Public opinion survey:

Citizens' Practices and Perceptions about GETTING INFORMED and DEALING with DISINFORMATION



Institute of communication studies

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CONTENT

Methodology 4

Introduction 5

Survey results 7

A. Sources of information and topics of interest 7

B. Perceptions about the way in which the media inform 11

C. Perceptions regarding the way of communication of state institutions 14

D. Trust in the media and exposure to disinformation 19

E. Comparison of responses to the 2023 and 2022 surveys 24

Demographic distribution 29

Annex 1 – Questionnaire on citizens' practices and perceptions about getting informed and dealing with disinformation 30

METHODOLOGY

Number of questions: 17
Sample: N=1142 (Respondents aged 18+,
selected from the entire territory of the country)
Method: Telephone survey
Period: June 15 – July 2, 2024
Statistical error: ±3%.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the public opinion survey on the practices and perceptions of citizens about getting informed and dealing with disinformation. The research aims to provide knowledge about the way citizens become informed, what are their topics of interest, what is their perception of the way in which the media inform the public, their perceptions of the transparency and accountability of state authorities and how they deal with disinformation. The research is part of the "Use Facts" project which is being implemented by the Institute of Communication Studies in the period from 2022 to 2025, with the support of the British Embassy in Skopje. The project aims to strengthen the resilience of the general public and vulnerable groups in North Macedonia to disinformation. This is the third survey conducted as part of the project, and it is possible to compare the responses of the participants to certain questions.

The survey was conducted on a representative sample of 1142 participants - citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia over the age of 18, from all regions of the country. The data collection method was a telephone survey. The data was collected in the period from June 15 to July 2, 2024. It is important to note that, for several questions within the survey, respondents were offered to choose more than one answer (multi-select questions). As a result, the sum of the percentages for these questions exceeds 100%.

The main findings of the research indicate that television is the main source of information, especially among the older population, while younger people mostly use social media and websites. In comparison with the responses from the surveys conducted in 2023 and 2022, it is evident that television remains the primary source of information. Areas of interest differ among the different age groups, namely, young people (18-24) are more interested in culture and entertainment, while older people (65+) focus on domestic politics. Despite the different demographics, the majority of respondents use information to keep up with recent events, make the right decisions in their private lives and educate themselves, and they use it less for social activism or to make decisions about socially important issues. Despite the widespread use of these sources of information, 71% of respondents believe that the media provide only superficial information, while only 29% believe that they offer in-depth analysis and comprehensive information.

In terms of communication with competent institutions, older people (65+) prefer direct communication, while young people (18-24) mostly use social media. Many (39%) think that communication coming from public institutions is often based on general statements and much less on arguments.

As for trust in the media, almost half of the respondents (49%) stated that they doubt the veracity of all the news they read, and only 15% completely trust it. Younger respondents and those aged 35-44 were particularly sceptical. Here, one can observe continuity in the responses from the surveys in 2023 and 2022. Although there is a general suspicion towards the contents published in the media, almost a third of the respondents (31%) never check the source of the news, and 40% never check whether the author of the text is signed.

When it comes to recognizing disinformation, 44% believed they can sometimes recognize disinformation, but opinions vary by gender. Namely, men are more confident that they can always recognize fake news compared to women. Compared to past surveys, 2023 survey participants had more confidence in their ability to share news that is accurate.

SURVEY RESULTS

A. Sources of information and topics of interest

The first block of questions aims to identify the main sources from which citizens get information about developments in the country and the world, as well as their main topics of interest. Through the analysis of the answers to the first question, it is noted that two thirds of the respondents mostly get information about the developments in the country and in the world through television (67%). Social

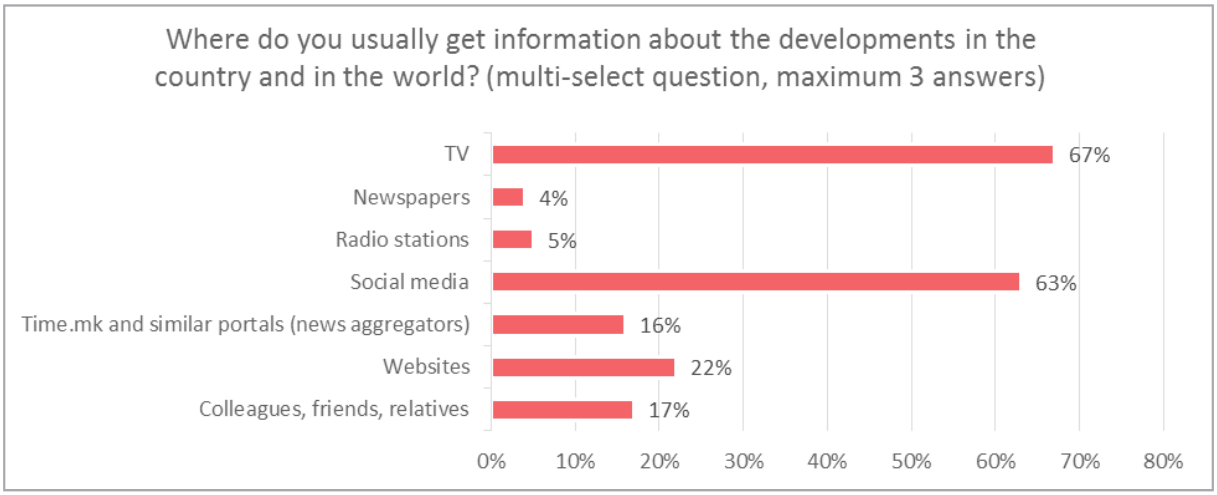


Chart 1[1]

media come in second, while websites are in third place. Colleagues and/or friends (17%) are a more significant source of information for respondents, compared to news aggregates (16%), radio stations (5%) and newspapers (4%). Television is the most popular source of information among citizens aged 45-54 (73%), 55-64 (85%) and those over 65 (95%). On the other hand, social media is most used among the age groups of 18-24 (81%), 25-34 (90%) and 35-44 (79%). A significant percentage of young people aged 18 to 24, in addition to social media, also use websites as sources of information (45%). Social media, news aggregators and websites are more frequently used by respondents living in urban areas compared to respondents

1. Respondents could choose more than one answer for this question. As a result, the sum of the percentages is over 100%.

from rural areas. Categorised according to education, respondents with the highest (completed postgraduate studies, doctorates or residency training) (78%) and higher education (77%) use social media more as sources of information, compared to those without education (79%), with completed primary (89%) and secondary education (68%) who mention television as a source of information.

When asked "Which areas most interest/concern you?" most respondents chose the areas of economy, finance and business (37%) and health and wellness (36%), followed by internal politics (35%) and culture and entertainment (33%). Foreign policy (17%) and local issues (14%) ranked fifth and sixth, respectively. Interests in the areas of crime, corruption, personal safety, education, the environment and climate change rank at the same level (13% each), while the last are the areas of social justice (5%). Categorised by age, almost half of young people aged 18 to 24 are most interested in culture and entertainment (48%), while people over 65 are most interested in internal politics (51%). Gender differences reveal that men are primarily interested in the areas of economics, finance and business (42%), as well as domestic politics (40%). Women, on the other hand, are more focused on health and wellness (50%) and culture and entertainment (36%). When following the issue according to ethnicity, there are no major differences in interests between ethnic

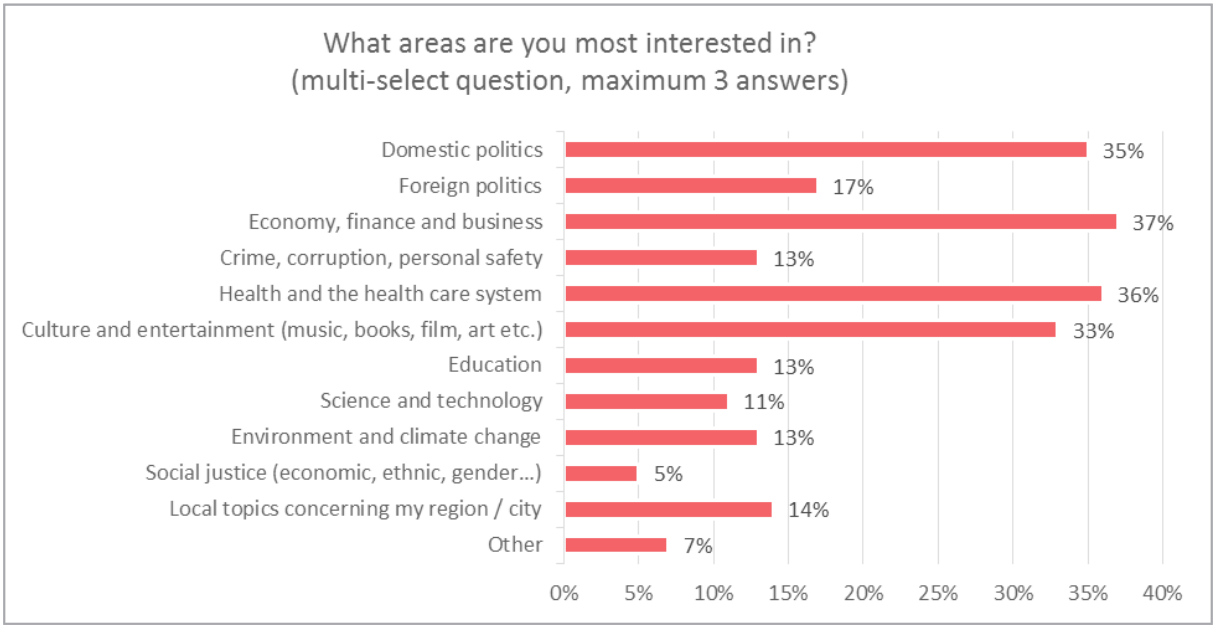


Chart 2 [2]

