



# **MEDIA TRUST AND MEDIA-GENDER ISSUES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS**

**Regional public opinion poll**

Prepared for South East European Network for  
Professionalization of Media (SEENPM)

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# I. METHODOLOGY

## Quantitative public opinion research

Quantitative public opinion survey was carried out on representative sample of approximately 1000 citizens of Western Balkan countries, 18 years or older. Data collection was performed during February and March 2021, with structured questionnaire of 10 minutes duration.

Method of data collection in most of countries was mixed mode: Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI, telephone interviewing) and Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI, online interviewing). Online interviewing targeted younger urban population (18 to 44 years), i.e. the ones that are hard to reach by phone and it was realized on 10 to 20% of the total sample in Serbia, Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia. In Kosovo 100% of interviews were conducted by telephone. Finally, data collection method in Bosnia and Herzegovina was face-to-face in respondent's house (CAPI - Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews).

**Table I.1. A brief overview of methodology**

	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Albania	Serbia	Kosovo	Montenegro	North Macedonia
Field research:	March 10 to March 30, 2021	February 22 to February 26, 2021	February 24 to February 28, 2021	February 23 to March 6, 2021	March 3 to March 7, 2021	March 1 to March 15, 2021
Sample universe:	Population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 18+	Population of Albania, 18+	Population of Serbia, 18+	Population of Kosovo, 18+	Population of Montenegro, 18+	Population of North Macedonia, 18+
Target population size:	2.841.840	2.234.646	5.801.993	1.205.788	484.949	1.650.890
Sample size:	1003	1010	1004	1045	1018	1002
Type of sample:	Three stage random representative stratified sample			Two-stage random representative stratified sample with quota selection of respondents (by gender and age)		
Stratification:	Stratification was based on: Region and Type of settlement (urban and rural);					
Post-stratification:	By region, type of settlement, gender, age, education			By region, type of settlement, gender, age, ethnicity, education		
Method of data collection:	Face-to-face	Mixed mode (telephone and online*)	Mixed mode (telephone and online*)	Telephone survey	Mixed mode (telephone and online*)	Mixed mode (telephone and online*)



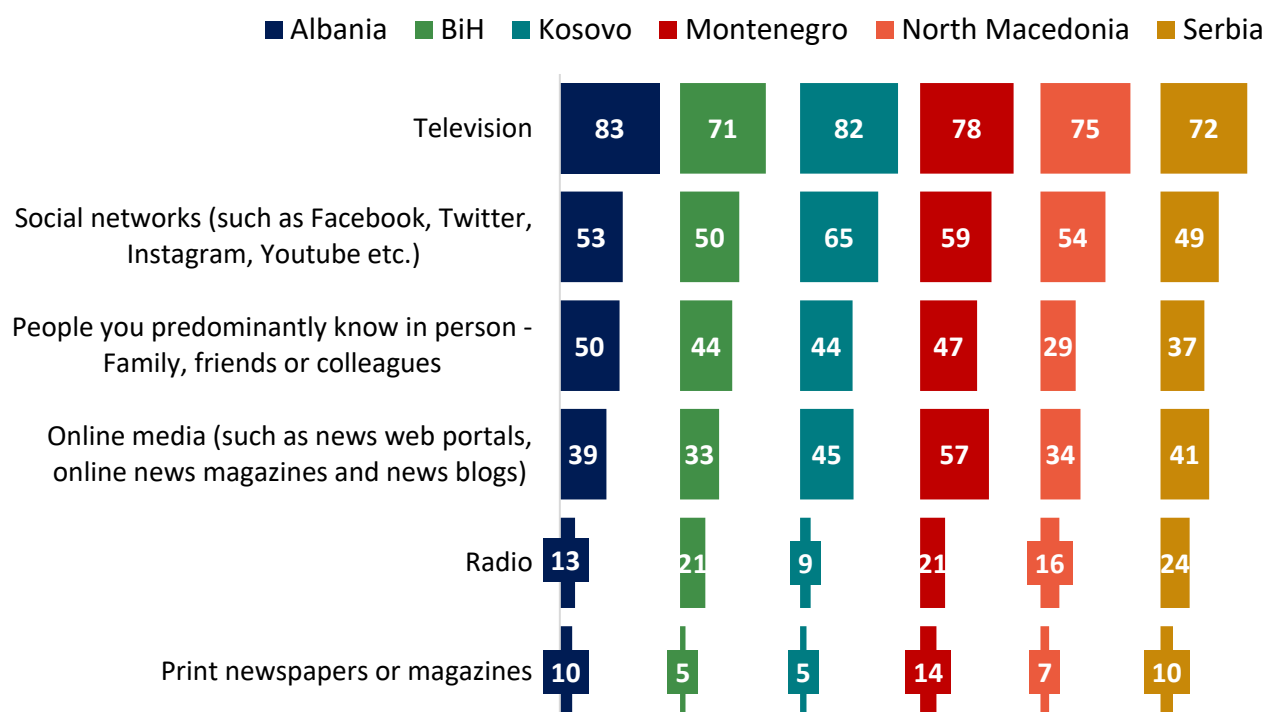
# 1. Population's media usage and preferences

Among media, TV is by far the most used source for gathering information in the Western Balkans countries - between seven and eight out of ten citizens follow political and social events on TV every day (Figure 1.1). The only other source of information that is used daily by more than half of the population in all countries in order to get information about political and social events is social networks.

**Figure 1.1. Usage of different sources of information about political and social events - % of answers Every day**

*How often do you use the following sources to get news, i.e. information about political and social events?*

Base: Total target population



TV is indeed followed daily by the highest share of population in Albania (83%) compared to other Western Balkan countries, but the share of people following TV daily in Bosnia and Herzegovina seem to be among the lowest in the region (71%). In between are Serbia (72%), North Macedonia (75%), Montenegro (78%) and Kosovo (82%) (Figure 1.2).

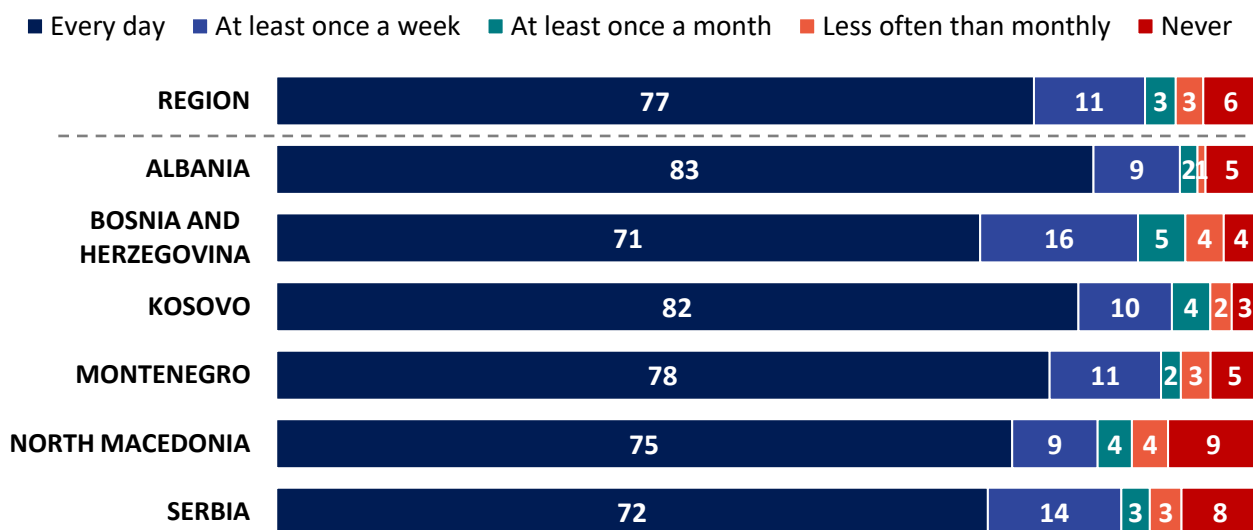


## MEDIA TRUST AND MEDIA-GENDER ISSUES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS - Regional public opinion poll | Population's media usage and preferences

**Figure 1.2. Frequency of Television usage**

*How often do you use the following sources to get news, i.e. information about political and social events?*

Base: Total target population

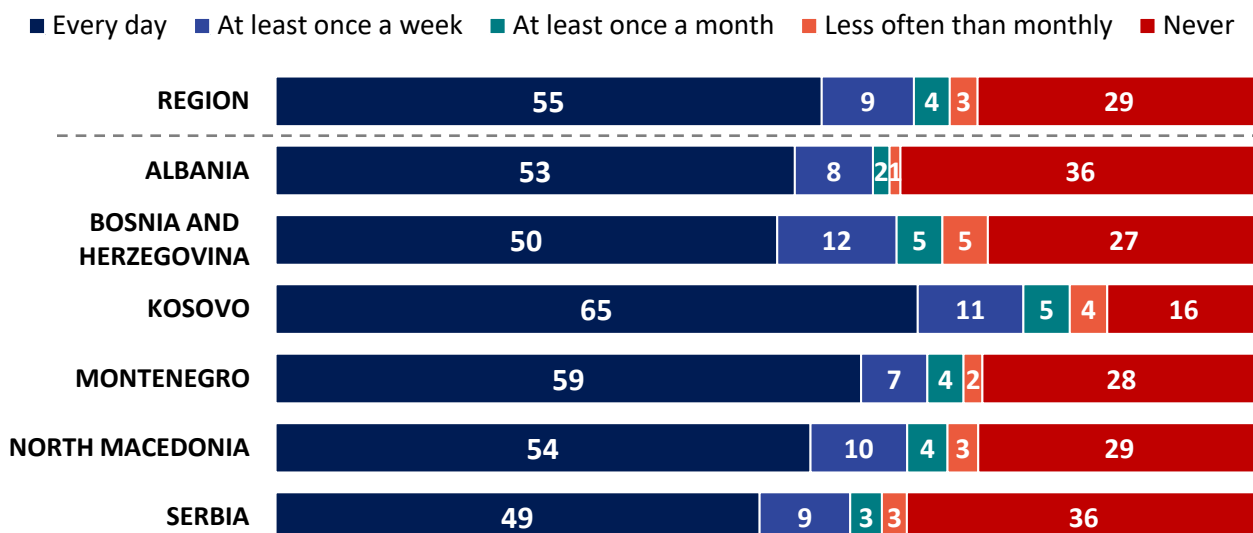


About half of general population in Western Balkan countries uses social networks to get information about political and social events (Figure 1.3). Share of citizens using this source is below regional average in Serbia (49%) and BIH (50%), while in Kosovo is higher compared to majority of other countries in the region (65%).

**Figure 1.3. Frequency of Social networks usage**

*How often do you use the following sources to get news, i.e. information about political and social events?*

Base: Total target population



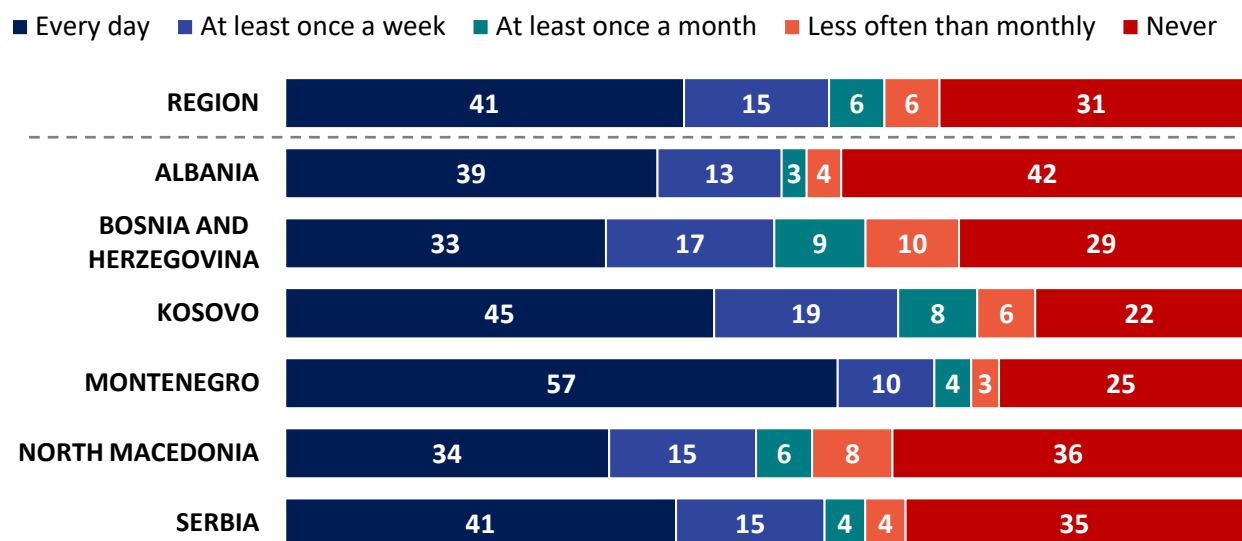
Online media (news web portals, online news magazines and news blogs) is being used every day by approximately two-fifths of citizens in Western Balkans. However, percentage of daily users of online media in Montenegro rises to 57%, while it is below regional average in BIH and Macedonia (33% and 34%, respectively) (Figure 1.4).

## MEDIA TRUST AND MEDIA-GENDER ISSUES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS - Regional public opinion poll | Population's media usage and preferences

**Figure 1.4. Frequency of Online media usage**

*How often do you use the following sources to get news, i.e. information about political and social events?*

Base: Total target population

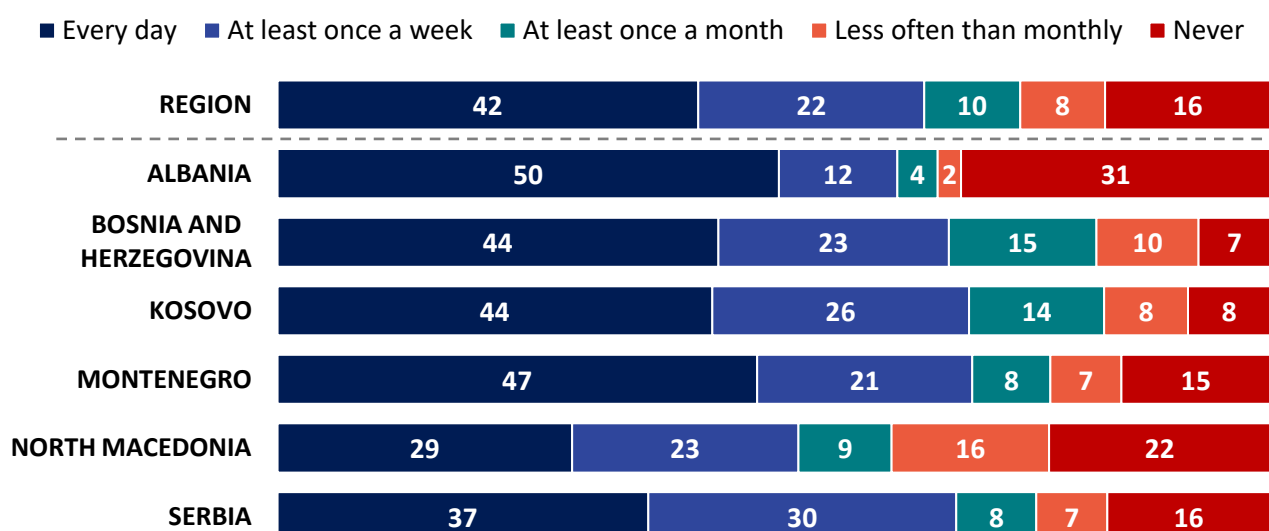


Similarly, about two fifths of citizens report getting information about political and social events through their personal contacts. Albania and Montenegro stand out as countries with highest percent of citizens daily sharing information about political and social events among family, friends or colleagues – about half of them (50% and 47% respectively) (Figure 1.5). On the other hand, North Macedonia and Serbia are the countries with the lowest shares of the population that use this source on a daily basis (29% and 37% respectively).

**Figure 1.5. Getting informed through personal contacts**

*How often do you use the following sources to get news, i.e. information about political and social events?*

Base: Total target population





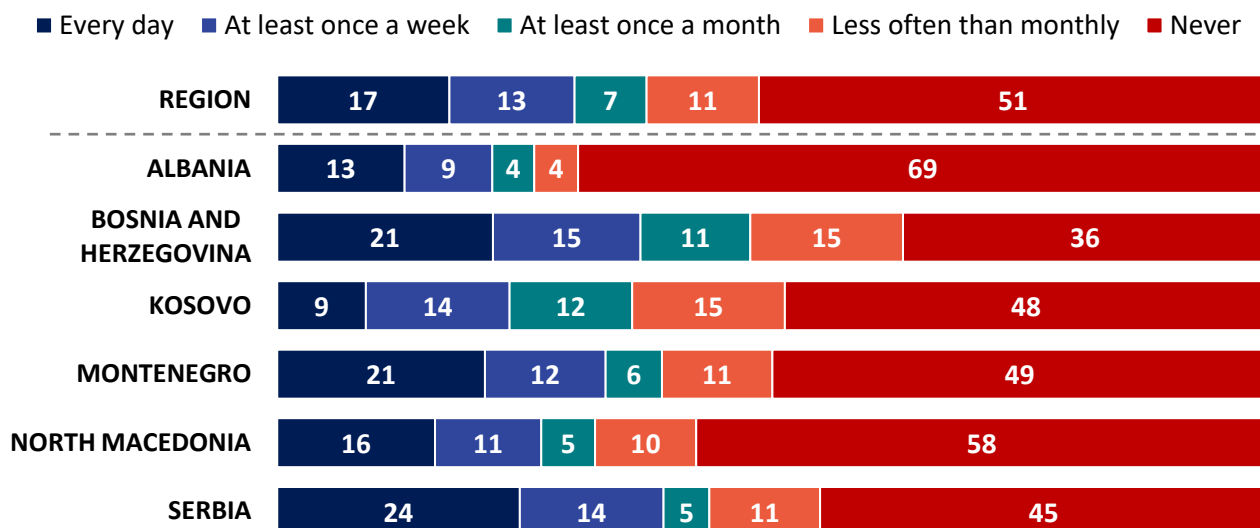
## MEDIA TRUST AND MEDIA-GENDER ISSUES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS - Regional public opinion poll | Population's media usage and preferences

Majority in each country never get informed through the radio (Figure 1.6). However, the radio is far more commonly used daily in Serbia (24%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (21%) and Montenegro (21%), where about one-fifth of the citizens follow political and social events via radio.

**Figure 1.6. Frequency of Radio usage**

*How often do you use the following sources to get news, i.e. information about political and social events?*

Base: Total target population

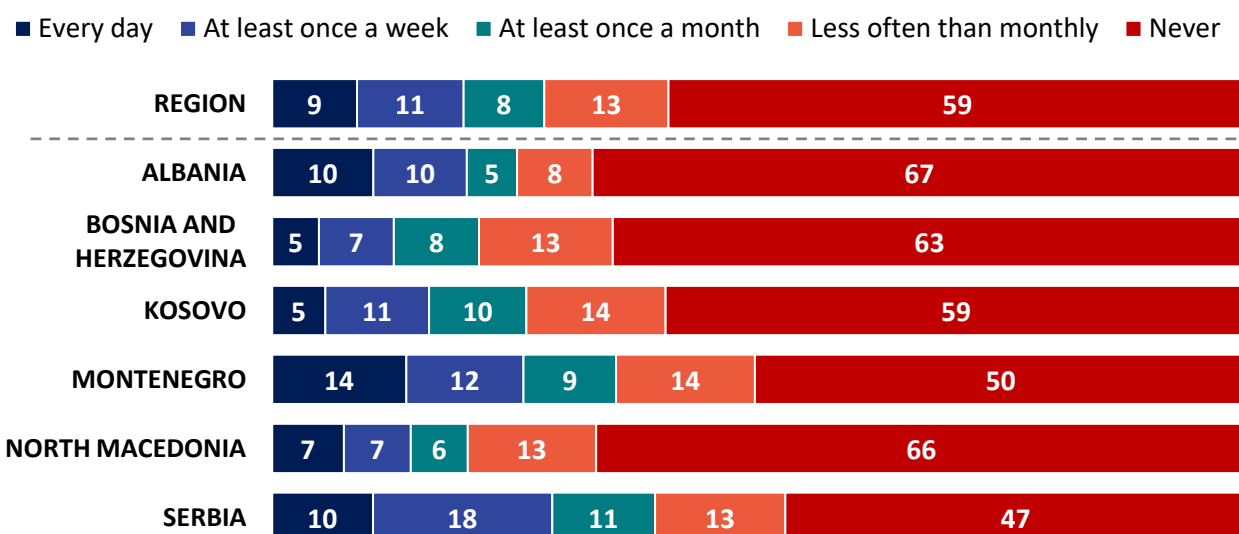


Similar to the radio, majority in each country never reads the news in the press. Less than one out of five citizens reads them daily in Montenegro (14%) which is still significantly higher share of population compared to BIH (5%), Kosovo (5%) and North Macedonia (7%) (Figure 1.7).

