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OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO

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DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA PUBLIC VERSION

MEDIA INTELLIGENCE SERVICE
September 2021



ABOUT THIS REPORT

Free and independent media constitute the cornerstone for a healthy and thriving democracy. However, recent political upheavals across Europe, paired with increasing threats of misleading information or even disinformation – not only during elections – are generating insecurity among citizens.

For many Europeans, public service media (PSM) are the place to go for trustworthy and reliable information. At the same time, democratic institutions and political stability are challenged in more and more countries. Populist leaders are launching attacks against free and independent media, including PSM, even in mature democracies.

Strong partisanship and increased social and political polarization, even if only perceived, are threats to democratic values. In some states – even member states of the European Union – national media landscapes are almost fully controlled by political leaders and their allies in business and society.

To what extent does a nation's democratic health relate to the strength of its public service media? And can this correlation be supported by numbers?

Two years after the first [Democracy & PSM](#) report, these questions still remain of the highest importance. Therefore, it is about time to reinforce the key arguments as to why PSM still matter and to demonstrate again how well-funded and strong PSM contribute to the well-being of societies.

With increasing levels of societal polarization across Europe, it is essential to examine the interplay of political and media institutions in a broader context.

This report draws on a number of internationally established and widely used political indicators to find links between countries' ranks on these indices and the status of their PSM organizations. The correlations indicate that there is a close relationship between a country's democratic well-being and the performance of its PSM. The report aims to inspire EBU Members in crafting narratives and messages to advance the cause of PSM. Moreover, the cross-country analysis also allows for comparisons across different national markets. The research was done using data mostly from 2021 and 2020, and in some cases from earlier years, due to availability issues. Apart from the EBU-MIS in-house data collected via the annual Media Intelligence Survey, a number of external data sources were used, listed on [pages 9-10](#) together with their publishers. Selected insights from academia (see [references on page 50](#)) complement the indicator-based research throughout the report.

In total, data from

51

of the 55 states within
the EBU area

is included within the
report



KEY FINDINGS (1/2)

Challenge to democracy

DEMOCRACY IS IN DECLINE

Comparative research indicates a global trend towards authoritarianism. Democratic values seem to be threatened even in Europe.

CITIZENS TURN THEIR BACK TO PUBLIC LIFE

Citizen participation in various aspects of public life is at the core of a sound democracy. Civic disengagement estranges people from the political system, their fellow citizens and the common good.



PSM contribution to democracy

PSM STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY

Citizens are more satisfied with democracy in countries with well-funded PSM. The higher the PSM TV market shares, the less citizens think of authoritarian leadership as a good way of governing.

PSM FOSTERING CITIZENSHIP

Citizens trust one another more in countries where the position of PSM is strong. High PSM market shares go along with greater political interest on the part of citizens. The more well-funded PSM are, the more citizens feel confident of being able to participate in politics.

KEY FINDINGS (2/2)

Challenge to democracy

MEDIA GETTING CAPTURED

Subtle forms of government or business control threaten the flourishing of plural media landscapes even in European democracies.

MISINFORMATION SPREADS

False information, spread intentionally or unintentionally, shakes democracy to the core.
Only with a well-informed citizenry do democracies work well.



PSM contribution to democracy

CITIZENS VALUE STRONG & FREE PSM

Citizens are more satisfied with democracy in their country when they perceive their national PSM to be free from political pressure. Press freedom is higher in countries with well-funded PSM.

PSM ENSURE A SOUND INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

Citizens are less concerned about misinformation and feel less exposed to it in countries with strong PSM.
Citizens are more satisfied with election coverage in countries with greater audience shares for public TV.

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CONCEPT AND METHODOLOGY



CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY

This report is structured around four major threats to contemporary democracy. Each of the four topical chapters presents results on the situation concerning the respective challenges across Europe, along with an examination of how PSM contribute to mitigating these.

DEMOCRATIC RECESSION

Democracy indices and academic research alike often diagnose a decline of democracy and its core values. As a global trend, new forms of authoritarianism are on the rise, embracing populist worldviews and furthering polarization in society. Even mature democracies do not seem to be immune against these developments which may in the long run hollow out democratic core values such as rule of law, minority rights, social justice or media freedom.

CIVIC DISENGAGEMENT

A nation's democratic health strongly depends on the ability and willingness of its citizens to participate in political processes and social life. Strong civil societies are the backbones of democracies. Support for democracy plummets if larger parts of the population detach from public life – e.g., because they believe that their voices are not going to be heard by decision-makers anyway. In turn, democracies may more easily fall prey to authoritarian governments.

