



# FL464

## Fake News and Disinformation Online

**Survey conducted by TNS Political & Social at  
the request of the European Commission,  
Directorate-General for Communications  
Networks**

**Survey co-ordinated by the European  
Commission, Directorate-General for  
Communication  
(DG COMM “Media Monitoring, Media Analysis  
and Eurobarometer” Unit)**

# METHODOLOGY

- *The survey was conducted via telephone interviews*
- *Fieldwork: 7 February- 9 February 2018*
- *Population: General population 15+*
- *Coverage: EU28*
- *Number of interviews: 26,576*

# Key Findings

- *Respondents perceive traditional media as the most trusted source of news: radio (70%), television (66%) and printed newspapers and news magazines (63%). Trust among users is higher for each media or channel.*
- *Respondents with a higher level of education tend to trust more the various sources, while younger respondents (15 to 24 years old) are more likely to trust news and information they access online*
- *37% of the respondents come across fake news every day or almost everyday and 71% feel confident on identifying them*
- *Respondents with a higher level of education say they come across fake news more often and they feel more confident identifying it*

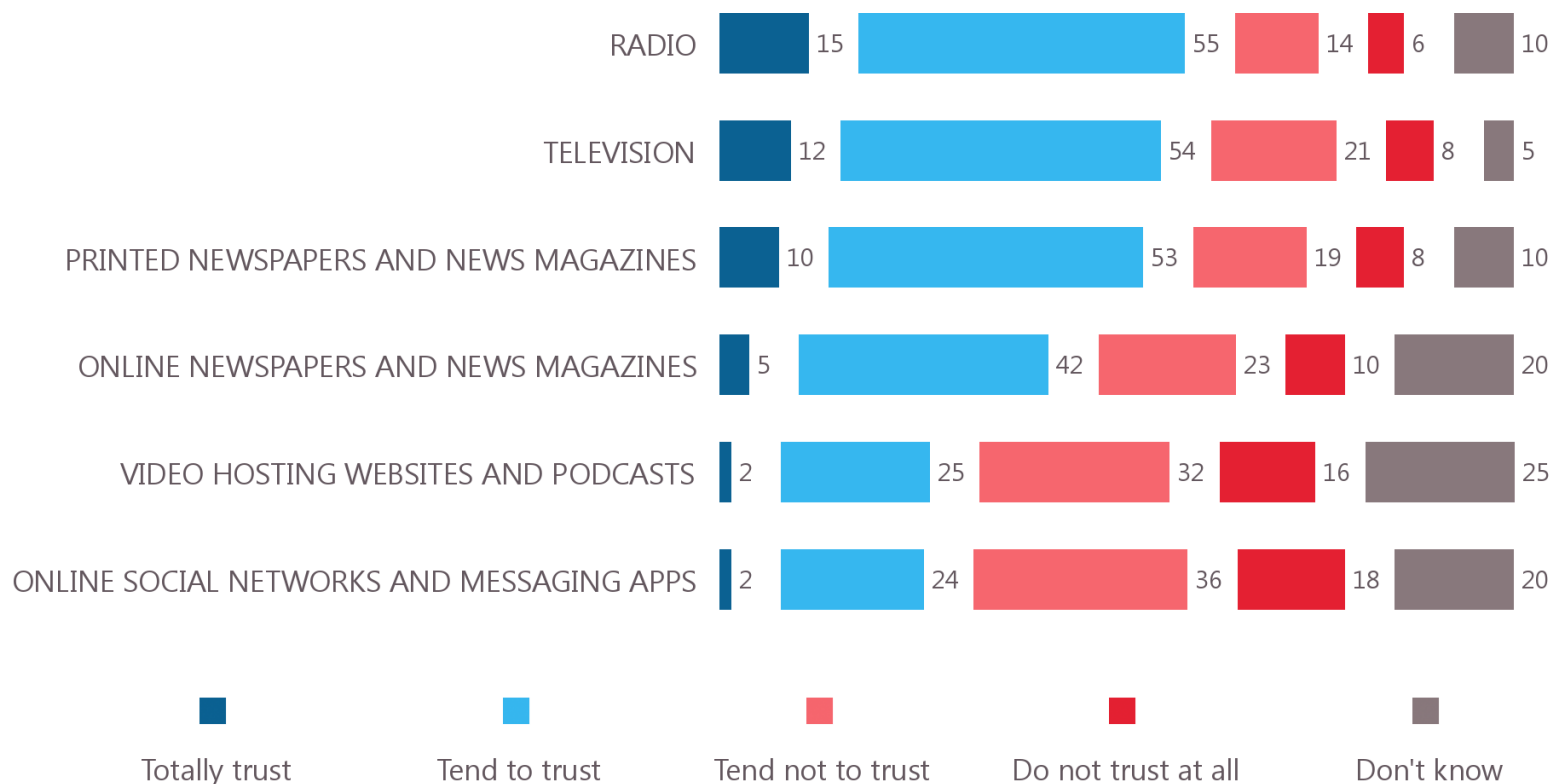
# Key Findings

- *85% of respondents perceive fake news as a problem in their country and 83% perceive it as a problem for democracy in general*
- *In respondents' view, journalists (45%), national authorities (39%) and the press and broadcasting management (36%) should be the main responsible for stopping the spread of fake news*
- *Respondents who use online social networks daily and respondents with a high level of education tend to expect more from the different media actors*

# I. TRUST IN NEWS SOURCES

# Respondents perceive traditional media as the most trusted source of news

Q1 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...  
(% - EU)

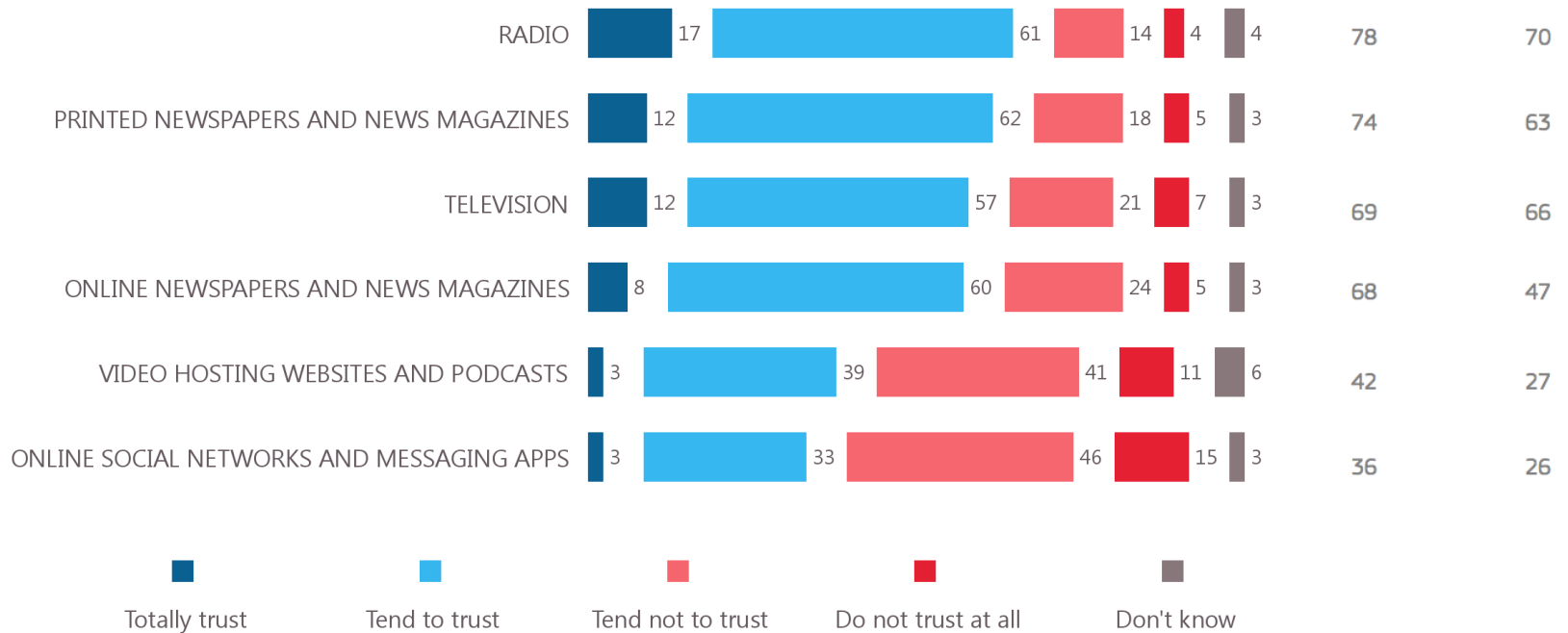


Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# Trust among users is higher for each media or channel

**Q1F** How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...  
(% - EU)

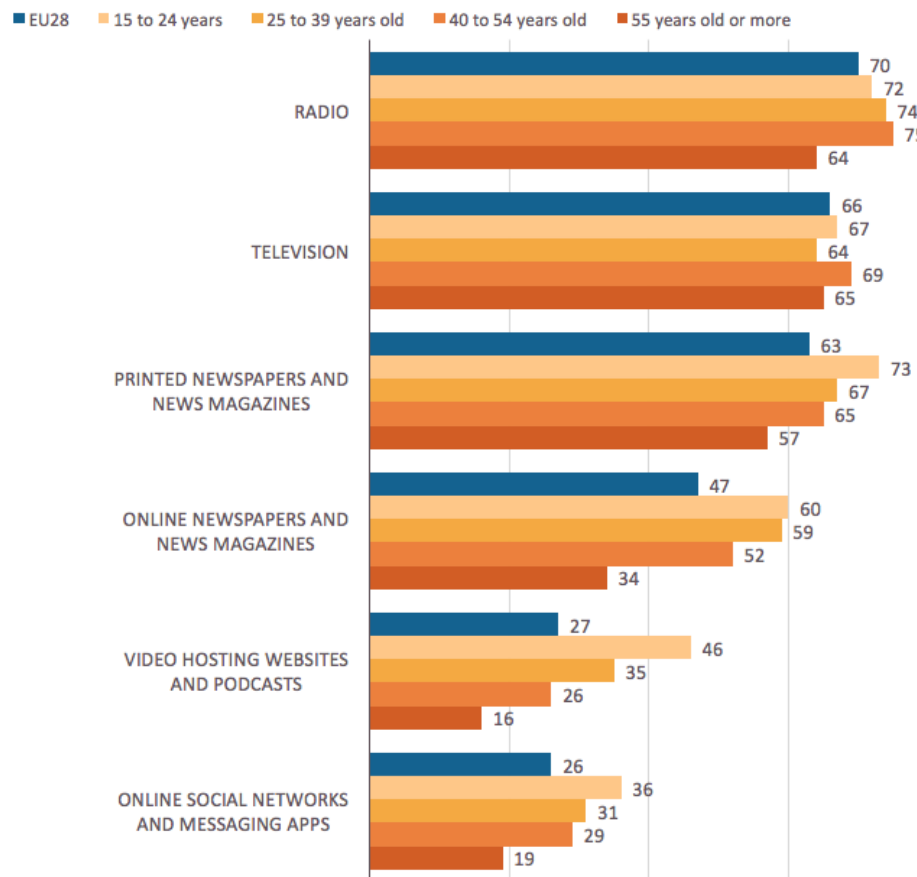
Total 'Trust'  
Media Users    Total 'Trust'  
General Public



Base: Respondents who use the media or channel (N = 26,374)

# Younger respondents (15 to 24 years old) are more likely to trust news and information they access online

Q1 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...  
(% - TOTAL 'TRUST')

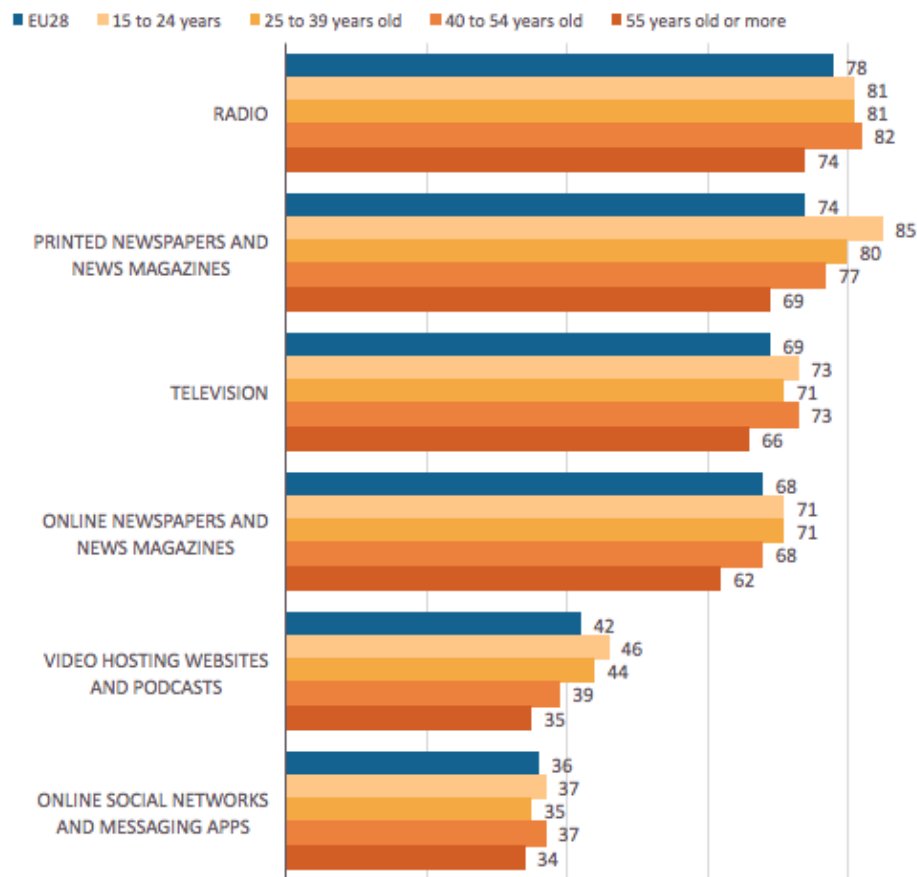


Base: All respondents (N=26,576)



