

Geographical-administrative distribution of MPs of the 13th convocation: does every place in Serbia have “its very own” MPs?

The electoral system of Serbia foresees that the whole of Serbia is one electoral unit and that **every member of parliament is a representative of all citizens of Serbia**. On the other hand, it is indisputable that the local problems and needs of citizens can best be understood and represented by members of parliament who come from their environment, which is why it is important to have at least one representative in the Assembly who will represent the interests of a particular local community.

A preliminary [analysis of the Serbian Assembly new convocation structure](#) showed an uneven distribution of parliamentary mandates in the 13th convocation, when it comes to geographical-administrative criteria. The highest percentage – 42 percent of MPs in the 13th convocation come from Belgrade, while 16 districts have less than 2 percent of MPs (Table 1).

District	Number of MPs	Percentage	District	Number of MPs	Percentage
Grad Beograd	105	42.00%	Moravica district	4	1.60%
South Bačka district	30	12.00%	North Bačka district	4	1.60%
Raška district	13	5.20%	Central Bačka district	4	1.60%
Nišava district	10	4.00%	Braničevo district	3	1.20%
Šumadija district	10	4.00%	Zaječar district	2	0.80%
Zlatibor district	7	2.80%	Kolubara district	2	0.80%
Pomoravlje district	7	2.80%	Kosovska Mitrovica district	2	0.80%
Srem district	6	2.40%	Pirot district	2	0.80%
Pčinja district	6	2.40%	North Banat district	2	0.80%
Mačva district	5	2.00%	Bor district	1	0.40%
Podunavlje district	5	2.00%	Kosovo district	1	0.40%

Rasina district	5	2.00%	Peć district	1	0.40%
West Bačka district	4	1.60%	Toplica district	1	0.40%
Jablanica district	4	1.60%	Kosovo Pomoravlje district	0	0.00%
South Banat district	4	1.60%	Prizren district	0	0.00%

Table 1: Total number of MPs by administrative areas of residence

The analysis, however, at the same indicated that given the number of residents of those districts, the first impression does not suffice for a fuller understanding of these data. If the data on the place of residence of MPs, whose mandate was confirmed at the constitutive sitting of the 13th convocation, is crossed with the number of inhabitants at different levels of administrative organisation, what is the ratio of representation of citizens in the National Assembly?

The division by region, based on the data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, does not show any difference compared to the previously shown percentages (Table 2).

Region	Number of MPs	Number of citizens ¹	Number of citizens per MP	Number of MPs per citizen
Belgrade region	105	1,694,480	16,137.90	0.0000620
Vojvodina region	54	1,840,852	34,089.85	0.0000293
Šumadija and Western Serbia region	53	1,810,941	34,168.70	0.0000293
Region Southern and Eastern Serbia region	34	1,552,853	45,672.15	0.0000219

Table 2: Total number of MPs and inhabitants by region

The Belgrade region has by far the most MPs per inhabitant, the region of Vojvodina and the region of Šumadija and Western Serbia are positioned approximately the same according to this criterion, while the region of Southern and Eastern Serbia has the fewest MPs per inhabitant.

The situation changes slightly with the transition to smaller administrative areas – districts (Table 3).

¹ The source for all data on the number of inhabitants is the estimate of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia for the year 2020 <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2021/Xls/G202113048.xlsx>

