

Only one in five Romanians believes the media are free

OPINION POLL COMMISSIONED BY THE KAS MEDIA PROGRAM

The majority of Romanians (52 percent) does not consider that the media are independent. One in four is undecided, and only 20 percent express a belief in independent journalism. This is the result of an opinion poll commissioned by the KAS Media Program. This also shows that daily newspapers have only limited remaining significance. The Internet is increasingly more important for political information.

Citizens of Romania give their media poor marks. This is shown in a [survey conducted for the KAS by the independent research institute Market Links](#) (Sofia). Market Links has also researched trust in the media by Bulgarians. In Romania, around 1,000 adults were questioned online in December 2013. The sample is representative for the urban and rural population. It shows that only a minority believes in the freedom of the media.

TV is most important news medium, but the Internet is catching up

For broad sections of the population television is still the number one medium for information, but the Internet is catching up. For 52 percent of Romanians, TV channels are the most important source of political news, while 29 percent mention the Web. Only 7 percent inform themselves mainly from newspapers. In terms of content too, television is better regarded by the population than print media. 67 percent say that television helps them to understand politics, the economy and society. Only 33 percent say this about newspapers, although print media in theory

are better suited for the presentation of complex themes in detail. Online media are already helping every second Romanian (50 percent) to understand daily events.

Online media enjoy almost as much trust as television

Similarly, asked which branch of the media they „most trusted“, more people named television (30 percent) than other media (the Internet 27, radio 13 and newspapers 11 percent). But the difference between TV and the Web is small – the competition for popular favour is toughest between these two types of media. The print media appear already to have lost this battle. The high level of trust in TV channels can also be explained, among other things, by the fact that many people trust pictures rather than words. In addition, in many households the television is a complementary medium, that is to say: the television is a constant accompaniment. Higher TV consumption leads television to have a more positive general image.

Alarm signal for the print media – they must concentrate on quality

This finding is an alarm for the print media. To compete with the Internet they must concentrate on quality, to remain relevant for broad sections of the population. If publishers are already under pressure in traditionally strong print markets like Germany, this is all the more true for smaller countries. A consistent orientation to high professional standards is therefore essential, if newspapers and periodicals are to operate at a profit.

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