2. Respondents could choose more than one answer for this question. As a result, the sum of the percentages is over 100%

Macedonians and Albanians. Specifically, Macedonians (35%), Albanians (39%) and other ethnic groups (42%) chose the area of economy, finance and business first, and internal politics came in second. Work status affects interests, where full-time employees are interested in the economy, finance and business (40%), retirees are interested in internal politics (50%), and students' primary interest is culture and entertainment (53 %).

In response to the question "What kind of information in that area would you like to receive", the most common answer was current news and true news (15%). The remaining topics of interest are largely similar to the previously defined categories. Namely, health and health care together with the domestic and foreign policy of the state were mentioned by 9% of the respondents, while the economy and business with culture and entertainment were equally prioritized by 6% of the respondents.

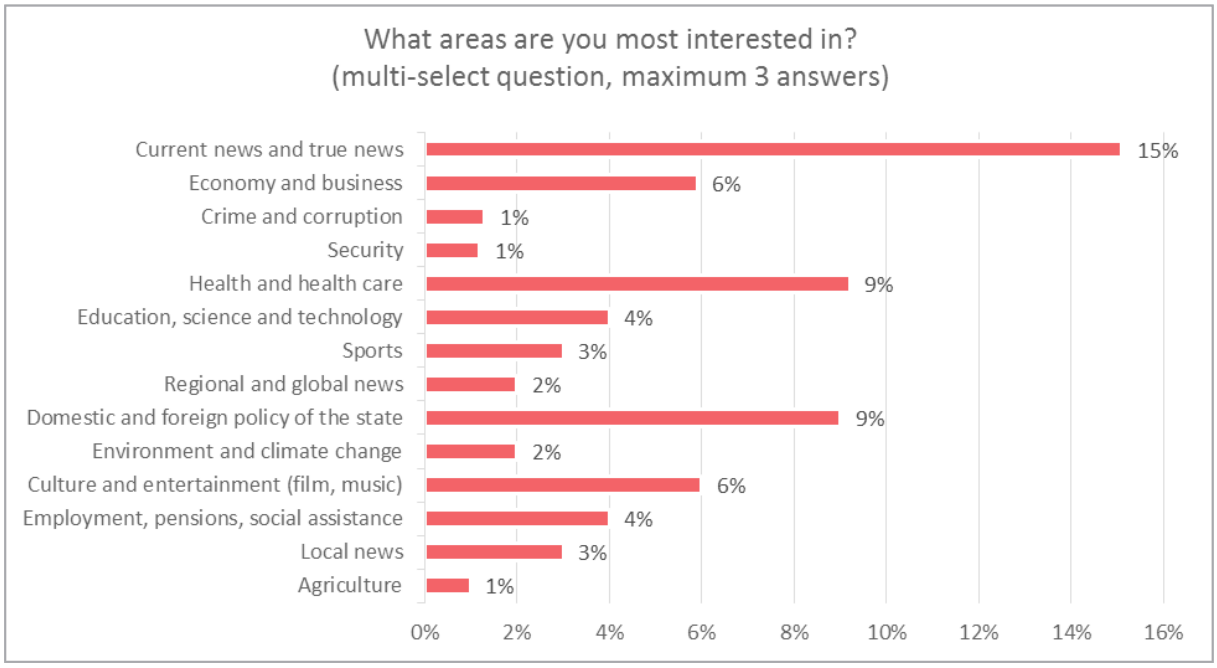


Chart 3 [3]

3. Respondents could choose more than one answer for this question. As a result, the sum of the percentages is over 100%

Regarding the use of information in everyday life, a strong majority of respondents (65%) said that they want to stay informed about a certain area or topic. Those who use the information to make the right decision in their private life (42%) came in second, followed by the group of respondents who wanted to learn more about a certain topic (34%). The percentage of respondents who would use the information for making the right decision on socially important issues (16%) and for reacting or initiating an initiative for a social problem (15%) is relatively low. Young people (24%) would be more likely to use information about activism compared to people over 65 years of age (13%). Seen according to ethnicity, the percentage of Albanians (20%) who would use the information to make a correct decision in social life is higher, compared to Macedonians (15%).

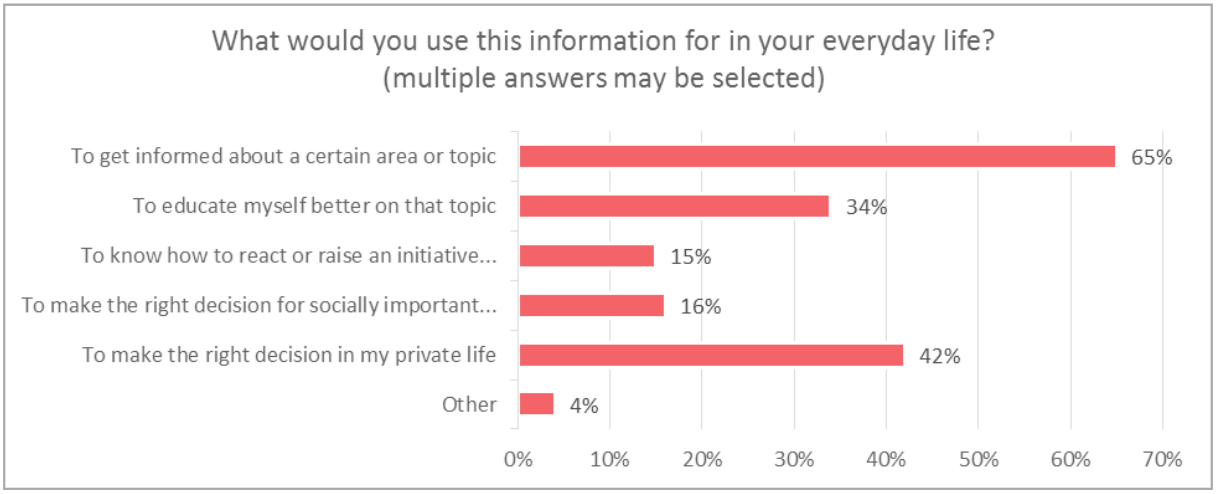


Chart 4 [4]

4. Respondents could choose more than one answer for this question. As a result, the sum of the percentages is over 100%

B. Perceptions about the ways of getting informed by the media

In the next block of questions, respondents in the survey were asked about their perception regarding the way the media provide information.

First, respondents were asked how they get the desired information about their topics of interest. Most of the citizens indicated television stations and their online outlets (70%). Over a third of respondents (35%) access information through public profiles of experts, while 33% of respondents use specialized websites. The results show that respondents would rather choose to get information from social media influencers (10%) than from radio stations with their online outlets (6%). The results categorised according to the age of the respondents show that the percentage

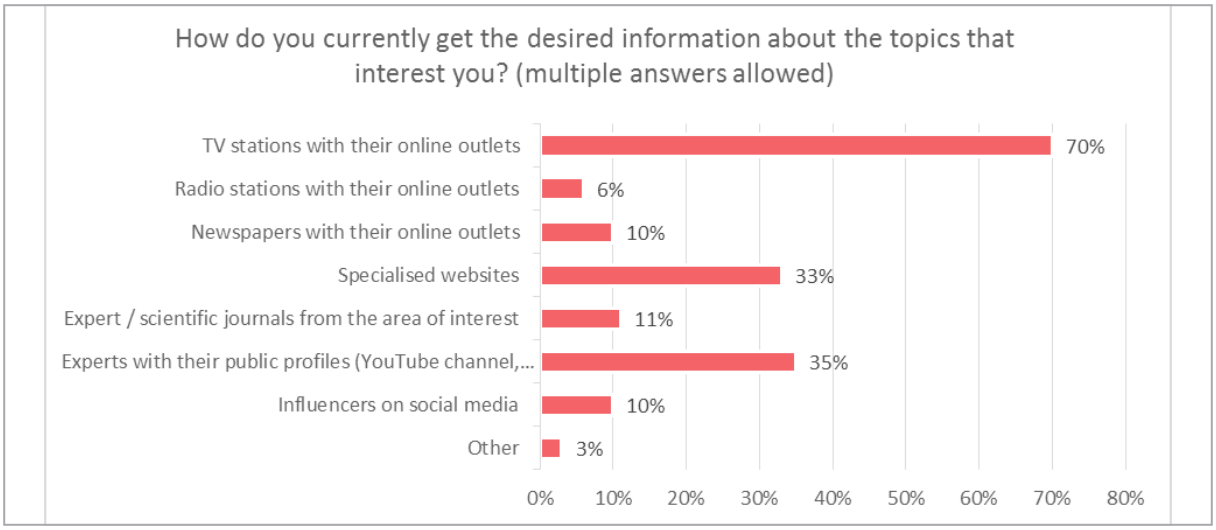


Chart 5 [5]

of respondents who would choose television stations and their online outlets as a way to get the desired information grows proportionally with the age of the respondents. So, 39% of 18-24-year-olds chose this option, 52% of 25–34-year-olds, 66% of 35–44-year-olds, 77% of 45–54-year-olds, then 81% of 55 -64 years and 86% of the group of people over 65 years of age. Categorised according to the respondents' employment status, television stations with their online outlets are the dominant source of information among pensioners (87%), while specialized websites are most preferred among students (62%).