# But there is no strong age pattern for trust, among the media or channel users

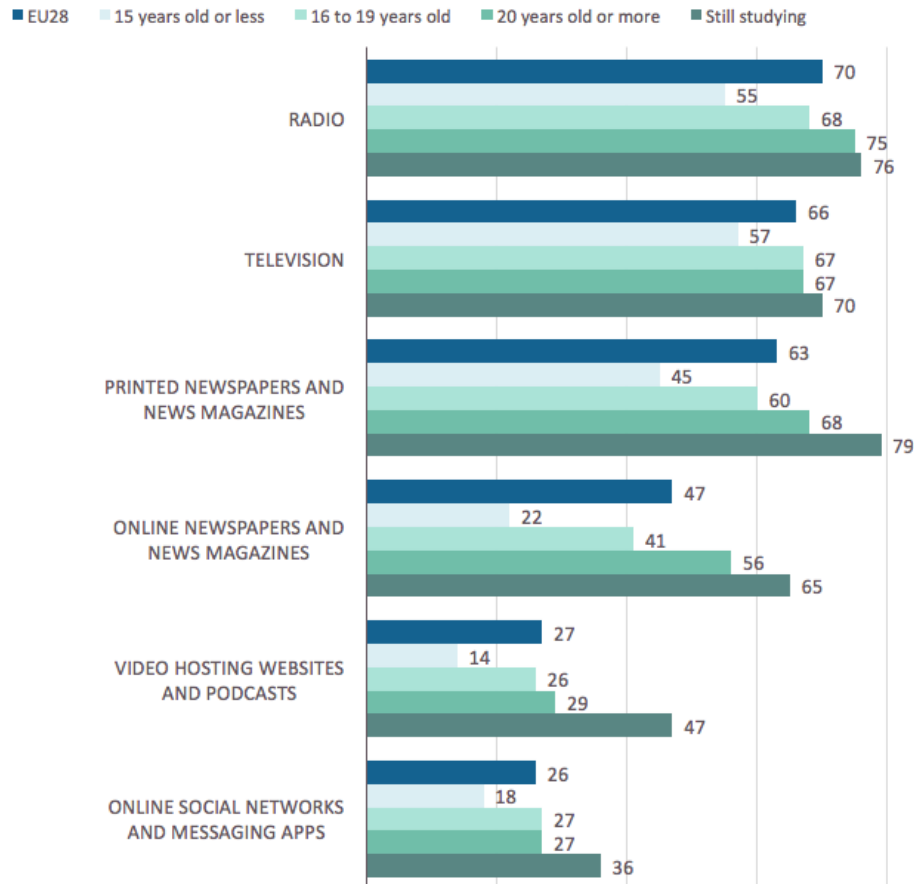
Q1F How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...  
(% - USERS OF THE MEDIA OR CHANNEL - TOTAL 'TRUST')



Base: Respondents who use the media or channel (N = 26,374)

# Respondents with a higher level of education tend to trust more the various sources

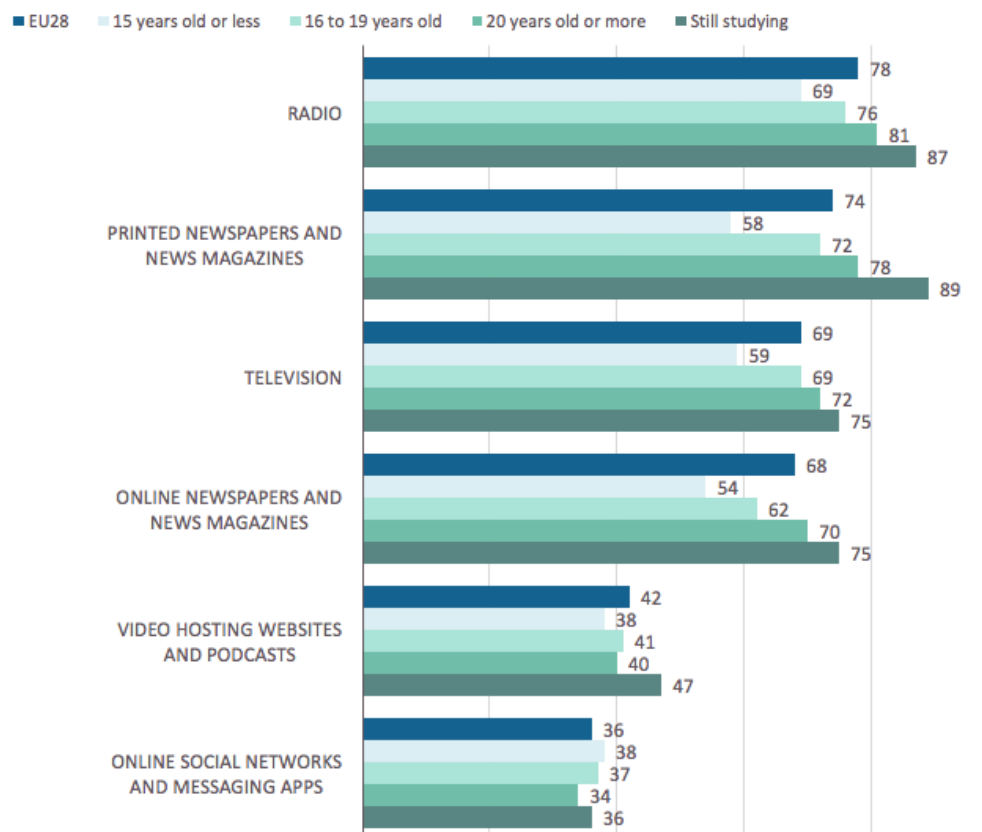
Q1 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...  
(% - TOTAL 'TRUST')



Base: All respondents (N=26,576)



# But among online social networks users, respondents with a higher level of education tend to trust it less

Q1F How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...  
(% - USERS OF THE MEDIA OR CHANNEL - TOTAL 'TRUST')



Base: Respondents who use the media or channel (N = 26,374)

# Media users - Age and level of education

	Total	Online social networks and messaging apps	Online newspapers and news magazines	News agencies	Printed newspapers and news magazines	Television	Radio	News aggregators	Video hosting websites
 Age									
15-24	12	18	14	12	10	11	10	15	21
25-39	23	31	30	26	19	22	23	29	33
40-54	26	28	28	29	25	26	27	27	26
55 +	39	23	28	33	46	41	40	29	20
 Education (End of)									
15-	11	6	4	6	10	12	10	5	4
16-19	34	33	29	31	33	35	34	30	31
20+	46	49	56	54	49	45	49	54	50
Still studying	8	11	10	8	7	7	6	11	14

Respondents between 15 and 39 years old tend to use more online social networks and video hosting websites; while older respondents (55+) tend to use more traditional media.

Respondents with a high level of education tend to use more online newspapers and news magazines, news agencies and news aggregators

Base: Respondents who use the media or channel (N = 26,394)

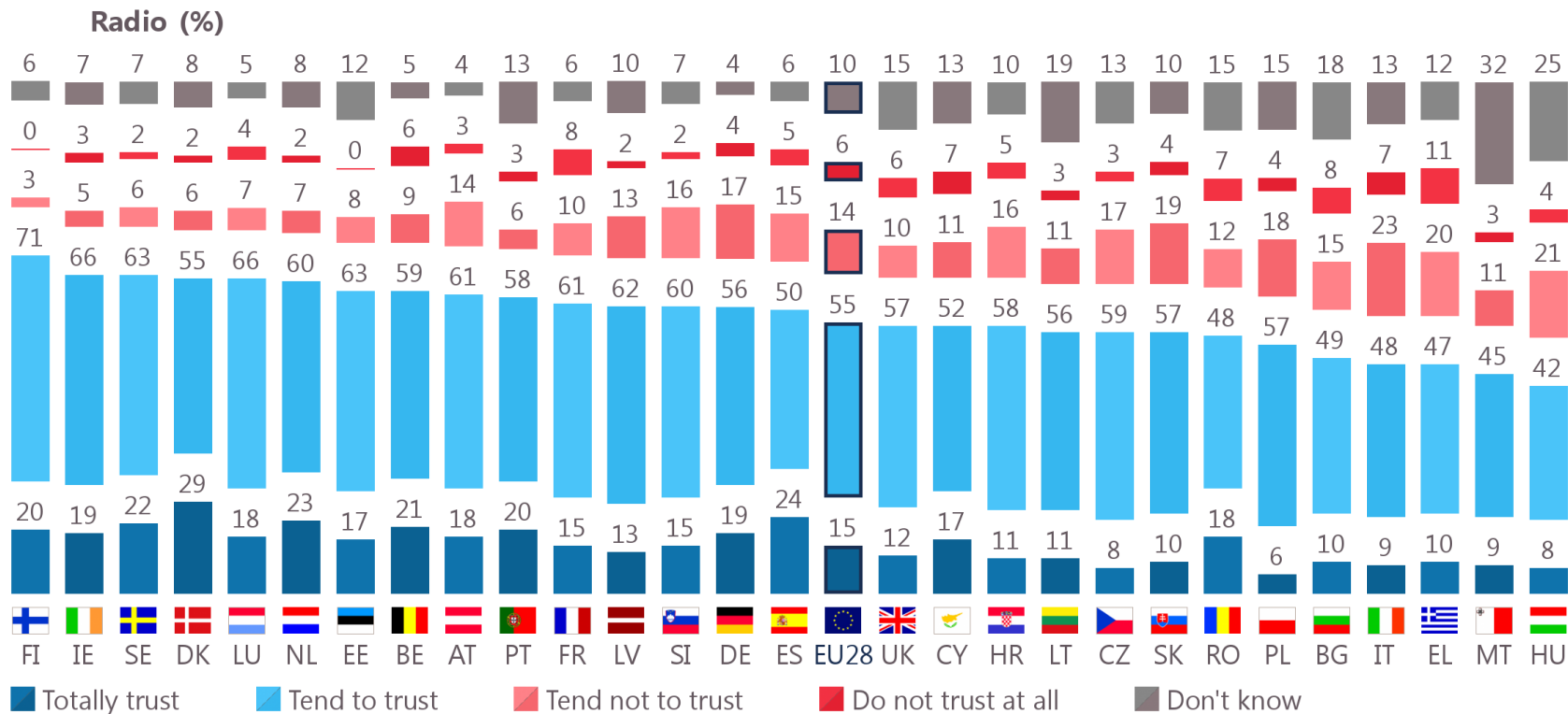
# Online media users tend to use more other online platforms

	Total	Online social networks and messaging apps	Online newspapers and news magazines	News agencies	Printed newspapers and news magazines	Television	Radio	News aggregators	Video hosting websites
<b>Media usage</b>									
Online social networks and messaging apps	62	100	79	76	60	61	63	82	85
Online newspapers and news magazines	47	60	100	70	51	47	50	70	66
News agencies	23	29	34	100	28	24	26	41	32
Printed newspapers and news magazines	55	53	60	67	100	57	61	59	54
Television	89	88	88	91	92	100	92	90	86
Radio	75	75	80	82	83	78	100	80	77
News aggregators	23	30	34	40	25	23	25	100	34
Video hosting websites	42	58	59	59	42	41	44	64	100

Base: Respondents who use the media or channel (N = 26,394)

# In all 28 EU Member States, at least half of respondents trust the news and information aired on the radio

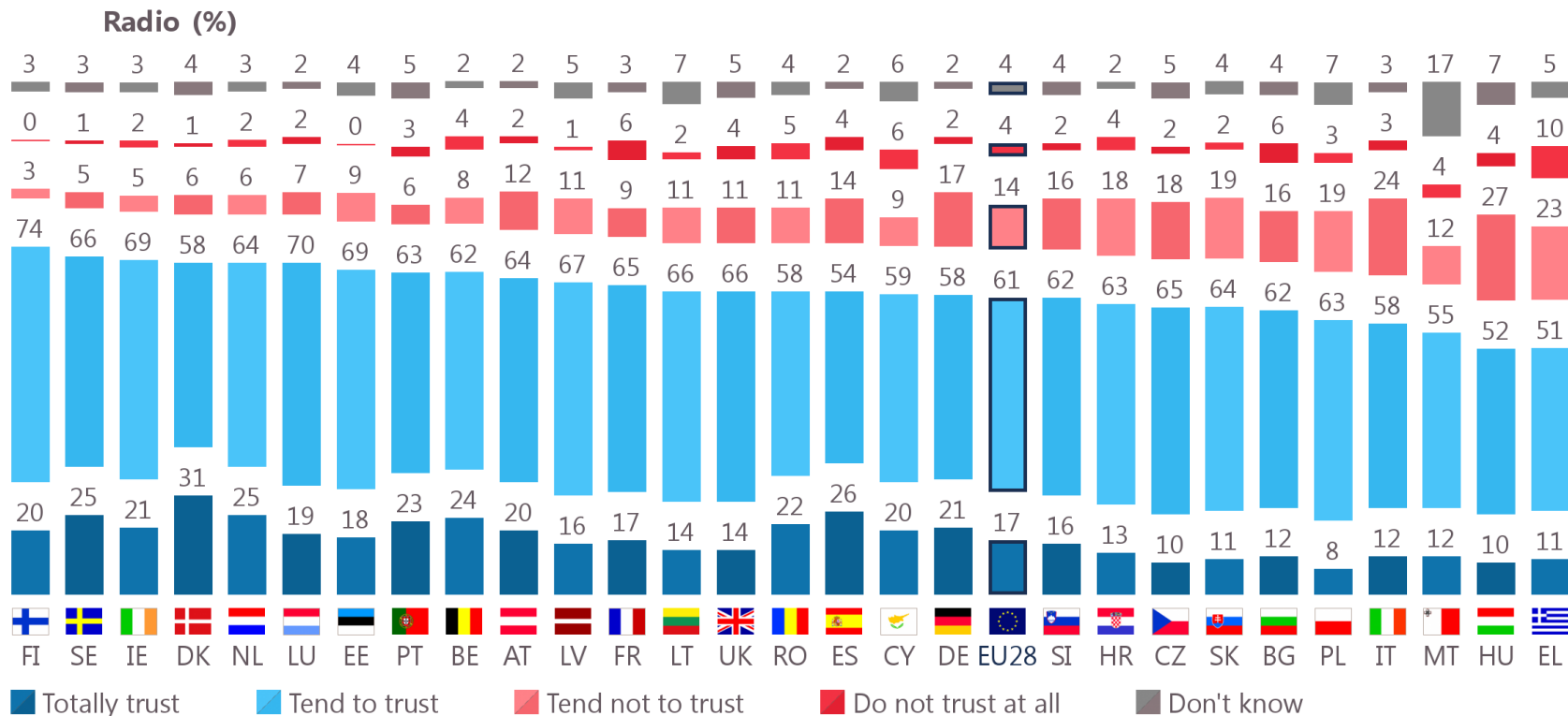
Q1.5 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...



Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# In all Member States, trust is higher among those who listen to the radio

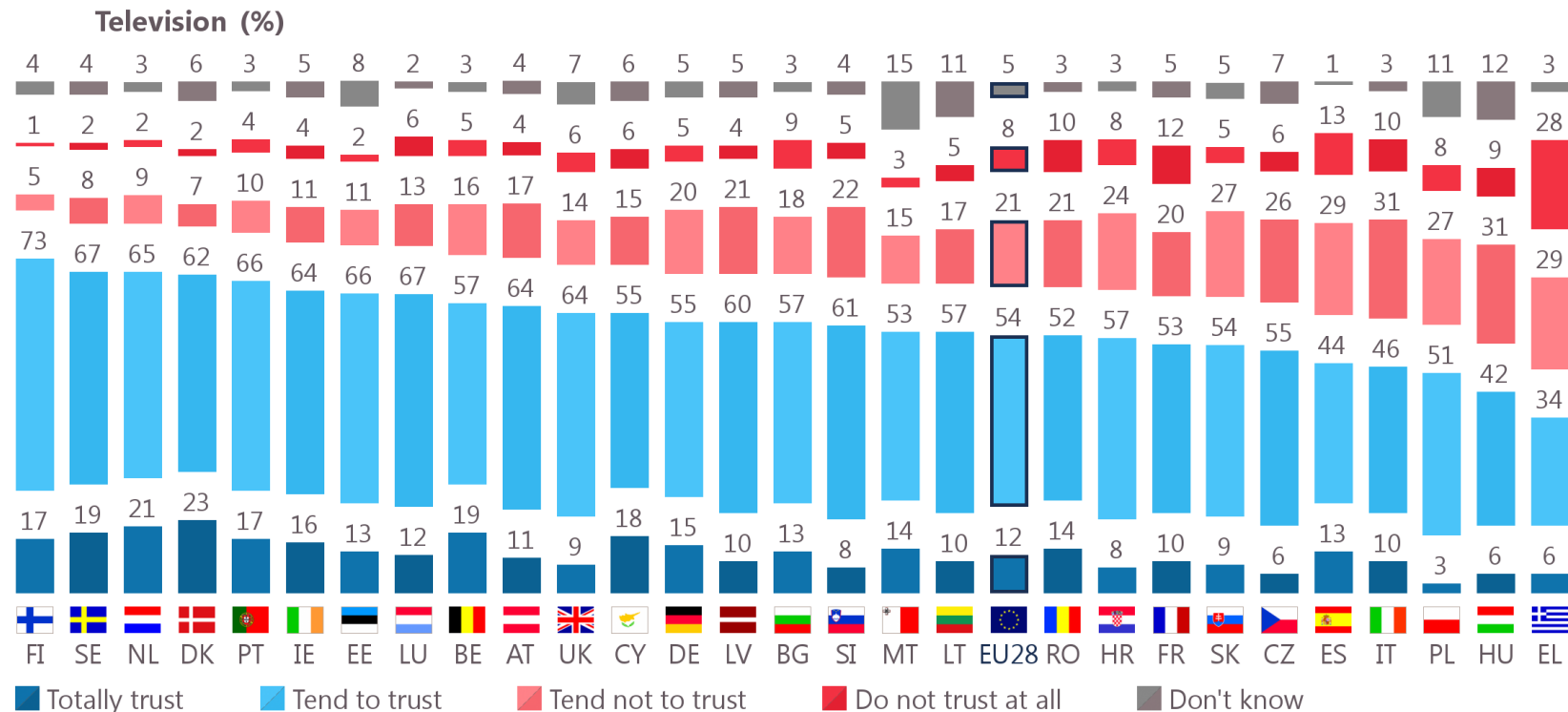
Q1F.5 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...



Base: Respondents who listen to radio (N = 19,861)

# In 15 EU Member States, at least seven in ten respondents trust the news and information aired on the television

Q1.4 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...



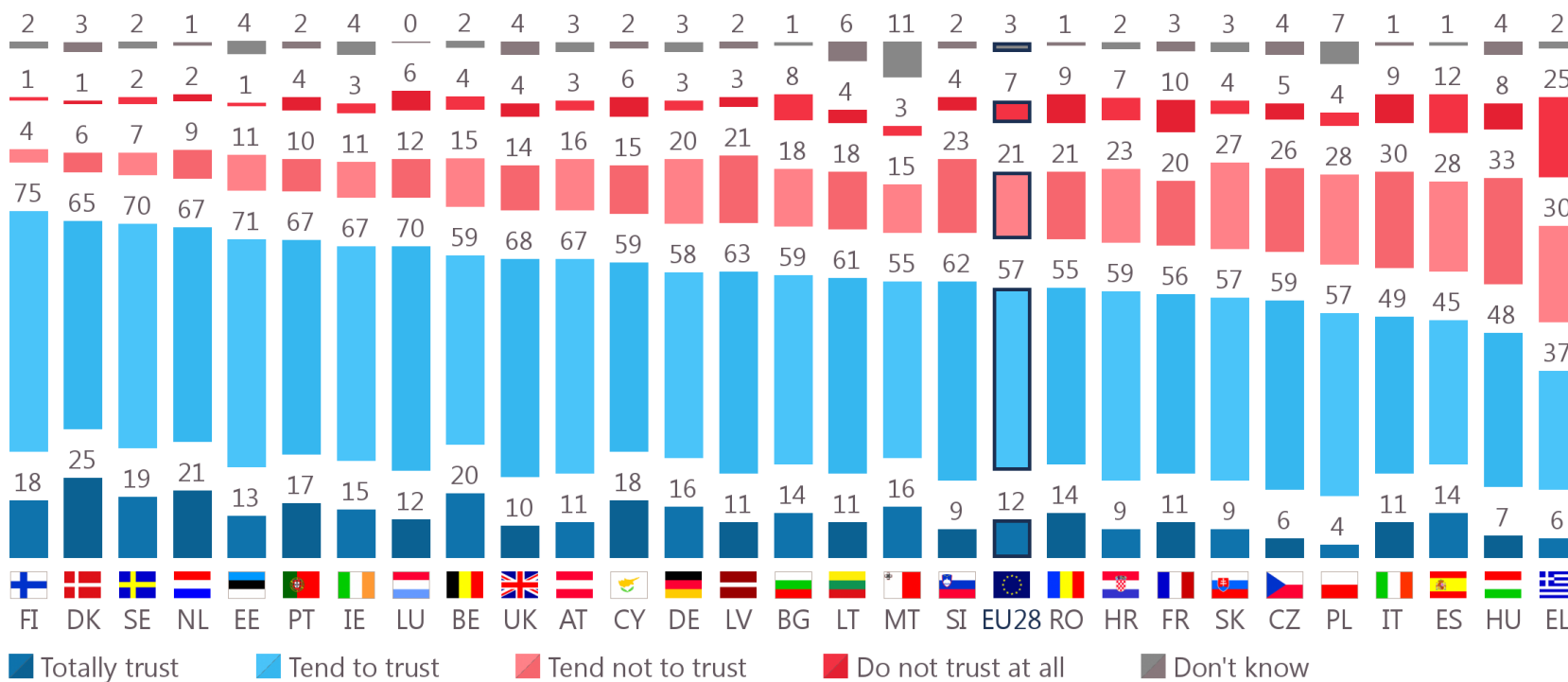
Base: All respondents (N=26,576)



# In all 28 EU Member States, trust is higher among those who watch television

Q1F.4 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...

Television (%)

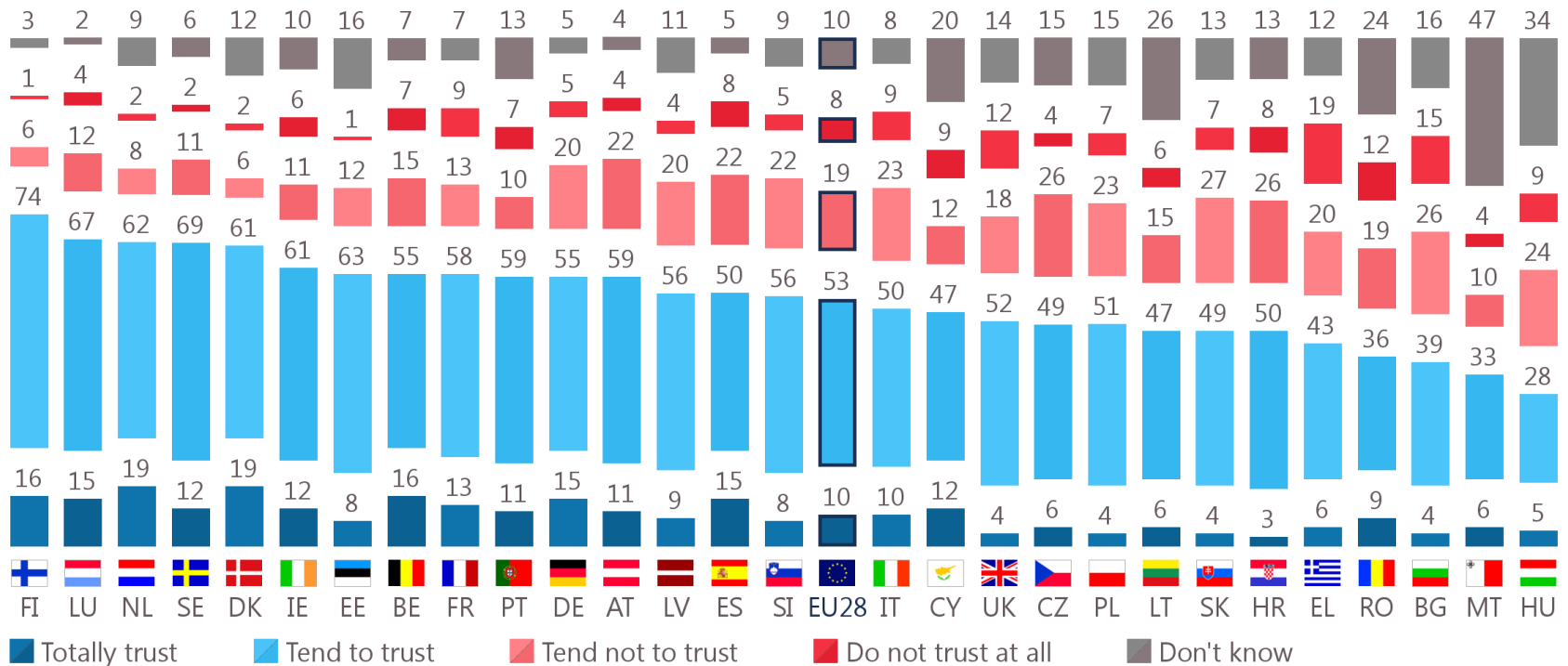


Base: Respondents who watch television (N = 23,572)

# In 23 EU Member States, at least half of respondents trust the news and information provided in printed newspapers and news magazines

Q1.1 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...

## Printed newspapers and news magazines (%)

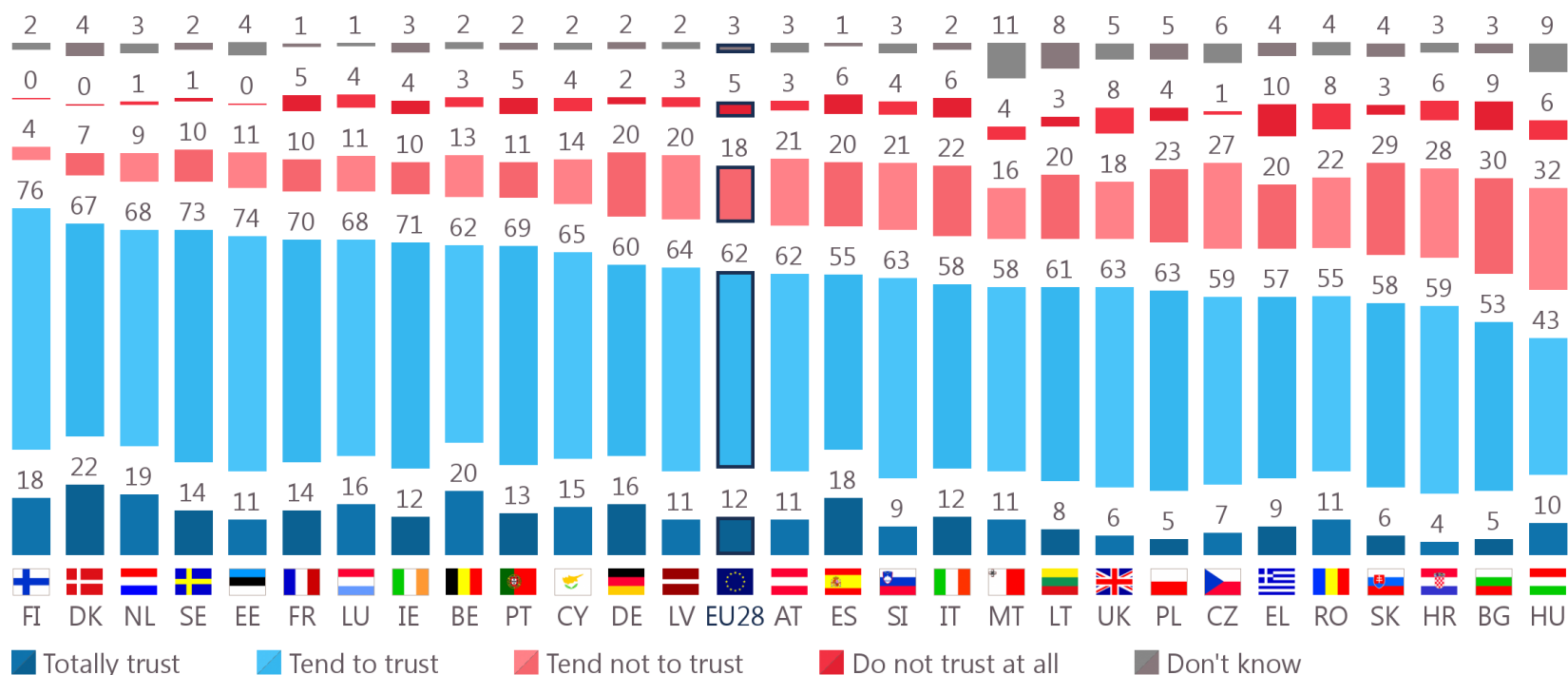


Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# Trust is higher among those who read printed newspapers and news magazines

Q1F.1 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...

