



## **THE STREET DOGS AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM**

November, 2001

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### 1. SURVEY SAMPLE

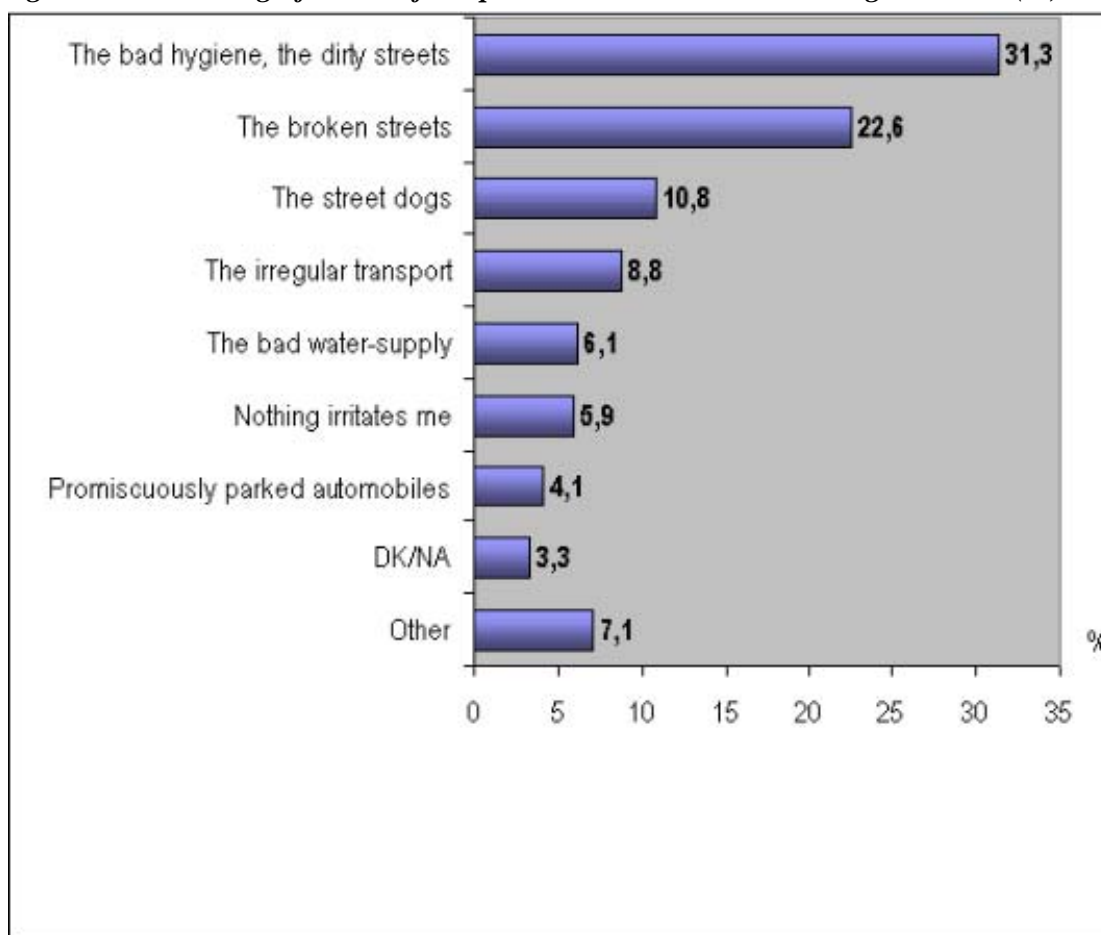
Population studied:	Population in Bulgaria aged over 18 years
Sample design:	Two-stage cluster random sample, representative for the studied population
Sample size:	N = 784 (Planned N = 800; 100 clusters - 8 respondents in each cluster)
Survey method:	Face-to-face structured interview
Fieldwork:	November, 2001

## 2. SURVEY FINDINGS

### 2.1. THE PROBLEM

Bulgarian society has been facing the problem of street-dogs for a long time since a consensus solution has not been found. The long lasting debates and the lack of an effective commonly acceptable solution has lead to the polarization of opinions and has blocked most of the initiatives undertaken. The existing deadlock made street-dogs one of the most serious problems of most of the settlements/ neighborhoods in the country. It is one of the first three issues, which are of greatest concern for the Bulgarian public (Figure 1).

