

ASSESSMENT OF MEDIA SECTOR NEEDS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Report on a Public
Opinion Survey about
Media Sector Needs
in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Assessment of Media Sector Needs in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Report on a Public Opinion Survey about Media
Sector Needs in Bosnia and Herzegovina

ISBN: 978-92-9234-045-2

This publication is produced with the financial support of Sweden, and in co-operation with the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The contents of this publication do not reflect the opinions or views of Sweden and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, unless specifically stated.

CONTENT:

INTRODUCTION	5
Project background	5
Purpose and goals of the survey.....	6
SUMMARY.....	7
Key survey findings.....	7
Recommendations	9
METHODOLOGY DESCRIPTION.....	10
Basic information.....	10
Pollster training.....	14
Quality control of gathered data.....	15
Response rate	16
Socio-demographic sample structure	17
RESULTS.....	21
Public opinion survey and focus group results	21
Introductory part.....	21
The most interesting content, factors that impact the selection of the media and trust in the media.....	25
Pressure, accountability of the media and legitimate reactions of citizens	28
Links to politics and additional payments for media contents.....	32
Impact of the media on democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and importance of information for daily life.....	35
In-depth interview analysis results.....	38
Assessment of the situation in general and issues in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina ...	38
Safety of journalists	40
Differences regarding the position of male and female journalists.....	41
Position of freelancers in Bosnia and Herzegovina	42
Assessment of media (in)dependence	42
Legal framework for the functioning of the media	43
Associations of journalists of Bosnia and Herzegovina.....	44
Role of education in the development of the media and journalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina.....	45
APPENDICES	47
Citizen survey questionnaire	47
Guidelines for focus groups with citizens	56
Guidelines for semi-structured interviews with media representatives.....	59
Guidelines for semi-structured interviews with police representatives.....	60

INTRODUCTION

Project background

The media sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is facing numerous obstacles. The sector is characterised by a large number of media outlets, continuous marketing income decrease and political pressure on editorial policy and media freedoms. There are three public broadcasting services, around 100 TV stations, 150 radio stations, 8 news agencies and 8 daily newspapers as well as numerous online media that compete for income in a modest media market.¹ In addition to this, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a strong adverse impact on the media sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The media suffered a sharp advertising income decline, and some were forced to fire journalists and other media professionals. In spite of a better epidemiological situation and income generated in 2021, the media are still facing financial consequences and journalists are still inadequately paid.

The media sector is subject to continuous political pressure. For years, donations and subventions from public budgets and commercial contracts of governments and public companies have been allocated to the media based on untransparent and arbitrary procedures, which points to potential political and financial influence on editorial policies.²

Only in the past year, the association of journalists, BH novinari, registered 69 cases of violation of freedom of expression of journalists and attacks against journalists, including physical attacks, internet and personal threats, defamation campaigns and mobbing. The media community advocates a new law on freedom of information that would oblige public bodies to proactively ensure transparency and the adoption of a law on transparency of ownership and financing of the media from public budgets.

The current situation prevents media freedoms and prevents the media from possessing the capacities to produce high-quality and independent content. Although the media cover a wide range of topics, reports show that the quality of information is poor and that there is no detailed and specialised coverage of various topics, including economy and science.

In addition to this, media reporting was assessed as generally partial, since the media space is divided along ethnonational and political lines, and misinformation abounds, which was particularly the case during the COVID-19 pandemic.³

Although there is a general understanding of challenges, risks and threats faced by the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, before this analysis, there were no accurate data on which specific measures should be applied to improve the difficult situation in the media sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

An analysis of the situation shows that the public, media workers, policy creators and the international community understand political, financial, legal and security challenges that make the work of the

¹ Data in the Register of the Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Press and Online Media Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also: Sanela Hodžić and Brankica Petković. Sustainability of Professional Journalism in the Media Business Environment of the Western Balkans. TACSO, 2020.
<http://tacso.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Sustainability-of-Professional-Journalism-in-WB-Study-final.pdf>

² Obrasci finansiranja medija iz javnih budžeta: politički pritisci i finansijska nestabilnost (Media Financing Patterns from Public Budgets: Political Pressure and Financial Instability) | MC_ONLINE (media.ba)

³ Anida Sokol. Propaganda, Disinformation and Hate Models of Media and Communication in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2020.
<https://seenpm.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Research-publication-1-BiH-ENG.pdf>

media more difficult. However, a lack of strong and comprehensive data on the nature and scope of these issues and different needs of the media sector is crucial for ensuring understanding of the scope of problems and development of an efficient response.

The mentioned issues have been resolved by implementing a comprehensive assessment of needs of the media sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which also included consultations with key actors for the purpose of analysing data and specifying the true nature of the problem. This also contributed to developing of efficient measures and recommendations not only for future engagement of all relevant actors in this field, but also better defining of international support to the media sector over the coming years.

Purpose and goals of the survey

The purpose of the survey is to:

- ✓ Understand the needs of the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- ✓ Understand the habits regarding the consumption of the media, perceptions and needs of the public;
- ✓ Make recommendations on further development of independent media in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The assessment of needs includes the following segments:

- ✓ Needs for financial, expert, technical and other media capacities;
- ✓ Position and needs of media workers and journalists (including also freelance journalists), their ability to obtain, produce and share information without facing online/offline threats, attacks, harassment and any type of pressure;
- ✓ The current situation in the field of freedom of the media and the need for the improvement of legal, regulatory and self-regulatory media framework;
- ✓ Habits and needs of the public and their attitude towards the media.

The present report includes the findings of a public opinion and attitude survey carried out among citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding their opinion on some of the mentioned issues as well as opinions and attitudes of media professionals and professionals from other areas of life and work that are related to the work of the media.

SUMMARY

Key survey findings

In general, citizens are of the opinion that the situation regarding the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina is dissatisfactory. Citizens demonstrate a low level of trust in the media. They believe that the media are characterised by censorship and auto-censorship as a result of political and economic influence. The content and key messages published by the media have a negative impact on democracy and functionality of the society of Bosnia and Herzegovina. News shows are clearly perceived as political propaganda that aims to maintain tensions caused by political actors that determine the work of the media.

According to the opinion of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the media are saturated with fake news, hate speech and partial provision of information, and the safety of journalists is assessed as dissatisfactory. One of the reasons for this is the great political pressure on the media as well as lack of implementation or lack of legal framework that would regulate the media sector.

Most respondents agree that the situation regarding online media is considerably better than the situation regarding TV, radio and press. In the opinion of respondents, in addition to the liberation of the media from political and economic dependence, improvement of legal norms defining ethical and professional work and the position of journalists, it is necessary to increase the share of affirmative content in the media space. A more successful work of journalists requires a modernisation and improvement of work of relevant faculties and the establishment of a functioning organisation of journalists and media professionals.

The key survey findings are as follows:

At the mention of the media, most respondents think of one of the areas of the media sector (TV, Internet portals and blogs, radio and press). In addition to this, the term media also has a negative connotation for most respondents, because it reminds them of the negative phenomenon of fake news, lack of professionalism, partiality, deliberate maintaining of social tensions and incorrect promotion of political goals. According to the opinion of the largest number of respondents, in the content published by the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, negative news dominate. Respondents are of the opinion that such negative news are insisted on deliberately, because they help the political elites in Bosnia and Herzegovina to maintain a non-functioning state. Fabrication of lies is also a frequent association that citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina have when it comes to the term the media.

The greatest disadvantages and problems in the media sector that are mentioned include inaccurate information, which is frequently also deemed to be inflammatory, as well as partiality of media coverage. The media are viewed as partial, in the sense that it can be easily determined to which political structures individual media outlets have ties and on which political structures they depend on. Respondents believe that all or almost all media in Bosnia and Herzegovina are dependent either in political or financial sense. Political and economic dependence of the media is seen as the greatest source of problems faced by the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This type of dependence also impacts the manner in which information is provided and, in the opinion of respondents, this directly prevents the development of impartial journalism and provision of adequate information to citizens. Media content in all media should include more news with positive examples, especially regarding the

daily life in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that have a positive connotation or news that will result in increased optimism among citizens regarding the daily life and future in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this respect, it is also necessary to reduce the quantity of unverified information that is placed in the public domain and that suits only the governing structures, given their political and social goals.

Respondents mostly have a negative opinion about news programmes. They believe that the information presented during news programmes is placed based on certain ideological guidelines of politicians that control certain media outlets and that negative information dominates, which, according to respondents, artificially maintains tensions in the society of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Citizens mostly have very little trust in the media and information they obtain from them. They are thus focused on independent search for and verification of information in order to be better informed and have more impartial information.

When it comes to fake news, respondents believe that adequate consequences in case of fake news publication would include fines, revocation of operating licences, and to a somewhat lesser extent, legal proceedings such as legal actions. Respondents believe that, as a result of this, the media would be forced to report in an unbiased and more impartial manner and, in particular not to spread hate speech. It should be stressed that respondents were absolutely against any form of violence against journalists and the media and that the only correct manner of punishment of the media for lack of professionalism is a systematic application of the relevant legal norms. At this point it is necessary to point out that the obtained findings differ from survey findings of the past years, when citizens supported violence against journalists to a greater degree (e.g. they were of the opinion that it is acceptable to hit a journalist).⁴ When it comes to this issue, most citizens believe that in similar cases the law is not applied sufficiently and consistently. They believe that it is necessary to develop the relevant legal framework and legal norms to adequately respond to the lack of professionalism in case of media and apply them consistently.

When it comes to journalists and media workers, they believe that they are threatened, insufficiently protected and, as a result, unable to fully engage in their work without fear. They believe that the only possibility for journalists to function without such a problem is a policy of conflict avoidance due to fear of reprisal by journalists, or some sort of auto-censorship. They believe that both female and male journalists are in an unfavourable position and that women are exposed to a greater pressure than men. The education at faculties that offer degree programmes in the field of journalism and media is not in compliance with state-of-art technologies and does not provide sufficient theoretical or practical knowledge that would enable the graduates to work in the media sector. The general opinion of respondents was that considerable changes were needed in this field.

In most cases, respondents are willing to pay additionally for media content in order to obtain high-quality, verified and impartial information and overall better content. Younger respondents are the only category of citizens that disagrees with such an opinion.

Media professionals agree with almost all aspects of attitudes expressed by respondents in the questionnaire or during focus groups. The most impressive finding from an in-depth interview with media professionals is related to their complete conviction of the political and financial dependence of the media and insistence that the media outlet they represent was a rare example of an independent media outlet. It remains to be seen whether this is a consequence of impartial state of things or actually another indicator of auto-censorship that is present in the media.

⁴ BiH: Raste broj građana koji opravdavaju nasilje nad novinarima (Bosnia and Herzegovina: The number of citizens that justify violence against journalists is rising) (voanews.com)

Recommendations

Having in mind the fact that the presented conclusions are intertwined, the following general recommendations may be formulated based on the survey that was carried out. They include several different issues identified within this study:

It is necessary to improve the legal framework and to consistently apply the existing legal measures regulating fake and malicious information and promotion of content that aims at heightened social tensions. A more consistent application and improvement of legal norms is necessary also in relation to safety of journalists and the status of freelance journalists.

At the same time, based on the obtained data, it is desirable to intensify the support for the media (primarily online media) that fulfill the criteria of ethical coverage, are able to maintain their independence from political and economic factors and are focused on affirmative contents and an open society.

Citizens believe that, when it comes to adequate measures for fake or malicious reporting by the media, in addition to libel action as an existing mechanism, it would be good to also introduce different forms of fines for both journalists and media outlets or revocation of licences. According to the obtained data, such reactions are considered to be adequate counter measures and should be applied in case of various misdemeanours that constitute malicious distortion of truth in the media or fake news.

It is necessary to support the media and individual media contents that promote positive examples (primarily from Bosnia and Herzegovina) and general humanistic values. Supporting media contents with positive connotations ensures a counterbalance to contents with negative connotations that dominate in most media, and especially on TV.

Further specific actions should be taken to improve the position of freelance journalists that are assessed to be the best and most promising form of journalism. However, according to legal standards, this group is in the worst position among all journalistic professions.

It is necessary to adapt the curricula of faculties of journalism and media to current needs of the journalistic profession and manner of operations of the media, because they are extremely incompatible at the moment. In addition to this, it is necessary to continuously provide professional training for journalists and media workers (from all media segments) in order: to make it possible to keep abreast with state-of-art technologies, ensure professional training in the field of investigative journalism and further promote the importance of independent, impartial and truthful reporting.

METHODOLOGY DESCRIPTION

Basic information

The project was implemented in the period February – March 2022 using three data gathering methods:

1. Quantitative data gathering in the framework of public opinion survey on a representative sample of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina by means of the Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) methodology;
2. Qualitative data gathering in the form of group discussions with citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
3. Qualitative data gathering through semi-structured in-depth interviews with media professionals throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Table A – CAPI method survey implementation period

Pollster training	February 04, 2022
Field work duration – phone survey	February 05 – 22, 2022
Respondents	Persons older than 18 years
Planned sample	N=1000
Data gathering method	CAPI

48 interviewers and 12 regional coordinators were hired for data gathering using the CAPI method and several Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) interviewers who were hired for the purpose of quality control.

Prior to the hiring of pollsters, obligatory trainings were held for all involved project associates. Every pollster was obliged to carry out at least one trial survey in order to make it possible to evaluate the knowledge he/she acquired and confirm that they are ready to work on the project.

The survey instrument was programmed in the professional programme for public opinion surveys, the use of which was specifically adapted to CAPI and CATI survey method.

The survey was carried out using a random stratified representative sample of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who are older than 18 years. The sample was stratified by entities, Brčko District, 3 areas in which one of the three peoples is a majority, based on 18 regions within these areas, size of municipalities, type of settlements. The selection of primary sample points – settlements in which the survey took place was based on random samples from the data base of inhabited places in municipalities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The selection of secondary points of the sample was implemented using the method of random movement from the randomly selected initial point in the randomly selected primary sample point.

The respondent of a randomly selected household is selected using the method of “last birthday” among household members who were older than 18 years. After the interviewer notes down the dates of birth of all household members, looking back from the date of survey, the person who was the last to have a birthday (and belonged to the age group 18+) is the selected respondent. If the selected respondent refuses to participate in the survey, the interviewer selects a new household and a new respondent. It is not permitted to do more than one survey per household.