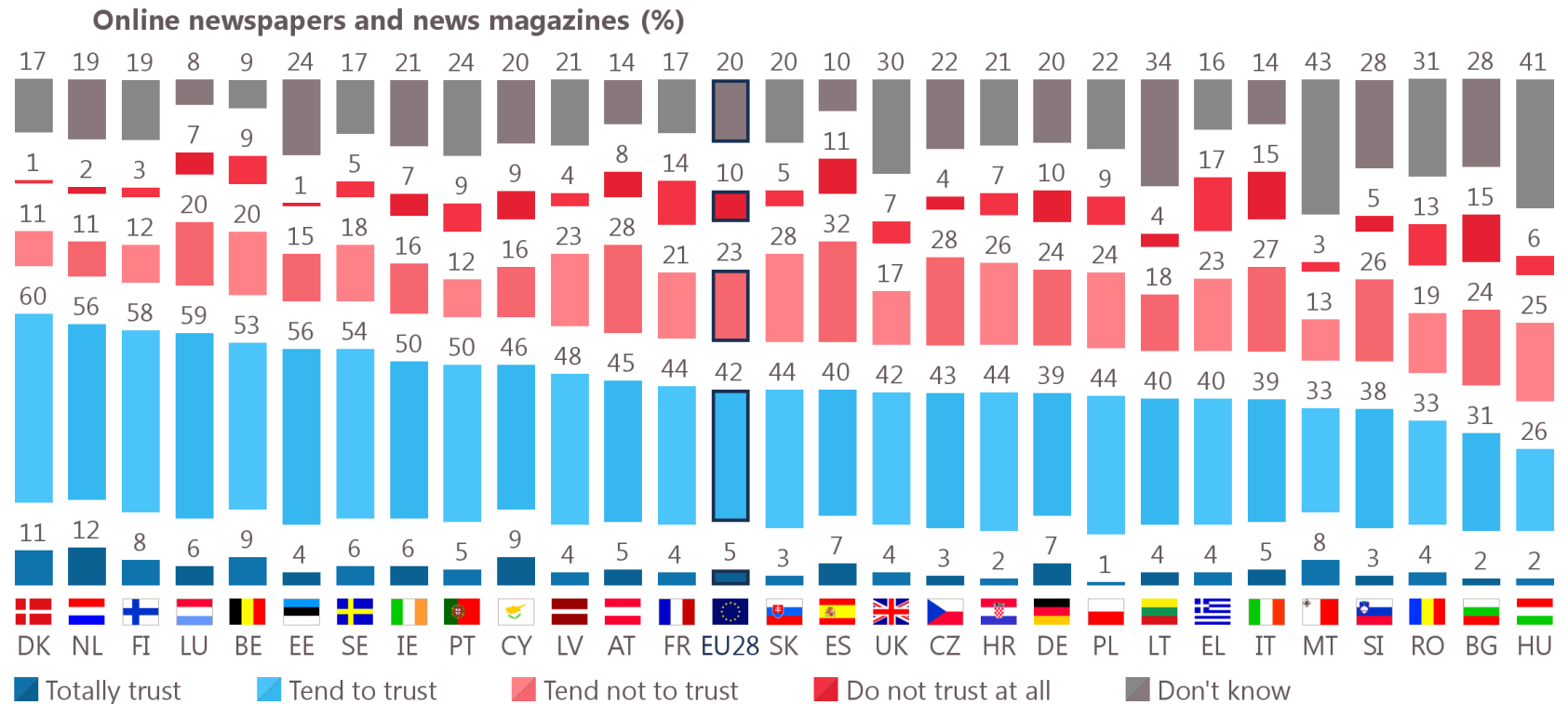
Printed newspapers and news magazines (%)



Base: Respondents who read printed newspapers and news magazines (N=14,641)

# In 12 EU Member States at least half of respondents trust the news and information provided in online newspapers and news magazines

Q1.2 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...

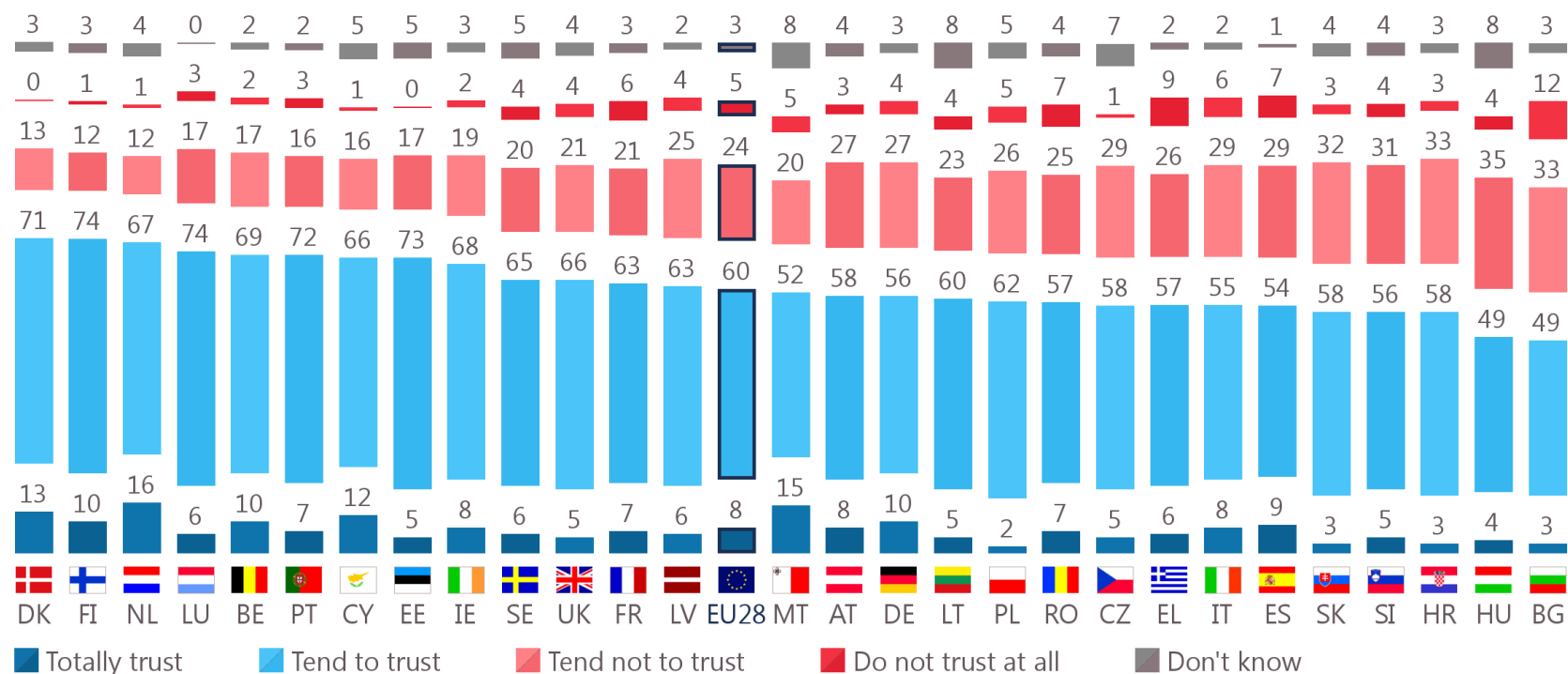


Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# In all 28 Member States, trust is much higher among those who read these sources of news

Q1F.2 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...

## Online newspapers and news magazines (%)

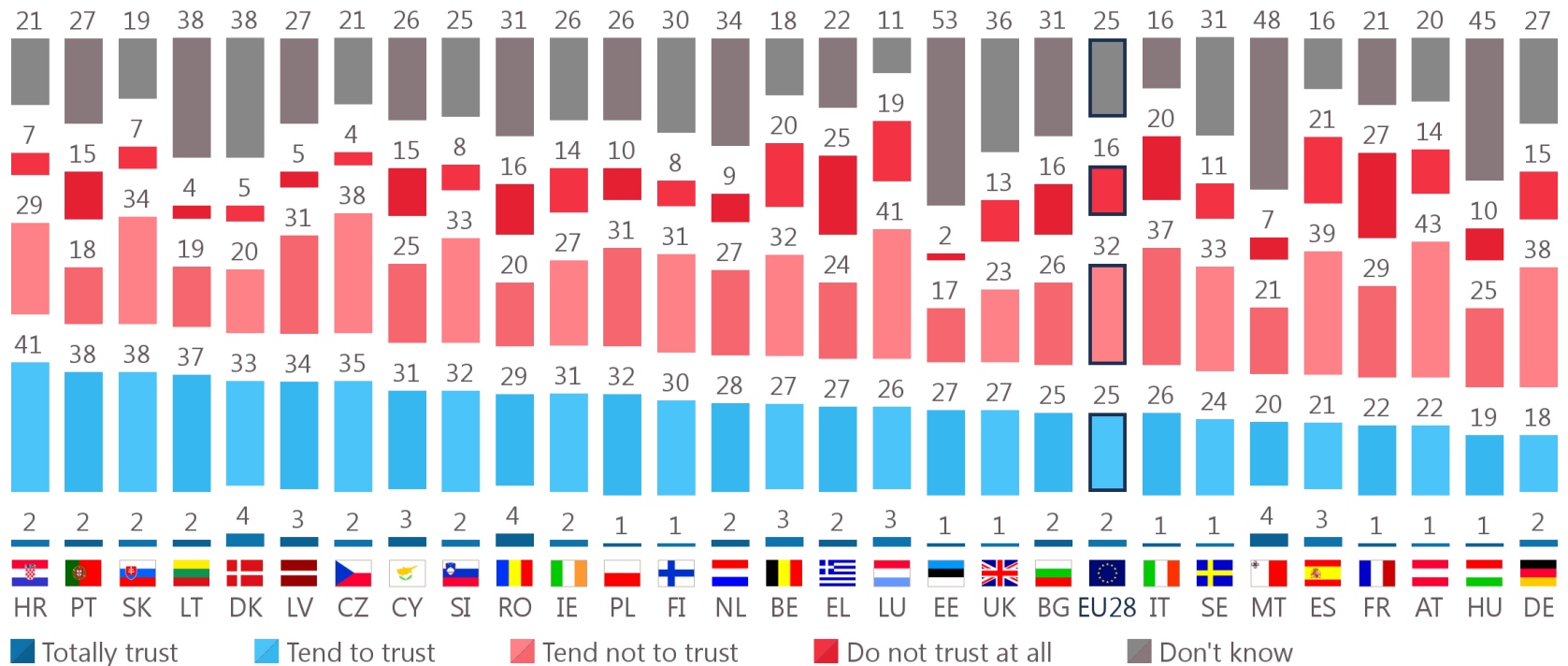


Base: Respondents who read online newspapers and news magazines (N=12,509)

# Respondents in Germany and Hungary (both 20%) are the least likely to trust the news and information provided by video hosting websites and podcasts; while 58% of the respondents do not use these platforms

Q1.6 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...

Video hosting websites and podcasts (%)

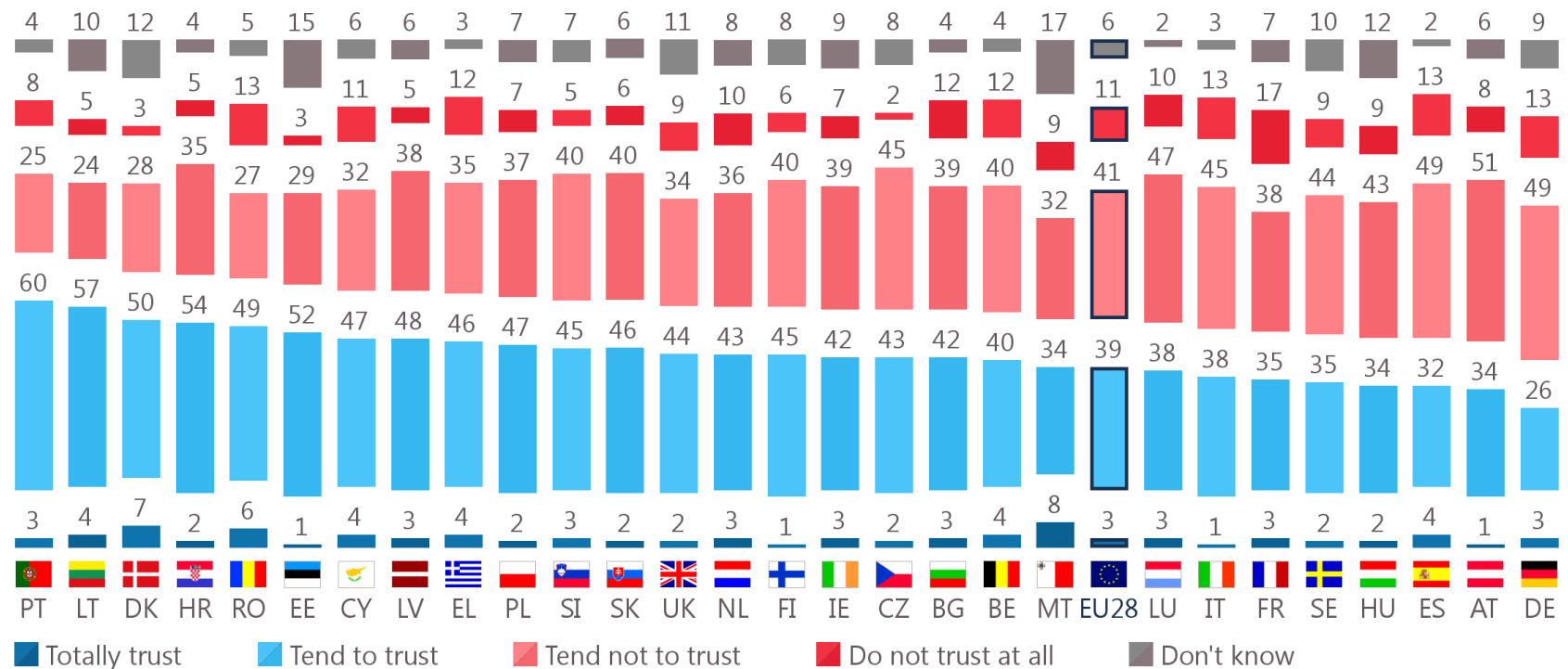


Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# Users of video hosting websites in Portugal (63%) and Lithuania (61%) are more likely to trust these platforms

Q1F.6 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...