5. Respondents could choose more than one answer for this question. As a result, the sum of the percentages is over 100%

When asked whether the media reports enough about the topics of your interest, 29% of respondents stated that the media sufficiently and regularly publishes detailed news about the topics of interest. However, a larger percentage (43%) believe that the media sometimes cover topics of interest, followed by the group of respondents who believe that this rarely happens (19%). People over the age of 65 (46%) and pensioners (44%) have more positive attitudes and think that the media regularly publishes detailed news, compared to the youngest (18-24 years) (17%) and pupils/students (23%) in the same category of opinion. There are no significant differences in the answers given by respondents from different regions, nor are there any significant differences based on gender, ethnicity and the place of residence.

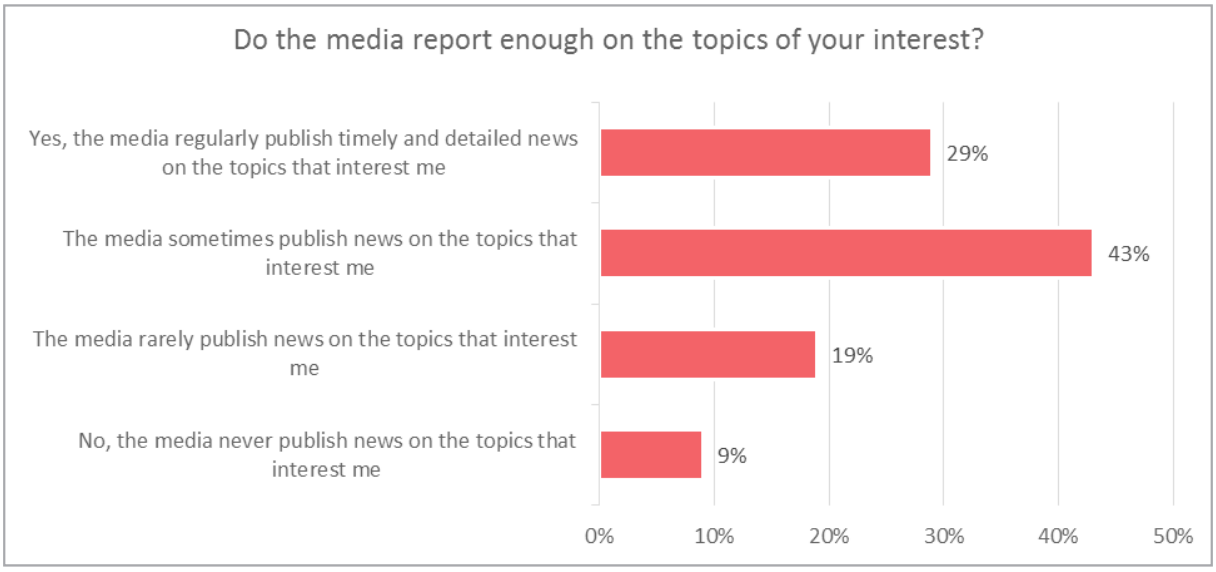


Chart 6

When asked about how the media inform, the majority of the respondents said that they believe that the media only convey superficial information from which sufficient knowledge/insight on the subject cannot be obtained (71%). Contrary to this, 29% believe that the media inform more in-depth, they analyse and provide complete information that is beneficial to the citizens. Categorising the answers to this question according to the level of education, the results show that as the level of education increases, so does the percentage of respondents who believe that the media convey only superficial information. In contrast, the belief that the media provide complete information decreases with increasing levels of education. The results show that younger people and those living in urban areas express more negative attitudes about the way the media inform compared to older people and those living in rural areas.

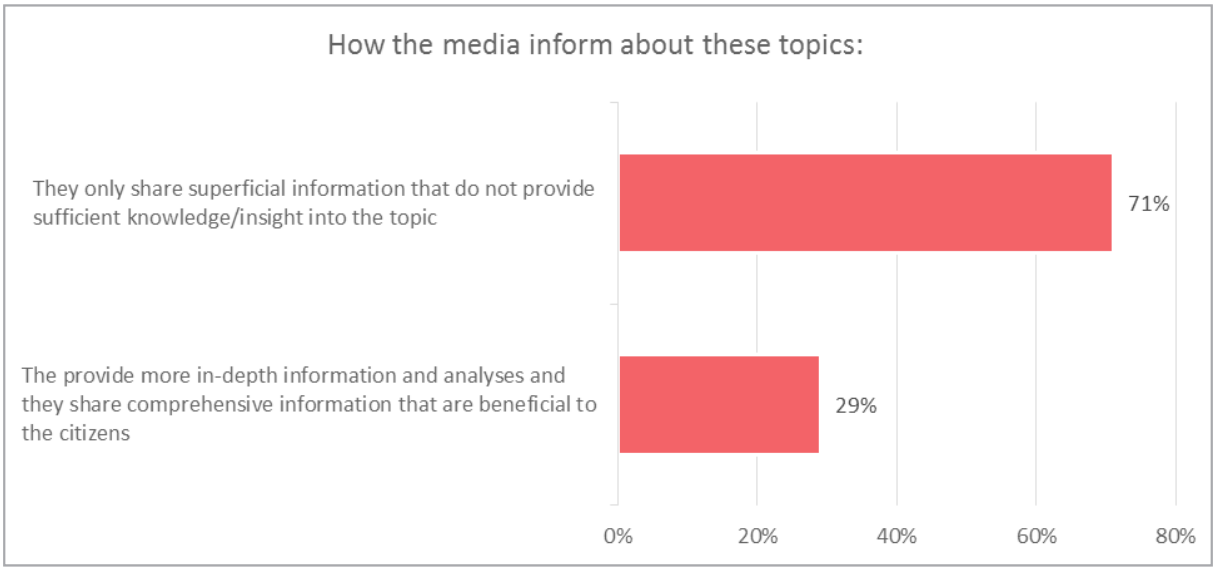


Chart 7

C. Perceptions regarding the way in which state institutions communicate

The next block of questions refers to the respondents' perceptions regarding the way in which state institutions communicate.

Most of the respondents get information from the competent institutions through social media (46%). A significant percentage also use websites (42%), while almost a third (32%) prefer direct communication with competent institutions to obtain information on topics of interest. Preferences vary by age, with those over 65 favouring direct communication (46%), while social media is the most popular choice among 18 to 24-year-olds (64%). Analysed by place of residence, the majority of respondents living in rural areas (55%) access information through social media, compared to respondents from urban areas (42%). Albanians (38%) prefer direct communication more than Macedonians (31%).