**Figure 1.7. Frequency of print newspapers/ magazines usage**

*How often do you use the following sources to get news, i.e. information about political and social events?*

Base: Total target population

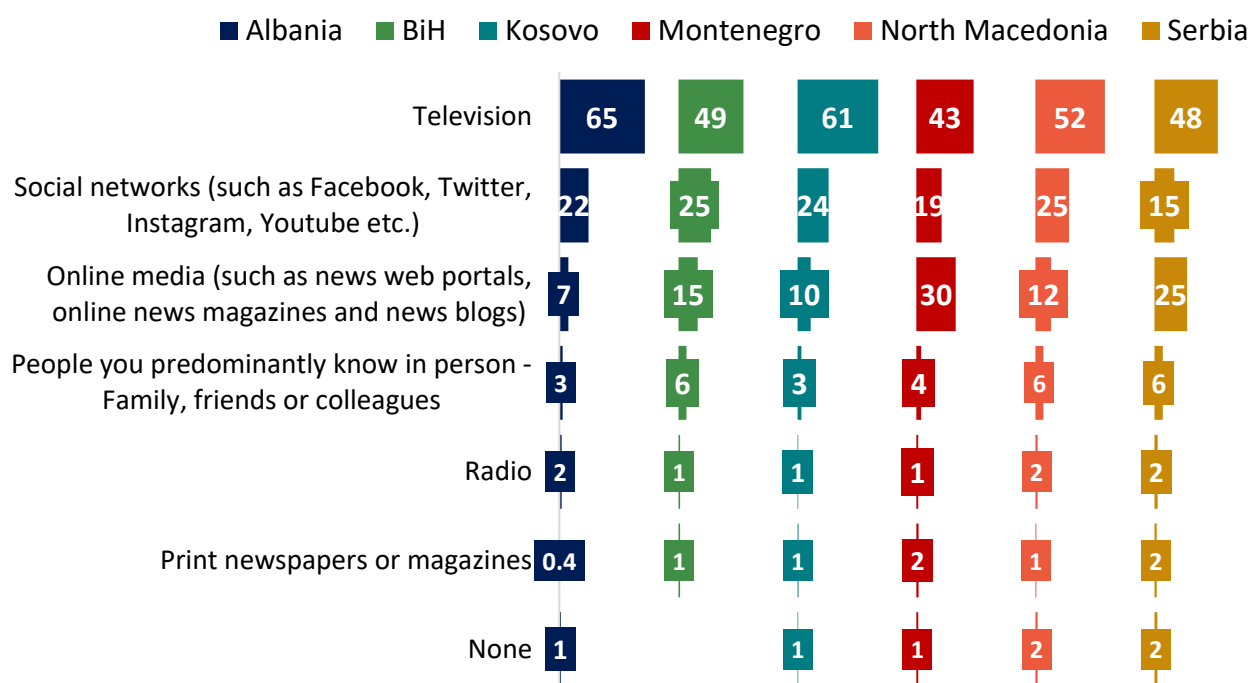


In line with the previous findings, television is the main source of news for majority of citizens – half or more of them in all countries (Figure 1.6). Social networks are the second most popular source of information which approximately a quarter of citizens in most countries mention as their primary source. Social networks are followed by online media, which are the main source of information for a tenth or more citizens in the Western Balkans, while other sources of information are far behind, at a single-digit level.

Compared to other countries, in Albania and Kosovo, television is more often the primary source of information (65% and 61%, respectively). On the other hand, social networks are more often the main source of news in BiH and Macedonia (25% both). Finally, citizens of Serbia and Montenegro significantly more often rely on information from web portals compared to other countries (25% and 30%, respectively).

**Figure 1.8. Main source of information**

*And what is your main source of information?* Base: Total target population

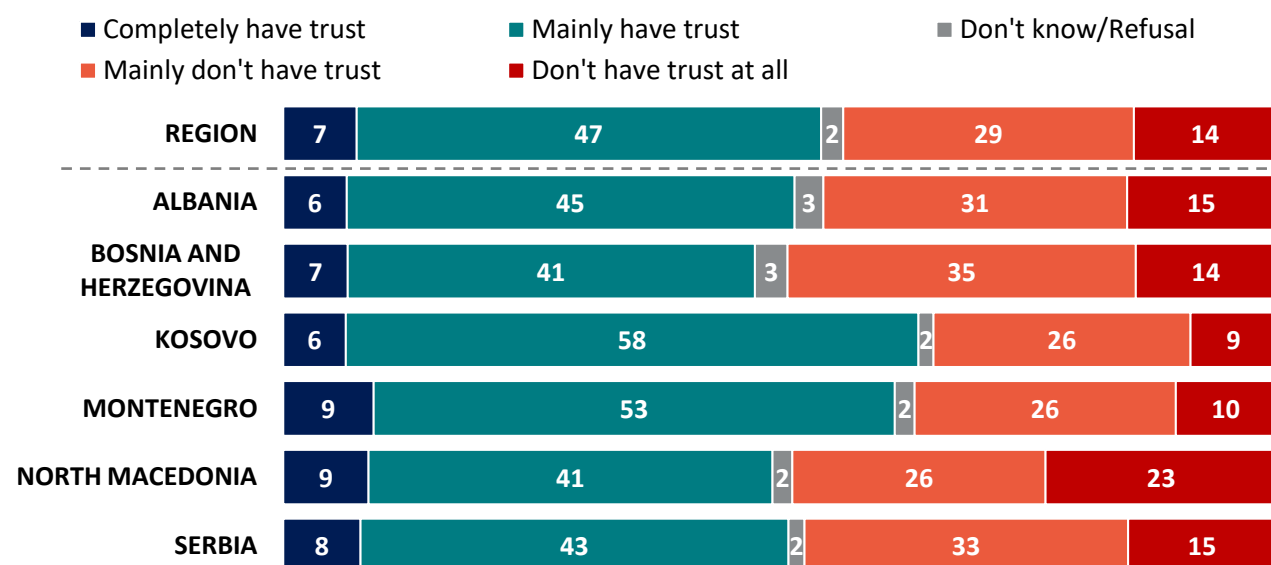


## 2. Trust in news sources

Concerning the general trust in media, two groups of countries can be distinguished - on the one hand BIH, Serbia and North Macedonia where citizens are evenly divided over trust in media reporting (with approximately half of citizens having trust in media, while the other half claiming they do not trust the media), and on the other hand, Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro with trust in media higher than distrust (Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1. Public's trust in the media**

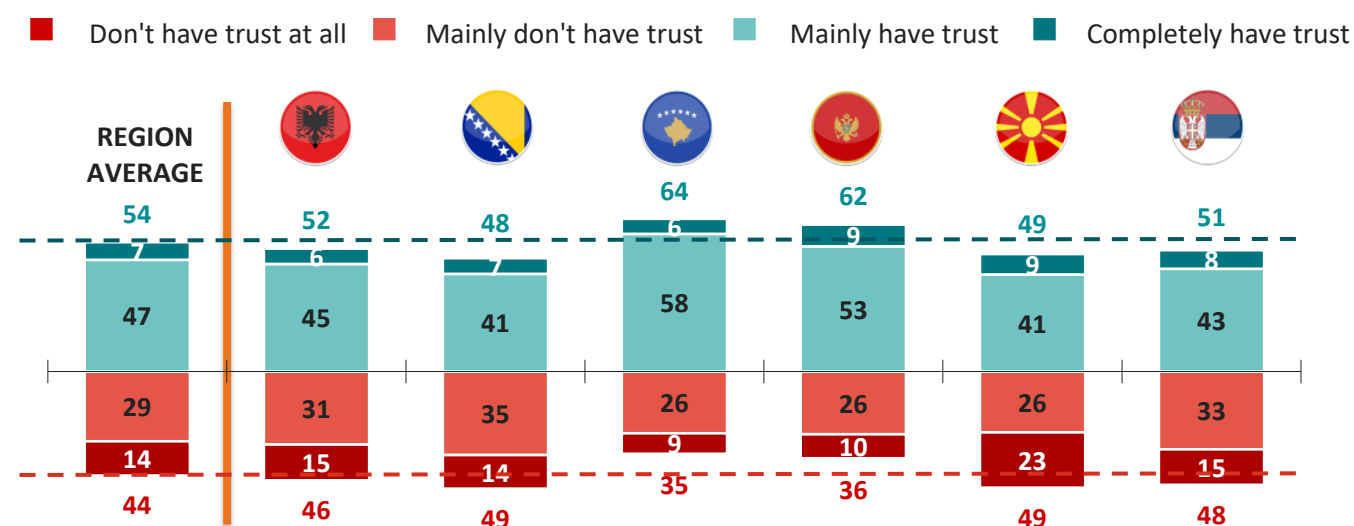
*In general, how much trust do you have in the media - such as newspapers, TV, radio or online news sources - when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly in COUNTRY?* Base: Total target population



However, it should be noted that the level of trust in the media is the highest in Kosovo (64%) and Montenegro (62%), while it is the lowest in BIH (48%) and North Macedonia (49%) (Figure 2.2).

**Figure 2.2. Public's trust in the media**

*In general, how much trust do you have in the media - such as newspapers, TV, radio or online news sources - when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly in COUNTRY?* Base: Total target population



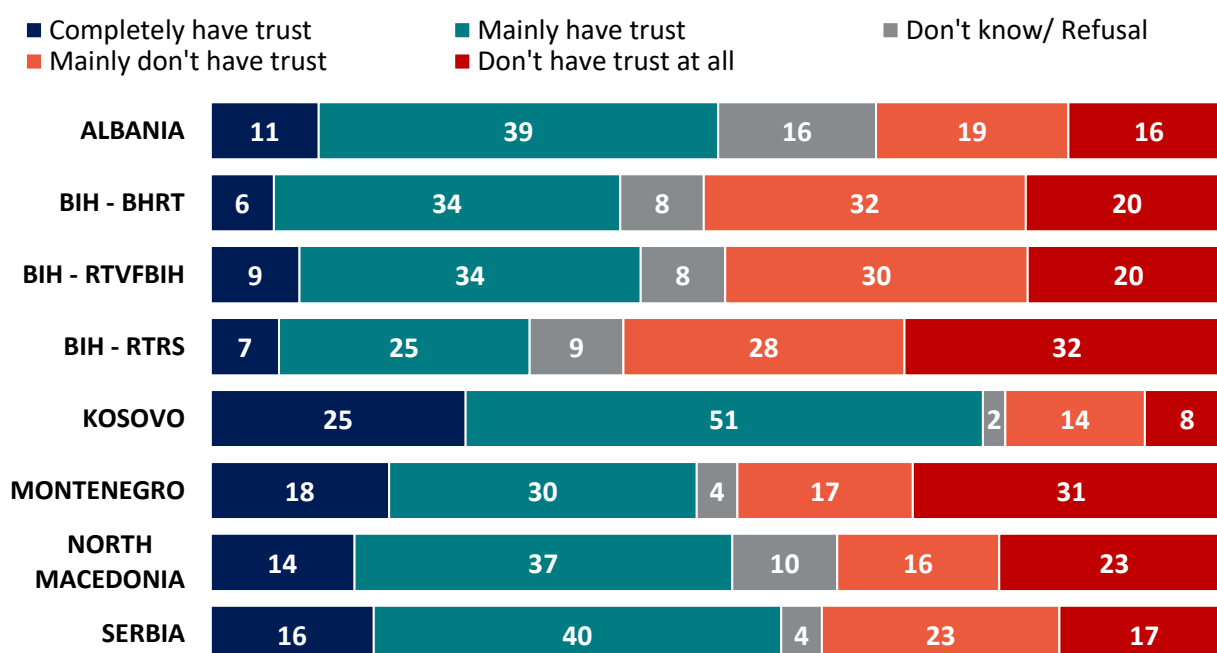
## MEDIA TRUST AND MEDIA-GENDER ISSUES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS - Regional public opinion poll | Trust in news sources

Trust in Public Service Media varies significantly across the region. It is the highest in Kosovo (76%) and Serbia (56%), which is significantly higher than the regional average (Figure 2.3). In Albania and Northern Macedonia, trust in the public broadcaster prevails over distrust (approximately one-half of those who have trust versus one-third who do not). Additionally, in Montenegro, citizens are divided when it comes to trust in the public broadcaster (both at 48%), while in Bosnia and Herzegovina mistrust towards all three public broadcasters prevails.

Furthermore, distrust in Public Service Media is significantly higher than the regional average in Bosnia and Herzegovina - for all three public broadcasters (between 50% and 60% percent), as well as in Montenegro (48%).

**Figure 2.3. Trust in Public Service Media**

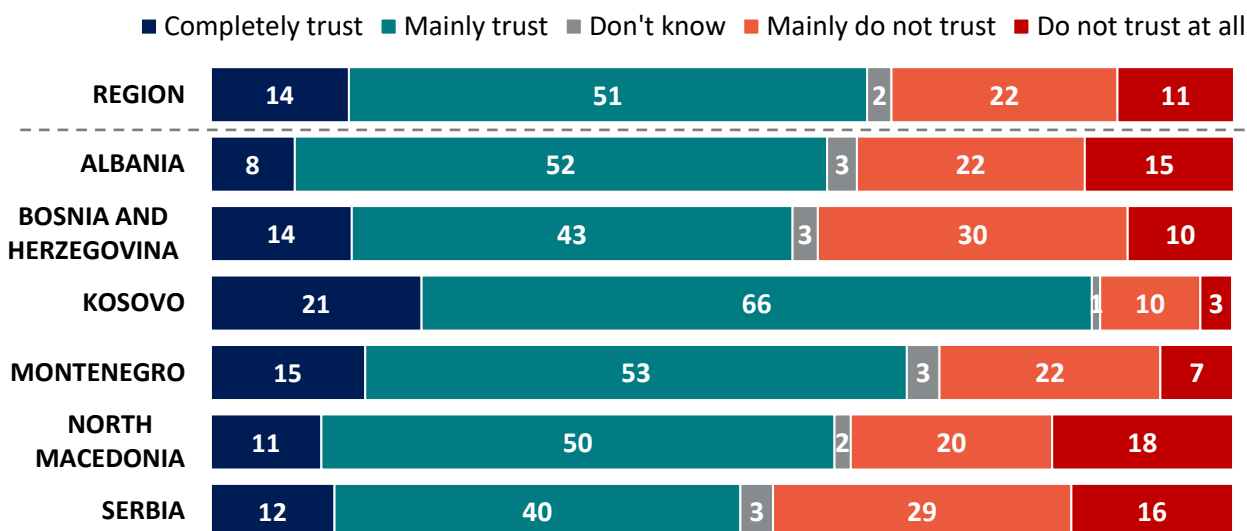
*On a scale from 1 to 4, how much trust do you have in Public Service Media (please insert specific media), when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly? Base: Total target population*



Over half of citizens in all countries trust television as a source of information, with trust in television being the highest in Kosovo (86%), and lowest in BIH (57%) and Serbia (52%) (Figure 2.4).

**Figure 2.4. Trust in Television**

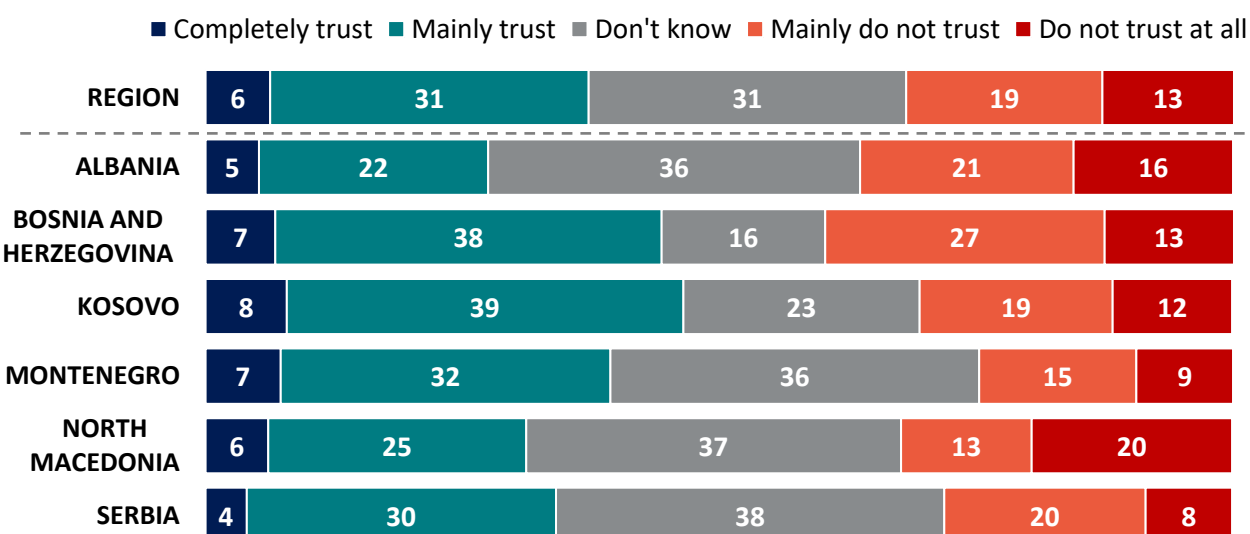
*To what extent, do you trust each of the following media is a reliable source of news and information? - Television;* Base: Total target population



Trust in the radio as a source of information is the highest in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, where more than two-fifths of citizens state that they believe the radio to be a reliable source of news and information (45% and 47%, respectively). On the other hand, trust in radio news is the lowest in Albania and Northern Macedonia, where approximately three out of ten citizens report that they mostly or completely trust in this source of information (27% and 31%, respectively). In between are Serbia and Montenegro, where somewhat more than a third of citizens trust the news they hear on the radio (34% and 39%, respectively) (Figure 2.5).

**Figure 2.5. Trust in the Radio**

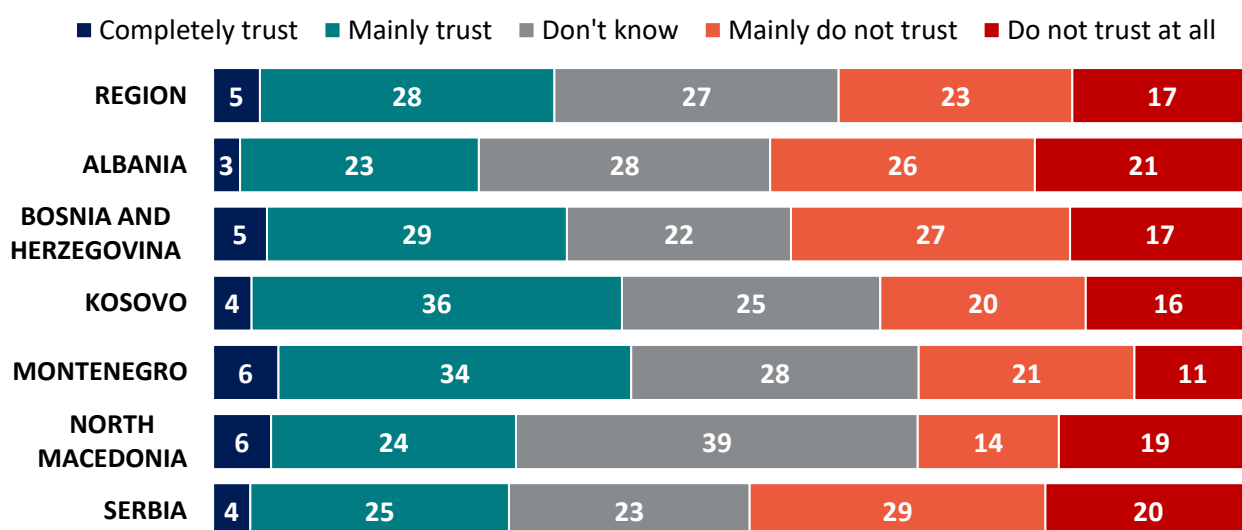
*To what extent, do you trust each of the following media is a reliable source of news and information? - Radio;* Base: Total target population



Between a quarter and a third of citizens in most of Western Balkan countries trust the news they read in the newspapers and magazines, with this percentage rising to four out of ten citizens in Montenegro and Kosovo (both 40%) (Figure 2.6).

**Figure 2.6. Trust in Print newspapers and magazines**

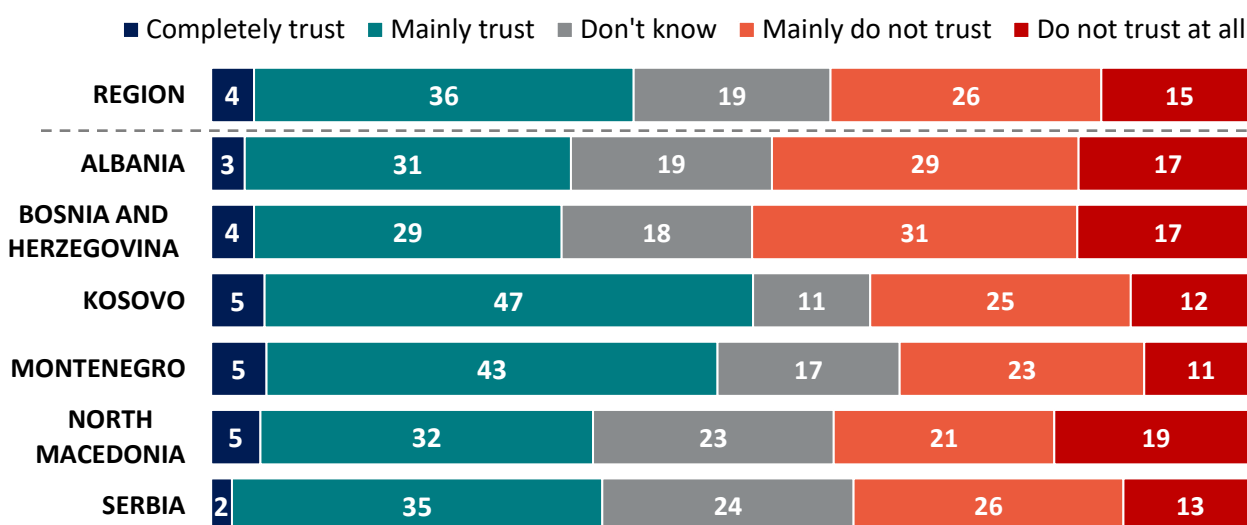
*To what extent, do you trust each of the following media is a reliable source of news and information? - Print newspapers and magazines; Base: Total target population*



Similarly, about half of citizens in Montenegro and Kosovo have confidence in the reliability of the news that can be found on web portals (48% and 52%, respectively), which is significantly higher compared to other countries in the region where approximately a third of the population has confidence in this source of information (Figure 2.7).