## Video hosting websites and podcasts (%)

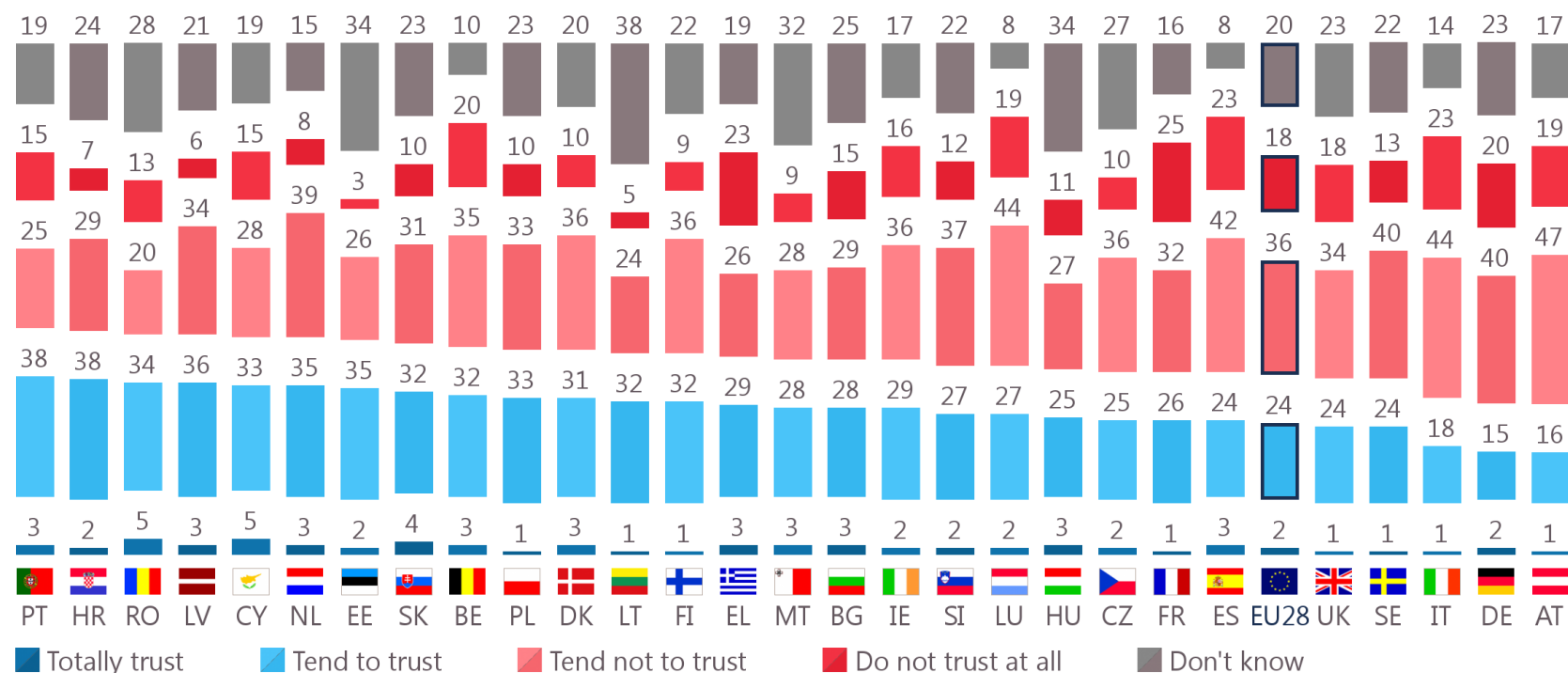


Base: Respondents who use video hosting websites (N=11,242)

# Respondents in Italy (19%), Germany and Austria (both 17%) are least likely to trust news and information available on online social networks and messaging apps; while 38% of the respondents do not use these platforms

Q1.3 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...

## Online social networks and messaging apps (%)



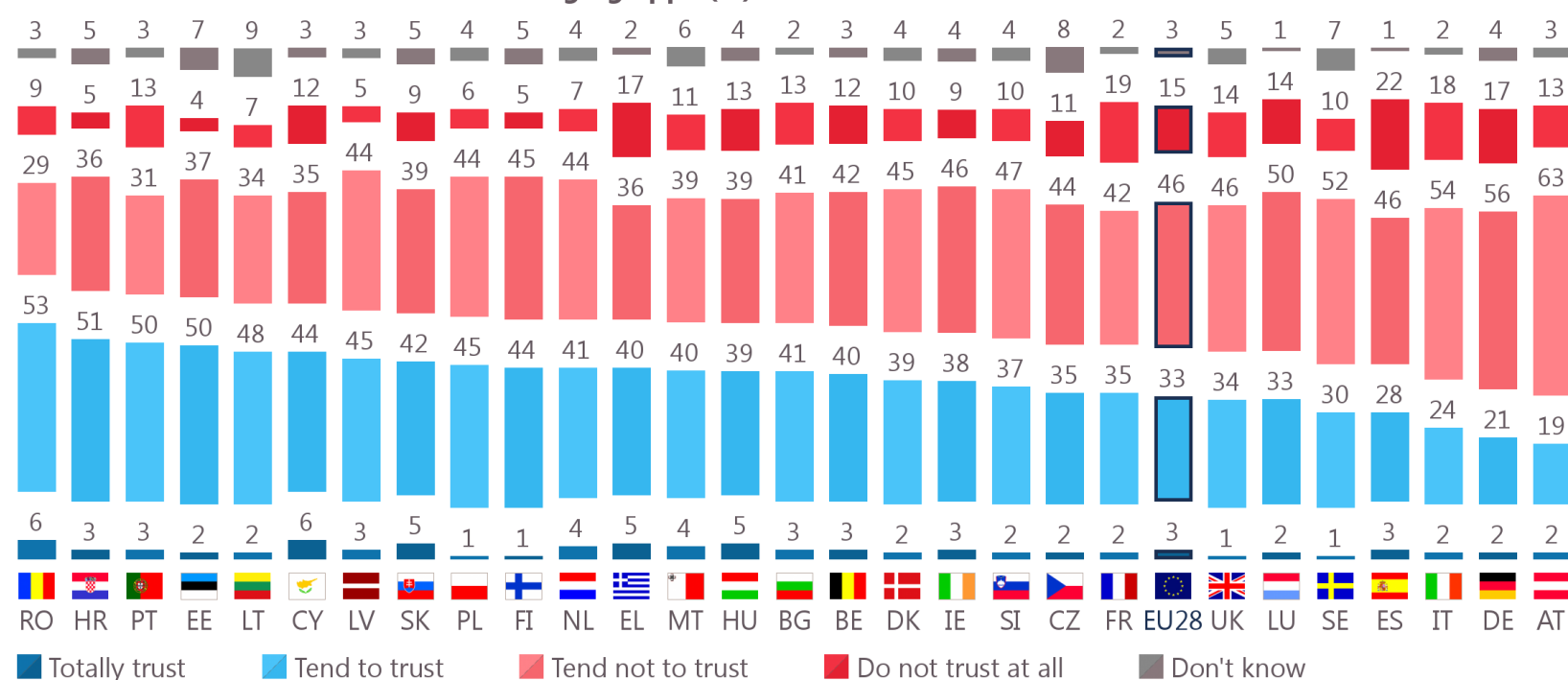
Base: All respondents (N=26,576)



# Among those who use online social networks and messaging apps, respondents in Romania (59%) are most likely to trust the news and information they access through these platforms

Q1F.3 How much do you trust or not the news and information you access through...

Online social networks and messaging apps (%)

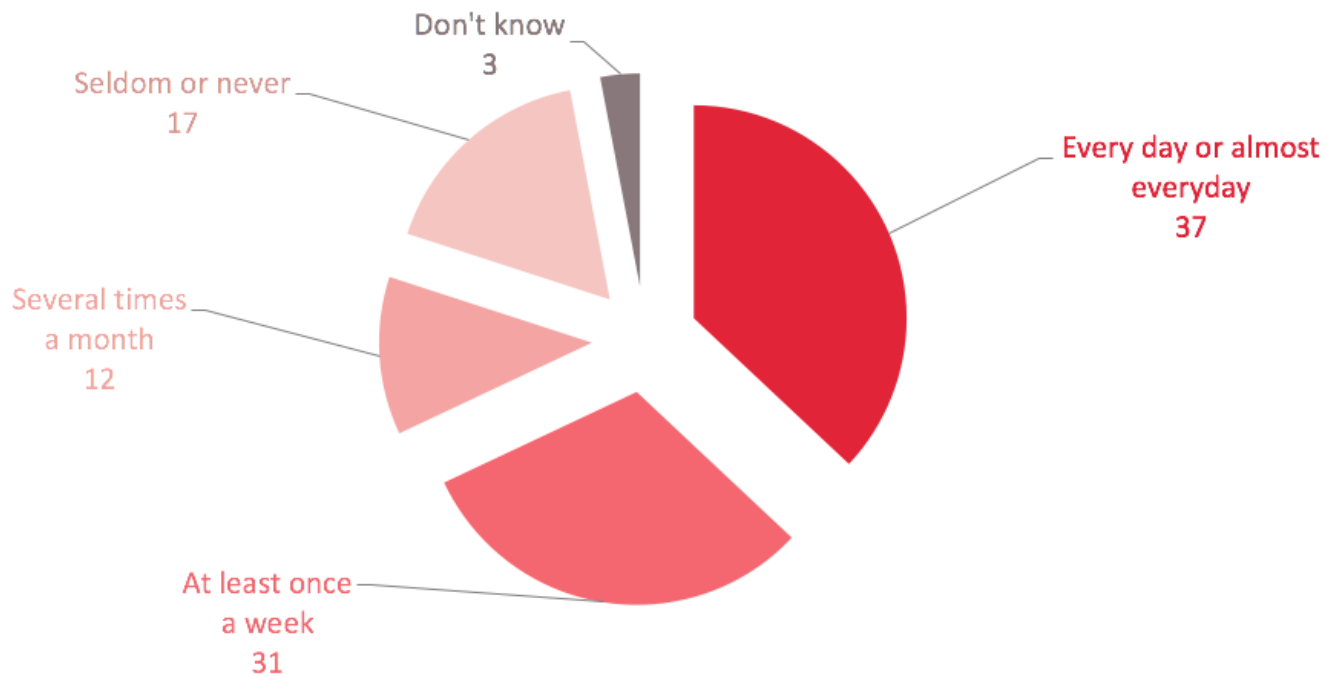


Base: Respondents who use online social networks and messaging apps (N=16,538)

## **II. *FAKE NEWS AWARENESS***

# Almost four in ten respondents (37%) come across *fake news* every day or almost everyday

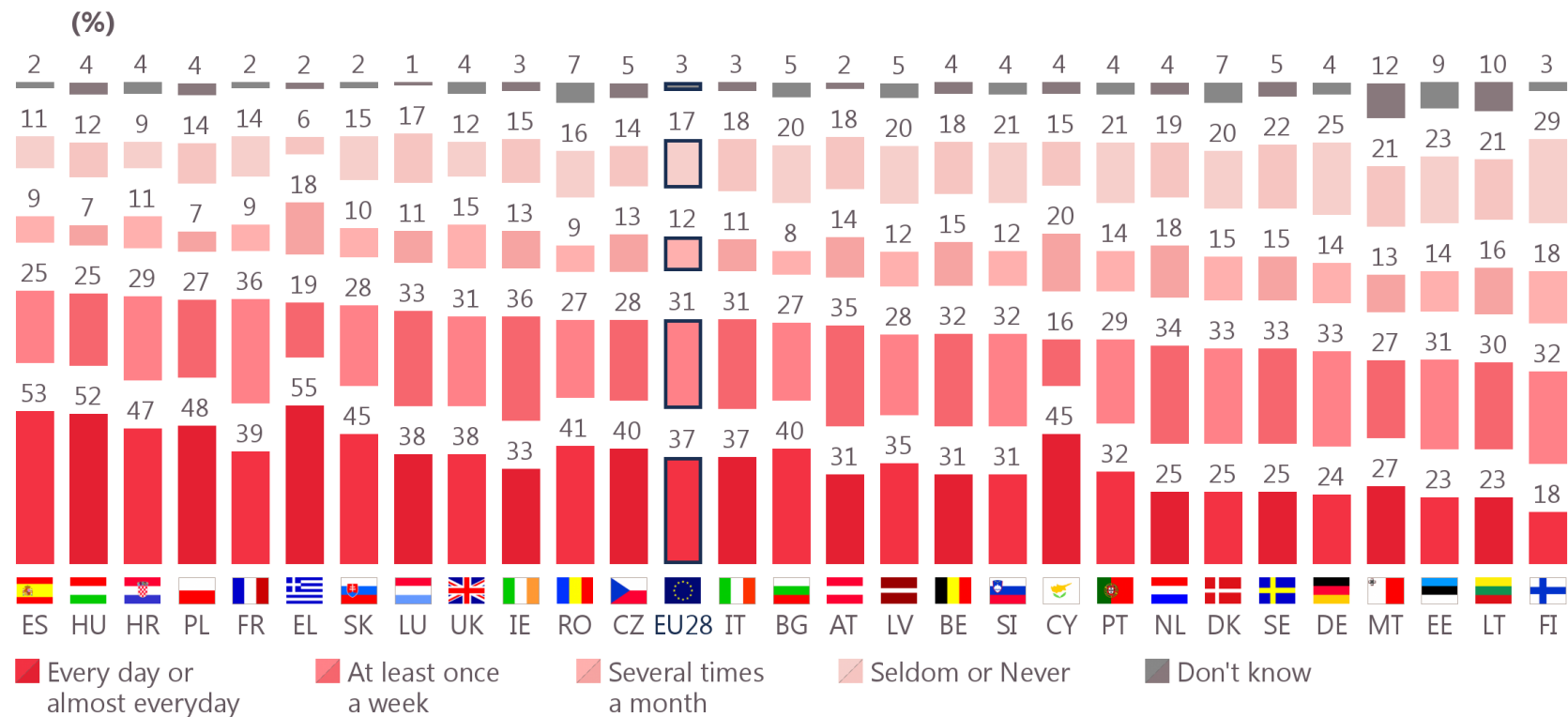
Q2 How often do you come across news or information that you believe misrepresent reality or is even false?  
(% - EU)



Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# At least half of respondents in all 28 EU Member States come across fake news at least once a week

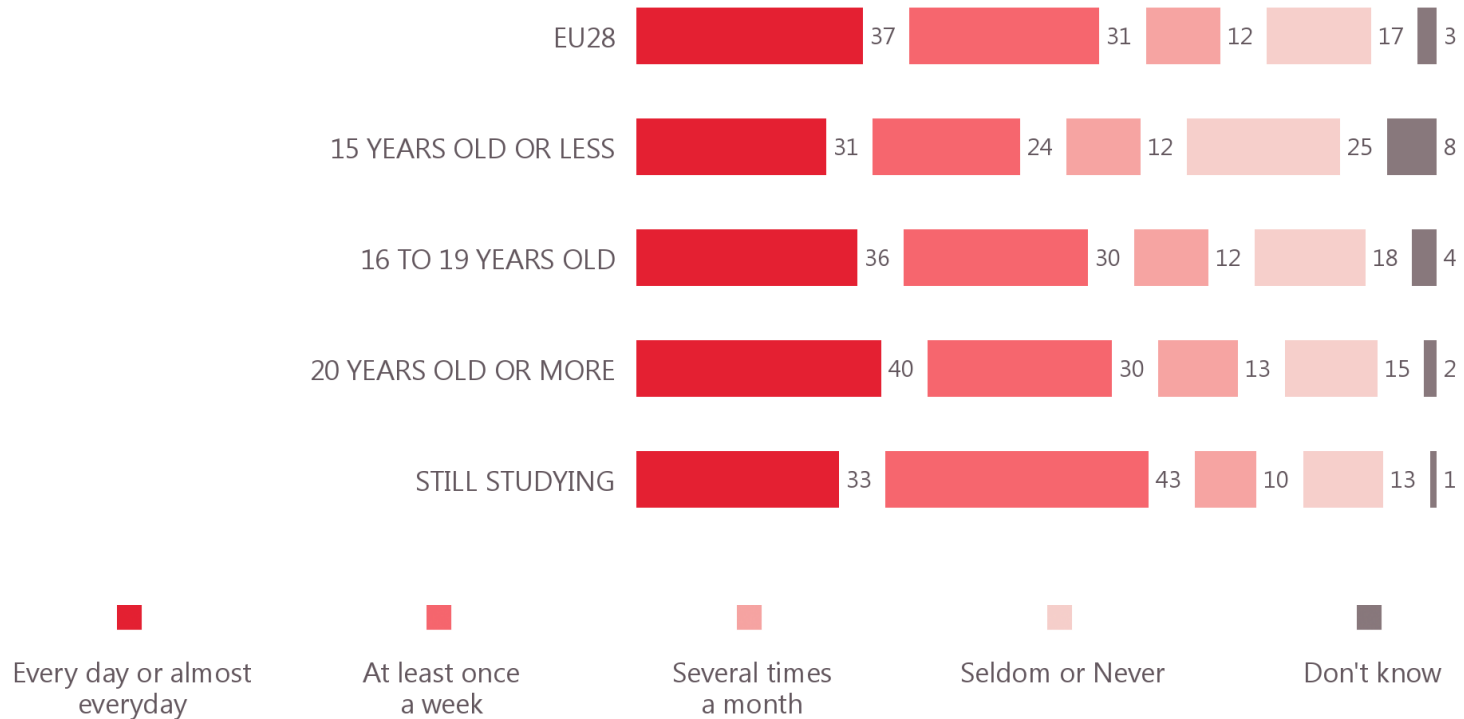
Q2 How often do you come across news or information that you believe misrepresent reality or is even false?



Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# Respondents with a higher level of education say they come across fake news more often

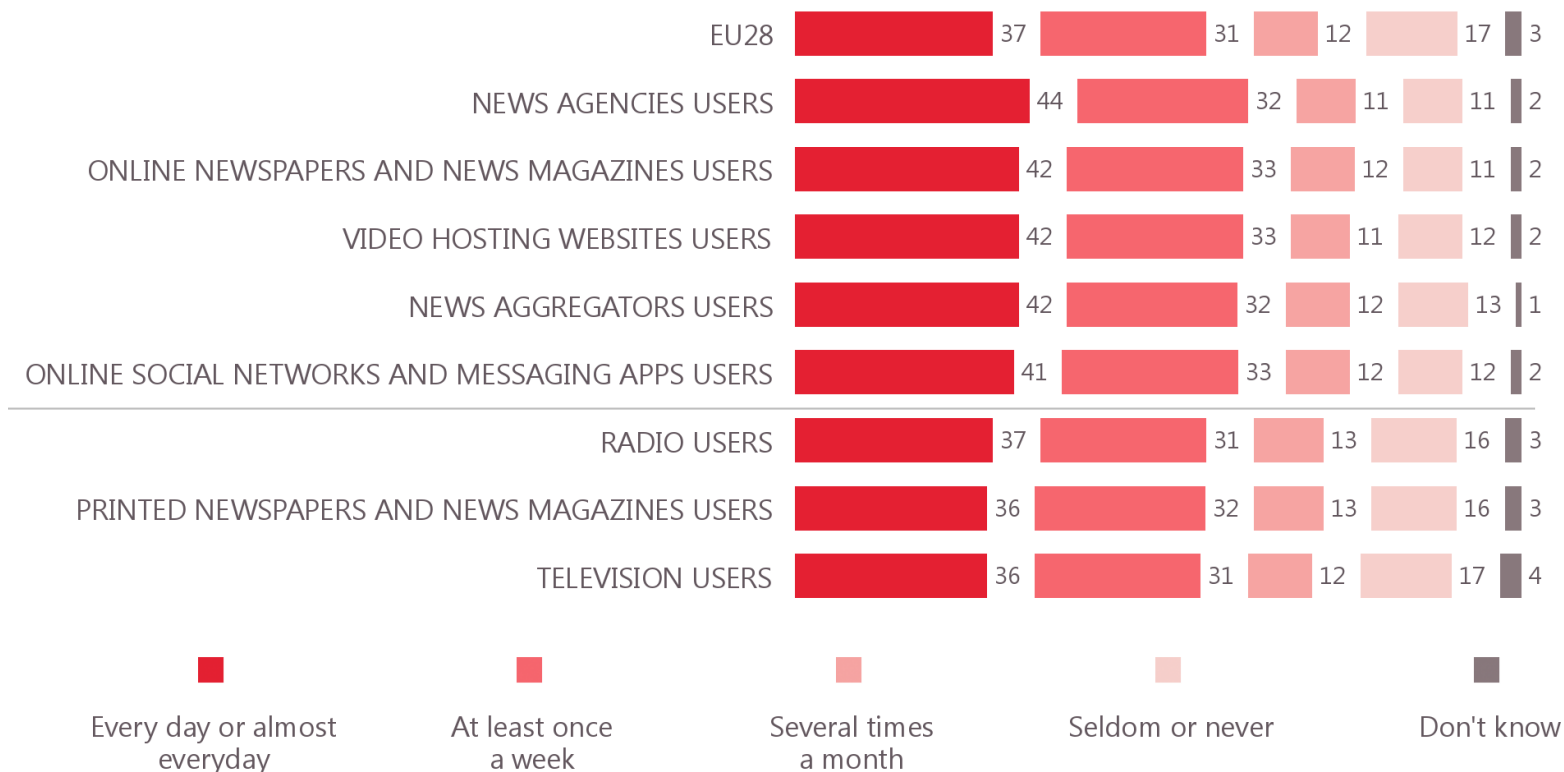
Q2 How often do you come across news or information that you believe misrepresent reality or is even false?  
(%)



Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# Online media users say they come across *fake news* more often than traditional media users

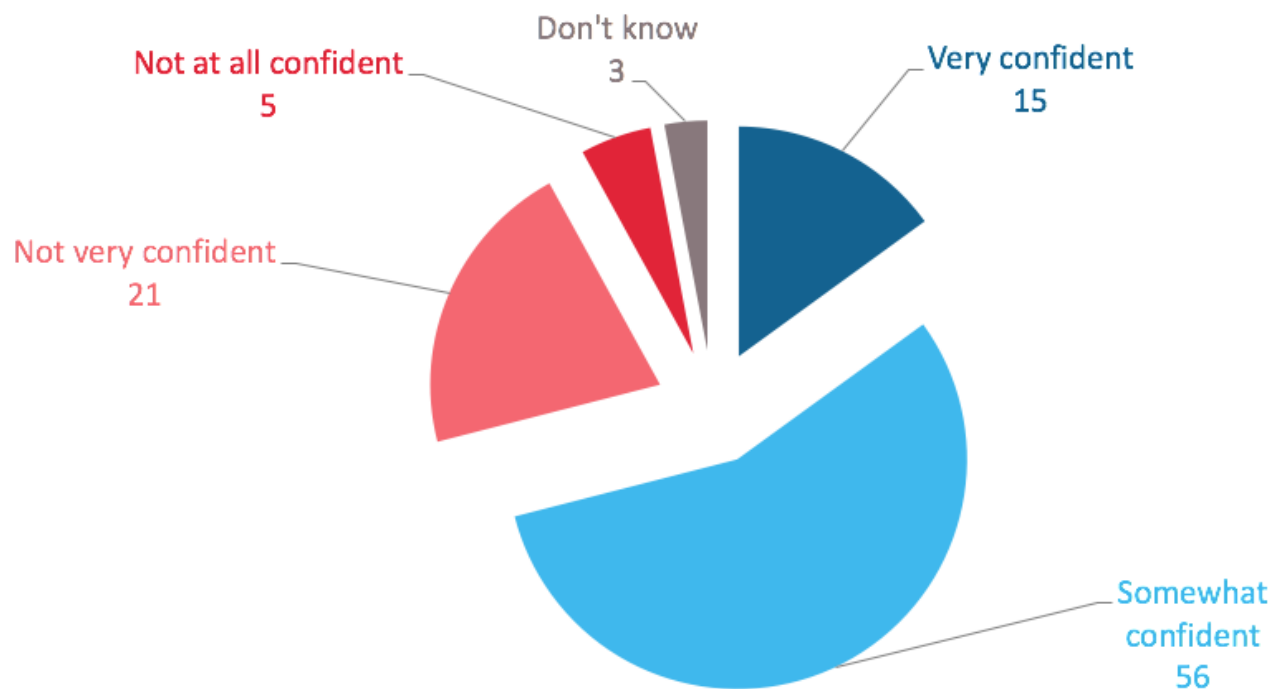
**Q2** How often do you come across news or information that you believe misrepresent reality or is even false?  
(% - TOTAL 'TRUST')



Base: Respondents who use the media or channel (N = 26,394)

# Over seven in ten respondents (71%) feel confident identifying *fake news*

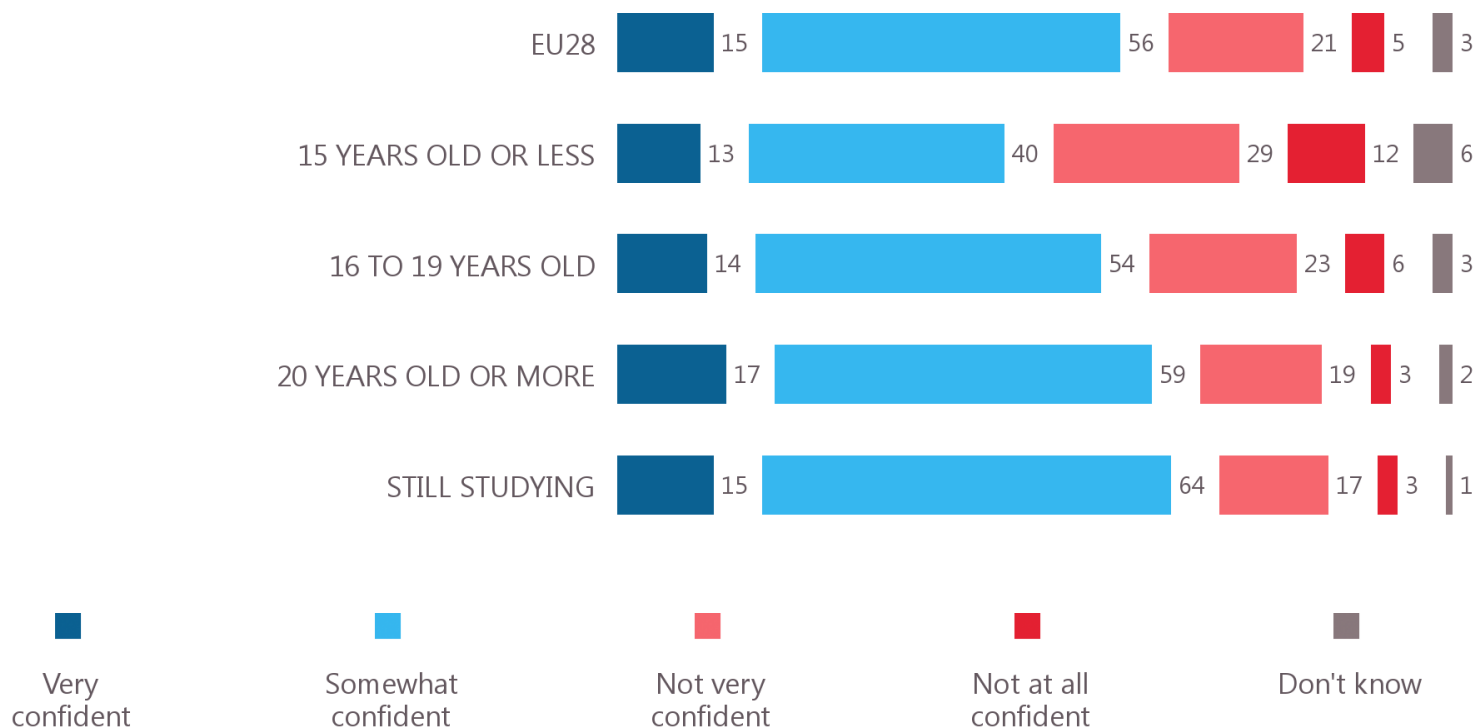
Q3 How confident or not are you that you are able to identify news or information that misrepresent reality or is even false?  
(% - EU)



Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# Respondents who left education at a later age tend to be more confident identifying *fake news*

Q3 How confident or not are you that you are able to identify news or information that misrepresent reality or is even false? (%)

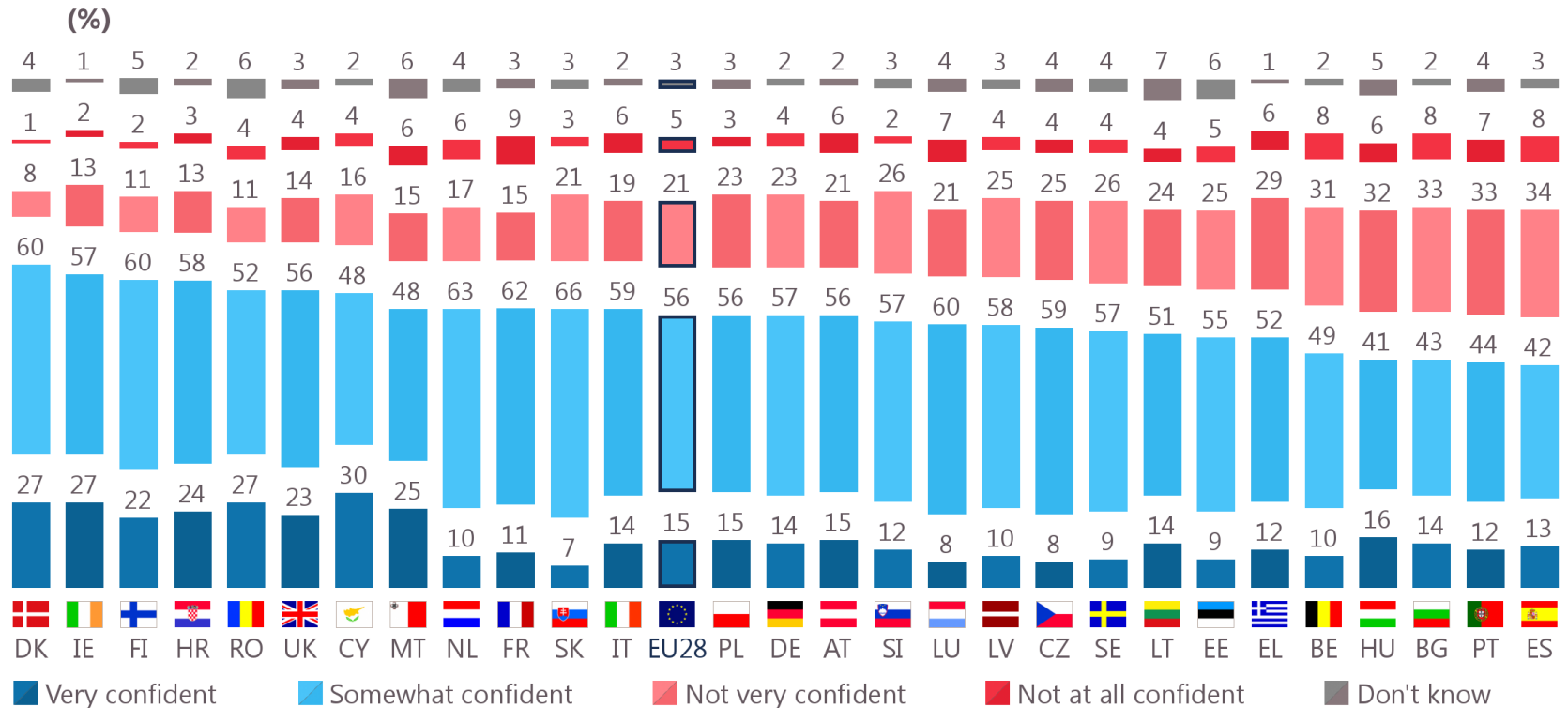


Base: All respondents (N=26,576)



