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SURVEY RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC CAMPAIGN “CITIZENS AND JOURNALISTS TOGETHER IN THE FIGHT FOR THE TRUTH”

The BiH citizens’ trust in media is shaken, while at the same time there is an increase in the awareness about the presence of hate speech in public discourse and its harmful consequences, as well as about the citizens’ right to professional, accurate and objective information - are the results of the survey conducted by the Press Council in BiH and the Youth Journalism Agency in BiH (ONAuBiH). The survey was conducted amongst 1.138 citizens in 21 towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as part of the Public Campaign “Citizens and Journalists together in the Fight for the Truth”, held on November 8th, 2013.

The question “How much do you trust the media in comparison to other institutions?”, was answered as “Completely” by 50 out of 1,138 citizens surveyed, or 4.3%. The media is trusted sometimes by 38% of surveyed citizens, 26% trust in certain media, while 31.3% do not trust the media at all.

The question “Are you familiar with the right to complain to the Press Council in BiH about unprofessional media coverage?” was answered positively by 229 or 20% of citizens surveyed.

22% of the surveyed know that they have a right to complain about unprofessional media reporting, but they do not use this right.

650 citizens out of 1,138 surveyed, or 75%, notices hate speech in public discourse. The question “How does hate speech affect you?” was mostly answered by “Affects me negatively”, “It angers me”, “I am disappointed” and “We have gotten used to hate speech”. The citizens surveyed offered possible solutions. The question “What should be done to stop hate speech?” was most often answered by: “It should be punished”, “The editorial policy in media should be changed”, “More education should be organized”, “Less political shows”, “Limit unprofessional media” and “Educated people should be hired”.

The Public Campaign “Citizens and Journalists together in the Fight for the Truth” as part of which the survey was conducted, had the goal of informing the public about the citizens’ right to the truth, objective and current information, as well as about their right to complain to inaccurate and unprofessional media coverage. The citizens of 21 towns in BiH were acquainted with the Complaints Procedure of the Press Council in BiH and the Press Code of BiH.