Table B – Structure of the planned and achieved samples

Population of Bosnia and Herzegovina – 18+			Sample	
By region, type of settlement, sex and age			Planned	Achieved
Total population	Number of inhabitants	%		
Total	2.838.458	100.00%	N=1000	N=1003
Entity				
Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	1.762.918	62.11%	621	631
Republika Srpska	1.008.372	35.53%	355	346
District Brčko	67.168	2.37%	24	26
Areas with national majority			1.000	1.003
Bosniak majority	1.355.205	47.74%	477	510
Croat majority	407.714	14.36%	144	121
Serb majority	1.008.372	35.53%	355	346
District Brčko	67.168	2.37%	24	26
Region – areas with a Bosniak majority			1.000	1.003
Una Sana Canton	212.139	7.47%	75	53
Tuzla Canton	355.423	12.52%	125	126
Zenica Doboј Canton	258.347	9.10%	91	92
Bosnia Podrinje Canton	19.381	0.68%	7	7
Central Bosnia Canton	103.565	3.65%	36	48
Herzegovina Neretva Canton	72.212	2.54%	25	21
Sarajevo Canton	334.137	11.77%	118	163
Region – areas with a Croat majority	1.355.205	47.74%	477	510
Posavina Canton	35.567	1.25%	13	15
Zenica Doboј Canton	28.658	1.01%	10	10
Central Bosnia Canton	95.757	3.37%	34	21
Herzegovina Neretva Canton	105.511	3.72%	37	34
Western Herzegovina Canton	73.517	2.59%	26	24
Canton 10	68.703	2.42%	24	17
Region – areas with a Serb majority	407.714	14.36%	144	121
Banja Luka	455.102	16.03%	160	194
Doboј	178.468	6.29%	63	49
Bijeljina	217.381	7.66%	77	48
Pale	76.754	2.70%	27	27
Foča	25.697	0.91%	9	12
Trebinje	54.970	1.94%	19	16
	1.008.372	35.53%	355	346
District Brčko	67.168	2.37%	24	26
Total			24	26
Total			1.000	1.003

Population of Bosnia and Herzegovina – 18+			Sample	
By region, type of settlement, sex and age			Planned	Achieved
Type of settlement	Number of inhabitants	%	1.000	1.003
Urban area	1.232.532	43.42%	434	478
Rural area	1.605.926	56.58%	566	525
Sex			1.000	1.003
Men	1.376.637	48.50%	485	519
Women	1.461.821	51.50%	515	484
Age	Number of inhabitants	%	1,000	1,003
18-24	321.816	11.34%	113	52
25-34	504.951	17.79%	178	154
35-44	490.404	17.28%	173	193
45-54	537.503	18.94%	189	209
55-64	481.788	16.97%	170	201
65+	501.996	17.69%	177	194
Total			1.000	1.003

24 persons participated in the qualitative survey that included 3 group discussions, 8 persons each for every of the three focus groups.

The socio-demographic structure of participants is presented in the table below.

Table C – Demographic structure of focus group discussion participants

City	Sex	Age	Level of education	Work status	Sector of employment	Household income	Ethnicity
Banja Luka	F	29	University education	Employed	Public	1501-2000	Serb
Banja Luka	M	30	Secondary school education	Employed	Private	> 2000	Serb
Banja Luka	M	33	University education	Employed	Private	> 2000	Serb
Banja Luka	F	47	Secondary school education	Employed	Private	1501-2000	Serb
Banja Luka	F	39	Secondary school education	Employed	Private	1501-2000	Serb
Banja Luka	M	29	University education	Unemployed		1501-2000	Serb
Banja Luka	M	22	Secondary school education	Unemployed		501-1000	Croat
Banja Luka	F	35	University education	Employed	Private	501-1000	Serb
Sarajevo	F	21	Secondary school education	Employed	Private	> 2000	Serb
Sarajevo	F	26	University education	Employed	Private	> 2000	Croat
Sarajevo	F	39	Secondary school education	Unemployed		1001-1500	Bosniak
Sarajevo	M	30	Secondary school education	Employed	Private	1001-1500	Bosniak
Sarajevo	M	24	Secondary school education	Employed	Private	1001-1500	Bosniak
Sarajevo	M	34	Secondary school education	Employed	Private	1501-2000	Bosniak
Sarajevo	M	23	Secondary school education	Employed	Private	> 2000	Bosniak
Sarajevo	M	36	Secondary school education	Employed	Private	501-1000	Bosniak
Mostar	M	40	Secondary school education	Employed	Public	1501-2000	Serb
Mostar	F	55	Secondary school education	Employed	Public	> 2000	Croat

Mostar	M	34	Secondary school education	Employed	Public	1501-2000	Bosniak
Mostar	F	21	Secondary school education	Student		Up to 500	BiH
Mostar	F	42	Secondary school education	Employed	Private	501-1000	Bosniak
Mostar	F	23	Secondary school education	Student		501-1000	Croat
Mostar	M	39	University education	Employed	Public	1501-2000	Croat
Mostar	M	44	Secondary school education	Employed	Public	1001-1500	Croat

When it comes to semi-structured in-depth interviews, a total of 21 interviews were carried out. Out of this number, 15 interviews were carried out with media representatives (journalists, editors), 1 interview with a marketing agency representative, 1 interview with a communications professor, 2 with independent journalists and 2 with representatives of police institutions. The table below shows the structure of completed interviews.

Table D – Structure of semi-structured in-depth interviewees

Media outlet	Type
BHRT	Public/electronic media outlet/Bosnia and Herzegovina
TVSA	Public/electronic media outlet/Sarajevo
RTV HB	Private/substitute for Croatian language/electronic media outlet/Mostar
ATV	Private/electronic media outlet/Banja Luka
Nezavisne	Private/print+online media outlet/Banja Luka
Oslobođenje/O kanal	Private/print+online media outlet+TV/Sarajevo
Avaz	Private/print media outlet/Sarajevo
Hercegovina info	Private/online media outlet/Mostar
Detektor	Independent/online media outlet/Sarajevo
CIN	Independent/online media outlet/Sarajevo
Fokus	Independent/online media outlet/Sarajevo
MC	Independent/online media outlet/Sarajevo
buka.ba	Independent/online media outlet/Banja Luka
RSG radio	Independent/radio media outlet/Sarajevo
BH radio 1	Public/radio media outlet/Bosnia and Herzegovina
Other institutions	
Marketing agency	Fabrika
Professors/independent experts	
Faculty professor	PhD in Communication, faculty professor
Independent journalist	Freelance
Independent journalist	Freelance
Institutions	
Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republika Srpska	Institutions
Police of Brčko District	Institutions

Pollster training

Before the survey, we conducted trainings for all participants focusing on the roles of interviewer, coordinator and project implementation quality controller.

Trainings took place through the online platform (3CX) that ensures audio and video streams of the training as well as active participation in the training, asking and answering questions of survey manager.

The content of public opinion poll training:

1. Introduction and general information about the project
2. CAPI/CATI survey work methodology
3. Technical instructions for the use of the application Survey System
4. Correct selection of respondents
5. Training for survey instrument Q by Q (question by question)
6. Questionnaire testing exercise
7. Verification of acquired knowledge
8. General citizens survey rules.

The training lasted for several hours and all hired interviewers with experience of more than a year in similar projects as well as coordinators and supervisors in charge of quality control of gathered data or control of interviewer work participated in it.

Quality control of gathered data

Quality control takes place through supervision during interviews with respondents and subsequent phone calls to randomly selected respondents. A supervisor controls various interview aspects.

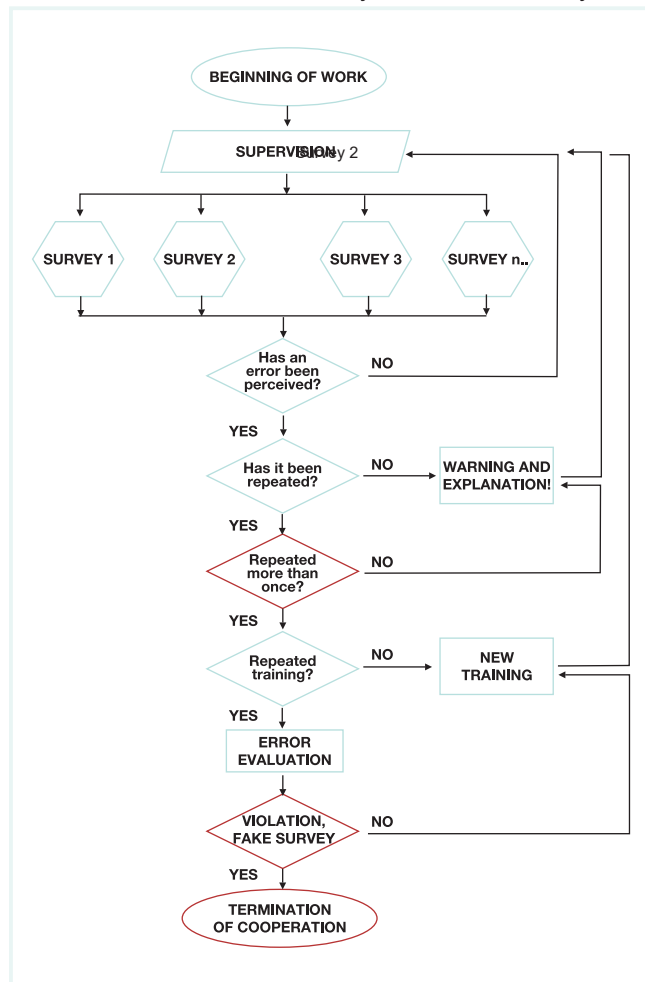
A supervisor notes down the course and outcomes of control for every controlled survey and every controlled interviewer. If an error is repeated, he/she sends the interviewer to repeated training, or, in case of a violation (fake survey), he/she reports the case to the head of the field department, who, following the evaluation, removes the interviewer from the project and network of collaborators.

Prism Research and Consulting applies ESOMAR standards for a control that implies at least 15% of controlled surveys of every interviewer. If in case of an interviewer there is not a sufficient number of "live supervisions", the supervisor calls respondents again to check the quality of survey.

Also, if during a control it is determined that an interviewer committed a violation, has not complied with methodological rules or has repeated an error several times in case of more than 15% surveys, the interviewer is removed from the project and all surveys carried out by the mentioned pollster are considered invalid and are repeated, with new randomly selected respondents.

We have to stress that such types of mistakes or violations are discovered at the very beginning of work on a project, since continuous supervision makes it possible.

In case of minor error, an interviewer is sent to repeat the training, he/she repeats surveys during exercises, and if he/she meets the criteria to work on the project following a test, he/she can come back to the shift.



Response rate

Based on our 25-year experience, in case of such surveys, the expected response rate varies between 8% and 15%, depending on the municipality and type of settlement (there is a higher response rate in case of rural or suburban areas as compared to urban areas).

The response rate for the quantitative part of survey is within the expected limits and is shown in the table below (Table E).

Table E – Public opinion survey response rate

Stopa odgovora	Total		1st attempt		2nd attempt		3rd attempt		4th attempt		5th attempt	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Completed	1003	10.6%	627	13.3%	246	11.0%	73	7.0%	43	3.4%	14	7.1%
Rejected	4634	49.0%	2398	50.7%	1103	49.4%	519	49.5%	504	40.2%	110	56.1%
Survey was interrupted	147	1.6%	98	2.1%	35	1.6%	9	0.9%	4	0.3%	1	0.5%
Is not a household	49	0.5%	37	0.8%	9	0.4%	3	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Answering machine/fax	170	1.8%	120	2.5%	34	1.5%	11	1.0%	4	0.3%	1	0.5%
Disease/language issue	100	1.1%	64	1.4%	27	1.2%	4	0.4%	5	0.4%	0	0.0%
1.5	121	1.3%	62	1.3%	28	1.3%	16	1.5%	10	0.8%	5	2.6%
Above the quota	1624	17.2%	940	19.9%	440	19.7%	140	13.4%	94	7.5%	10	5.1%
Wrong number	1617	17.1%	386	8.2%	312	14.0%	273	26.0%	591	47.1%	55	28.1%
	9465	100.0%	4732	100.0%	2234	100.0%	1048	100.0%	1255	100.0%	196	100.0%

Table – Completed surveys as compared to the number of attempted contacts

Completed surveys as compared to the number of attempted contacts	1st attempt	2nd attempt	3rd attempt	4th attempt	5th attempt	Total
N	627	246	73	43	14	1003
%	62.51%	24.53%	7.28%	4.29%	1.40%	100.00%

Socio-demographic sample structure

Since the public opinion survey included three different data gathering techniques (survey questionnaire, focus groups and in-depth interviews), the sample was divided into three parts. The first part were respondents that were polled using a questionnaire (N=1003), the second part included respondents that participated in focus groups (N=23), whereas the third subsample included media professionals that participated in in-depth interviews (N=21).

Charts 1 to 7 show socio-demographic characteristics of respondents that were polled by means of a structured questionnaire. Out of a total of 1003 persons that participated in the survey, 484 were women (48%) and 519 men (52%). As it may be seen on the charts below, there is a proportional share of all age categories. The smallest share in the overall sample were youth (aged 18 to 24). Out of the total number of respondents, only 2% do not have any education at all, while 9% possess a primary school degree. Overall, there is an almost equal percentage of respondents with a secondary school degree and some form of higher education degree.

