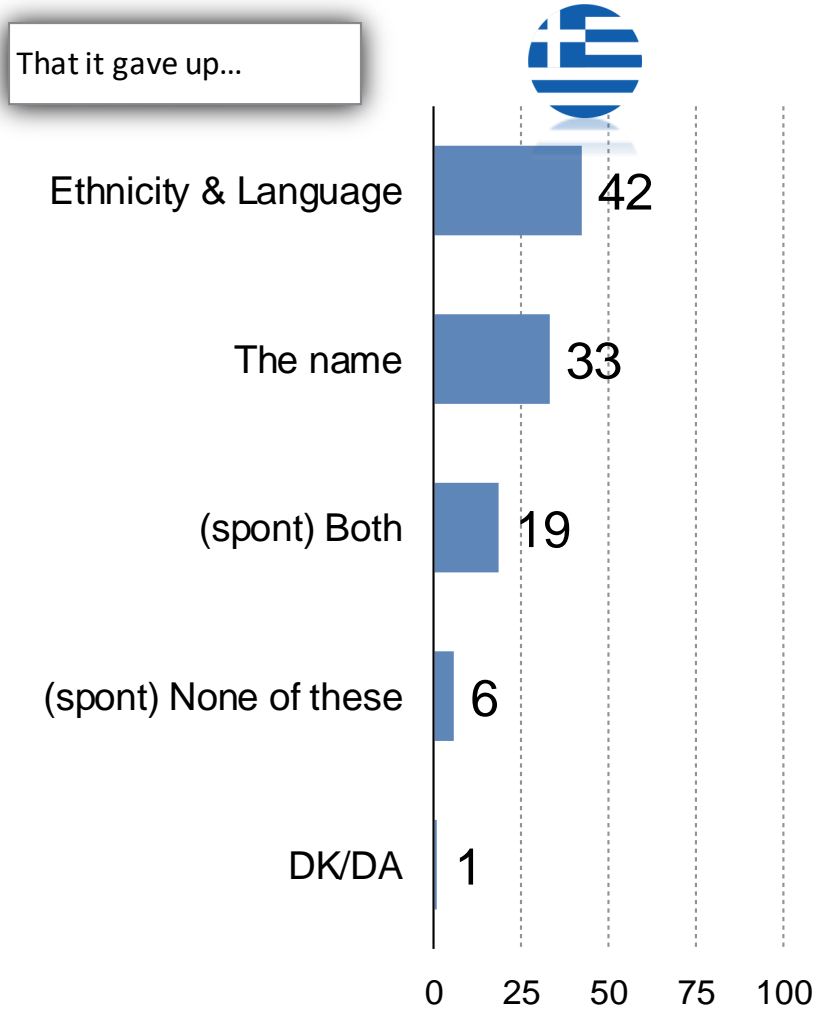


# How beneficial has the Prespa agreement been for North Macedonia and Greece