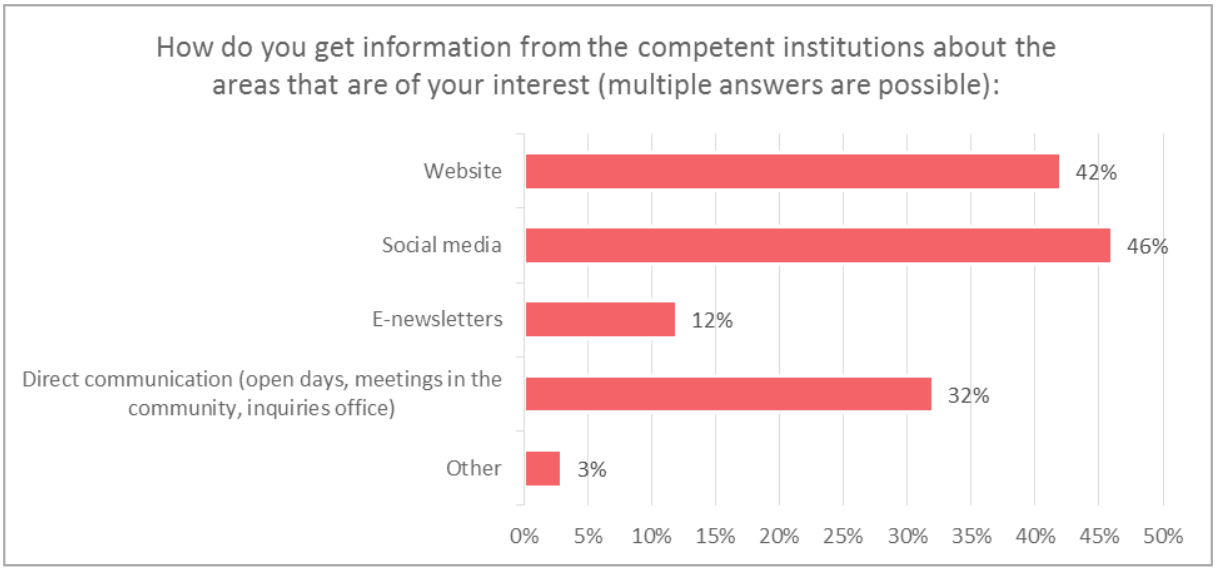


Chart 8 [6]

6, Respondents could choose more than one answer for this question. As a result, the sum of the percentages exceeds 100%

The respondents' perceptions regarding the frequency, availability, clarity and comprehensibility of the information shared by the competent institutions were examined. The views of the citizens were divided, that is, 25% of the respondents agreed, against 23% of the respondents who did not agree that the information is shared **regularly.** The percentage of men (12%) who believed that the information is not regular at all is higher, compared to women (7%). More positive attitudes were expressed by Albanians, with almost one third (30%) who agreed that the information is regular, compared to Macedonians (23%).

Regarding how **accessible** and **understandable** the information is, a higher percentage of respondents agreed that it is accessible and understandable (32% each), compared to those who disagreed (17% each).

The situation is the same regarding how **clear** the information is**,** namely 30% of respondents agree that the information is clear, while 16% disagree with this statement.

Analysed according to place of residence, respondents living in urban areas express more negative attitudes about **the availability, clarity** and **comprehensibility** of information, compared to respondents living in rural areas.

No other significant differences appeared in relation to other socio-demographic characteristics of the participants.

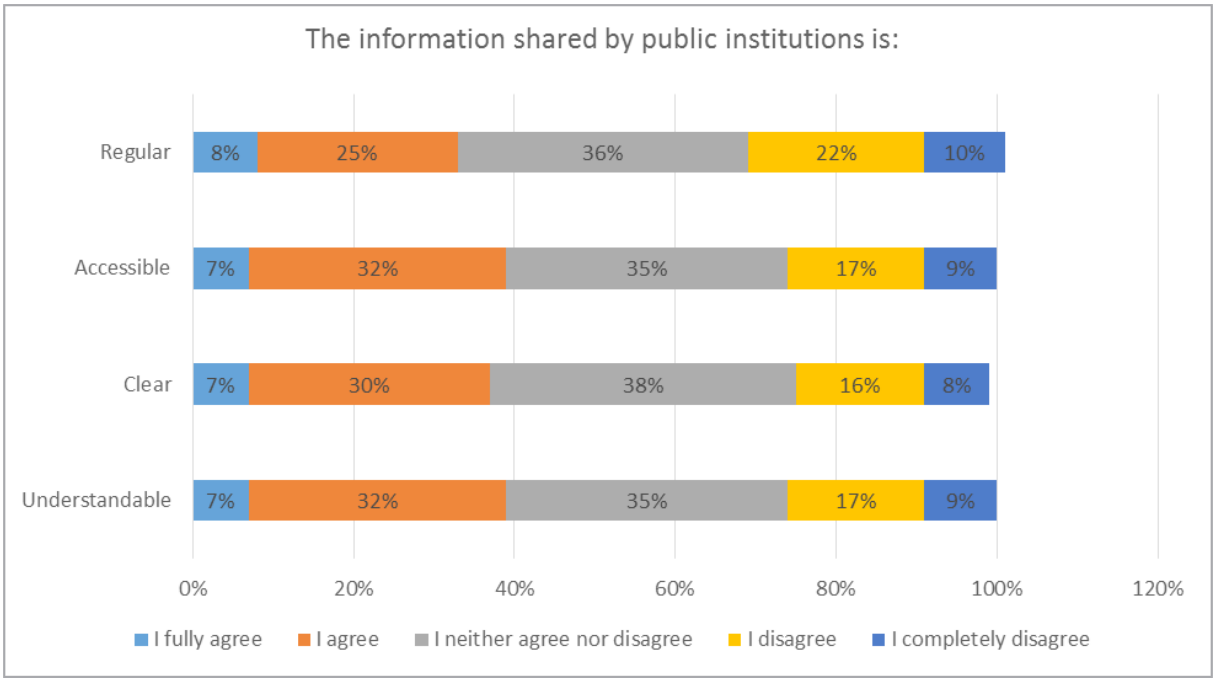


Chart 9

When asked “How satisfied are you with the communication of the competent institutions on the topics that are of your interest”, most of the respondents (38%) expressed partial satisfaction with the communication with the competent institutions on topics of interest. The percentage of respondents who were not at all satisfied with communication is higher (10%), compared to those who were completely satisfied (7%). Analysed by gender, the results show that the percentage of men (12%) who are not satisfied at all is higher than the percentage of women (9%) in the same category of opinions. According to the place of residence, respondents from rural areas report greater satisfaction with the communication of competent institutions, compared to respondents from urban areas.

To gain a deeper understanding of the observed gender differences (male/female) and differences in the residence type (urban/rural), it is recommended that future research explore the underlying causes of these differences.

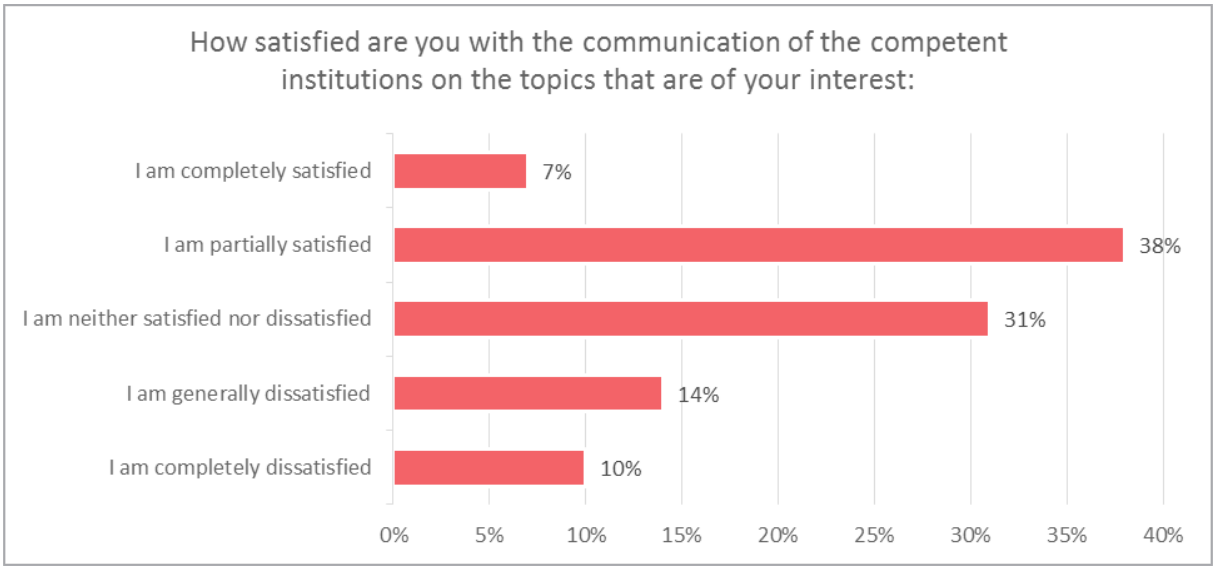


Chart 10

When asked about the availability of the necessary information on the institutions' social media, almost a third (29%) believed that only a small part of the necessary information is available on the pages/profiles of the competent institutions, while 23% believed that most of the information is available. Part of the respondents were divided regarding the availability of information, with 12% believing that the information is not available at the sites, and an equal percentage (12%) believing that the information is available. The majority of people over 65 years of age (54%) never visit the pages and/or profiles of competent institutions. This attitude is dominant among people with completed primary education (47%), pensioners (50%) and those living in rural areas (31%).