Chart 1 Gender structure of the sample

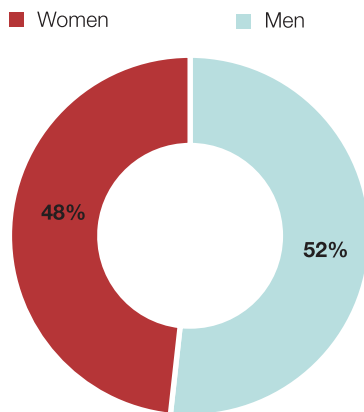


Chart 2 Age structure of the sample

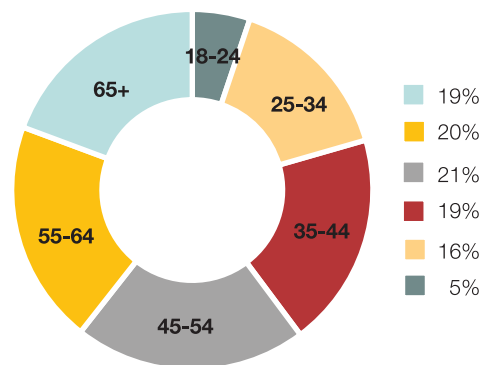


Chart 3 Place of living

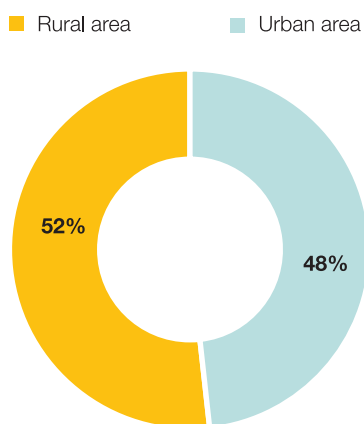


Chart 4 Ethnic structure of the sample

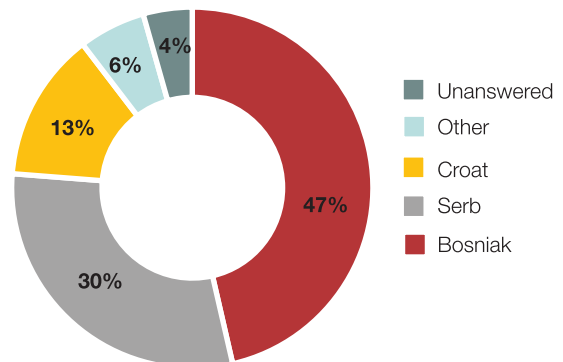


Chart 5. Employment status

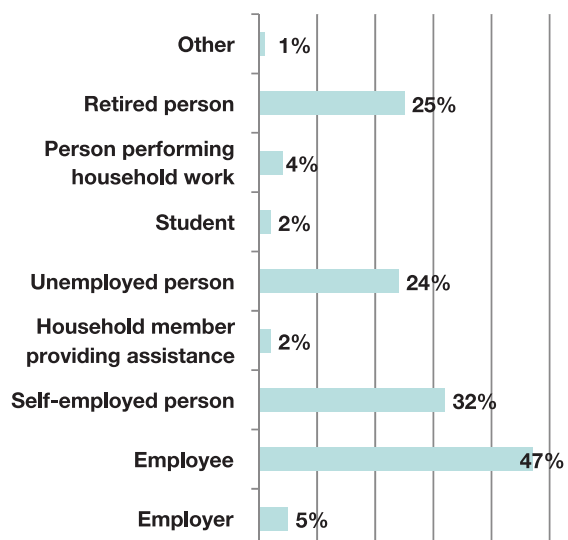


Chart 6. Level of education

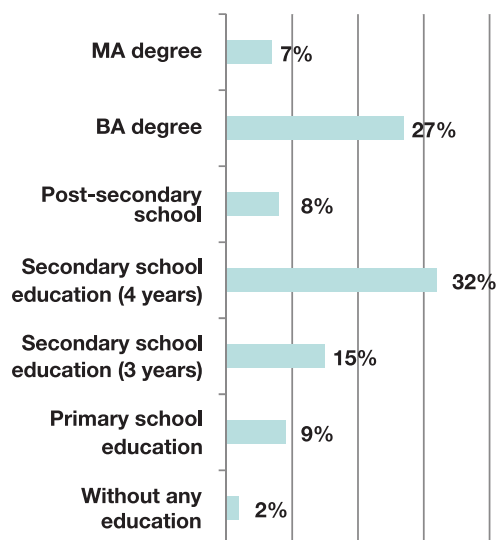
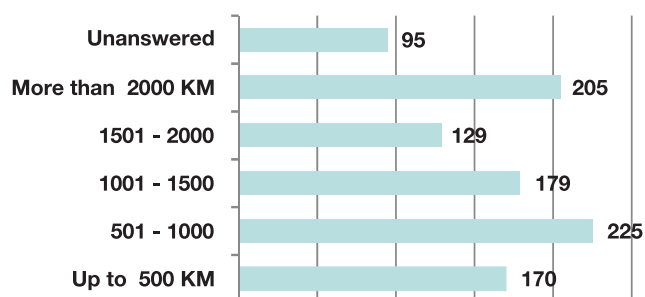


Chart 7. Monthly household income



The sample of respondents that were gathered in three focus groups and participated in these meetings in Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Mostar included 23 persons. Socio-demographic characteristics of this survey sample are shown on charts 8 to 14 below. 10 of respondents were women, while 13 respondents were men. When it comes to the age of respondents, there was an almost equal share of respondents aged 18 to 30 years and 31 to 35 years, whereas the smallest share were elderly persons aged 51 to 65. Only 1 respondent was from a rural area, and 22 were from an urban area. There were respectively 8 Bosniak and Serb respondents within the sample, 6 respondents were Croats, and one respondent declared themselves as Bosnian and Herzegovinian. When it comes to education, it may be observed that 18 respondents have a university degree, whereas 5 respondents have a secondary school degree. In addition to this, the focus group sample included 1 student, 3 unemployed persons and 19 employed persons. When it comes to the average monthly household income, only one respondent belongs to the category of up to 500 KM. 4 respondents have respectively an average monthly income between 500 and 1000 KM, i.e. between 1001 and 1500 KM. Eight respondents have an average monthly household income between 1501 and 2000, and 6 participants have an income above 2000 KM.

Chart 8. Gender structure of the focus group sample

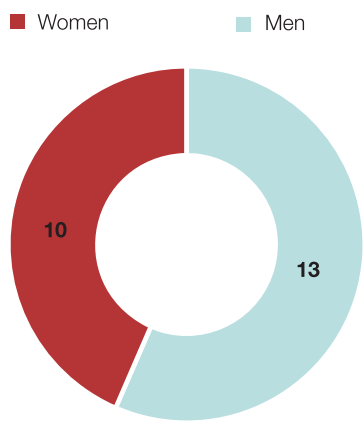


Chart 9. Age structure of the focus group sample

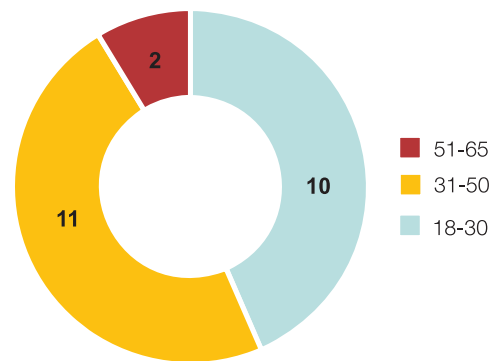


Chart 10. Place of living of focus group participants

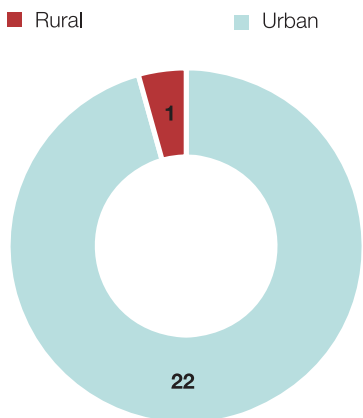


Chart 11. Ethnic structure of the focus group sample

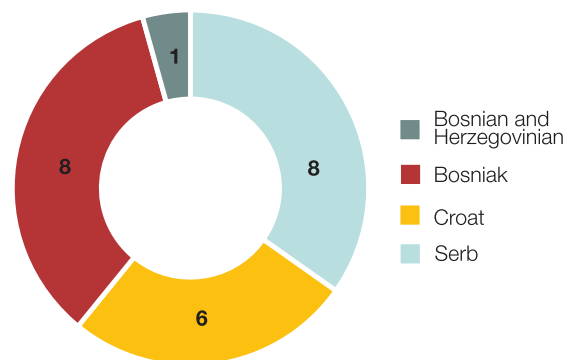


Chart 12. Employment status of focus group participants

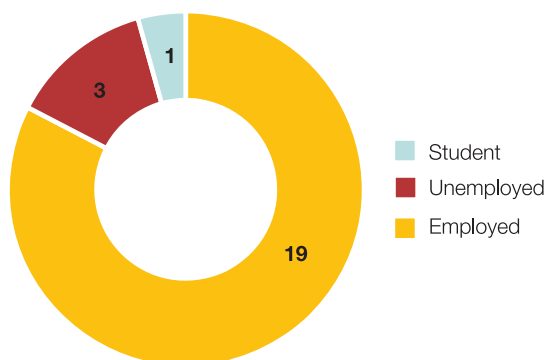


Chart 13. Level of education of focus group participants

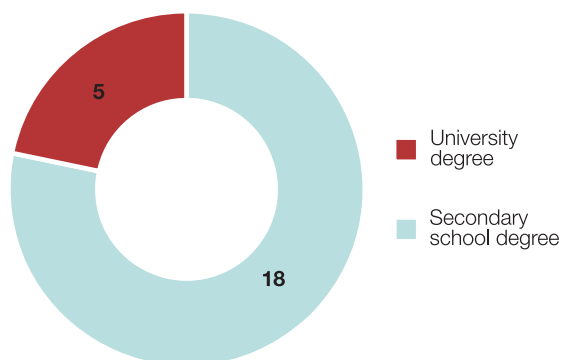
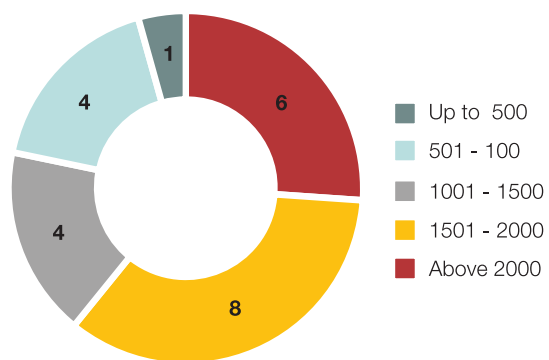


Chart 14. Monthly income of households of focus group participants



RESULTS

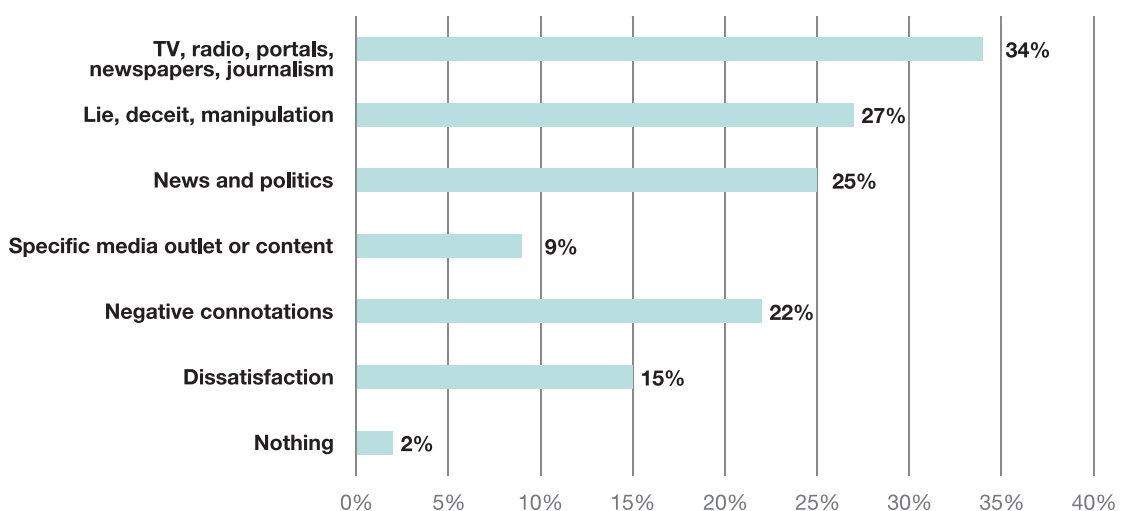
The overall survey results were first presented and interpreted for a sample of N=1003 respondents, which was supported by findings obtained in the framework of focus groups. The second part of results focuses on findings obtained in in-depth interviews with representatives of media-related professionals.

Public opinion survey and focus group results

Introductory part

The first part of results relates to associations that respondents have as a reaction to the term “the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina”. It should be pointed out that respondents had the possibility to provide several associations in their answer. In other words, the obtained percentages shown in the chart for every of the mentioned associations relate to the overall percentage of respondents in the sample that stated the mentioned items as an association related to the term the media. As can be observed based on the results shown in chart 15, the most frequent associations related to the term the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina are of a general nature. 34% of respondents first think of TV, newspapers, Internet or portals or information in general. 25% of respondents think of news and politics, whereas the remaining 9% of respondents first think of a specific media outlet or a specific media content. Other associations they had were negative. 27% of respondents first think of a lie, fraud or manipulation, 22% of respondents have a generally negative feeling, and 15% respondents feel dissatisfaction when they hear the term the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Chart 15. Associations related to the term the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina





On the other hand, when someone says media outlet, the first thing that comes to my mind are fake news and unnecessary information. (Man, 33 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

To be honest, I personally think of a large shovel full of nonsense, because I believe that the media today do not provide relevant data because they all follow a certain political orientation and cover issues that fit them at the moment. (Man, 30 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

My first association was absolutely that the media do publish untruths. (Woman, 39 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

In essence, when a media outlet is mentioned, I think of TV stations, because when you watch TV, no matter whether it is a local TV station or a global one, it is quite obvious. And there are internet portals, I don't know who writes that and what they write. Whether they are journalists or not. (Man, 44 years old, general population, Mostar)

The situation regarding the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still undefined due to the appearance of various portals that are established by persons that do not belong to the journalistic community, at least not all of them, and such cases are not rare. They also do not dispose of adequate accreditations and work as journalists... (Police of Brčko District)



Table 1 contains the results of an assessment of certain characteristics of the media that should be basic guidelines for correct and truthful reporting, irrespective of the type of media. The largest percentage of respondents believe that the media are completely dependent when it comes to their reporting (36%). Other respondents believe that the media are independent to a certain extent (23.2%) and to a small degree (22.2%). The smallest share of respondents (18.5%) believe that the media are to a large extent independent in their reporting. Out of the total number of respondents, only 12.5% believe to a large extent that the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina are professional in terms of reporting, whereas 48% of respondents believe that they are somewhat professional. 23% believe that the media are professional to a small extent, and 16.6% of respondents believe that the media are not professional at all. Finally, the smallest share of respondents (11.1%) believe that the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina are to a large extent impartial and unbiased. The largest share, almost 40%, believe that the media are somewhat impartial in their reporting. On the other hand, almost half of respondents believe that the media are impartial to a small extent (26.1%) or not at all (23.5%).