# Confidence is higher in Denmark (87%), Ireland (84%), Finland (82%) and Croatia (82%)

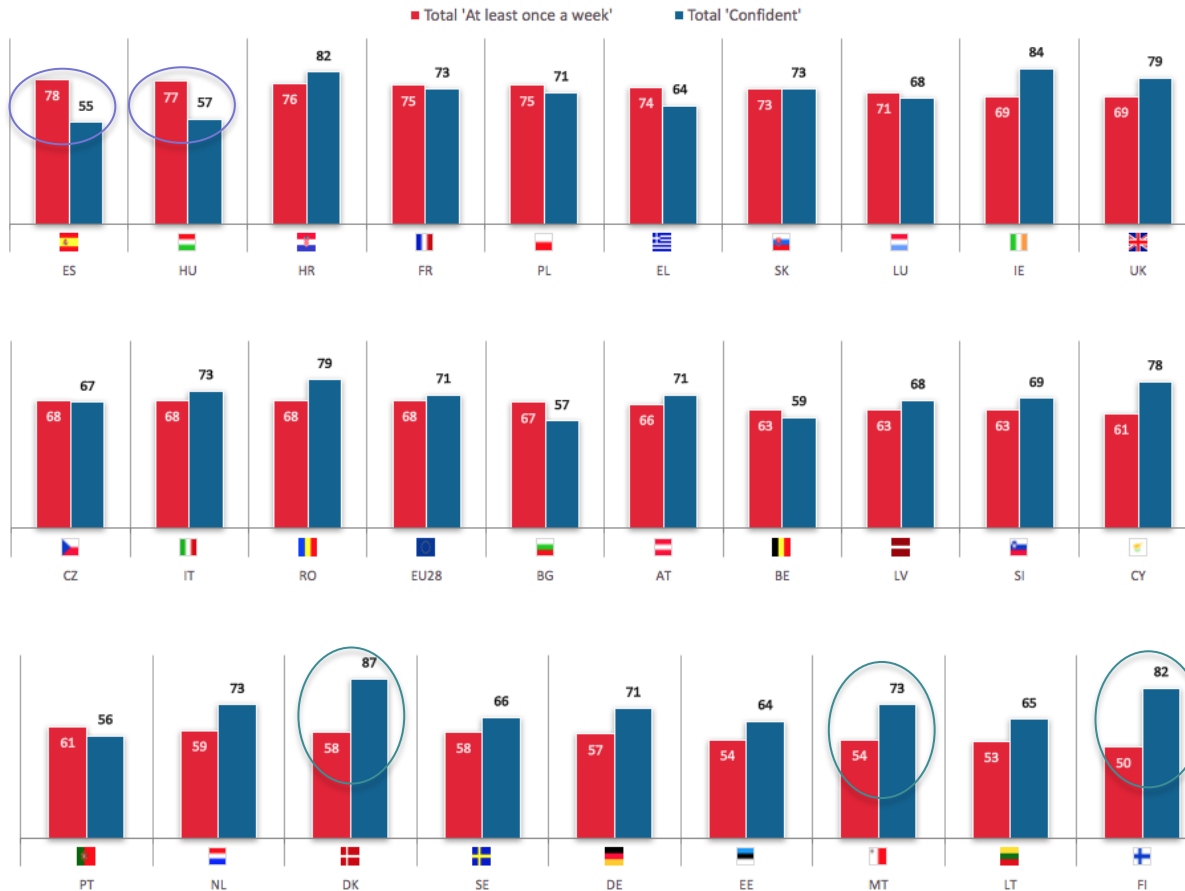
Q3 How confident or not are you that you are able to identify news or information that misrepresent reality or is even false?



Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# Frequency of exposure to *fake news* and the level of confidence in identifying it vary among countries

- Q2 How often do you come across news or information that you believe misrepresent reality or is even false?  
(% - TOTAL 'AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK')
- Q3 How confident or not are you that you are able to identify news or information that misrepresent reality or is even false?  
(% - TOTAL 'CONFIDENT')



Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# Online social networks users - Trust in media, exposure to *fake news* and confidence in identifying it

Total 'Trust'	Education					Age			
	15-	16-19	20+	Still studying	15-24	25-39	40-54	55+	

Online social networks users

Media trust									
Radio	75	69	72	76	77	73	77	77	69
Television	68	64	68	68	69	67	67	71	67
Printed newspapers and news magazines	67	58	62	70	79	74	69	67	62
Online newspapers and news magazines	58	39	51	63	66	61	62	58	51
Online social networks and messaging apps	36	38	37	34	36	37	35	37	34
Video hosting websites and podcasts	35	28	33	34	47	46	39	32	26
Exposure to Fake News									
Every day or almost everyday	41	40	41	43	35	40	42	40	41
At least once a week	33	26	34	32	42	38	34	31	30
Several times a month	12	12	11	12	10	10	12	13	11
Seldom or never	12	19	12	12	13	12	11	13	15
Confidence in identifying Fake News									
Confident	75	63	72	78	78	77	79	74	70
Not confident	23	35	26	21	20	22	20	24	27

Students tend to trust more online newspapers and news magazines and video hosting websites.

Younger users (15-24) tend to trust more video hosting websites and printed newspapers and news magazines.

Users with a lower level of education tend to trust less online and printed newspapers and news magazines.

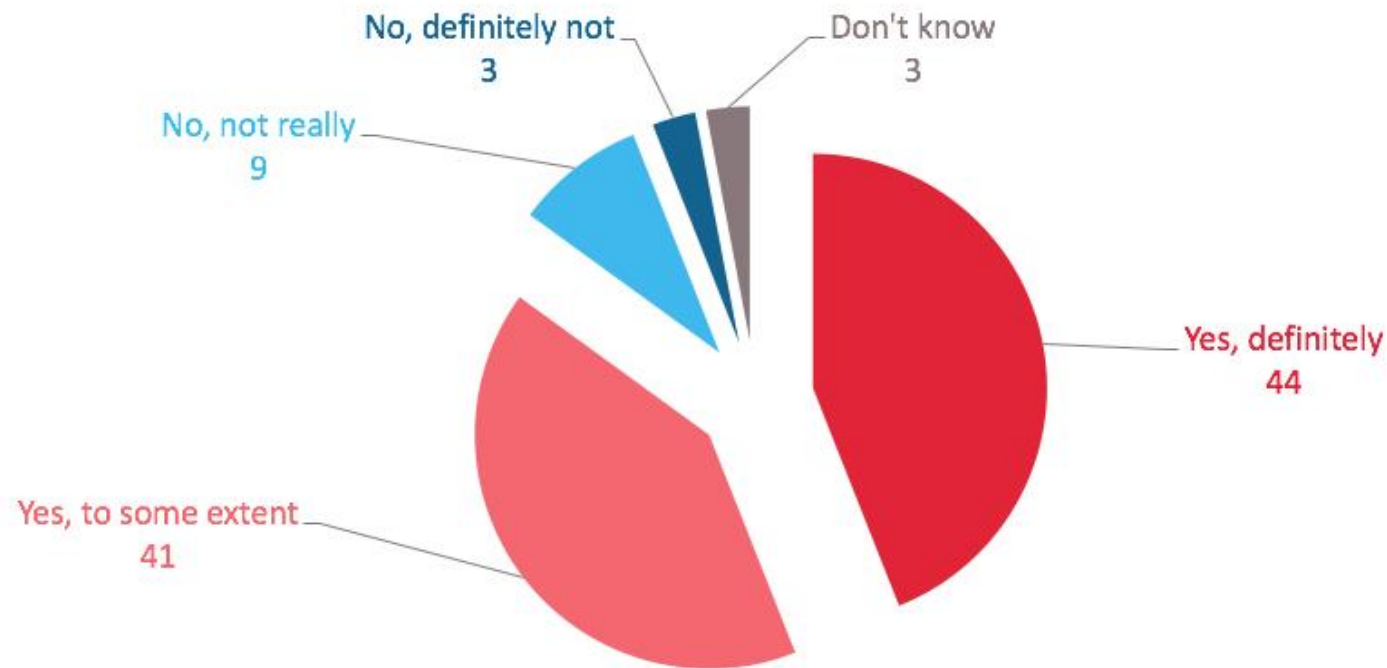
Users with a lower level of education are more likely to say they come across *fake news* seldom or never; while they are also less confident identifying it.

Base: Respondents who use online social networks and messaging apps (N=16,538)

# III. THE IMPACT OF *FAKE NEWS*

# 85% of the respondents perceive *fake news* to be a problem in their country

Q4.1 In your opinion, is the existence of news or information that misrepresent reality or is even false a problem ...  
In (OUR COUNTRY) (% - EU)

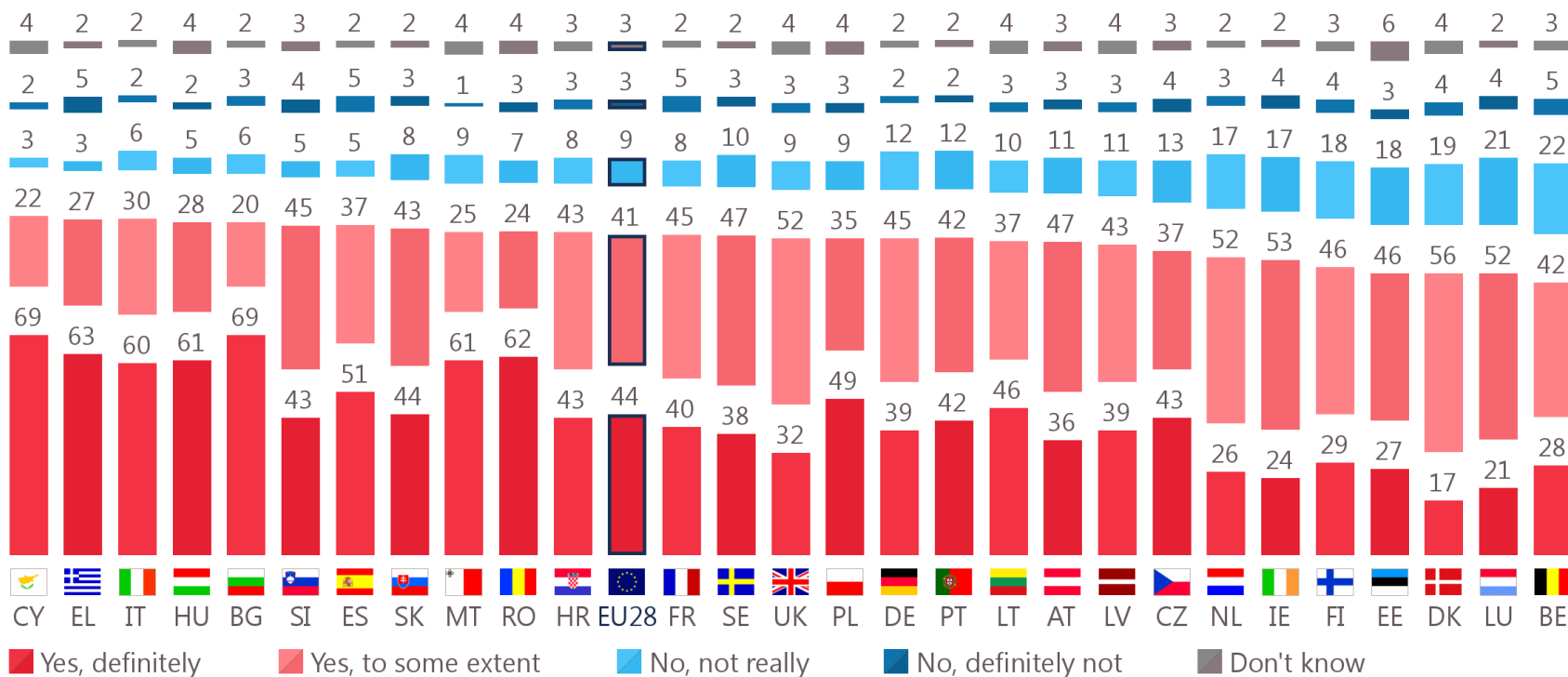


Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# In all 28 Member States, at least seven in ten respondents perceive *fake news* to be a problem in their country

Q4.1 In your opinion, is the existence of news or information that misrepresent reality or is even false a problem ...