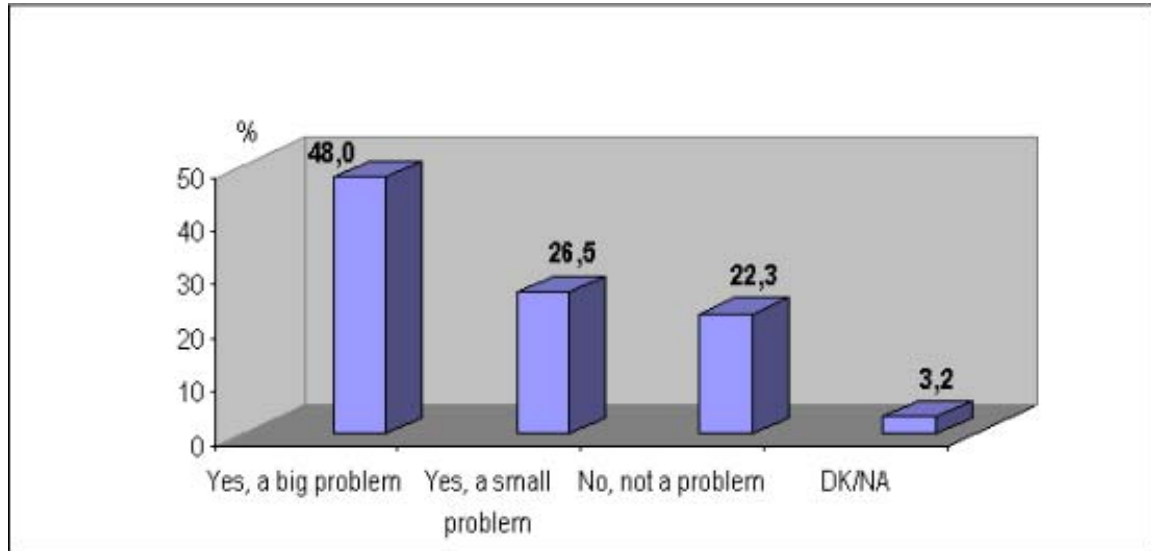
*Figure 1. Relative significance of the problems in the settlement/neighborhood (%)*



*Base N = 784 (all respondents)*

The significance of the problem is also confirmed by the general assessment of its gravity. Almost every second Bulgarian citizen considers the street dogs as a “very big problem” (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Assessments of the level of significance of the street-dogs problem (%)**



*Base N = 784 (all respondents)*

It should also be noted, that more than 50% of the adults in the country think that dogs are “too many” or “many” in the neighborhood (51,4%) as well as in the settlement (57,3%).

## 2.2. ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE PROBLEM

The demographic cross-section of the respondents shows a significant relationship between the attitude towards the street-dogs, on the one hand, and the level of education and the size/type of settlement, on the other.

- The people with higher level of education identify to a greater extent the street-dogs as a serious problem. While among the respondents with secondary and higher level of education between  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the respondents consider the street-dogs a “big problem” for their settlement, among the people with basic and lower level of education that assessment is relatively rare.
- By types of settlements the most concerned are the citizens of Sofia and those living in the bigger settlements, and least concerned - the inhabitants of villages/village areas.