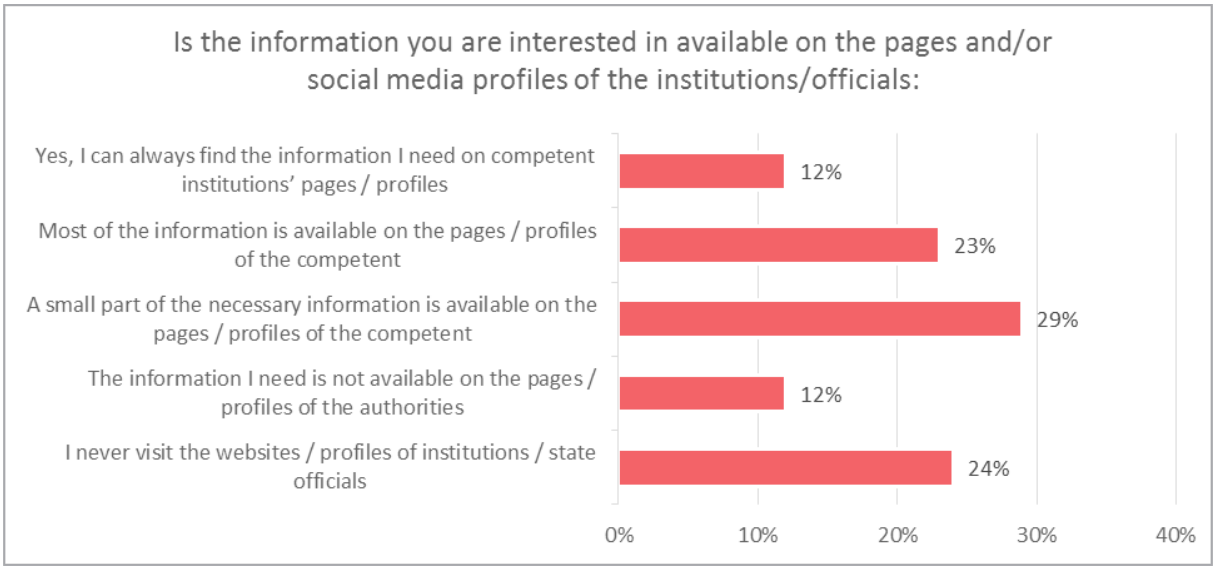


Chart 11

In terms of how they would evaluate the communication of public institutions, 39% of respondents had the opinion that most of the communication of public institutions is based on general statements and much less arguments. This attitude is widespread among full-time employees (47%) and persons with the highest (postgraduate studies, doctorate or specialization) level of education (43%). On the other hand, among pupils/students (38%) and people with completed primary education (32%), the perception is that communication contains arguments to a higher degree, but there are also general statements. Overall, the percentage of respondents (20%) who consider that communication is mostly based on general statements is higher, compared to those who consider that communication is mostly based on arguments (9%).

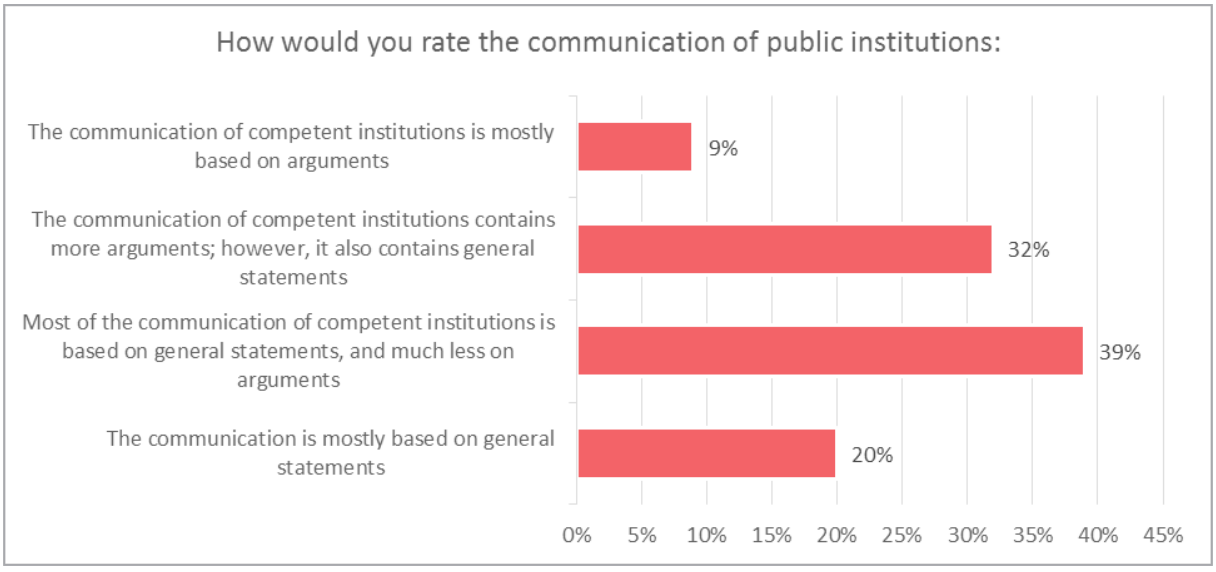


Chart 12

D. Trust in the media and exposure to disinformation

The last block of questions concerns the level of trust in the media and exposure to disinformation.

Trust in the media

When asked about the level of trust in the media, almost half of the respondents (49%) expressed doubt in everything that is published, while 36% assume that what they read is reliable because it is published. Only 15% of respondents completely trust the media. The youngest 18 to 24-year-olds (54%) and those aged 35 to 44 (56%) most doubt the accuracy of published information. Categorised according to education, people with the highest (postgraduate studies, doctorate or specialization) level of education are the most sceptical (70%), while 25% of people without education have full confidence in the media and the news they publish. Men express more doubt in anything that is published (53%), compared to women (44%), and a higher percentage of women (40%) believe what they read to be credible because it is published, compared to men (32%). According to the place of residence, respondents from urban areas tend to express greater doubt, compared to those from rural areas. Macedonians (39%) in a higher percentage than Albanians (25%) trust the information published in the media without questioning i.e. verifying it. Albanians (55%) are significantly more suspicious of everything that is published, compared to Macedonians (47%).

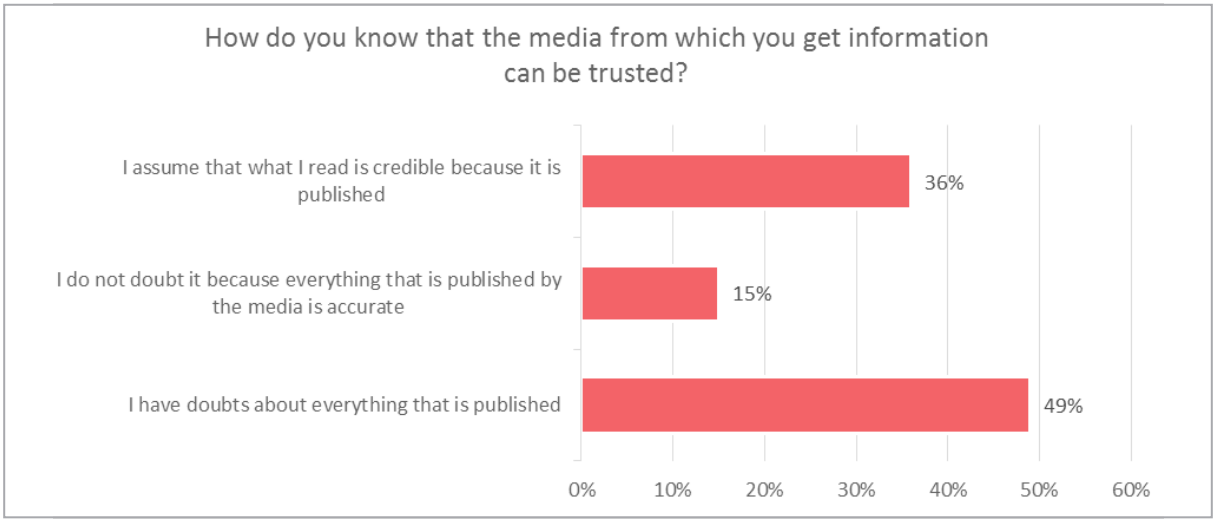


Chart 13

Habits for checking the accuracy of information: checking the publisher of the information, its author and whether and how it has been shared by other media

When asked about the practices of checking the accuracy of information, almost a third of the respondents (31%) stated that they never check the publisher of the news, while 24% regularly check who published the information. A significant percentage (40%) never check whether the author of the text is signed when reading news. Among those with the highest level of education, the majority always check the publisher of the news (54%), check if the author is signed (50%), consult with someone who is knowledgeable on the subject (31%) and check if and how the news was reported by other media (57%).

Categorised according to the responses of the respondents from different regions, the largest percentage from the Southeast region never check who is the publisher of the news (38%), nor do they check if the author is signed (56%). Analysed by age, the respondents aged 55-65 (40%) and over 65 (50%) in a high percentage never check who is the publisher of the news, nor do they check if the author is signed, compared to those younger than 18-24, 25-34 and 35-44 years old who regularly or sometimes practice this.