**Figure 2.7. Trust in Online media**

*To what extent, do you trust each of the following media is a reliable source of news and information? - Online media (such as news web portals, online news magazines and news blogs); Base: Total target population*



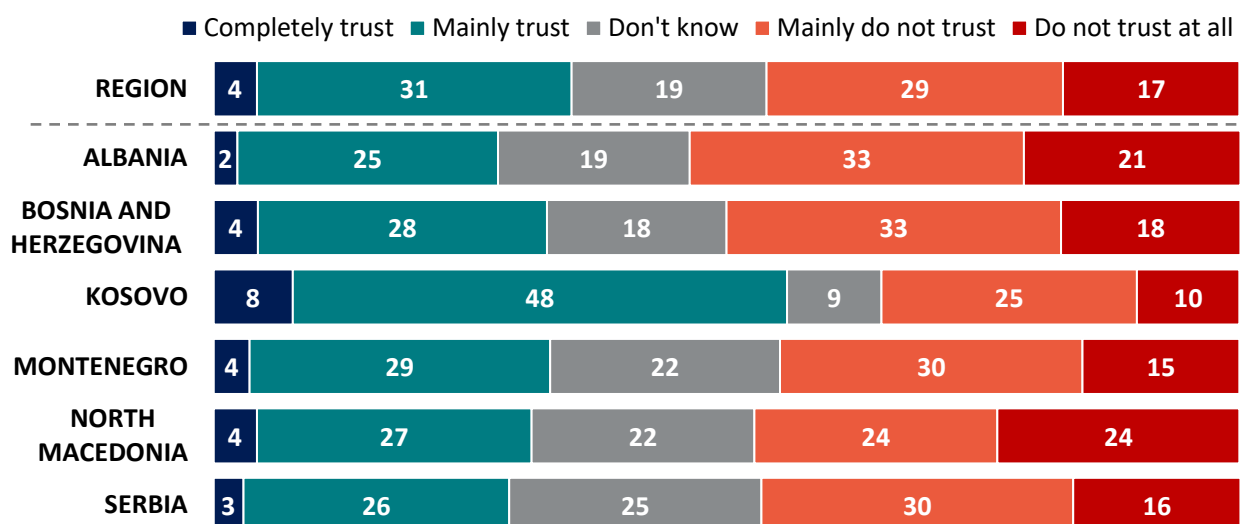


## MEDIA TRUST AND MEDIA-GENDER ISSUES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS - Regional public opinion poll | Trust in news sources

The share of citizens who trust social networks is fairly uniform across the region (approximately one out of three citizens in all countries), with exception of Kosovo, where more than a half of the population say they trust this type of information source (56%) (Figure 2.8).

**Figure 2.8. Trust in Social networks**

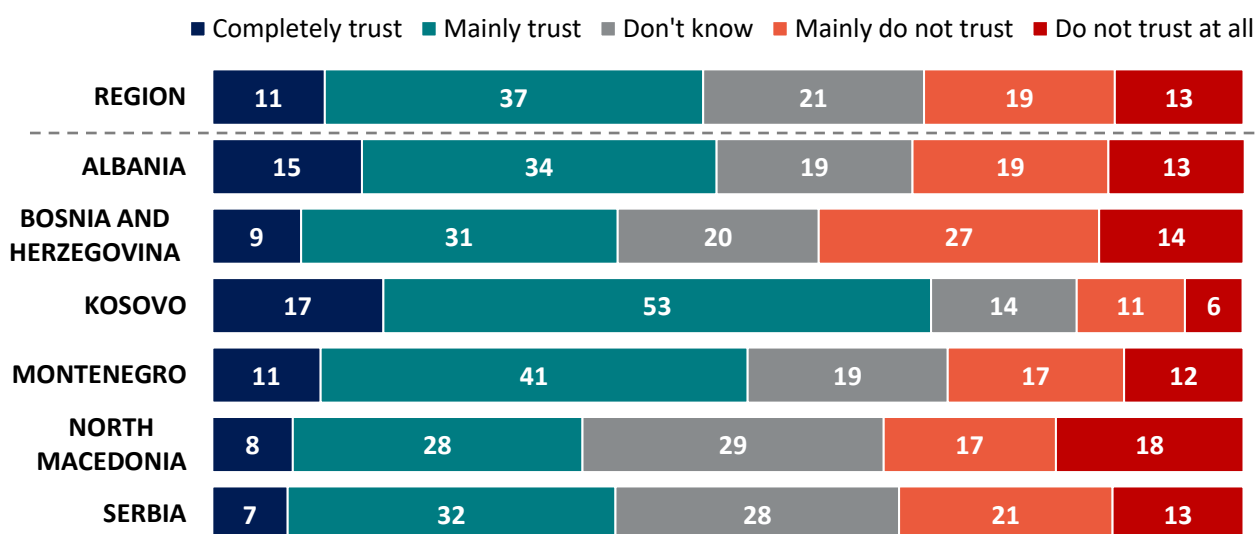
*To what extent, do you trust each of the following media is a reliable source of news and information? - Social networks (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube etc.); Base: Total target population*



Over half of citizens in Montenegro and Kosovo believe that the investigative reporting outlets are a reliable source of information (52% and 70%, respectively) (Figure 2.9). The same is claimed by about half of the citizens in Albania (49%), while this share is significantly lower in other countries in the region - below two-fifths (36% in Macedonia and 39% in both Serbia and BIH).

**Figure 2.9. Trust in Investigative reporting outlets**

*To what extent, do you trust each of the following media is a reliable source of news and information? - Investigative reporting outlets; Base: Total target population*

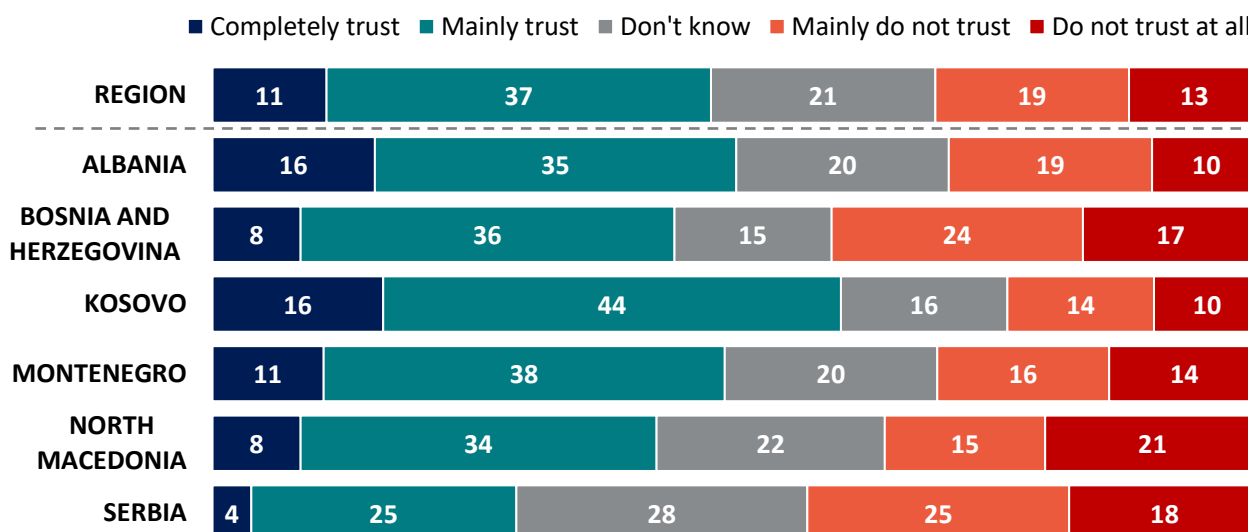


## MEDIA TRUST AND MEDIA-GENDER ISSUES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS - Regional public opinion poll | Trust in news sources

International media outlets enjoy significant trust in most of the countries in the region - between two-fifths and three-fifths of citizens say they mainly or completely trust international media, with the level of trust being the highest in Kosovo (60%). The exception is Serbia, where only three out of ten citizens state that they trust the international media (29%) (Figure 2.10).

**Figure 2.10. Trust in International media outlets**

*To what extent, do you trust each of the following media is a reliable source of news and information? - International media outlets (such as BBC, CNN, Russia Today, Al-Jazeera, Deutsche-Welle, Euronews, Voice of America, Sputnik); Base: Total target population*

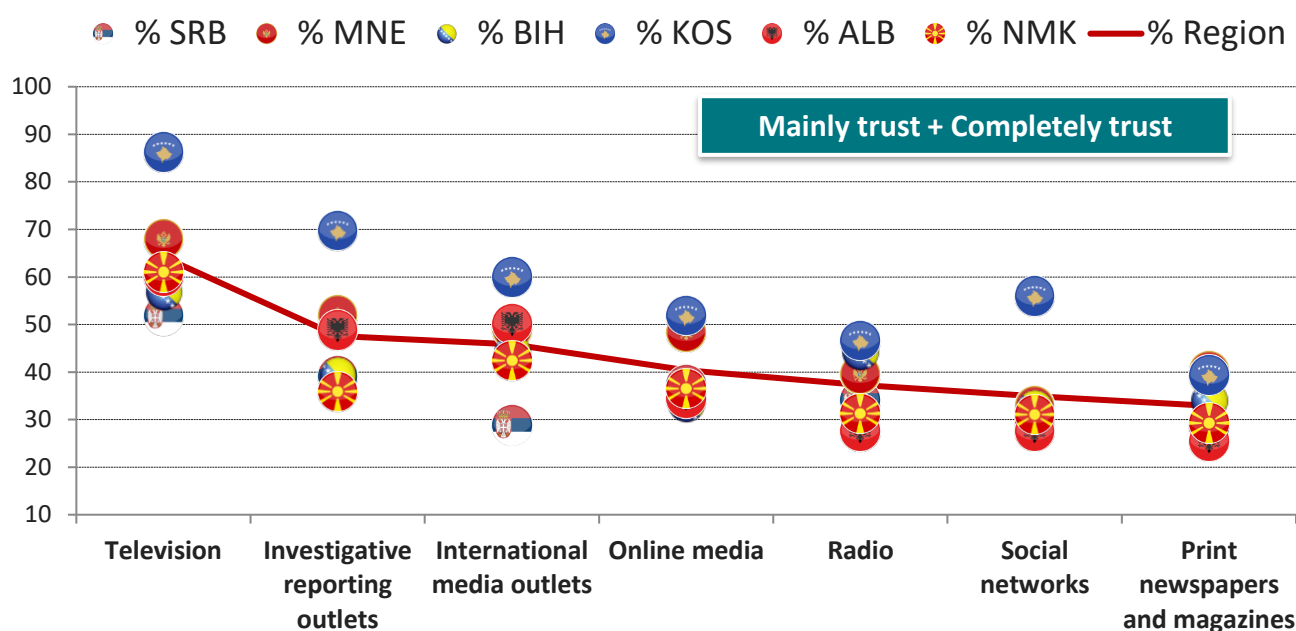


In line with the general trust in the media, trust in all mentioned types of media is significantly higher in Kosovo compared to the regional average. In addition, in Montenegro trust in television, press, news web portals and investigative reporting outlets is significantly higher than in most other countries in the region (Figure 2.11).

## MEDIA TRUST AND MEDIA-GENDER ISSUES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS - Regional public opinion poll | Trust in news sources

**Figure 2.11. Trust in news sources**

To what extent, do you trust each of the following media is a reliable source of news and information?; Base: Total target population



In all countries of the region, the share of citizens who trust the information they receive through television is higher than the share of those who do not trust such information (Table 2.1). The opposite is true for social networks - largest share of citizens in all countries, except Kosovo, do not trust this source. Furthermore, in Kosovo and Montenegro, trust is greater than distrust for most types of media sources. On the other hand, distrust in most types of media prevails in Albania, BiH, Macedonia and Serbia.

**Table 2.1. Net trust scores by country and source**

To what extent, do you trust each of the following media is a reliable source of news and information?; Base: Total target population

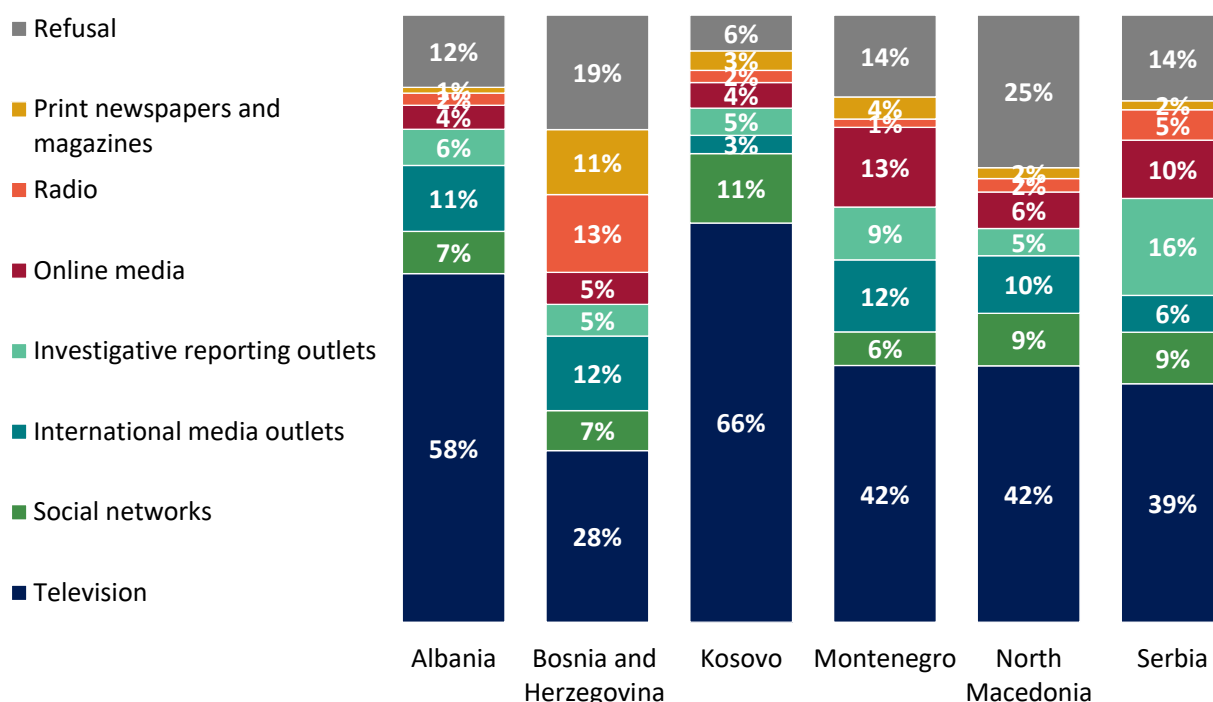
	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo	Montenegro	North Macedonia	Serbia
Television	23.4	16.3	73.3	39.4	23.6	6.8
Radio	-8.8	4.6	16.1	14.7	-1	6.1
Print newspapers and magazines	-20.8	-10.1	3.7	8.3	-2.9	-19.8
Online media	-12	-14.9	14.8	14.2	-4	-1.2
Social networks	-26	-17.6	21	-12	-16.3	-17.9
Investigative reporting outlets	16.7	-1.9	53.6	23.2	1	5.7
International media outlets	20.2	3.3	35.9	18.1	6.6	-14.2

Although the priority given to television varies by country, it is the top-ranked medium in terms of citizens' trust in all countries in the region, with this being significantly more often the case in Albania and Kosovo (58% and 66%, respectively) (Figure 2.12). All other media are in the first place in terms of trust among 15% or less of citizens.

Compared to the regional average, international media outlets are more often positioned in the first place as the source that citizens trust the most in Albania, BiH and Montenegro (11%, 12% and 12%, respectively), while in Serbia, investigative reporting outlets are significantly more often first-placed compared to the region (16%). In addition, in Serbia and Montenegro, citizens significantly more often state that they trust online media the most (10% and 13%, respectively), while in BiH they more often claim it for traditional media such as the radio and the press (13% and 11%, respectively).

**Figure 2.12. The most trusted source**

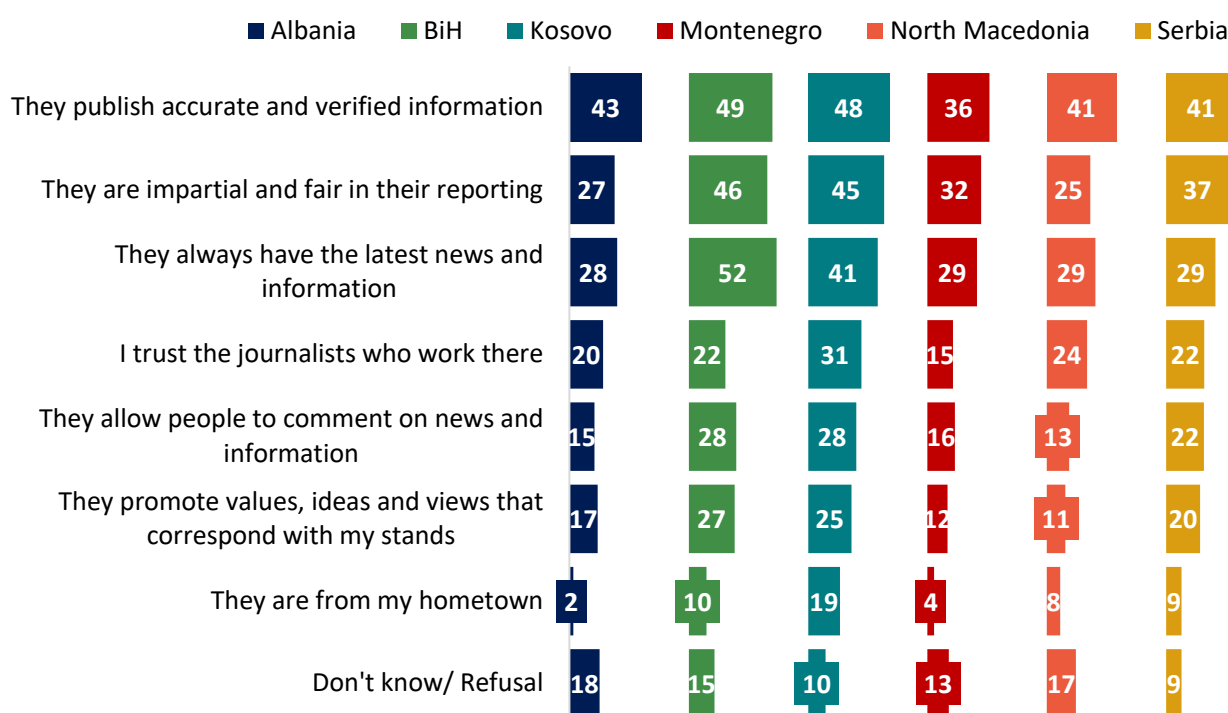
*And now please rank the following sources from the one you trust the most to the one you trust the least when it comes to the news and information; Base: Total target population*



In most of countries publishing accurate and verified information is the main reason why citizens trust certain media outlets, while being impartial and fair in reporting and having the latest news come second or third (Figure 2.13). However, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, most citizens trust the media which, in their opinion, always have the latest news and information.