District/ Administrative area of residence²	Number of MPs	Number of citizens	Number of citizens per MP	Number of MPs per citizen
Grad Beograd	105	1694480	16,137.90	0.0000620
South Bačka district	30	618624	20,620.80	0.0000485
Raška district	13	303552	23,350.15	0.0000428
Pomoravlje district	7	194676	27,810.86	0.0000360
Šumadija district	10	278917	27,891.70	0.0000359
Pčinja district	6	182895	30,482.50	0.0000328
Nišava district	10	357920	35,792.00	0.0000279
Zlatibor district	7	262664	37,523.43	0.0000267
Mačva district	5	195041	39,008.20	0.0000256
Pirot district	2	82537	41,268.50	0.0000242
West Bačka district	4	168841	42,210.25	0.0000237
Central Bačka district	4	171988	42,997.00	0.0000233
Rasina district	5	219017	43,803.40	0.0000228
North Bačka district	4	177044	44,261.00	0.0000226
Jablanica district	4	196265	49,066.25	0.0000204
Moravica district	4	196516	49,129.00	0.0000204
Srem district	6	295132	49,188.67	0.0000203
Zaječar district	2	104352	52,176.00	0.0000192
Braničevo district	3	163058	54,352.67	0.0000184
Podunavlje district	5	274549	54,909.80	0.0000182
North Banat district	2	133934	66,967.00	0.0000149
South Banat district	4	275289	68,822.25	0.0000145
Kolubara district	2	160558	80,279.00	0.0000125
Toplica district	1	82067	82,067.00	0.0000122
Bor district	1	109210	109,210.00	0.0000092

Table 3: Total number of MPs and inhabitants by districts

² In this analysis, there are no districts, municipalities and cities in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, because the publication of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia does not contain their data on the number of inhabitants, so it was not possible to process them.

The city of Belgrade still holds the first place when it comes to the number of MPs per inhabitant, but the difference compared to the South Banat district, which is in second place, is significantly smaller. In the last place is the Bor district, which has almost seven times fewer MPs per inhabitant than Belgrade, i.e., it has one MP per 109,210 inhabitants.

When we take into account the residence of MPs by district, Raška and Podunavlje districts are in the best position, as all cities and municipalities have at least one MP. The Jablanica district is in the most unfavourable position, with only one city with “its own” MPs and five municipalities without their representatives, and Braničevo district, with one city and one municipality represented and six municipalities without “their” representatives (Table 4).

District/ Administrative area of residence	Number of cities/municipalities with MPs	Number of cities/municipalities with no MPs
Raška district	5	0
Podunavlje district	3	0
Srem district	5	2
Šumadija district	5	2
Pomoravlje district	4	2
Pčinja district	4	3
North Bačka district	2	1
South Bačka district	6	6
Rasina district	3	3
Zaječar district	2	2
West Bačka district	2	2
Kolubara district	2	3
Moravica district	2	3
Nišava district	3	4
Bor district	1	3
South Banat district	3	5
Mačva district	3	5
Pirot district	1	3
Toplica district	1	3
Zlatibor district	4	6
North Banat district	2	4

Central Banat district	1	4
Braničevo district	2	6
Jablanica district	1	5

Table 4: Municipalities and cities with and without MPs by district

A complete reversal in the analysis occurs when the number of MPs is considered in the light of the number of inhabitants in cities and municipalities. In Serbia, if we do not count urban municipalities, there are 145 cities and municipalities, in which the residences of 246 MPs are distributed. Four MPs have residences in the area of Kosovo and Metohija, which was not included in the analysis due to the lack of data on the number of inhabitants. These are the municipalities of Kosovska Mitrovica, Peć, Priština and Zubin potok.

If the number of MPs per inhabitant of municipalities and cities is considered, Belgrade is only in 14th place. In comparison to the first-ranked Priboj, it has nearly three times fewer MPs per inhabitant (Table 5).