Table 1. Assessment of independence, professionalism and impartiality of the media in providing information

	Independent in reporting	Professional in reporting	Impartial and unbiased
	%		
To a large extent	18.5	12.5	11.1
To a certain extent	23.2	48.0	39.3
Somewhat	22.2	23.0	26.1
Not at all	36.0	16.6	23.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0



In my opinion, they are not impartial at all. When I say media, I mostly intend only TV, and, unfortunately, the situation is disastrous. (Woman, 55 years old, general population, Mostar)

Well, the first thing that comes to my mind when we say the media, is the fact that there is no longer any freedom of the media in my opinion. Whether these are portals, TV or newspapers, there is no freedom, all the media are controlled by politics (Woman, 47 years old, general population, Banja Luka).

Do media report truthfully? It really depends on which topic they cover. When it comes to the political scene and politics, I do not think that they inform and present accurate information. (Woman, 42 years old, general population, Mostar)

To be honest, I believe that the media reflect the state of the society. They are less and less professional, they are increasingly under the influence of certain interest groups of any kind, that is my opinion. There are less and less professional journalists, less and less properly educated professional journalists and more and more of those that work as journalists out of interest. This somehow disturbs me, since I myself also come from the field of journalism, I worked in the sector for several years, and I believe that everyone is under the influence of someone. (Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republika Srpska)



Results in Table 2 reflect the opinion of respondents on potential sanctions that should be applied to the media in case of untruthful or malicious reporting. As may be seen based on the results, the largest number of respondents (28.7%) believe that the most adequate measure would be a temporary revocation of the operating licence. A similar, but somewhat smaller share of respondents (24%) believe that a fine would be the most appropriate sanction in such cases, whereas 21.2% of respondents believe that criminal liability with potential imprisonment would be an adequate sanction. Misdemeanor sanctions for untruthful or malicious reporting make sense according to 14.9% respondents, whereas 4% of respondents believe that a different response should be applied in similar situations. As additionally pointed out in table 2, more men believe that criminal sanctions should be introduced, whereas women prefer misdemeanour sanctions. When it comes to the entities that the respondents come from, it may be observed that the results are quite homogenous, especially in case of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. Respondents from Brčko District, on the other hand, prefer misdemeanour sanctions and to a slightly higher extent more criminal liability in case of untruthful or malicious reporting.

Table 2. Level of agreement with sanctions for untruthful or malicious reporting of the media

	Total	M	F	FBiH	RS	DB
The media outlet should pay a fine	24%	22%	26.2%	24.1%	24.9%	11.5%
The media outlet should lose its operating licence for a certain period of time	28.7%	30.1%	27.3%	29.3%	27.5%	30.8%
Persons responsible should be punished for a misdemeanor	14.9%	10.6%	19.4%	15.1%	13.9%	23.1%
Persons responsible should be punished for an offence (possibility of a prison sentence)	21.8%	27.2%	16.1%	21.7%	21.7%	26.9%
Different type of sanction	6.7%	6.4%	7%	7%	6.1%	7.7%
Unanswered	4%	4%	4%	2.9%	6%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



If they were all to be punished, we would simply be forced to watch cartoons, because, as anything else in the country, there is no accountability. (Woman, 44 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

This is one of the key issues and the reason why the media write whatever they want – there is no criminal liability of the owners of the portals or authors of texts. (Man, 23 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

Action is maybe the only thing that remains. (Man, 39 years old, general population, Mostar)



Table 3 includes results of an assessment of factors of importance that should have a positive impact on the quality of content that is presented in the media. Respondents generally believe that private or public ownership of a certain media outlet is the least important factor in terms of content quality. Editors and journalists on the one hand, as well as the fact whether a media outlet is a foreign or domestic media outlet, on the other hand, are relatively equally important quality indicators of media content for citizens.

Table 3. Assessment of factors of importance for the quality of media programme content

	Domestic or foreign media outlet	Public or private media outlet	Editors and journalists
The most important factor	18.3%	13.5%	18.2%
The second most important factor	27.4%	27.5%	29.7%
The third most important factor	25.8%	30.6%	29.8%
Unanswered	28.4%	28.4%	22.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



We do not have independent media. We do not even have independent journalists that might freely express their views. (Woman, 47 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

This is another branch in case of which the private sector can openly present all irregularities that happen in the public sector. (Man, 24 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

Something I like in case of our media? Well, I do not know what I might stress in particular. To be honest, the only media outlet I follow is the TV station Aljazeera, also N1 from time to time, but I do not believe in everything they say. I mostly try to read some other sources, not ours. (Woman, 21 years old, general population, Mostar)



The most interesting content, factors that impact the selection of the media and trust in the media

As it may be observed based on table 6, respondents mostly watch news shows, news and evening news and consider them the most important content for them. Although political shows are similar to news shows in terms of content, they are assessed as least important. Respondents watch them the least frequently. It is interesting that in case of political shows, as many as 60.5% respondents did not have or did not want to give an answer. Entertainment programmes were the second choice of respondents, although this type of show in many cases is not preferred over educational programmes.

Table 6. Media content/programmes with highest viewing ratings

	Information programme/ news/evening news	Political shows	Entertainment shows	Educational programme
The most important factor	46.0%	6.6%	25.9%	21.2%
The second most important factor	23.3%	19.2%	30.4%	26.7%
The third most important factor	21.5%	13.7%	22.7%	30.4%
Unanswered	9.2%	60.5%	20.9%	21.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0 %	100.0%	100.0%



I prefer Klix, Index HR and I also watch a lot of sport, Sky Sport, for example, they provide accurate information about transfers. I also watch Face and sports channels. (Man, 36 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

I mostly use the Internet due to impartiality. I sometimes watch Face TV. I like to watch the news with Senad, I think he is a good and fair journalist. When I am in the car, I listen to the radio, mostly music. As soon as I hear the news, I switch the station to find music. (Man, 34 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

I really follow a lot of media. I am involved, unfortunately, maybe I should follow less. I mostly read Bljesak and Hercegovina.info. (Woman, 23 years old, general population, Mostar)



When it comes to an assessment of factors that respondents consider when choosing news shows, truthfulness and timely provision of information are considered the most important factors, as shown in table 7. The presence of a research orientation, which is a basis for news shows and investigative journalism constitutes the second most important factor when choosing news shows. The type of media outlet is the first criterion in the selection of information content and shows for 15.8% respondents, and political impartiality in case of 11.3% respondents. Finally, it should be added that the least important factor for the selection of news shows for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the style or quality of certain journalists or editors, only 7.5% of respondents consider this factor in their choice.

Table 7. Assessment of importance of factors in the selection of news shows

	The most important factor	The second most important factor	The third most important factor	Bez odgovora
Investigative journalism	24.0%	19.2%	14.6%	42.2%
Truthfulness and timely provision of information	39.6%	30.0%	12.9%	17.5%
Provision of information in compliance with ethical values and political preferences	1.8%	4.7%	5.1%	88.4%
Political and other types of impartiality	11.3%	18.7%	19.7%	50.2%
Journalist or editor	7.5%	15.0%	17.6%	59.9%
Type of media outlet (TV, radio, printed media, Internet)	15.8%	12.2%	20.0%	52.0%



I am not competent to comment. As soon as I see news on TV, I change the channel. I believe that there are too many portals, given that I am absolutely not interested in news. (Man, 24 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

There was this news show called 60 minutes with Bakir Hadžiomerović. When he was doing his job, he faced endless threats. In my opinion, if there were more such journalists and hosts of shows, things would look differently in the country, maybe persons would be more aware (Woman, 55 years old, general population, Mostar)

I do not really have a criterion, whatever is there, I mostly scroll down on different portals. (Woman, 39 years old, general population, Banja Luka)



An analysis of trust in the media that citizens follow has shown that the largest number of respondents to a certain extent trusts the information that is published. In other words, these 59.9% respondents consider the possibility that the media they follow do not deserve their full trust. Only 6.2% of the total number of respondents fully trust the media they follow, whereas 11.6% of respondents do not trust the media at all. The most interesting fact about these results is that they relate to the media that respondents regularly follow.

Since this is an important aspect of the relationship between citizens and the media and, generally speaking, the low trust of respondents in the media they follow, the analysis was also carried out from the perspective of different categories of respondents. Based on table 8 it may be observed that there is an equal percentage of respondents that fully trust the media they follow, irrespective of their sex and entity in which they live. However, the results in table 8A suggest that the level of education and employment status have a certain impact on the level of trust that respondents place in the media they follow. Namely, respondents that are uneducated (8.3%) show the highest degree of trust in the media they follow, whereas the level of trust decreases linearly with the increase in the level of education of respondents. In addition to this, it may be observed that retired persons as a category of inhabitants have the greatest level of trust in the media they follow (12.1%), whereas employed respondents have the least trust in the media.

Table 8. Assessment of trust in the media (most frequently followed media)

	Total	M	F	FBiH	RS	BD
I trust them very much	6.2%	6.4%	6.0%	6.2%	6.4	3.8
I trust them to a certain extent	59.9%	62.2%	57.4%	60.9%	58.1	61.5
Neutral	12.8%	8.5%	17.4%	12.2%	13.6	15.4
I do not trust them to a certain extent	8.6%	9.4%	7.6%	9.2%	7.8	3.8
I do not trust them at all	11.6%	12.7%	10.3%	10.6%	13.0	15.4
Unanswered	1.0%	0.8%	1.2%	1.0%	1.2	0.0
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8A. Assessment of trust in the media (most frequently followed media)

	Uneducated	Primary school	Secondary school	Post-secondary school	Employed	Unemployed	Student	Retired person
I trust them very much	8.3%	7.7%	6.3%	5.6%	3.4%	6.6%	5.0%	12.1%
I trust them to a certain extent	41.7%	58.2%	61.0%	60.1%	60.6%	61.0%	45.0%	58.7%
Neutral	12.5%	9.9%	11.4%	15.0%	14.1%	13.2%	20.0%	8.9%
I do not trust them to a certain extent	8.3%	4.4%	8.9%	9.2%	9.4%	6.0%	25.0%	7.3%
I do not trust them at all	25.0%	17.6%	11.0%	10.1%	11.9%	11.5%	5.0%	11.3%



When I come, I listen to the news or I watch it online later on, if I do not manage to see it when it is broadcast and it lasts for an hour, because I watch two evening news, I never watch just one. I have to hear both sides and understand what are the things that do not fit in and which topics are avoided. (Woman, 29 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

I believe that information media are generally obsolete and that we need to go back to the path that enables us to trust the information media. (Man, 33 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

It is important that the content makes one curious enough to click, not to pay attention to quality. This is the case today, especially on social networks and portals, we do not even have any type of verification whether the information is true. (Man, 23 years old, general population, Sarajevo)



Pressure, accountability of the media and legitimate reactions of citizens

Table 9 shows an overview of assessments by respondents related to the pressure faced by the media. The results show that the largest number of respondents believe that the most pronounced and present political pressure is political pressure (79.3%). Economic pressure, although it is viewed as considerably weaker than the political pressure, is considered the next most important negative factor that influences the media. Different legal remedies, such as actions or impaired safety, were assessed as least present or rarely present as compared to all described types of media pressure.

Table 9. Assessment of factors of importance for media programme content quality

	To a large extent	To a certain extent	Somewhat	Not at all
Political pressure	79.3%	44.6%	28.3%	43.7%
Economic pressure	14.3%	34.4%	40.0%	38.1%
Legal action and other legal means	3.6%	13.4%	17.8%	10.7%
Threats and security breach	2.9%	7.6%	13.9%	7.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Political parties control the media and dictate what should be written, how it is to be written, how and to whom such news should be served. They do not have any freedom of expression. Avaz writes whatever Radončić wants, it is not unbiased. I think that they are facing a lot of pressure. (Man, 34 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

I agree with them, there is mostly political pressure. (Woman, 21 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

I think that it is about the political pressure. I will give you an example: Over the past years following the death of the young men Memić and Dragičević, the father of the young man Dragičević tried hard to get some media outlets to listen to him, but they closed their doors to him. Unfortunately, the politics has all the say. They write what they want and it is a great pressure, especially on common people. (Man, 34 years old, general population, Mostar)

All of that is simply already known, who is under which influence, which political party, and it is sadly extremely bad. (Woman, 35 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

I believe that there is quite a pressure regarding all these aspects, and when I watch the news, as I said at the beginning, I simply have the impression that everyone was told in advance what they should say and what story they should present. (Woman, 35 years old, general population, Banja Luka)



The assessment of regular problems faced by the media is shown in table 10. It may be observed that respondents assess the exposure to political pressures as the most important and largest problem that the media face (table 10). Having in mind all categories of answers, it may be said that, in the opinion of respondents, economic sustainability is the second most important problem faced by the media. Safety of journalists and insufficient court protection are relatively equal in terms of how they were assessed, and inefficient resolution of court proceedings is viewed as the least problem.