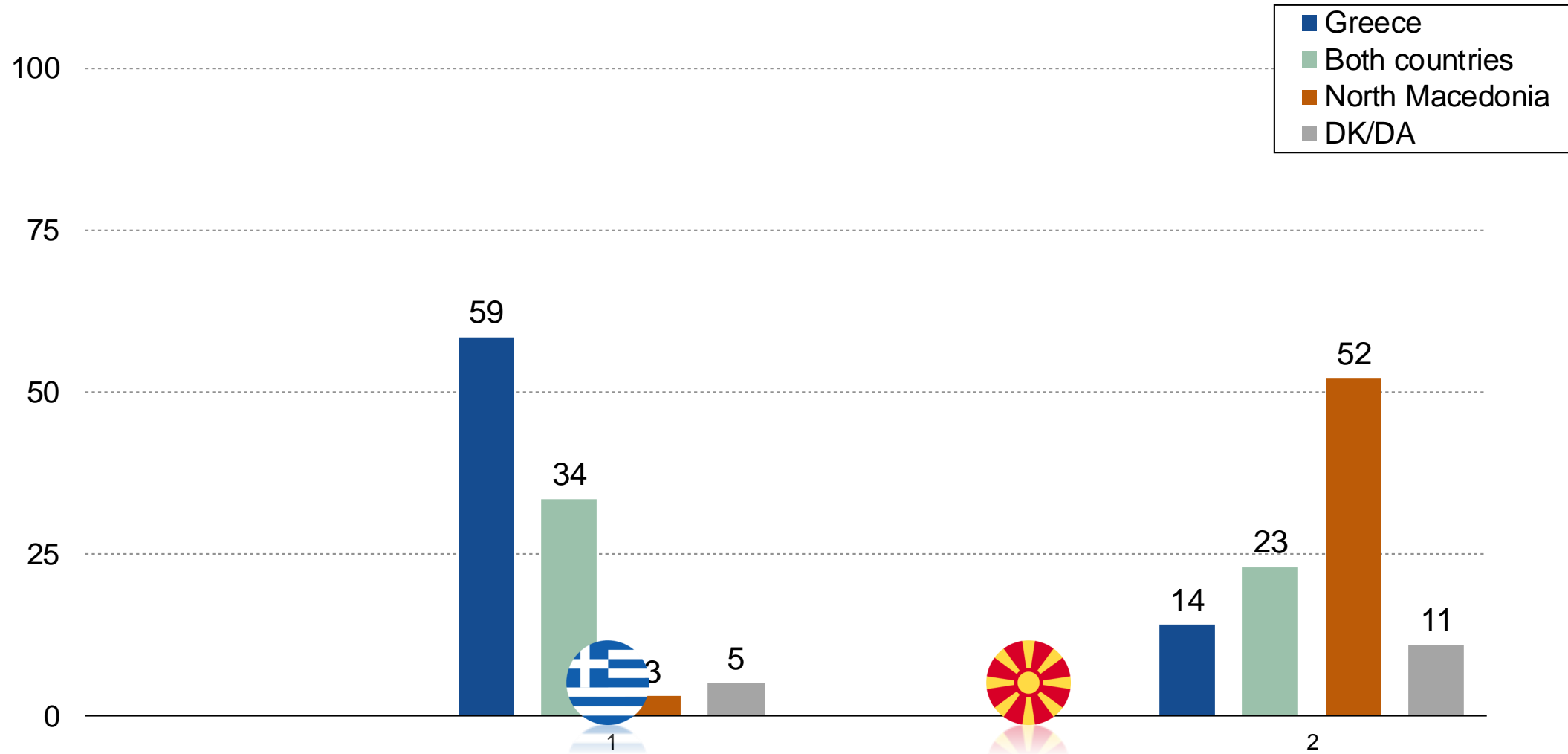


# Reasons for opposition to the Prespa agreement

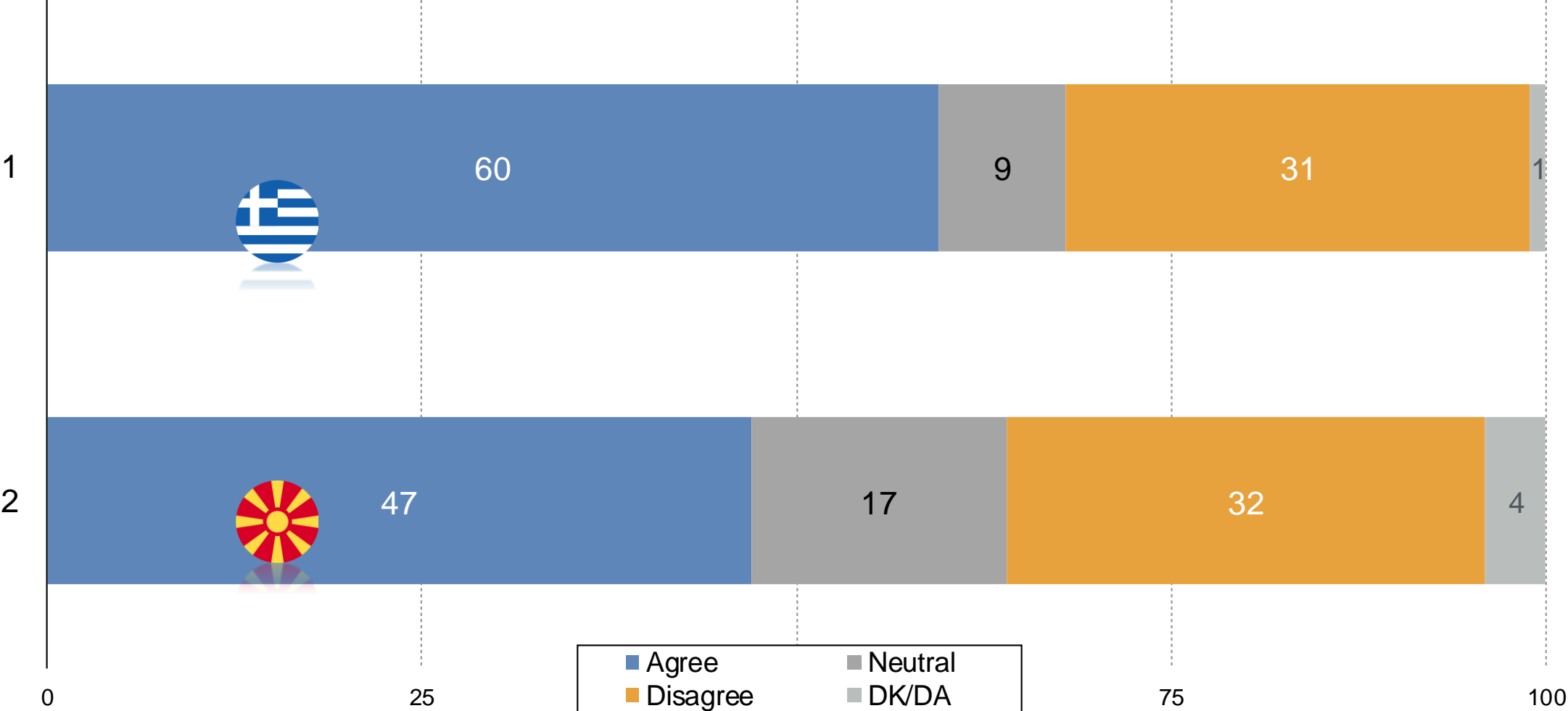
Among those that consider the