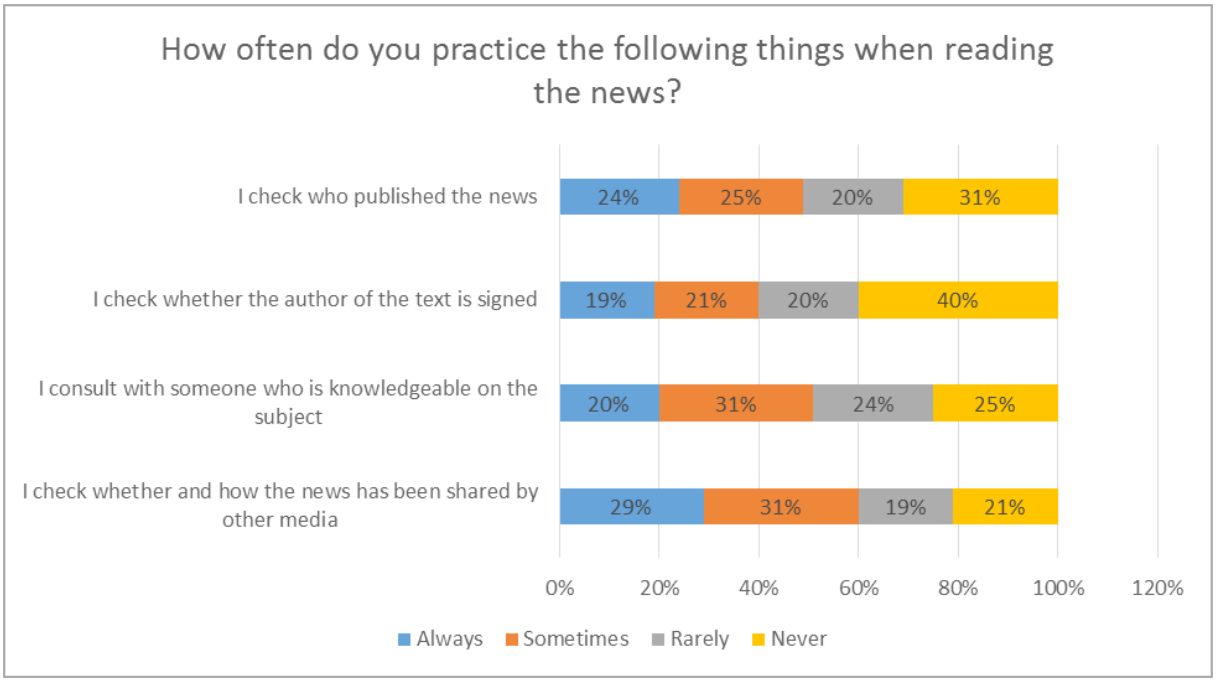


Chart 14

Recognizing disinformation

When asked if they can recognize disinformation or fake news, 44% of the respondents answered that they can sometimes recognize it, while 29% are sure that they can always recognize when the news is not true, 16% answered "rarely", and 8% believe that they cannot recognize false information and disinformation. By gender, men (34%) are more confident in their ability to spot disinformation than women (23%), while a similar percentage of men (43%) and women (45%) think they can sometimes spot disinformation. Respondents over the age of 65 believe that they cannot recognize disinformation (14%) and as the age decreases, so does the percentage of respondents who share the same attitude. Respondents from the Southwest region believe that they can always recognize false information or disinformation in a higher percentage than other regions (47%). According to ethnicity, a higher percentage of Macedonians (cumulative 78%) believe that they can sometimes or always recognize when a piece of news is disinformation, compared to Albanians (cumulative 52%) and respondents from other ethnic groups (cumulative 77%) who stated that the same thing. More than 80% of respondents with a university degree and higher education stated that they can sometimes or always recognize disinformation, compared to respondents with a lower level of education, who gave the same answer in a significantly lower percentage.

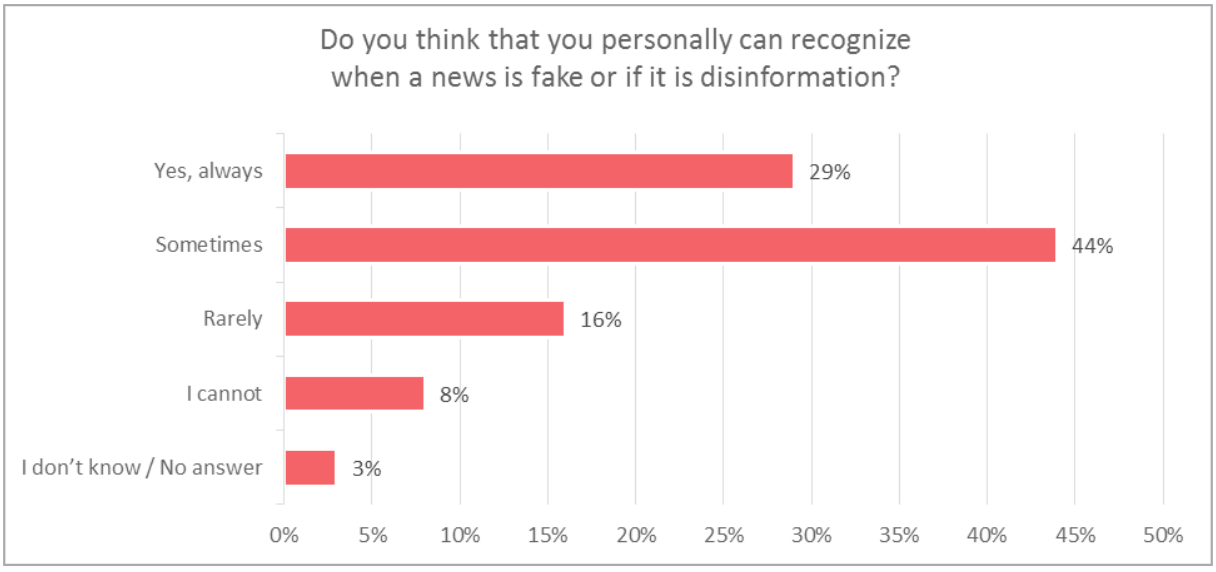


Chart 15

Regarding the frequency of sharing incorrect information, the majority of respondents answered “sometimes” (53%), while 31% said it never happened to them, and 11% admitted that it often happens for them to share information that turns out to be incorrect later on. Men (13%), in a higher percentage than women (8%), stated that they often share incorrect news. In terms of age, the youngest 18–24-year-olds and 35–44-year-olds responded in a higher percentage compared to other age groups that they sometimes share incorrect news. Respondents from the South-West region (20%) answered in a higher percentage compared to other regions that this sometimes happens to them. Contrary to this, the largest percentage (43%) of respondents who have never had this happen to them come from the Polog region.

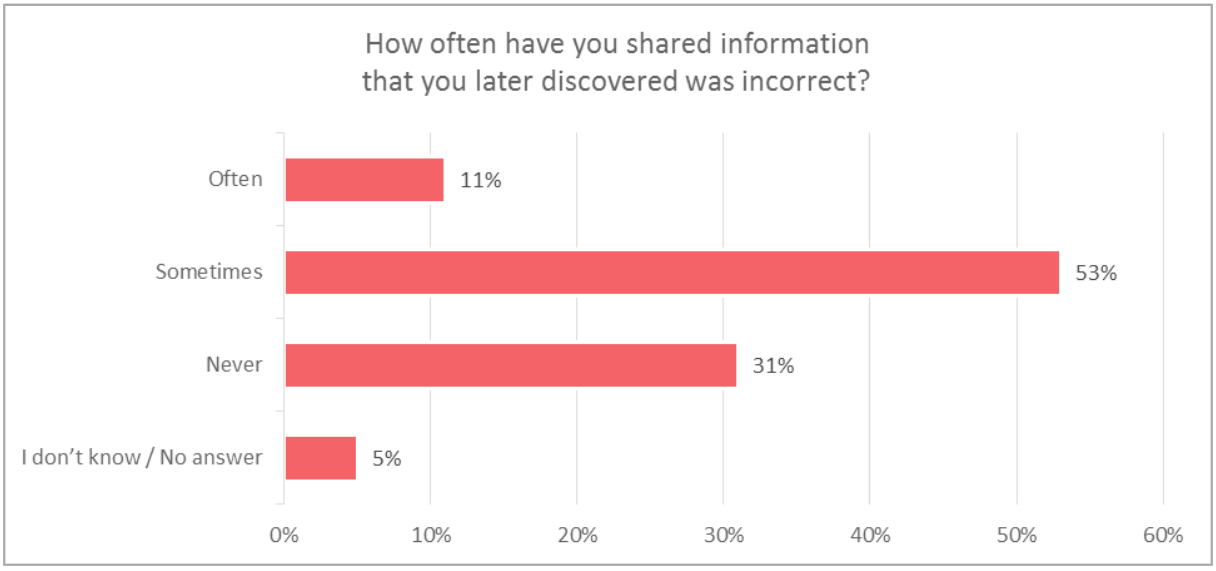


Chart 16

On which topic do they most often notice disinformation?