Table 10. Major problems faced by the media

	Economic sustainability	Political pressure	Safety of journalists	Insufficient court protection of the media	Inefficient resolution of libel suits
The most important problem	24.3%	45.1%	13.6%	12.4%	6.4%
The second most important problem	22.7%	27.2%	21.9%	19.3%	8.5%
The third most important problem	16.1%	10.5%	25.4%	21.8%	19.1%
Total	63.1%	82.8%	60.9%	53.5%	34.0%



So, media outlets report in compliance with their political orientation. There is no freedom of the media and a common reader or viewer cannot get any unbiased information, in my opinion. Everything is exaggerated. (Woman, 47 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

The problem lies in sensational media. Publication of things that are not that important. Things that divert attention from essential matters. (Man, 29 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

What I would say is that the media wish to be first in everything and that is the cause of the problem. People get a certain piece of information and then they do not devote due attention to research what actually happened and then they just publish such information that is completely inaccurate. (Man, 24 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

One of the key causes why the media write whatever they want is that there is no criminal liability for portal owners or authors of texts. It is very problematic when they decide about headings and a heading has nothing to do with the text. (Man, 30 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

In my opinion, the largest problem is that everything is quite negative. Following the media somehow mostly means negative news or news that I am not interested in at all. There is no benefit or anything positive. (Woman, 23 years old, general population, Mostar)

Whenever I hear the term the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, my first thought is corruption and I quite agree with my colleague Adnan. I believe that everything that is related to media outlets, portals is in the service of politicians. I also think that there is such a large quantity of disinformation and unnecessary information that persons are bombarded with. (Woman, 23 years old, general population, Mostar)



Dissatisfaction with the media and their reporting often leads to different reactions of citizens. Table 11 shows to what extent respondents support different types of behaviours as reactions focusing on the media, journalists or editors and their reporting. As it may be seen, the largest number of respondents do not support violence (90.2%), threats (89.4%) or online hate speech (90.4%) at all. Respondents have interesting attitudes also in relation to libel action, which should constitute a legitimate remedy against untruthful or malicious reporting. It is interesting that one fourth of respondents (25.8%) do not support such a counter-measure at all. On the other hand, it is extremely interesting that respondents support censorship to a significant extent.

Table 11. Do you agree with the mentioned forms of behaviour towards some media outlets, journalists or editors?

		Total	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-80
		%					
Violence	To a large extent	4.2	4.3	2.2	2.4	5.0	5.9
	To a certain extent	4.1	7.1	6.2	2.4	5.0	2.7
	Somewhat	1.5	1.4	2.8	0	3.0	1.3
	Not at all	90.2	87.1	88.8	95.2	87.1	90.1
Threats	To a large extent	4.1	0.7	3.4	1.9	5.0	6.7
	To a certain extent	3.8	7.1	2.8	2.4	5.9	3.2
	Somewhat	2.7	4.3	3.4	1.0	3.0	2.7
	Not at all	89.4	87.9	90.4	94.8	86.1	87.4
Libel suits	To a large extent	33.7	28.6	36.0	37.1	34.7	32.4
	To a certain extent	33.5	42.1	39.3	29.0	38.6	28.6
	Somewhat	7.0	6.4	8.4	8.1	5.0	6.4
	Not at all	25.8	22.9	16.3	25.7	21.8	32.6
Online hate speech	To a large extent	4.4	1.4	2.8	2.9	8.9	5.9
	To a certain extent	3.7	7.9	5.6	1.9	3.0	2.4
	Somewhat	1.5	2.1	1.1	1.0	2.0	1.6
	Not at all	90.4	88.6	90.4	94.3	86.1	90.1
Censorship	To a large extent	11.1	14.3	11.2	9.0	10.9	11.0
	To a certain extent	33.4	39.3	39.9	32.4	35.6	28.1
	Somewhat	10.2	12.1	8.4	9.5	5.9	11.8
	Not at all	45.4	34.3	40.4	49.0	47.5	49.2

The same forms of behaviour were analysed also from the perspective of whether they are more focused on women or men (table 12). In general, it may be stated that the least number of respondents believe that men are those that are most frequently subject to such phenomena. As regards violence (46.5%) and libel actions (60%), the largest number of respondents believe that women are more subject to them. In addition to this, in case of threats (53.6%), online hate speech (65.8%) and censorship (63%), it is assessed that they affect both men and women equally frequently. It is interesting to also see the differences in assessments obtained from women and men. They both show the same trend when it comes to the assessment of mentioned behaviours, but men achieve higher scores in the category of responses that suggest that men are subject to all of the mentioned phenomena, whereas in case of the remaining three categories of responses, women achieve higher results.

Table 12. Differences between women and men regarding susceptibility to the following

		Total	Men	Women
		%		
Violence	More men	8.4	11.0	5.6
	More women	46.5	43.7	49.4
	Equal	42.7	42.0	43.4
	Neither men nor women	2.5	3.3	1.7
Violence	More men	14.8	18.7	10.5
	More women	29.6	26.2	33.3
	Equal	53.6	52.6	54.8
	Neither men nor women	2.0	2.5	1.4
Libel suits	More men	5.6	5.6	5.6
	More women	60.2	58.8	61.8
	Equal	30.1	30.1	30.2
	Neither men nor women	4.1	5.6	2.5
Online hate speech	More men	12.1	14.5	9.5
	More women	17.0	15.2	19.0
	Equal	65.8	63.2	68.6
	Neither men nor women	5.1	7.1	2.9
Censorship	More men	10.8	13.1	8.3
	More women	22.1	17.5	27.1
	Equal	63.0	65.5	60.3
	Neither men nor women	4.1	3.9	4.3



Violence is something we all should avoid. Today we mark the day of fight against peer violence. When we talk about the youth, then violence is the last thing we need. When we harass someone verbally or attack them physically, as if violence were the only solution. In my opinion, everything can be resolved without violence or ugly words. (Man, 39 years old, general population, Mostar)

No, absolutely not. I think that there are ways and space to resolve that. Physical violence or hate speech does not lead to anything. It leads to more hatred, more violence and this is not good for anyone. (Man, 24 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

I am against any type of violence and against sanctions against journalists. If they were not doing their job, we would not have the information we have. In essence, I think that the key problem in case of the media is their lack of professionalism. Every media outlet should punish a journalist that wrote an untruthful article, instead of us punishing their employee. (Man, 36 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

I agree, too. I wanted to speak earlier. I would sue both the media outlet and the journalist, because I believe that a journalist cannot publish something on the portal until the head or person responsible of a media outlet checks it. (Woman, 21 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

When it comes to the violation of some human rights of an individual, I agree that if someone causes damage to someone else, that they should certainly be held responsible under the law. Maybe a lawsuit or something similar, and I absolutely do not support any violence, because it does not resolve anything, things are not resolved in such a manner. (Woman, 35 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

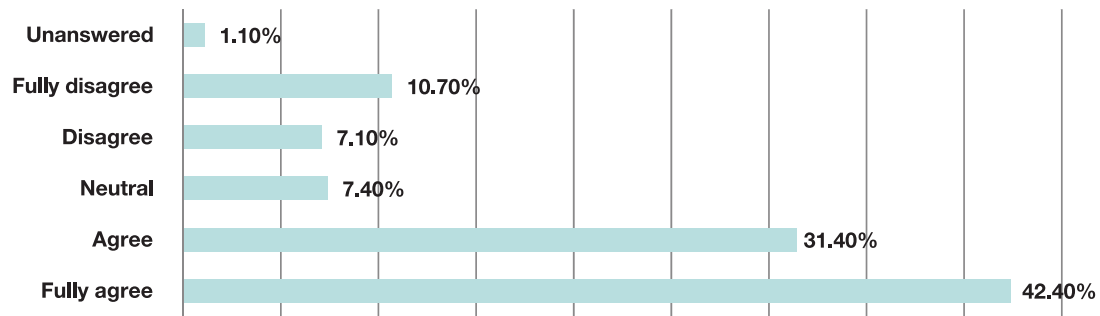
I am against violence, of course, but I support lawsuits, why not. If a journalist publishes something, they should stand behind it. They need to check information before they publish it. (Woman, 47 years old, general population, Banja Luka)



Links to politics and additional payments for media contents

Chart 16 presents results that show to what extent citizens believe that the media should devote attention to politics and statements by politicians regarding the situation we are facing. 42.4% of respondents fully agree, 31.4% of respondents agree to a certain extent that politics and statements of politics should receive much less attention. Having in mind that only 10.7% fully agree, and 7.1% agree to a certain extent that less attention should be devoted in such cases, it may be concluded that respondents agree that there should be less politics in the media in general.

Chart 16. Should the media devote less attention to statements by politicians and political content?



They rarely publish something positive when it comes to politics or something that politicians have done. They mostly publish disputes between Dodik and others. They mostly publish such disputes and negative things. (Woman, 21 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

When we sit down to have coffee and talk about politics, politicians, it is quite clear in what kind of society we live. Politics is topic number 1 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the key topic, that is the way it is. (Man, 30 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

A negative aspect is the fact that the information is not sufficiently specific and that unimportant things are discussed. It is mostly about reality shows. People obviously watch things like that. I hear that many people watch such shows. They are interested in other people's lives, what is happening in someone else's life. Negative things like that. (Woman, 55 years old, general population, Mostar)

I think that they are slowly, but surely mind numbing us with such content. (Man, 44 years old, general population, Mostar)

People are generally distressed and the media are stubbornly adding oil to the fire and provoking. I even think that they are responsible for causing some larger conflicts, because they are following the path of politicisation simply because they have become too dependent on politics. I think that we all here know very well which media outlet belongs to which political party. (Man, 30 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

Everything is mostly focused on politics, reality shows that are increasingly present and have a negative impact on people, of course, both on young people and adults. Everything somehow evolves around such things, and the least attention is somehow devoted to things that should be a priority. To discuss a better development of the country, economy, culture, sport. So, yes, everything is somehow focused on negative things and there are mostly such shows, such stories. (Woman, 35 years old, general population, Banja Luka)



Finally, when it comes to truthfulness, timeliness and quality of information, there is the idea that high-quality sources of information should be paid for additionally. Table 13 shows the results that show the degree of agreement of respondents with the mentioned view. Results of the overall sample show that more than a half of respondents by categories fully agree (27.4%) and agree to a certain extent (27.8%) with the mentioned attitude. One fifth of respondents in the overall sample are completely against such an idea. Having in mind the fact that such an attitude also depends on several variables, especially those that have an impact on the income of citizens, the level of education and employment status of respondents were also included in the analysis. As demonstrated by the results, an almost equal number of employed persons (60-6%) and unemployed persons (61%) fully agree with the idea that higher quality information should be paid for additionally, and it may be also observed that there is quite a similar attitude in relation to other response categories. A similar trend with somewhat less agreement is present also in case of retired persons, whereas the least agreement with such an idea is present in case of the student population. If the same question is analysed from the perspective of the level of education, it may be concluded that in case of all categories of respondents there is partial agreement with the opinion that high-quality information should be paid for additionally. In this case, it should be emphasized that respondents that are uneducated (25%) and respondents with primary school degree show the most resistance against the mentioned idea.

Table 13. Should one pay more money for high-quality information provision by the media?

	Fully agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Fully disagree
Total	27.4%	27.8%	13.2%	8.8%	20.2%
Employed persons	60.6%	14.1%	9.4%	11.3%	0.0%
Unemployed persons	61.0%	13.2%	6.0%	11.3%	0.0%
Students	45.0%	20.0%	25.0%	5.0%	0.0%
Retired persons	58.7%	8.9%	7.3%	11.3%	0.0%
Uneducated	8.3%	41.7%	12.5%	8.3%	25.0%
Primary school degree	7.7%	58.2%	9.9%	4.4%	17.1%
Secondary school degree	6.3%	61.0%	11.4%	8.9%	11.0%
University degree	5.6%	60.1%	15.0%	9.2%	10.1%



Well, yes, I think that the right information needs to be paid for. I mean, every good piece of information is not expensive, if it is good, if it is supported by scientific facts, arguments and if it is not endangering anyone. So, yes, I agree with it. (Man, 29 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

I agree with the colleagues. Behind any piece of good, verified, high-quality information, there is someone’s work, someone’s time and effort. I believe that such things should be paid for and the person using the information should pay, because such useful information will save both time and money to someone. It will make them take the right decision in daily life and maybe even have a long-term impact. So, a good piece of information is worth gold. (Woman, 29 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

I think that it would be fine. If they will be more careful as to what they say. There is no such thing as free lunch. It is not probable that a media outlet will present 100% truth in case of a piece of news. Some of them will present 10%, others 20% or 30%, others 50%, but to get 100% truth is not probable, no matter how much we pay. (Man, 40 years old, general population, Mostar)

In essence, I could and would want to pay for a media outlet that provides good and verified information. I think that we are truly far from that and that we will need a lot more time so our media can improve and reach such a level to offer paid services. (Man, 36 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

Generally, I would not do it, because if I think of TV and other media, why should I do it if I again have portals, both foreign and domestic ones, regional, as well, that I can use to obtain information. When it comes to payments, why should I give someone more to do their job, to do what they are supposed to do? (Woman, 26 years old, general population, Sarajevo)



Impact of the media on democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and importance of information for daily life

Some of the questions included in focus groups gave a better insight into arguments and facts that citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina use as a basis for their attitudes, which made it possible to improve the results obtained through questionnaires. One of these areas is the impact of the media on democracy and the society of Bosnia and Herzegovina in general. A common trait for almost all respondents is underlining the fact that the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina insist on news, information and topics that have negative connotations. This is attributed to all the media. Respondents state that the political topics dominate in the media content and that they are presented in such a manner that they raise tensions and make life more difficult. Respondents mention that there is no media outlet that insists on positive examples and news that support optimism and a positive attitude towards life in citizens. Participants agree about the fact that such media, including also political institutions and organisations, have a generally negative impact on the democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Based on the obtained opinions of respondents, it may be concluded that the described negative impact of the media essentially comes down to two problems. The first one is the tension that is imposed in the field of inter-ethnic relations, whereas the second relates to the fact that topics and contents in all areas (entertainment, art, culture, politics, public life, education) have negative connotations.