agreement Harmful or neither beneficial nor harmful.



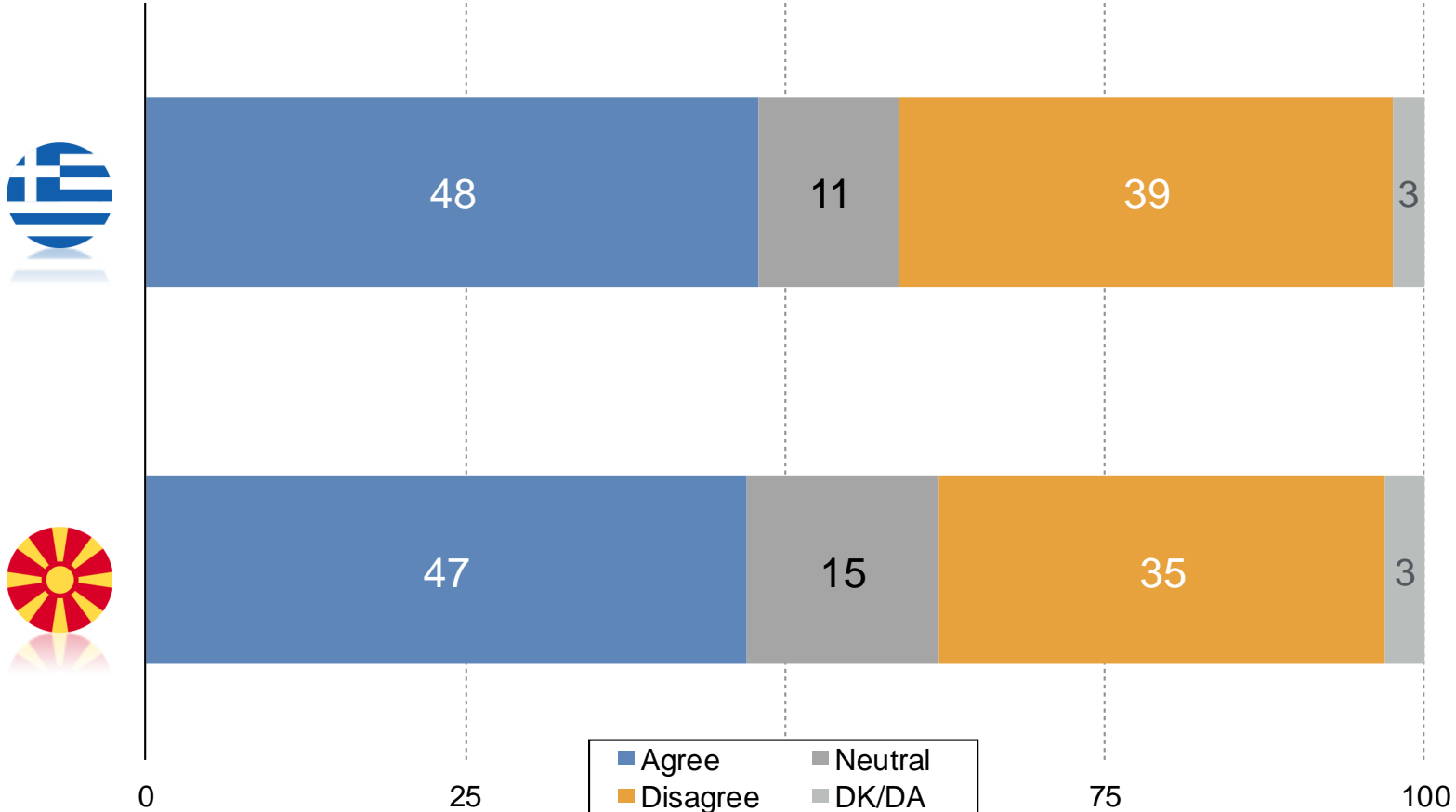
# Views on the name dispute: who was right?