**Figure 2.13. Factors related to the trust in media**

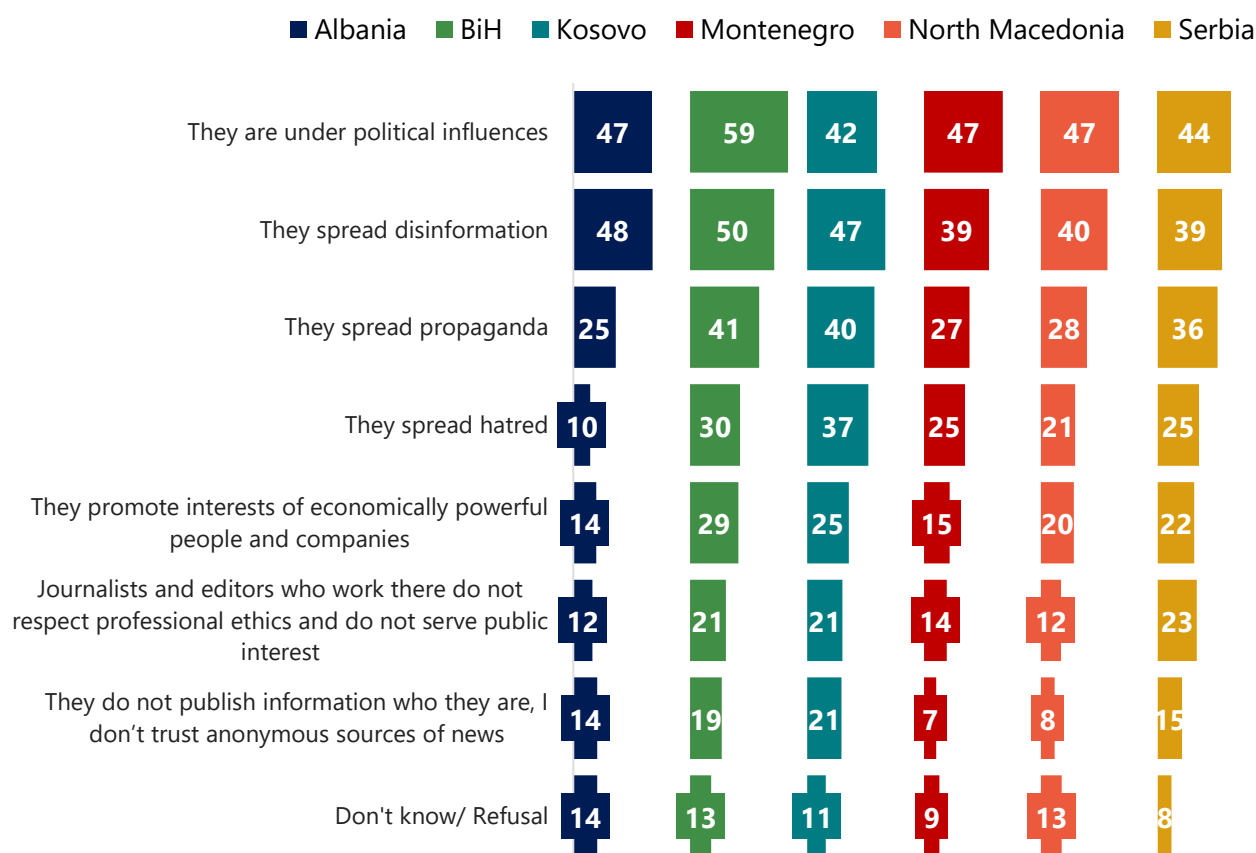
*You may trust some media outlets more than others. Thinking about the media you consider the most trustworthy, what are the main reasons you trust them?* Base: Total target population



On the other hand, the main reasons for distrust in all countries are related to the perception that certain media are under political influence and that they are spreading disinformation, while propaganda spreading comes third (Figure 2.14).

**Figure 2.14. Factors related to the distrust in media**

*And thinking about the media you consider the least trustworthy, what are the main reasons you do not trust them?* Base: Total target population

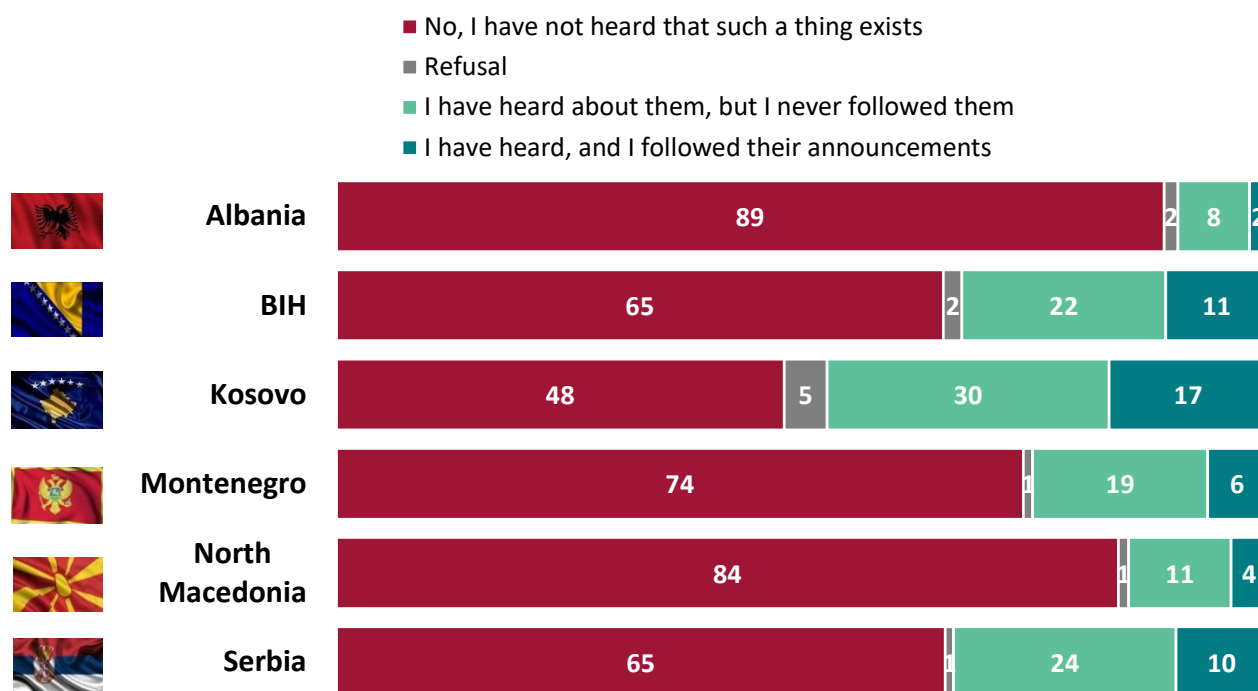


In all countries, except Kosovo, vast majority of citizens have not heard of a media or organization in their country that deals with checking the accuracy of news (Figure 2.15). The citizens of Albania and Macedonia are the least aware of presence of fact-checkers in their country (10% and 15%, respectively). On the other hand, almost half of citizens of Kosovo have at least heard about the existence of platforms that deal with checking the accuracy of news and information (47%), which is significantly higher compared to other countries. Still, half of citizens did not hear of such platforms (48%) in Kosovo, as well.



**Figure 2.15. Familiarity with fact-checkers**

*Have you heard of any media or organization in COUNTRY that deals with checking the accuracy of news and information (so-called fact-checkers) such as...? Base: Total target population*

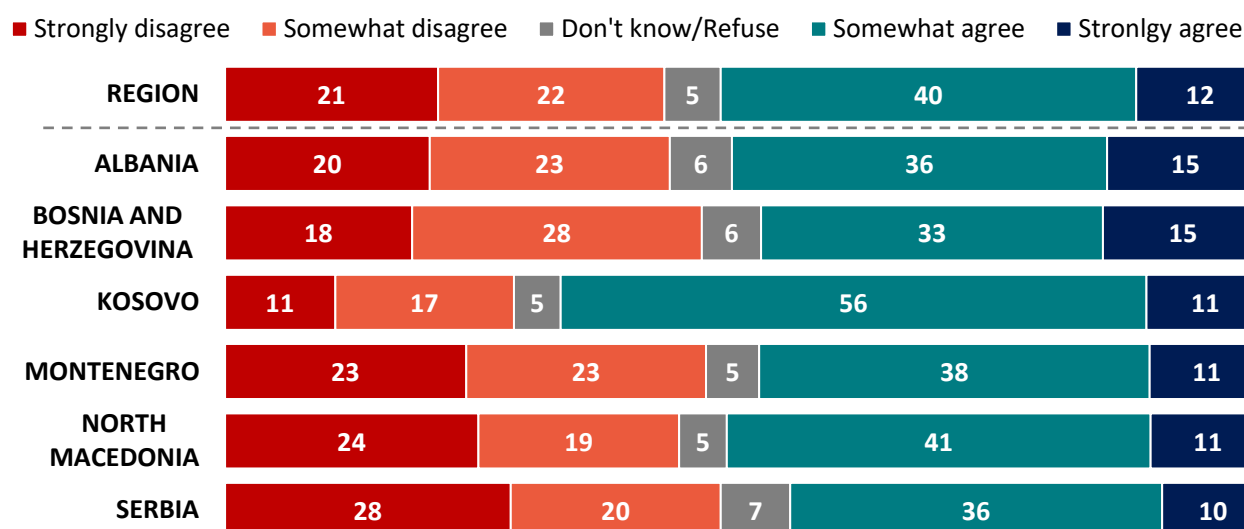


### 3. Attitudes on media

About half of citizens in all countries agree that the media in their country serve democracy and public interest very well, with the share rising to two thirds in Kosovo (Figure 3.1). Furthermore, Serbian citizens support this view to a significantly lesser extent compared to the regional average (46%).

**Figure 3.1. Media (TV channel, radio station, newspaper or news web portal) in COUNTRY serve democracy and public interest very well**

*On a scale from 1 to 4, assess how much do you agree with the following statements.;* Base: Total target population



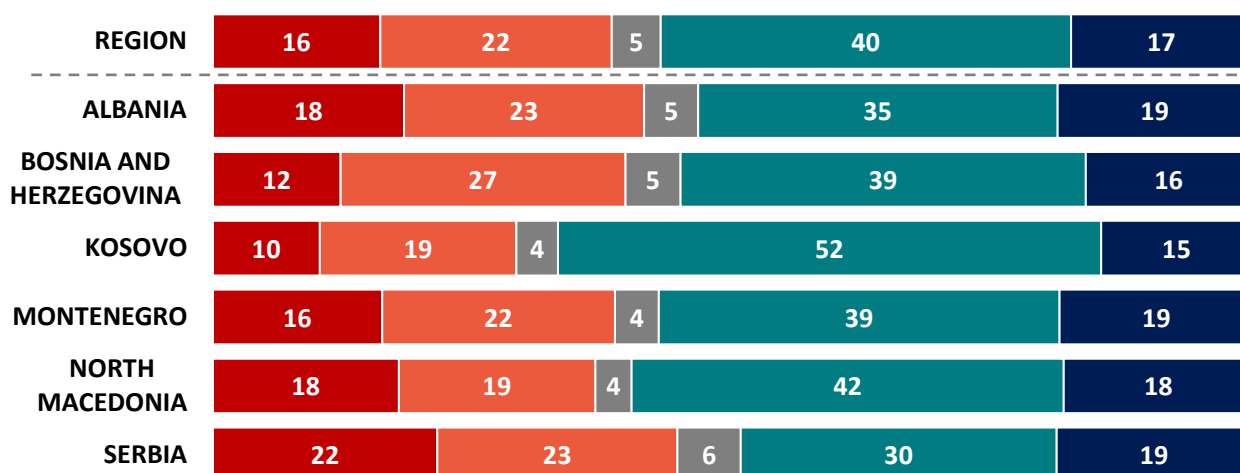
Also, slightly more than half of the citizens in most countries of the Western Balkans believe that the media in their country can freely do their job and report on important topics (Figure 3.2). The impression that the media is free to collect and publish information on all relevant issues is more widespread in Kosovo (67%) compared to other Western Balkan countries. On the other hand, the citizens of Serbia share this attitude significantly less often (49%).

## MEDIA TRUST AND MEDIA-GENDER ISSUES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS - Regional public opinion poll | Attitudes on media

**Figure 3.2. Media in COUNTRY are free to collect and publish information about all relevant issues**

On a scale from 1 to 4, assess how much do you agree with the following statements.; Base: Total target population

■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Don't know/Refuse ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree

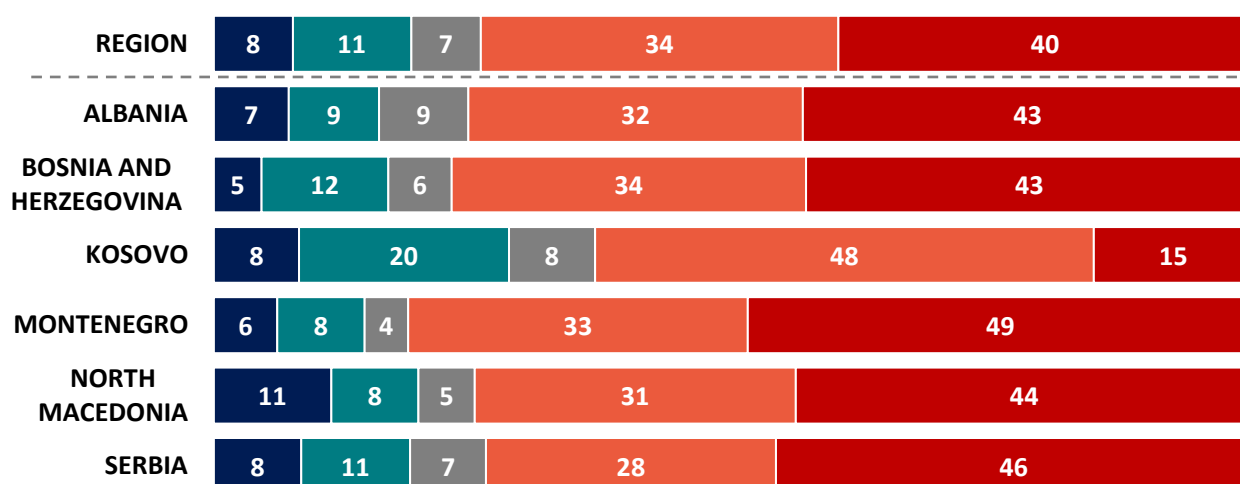


The vast majority of citizens in all countries in the region agree that the media in their country are mainly controlled by political and business powers, with their share being the largest in Montenegro - about four-fifths (82%), and the smallest in Kosovo - close to two-thirds (63%) (Figure 3.3). In other countries, about three quarters of citizens support this view.

**Figure 3.3. Media in COUNTRY are mainly controlled by political and business powers**

On a scale from 1 to 4, assess how much do you agree with the following statements.; Base: Total target population

■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Don't know/Refuse ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree

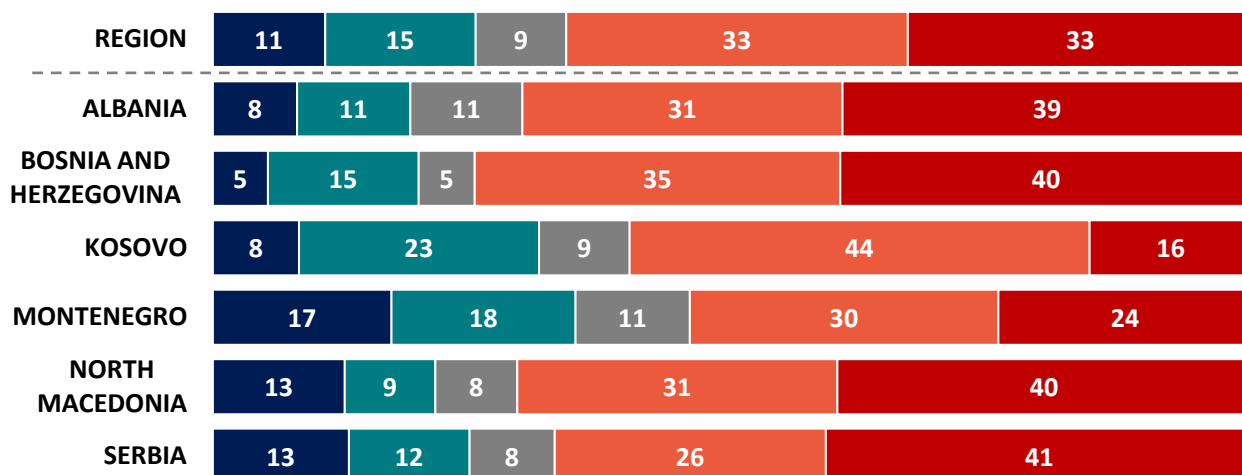


The majority of the Western Balkan countries is of the opinion that the government controls most country's media (Figure 3.4). This opinion is significantly more often held true in Bosnia and Herzegovina – three out of four citizens somewhat or strongly agree with this statement (75%). General population in Montenegro and Kosovo are least assured, with a half of the former (54%) and three-fifths of the latter (60%) holding the same opinion.

**Figure 3.4. The government controls most media in COUNTRY**

On a scale from 1 to 4, assess how much do you agree with the following statements.; Base: Total target population

■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Don't know/Refuse ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree

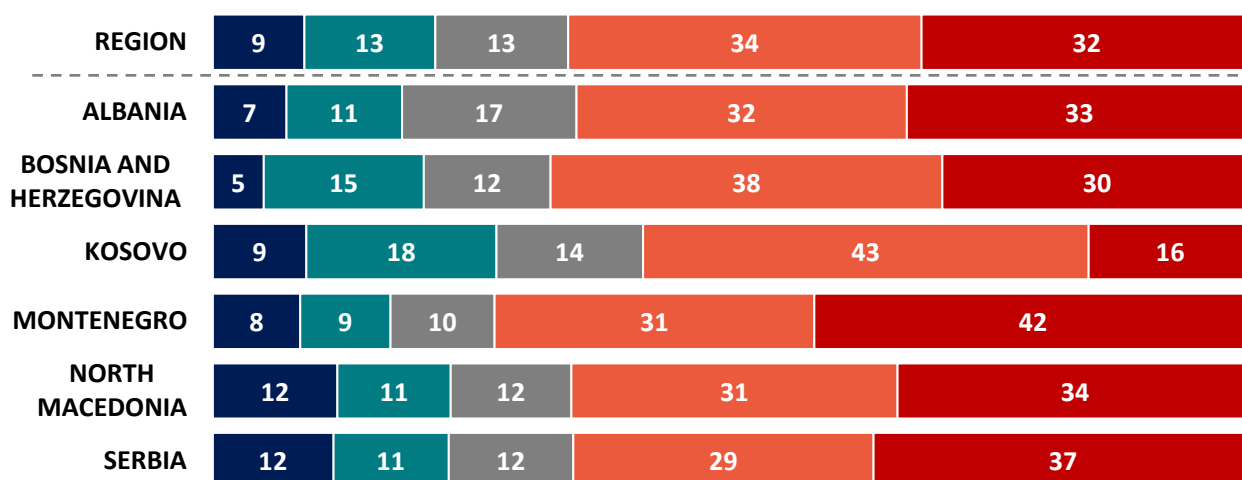


That there is a strong polarization in country between media controlled by the government and the opposition is a belief held by the majority of citizens in Western Balkan countries, with around two-thirds in most of the countries strongly or somewhat agreeing with this statement (Figure 3.5). However, citizens of Montenegro significantly more often perceive that media in their country is polarized (73%), while in Kosovo this belief has been registered far less often (59%).

**Figure 3.5. There is a strong polarization in COUNTRY between media controlled by the government and the opposition**

On a scale from 1 to 4, assess how much do you agree with the following statements.; Base: Total target population

■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Don't know/Refuse ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree



Nevertheless, at least three-fifths of citizens in all Western Balkan countries think that there is a lack of independent and impartial media in their country (Figure 3.6). More precisely, in majority of countries around three out of four people agree with this, while two countries stand out – Montenegro where this

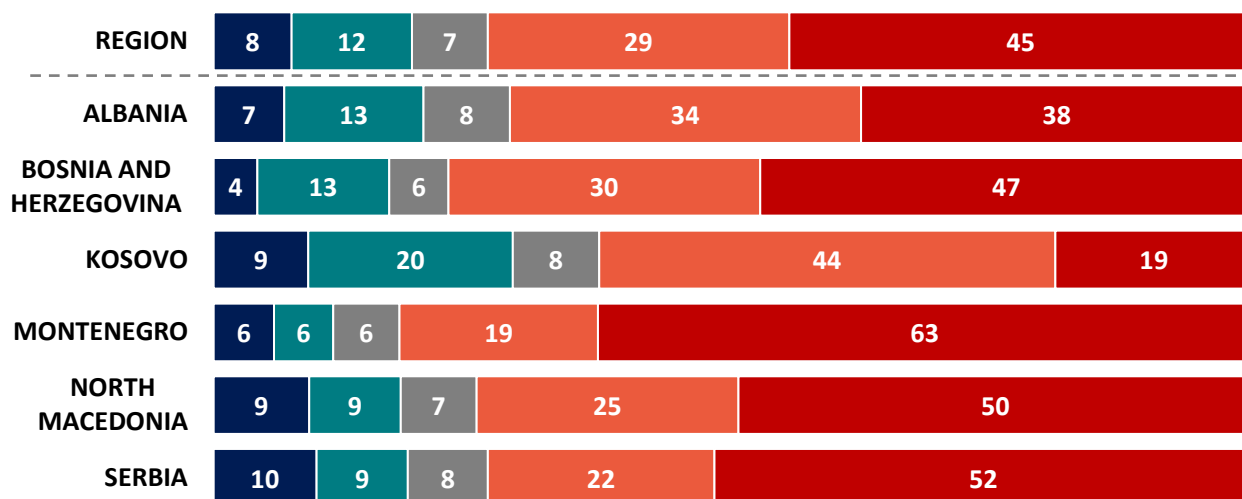
## MEDIA TRUST AND MEDIA-GENDER ISSUES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS - Regional public opinion poll | Attitudes on media

belief is more widespread (82%) and Kosovo where the percentage of people sharing this view is significantly lower compared to regional average (63%).