Well, to put it briefly, the influence is negative. I think that all persons that read the daily press are aware of this. Persons reading daily news know. Especially sensationalist news, which are present in all media outlets, they are merely impairing democracy. (Woman, 29 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

The question to be asked is actually what elections we have. The media continuously impose it on us to select the lesser evil, so to say. I believe that the media have a great impact on the public opinion and on conditions that the current political establishment needs. (Man, 33 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

I believe that the media have an impact on democracy, that they impact the subconsciousness of people, that democracy is interpreted in a completely different manner as a result of the media. I really sound like a bitter person, but I follow the media, although there are tons of stuff I don't like. (Woman, 42 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

You will never find a piece of news that a child was awarded a gold medal or that something positive happened. The media will focus on a graffiti or some petty nationalist issue. (Woman, 21 years old, general population, Mostar)

They have a negative impact. Especially on children, for example the violence they see in TV, such violence has become completely normal for them. I am truly bitter when it comes to the media. I believe that they are extremely biased. Previously, the state was controlling the media. Today, the media are independent and in my opinion they have too much freedom and they spread misinformation. (Woman, 55 years old, general population, Mostar)

They have a negative impact on democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially since now warmongering is prevailing, the situation is becoming more tense on a daily basis... And they are again spreading negative information. (Man, 24 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

I think that there is a lot of democracy here, especially when it comes to the media, the democracy is being used in a wrong way. Why? As my colleagues said before, news is published, but it is not checked at all. In essence, what matters is simply to say something, without even checking or proving it. Everyone is doing whatever they want. (Man, 36 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

There is less and less democracy and the country is increasingly becoming the empire of the three big guns. There is no freedom of speech. (Man, 34 years old, general population, Mostar)



The next important question that was raised and explained by the focus groups, was to what extent citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina even search for information and how important it is for their daily life. A general conclusion is that citizens have a negative attitude to information from all media (TV, radio, press, Internet), which is based on facts described in the above results. This influences respondents in two ways. Some are trying to distance themselves from news contents and select their own content that they know, like or consider important, mostly using the Internet. Others are searching for news and information on their own, using several sources, and verifying them, which, in their opinion, enables them to understand events in a better and more accurate manner, since the media are not sufficiently impartial in their reporting on such issues. Overall, such a situation shows that citizens cannot rely on the credibility and completeness of information, but it may be concluded which information is important for the daily life of most respondents, and they are therefore trying to obtain them themselves.



Maybe 2 or 3 hours. (Man, 34 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

There is very little information. I read literally what I can get my hands on. I am really unable to assess how much it is. (Woman, 39 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

An hour or two. It depends on how much time I have and whether something interesting happened. (Woman, 26 years old, general population, Sarajevo)

I am really following quite a lot. I am involved, unfortunately, maybe I should follow less. (Woman, 23 years old, general population, Mostar)

Given the fact that for a number of reasons I decided not to purchase a TV for my home, I do not have the chance to choose whether I will watch the news or not. A colleague mentioned this, and I do it as well, I simply use the Internet to find information that I am interested in. (Man, 22 years old, general population, Banja Luka)



In addition to respondents' comments related to the quantity of time they spend searching for information, respondents' statements related to the question how important the media are for them or describing the context of search for information or their attitudes and reasons for a negative attitude to the media and their coverage or available information content were also presented.



They have no importance for the quality of life. Given their current format and manner of work, they are absolutely unimportant. (Woman, 39 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

Although we have an enormous number of media that are available to us, we are in the dark in terms of information, because information is provided as if we were in North Korea. The media are extremely important. We need to be aware of what is happening in the world, what is happening in our country. I stopped watching some information shows when the previous staff of Alternativna televizija disappeared. I was of the opinion that they were, to a certain extent, the most impartial media outlet. I now use the Internet to find the information I am interested in and then I compare two or three to get to some conclusions based on all that. (Woman, 47 years old, general population, Banja Luka)

I agree with Medisa. The media are extremely important specifically in order to be able to know what is happening in my city, my country in general. Just the way it was with Covid, we were able to follow what was happening around the world. The media are important. How much truth they will tell is another matter entirely. (Man, 34 years old, general population, Mostar)



IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW ANALYSIS RESULTS

In-depth interviews have made it possible to analyse problems and issues from the perspective of professionals who are directly involved in the work of the media. A better insight was obtained based on results of questionnaires and focus groups. This made it also possible to understand how individuals who work in the media assess various aspects of such media. An analysis of obtained answers was presented in the text below in compliance with the order of topics included in the interview. Interpretations of obtained answers are supported by statements of the respondents.

Assessment of the situation in general and issues in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In general, the situation in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina was most frequently described as bad in the in-depth interviews. The most frequent negative aspects that are mentioned relate to the poor economic situation in media outlets from all areas (TV, radio, newspapers, Internet), strongly intertwined politics and the media, political and economic impact on the media, lack of respect for the profession and lack of protection of journalists. In addition to this, when describing the state of the media sector today, respondents mention negative phenomena such as the large quantity of fake news and lack of ethical principles that would have to be applied. It was also mentioned that the pandemic made the work of the media and journalists even more difficult. However, not all the respondents share this view. A small share of respondents believes that the current situation in the media is somewhat better, that is, that the situation is slowly getting better or that it is not that bad. It should be mentioned that the bad situation in the media is primarily associated with the generally bad situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state.



Well, I believe that the situation is extremely bad and I believe that university graduates do not meet quality standards and are unprepared. Many will say that journalism is a trade craft, and it truly is, but on the other hand it requires a truly comprehensive and quite deep knowledge. (ATV)

I do not like the situation. The media are quite dependent, starting with my own employer. (TVSA)

I believe that the media almost do not exist in Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Freelancer)

Well, the situation is quite bad. I think that it is getting worse every year. We can notice that the indicators are getting worse every year. (Media centar)

Media polarisation exists even in democratic and well-developed societies. However, there is no corruption and pressure that is present in the Balkans, where you can see that some media cheer a bit more for one side, and others for the other side. (Fokus.ba)

I believe that the situation has never been worse. I am of the opinion that the overall situation in the society also has an impact on the media, since the media function in the current system. That has an impact on the quality of professional standards, reporting, access to information, problems related to fake news, problems related to the phenomenon of misinformation, and financial problems. (CIN)



Specific problems mentioned by respondents include political pressure, censorship, auto-censorship, financing problems, lack of adequate journalistic staff, low quality education of future journalists, low salaries of journalists and lack of respect for the profession. Inadequate regulations and lack of implementation of legal provisions was also described as a large issue by the largest number of respondents. The fact that there is a large number of media in Bosnia and Herzegovina is perceived in different ways. Whereas one group of respondents believes that this is a problem and that the number of media outlets should be reduced over time, another group of respondents believes that such a number is an indicator of democracy and that it should be like that. Education is one of the fundamental issues that according to respondents' opinion requires attention. Respondents believe that the knowledge students obtain during their studies is obsolete and impractical, which makes it contrary to the needs of the modern media. In their opinion, both journalists and all other media workers have the obligation to continuously attend professional trainings. Certain aspects of legal regulations were assessed as good, although there is a unanimous opinion that the law is not implemented the way it should. On the other hand, respondents point out that certain legal areas are inadequate and that they should be improved in order to be applicable and useful in Bosnia and Herzegovina, that is that they should be adapted to the needs of journalists and the media. They point out that only the public broadcasting services are more or less financially stable, whereas smaller media outlets face much more problems in their efforts to ensure their financial stability.



There is an extremely large number of media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it is also enormous for a small audience. We are a small country and if you take a look at the number of the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina and compare it to the number of the media in other countries, their number is enormous. (Media centar)

I would not prohibit it. I am against prohibitions of any kind. I would, however, prefer, if special attention were devoted to persons or media that do not have a name, an impressum, in case of which we do not know who is behind them, who is spreading the lies and hatred. This is what I would focus on and we are slowly eliminating such issues. (Avaz)

I will start from us, the media. We need to make a selection. Train our staff. I am starting from the public broadcasting service – in our case, it means adopting a law first and making it possible to apply the existing rulebook, so that the other part of Bosnia and Herzegovina forwards the money paid for radio and TV fee to the right address. (BHRT)

It is difficult to expect that someone will have serious journalists or invest into serious journalists if they are barely making the ends meet. Material stability is absolutely crucial in all this. However, it will not happen on its own. (Hercegovina info)

Censorship is present. Again, something that nobody will admit. Censorship exists because the ownership structure dictates certain topics that are researched and covered in terms of both topics and manner of reporting. Certain information will never be published in certain media outlets, simply because that does not fit their ownership structure. The ownership structure is certainly connected to politics. (CIN)

Not only auto-censorship, there is also censorship. This is what needs to be discussed. I believe that different editorial boards have their ways of censoring certain contents. Even when a journalist writes or does something, makes a reportage that is not adequate, we see the sanctions, we see how journalists are fired. (a professor)



Safety of journalists

There are varying opinions about the safety of journalists. Around two thirds of respondents believe that the level of safety of journalists is very low and that journalists are almost left to themselves. A small group of respondents believes that the situation is not that bad, that is that the situation is similar to other professions or to the overall situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to respondents, such a situation is the key generating factor of auto-censorship. Namely, journalists and media workers, or even whole media outlets, are aware of the fact that by choosing certain topics or by writing in a certain manner and providing information, they may endanger their safety or make their work more difficult. Out of fear of reprisal that would bring consequences for their own lives and livelihoods, they frequently choose a conflict-avoidance policy or auto-censorship. On the other hand, journalists that are determined not to succumb to pressure, are left to themselves. All respondents agree that associations of journalists provide only nominal protection, but no real, functional protection. It is interesting to observe that most respondents in a way separate threats and insults from the social media, portals and blogs, as an almost integral part of the media that function based on the Internet. According to one of the respondents, the situation would improve immensely, if a draft law were adopted according to which attacks against journalists would be considered attacks against officials. Finally, respondents believe that it is necessary to adopt adequate legal measures and strictly comply with such measures in order to improve the level of safety of journalists.



Can you publish this, can you or anyone else from OSCE explain why nobody from the association of journalists, BH novinari, or Klub novinara Banja Luka, called me over the past four years? They all receive some donations. A professional killer threatened me, he sent me a letter. I reported it, it is also on my blog. Do you think that someone reacted? Nobody did a thing. (Freelancer)

Investigative journalism is the most dangerous form of journalism. For example, shows focusing on certain situations at companies, government structures, etc. I believe that it is not easy for them at all. We see all kinds of stuff, even when something is filmed by chance or on purpose, and otherwise we have no idea what certain persons endure, from verbal insults to physical assaults. (TVSA)

Today, anyone can say anything. And not just in case of a journalist, but also in case of the public-at-large, specifically because of the Internet. In any case, I believe that the whole public is always taking the side of journalists and their tasks, no matter what they are. (ATV)

I think that the easiest thing to do today is to insult journalists, attack them, criticise them, without anyone reacting to it. I do hope that something will be done also in relation to hate speech that is now more in the focus and that such persons that attack and insult journalists and other people will be automatically found and that something will be done about it. (Avaz)

Just imagine your life when you are published in various groups as a big traitor, fingers are pointed at you, your picture, your address, name and last name are published in various groups and you are being accused of having betrayed the people, that someone sent you to destroy the country, etc. And all this because you uncovered an affair involving the theft of a large sum of public money by private criminal and political structures. (Fokus.ba)



Differences regarding the position of male and female journalists

When it comes to pressure that journalists and media workers are exposed to, most respondents believe that women are in a more difficult position. In addition to all the problems they share with their male colleagues, they also face the issue of sexism. Most respondents believe that women are perceived as the weaker sex in our society, so that they are easier targets for insults or threats. Female respondents do not point out differences as compared to their male colleagues to such a great extent, but they do believe that they are more susceptible to insults, threats and being put down.



I do not think that that is about sex of a person and I will even say that lately there have been much more women working in the media sector than men. But I simply believe that there is an equal number of both sexes. I don't know what is the situation like with other professions, but I truly believe that in case of the media sector there is no stratification in that respect and I believe that men and women truly function excellently both as colleagues and professionals. (ATV)

It is probably much more difficult for women. Women are mostly mothers and they are different, more subtle. Also, at least according to our experience, female journalists are usually braver and have a much deeper approach to the stories they research. As a result, they probably also touch upon some topics behind which there are people that do not want their coverage. (Fokus.ba)

I believe that female journalists in Bosnia and Herzegovina are facing much larger and different problems than their male colleagues. They are receiving threats that their male colleagues never get and this happens to them simply because they are women. That relationship is truly scary. (Detektor)

The violence against men and women differs. In my opinion, it is not that easy to scare men as opposed to women, simply because they are physically stronger. They therefore may also have a different position. The type of violence or methods applied in case of male and female journalists differ completely. Men primarily receive threats involving physical violence, whereas women are easily made into sexual objects, so that they are more exposed to the emotional effect of violence in this respect. (GIN)

I believe that women are more exposed to sexist attacks, because I know this very well from personal experience as a woman. Also, when I work here at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but also elsewhere, people sometimes approach me with "girl" or something similar. It is our Bosnian chauvinism. And the same goes for female journalists. The threats they receive, the largest part of them are not threats against their lives, but they mostly focus on their sex. There are less men reporting such threats and when they do report them, then these are serious threats. (Police of Brčko District)

As I said, we do not have exact records, but according to my experience issues related to attacks against journalists equally apply to men and women. (Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republika Srpska)



Position of freelancers in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Respondents agree that there are few freelancers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially those that have made a name and reputation for themselves. In addition to this, respondents agree that this category of media workers are journalists that are least subject to censorship and auto-censorship. Respondents agree that this is the most difficult category of journalism for several reasons. Firstly, they do not have any institution that might help them in unpleasant situations they may face as journalists. Secondly, this form of journalism requires pluriannual experience. Thirdly, this group of journalists are in the worst position, given their problems with the social and health insurance, employment status and payment of taxes.



I believe that it is the only type of journalism that can bring some changes. As regards the mainstream media, they will not bring about any change. (Freelancer)

Actually, it is an issue related to their status and pension and health insurance, which is not regulated. Just take the example of the Prime Minister who compared freelancers to satellites wandering around. The law does not recognise this category at all and the fact that these people wish to do their jobs, to earn money, pay taxes and enjoy the same rights as everyone else. (Detektor)

As far as I know, in our sector, at the association of journalists, BH novinari, there are less than eighty registered freelancers, and not all of them are active. I believe that the last figure was sixty-seven. (Freelancer)

These people are in a truly difficult position. The state provides for certain measures, but their employers treat them differently, and these people truly do not know what to do. I think that they really need help, in the sense that their legal status should be clear, no matter what, and they should have the right to work the way we work at some other media outlets. (Nezavisne novine)

I believe that there are good journalists, but they are less protected, just as any freelance expert. They are less protected because they do not have a media outlet to support them. (Fabrika)



Assessment of media (in)dependence

When it comes to an assessment of the independence of the media, respondents agree that there are almost no independent media in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They point out that economic dependence on the one hand, and political dependence on the other, constitute factors that largely dictate the editorial policy of the media. Respondents believe that the most independent media are online media. According to the obtained results, public media depend on their founders, and other media depend on various political and economic factors. It is interesting that almost all respondents described their media outlet as impartial and independent, irrespective of the type of media, and thereby separated it from the above described model of media dependence on politics and financial support. One of the criteria that is visible when it comes to differences between the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina is

the source of financing. It is assessed that those media that obtain funds through various projects or donor funds are more independent, whereas the narrative of the media that are financially supported by government institutions or political organisations is fully determined by the goals of such groups.