MEDIA CAPTURE

For a sound democracy to thrive, independent news media need to be able to perform their watchdog function. Media landscapes thus require a certain degree of pluralism, also through a diversity of opinions and views being represented in news media coverage and included in media governance. Even if the era of direct censorship is long gone in most countries, various forms of media capture still allow for a considerable degree of political or economic control over the media.

MISINFORMATION

Recent years have seen a surge of misinformation or even targeted disinformation campaigns, most notably spread through digital platforms such as social networks. This flood of „fake news“ may undermine the legitimacy of democratic institutions and further fragment public spheres already separated through the impact of technology on news consumption. A reasoning dialogue legitimating democracy, however, requires a well-informed citizenry.

Source: EBU.

CONCEPT & METHODOLOGY

CHOOSING RELEVANT INDICATORS

To investigate the relationship between PSM and democracy, the following indicators were selected:

PSM	DEMOCRACY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSM TV market share • PSM radio market share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democracy indices • Political participation & political interest • Satisfaction with democracy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSM funding per capita 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press freedom • Trust in national media & satisfaction with crucial fields of news coverage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived political pressure on PSM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authoritarian beliefs • Interpersonal trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust in PSM news brands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern on & exposure to misinformation

We defined *democracy* broadly here, i.e. not only in relation to a certain form of government, but also to capture a variety of indicators related to the well-being of a free and democratic society at large. A description of the indicators and their sources can be found on [pages 9-10](#).

TESTING CORRELATIONS

After compiling datasets with the relevant indicators, correlation analysis tests were run with the *Jamovi* data analysis tool, to determine the strength of the correlation and its level of significance.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r)

- A measure of the linear correlation between two variables
- Equals a value between +1 and -1: A coefficient of +1 indicates a perfect positive correlation, 0 indicates no correlation at all, -1 a perfect negative correlation
- Moderate correlation: 0.4 to 0.6 or -0.4 to -0.6
- Strong correlation: 0.6 to 1 or -0.6 to -1

Level of significance (p-value)

Is the correlation statistically significant or is it only by chance? If $p < 0.05$ the correlation is statistically significant: increases or decreases in one

variable significantly relate to increases or decreases in the second variable.

All correlations shown in this report are statistically significant with p-values < 0.05 , most of them with p-values < 0.001 .

CORRELATION \neq CAUSATION

A correlation only implies that two things tend to go together, but not that one causes the other.

INDICATORS & SOURCES

PSM INDICATORS

EBU Members' data by EBU's Media Intelligence Service (MIS)

Data collected among EBU Members via the annual Media Intelligence Survey, providing in-depth information about PSM performance across Europe. Indicators used in this report:

[PSM market shares for TV](#), [PSM market shares for radio](#), [PSM funding per capita](#)

Perceived political pressure on PSM by [Eurobarometer 94](#) (European Commission)

A public opinion survey, showing citizens' perception on a variety of topics. This indicator is measured across all EU member states and based on agreement with the statement: *National public service media are free from political pressure.*

Risk for independence of PSM governance and funding ([Media Pluralism Monitor 2021](#))

An academically driven, EU-funded experts-based assessment of risks to media pluralism, currently undertaken in 32 European countries, including all 27 EU member states. The independence of PSM governance and funding indicator assesses whether a law safeguards funding that adequately covers the public service missions of PSM. Moreover, it scrutinizes the appointment procedures of PSM governance structures.

Trust in PSM news brands ([Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2021](#))

A survey-based assessment on how citizens consume and perceive news in 46 markets worldwide, including 26 in Europe. Citizens are asked to rank different national news brands according to their trustworthiness.

DEMOCRACY INDICATORS (I)

[EIU Democracy](#)

[Index](#) (The Economist Intelligence Unit)

A ranking of 167 countries based on their state of democracy on a scale from 0 to 10. The Index is based on a combination of expert assessments and public opinion surveys and put together by the *The Economist's* Intelligence Unit (EIU). In addition to the aggregated index intending to measure the status quo of democracy in general, we refer to its political participation subcategory, which rates the level of citizens' engagement in political affairs, taking into account variables such as voter turnout, party memberships, and participation in public protest and demonstrations.

[V-Dem Varieties of Democracy](#) (V-Dem Institute)

An indicator framework to measure and contextualize democracy developed by Gothenburg-based V-Dem Institute, based on a multidimensional dataset. In this report, we refer to the following indicator:

- V-Dem Deliberative Democracy Index 2020, reflecting the extent to which political decision-making processes in a country are grounded within the deliberative principles of public reasoning and respectful dialogue.