When asked about the topics/areas where they have noticed false or incorrect information, internal politics is the area where almost half of the respondents (48%) have noticed false or incorrect information. The area of crime, corruption and personal security came in second (32%), followed by the area of economy, finance and business (30%). Analysing this question by ethnicity, the majority of Macedonians (52%) have noticed incorrect information related to the area of the internal policy, compared to 36% of Albanians in the same category of answers.

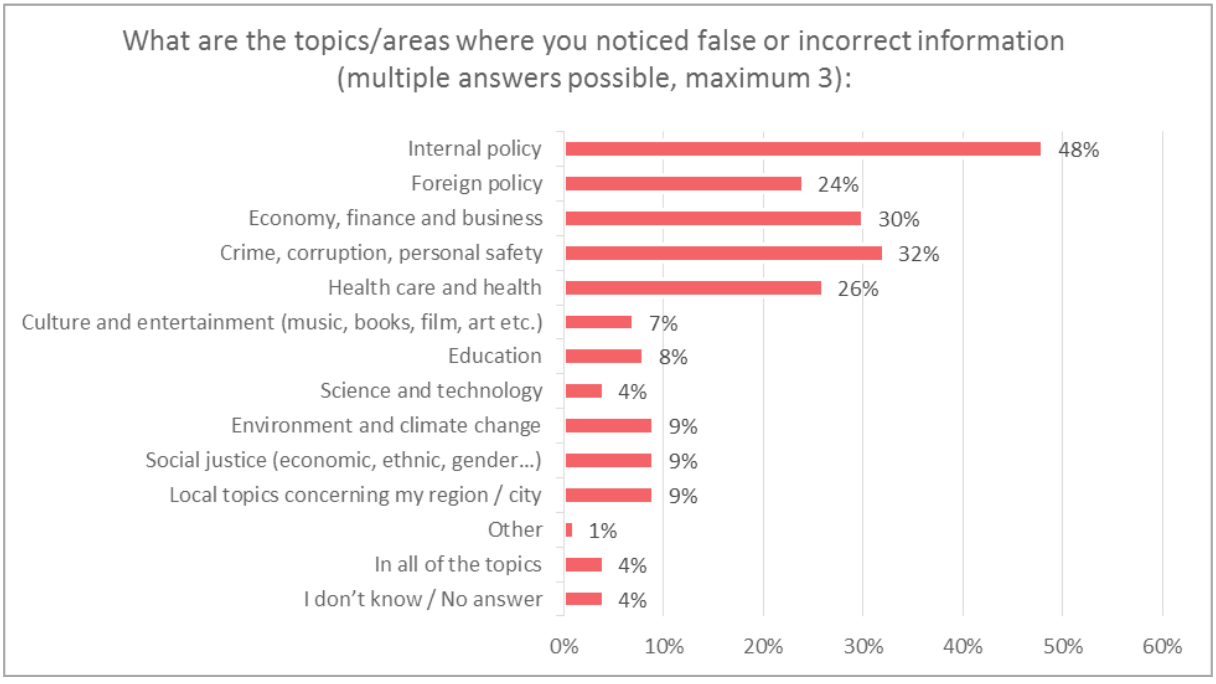


Chart 17 [7]

7. Respondents could choose more than one answer for this question. As a result, the sum of the percentages is over 100%

E. Comparison of responses to the 2023 and 2022 surveys

The answers of the participants for a certain block of questions can be compared with the answers collected in the surveys of 2023 and 2022. This primarily concerns the issues of preferred media for getting informed, practices of checking the reliability of the information shared by the media, the perception of the communication of the institutions as well as dealing with disinformation. For the sake of methodological clarity, some of the questions in this year's questionnaire were modified and for them the comparison can only be made indirectly.

Comparison by years of the media through which respondents get informed

One of the questions answered by the participants in both surveys refers to the identification of the main media they use to obtain information. For this question, a full comparison with the survey from 2023 and a partial comparison with the survey from 2022 is possible because the possible answers in the survey have been modified.[8] Namely, more than two-thirds of the participants in the three surveys singled out television as the type of media from which they get information. The percentage of respondents who chose television shows growth (65% in 2022, 66% in 2023 and 67% in 2024). In 2024, the percentage of participants who are informed by social media increases and amounts to 63%; in 2023 it was 57.3%; in 2022, 47% of participants used Facebook for information, 14% YouTube, 7% TikTok, 3% Twitter (X) and 3% Instagram. Since in all three cases the participants had the opportunity to give more answers to the question, it is not possible to determine with precision what is the share of all social media in informing.[9] Information from websites went back to the same percentage from 2022 (24%) after it was reduced to 20% in 2023. The use of news aggregates has decreased, from 20% in 2023, to 16% in 2024, but the percentage is still higher compared to that of 2022 (11%). 7% of participants received information from friends or colleagues in 2022, 11% in 2023 and in 2024 the percentage increases to 17%. In 2024, respondents use 4% newspapers and 5% radio, in 2023 the percentage of the participants was 6% (radio and newspapers), while in 2022 it was 3% newspapers and 5% radio.

8. In the 2022 survey, participants provided answers for multiple individual social media platforms. Due to the low percentage of responses for certain social media, and in the interest of efficiency of the survey process, individual social media platforms are grouped into one category – social media.
9. Because one participant can use multiple social media as sources of information.

Comparison by years of trust in media content

The next question refers to the participants' trust in the contents that the media publish. In this case, a full comparison with the survey from 2023 is possible, and only an intermediate comparison of the answers from 2022, because in the survey from 2023 the question was divided into two separate questions, in order to gain more knowledge about the frequency of certain practices for checking the reliability and the accuracy of the information. To the question "How do you know that the media from which you get information can be trusted?" in 2024, 49% stated that they doubt everything that is published; this answer is shared by 56% of respondents in 2023 and 54% of respondents in 2022. The percentage of the respondents who answered that they assume that what they read is reliable because it is published showed a significant increase; namely in 2024 it was 36%, in 2023 30% and in 2022 14% gave the same answer. The percentage of respondents who stated that they do not doubt the news because everything published in the media is true remains the same compared to 2023 (14%); in 2022, 4% of respondents chose this answer. It is necessary to emphasize once again that there are methodological differences in the implementation of the survey and the ascertained differences should be taken with some reservation.

A comparison by years of information fact-checking habits

The next question concerns the attitude of the participants towards the contents that are placed in the media – checking their reliability. And in this case, a full comparison with the answers from 2023 and a partial comparison with the answers from 2022 is possible.[10] When it comes to news verification practices, 24% of 2024 survey respondents always check who is the publisher of the news and 25% sometimes check the publisher of the news, compared to 18% who always do it. In 2023, 23% of respondents said they sometimes do this, and in 2022, 7% of participants stated that they check the publisher. Among the participants in the survey in 2024, 19% always check whether the author of the text is signed and 21% sometimes check whether the author of the text is signed. In 2023, 14% of respondents said that they always did checked whether the author is signed, and 19% did it sometimes; in the

10. In the 2022 survey, the question "How do you know the media you get information from can be trusted?", participants could choose one or more of the following possible answers: I assume that what I read is reliable because it is published; I have no doubt because everything published in the media is true; I check the publisher of the news; I check if the author of the text is signed; I consult with someone who is knowledgeable on the topic; I doubt everything that is published; I check whether and how the news was reported in other media. In 2023 and 2024, the question is split into two separate questions, with attitudes toward news credibility being the first question and practices for checking accuracy and reliability being a separate question, answered on a scale of frequency of practice (always, sometimes, rarely, never).

2022 survey, the percentage of participants who gave this answer was 6%. Advice from someone they consider more knowledgeable on the subject was always sought by 20% of survey participants in 2024, and sometimes by an additional 31%. In 2023, this practice was always done by 15% and sometimes by 29% of respondents. In the 2022 survey, the percentage of participants who consult with another person is 16%. Slightly less than a third, 29% of participants in 2024 always check how the news is published by other media; an additional 31% sometimes do this. In 2023, this practice was always present in 28% and sometimes in 25% of respondents. For comparison, 30% of the participants in the research in 2022 checked how one news is reported by several media. In view of these answers, it is necessary to take into account the methodological reserve regarding the comparison of the data from the two surveys.

Comparison by years of the self-reported ability to recognize disinformation

The next question concerns the participants' self-assessment of whether they can recognize when a news story is fake or if it is disinformation. The 2024 percentage (29%) decreases compared to the 2023 survey (32%) of participants who said they can always spot fake news or disinformation. However, it remains higher compared to 2022 when 22% of participants gave this answer. However, in 2022, the highest percentage of participants answered that they can sometimes recognize disinformation – 51%, in contrast to 35% in 2023 and 44% in 2024. In 2023, the percentage of participants who stated that they cannot recognize disinformation is also higher – 11%, compared to 8% in 2024 and 2022. If we consider them cumulatively, it can be concluded that the percentage of respondents in 2024 and 2022 who stated that they can always or sometimes recognize disinformation is the same.