**Figure 3.6. There is a lack of independent and impartial media in COUNTRY**

On a scale from 1 to 4, assess how much do you agree with the following statements.; Base: Total target population

■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Don't know/Refuse ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree

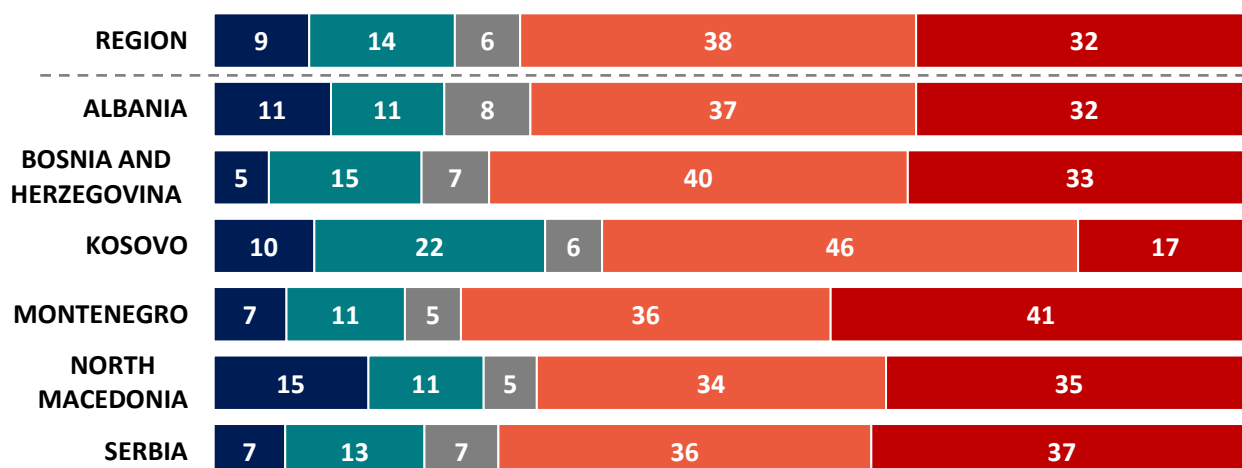


The percentage of citizens who perceive that the media in their country is spreading political propaganda and disinformation is also quite high – about seven out of ten people agree with such statement in all Western Balkan countries (Figure 3.7). People in Montenegro are more prone to support such a view (above 70%), compared to Kosovo where three-fifths of citizens believe that political propaganda and disinformation are ubiquitous in the media (63%).

**Figure 3.7. Media in COUNTRY spread political propaganda and disinformation**

On a scale from 1 to 4, assess how much do you agree with the following statements.; Base: Total target population

■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Don't know/Refuse ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree



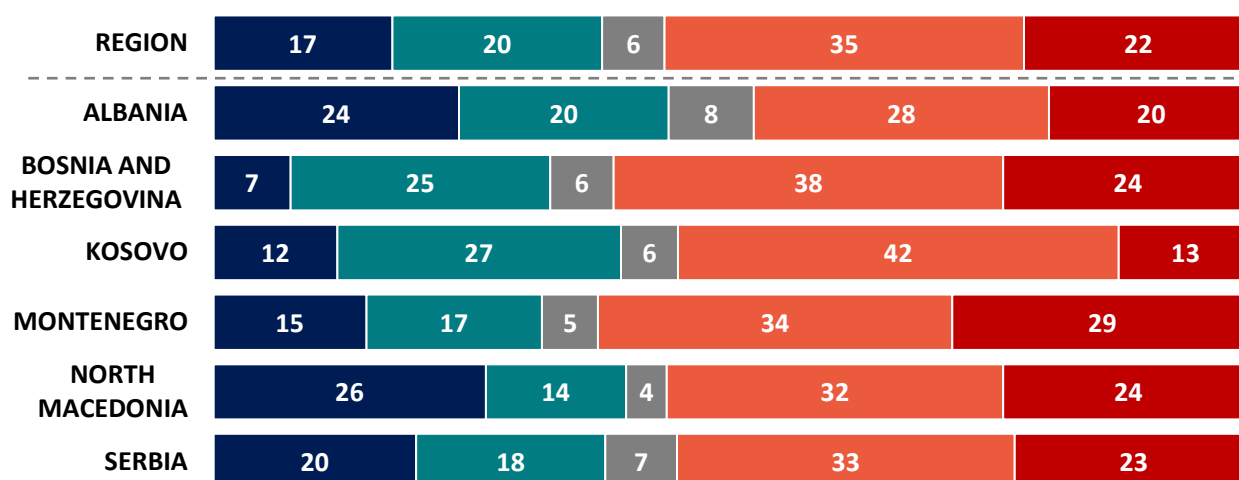
## MEDIA TRUST AND MEDIA-GENDER ISSUES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS - Regional public opinion poll | Attitudes on media

In most countries of the Western Balkans, about half of the citizens think that the media spread hatred, while this share grows to over three-fifths in Bosna and Herzegovina (62%) and Montenegro (63%) (Figure 3.8).

**Figure 3.8. Media in COUNTRY spread hatred**

On a scale from 1 to 4, assess how much do you agree with the following statements.; Base: Total target population

■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Don't know/Refuse ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree

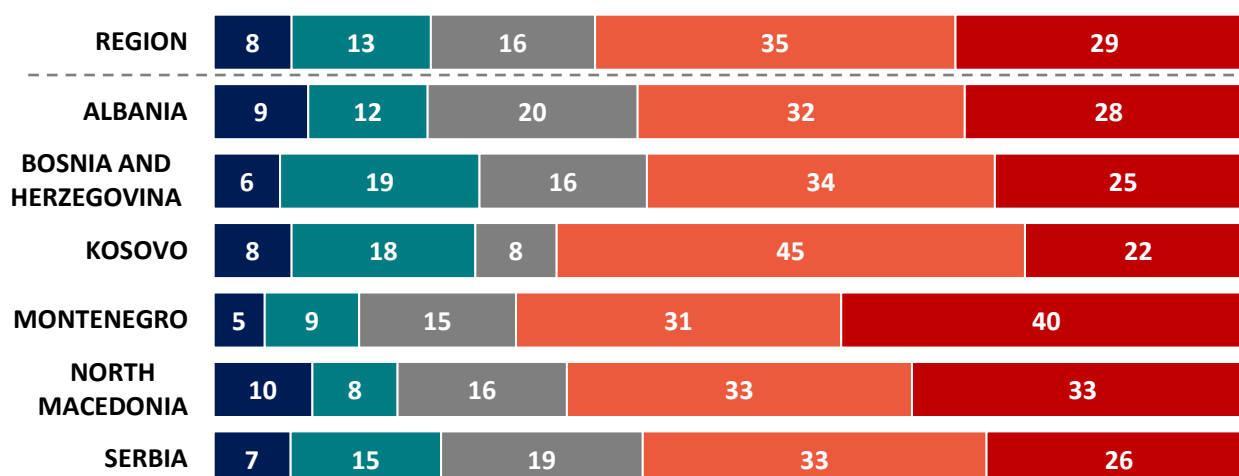


Similar to the media in general, most citizens in the Western Balkans, at least six out of ten, believe that social networks spread political propaganda and misinformation (Figure 3.9). This opinion is particularly widespread in Montenegro, where seven out of ten citizens agree with the statement (71%).

**Figure 3.9. Social networks spread political propaganda and disinformation**

On a scale from 1 to 4, assess how much do you agree with the following statements.; Base: Total target population

■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Don't know/Refuse ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree



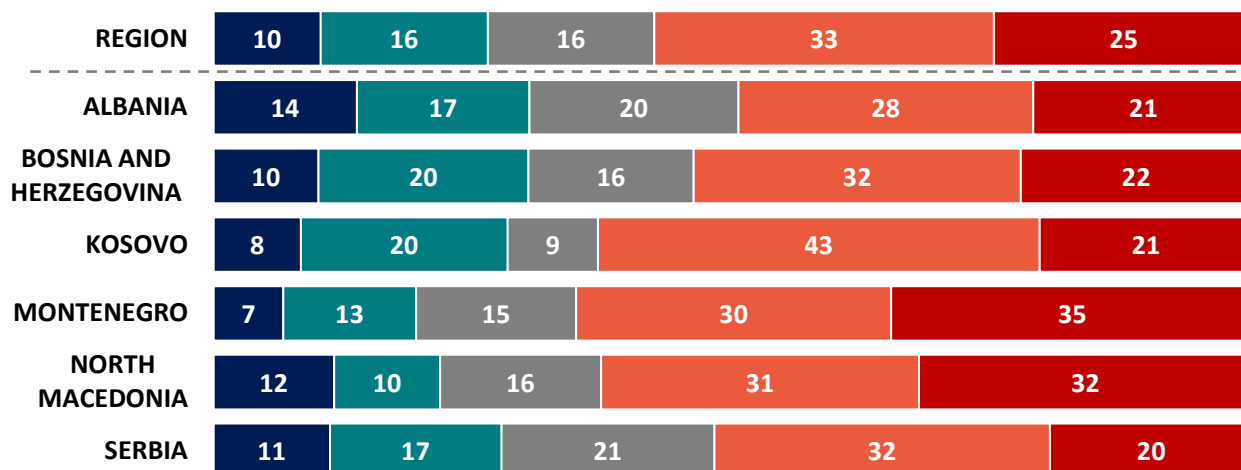
Finally, almost two-thirds of citizens in Montenegro, Kosovo and North Macedonia agree that social networks spread hatred (65%, 64% and 63%, respectively), while share of those agreeing with this view in other Western Balkan countries is lower – one out of two citizens in Albania, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (49%, 52% and 54%, respectively) (Figure 3.10).



**Figure 3.10. Social networks spread hatred**

On a scale from 1 to 4, assess how much do you agree with the following statements.; Base: Total target population

■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Don't know/Refuse ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree



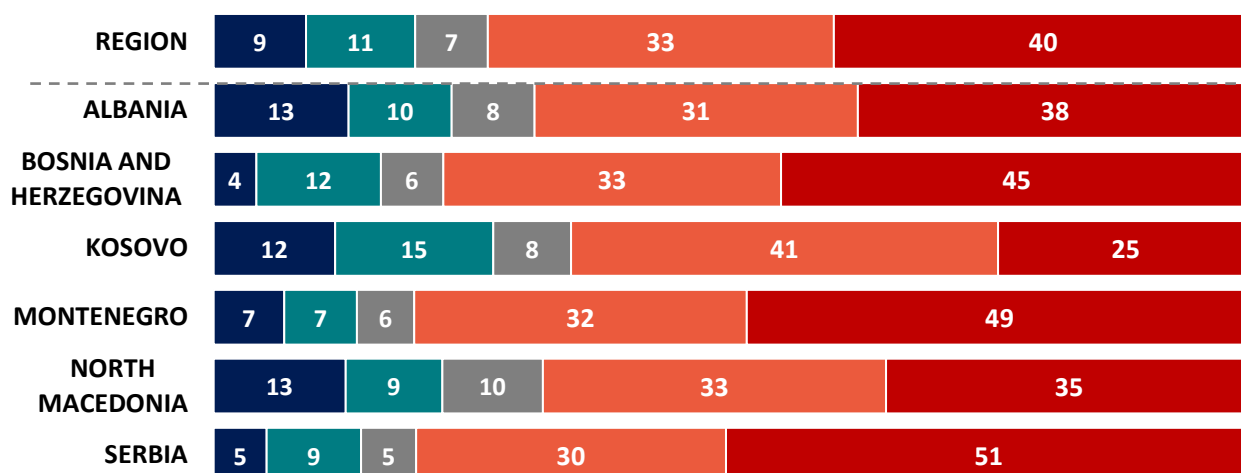
## 4. Media-gender issues

In Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia, approximately two-thirds of citizens believe that women journalists in their country are often the target of attacks, threats, insults, and harassment (69%, 66% and 68%, respectively), while about three-quarters of BiH citizens claim the same (78%) (Figure 4.1). The share of citizens who perceive that women journalists are exposed to attacks is significantly higher in Montenegro and Serbia compared to the regional average - eight out of ten citizens in these countries share this view (81% both).

**Figure 4.1. Women journalists in COUNTRY are often target of attacks, threats, insults, and harassment**

On a scale from 1 to 4, assess how much do you agree with the following statements.; Base: Total target population

■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Don't know/Refusal ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree

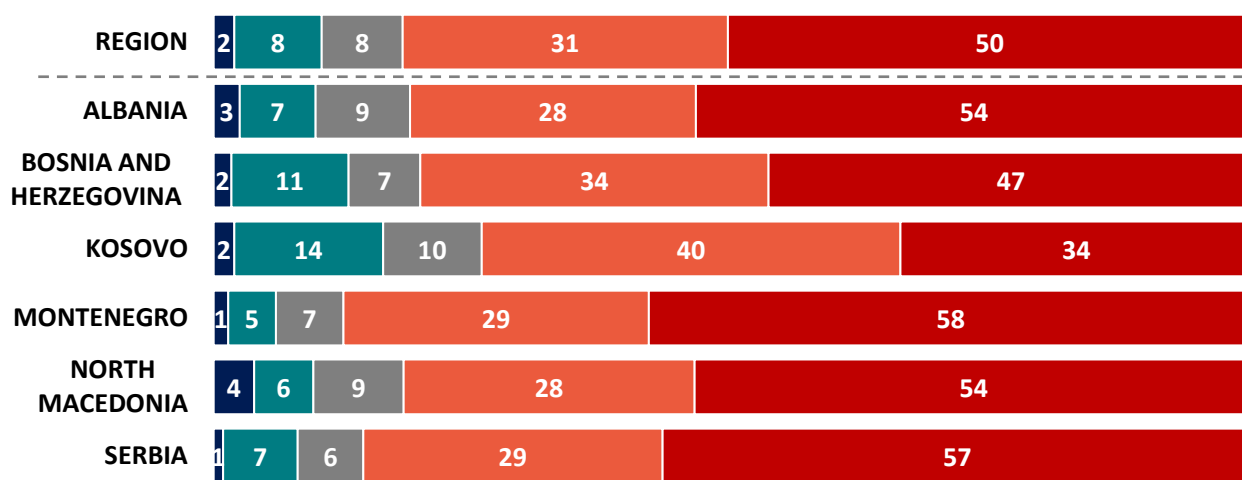


Eight out of ten citizens who believe that women journalists are often the target of attacks and threats, agree that this is a consequence of the fact that they disclose the truth when they report on politics, corruption and crime (Figure 4.2). The exception is Kosovo, where this opinion is shared by about three quarters of those who observe that women journalists are victims of attacks in their country (74%).

**Figure 4.2. Women journalists in COUNTRY are exposed to attacks, threats, insults, and harassment because they disclose truth when they report on politics, corruption and crime**

*On a scale from 1 to 4, assess how much do you agree with the following statements.; Base: Total target population*

■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Don't know/Refusal ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree

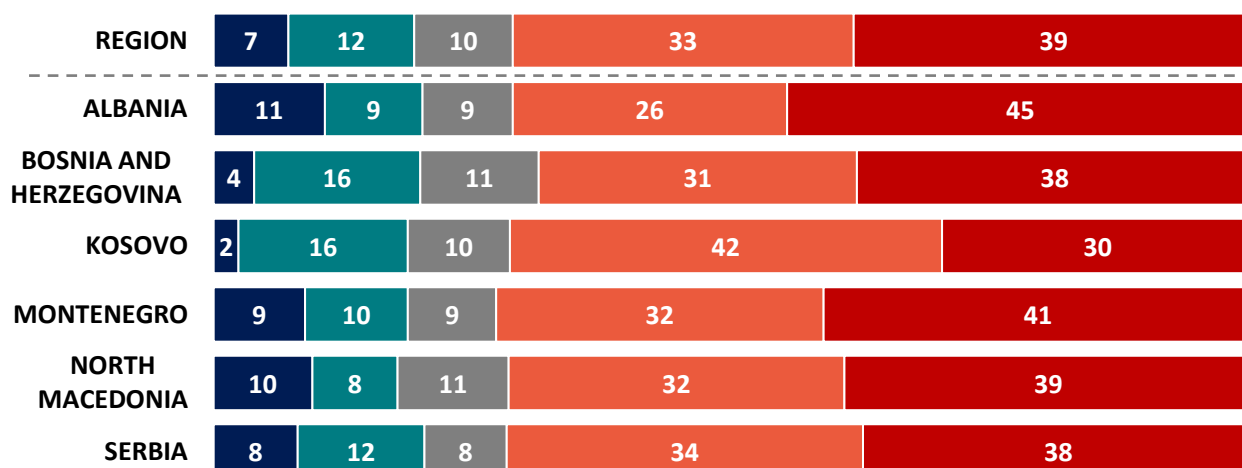


Furthermore, approximately seven out of ten citizens in all countries agree that attacks on women journalists stem from prejudices and stereotypes about their gender (Figure 4.3).

**Figure 4.3. Women journalists in COUNTRY are exposed to attacks, threats, insults and harassment because of prejudices and stereotypes about their gender**

*On a scale from 1 to 4, assess how much do you agree with the following statements.; Base: those who somewhat disagree, somewhat or strongly agree that women journalists in their country are target of attacks, threats, insults, and harassment*

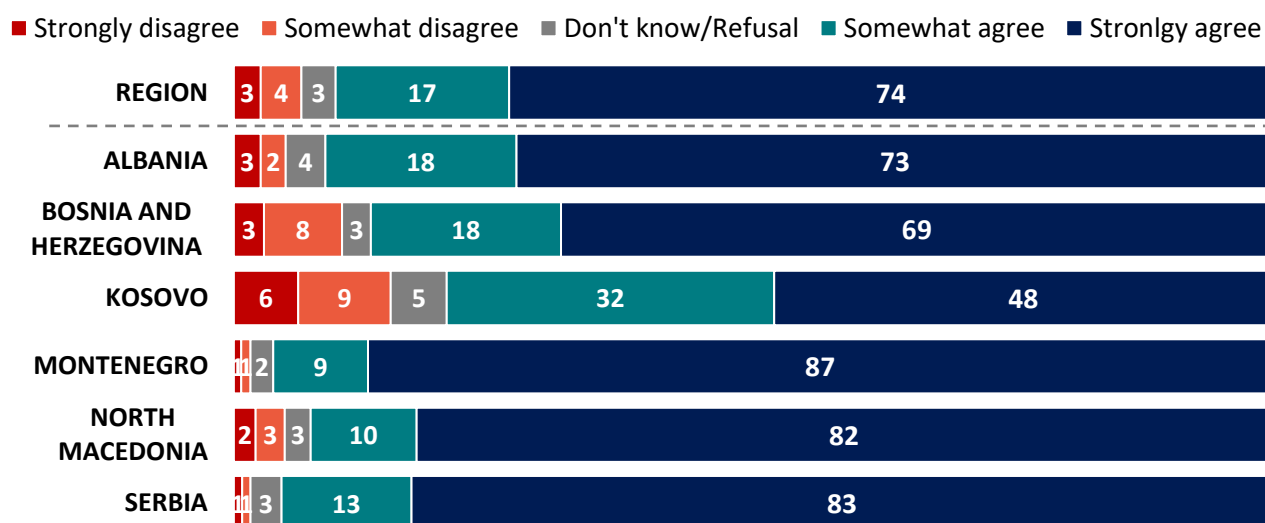
■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Don't know/Refusal ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree



The vast majority of the citizens in the Western Balkans believes that state authorities should protect women journalists when they are threatened or attacked, with around half of the population in each country strongly agreeing with this statement (Figure 4.4). However, Montenegrin citizens much more often agree that the duty of state bodies is to protect women journalists from attacks (96%), while in Kosovo such an attitude is registered somewhat less frequently (80%).

**Figure 4.4. The state bodies (police, judiciary) should protect women journalists when they are threatened or attacked**

*On a scale from 1 to 4, assess how much do you agree with the following statements.;* Base: those who somewhat disagree, somewhat or strongly agree that women journalists in their country are target of attacks, threats, insults, and harassment



# ANNEX 1. COUNTRY REPORTS

## a. Albania

**Television stands out as the most commonly used source for gathering information in Albania, as more than four-fifths of citizens claim to be using it on a daily basis (83%).** Other “traditional” media, such as print newspapers/magazines and radio, are far behind, both followed daily by about one in ten citizens (10% and 13%, respectively).

**Social networks are second most commonly consumed news source, through which more than one half of population 18+ is informed on a daily basis (53%).** Similar numbers are present in the case of personal contacts such as family, friends and colleagues (50%), while news web portals, online news magazines and blogs are being used by two-fifths of citizens every day (39%).

**The results indicate the significant differences in the use of information sources according to demographic characteristics, especially age.**

- People aged 60 or older more often report watching TV daily (96%), while television is less often watched by those aged 18 to 29 (67% daily).
- Other types of traditional media also tend to be less popular among the youngest. For example, among those aged 60 and older a fifth read the press every day to get informed (20%), compared with 6% of 18-29-year-olds. Similarly, radio is the most popular source of information among those aged 30-59 (17% of them listen to the radio daily), while only 7% of those aged 18-29 report using it in order to get news.
- On the other hand, the youngest, aged 18-29, prefer getting information through online media - news web portals, online news magazines/blogs (54% use them daily) and social networks (84% use them daily). Furthermore, these sources show higher usage among those in the 30-44 age category, highly educated, employed, as well as those from upper-income households (above 48000 Lek).

**When it comes to the main source of information, the findings are largely similar: for the largest share of citizens, close to two-thirds, the main source of news is television (65%).** Social networks are the main source of information for one-fifth of citizens (22%), while other sources of information are far behind, at a single-digit level. Also, online sources such as social networks and web portals are more often main source of news for young people (18-29 years old), those with higher education and with the highest household income. On the other hand, television is far more often the primary source for citizens over the age of 45 and those with primary or no education.

**Somewhat higher share of citizens have trust in the media than those who don't, with 52% vs 46% ratio in favor of trust.** More specifically, 45% of citizens maintain that they mostly trust what is being said in the media, while 6% say they trust in media completely. On the other hand, three out of ten say they mainly don't have trust (31%), with additional 15% who don't believe media at all. Generally, levels of trust are higher among women and those who prefer traditional media such as TV, radio and the press.

**When it comes to different types of media, citizens have the most confidence in the information they receive through television**, as three-fifths claim they mainly or completely trust television to be reliable source of information (60%). Right behind are **international and investigative media that enjoy the trust of one in two citizens in Albania** (50% and 49%, respectively). It is important to note that if we look at the average values, international media outlets are rated as the most trustworthy source of news, followed by the investigative media and television.