INDICATORS & SOURCES

DEMOCRACY INDICATORS (II)

[Eurobarometer 94 \(European Commission\)](#)

A public opinion survey covering 37 European countries. It gives an idea of citizens' perception on a variety of topics. Aside from perceived pressure on PSM, we use Eurobarometer data in this report to assess

- citizens' trust in information provided by national media
- citizens' satisfaction with democracy in their country
- citizens' perceptions of whether their national news media coverage represents a diversity of views and opinions
- citizens' concern about misinformation and how often they come across information they perceive as misleading or false

[European Social Survey \(ESS\) Round 9 \(2018\) \(ESS research consortium\)](#)

An academically driven comparative survey investigating people's opinions, values, and beliefs on a variety of political and social issues in about 30 European countries. The latest data available was surveyed in 2018. This report makes use of ESS data for the following indicators:

- Citizens' interest in politics
- Citizens' confidence in their own ability to participate in politics

[World Values Survey \(WVS\) Wave 7 \(2017-2021\) \(WVS research network\)](#)

An academically driven comparative survey on people's values, beliefs, and attitudes across countries worldwide, conducted every five years and covering a wide range of political and social issues. The first dataset of the most recent survey round (wave 7) has been released in November 2020. This report uses WVS data to illustrate

- to what extent citizens think of rule by strong leaders as a good way of governing
- how far citizens trust each other
- to what extent citizens perceive the news coverage of elections within their country as being fair

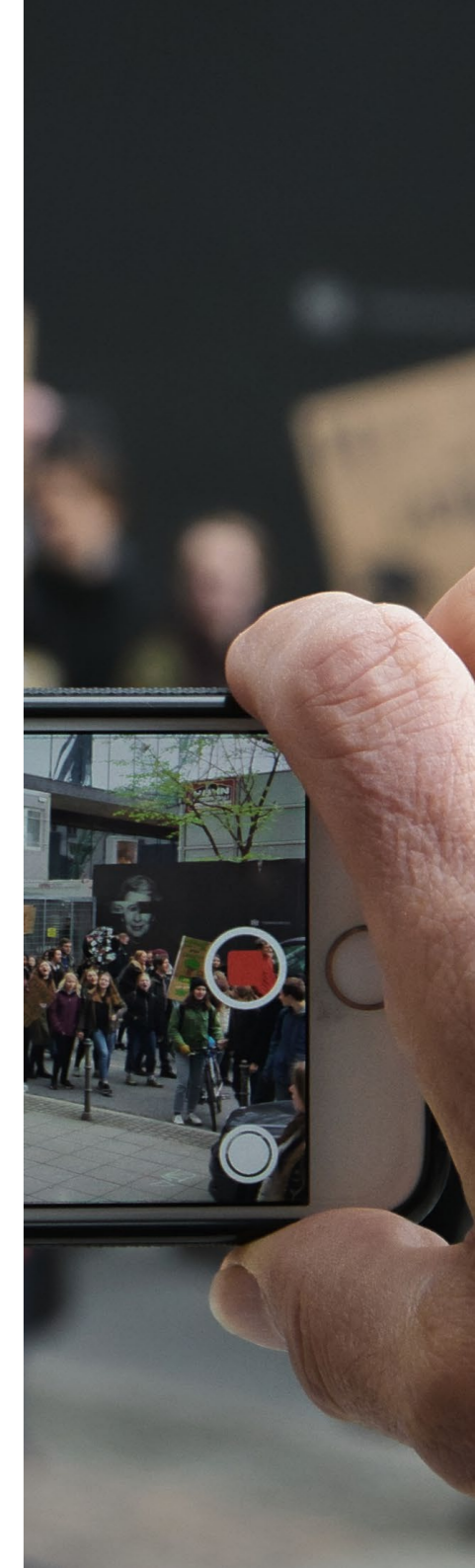
[RSF 2021 World Press Freedom Index \(Reporters Without Borders\)](#)

An annual ranking of 180 countries regarding the freedom available to journalists, based on a questionnaire among experts. The Index ranges from 1-100: the higher the score, the less press freedom. For this report, the RSF index was inverted in order to match higher scores to higher press freedom levels.

COUNTRY CODES

Albania	AL	Hungary	HU	Russian Federation	RU
Algeria	DZ	Iceland	IS	Serbia	RS
Armenia	AM	Ireland	IE	Slovakia	SK
Austria	AT	Israel	IL	Slovenia	SI
Azerbaijan	AZ	Italy	IT	Spain	ES
Belgium	BE	Jordan	JO	Sweden	SE
Belgium (Flemish)	BE FL	Latvia	LV	Switzerland	CH
Belgium (French)	BE FR	Lebanon	LB	Switzerland (French)	CH (FR)
Bosnia-Herzegovina	BA	Lithuania	LT	Switzerland (German)	CH (DE)
Bulgaria	BG	Luxembourg	LU	Switzerland (Italian)	CH (IT)
Croatia	HR	Malta	MT	Tunisia	TN
Cyprus	CY	Moldova	MD	Turkey	TK
Czech Republic	CZ	Montenegro	ME	Ukraine	UA
Denmark	DK	Morocco	MA	United Kingdom	UK
Estonia	EE	Netherlands	NL		
Finland	FI	North Macedonia	MK		
France	FR	Norway	NO		
Georgia	GE	Poland	PL		
Germany	DE	Portugal	PT		
Greece	GR	Romania	RO		