# Prespa agreement as a compromise

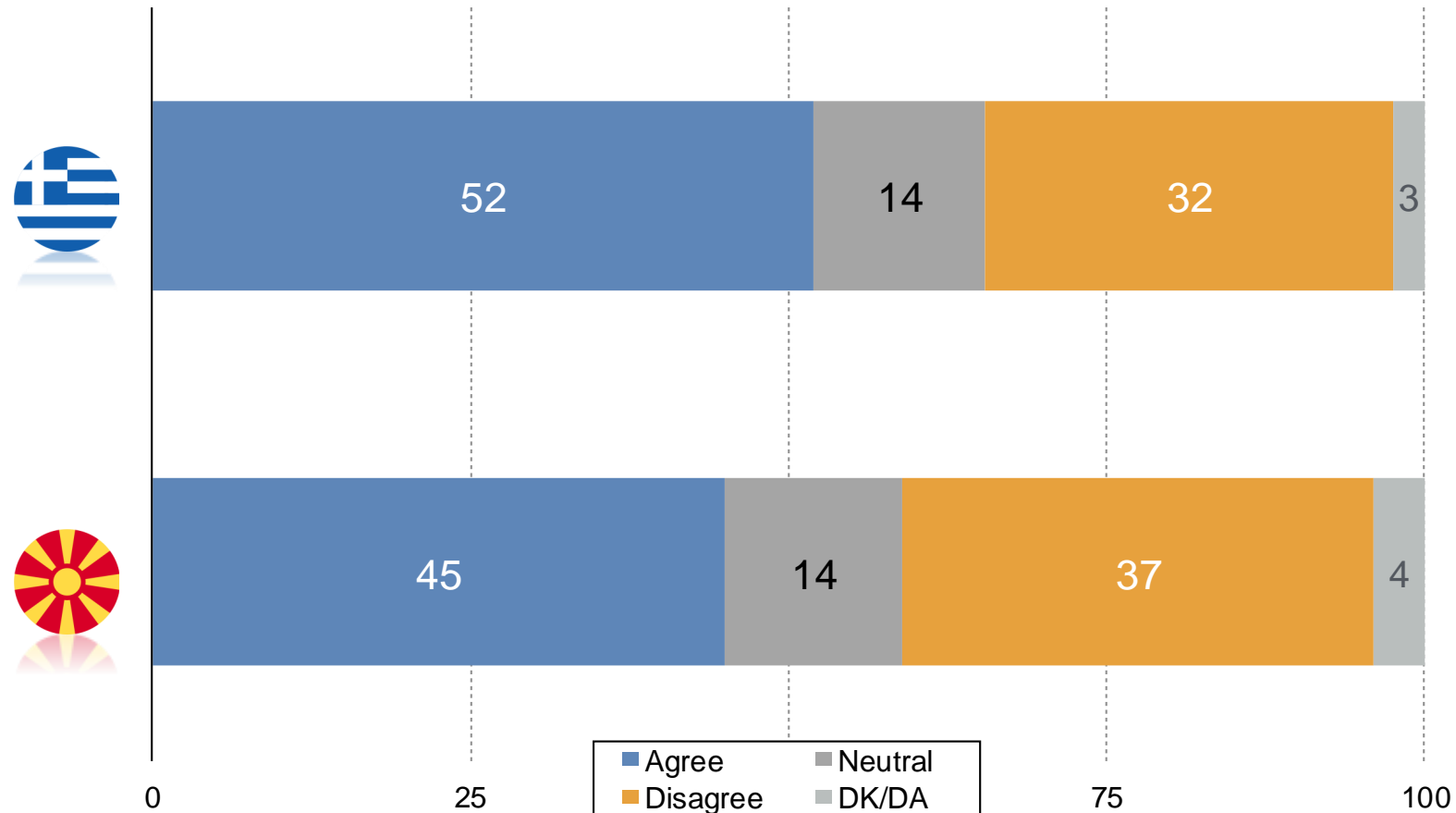


# Prespa agreement undermines