**Table 1. Assessments of the significance of the street-dogs problem by sex, education and type of settlement(%)**

	<i>Yes, a very big problem</i>	<i>Yes, a small problem</i>	<i>No, they are not a problem</i>	<i>DK/NA</i>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	43,2	28,8	25,6	2,4
Female	51,6	24,8	19,8	3,8
<b>Highest level of completed education</b>				
Lower than primary	21,2	18,2	36,4	24,2
Primary	32,8	22,4	41,8	3,0
Basic	42,3	27,0	26,5	4,2
Secondary	51,9	27,2	19,2	1,6
Semi-higher	71,4	28,6	0,0	0,0
Higher	61,8	27,9	10,3	0,0
DK/NA	0,0	50,0	50,0	0,0
<b>Settlement</b>				
Sofia	70,1	21,4	6,8	1,7
Big town	57,7	28,8	12,1	1,4
Small town	50,9	30,3	15,4	3,4
Village/village area	29,2	24,5	41,2	5,1

Base N = 784 (all respondents)

### 2.3. FACTORS DETERMINING THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PROBLEM

Nearly 20% of the respondent note that they or their relatives were attacked by street dogs in the past year (Table 2). Over 2/3 of the attacked declare, that it happened once, and approximately 1/5 – twice. Most of the victims appear to be in Sofia (32,5%), and the smallest number - in the villages (7,6%). Approximately 2/3 of all victims received medical aid – vaccine against tetanus and/or rabies.

**Table 2. Citizens (or their relatives), attacked by street-dogs in the past year (2001)**

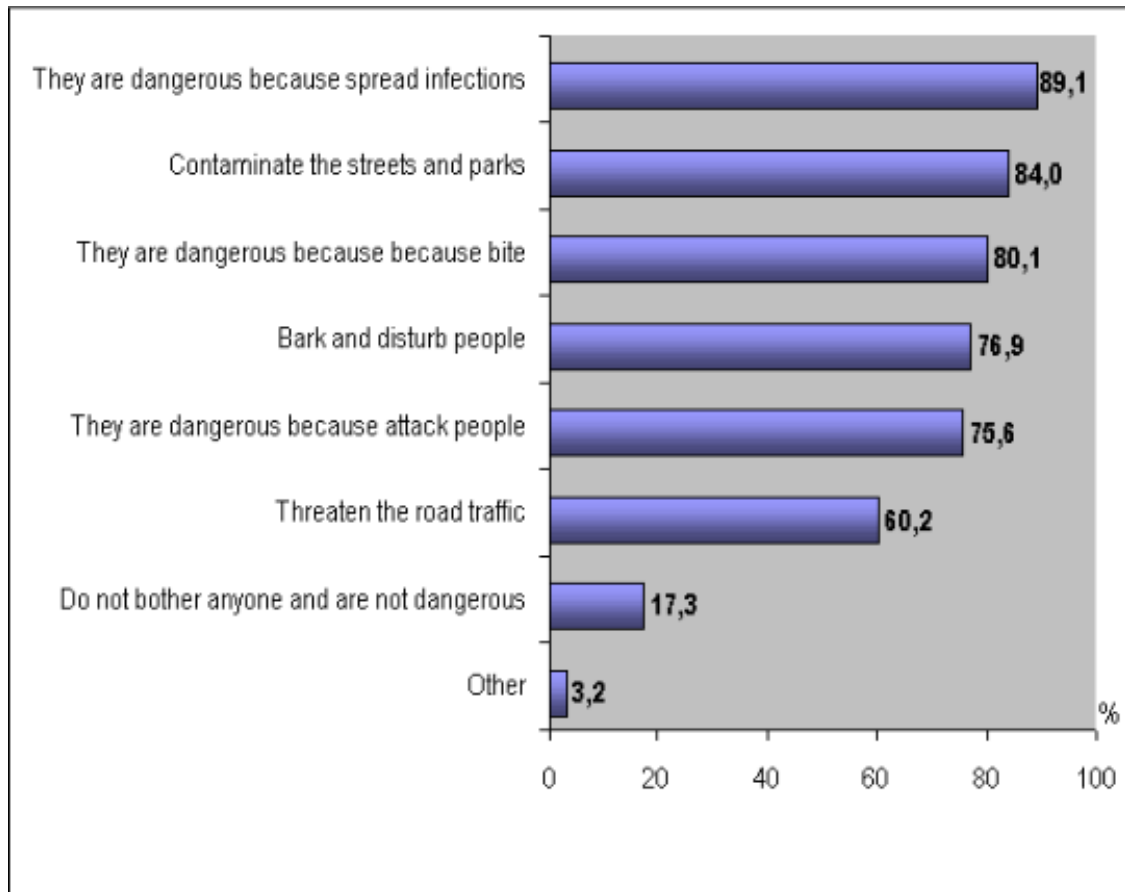
	<i>Share of the sample %</i>	<i>Number of citizens</i>
Attacked	17,7	<b>1136000<sup>1</sup></b>
Not attacked	80,5	
DK/NA	1,8	