Furthermore, for every third citizen, online media (such as news web portals, online news magazines and news blogs) is trustworthy source of information (34%), while slightly more than a quarter believe the information they read on social networks or in the press, and which they hear on the radio is reliable (28%, 26% and 28%, respectively). However, **social networks are the media that citizens trust the least (54%), followed by printed editions of newspapers and magazines (46%), as well as news web portals/online magazines (47%)**.

As expected, those citizens who trust the media in general, are more inclined to trust all the different types of media as well, compared to the total population. Moreover, the youngest, who more often follow online sources, are more likely to trust social networks and web portals.

**Similar findings were obtained when citizens were asked to rank the mentioned types of media from the one they trust the most to the one they trust the least. Namely, television is the source that over half of the population trusts the most (58%), while three quarters include it in the top three most trusted sources (76%).** Television is followed by international media and investigative reporting outlets, which more than a third of citizens mentioned among the three most trustworthy sources (37% and 34%, respectively).

There is also a tendency for citizens who prefer certain types of media as their main source of information to also trust these types of media more. Thus, those who opt for traditional media more often mention television, radio and the press as the top three most trusted sources of information. On the other hand, those who prefer modern media more often trust online media and social networks the most.

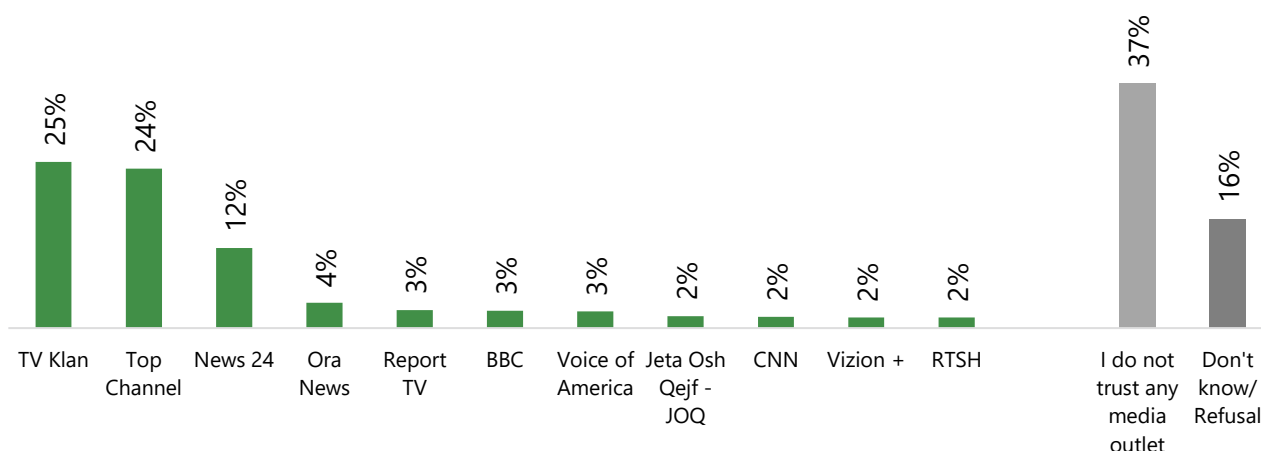
Looking at first answers, as well as when all answers are considered, **publishing accurate and verified information is the main reason why citizens trust certain media outlets (43%), while having the latest news and being impartial and fair in reporting share the second place (28% and 27%, respectively).**

**On the other hand, the main reasons why citizens do not trust certain media are related to spreading misinformation or political influence they are under (48% and 47%, respectively).** In addition, another quarter of citizens do not trust certain media outlets due to propaganda spreading (25%).

**TV Klan and Top Channel are the most trusted media outlets, mentioned by around a quarter of citizens. However more than a third of citizens say they do not trust any media outlet (37%) (Figure a.1).**

**Figure a.1. Top ten media outlets citizens in Albania trust the most**

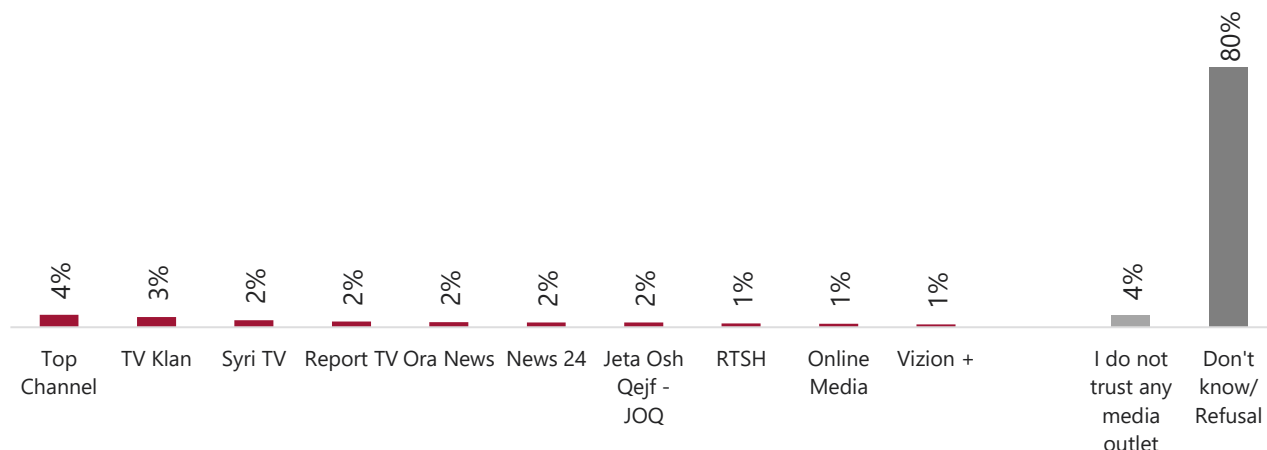
*Which specific media outlets (TV channel, radio station, newspaper or news web portal) do you trust the most, when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly?; Multiple answers; Base: Total target population*



However, when it comes to the least trusted media outlets, there is no significant consensus of citizens, as all mentioned media are at single-digit level (Figure a.2). It is important to note that four-fifths of citizens could not name specific media outlet they distrust the most (80%).

**Figure a.2. Top ten media outlets citizens in Albania distrust the most**

*And what specific media outlets (TV channel, radio station, newspaper or news web portal) do you distrust the most?; Multiple answers; Base: Total target population*



A half of citizens say they trust the Public Service Media (Albanian Radio and Television), while slightly more than a third claim the opposite (35%).

The largest share of citizens believes that the media in Albania are controlled and are not independent. More specifically, three-quarters of citizens claim that media in Albania are mainly controlled by political and business powers (76%), while nearly as many thinks that there is a lack of independent and impartial media in Albania (72%). Furthermore, 70% of citizens think that government controls most media in Albania.

Nearly two-thirds of citizens agree that there is a strong polarization in Albania between media controlled by the government and the opposition (65%).

**Moreover, there is a strong belief that political propaganda and disinformation are widespread in the media** - both in the mainstream media (TV channels, radio stations, newspapers or news web portals) and on social networks (70% and 59%, respectively). **However, there is less agreement among citizens when it comes to spreading hatred in the media and on social networks.** Namely, while about half of citizens agree that social networks and media in Albania spread hatred (50% and 48%, respectively), the opposite attitude is shared by a third or more citizens (30% and 44%, respectively).

**Public is divided in its perception of media freedom and media contribution to democracy in the country.** Namely, more than a half say that media in Albania are free to collect and publish information about all relevant issues, as well as that they serve democracy and public interest very well (53% and 51%, respectively), while more than two-fifths claim the opposite (42% and 43%, respectively). Interestingly, those who trust the media in general, more often believe that the media in Albania are free and that they serve democracy and public interest very well.

**The vast majority of citizens are not aware of the existence of platforms that deal with checking the accuracy of news and information in Albania (89%). One in ten citizens have heard about fact-checkers, of which only 2% also followed their announcements.**

**The majority of citizens perceive the position of women journalists in Albania as very unfavorable.** More precisely, more than two-thirds of citizens believe that women journalists in Albania are often target of attacks, threats, insults, and harassment (69%). Furthermore, nearly three-quarters of them agree that attacks, threats, insults and harassment stem from gender prejudices and stereotypes (71%), while four-fifths think that the attacks are the result of revealing the truth while reporting on politics, corruption and crime (81%). Finally, there is an almost unanimous agreement among the citizens that the state bodies (police, judiciary) should protect women journalists when they are threatened or attacked (91%).

## **b. Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Television stands out as the most commonly used source for gathering information in BiH, as almost three-quarters of citizens claim to be using it on a daily basis (71%).** Other “traditional” media, such as radio and print newspapers/magazines are far behind – a fifth of citizens listens to radio daily (21%), while print newspapers and magazines are read daily by only 5% of them.

**Social networks are second most commonly consumed news source, through which a half of population 18+ is informed on a daily basis (50%), while news web portals, online news magazines and blogs are being used by a third of citizens every day (33%).**

**Finally, slightly more than two-fifths inform themselves through personal contacts such as family, friends and colleagues (44%).**

**The results indicate the significant differences in the use of information sources according to demographic characteristics, especially age.**

- People aged 60 or older more often report watching TV daily (88%), compared to those aged 18 to 29 years (45%).
- On the other hand, the youngest, aged 18-29, more often get information through online media - news web portals, online news magazines/blogs (49% use them daily) and social networks (84% use them daily), compared to the older adults (12% and 14%, respectively). Furthermore, these sources show higher usage among those in the 30-44 age category, with higher education and employed. In addition, online media are more often followed by those living in Federation BiH, residents of urban settlements, ethnic Croats, and those who have household incomes above 1500 KM, while social networks are more often popular among those who don't trust the media.
- The radio is more often used as a source of news among ethnic Croats, employed and those who trust the media.

**When it comes to the main source of information, the findings are largely similar: for the largest share of citizens, nearly a half, the main source of news is television (49%).** Social networks are the main source of information for a quarter of citizens (25%); 15% of citizens relies mainly on the news he reads on web portals, while other sources of information are far behind, at a single-digit level.

Also, online sources such as social networks and web portals are more often main source of news for young people (18-29 years old). On the other hand, television is far more often the primary source for citizens over the age of 45, those with primary or no education, who trust the media and those from low-income households (up to 600 KM).

**Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina are evenly divided over trust in media reporting - half of them do not trust the media, while nearly as many claims they trust the media (49% vs 47% ratio in favor of distrust).** More specifically, 41% of citizens maintain that they mostly trust what is being said in the media, while 7% say they trust in media completely. On the other hand, one out of three citizens mainly don't have trust (35%), while 14% doesn't believe media at all. Generally, levels of trust are higher among those who prefer traditional media such as TV, radio and the press.



**When it comes to different types of media, citizens have the most confidence in the information they receive through television**, as nearly six out of ten claim they mainly or completely trust television to be reliable source of information (57%).

However, citizens are narrowly divided over whether other media represent reliable sources of news and information. Thus, **international media outlets, investigative reporting outlets and the radio enjoy the trust of two out of five citizens in BIH** (44%, 39% and 44%, respectively), while nearly as many do not trust them (41%, 41% and 40%, respectively). Similarly, approximately one third trust the press (34%), while more than two-fifths consider it to be unreliable (44%). Greater difference in favor of distrust is present when it comes to the online media (48% vs 33%) and social networks (50% vs 33%).

As expected, those citizens who trust the media in general, are more inclined to trust all the different types of media as well, compared to the total population. Moreover, the youngest and those who prefer modern media are more likely to trust news from social networks and web portals.

**Similar findings were obtained when citizens were asked to rank the mentioned types of media from the one they trust the most to the one they trust the least. Namely, television is the source that over a quarter of the population trusts the most (28%). However, radio is more often mentioned among the three most trustworthy sources (44%), followed by radio and television (42% and 39%, respectively).**

There is also a tendency for citizens who prefer certain types of media as their main source of information to also trust these types of media more. Thus, those who prefer modern media more often trust online media and social networks the most.

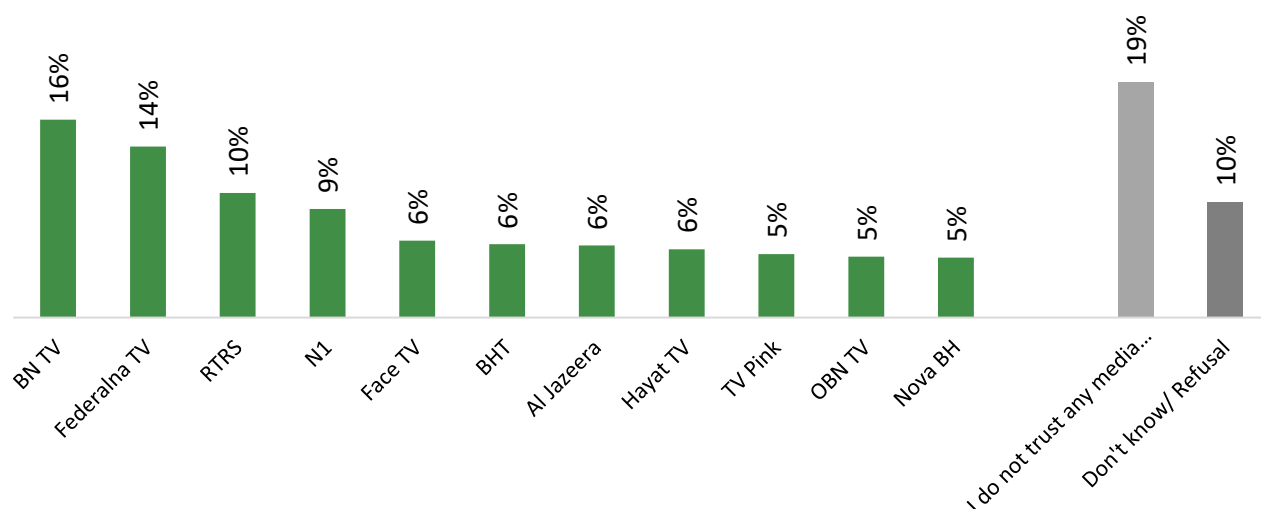
Looking at first answers, as well as when all answers are considered, **having the latest news and information** is the main reason why citizens trust certain media outlets (52%), while **publishing accurate and verified information and being impartial and fair in reporting come next** (49% and 46%, respectively).

**On the other hand, the main reasons for distrust are related to the perception that certain media are under political influence and that they are spreading disinformation** (59% and 50%, respectively). In addition, more than two-fifths do not trust certain media outlets due to propaganda spreading (41%).

**BN TV and Federalna TV are the most trusted media outlets, mentioned by approximately 15% of citizens, while around a tenth of them name RTRS and N1 (Figure b.1). However, a fifth of citizens say they do not trust any media outlet (19%), while one out of ten cannot name media outlet they trust the most.**

**Figure b.1. Top ten media outlets citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina trust the most**

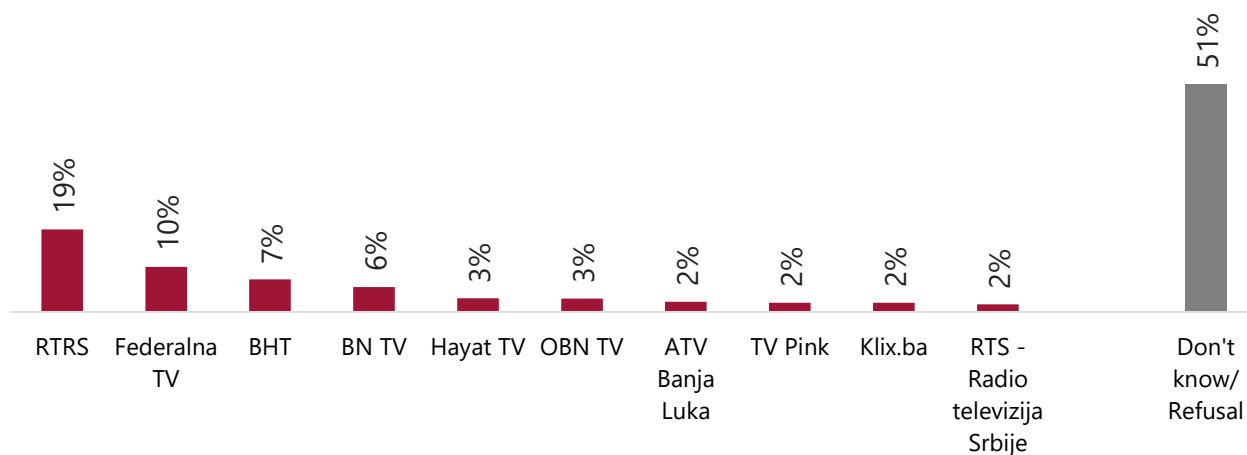
*Which specific media outlets (TV channel, radio station, newspaper or news web portal) do you trust the most, when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly?; Multiple answers; Base: Total target population*



When it comes to the least trusted media outlets, there is also no high consensus of citizens: approximately one fifth mentions RTRS, while one tenth names Federalna TV as the ones they distrust the most (19% and 10%, respectively) (Figure b.2).

**Figure b.2. Top ten media outlets citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina distrust the most**

*And what specific media outlets (TV channel, radio station, newspaper or news web portal) do you distrust the most?; Multiple answers; Base: Total target population*



A half of citizens say they do not trust the public broadcasting services BHRT and RTVFBiH (52% and 50%, respectively), while two-fifths claim the opposite (40% and 42%, respectively). However, somewhat higher share of citizens does not have trust in the third public broadcaster - RTRS, with 60% vs 31% ratio in favor of distrust. Those who trust media in general more often trust all public broadcasters as well. However, there is a clear ethnic division in terms of trust in the different public broadcasters in BiH, as ethnic Bosniaks are significantly more likely to trust BHRT and RTVFBiH, while on the other hand they more often do not trust RTRS. The opposite is true for ethnic Serbs, who have significantly more trust in RTRS, while the level of trust in the other two public broadcasters among them is significantly lower.

**The largest share of citizens believes that the media in BIH are controlled and are not independent, as well that political propaganda and disinformation are widespread in the media.** More specifically, three-quarters of citizens claim that most media in BIH are controlled by political and business powers, as well as by the government, that there is a lack of independent and impartial media and that media spread political propaganda and disinformation (between 77% and 74%).

**Furthermore, two-thirds of citizens agree that there is a strong polarization in BIH between media controlled by the government and the opposition and that media in BIH spread hatred (66% and 62%, respectively).**

**The situation on social networks is perceived similarly – more than a half of citizens think that social networks spread political propaganda and disinformation, as well as hatred (58% and 54%, respectively).**

**Public is divided in its perception of media freedom and media contribution to democracy in the country.** Namely, approximately one half say that media in BIH are free to collect and publish information about all relevant issues, as well as that they serve democracy and public interest very well (55% and 48%, respectively), while about two-fifths claim the opposite (40% and 46%, respectively). Interestingly, those who trust the media in general, more often believe that the media in BIH are free and that they serve democracy and public interest very well.

**Two-thirds of citizens are not aware of the existence of platforms that deal with checking the accuracy of news and information in BIH (65%). One third of them have heard about fact-checkers (33%), of which one tenth also followed their announcements (11%).**

**The majority of citizens perceive the position of women journalists in BIH as unfavorable.** More precisely, more than three-quarters of citizens believe that women journalists in BIH are often target of attacks, threats, insults, and harassment (78%). Furthermore, more than two-thirds of them agree that attacks, threats, insults and harassment stem from gender prejudices and stereotypes (69%), while four-fifths think that the attacks are the result of revealing the truth while reporting on politics, corruption and crime (80%). Finally, there is strong agreement among the citizens that the state bodies (police, judiciary) should protect women journalists when they are threatened or attacked (87%).

## **c. Kosovo**

**Television stands out as the most commonly used source for gathering information in Kosovo, as more than four-fifths of citizens claim to be using it on a daily basis (82%). Other “traditional” media, such as radio and print newspapers/magazines, are far behind, both followed daily by less than a tenth of citizens (9% and 5%, respectively).**

**Social networks are second most frequently used source of news, through which two-thirds of the population over the age of 18 are informed on a daily basis (65%). News web portals and personal contacts follow, with almost half of the citizens informing through them every day (45% and 44%, respectively).**

**The results indicate the significant differences in the use of information sources according to demographic characteristics, especially age.**

- People aged 45 or older more often report watching TV daily (92%), while television is less often watched by those aged 18 to 29 (68% daily).

- Radio also tend to be more popular among the elder. For example, among those aged 60 and older 16% listen to the radio every day to get informed, compared with 7% of 18-29-year-olds. Radio is also more often a source of daily information for highly educated, ethnic Serbs, residents of the Northern part of the country, as well as those with higher household incomes (more than 650 EUR).
- On the other hand, the youngest, aged 18-29, prefer getting information through online media - news web portals, online news magazines/blogs (53% use them daily) and social networks (86% use them daily). Furthermore, these sources also show higher usage among those in the 30-44 age category, highly educated, employed and ethnic Serbs. In addition, news web portals, as well as personal contacts are more often used source of news among men.

**When it comes to the main source of information, the findings are largely similar: for three out of five citizens, the main source of news is television (61%).** Social networks are the main source of information for a quarter of citizens (24%); one out of ten citizens relies mainly on the news he reads on web portals (10%), while other sources of information are far behind, at a single-digit level.

- Social networks are more often main source of news for young people (18-29 years old).
- Those with higher education and those who do not trust the media in general, more often prefer online sources, both news web portals and social media. Furthermore, news web portals are more popular among Ethnic Serbs and those with household income over 650 EUR.
- On the other hand, television is far more often the primary source for citizens over the age of 45, those with primary or no education, from low-income households (up to 300EUR), as well as those who trust the media in general.