the national interest of Greece/North Macedonia

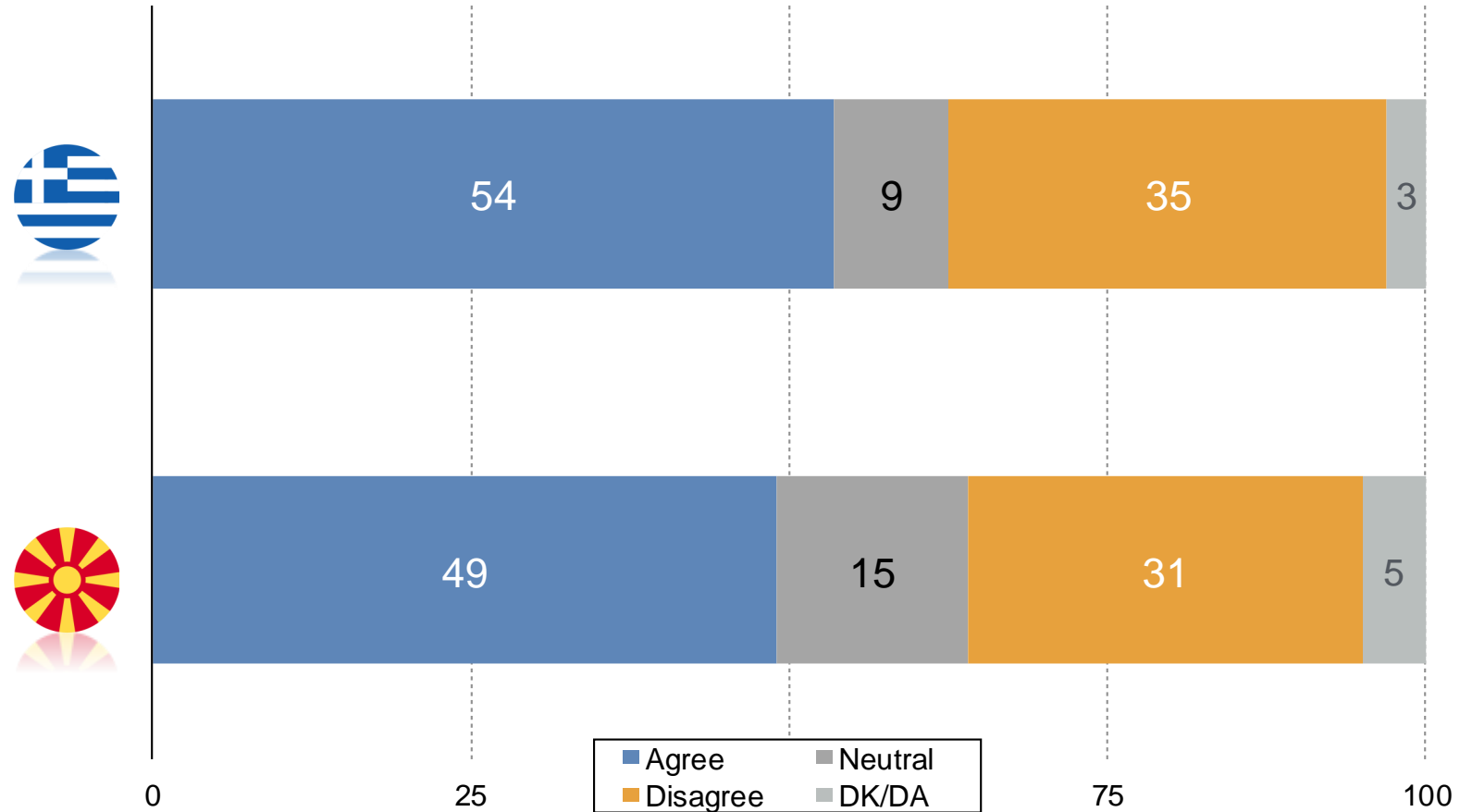