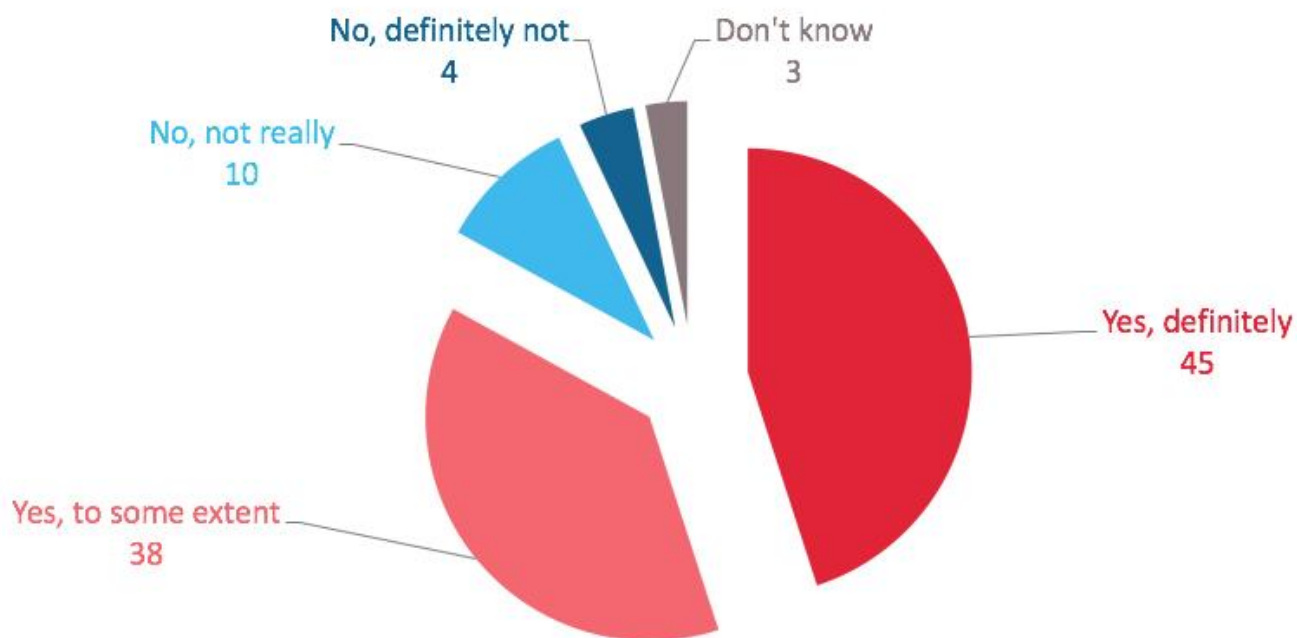
In (OUR COUNTRY) (%)



Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# 83% of respondents perceive *fake news* to be a problem for democracy in general

Q4.2 In your opinion, is the existence of news or information that misrepresent reality or is even false a problem ...  
For democracy in general (% - EU)

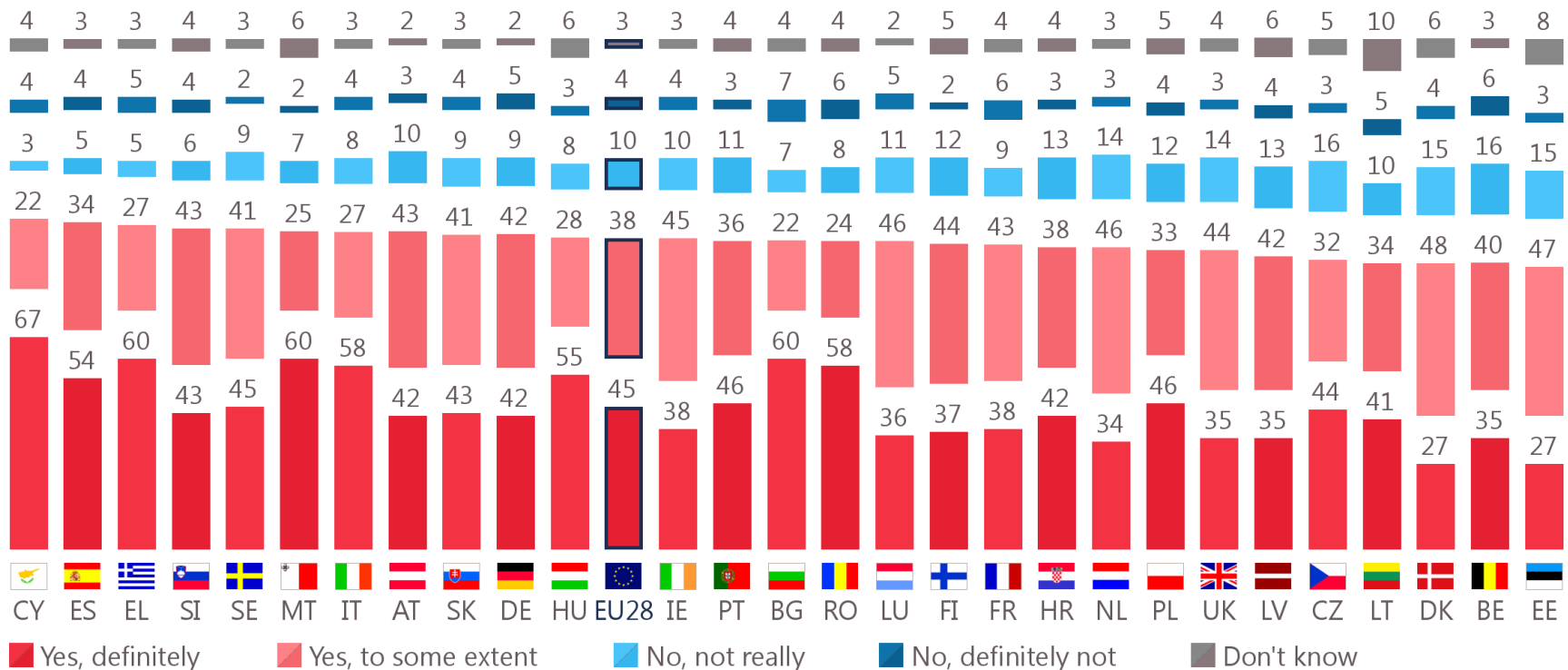


Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# In all 28 Member States, at least seven in ten respondents perceive *fake news* to be a problem for democracy in general

Q4.2 In your opinion, is the existence of news or information that misrepresent reality or is even false a problem ...

For democracy in general (%)



Base: All respondents (N=26,576)



# Journalists (45%), national authorities (39%) and the press and broadcasting management (36%) are the three most designated actors to act to stop the spread of *fake news*

**Q5** News or information that misrepresent reality or that are even false are called "fake news". Which of the following institutions and media actors should act to stop the spread of "fake news"? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)  
(% - EU)

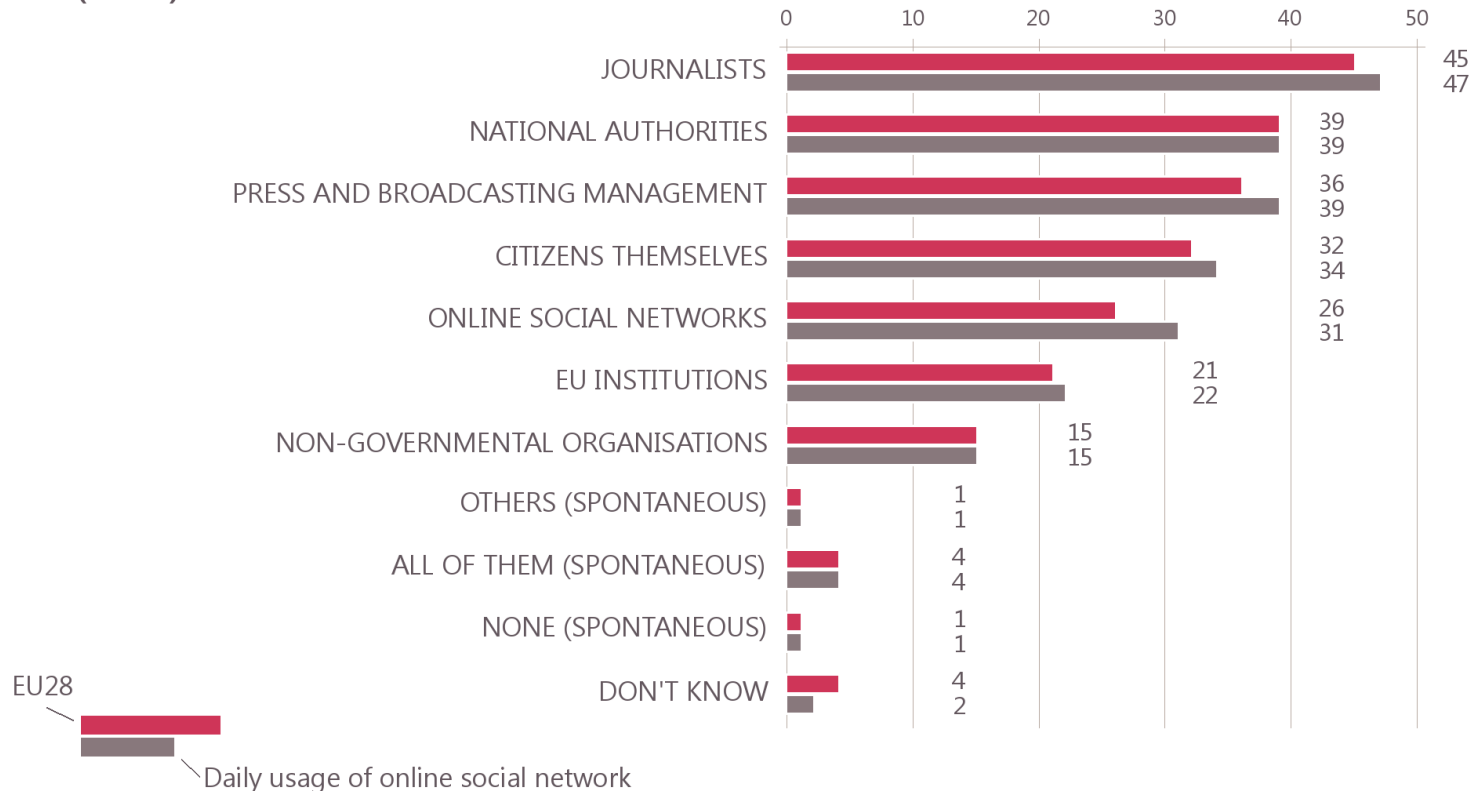


Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

# Respondents who use online social networks daily tend to expect more from the different media actors, especially online social networks

**Q5** News or information that misrepresent reality or that are even false are called “fake news”. Which of the following institutions and media actors should act to stop the spread of “fake news”? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)

(% - EU)



Base: All respondents (N=26,576)

Respondents who use online social networks every day or almost every day (N=13,451)

Q5 News or information that misrepresent reality or that are even false are called "fake news". Which of the following institutions and media actors should act to stop the spread of "fake news"? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)

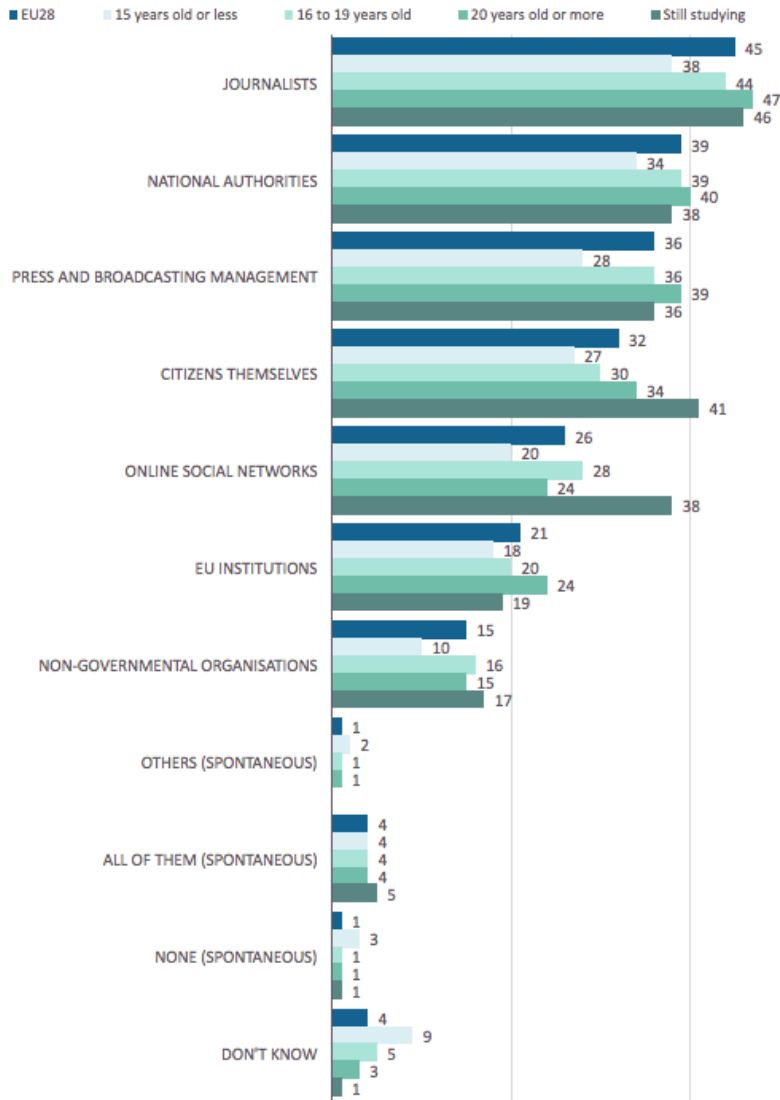
(%)

		Journalists	National authorities	Press and broadcasting management	Citizens themselves	Online social networks	EU institutions	Non-governmental organisations	Others (SPONTANEOUS)	All of them (SPONTANEOUS)	None (SPONTANEOUS)	Don't know
EU28		45	39	36	32	26	21	15	1	4	1	4
BE		44	37	35	25	24	27	10	1	7	2	3
BG		40	46	40	23	15	11	8	1	8	2	5
CZ		45	41	45	32	24	19	15	2	2	4	3
DK		52	28	48	34	25	15	8	1	3	2	8
DE		41	36	34	35	26	24	18	1	4	2	6
EE		49	33	43	28	14	13	11	1	6	3	8
IE		47	32	35	32	38	28	19	1	4	1	5
EL		41	34	30	36	13	25	7	2	3	2	4
ES		52	51	40	36	25	33	11	2	2	1	2
FR		56	35	38	38	37	21	21	2	4	1	3
HR		44	29	37	32	16	13	20	1	5	1	4
IT		33	46	33	25	17	24	6	1	4	1	2
CY		38	31	28	31	14	21	9	1	13	2	4
LV		37	43	28	28	19	13	8	1	7	1	5
LT		37	31	24	31	10	10	7	1	4	3	7
LU		37	34	34	26	23	31	13	1	5	2	4
HU		23	34	33	27	14	13	11	1	6	3	9
MT		41	36	35	26	14	15	9	2	3	2	9
NL		55	54	37	35	25	24	11	0	2	1	3
AT		42	40	27	38	27	32	22	1	3	2	4
PL		49	40	20	34	18	18	22	1	4	1	5
PT		48	45	29	38	20	22	15	0	3	1	6
RO		41	31	34	27	20	11	12	2	7	1	8
SI		51	32	44	32	16	13	14	2	5	1	3
SK		41	32	26	30	14	20	14	1	3	1	7
FI		48	37	44	25	17	16	7	1	2	2	5
SE		46	43	52	30	22	22	8	1	4	0	5
UK		45	29	46	30	38	13	20	1	6	2	4

Highest percentage per country      Lowest percentage per country  
 Highest percentage per item      Lowest percentage per item

**Journalists are the most mentioned in 22 EU Member States, especially in France (56%)**

Q5 News or information that misrepresent reality or that are even false are called "fake news". Which of the following institutions and media actors should act to stop the spread of "fake news"? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)  
(%)



**There is a general tendency for more highly educated respondents to mention the various institutions and media actors**