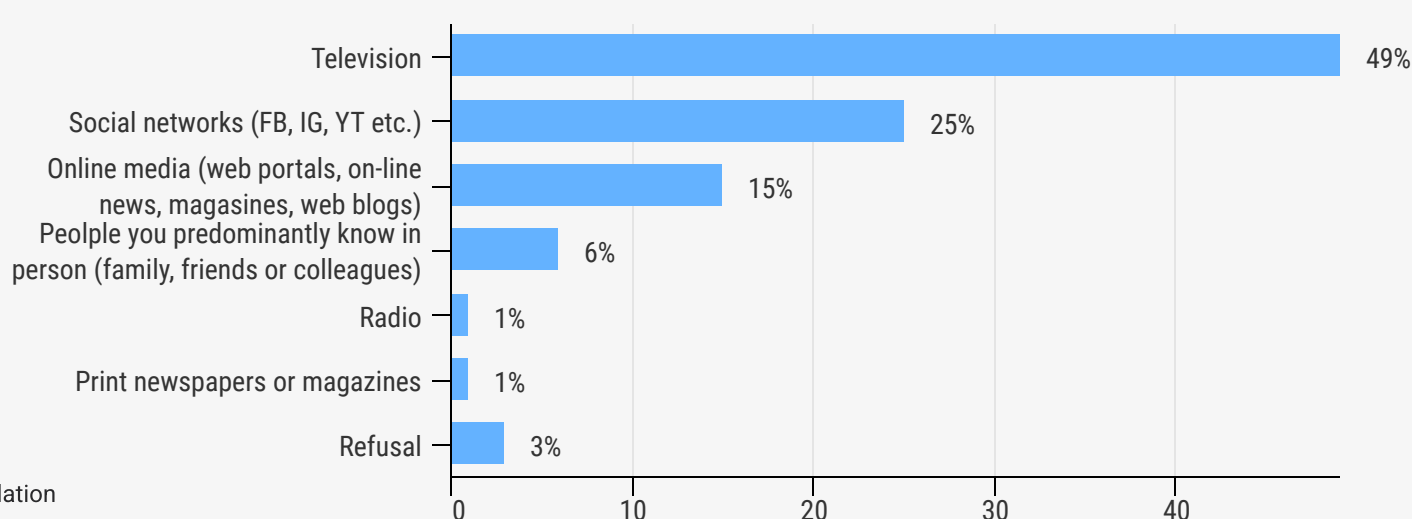


Polarized Public Trust in the Media and Social Networks Bosnia and Herzegovina



Television stands out as the most-used news source in BiH - almost three quarters of respondents (71%) claim to watch television daily to get news, i.e. information about political and social events. Television is the primary source of information for half of the respondents (49%), followed by social networks (25%) and online media (15%), while radio and print are far behind, at a single-digit level.

And what is your main source of information ?

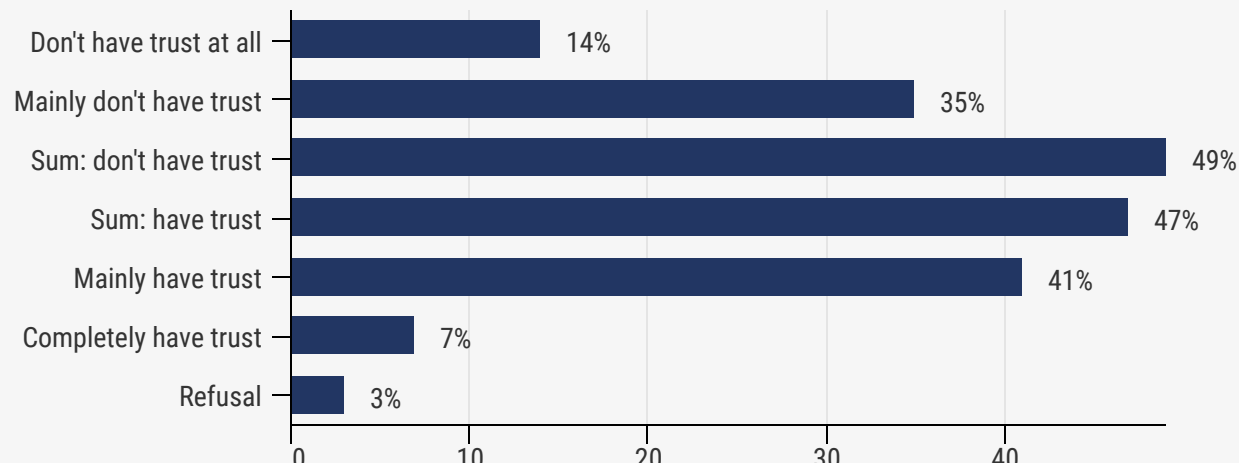


Base: Total target population



Half of the respondents, in sum, claim to not trust the media, while nearly as many claim they trust the media (49% vs 47% ratio in favour of distrust)

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 BiH?



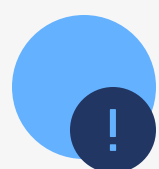
Base: Total target population



Respondents have the most trust in television as a reliable source of news and information; nearly six out of ten claim they mainly or completely trust television to be a reliable source of information (57%).