**The majority of citizens, almost two thirds, trust the media (64%), while about a third do not trust the media (35%).** More specifically, 58% of citizens maintain that they mostly trust what is being said in the media, while 6% say they trust in media completely. On the other hand, one out of four mainly doesn't have trust (26%), with additional 9% who don't believe media at all. Generally, levels of distrust are higher among the youngest (18-29 years), ethnic Serbs, and those who prefer informing through online media and personal contacts.

**When it comes to different types of media, citizens have the most confidence in the information they receive through television,** as more than four-fifths claim they mainly or completely trust television to be reliable source of information (86%). Right behind are **investigative media that enjoy the trust of one out of seven citizens in Kosovo (70%).** Furthermore, for more than a half of citizens international media, social networks and online media (such as news web portals, online news magazines and news blogs) are trustworthy source of information (60%, 56% and 52%, respectively), while slightly less than half believe the information they hear on the radio (47%). Finally, citizens are divided in terms of trust in the press - while close to two-fifths state that newspapers and magazines are a reliable source of news and information (39%), nearly as many share the opposite opinion (36%).

As expected, those citizens who do not trust the media in general, are more inclined to distrust all the different types of media, compared to the total target population. Moreover, the youngest (18-29), who more often follow online sources, are more likely to trust social networks and more likely to distrust the radio and the press.

**Similar findings were obtained when citizens were asked to rank the mentioned types of media from the one they trust the most to the one they trust the least. Namely, television is the source that two-thirds of the population trusts the most (66%), while nearly nine in ten include it in the top three most trusted**

**sources (87%).** All other types of media, except printed newspapers and magazines, are ranked in the top three most trustworthy by approximately equal share of citizens - between 30% and 40% of them.

There is also a tendency for citizens who prefer certain types of media as their main source of information to also trust these types of media more. Thus, those who prefer modern media more often trust online media and social networks the most.

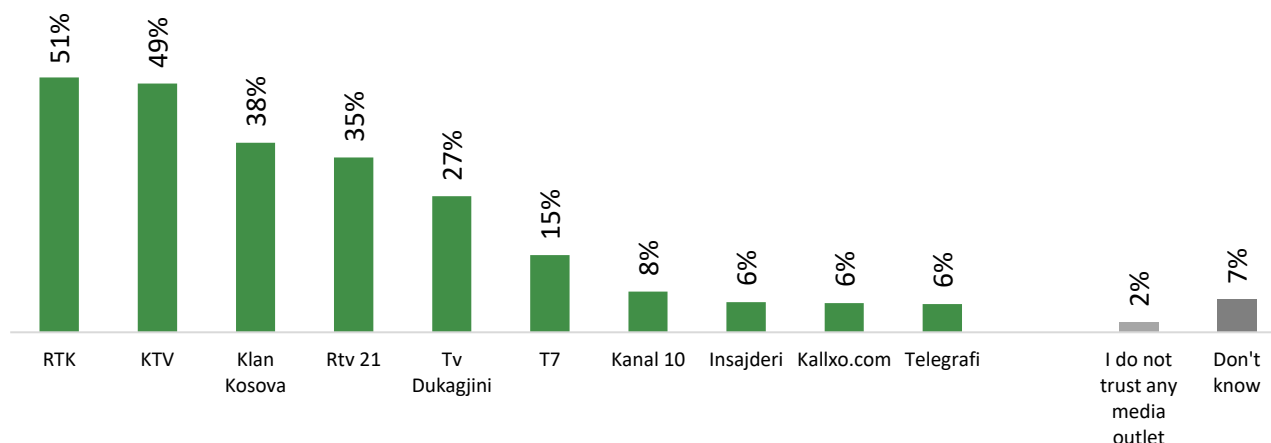
Looking at all three answers, **publishing accurate and verified information, being impartial and fair in reporting and having the latest news, are the main reason why citizens trust certain media outlets** (48%, 45% and 41%, respectively).

**On the other hand, the main reasons why citizens do not trust certain media are related to the spreading disinformation, spreading propaganda, political influence they are under** (47%, 40% and 42%, respectively). In addition, more than a third of citizens do not trust certain media outlets due to the spreading of hatred (37%).

**RTK and KTV are the most trusted media outlets in Kosovo, mentioned by around a half of citizens (51% and 49%, respectively) (Figure c.1). Furthermore, Klan Kosova and RTV 21 are mentioned as most trustworthy by more than a third of citizens (38% and 35%, respectively), while more than a quarter named Tv Dukagjini as media outlet they trust the most (27%).**

**Figure c.1. Top ten media outlets citizens in Kosovo trust the most**

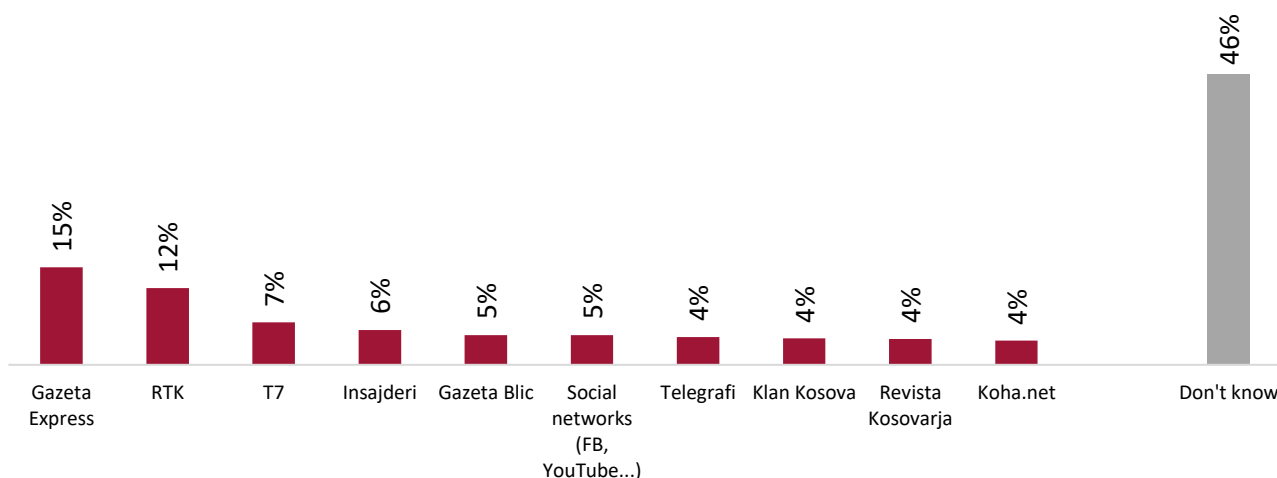
*Which specific media outlets (TV channel, radio station, newspaper or news web portal) do you trust the most, when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly?; Multiple answers; Base: Total target population*



**However, when it comes to the least trusted media outlets, there is no such significant consensus of citizens: 15% mentioned Gazeta Express, 12% mentioned RTK, while all the rest are at single-digit level (Figure c.2). It is important to note that almost half of citizens could not name a certain media outlet they distrust the most (46%).**

**Figure c.2. Top ten media outlets citizens in Kosovo distrust the most**

*And what specific media outlets (TV channel, radio station, newspaper or news web portal) do you distrust the most?; Multiple answers; Base: Total target population*



**Three-quarters of citizens say they trust the Public Service Media - Radio Television of Kosovo (76%), while slightly more than a fifth claim the opposite (22%).**

**More than two-thirds of citizens believe that the media in Kosovo serve democracy and public interest very well and that they are free to collect and publish information about all relevant issues (68% and 67%, respectively). However, nearly as many also perceive media in Kosovo as controlled and dependent. More specifically, almost two-thirds of citizens claim that media in Kosovo are mainly controlled by political and business powers, that there is a lack of independent and impartial media in Kosovo and that media in Kosovo spread political propaganda and disinformation (63% each). Furthermore nearly three out of five citizens agree that the government controls most media in Kosovo (60%), that there is a strong polarization between media controlled by the government (59%), and the opposition and that media in Kosovo spread hatred (55%).**

**The situation on social networks is perceived similarly - about two thirds think that social networks spread political propaganda and disinformation, as well as hatred (67% and 63%, respectively).**

**Half of citizens are not aware of the existence of platforms that deal with checking the accuracy of news and information in Kosovo (48%), while nearly as many have heard about fact-checkers such as Krypometër, a section of Kallxo.com (47%). However, only a fifth of them followed the contents of such platforms (17%).**

**The majority of citizens perceive the position of women journalists in Kosovo as unfavorable. More precisely, two-thirds of them believe that women journalists in Kosovo are often target of attacks, threats, insults, and harassment (66%). Furthermore, three-quarters of those agree that that the attacks are the result of revealing the truth while reporting on politics, corruption and crime (74%), as well as that they stem from gender prejudices and stereotypes (72%). Finally, there is a strong consensus among citizens that state authorities (police, judiciary) should protect women journalists when they are threatened or attacked (80%).**

## **d. Montenegro**

**Television stands out as the most commonly used source for gathering information in Montenegro, with more than three out of four citizens claiming to be using it on a daily basis (78%).** Other “traditional” media, such as radio and print newspapers/magazines are far behind – a fifth of citizens listens to radio daily (21%), while print newspapers and magazines are read daily by only 14% of citizens.

**Social networks and news web portals share the second place as the most commonly consumed news sources, with more than a half of adult Montenegrin population using them to get daily news (59% and 57%, respectively).**

Lastly, nearly a half of citizens is getting informed through personal contacts (family, friends and colleagues) on a daily basis (47%).

**Significant differences were registered in the use of information sources based on demographic characteristics, especially age.**

- People aged 60 or older more often report watching TV daily (92%), while television is far less often watched daily by those aged 18 to 29 (58%). Furthermore, TV is watched daily more commonly by those with primary or no education (86%).
- Similarly, print is also less popular among the youngest population. While 20% of those aged 60 and older reads the press every day to get informed, only 6% of citizens aged 18-29 uses this type of media daily.
- Younger population prefer getting information through online media. News web portals and online news magazines/blogs are more often used daily by citizens aged 30-44 (75%), and far less often by those aged 60 or older (28%). This type of media is preferred by highly educated citizens (73%), employed (70%), and those with the high household incomes – above 1050 EUR (78%).
- Social networks are most commonly used by youngest population aged 18-29 (82%), but higher usage is also registered among those in the 30-44 age category (77%). Like news web portals, social networks are more commonly used by employed (70%).
- Finally, those aged 30 to 44 are more likely to rely on information they receive from people they know personally (56% of them are informed in this way on a daily basis).

**When it comes to the main source of information, the findings are somewhat similar: for the largest share of citizens, more than two-fifths, the main source of news is television (43%).** Online media (such as news web portals) are the main source of information for three in ten citizens (30%), while social networks are primary source for one-fifth of them (19%). Other sources of information are far behind, at a single-digit level.

Social networks and online sources such as web portals are more often main source of news for younger people (18-29 and 30-44 years old). On the other hand, television is far more often the primary news source for citizens over the age of 45, as well as those with primary or no education and from the low-income households.

**The majority of citizens in Montenegro trust the media such as newspapers, TV, radio or online news sources to report the news fully, accurately, and fairly. While nearly two-thirds have trust in the media (62%), one-third doesn't (36%).** More specifically, 53% of citizens maintain that they mainly trust what is being said in the media, while 9% say they trust in media completely. On the other hand, a quarter of citizens



say they mainly don't have trust (26%), with additional 10% who don't believe media at all. Generally, level of trust is lower among those citizens who prefer being informed through the people they know in person.

**When it comes to different types of media, citizens have the most confidence in the information they receive through television**, with more than two-thirds claiming they mainly or completely trust television to be reliable source of information (68%). About half of citizens places their trust in **investigative media (52%), international media outlets (49%) and online media such as news web portals (48%)**.

Furthermore, **four out of ten citizens consider the radio and print newspapers/magazines to be trustworthy sources of information (40% each), while every third believe the information they read on social networks is reliable (33%)**.

As expected, those citizens who trust the media in general, are more inclined to trust all the different types of media as well, compared to the total population. The youngest (18-29) are more likely to trust international media outlets, online media and the radio, while those highly educated more often evaluate international and investigative media as trustworthy. On the other hand, foreign, investigative, as well as online media enjoy far less trust among the oldest population (60+)

**Similar findings were obtained when citizens were asked to rank the mentioned types of media from the one they trust the most to the one they trust the least. Namely, television is the source that two-fifths of the population trusts the most (42%), while two-thirds included TV in the top three most trusted sources (66%)**. Television is followed by news web portals, which more than two-fifths of citizens mentioned among the three most trustworthy sources (45%). Furthermore, approximately one third of citizens rank print newspapers and magazines, investigative reporting outlets and international media outlets in the top three most reliable sources (34%, 32% and 31%, respectively), while about a quarter think these are the radio and social networks (29% and 24%, respectively).

There is also a tendency for citizens who prefer certain types of media as their main source of information to also assess these types of media as more reliable. Thus, those who opt for traditional media more often mention television, radio and the press as the top three most trusted sources of information. On the other hand, those who prefer modern media have more trust in online media and social networks, but in investigative and international media as well.

**Looking at top mentioned reason, as well as all mentioned reasons why citizens trust certain media outlets, publishing accurate and verified information is the number one (36%), while impartiality and fairness in reporting is the second most commonly cited reason (32%)**. Finally, more than a quarter of the citizens name publishing the latest news and information as one of the reasons why they trust certain media (29%). Interestingly, citizens who prefer modern media, as well as young population, more often describe their trustworthy media as those that have the latest news and information, allow people to comment on news and information, and publish accurate and verified information.

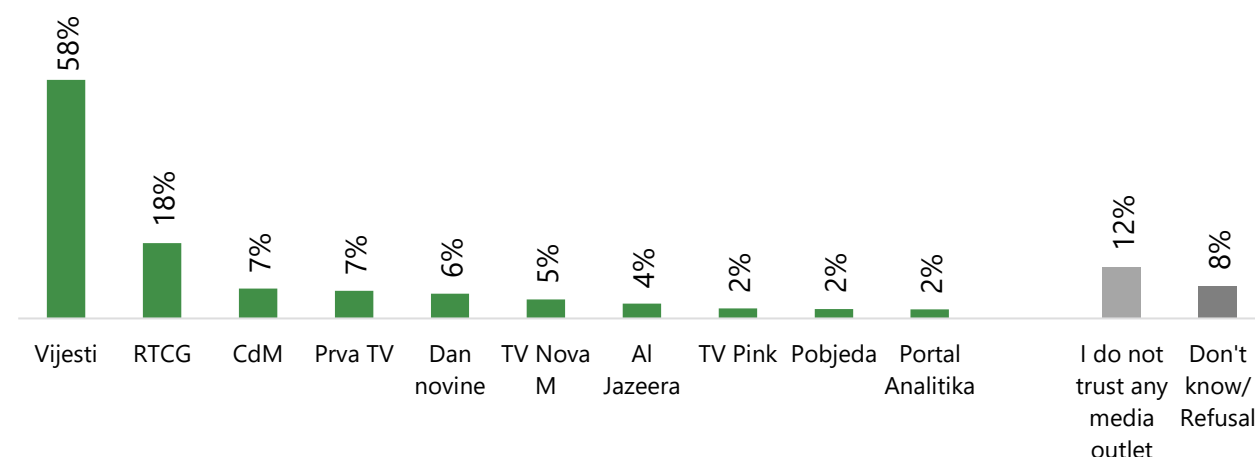
**On the other hand, the main reasons why citizens do not trust certain media are related to the perception that they are under political influences (47%) and that they spread misinformation (39%)**. In addition, approximately one quarter of citizens do not trust certain media outlets due to the spread of propaganda and hatred (27% and 25%, respectively). Those who prefer modern media more often mention that they do not trust some media because they promote interests of economically powerful people and companies and because their journalists and editors neither respect professional ethics nor serve public interest.



Vijesti is clearly singled out as the medium that the citizens of Montenegro trust the most (58%), while Public Service Media - RTCG is most often mentioned as a medium that citizens do not trust (25%). However, it is important to note that RTCG is also the second most trusted media (18%), while Vijesti is the second least trusted media (13%) (Figure d.1. and Figure d.2.).

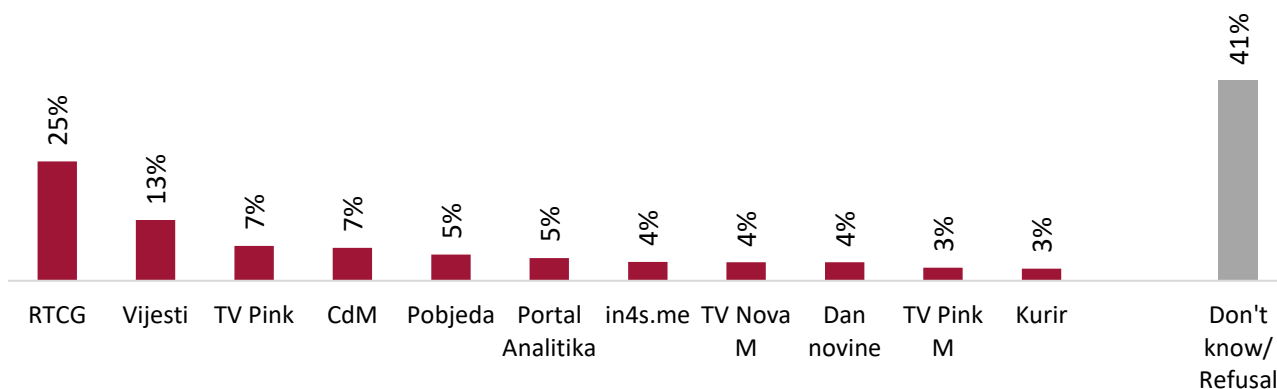
**Figure d.1. Top ten media outlets citizens in Montenegro trust the most**

*Which specific media outlets (TV channel, radio station, newspaper or news web portal) do you trust the most, when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly?; Multiple answers; Base: Total target population*



**Figure d.2. Top ten media outlets citizens in Montenegro distrust the most**

*And what specific media outlets (TV channel, radio station, newspaper or news web portal) do you distrust the most?; Multiple answers; Base: Total target population*



**Opinions are divided when it comes to the trust in of in Public Service Media (RTCG) reporting. While 48% of citizens have trust in media, same percentage of them doesn't.** Levels of trust in RTCG are higher among woman, those with primary or no education, ethnic Montenegrins and Bosniaks, and those who generally trust the media.

**The largest share of citizens believe that the media in Montenegro are controlled and are not independent.** More specifically, **four-fifths of citizens think that Montenegro lacks independent and impartial media (82%), while nearly as many claims that media in Montenegro are mainly controlled by political and business powers (81%).**

Approximately **three-quarters of citizens perceive that media in Montenegro spread political propaganda and disinformation (76%)** and that **there is a strong polarization between media controlled by the government and the opposition (73%)**.

**Seven in ten citizens believe that social networks spread political propaganda and disinformation (71%), while two-thirds agree that social networks are spreading hatred (65%).** Nearly as many claims the same for media (TV, radio, newspapers or news web portals) in Montenegro (63%).

**Nearly three-fifths believe that media in Montenegro are free to collect and publish information about all relevant issues (57%), while two-fifths claim the opposite (39%).**

**More than a half of citizens agree that government controls most media in Montenegro (54%), while a third share the opposite opinion (35%).**

**Public is divided in its perception of media contribution to democracy in the country.** Namely, slightly less than half of citizens say that media in Montenegro serve democracy and public interest very well (49%), while quite similar share of population claims the opposite (46%).

Interestingly, those who trust the media in general more often believe that the media in Montenegro are free and that they serve democracy and public interest very well.

**Most citizens are not aware of the existence of platforms that deal with checking the accuracy of news and information in Montenegro (74%).** A quarter of citizens have heard about fact-checkers (25%), while only 6% of them followed their announcements. Those who follow such platforms are predominantly highly educated population and citizens who prefer modern media.

**The majority of citizens perceive the position of women journalists in Montenegro as very unfavorable.** More precisely, four in five citizens believe that women journalists in Montenegro are often target of attacks, threats, insults, and harassment (81%). Furthermore, nearly three-quarters of them agree that attacks, threats, insults and harassment stem from gender prejudices and stereotypes (73%), while 87% think that the attacks are the result of revealing the truth while reporting on politics, corruption and crime (81%). Finally, there is an almost unanimous agreement among the citizens that the state bodies (police, judiciary) should protect women journalists when they are threatened or attacked (96%).

## **e. North Macedonia**

**Television stands out as the most commonly used source for gathering information in North Macedonia, as three-quarters of citizens claim to be using it on a daily basis (75%).** Other “traditional” media are far behind: 7% of citizens read the news in printed newspapers / magazines every day, while twice as much listen to the radio (16%).

**Social networks are second most commonly consumed news source, through which more than one half of population 18+ is informed on a daily basis (54%), while news web portals, online news magazines and blogs are being used by a third of citizens every day (34%).**

Finally, slightly more than a quarter inform themselves through personal contacts such as family, friends and colleagues (29%).

The results indicate the significant differences in the use of information sources according to demographic characteristics, especially age.