No.	City/ Municipality	District/ Administrative area of residence	Number of MPs	Number of citizens	Number of citizens per MP	Number of MPs per citizen
1	Priboj	Zlatibor district	23373	4	5843.25	0.0001711
2	Gadžin Han	Nišava district	6480	1	6,480.00	0.0001543
3	Sremski Karlovci	South Bačka district	8265	1	8,265.00	0.0001210
4	Rača	Šumadija district	10226	1	10,226.00	0.0000978
5	Koceljeva	Mačva district	11469	1	11,469.00	0.0000872
6	Svrljig	Nišava district	12098	1	12,098.00	0.0000827
7	Knić	Šumadia district	12595	1	12,595.00	0.0000794
8	Sokobanja	Zaječar district	13760	1	13,760.00	0.0000727
9	Temerin	South Bačka district	27629	2	13,814.50	0.0000724
10	Brus	Rasina district	14343	1	14,343.00	0.0000697
11	Novi Sad	South Bačka district	362675	24	15,111.46	0.0000662
12	Majdanpek	Bor district	15893	1	15,893.00	0.0000629
13	Tutin	Raška district	32010	2	16,005.00	0.0000625
14	Beograd	City of Belgrade	1694480	105	16,137.90	0.0000620
15	Jagodina	Pomoravlje district	68378	4	17,094.50	0.0000585

16	Surdulica	Pčinja district	18311	1	18,311.00	0.0000546
17	Vladičin Han	Pčinja district	18472	1	18,472.00	0.0000541
18	Velika Plana	Podunavlje district	37222	2	18,611.00	0.0000537
19	Despotovac	Pomoravlje district	19792	1	19,792.00	0.0000505
20	Topola	Šumadija district	19858	1	19,858.00	0.0000504

Table 5: Top 20 municipalities and cities by the number of MPs per inhabitant

Smederevo, which has 17 times fewer MPs per inhabitant than the first-ranked Priboj, is in last place on the list of cities and municipalities where MPs reside.

Another important piece of information revealed by this analysis is that out of a total of 145 cities and municipalities, **as many as 77 municipalities do not have a representative residing in their territory**. If these municipalities are further considered, it can be seen that the number of inhabitants is not the only decisive factor for a municipality to be on the list of those that have “their own” representative. On the first place in the list of municipalities without MPs is Paraćin, which has twice as many inhabitants as Priboj, where four MPs reside. Moreover, Paraćin also has more inhabitants than the top ten cities and municipalities when it comes to the number of MPs per inhabitant. Paraćin, however, is not unique, in the top 20 there are more municipalities whose population is significantly higher than many municipalities that have MPs (Table 6).

No.	City/ Municipality	District/ Administrative area of residence	Number of inhabitants
1	Paraćin	Pomoravlje district	49596
2	Aleksinac	Nišava district	46541
3	Bor	Bor district	43983
4	Gornji Milanovac	Moravica district	40749
5	Kula	West Bačka district	38630
6	Negotin	Bor district	31332
7	Preševo	Pčinja district	30172
8	Vlasotince	Jablanica district	27101
9	Knjaževac	Zaječar district	27005
10	Apatin	West Bačka district	26041
11	Bogatić	Mačva district	26024
12	Sjenica	Zlatibor district	25560
13	Žabalj	South Bačka district	24852

14	Bajina Bašta	Zlatibor district	23859
15	Aleksandrovac	Rasina district	23551
16	Kovačica	South Banat district	23489
17	Novi Bečej	Central Banat district	22139
18	Senta	North Banat district	21376
19	Lebane	Jablanica district	19124
20	Pećinci	Srem district	19095

Table 5: The top 20 municipalities without MPs per inhabitant

What conclusions can be drawn based on the data presented so far? The dominance of Belgrade in the number of MPs is not as prominent as it may seem at first glance, and residents of different municipalities and cities are not evenly represented in the Assembly. This uneven representation may contribute to the neglect of the problems of those local communities in the National Assembly. In other words, the problem is not that the Assembly does not faithfully portray the whole of Serbia. On the contrary, the current composition of the Assembly points to the problems that Serbia is facing. On the one hand, smaller areas are not only left without a population, which gravitates towards larger urban centres, but, as a consequence, they are also left without those who can represent local problems at the highest level. On the other hand, regardless of the number of inhabitants, certain local communities are more represented in the Parliament. Many different factors economic, social, territorial, etc. may be the reason for that.