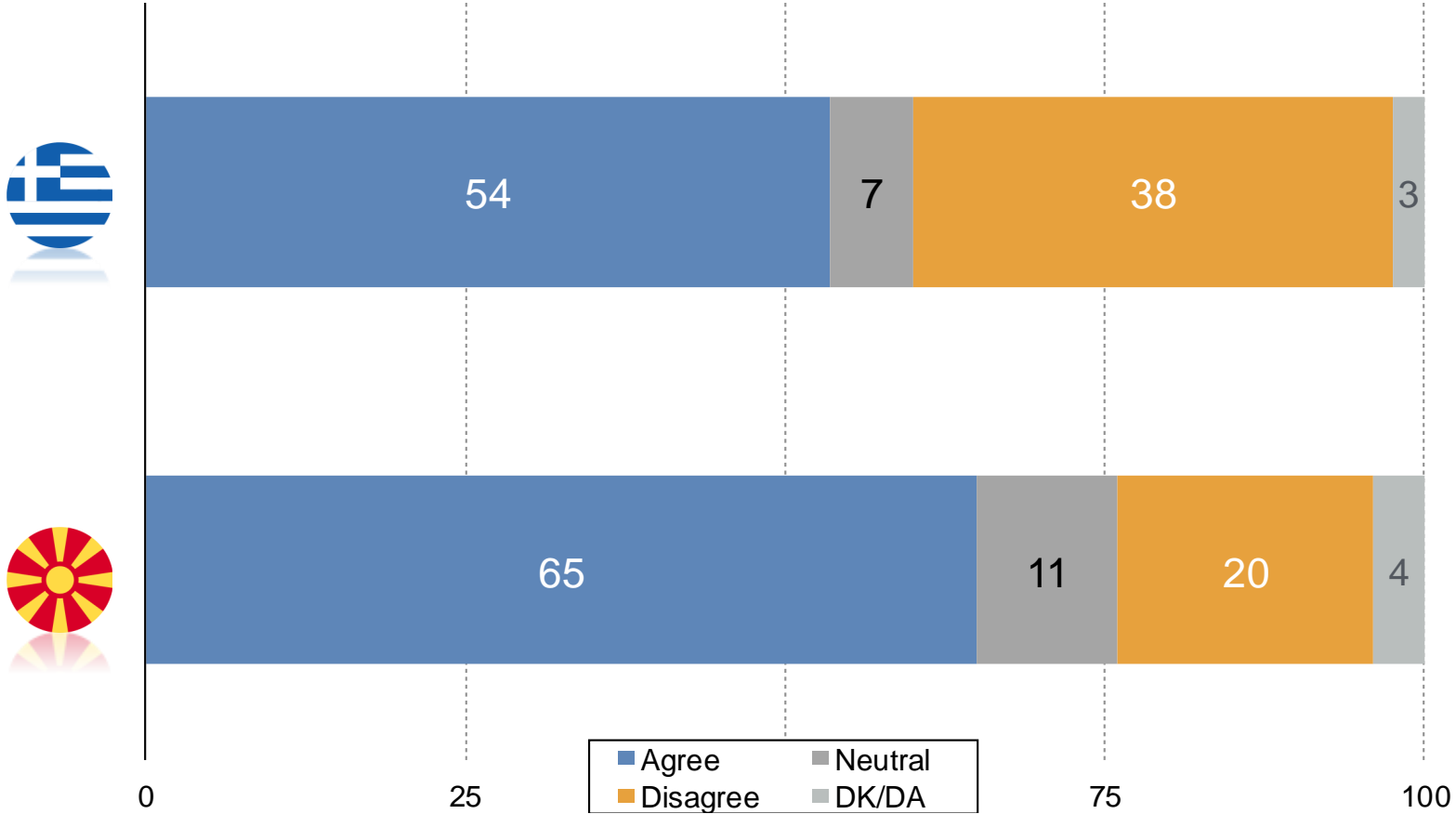
# The Prespa agreement as a factor of stability and peace in the Balkans