Base N = 784 (all respondents)

<sup>1</sup> The estimate for the number of people attacked by street dogs is obtained on the basis of the information from the last census (March, 2001). The total number of the population aged over 18 is 6 417 869. The number of people that corresponds to 1% of the sample is 64179. [Back](#)

Despite the significant number of people attacked by street-dogs, the direct physical threat is neither the only, nor the most serious reason for concerns. Bulgarians perceive street-dogs predominantly as a health-threat and public hygiene problem deteriorating everyday-life conditions in their neighborhood/settlement. Though street-dogs are considered a traffic hazard to a relatively smaller extent, a significant number of people are bothered by the fact (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Evaluations of the factors, which turn the street-dogs into a social problem (%)**



*Base N =784 (All respondents)*

#### 2.4. NECESSITY FOR SOLVING THE STREET-DOGS PROBLEM

Most Bulgarians (58,3%) firmly support the view that effective measures against the street-dogs have to be taken. The higher level of education contributes to the increase of the number of people who firmly support this view (Table 3). Citizens of Sofia and people with higher education are the most categorical, while the least convinced are those with primary and lower level of education.

**Table 3. Attitudes towards the necessity to resolve the street-dogs problem (by education and settlement)(%)**

	<i>It is necessary</i>	<i>It is not necessary</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>DK/NA</i>
<b>Highest level of completed education</b>			
Lower than primary	57,6	12,1	30,3
Primary	68,7	17,9	13,4
Basic	81,4	13,5	5,1
Secondary	93,1	5,2	1,6
Semi-higher	94,3	0,0	5,7
Higher	97,1	2,9	0,0
<b>Settlement</b>			
Sofia	97,4	1,7	0,9
Big town	93,0	3,7	3,3
Small town	89,7	8,0	2,3
Village/village area	75,1	15,2	9,7