- People aged 60 or older more often report watching TV daily (91%), compared to those aged 18 to 29 years (62%).
- On the other hand, the youngest, aged 18-29, more often get information through online media - news web portals, online news magazines/blogs (43% use them daily) and social networks (79% use them daily), compared to the older adults (13% and 18%, respectively). Furthermore, these sources show higher usage among those with secondary or higher education and employed. In addition, online media are more often followed by residents of urban settlements, who live in Skopje region, and those who have household incomes above 900EUR, while social networks are more often popular among those in the 30-44 age category, and those with household incomes between 500 and 900EUR.
- The radio is more often used as a source of news among men, those with secondary education, employed, and those with household incomes above 500EUR. On the other hand the press is more preferred among ethnic Albanians.
- The youngest (18-29 years) and those with secondary education more often get daily news through family, friends or colleagues.

**When it comes to the main source of information, the findings are largely similar: for the largest share of citizens, more than a half, the main source of news is television (52%).** Social networks are the main source of information for a quarter of citizens (25%); one out of ten citizens relies mainly on the news he reads on web portals (12%), while other sources of information are far behind, at a single-digit level.

Also, online sources such as social networks and web portals are more often main source of news for young people (18-29 years old) and employed. On the other hand, television is far more often the primary source for citizens over the age of 60, woman, those with primary or no education and those from low-income households (up to 300EUR).

**Macedonians are evenly divided over trust in media reporting - half of them trust the media, while the other half claim they do not trust the media (49% each).** More specifically, 41% of citizens maintain that they mostly trust what is being said in the media, while 9% say they trust in media completely. On the other hand, one out of four mainly doesn't have trust (26%), while nearly as many doesn't believe media at all (23%).

**When it comes to different types of media, citizens have the most confidence in the information they receive through television,** as three-fifths claim they mainly or completely trust television to be reliable source of information (61%).

However, citizens are narrowly divided over whether other media represent reliable sources of news and information. Thus, **international media outlets enjoy the trust of two out of five citizens in North Macedonia (42%),** while more than a third of them do not trust them (36%). Similarly, approximately one third do not trust sources such as investigative reporting outlets, the radio and the press (35%, 32% and 32% respectively), while nearly as many consider them to be reliable (36%, 31% and 29% respectively). Greater difference in favor of distrust is present when it comes to the online media (41% vs 37%) and social networks (47% vs 31%).

As expected, those citizens who trust the media in general, are more inclined to trust all the different types of media as well, compared to the total population. Moreover, the youngest, employed and those who prefer modern media, are more likely to trust news from social networks and web portals.

Similar findings were obtained when citizens were asked to rank the mentioned types of media from the one they trust the most to the one they trust the least. Namely, television is the source that over two-fifths of the population trusts the most (42%), while nearly two-thirds include it in the top three most trusted sources (62%). Television is followed by news web portals and social networks, which a third of citizens mentioned among the three most trustworthy sources (32% and 31%, respectively).

There is also a tendency for citizens who prefer certain types of media as their main source of information to also trust these types of media more. Thus, those who prefer modern media more often trust online media and social networks the most.

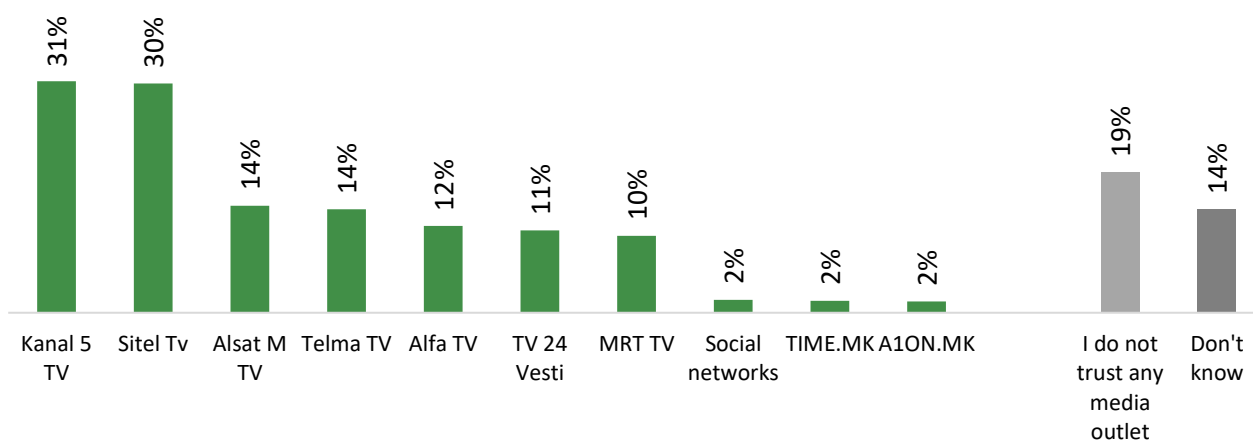
Looking at first answers, as well as when all answers are considered, **publishing accurate and verified information is the main reason why citizens trust certain media outlets (41%), while having the latest news and being impartial and fair in reporting come next (29% and 25%, respectively).**

On the other hand, the main reasons for distrust are related to the perception that certain media are under political influence and that they are spreading misinformation (47% and 40%, respectively). In addition, more than a quarter of citizens do not trust certain media outlets due to propaganda spreading (28%).

Kanal 5 and Sitel TV are the most trusted media outlets, mentioned by three out of ten citizens (31% and 30%, respectively) (Figure e.1). However, a fifth of citizens say they do not trust any media outlet (19%).

**Figure e.1. Top ten media outlets citizens in North Macedonia trust the most**

*Which specific media outlets (TV channel, radio station, newspaper or news web portal) do you trust the most, when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly?; Multiple answers; Base: Total target population*

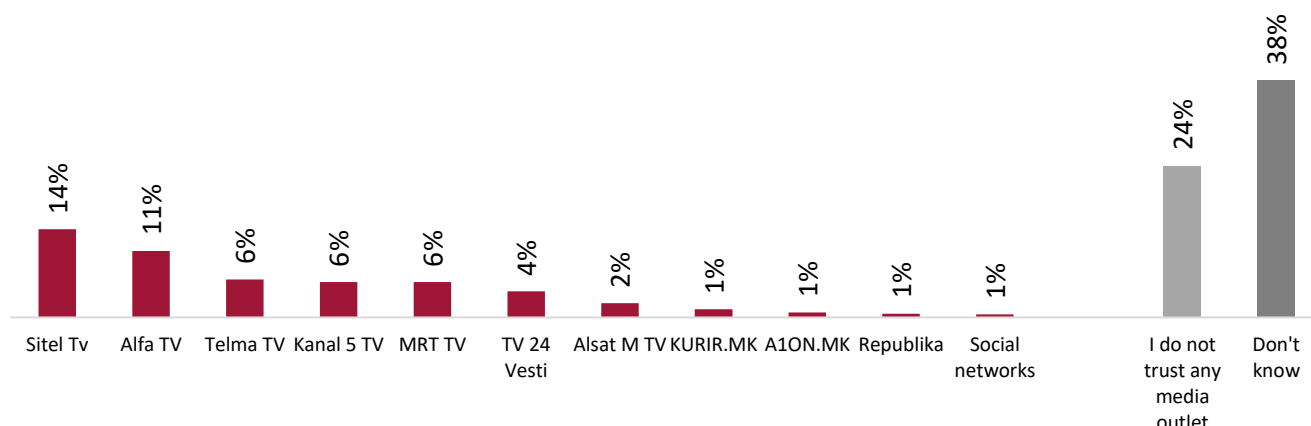


When it comes to the least trusted media outlets, there is no such high consensus of citizens: approximately a tenth mention both Sitel TV and Alfa TV as those they distrust the most (14% and 11%, respectively) (Figure e.2).

**Figure e.2. Top ten media outlets citizens in North Macedonia distrust the most**

## MEDIA TRUST AND MEDIA-GENDER ISSUES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS - Regional public opinion poll | North Macedonia

And what specific media outlets (TV channel, radio station, newspaper or news web portal) do you distrust the most?; Multiple answers; Base: Total target population



**A half of citizens say they trust the Public Service Media (Macedonian Radio Television), while 39% claim the opposite.**

**The largest share of citizens believe that the media in Macedonia are controlled and are not independent, as well that political propaganda and disinformation are widespread in the media.** More specifically, three-quarters of citizens claim that media in Macedonia are mainly controlled by political and business powers and think that there is a lack of independent and impartial media in Macedonia (75% each). Furthermore, seven out of ten citizens think that government controls most media in Macedonia and that media in North Macedonia spread political propaganda and disinformation (71% and 69%, respectively).

**Furthermore, two-thirds of citizens agree that there is a strong polarization between media controlled by the government and the opposition (66%).**

**The situation on social networks is perceived similarly - about two thirds think that social networks spread political propaganda and disinformation, as well as hatred (66% and 63%, respectively).**

**However, there is less agreement among citizens when it comes to spreading hatred in the media.** Namely, while more than a half of citizens agree that media in Macedonia spread hatred (57%), the opposite attitude is shared by four out of ten (40%).

**Public is somewhat divided in its perception of media contribution to democracy in the country.** Namely, more than a half say that media in Macedonia serve democracy and public interest very well (52%), while more than two-fifths claim the opposite (44%). **On the other hand, six out of ten citizens believe that media in Macedonia are free to collect and publish information about all relevant issues (60%), while almost two-fifths would dispute that.** Interestingly, those who trust the media in general, more often believe that the media in Macedonia are free and that they serve democracy and public interest very well.

**The vast majority of citizens are not aware of the existence of platforms that deal with checking the accuracy of news and information in North Macedonia (84%). 15% of citizens have heard about fact-checkers, of which only 4% also followed their announcements.**

**The majority of citizens perceive the position of women journalists in Macedonia as unfavorable.** More precisely, more than two-thirds of citizens believe that women journalists in Macedonia are often target of attacks, threats, insults, and harassment (68%). Furthermore, nearly three-quarters of them agree that attacks, threats, insults and harassment stem from gender prejudices and stereotypes (72%), while four-fifths

think that the attacks are the result of revealing the truth while reporting on politics, corruption and crime (82%). Finally, there is an almost unanimous agreement among the citizens that the state bodies (police, judiciary) should protect women journalists when they are threatened or attacked (93%).

## **f. Serbia**

**Television stands out as the most commonly used source for gathering information in Serbia, with almost three out of four citizens claiming to be using it on a daily basis (72%).** Other “traditional” media, such as radio and print newspapers/magazines are far behind – a quarter of citizens listens to radio daily (24%), while print newspapers and magazines are read daily by only 10% of citizens.

**Social networks are second most commonly consumed news source, through which a half of adult Serbian population is getting informed daily (49%).** Four out ten citizens in Serbia uses news web portals, online news magazines and blogs to get daily news, i.e. information about political and social events (41%).

Lastly, over a third of citizens gets daily news through personal contacts such as family, friends and colleagues (37%).

**Significant differences were registered in the use of information sources based on demographic characteristics, especially age.**

- People aged 60 or older more often report watching TV daily (93%), while television is far less often watched daily by those aged 18 to 29 (46%), and those aged 30 to 44 (60%). TV is watched daily more commonly by those with primary or no education (85%), although this difference is again closely connected to age.
- Similarly, other types of traditional media such as print is also less popular among the youngest population. While 17% of those aged 60 and older reads the press every day to get informed, only 1% of citizens aged 18-29 uses this type of media daily.
- On the other hand, radio is the most popular source of information among those aged 30-44 (35% listen to the radio daily), while only 21% of those aged 18-29 and 15% of those aged 60 and above report using it in order to get news.
- Younger population prefer getting information through online media. News web portals and online news magazines/blogs are more often used daily by citizens aged 30-44 (60%). This type of media is preferred by higher educated citizens (61%), living in urban areas (48%), and especially those from Belgrade (54%).
- Social networks are most commonly used by youngest population aged 18-29 (81%), but higher usage is also registered among those in the 30-44 age category (63%). Unlike news web portals, social networks are more commonly used by those with secondary education (54%).

**When it comes to the main source of information, the findings are somewhat similar: for the largest share of citizens, close to a half, the main source of news is television (48%).** Online media (such as news web portals) are the main source of information for one-quarter of citizens (25%), while social networks were cited by 15% of citizens. Other sources of information are far behind, at a single-digit level.

Online sources such as web portals are more often main source of news for younger people (30-44, and 18-29 years old), those with higher education, living in urban areas and with the highest household income. On the other hand, television is far more often the primary news source for citizens over the age of 45 and those with primary or no education, living in rural areas and having lower income.

**Opinions are divided when it comes to trust in the media such as newspapers, TV, radio or online news sources to report the news fully, accurately, and fairly in Serbia. While 51% of citizens have trust in media, 48% doesn't.** More specifically, 43% of citizens maintain that they mostly trust what is being said in the media, while 8% say they trust in media completely. On the other hand, a third of citizens say they mainly don't have trust (33%), with additional 15% who don't believe media at all. Generally, levels of trust are higher among older population, among lower educated population, those living in rural areas, and people who prefer traditional media such as TV, radio and the press.

**When it comes to different types of media, citizens have the most confidence in the information they receive through television,** with a half claiming they mainly or completely trust television to be reliable source of information (52%). Over a third of citizens places their trust in **investigative media (39%) and online media such as news web portals (37%).** It is important to note that if we look at the average values, investigative media outlets are rated as trustworthy as television.

Furthermore, every third citizen mentioned radio as most trustworthy source of information (34%), while **media that citizens trust the least are print media, social networks and international media outlets.** Less than a third of citizens believe the information they read on social networks or in the press, as well as information from international media outlets is reliable (all three are registered at 29%).

As expected, those citizens who trust the media in general, are more inclined to trust all the different types of media as well, compared to the total population. The younger population are more likely to trust investigative reporting outlets, online media, international media outlets and social networks/web portals.

**Similar findings were obtained when citizens were asked to rank the mentioned types of media from the one they trust the most to the one they trust the least. Namely, television is the source that 39% of the population trusts the most, while six out of ten included TV in the top three most trusted sources (39% cited TV as most trustworthy).** Television is followed by investigative reporting outlets, which 16% of citizens mentioned as the most trustworthy source, followed by online media (9%) and social networks (9%).

There is also a tendency for citizens who prefer certain types of media as their main source of information to also trust these types of media more. Thus, those who opt for traditional media more often mention television, radio and the press as the top three most trusted sources of information. On the other hand, those who prefer modern media more often trust online media and social networks the most.

Looking at top mentioned reason, as well as all mentioned reasons why citizens trust certain media outlets, publishing accurate and verified information is the reason number one (41%), while impartiality and fairness in reporting is the second most commonly cited reason (37%).

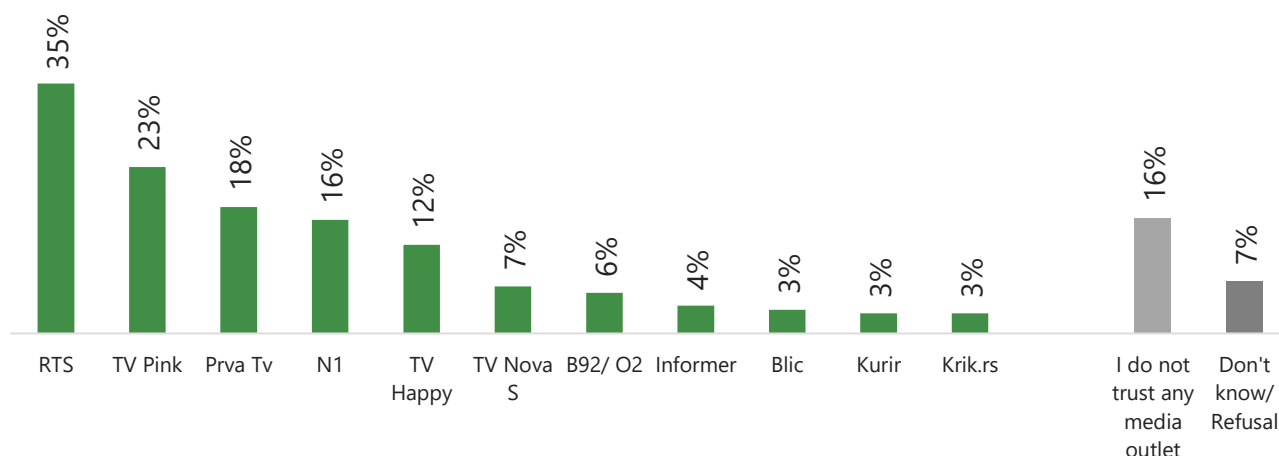
**On the other hand, the main reasons why citizens do not trust certain media are related to spreading misinformation (39%) and even more importantly political influence they are under (44%).** In addition, a third of citizens do not trust certain media outlets due to propaganda spreading (36%).

**Interestingly the same specific media outlets were cited as the most trusted and the least trusted. Public Service Media (RTS - Radio televizija Srbije) is by far the most trusted media outlet mentioned by over a third of citizens (35%).** As most trusted, RTS is followed by TV Pink (23%), Prva TV (18%) and N1 (16%).



**Figure f.1. Top ten media outlets citizens in Serbia trust the most**

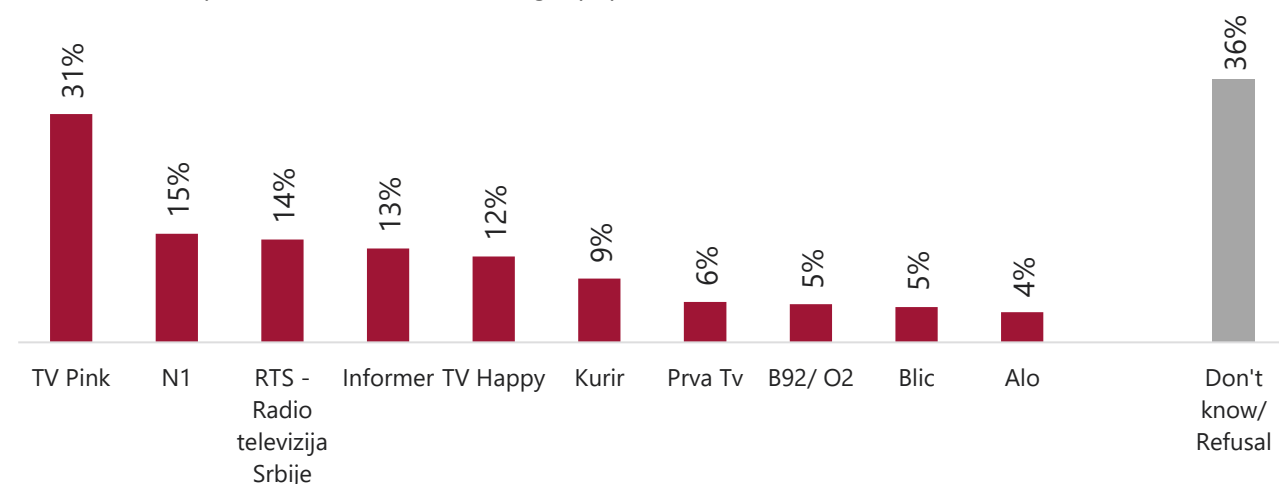
*Which specific media outlets (TV channel, radio station, newspaper or news web portal) do you trust the most, when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly?; Multiple answers; Base: Total target population*



When it comes to the least trusted media outlets, **TV Pink is by far media outlet number one (31%)**, followed by N1 (15%) and RTS (14%) (Figure f.2). It is important to note that a third of citizens could not name specific media outlet they distrust the most (36%).

**Figure f.2. Top ten media outlets citizens in Serbia distrust the most**

*And what specific media outlets (TV channel, radio station, newspaper or news web portal) do you distrust the most?; Multiple answers; Base: Total target population*



**Over half of citizens say they trust the Public Service Media (RTS - Radio televizija Srbije) – 56%, while four out of ten claim the opposite (40%).**

**The largest share of citizens believe that the media in Serbia are controlled and are not independent.** More specifically, three-quarters of citizens claim that media in Serbia are mainly controlled by political and



## **MEDIA TRUST AND MEDIA-GENDER ISSUES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS - Regional public opinion poll | Serbia**

business powers (74%), that there is a lack of independent and impartial media in Serbia (74%), and that media in Serbia spread political propaganda and disinformation (73%).

**Two-thirds of citizens agree that government controls most media in Serbia (67%) and that there is a strong polarization between media controlled by the government and the opposition (65%).**

**Over half of citizens believe that social networks spread political propaganda and disinformation (59%), and that media and social networks are spreading hatred (55% and 52% respectively).**

**Public is divided in its perception of media freedom and media contribution to democracy in the country.** Namely, slightly less than half of citizens say that media in Serbia are free to collect and publish information about all relevant issues (49%), as well as that they serve democracy and public interest very well (46%), while quite similar share of population claims the opposite (45% and 48%, respectively). Interestingly, older population, those who trust the media in general and follow traditional media, more often believe that the media in Serbia are free and that they serve democracy and public interest very well, while younger population and those following modern media are more critical regarding the current state of media in Serbia.

**A majority of citizens are not aware of the existence of platforms that deal with checking the accuracy of news and information in Serbia (65%).** A quarter of citizens have heard about fact-checkers (24%), while one in ten followed their announcements (10%). Those who followed such platforms were predominantly citizens ages 30-44, highly educated, living in urban area, and especially Belgrade.

**The majority of citizens perceive the position of women journalists in Serbia as very unfavorable.** More precisely, four in five citizens believe that women journalists in Serbia are often target of attacks, threats, insults, and harassment (80%). Furthermore, nearly three-quarters of them agree that attacks, threats, insults and harassment stem from gender prejudices and stereotypes (72%), while 86% think that the attacks are the result of revealing the truth while reporting on politics, corruption and crime (81%). Finally, there is an almost unanimous agreement among the citizens that the state bodies (police, judiciary) should protect women journalists when they are threatened or attacked (95%).