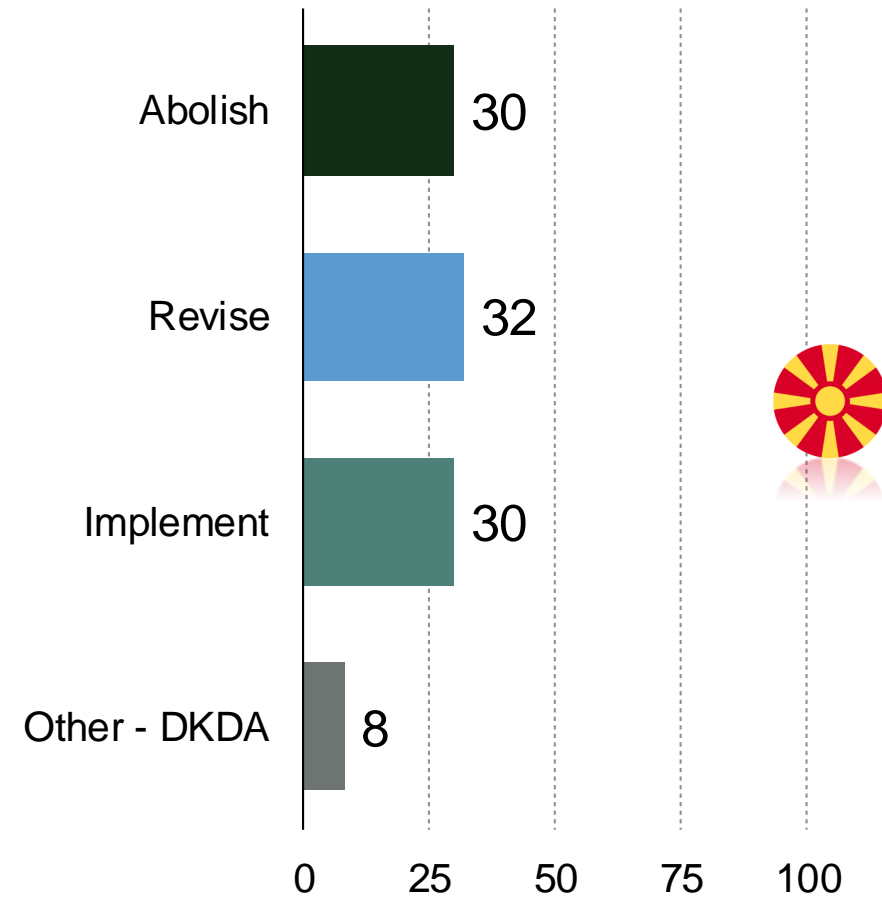
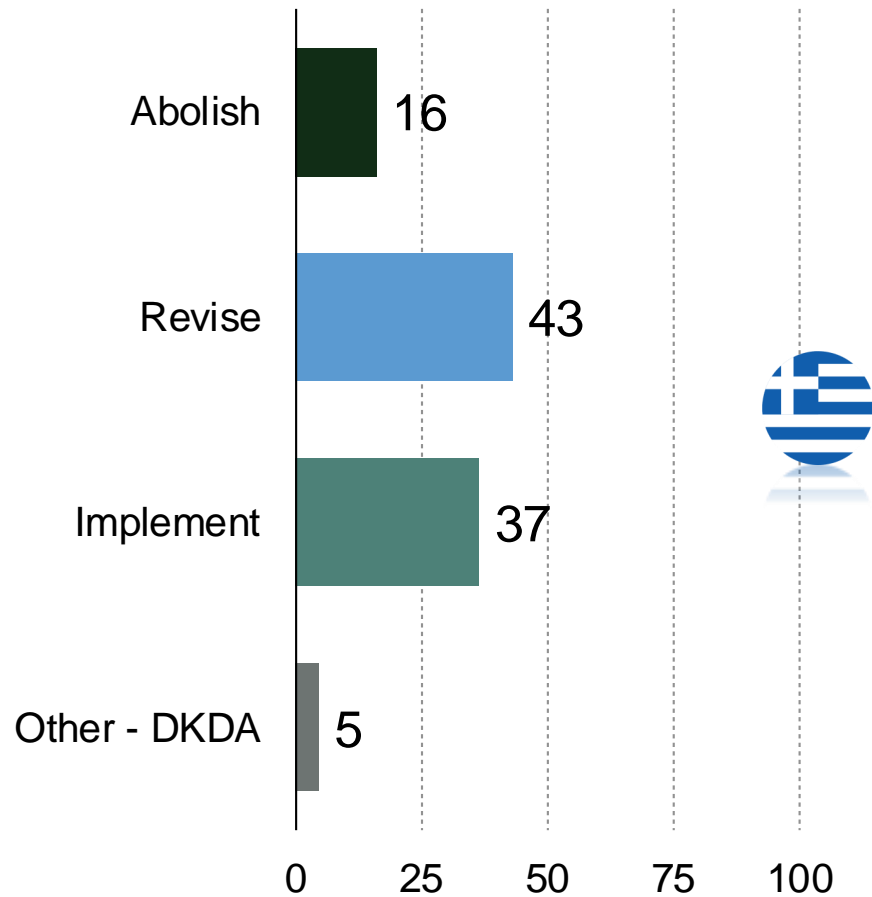
## Prespa Agreement prevented a better solution for the name dispute in the future