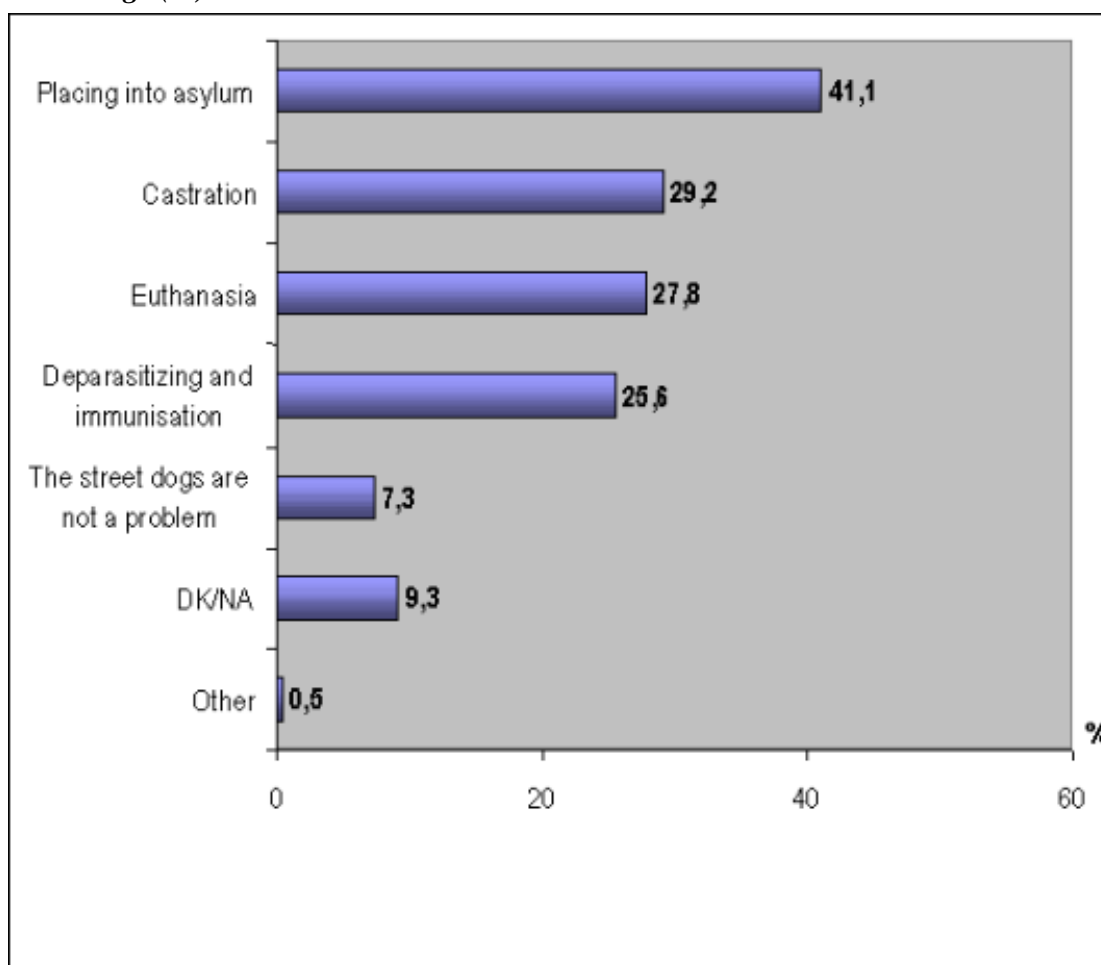
*Base N = 784 (all respondents)*

## 2.5. THE SOLUTION OF THE STREET-DOGS PROBLEM

The most popular measure for resolving the street-dogs problem is placing them into an asylum, while the least supported measures are deparasitizing and immunization. At the same time almost 30% think that the street dogs should be euthanized (Figure 4). This latter measure gets greater support in the smaller settlements, as in the villages/village areas it is the most largely supported way of resolving the problem.(Table 4)

<sup>2</sup> The category “It is not necessary” is obtained through unifying “It is not necessary at all” and “According to me the street dogs are not a problem, that should be solved”. [Back](#)

**Figure 4. Support of the measures, necessary for solving the problem with the street-dogs (%)<sup>3</sup>**



Base N = 784 (all respondents)

**Table 4. Level of support for measures to resolve the street-dogs problem by type of settlement (%)**

	<i>Castration</i>	<i>Putting into asylum</i>	<i>Euthanasia</i>	<i>Deparasitizing and immunization</i>	<i>They are not a problem</i>	<i>DK/NA</i>
<b>Settlement</b>						
Sofia	52,1	54,7	15,4	38,5	1,7	3,4
Big town	34,4	50,7	27,4	32,1	3,3	5,1
Small town	22,3	43,4	30,9	23,4	6,3	7,4
Village/village area	19,9	26,4	31,4	16,6	13,4	16,2