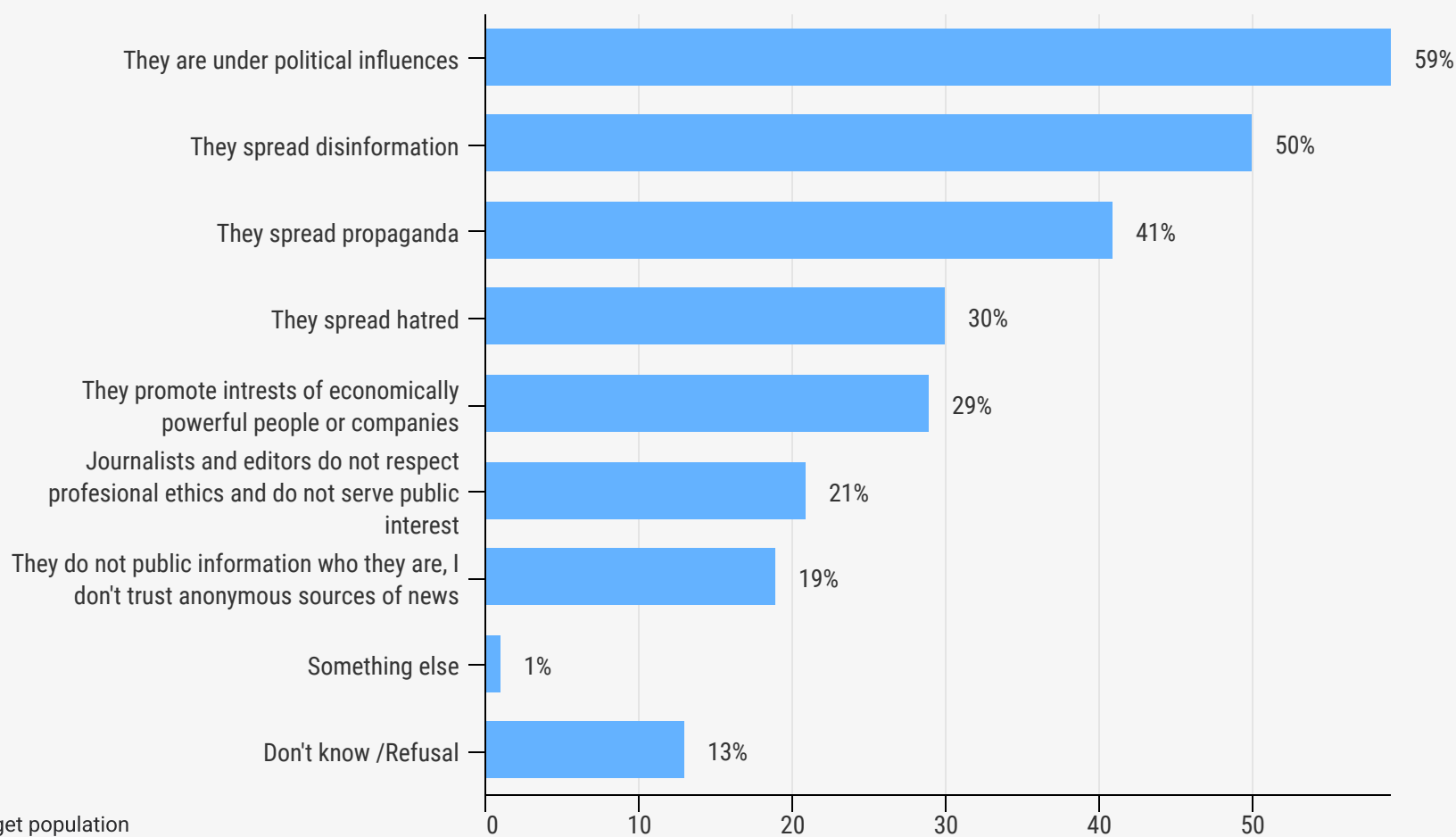


The main reason why respondents consider some media trustworthy is that they have the latest news and information (52%).



The main reasons for distrust are related to the perception that certain media are under political influence and that they spread disinformation (59% and 50%, respectively).

And thinking about the media you consider the least trustworthy, what are the main reasons you do not trust them? - All answers



Base: Total target population



Half of the respondents 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). A somewhat higher share of respondents does not trust RTRS, with a 60% vs 31% ratio in favour of distrust.



There is a clear ethno-national division in terms of trust in the public broadcasters. The poll results show highly negative attitudes towards the media in BiH. The largest share of respondents believes that the media in BiH are controlled and that there is a lack of independent and impartial media.

Policy recommendations



Regulations that will include provisions on the transparency of media ownership and precise criteria for the allocation of public funds to the media should be adopted.



Online media should adopt rules for the moderation of their comments, particularly regarding hate speech.



Media and information literacy should be introduced into primary and secondary education.



The regulator and ministries of communication should adopt a strategy and concrete steps for the prevention of organized systems for the spread of disinformation.



Prosecutor's offices should open and prosecute cases of hate speech in the online media and online media platforms.



The media should receive training courses on hate speech, particularly how to deal with problematic statements of politicians in their reports and training courses on disinformation and verification of information.



Professional media outlets should engage in the promotion of professional media reporting and education of the audience. Professional media should seek ways to engage the public, build supportive communities, involve them in dialogue, and gain support, including financial.



Journalists should be sensitized to diversity and marginalized groups in their course of formal and informal education and receive training courses on hate speech.



The governments on the state and entity levels should find ways to resolve the financial sustainability of the public service broadcasters and introduce measures against the political influence on their editorial policies and the appointments of steering boards and managerial staff.



Journalists and editors should be encouraged to investigate and publish reports about hate narratives in the media, problematize hate narratives of the leading politicians, write inclusive reports about the position of minorities and other marginalized groups in society.



These are findings of the research on media trust in Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted, in 2021, within the project "Resilience – Civil society action to reaffirm media freedom and counter disinformation and hateful propaganda in the Western Balkans and Turkey" in seven countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.