All public media are dependent. All of them, because their founders simply request this from them. They may claim differently, but they depend on the politics. You dance the way they play. (TVSA)

Independence can be measured based on how you report on different political parties. If you are equal in terms of your approach to different parties, you are very probably independent. However, the problem lies in the fact that in our case, such dependence is literal. You also have such examples in other countries, media that directly favour a certain political party, but their reporting is not as obvious as in case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Detektor)

As I said, the dependence and independence may be observed based on the marketing. Of course, TV and radio stations are given preference, as opposed to the print media, because they are more influential. Someone will buy a paper, someone will not, but everyone watches TV. (Nezavisne novine)

Censorship and auto-censorship are thriving. (Freelancer)

People are aware that, if they have commercials from certain companies that are close to some political parties, they simply should not touch upon some topics that are related to them. These problems are similar everywhere, but in our case, they are more pronounced. (Fokus.ba)

When we talk about independent media that are financed by foreign donors, independent private media do not have any other choice but to seek advertising clients that favour them and independent financiers, philanthropists, etc. or to be purchased by a foreign company. (Buka)



Legal framework for the functioning of the media

Respondents believe that there are good legal regulations that cover this area and that would have to be applied in a much stricter manner. They believe that the media would be much more independent in such a case. One of the ways to develop and stabilise independent media is the support for young journalists and bloggers to act self-consciously and independently from political motives of political subjects. As regards other proposals and measures for the improvement of independent journalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, respondents also mentioned the need to improve the situation related to portals, which are frequently untransparent, with unclear information about the ownership structure and agenda. Respondents mentioned the following specific proposals that might contribute to the development of independent journalism and independent media in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- Establishment or restructuring of associations of journalists to transform them into well-functioning organisations,

- Defining the role and obligations of the state toward the media and separate politics from the media,
- Improvement and more consistent implementation of laws applicable to the media,
- Facilitating (non-interference) access to information,
- Ensuring satisfactory salaries for journalists,
- Enabling journalists and media workers to attend continuous public trainings and seminars,
- Ensuring a more transparent relationship between institutions and the media in relation to reporting on activities and information,
- Trainings for the media and journalists on how to use the available funds, because they use them rarely.



I truly think that it depends on the media, journalists, I believe that there is no comradeship, cooperation, dialogue about problematic issues. The media as a separate sector simply have to build, value and support such values. (ATV)

I think that the state should help the media, but without any strings attached. They should adopt a law to help the media, for the purpose that I mentioned before. (BH Radio)

I believe that a lot can be achieved through the Press and Online Media Council. There are some opportunities even now, but they are not used. More active interests or a stronger engagement to use some of the powers they have are not to be observed. We primarily have to react using the social networks, because the media and social networks must cooperate and not be at war. (CIN)

Politics should be separated from the media. Politicians should do their job, and we should report on politics, but not directly related to political parties or dependent on them. Another issue, of course, are sources of financing and money. So, in order for a journalist to be satisfied today, you cannot give him/her a 500 KM salary and expect him/her to achieve fantastic results or to give his/best at the job. (RSG)



Associations of journalists of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Associations of journalists that currently operate in Bosnia and Herzegovina only have a nominal importance. Such associations are unable to ensure optimal conditions for the work of journalists, provide protection for journalists or enable any progress in the media sector. Respondents believe that it is not necessary to establish new associations, but rather make the existing associations more functional. Respondents generally agree that a relevant and well-functioning association of journalists would ensure the advancement of the profession and improve the situation in the media, which is impossible under the current conditions.



Such an organisation or body should be established and there should be a close cooperation. Journalists are like an army, so they should stand together and they should also be verified. (TVSA)

All of that would be good, it all sounds good. Many things should be changed in order for journalists to be protected. I do not think that they should be more protected than other persons or other professions, but we have to be aware of the fact that journalists work in specific situations. (BH Radio)

Well, we have an association of journalists at the state level, BH novinari. We also have an association of journalists of Republika Srpska. We have an association of Croatian journalists in Mostar. So, we have these three associations that, as may be observed, are not really compatible. They do not cooperate. This is what I mentioned at the beginning, they are divided into we, you, them, etc. (Nezavisne novine)

These are usually small groups of people, I am not sure how frequently they meet officially, but we also communicate unofficially all the time. If we had more members, some things might be clearer. We would be in a better position to ask for something. Like this, we do not have a sufficient number of members to request some sort of legal framework. (RTV HB)



Role of education in the development of the media and journalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina

All respondents agree that contemporary education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is in no way adapted to the needs of the media, that is, that young journalism graduates arrive fully unprepared for work in the media and with obsolete knowledge. Respondents believe that faculties of journalism and communications should adapt their curricula to the true needs of journalists in the framework of their future work with the modern media. Respondents also agree that it would be desirable, even necessary, to introduce subjects related to the journalistic profession, manner of obtaining and verifying information and work of the media and other aspects of their functioning in secondary schools.

In addition to the phenomena and problems included in the questionnaire, respondents expressed additional issues during interviews, which was assessed as important for the context that is analysed. Respondents mostly agree that the international community should change its attitude toward the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, given that, by maintaining its current approach, it supports the current situation, which is extremely unfavourable, as outlined at the beginning. Establishment of contacts between educational institutions, primarily faculties, and media outlets from all areas is also seen as a desirable factor, since a direct contact between the profession and science would ensure a more adequate education of new media workers and would also improve the media sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Finally, one of the most frequent criticisms of the media is the high burden in the form of news and information with negative connotations, which respondents also agree with. Most respondents believe that the focus should shift to news, reports and stories that have a positive connotation and that can have a positive impact on citizens. Insistence on negative and burdensome news only creates additional tensions, both in case of individuals and in general. A shift of direction and pointing out positive examples, especially from Bosnia and Herzegovina, would show positive examples for citizens, but also set a basis for the development of a more affirmative journalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



In any case, we need more education, more work, more practice. Practice for people in order to be able to deal with all kinds of situations. They need to broaden their horizons. Persons should attend trainings, to hear something else, see something different, because otherwise they remain limited to their media outlet and behave accordingly. (TVSA)

Given the state of the educational system in Bosnia and Herzegovina, both the horizontal and vertical fragmentation, I have my doubts that media literacy and media law will be one of the priorities of our government. This is something that is not considered at the moment at all, but everything that will contribute to a higher quality of the media and the audience, including politicians, is welcome. (Buka)

At faculties of journalism, they should devote more attention to the research of new media, sociology, psychology. That is necessary. Also, the approach to creating news is crucial, it is an eternal circle. You do your best, but you have to have the clicks, so you bring that type of news, and people thrive on them. (RTV HB)

When it comes to young journalists, it might be good to prepare a project that would involve their presence and work at a newsroom for a longer period of time. Not a day or two, but at least a month, so they can see what they will be doing once they graduate. (O Kanal)



APPENDICES

Citizen survey questionnaire

Introductory text:

Dear Madam/Sir,

The agency Prism Research is implementing a large-scale public opinion survey in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The survey is based on a random and representative sample of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina that are older than 18. Your household and you were selected for the participation in the survey by means of a random selection method. The survey focuses on opinions, attitudes and experiences of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding habits related to the use of various media, their perception and media-related needs.

Your opinion is therefore extremely important, since it is used in the processing of results related to opinions and attitudes of 1000 randomly selected citizens and are considered a relevant representation of opinions and attitudes of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The most important thing you should know is that we very much value your personal opinion and not the opinion of other people or groups of people close to you. Only your honest answers will help us assess exactly what the public or citizens think about certain issues. There are no correct and incorrect answers.

The participation in the survey is fully anonymous and your personal data, such as your name or last name and your contact data will not be disclosed.

The answers you provide in the questionnaire will be used only for the purpose of a statistical group analysis, together with the answers of 1000 other citizens from the whole country that were randomly selected for the participation in the survey, just like you.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

POLLSTER CODE

--	--	--	--

DATE OF INTERVIEW

--	--	--	--

TYPE OF SETTLEMENT FROM SAMPLE SPECIFICATION

(1-URBAN; 2-SUBURB/RURAL)

--

DATA FROM THE SAMPLE SPECIFICATION OR CONTACT LIST!

ŠIFRA ADRESE POLAZNE TAČKE	
MUNICIPALITY CODE	
MUNICIPALITY NAME	
PLACE CODE	
PLACE NAME	
STREET	
HOUSE NUMBER	
FLOOR	
APARTMENT NUMBER	
DESCRIPTIVE ADDRESS:	

NOTE FOR THE POLLSTER:

Please enter every address you visited between the last address at which you carried out a survey and this address for questions U1 to U5.

U1. What is the number of persons that you contacted in the period from the last published survey to this survey, who refused to participate in the survey?

Enter the number!	
-------------------	--

U2. What were the reasons for refusal to participate?

Reasons	Total
1 – Too busy, no time, other obligations, poor health	
2 – Not interested	
3 – Is not competent, does not know anything, does not want to	
4 – Is afraid, does not want to compromise his/her privacy	
5 – Has already participated in a survey, does not wish to participate, etc	
6 – Other – Please explain!	
Total	

Note: The total sum for all items in this table must correspond to the number entered in case of question U1.

U3. Sex of persons who refused to participate:

Sex	Total
1 – Man	
2 – Woman	
Total	

Note: The total sum for all items in this table must correspond to the number entered in case of question U1.

U4. Age of persons who refused to participate

Age	Total
Up to 30 years	
31 – 50	
51 or more	
Total	

Note: The total sum for all items in this table must correspond to the number entered in case of question U1.

U5. How many addresses did you visit at least twice or more times between the last and this survey and knock on the door, but you never found anyone home and you gave up on any further attempts to contact them?

Enter the number!	
-------------------	--

TIME OF THE BEGINNING OF THE INTERVIEW!		
	HOUR	MIN

P1. QUESTION ONLY FOR THE PILOT SURVEY! When you hear the words “Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? (Enter an answer in every row!)

Associations
1.
2.
3.

Do not read! Does not know or does not wish to answer

P2.-4. Now I will kindly ask you to tell me to what extent the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina are generally ... To a large extent, to a certain extent, somewhat or not at all? (Rotate the order of reading of individual items. Ask about every item separately. Enter an answer for every item!)

Forms of behaviour	To a large extent	To a certain extent	Somewhat	Not at all
2. Independent from political influence	1	2	3	4
3. Professional in terms of their reporting	1	2	3	4
4. Impartial or unbiased	1	2	3	4

P5. Some persons say that the media should be held responsible in cases when it has been established that they engaged in untruthful and/or malicious reporting. In what way should the media be primarily held responsible in your opinion? (Read the offered answers. Enter only one answer!)

1. The media should pay a fine
2. The media should lose their operating licence for a certain period of time
3. Persons responsible should be subject to a misdemeanour sanction
4. Persons responsible should be subject to criminal sanctions, with the possibility of imprisonment
5. Something else. Please explain!

--

6. **(Do not read this!) Does not know**
7. **(Do not read this!) Does not wish to answer**

P6.-P8. Which of the three mentioned factors or some other factor have the most POSITIVE impact on BETTER content offered by the domestic media in your opinion? *(Do not read! Wait for the answers! Enter 3 answers. Enter the first answer in the column "the most important factor". Enter the second answer in the column "the second most important factor". Enter the third answer in the column "the third most important factor". Stress that the first answer is the most important one, and so on until the third answer! Circle one answer in all three columns!*

Factors	The most important factor	The second most important factor	The third most important factor
Whether a media outlet is domestic or foreign	1	1	1
Whether a media outlet is private or public	2	2	2
In case of journalists and editors	3	3	3
7. Independence of the media from political influence	4	4	4

P9.-12. To what extent are the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina in your opinion exposed to the following type of pressure in their daily work? To a large extent, somewhat, to a small extent, not at all? *(Rotate the order of reading of these items. Ask about every item separately. Enter an answer for every item!)*

Forms of behaviour	To a large extent	Somewhat	To a small extent	Not at all
9. Political pressure	1	2	3	4
10. Economic pressure	1	2	3	4
11. Pressure resulting from legal remedies, libel action, report of a misdemeanour, etc.	1	2	3	4
12. Pressure due to threats and impaired safety	1	2	3	4

P13.-15. Which of three of the mentioned problems are in your opinion the most important problems faced by the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the moment? *(Do not read! Wait for the answers! Enter 3 answers. Enter the first answer in the column "the most important problem". Enter the second answer in the column "the second most important problem". Enter the third answer in the column "Third most important answer". Stress that the first answer is the most important one, and so on until the third answer! Circle one answer in all three columns!)*

Problems	13. The most important problem	14. The second most important problem	15. The third most important problem
Economic sustainability	1	1	1
Exposure to political pressure	2	2	2
Safety of journalists	3	3	3
Insufficient court protection of the media	4	4	4
More efficient resolution of libel actions	6	6	6
Do not read! Does not know or does not wish to answer	8	8	8

P16. A QUESTION ONLY FOR THE PILOT SURVEY! What content would you like to see more in the domestic media? (Enter only one answer in every line!)

Content
1.
2.
3.

Do not read! Does not know or does not wish to answer.

P17.-19. Which of the mentioned content/programmes do you follow in the media? (Do not read! Wait for the answers! Enter 3 answers. Enter the first answer in the column "the most important". Enter the second answer in the column "the second most important". Enter the third answer in the column "the third most important". Stress that the first answer is the most important one, and so on until the third answer! Circle one answer in all three columns!)