Asked how often it happened to them to share information that later turned out to be incorrect, 11% of 2024 participants, 8% of 2023 participants, and 11% of 2022 participants said it happened often. More than half (53%) of participants from 2024, 41% from 2023 and 53% from 2022 answered that they sometimes share incorrect news; this has never happened to 31% of 2024 participants, 46% of 2023 participants, and 33% of 2022 participants. In this case, 2023 survey participants have more confidence in their abilities to report news that is accurate.

Comparison by years (2023 and 2024) of the perception of regularity, availability, clarity and comprehensibility of information received from public institutions

The next question concerns the information shared by public institutions. This question was asked for the first time in the 2023 survey and therefore the comparison will only be made with this survey. In 2024, 8% completely agreed, 25% agreed, 36% were neutral, 22% disagreed and 10% did not agree at all with the fact that information from public institutions is regular. By comparison in 2023, 3% strongly agreed, 9% agreed, 32% were neutral, 34% disagreed and 21% strongly disagreed with this.

Regarding the fact that information from public institutions is available, in 2024, 7% completely agreed, 32% agreed, 35% were neutral, 17% disagreed and 9% did not agree at all. In 2023, 4% strongly agreed, 10% agreed, 33% were neutral, 32% disagreed and 22% strongly disagreed.

Regarding the statement that the information from public institutions is clear, in 2024 7% completely agreed, 30% agreed, 38% were neutral, 16% disagreed and 8% did not agree at all with this statement. In 2023, 4% strongly agreed, 11% agreed, 32% were neutral, 32% disagreed and 22% strongly disagreed.

And finally, when it comes to the statement that information from public institutions is understandable, in 2024 7% completely agreed, 32% agreed, 35% were neutral, 17% disagreed and 9% did not agree at all. By comparison, in 2023, 4% strongly agreed, 12% agreed, 29% were neutral, 32% disagreed and 23% strongly disagreed with this statement. Overall, the 2024 survey shows a notable increase in respondents' agreement that information from public institutions is regular, accessible, clear and understandable, with a significant decrease in the percentage of those who strongly disagree with these statements.

Comparison by years (2023 and 2024) of the evaluation of the argumentation of communication of public institutions

For the question that refers to the assessment of communication of public institutions, the comparison with 2023 may be partial because the possible answers in the survey have been modified. In 2024, 9% of the respondents answered that the communication from the authorities was mostly based on arguments, 32% answered that the communication contained a higher level of arguments, but there were also general statements, 39% of the respondents answered that most of the communication from the authorities was based on general statements, and much less on arguments and 20% considered that communication was mostly based on general statements. As a comparison with 2023, 9% answered that communication was more fact-based, 37% of respondents answered that communication was less fact-based and 43% believed that the communication has not changed. In general, despite the changes to the question in the survey, the 2024 results show a change: the number of respondents who believe that the communication of public institutions is based on arguments is decreasing.

DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

GENDER	Male	50,7%
	Female	49,3%
AGE	18-24	10,3%
	25-34	13,7%
	35-44	19,6%
	45-54	18,3%
	55-64	17,3%
	65+	20,8%
ETHNICITY	Macedonian	67,7%
	Albanian	25,7%
	Other	6,7%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	Full time employee	53,2%
	Part-time employee	2,2%
	Unemployed	11,8%
	Pupil/student	4,6%
	Pensioner	22,6%
	Homemaker	5,6%
REGION	Vardar region	8,1%
	Eastern region	9,7%
	Southwest region	8,1%
	Southeast region	10,2%
	Pelagonija region	10,5%
	Polog region	13%
	Northeast region	7,2%
	Skopje region	33,3%
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	City / town	64,5%
	Village	35,5%
EDUCATION	No education / incomplete primary education	2,1%
	Completed primary education	14,4%
	Completed secondary education	50,8%
	Completed college / university	27,9%
	Completed postgraduate studies, doctorate or residency	4,7%

ANNEX 1 - QUESTIONNAIRE ON CITIZENS' PRACTICES AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT GETTING INFORMED AND DEALING WITH DISINFORMATION

PART I – Topics and areas for which there is an interest to get informed

1. Where do you usually get information about the developments in the country and in the world? (multi-select question, maximum 3 answers)

1. TV
2. Newspapers
3. Radio
4. Social media
5. Time.mk and similar portals (news aggregates)
6. Websites
7. Colleagues, friends, relatives
8. Other_____

2. What areas are you most interested in / most concern you? (multi-select question, maximum 3 answers)

1. Domestic policy
2. Foreign policy
3. Economics, finance and business
4. Crime, corruption, personal safety
5. Health and health care
6. Culture and entertainment (music, books, film, art etc.)
7. Education
8. Science and technology
9. Environment and climate change
10. Social justice (economic, ethnic, gender inequality, LGBTI+ rights)
11. Local topics concerning my region/city
12. Other _____

3. What information in that area would you like to get (open-ended question)?

4. What would you use this information for in your daily life (multi-select question)?

1. To inform myself about a certain area or topic.
2. To educate myself more on the subject.
3. To know how to react or raise an initiative for a social problem.
4. To make the right decision on socially important issues.
5. To make the right decision in my private life.
6. Other (specify)_____

PART II – Media reporting

5. How do you currently get the desired information on the topics that interest you (multi-select question, maximum 3 answers)?

1. TV with their online outlets
2. Radio with their online outlets
3. Newspapers with their online outlets
4. Specialized websites
5. Professional/scientific journals in the field of interest
6. Experts with their own public profiles (YouTube channel, podcast, TV or radio show, newspaper columns)
7. Social media influencers
8. Other _____

6. Does the media report enough on the topics of your interest?

1. Yes, the media regularly publish timely and detailed news on the topics that interest me
2. The media sometimes publish news about topics that interest me
3. The media rarely report on the topics that interest me
4. No, the media never publish news about the topics that interest me

7. How the media informs about these topics:

1. They convey only superficial information from which sufficient knowledge/insight on the subject cannot be gained
2. They provide in-depth and complete information, as well as analyses, which is beneficial to the citizens

PART III – Transparency and accountability of institutions

8. How do you get information from the competent institutions about the areas that are of your interest (multiple answers are possible):

1. Websites
2. Social media
3. E-newsletters
4. Direct communication (open days, community meetings, inquiries office)
5. Other _____

9. The information shared by public institutions is:

	I completely agree	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I do not agree	I completely disagree
Regular	5	4	3	2	1
Available	5	4	3	2	1
Clear	5	4	3	2	1
Understandable	5	4	3	2	1

10. How satisfied are you with the communication of the competent institutions on the topics that are of your interest:

1. I am completely satisfied
2. I am partially satisfied
3. I am neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. I am generally not satisfied
5. I am not satisfied at all

11. Is the information you are interested in available on the pages and/or social media profiles of the institutions/officials:

1. Yes, I can regularly find the information I'm looking for on authority pages/profiles.
2. Most of the information is available on the pages/profiles of the authorities.
3. A small part of the necessary information is available on the pages/profiles of the authorities.
4. The information I need is not available on the authorities' pages/profiles.
5. I never visit the pages/profiles of institutions/officials

12. How would you rate the communication of public institutions:

1. Communication from the authorities is mostly based on arguments
2. The communication from the authorities contains a higher level of arguments, but there are also general statements
3. Most of the communication of authorities is based on general statements, and much less arguments
4. The communication of the authorities is mostly based on general statements

PART IV - Disinformation

13. How do you know that the media from which you get information can be trusted?

1. I assume what I am reading is credible because it is published
2. I have no doubt because everything published in the media is true
3. I doubt everything that is published

14. How often do you practice the following things when reading the news?

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I check the publisher of the news	4	3	2	1
I check if the author of the text is signed	4	3	2	1
I consult with someone who in knowledgeable on the subject	4	3	2	1
I check whether and how the news was reported by other media	4	3	2	1

15. Do you think that you personally can recognize when a news is fake or if it is disinformation?

1. Yes, always
2. Sometimes
3. Rarely
4. I can't
5. I don't know/No answer

16. How often have you shared information that you later discovered was incorrect?

1. Often
2. Sometimes
3. Never
4. I don't know/No answer

17. What are the topics/areas where you noticed wrong or incorrect information (multiple answers possible, maximum 3):

1. Domestic policy
2. Foreign policy
3. Economics, finance and business
4. Crime, corruption, personal safety
5. Health and health care
6. Culture and entertainment (music, books, film, art, etc.)
7. Education
8. Science and technology
9. Environment and climate change
10. Social justice (economic, ethnic, gender inequality, LGBTI+ rights)
11. Local topics for my region/city
12. Other _____

Institute of communication studies

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