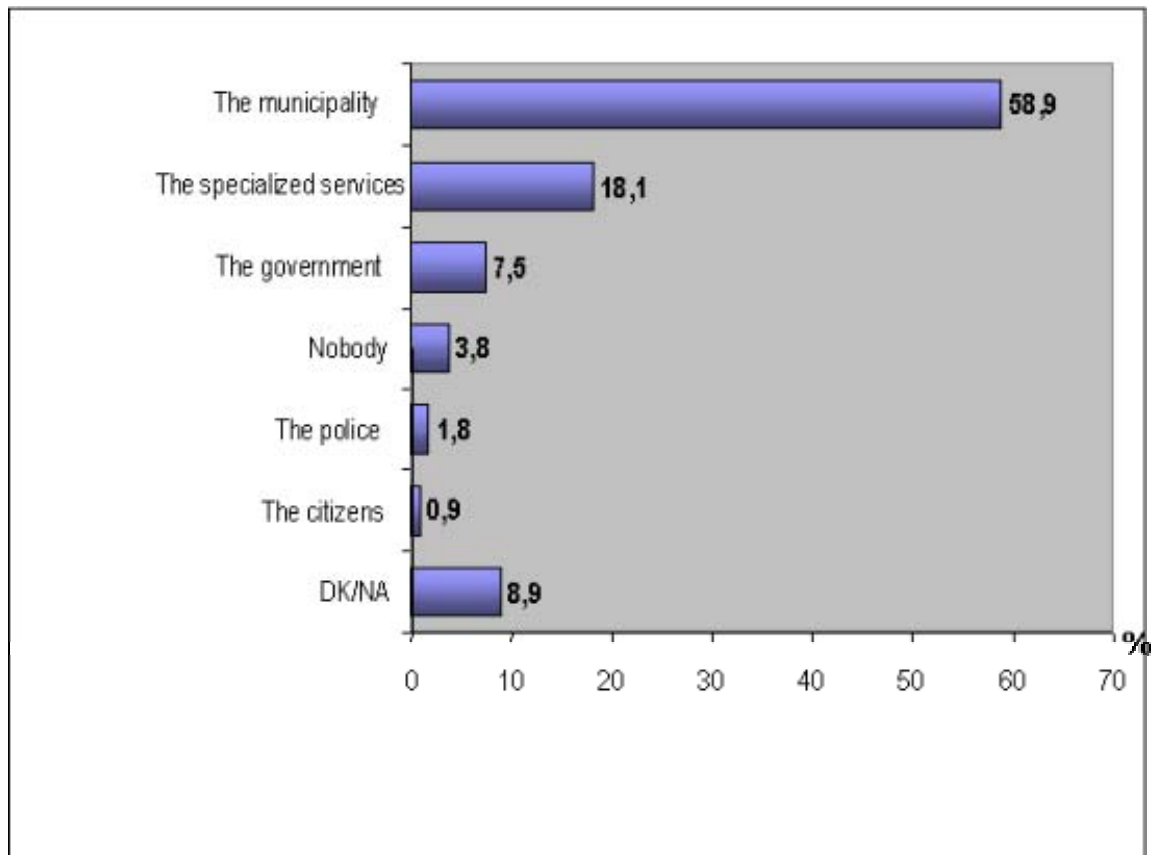
Base N = 784 (all respondents)

<sup>3</sup> The total percentage is more than one hundred, since the respondents have given more than one answer. That is also valid for the data in [Table 4.Back](#)



According to the greater part of the Bulgarian population, the municipality should be the main agent to deal with the problem. Those who think that resolving the street dogs problem should be a duty of the citizens represent the smallest group of people.

**Figure 5. Responsibility of the different institutions/ groups of people for solving the problem with the street dogs (%)**



*Base N = 784 (all respondents)*

### 3. SUMMARY

- Survey results categorically confirm the high significance of the street-dogs problem in Bulgarian society – it is perceived as a serious reason for concern not only by the majority of the adults aged over 18, but it ranks among the three most serious troublesome issues in their settlement/neighborhood.
- The attitudes towards street dogs are strongly influenced by the type of settlement and the level of education – it bothers citizens of the bigger cities and people with education higher than secondary to a greater extent, than citizens of the smaller settlements and the people with primary and lower level of education.
- Despite the expressed difference of opinion, on the whole street dogs appear to be a complex problem for the majority of the Bulgarians – among the most serious reasons

for the expressed concerns are the threat of spreading infections, the pollution of streets and the attacks on people.

- The results clearly show that taking efficient measures against the street-dogs is a pressing necessity. Despite the existing differences in the views concerning the method of resolving the problem, the most seriously supported measures are “placing into asylum”, “castration” and “euthanasia”.