# Everybody would call North Macedonia as “Macedonia” if the Prespa Agreement wasn’t signed



# What should the governments in Greece and North Macedonia do with the Prespa Agreement



# Main reasons for the signing of the Prespa Agreement

## ➤ Greece

- A result of imposition of foreign powers (45%)
- Exchange for achieving favourable terms in Greece's bailout agreements

## ➤ North Macedonia

- External pressures from foreign political actors as key factor for the settlement of the name dispute (44%)
- Economic expectations don't play a significant role

# Role of foreign actors in the name dispute

## ➤ Greece

- Vast majority of Greek respondents consider the involvement of foreign actors in the name dispute as favoring either North Macedonia or both countries

## ➤ North Macedonia

- More than a third of the Macedonian respondents believe that the involvement of the EU, USA and Germany have benefited Greece
- 30% perceive the involvement of the EU, USA and Germany as beneficial for both North Macedonia and Greece

# Concluding remarks: North Macedonia

- The Prespa agreement is still a sensitive topic
- Issues related to ethnic and national identities as key factors for resentment of the Prespa agreement
- Deeply divided public
  - among ethnic Macedonians and between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians
- Significant portion of the population has a more pragmatic outlook
- The Prespa Agreement as a way forward for EU accession aspirations

# Concluding remarks: Greece

- Public opinion more ambiguous about relations with North Macedonia than before
- Moderation in attitudes/on some key issues the majority opinions remain rejectionist or less compromising
- The number of Greeks supporting a compromise is increasing
- The question of ethnicity and language as a driver of opposition to the Prespa agreement
- Majority of Greeks believe that the Prespa Agreement was imposed on Greece by foreign powers



# Concluding remarks: three years after the Prespa Agreement

- Still a tough pill to swallow for many citizens of North Macedonia and Greece
- Publics in both states remain divided over the prospects of the Prespa Agreement
- Many instances where both publics share similar (in some cases almost identical) perceptions on the way forward
- The Prespa agreement as a compromise that had to be made
- Both publics believe that the Prespa agreement has strengthened peace and stability in the region