Content	17. The most important	18. The second most important	19. The third most important
News programme/ news/evening news	1	1	1
Political shows	2	2	2
Entertainment shows	6	6	6
Educational shows	8	8	8
Do not read! Does not know or does not wish to answer.	13	13	13

P20.-22. When it comes to information content – various news, evening news, etc. which of the mentioned factors have the greatest impact on your selection of the media from which you usually obtain such information? (Do not read! Wait for the answers! Enter 3 answers. Enter the first answer in the column "the most important". Enter the second answer in the column "the second most important". Enter the third answer in the column "the third most important". Stress that the first answer is the most important one, and so on until the third answer! Circle one answer in all three columns!)

Factors	20. The most important	21. The second most important	22. The third most important
Investigative journalism			
Truthfulness and timely provision of information	1	1	1
Information is in compliance with my political choices and ethnicity	3	3	3
Political and any other impartiality	4	4	4
A journalist who edits/presents/reports	5	5	5
Type of media outlet: TV, radio, press, Internet	6	6	6
Do not read! Does not know or does not wish to answer.	8	8	8

P23. Overall, to what extent to you trust the media that you follow most frequently? Do you trust them fully, to a certain extent, do you distrust them to a certain extent or you do not trust them at all? (Read the offered answers. Enter only one answer!)

- 1. Fully agrees
- 2. Agrees to a certain extent
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Disagrees to a certain extent
- 5. Fully disagrees
- 6. **(Do not read!) Does not know.**
- 7. **(Do not read!) Does not wish to answer.**

P24. QUESTION ONLY FOR THE PILOT SURVEY! Can you list specifically a maximum of three media outlet that you trust most in terms of information they publish? (Enter one answer per line!)

Media outlets
1.
2.
3.

Do not read! Does not know or does not wish to answer!

P25.-27. Do you and to what extent do you support the following forms of behaviour toward some media or journalists or editors that work for such media? To a large extent, somewhat, to a small extent, not at all? (Rotate the order of reading of items. Ask about every item separately. Enter an answer per item!)

Forms of behaviour	To a large extent	Somewhat	To a small extent	Not at all
25. Violence	1	2	3	4
26. Threats	1	2	3	4
27. Libel action	1	2	3	4
28. Online hate speech	1	2	3	4
29. Censorship	1	2	3	4

P30.-34. Are men or women more exposed, both men and women equally or neither men nor women exposed to the following forms of behaviour? *(Rotate the order of reading of items. Ask about every item separately. Enter an answer per item!)*

Forms of behaviour	Men are more exposed	Women are more exposed	Men and women equally	Neither men nor women
30. Violence	1	2	3	4
31. Threats	1	2	3	4
32. Gender-based insults	1	2	3	4
33. Libel actions	1	2	3	4
34. Online hate speech	1	2	3	4

P35. Some persons say that the media should devote considerably less attention to politics and statements of politicians due to the situation that we are facing? To what extent do you agree or disagree with such an opinion? *(Read the offered answers. Enter only one answer!)*

1. Fully agrees
2. Agrees to a certain extent
3. Neutral
4. Disagrees to a certain extent
5. Fully disagrees
6. **(Do not read!) Does not know.**
7. **(Do not read!) Does not wish to answer.**

P36. Some persons say that they would be willing to pay more, if a media outlet offered them better information. To what extent do you agree or disagree with such an opinion? *(Read the offered answers. Enter only one answer!)*

1. Fully agrees
2. Agrees to a certain extent
3. Neutral
4. Disagrees to a certain extent
5. Fully disagrees
6. **(Do not read!) Does not know.**
7. **(Do not read!) Does not wish to answer.**

Socio-demographic questions

Thank you for taking the time to answer the questions. I would like you to give me some basic information about you that will help us to better understand the answers you provided. Rest assured that all information will be treated as confidential.

P37. Sex? (Do not ask! *Only one answer is possible!*)

1. Male
2. Female

P38. Age? (Enter the answer!)

|| years old

P39. Level of education? (Read all suggested answers. *Only one answer is possible!*)

1. Uneducated
2. Primary education
3. Three-year secondary education
4. Four-year secondary education
5. Post-secondary education
6. Faculty education
7. MA/PhD degree

P40. Employment status? (Read all suggested answers. *Only one answer is possible!*)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Employer | go to P41 |
| 2. Employee | go to P41 |
| 3. Self-employed person | go to P41 |
| 4. Helping household member | go to P41 |
| 5. Unemployed person | go to P42 |
| 6. Student | go to P42 |
| 7. Person performing housework | go to P42 |
| 8. Retired person | go to P42 |
| 9. Other? <i>Please explain!</i> | go to P42 |

P41. In which sector do you work? *(Read all suggested answers. Enter only one answer!)*

1. Private sector
2. Public sector
3. NGO sector
4. Something else

P42. When you think about the total income of your household, that is the total amount earned or received by all members of your current household, what is the net amount of the average monthly income? *(Read all suggested answers. Enter only one answer!)*

1. Up to 500 KM
2. 501 – 1000 KM
3. 1001 – 1500 KM
4. 1501 – 2000 KM
5. More than 2000 KM
6. **(Do not read!)** Without an answer

P43. What is your ethnicity? *(Read all suggested answers. Enter only one answer!)*

1. Bosniak
2. Srb
3. Croat
4. Something else. *Please explain!* _____
5. **(Do not read!)** Does not know / does not wish to answer

Geographical questions

P43. Entity? *(Enter only one answer!)*

1. FBiH
2. RS
3. Brčko District

P45. Region? *(Enter only one answer!)*

P46. Municipality? *(Enter only one answer!)*

P47. Type of settlement? *(Enter only one answer!)*

1. Urban
2. Suburban/rural.

Guidelines for focus groups with citizens

Introduction – 10 minutes

Good afternoon/good evening and welcome. I am _____ and I work with the agency Prism. We are a professional research company that engages in marketing research and public opinion polls. We invited you today to participate in a group discussion on opinions and attitudes of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding various issues that are related to the way in which we use different media.

There are no wrong answers in this group discussion, this is not an exam and nobody will be assessed. We are interested in your attitude and your opinion. Every answer is the right answer. Everything you need to do is to relax and talk.

Let us first deal with some formalities. This discussion is recorded, since that is the only way for our other researchers and our client to analyse what is being said during these discussions. I cannot write down everything you say or remember everything that we will talk about. All data and information we obtain from you will be used exclusively for the purpose of this survey and will not be made public. The recordings will be used exclusively to create transcripts of discussions that will be a basis for an analysis of results.

(IF A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CLIENT IS ATTENDING THE FOCUS GROUP! In this respect, my assistant is here with me and will try to observe and write down as many things as possible that you say today.)

It is extremely important that all participants equally participate in the discussion. Everyone will have the chance to say what they think. It is therefore crucial to respect other persons. As long as a person is talking, other persons should listen. I will also make sure that nobody speaks too much or too little. So, I kindly ask you to forgive me if I interrupt you sometimes or if I give someone else the floor and let them jump the line.

Also, I will ask you to turn off your cellphone, so we do not get disturbed during this discussion. Thank you.

Alright, let us start with the introductions. I will go first. My name is _____.

Can you tell me something about yourselves, your name or nickname that you would like me to use during our discussion? I repeat once again that your participation in the discussion is fully anonymous. We are not interested at all in your identity in case of this survey.

Questions for the discussion – 60 – 75 minutes

- P1. When you hear the words “the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, what comes first to your mind? Which words, thoughts, associations?
- P2. How would you describe the current situation when it comes to the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina?
- P3. What are the key issues with the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina or at least those media that you follow?
(Moderator: If respondents do not mention it, ask them individually: the quality of content that is offered, impartiality and unbiasedness in the provision of information, professional reporting, dependence/independence from political influence, political pressure)
- P5. What is in your opinion the current influence of the media in our society?
- P6. What is the impact of the media on the development of democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina?
- P7. How would you generally assess the impact of the local media on the development of democracy in BiH?
- P8. Some persons say that the media should be sanctioned if it is determined that they report in an untruthful and/or malicious manner. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?
- P9. How satisfied are you overall with content offered by the domestic media? What are you most or least satisfied with?
- P10. Which factors in your opinion mostly influence the quality of content offered by the domestic media?
(Moderator: If respondents do not mention it, ask them individually: factors such as whether it is a domestic or foreign media outlet, whether it is a private or public media outlet, factors such as type of media outlet, like TV, radio, internet portal, newspaper, or factors like journalists, economic situation, independence of a media outlet journalist)
- P11. To what extent are the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina in your opinion exposed to different types of pressure in their daily work? What kinds of pressure are these?
- P12. How would you overall assess the impact of the current media when it comes to provision of truthful information to citizens?
- P13. Do you believe that there are considerably more media in Bosnia and Herzegovina than there should be, is their number sufficient, or is there a lack of media? Why?
- P14. How important is the existence of the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina for you personally and for your life?
- P15. What specific media do you mostly follow and why?
- P16. What types of shows/programmes do you mostly watch and why?
- P17. When it comes to information – different types of news, evening news, etc. which factors mostly influence your selection of the media that you mostly follow to obtain information?
(Moderator: If respondents do not mention it, ask them individually: truthful information, timely information, political orientation of the media, political and any other impartiality, journalists, type of media outlet, TV, radio, Internet, newspapers)

P18. How much time do you on average spend every day to obtain information from the following media – TV, radio, Internet, newspapers?

P19. Can you list a maximum of three media outlet that you trust most in terms of information? Why?

P20. What do you think – is it justified and in which situation is it justified to apply some form of violence against a media outlet or their employees? Hate speech? Threats? Libel action, etc.? Putting them down?

P21. Some persons say that the media should devote considerably less attention to politics and statements of politicians due to the situation that we are facing. To what extent do you agree or disagree with that opinion?

P22. Some persons that they would be willing to pay more, if a media outlet offered them better information. To what extent do you agree or disagree with such an opinion?

P23. We have come to the very end of today's discussion. Do you have anything to say in relation to this that we have not asked you yet?

Thank you very much for participating.

Guidelines for semi-structured interviews with media representatives

1. How would you overall assess the current situation in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina?
2. What are the most important problems or challenges?
3. What are the most important needs that should be met – organisational, financial, needs for qualified employees, trainings and education, etc.?
4. What is the situation like when it comes to journalism and journalists?
5. What are the key problems regarding journalists? Lack of journalists? Education/training? Political ties? Political pressure? Censorship and auto-censorship?
6. What is the situation like regarding the safety of journalists?
7. Do you think that, when it comes to these problems, male journalists have less, more or an equal amount of problems as their female colleagues?
8. What do you think about so-called freelance journalism? What is the situation like in relation to this? What are the greatest problems and challenges?
9. To what extent are the media dependent or independent in your opinion? What are the key criteria used to assess the dependence or independence of the media?
10. What should in your opinion be done first in order to improve the current situation with the media? What specific measures do you suggest? (IF THE RESPONDENT DOES NOT STATE ANYTHING SPECIFIC, ASK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING: ESTABLISH A NEW, MORE FUNCTIONAL ASSOCIATION, IMPROVE THE FUNCTIONING OF EXISTING ASSOCIATIONS, STRENGTHEN THE TRADE UNION, IMPROVE COOPERATION AMONG THE MEDIA, ESTABLISH A BODY FOR THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS, TRAIN THE POLICE AND JUDICIARY, INTRODUCE MORE FREQUENT INSPECTIONS IN THE MEDIA REGARDING THE COMPLIANCE OF RIGHTS OF JOURNALISTS AND EMPLOYEES, AMEND THE LAW, SO THAT ATTACKS AGAINST JOURNALISTS ARE TREATED AS ATTACKS AGAINST OFFICIALS)
11. How can independent media be assisted in the best possible way? How is it possible to help journalists working there?
12. What should the national authorities do first in your opinion to improve the situation in the media sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina? What should international organisations, NGOs, citizens and the media themselves do?
13. What do you think about the possibility to include topics important for the development of media culture, media literacy, special study programmes dedicated to media law, etc. in the educational system?
14. We have come to the end of our discussion. Do you have something to say at the end that you consider important and have not been asked yet?

Thank you once again for participating!

Guidelines for semi-structured interviews with police representatives

1. How would you generally assess the current situation in the media sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina?
2. What are the key problems and challenges?
3. How would you assess the situation regarding the safety of journalists?
4. Are laws that protect journalists adequate in your opinion or should something be changed? Given the fact that we do not have special provisions in the Criminal Law related to journalists.
5. Is there a contact person for safety issues related to journalists or an internal protocol of proceeding when it comes to the safety of journalists? If yes, can you give an example? How frequently is it applied?
6. Do you inform journalists about measures that have been taken in case when the commission of a crime against a journalist has been reported?
7. How does the cooperation with journalists in the field look like? Does your institution cooperate with associations of journalists? What are in your opinion specific recommendations to improve the relationship/cooperation?
8. Would you be willing to participate in the work of a working body/coordination group that would engage in the improvement of safety of journalists?
9. Do you cooperate with the Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina in relation to these topics?
10. What are the capacities to fight cyber/online attacks against the media and journalists? Do you need trainings regarding this topic?
11. Do you think that male journalists have more, less or an equal quantity of problems as compared to their female colleagues when it comes to these problems?
12. What should in your opinion be done first in order to improve the current situation with the media? What specific measures do you suggest? (IF THE RESPONDENT DOES NOT STATE ANYTHING SPECIFIC, ASK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING: ESTABLISH A BODY THAT WOULD WORK ON THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS, TRAIN THE POLICE AND JUDICIARY, INTRODUCE MORE FREQUENT INSPECTIONS IN THE MEDIA REGARDING THE COMPLIANCE OF RIGHTS OF JOURNALISTS AND EMPLOYEES, AMEND THE LAW, SO THAT ATTACKS AGAINST JOURNALISTS ARE TREATED AS ATTACKS AGAINST OFFICIALS)
13. What should the national authorities do first in your opinion to improve the situation in the media sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina? What should international organisations, NGOs, citizens and the media themselves do?
14. We have come to the end of our discussion. Do you have something to say at the end that you consider important and have not been asked yet?