DEMOCRATIC RECESSION



The higher the PSM market shares, the less citizens think of authoritarian leadership as a good way of governing

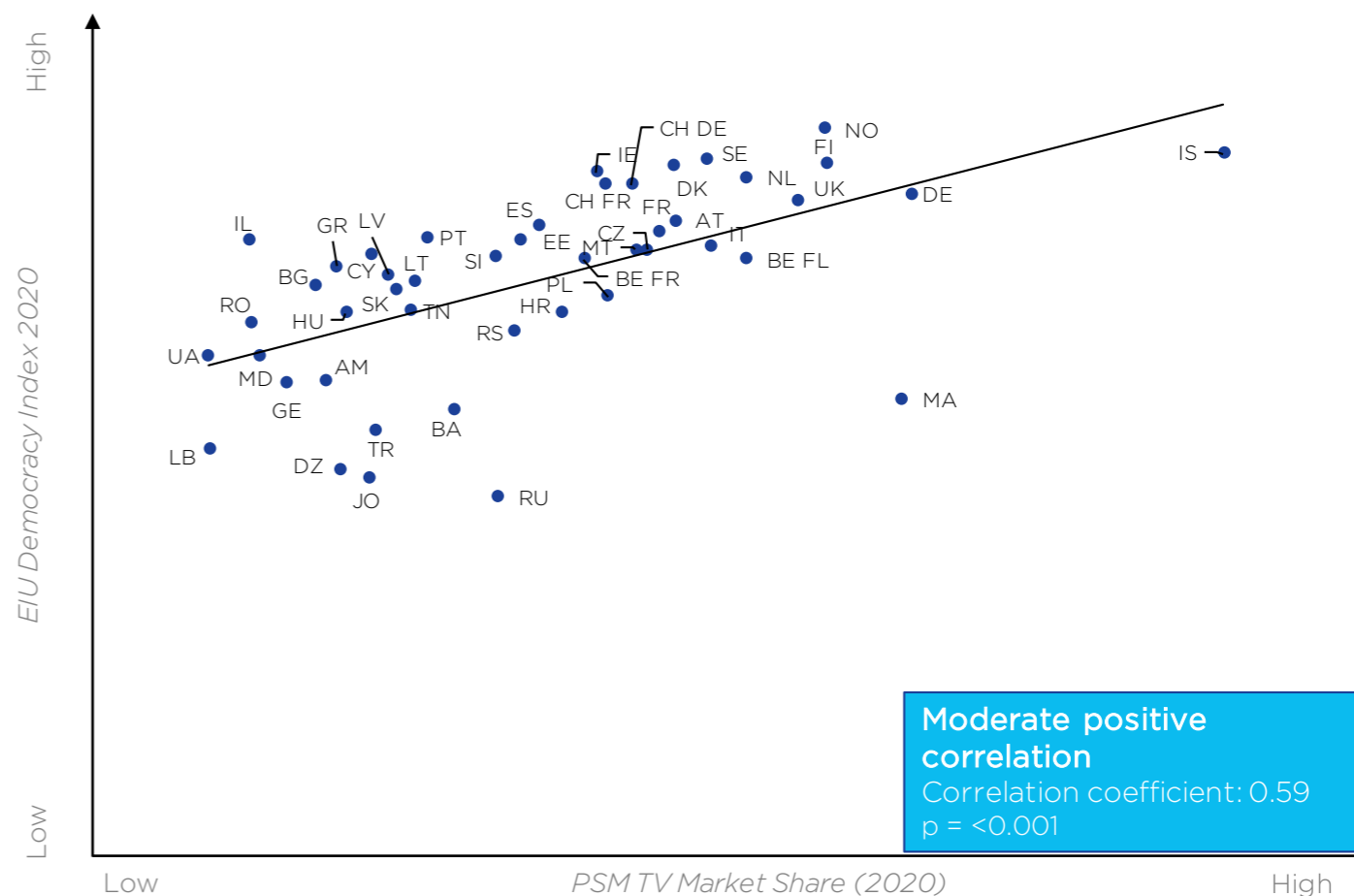


PUBLIC TV IS MOST WATCHED IN STRONG DEMOCRACIES

Citizens watch more public TV in stronger democracies

There is a connection between higher PSM TV market shares and greater democratic quality as measured by the *EIU Democracy Index*.

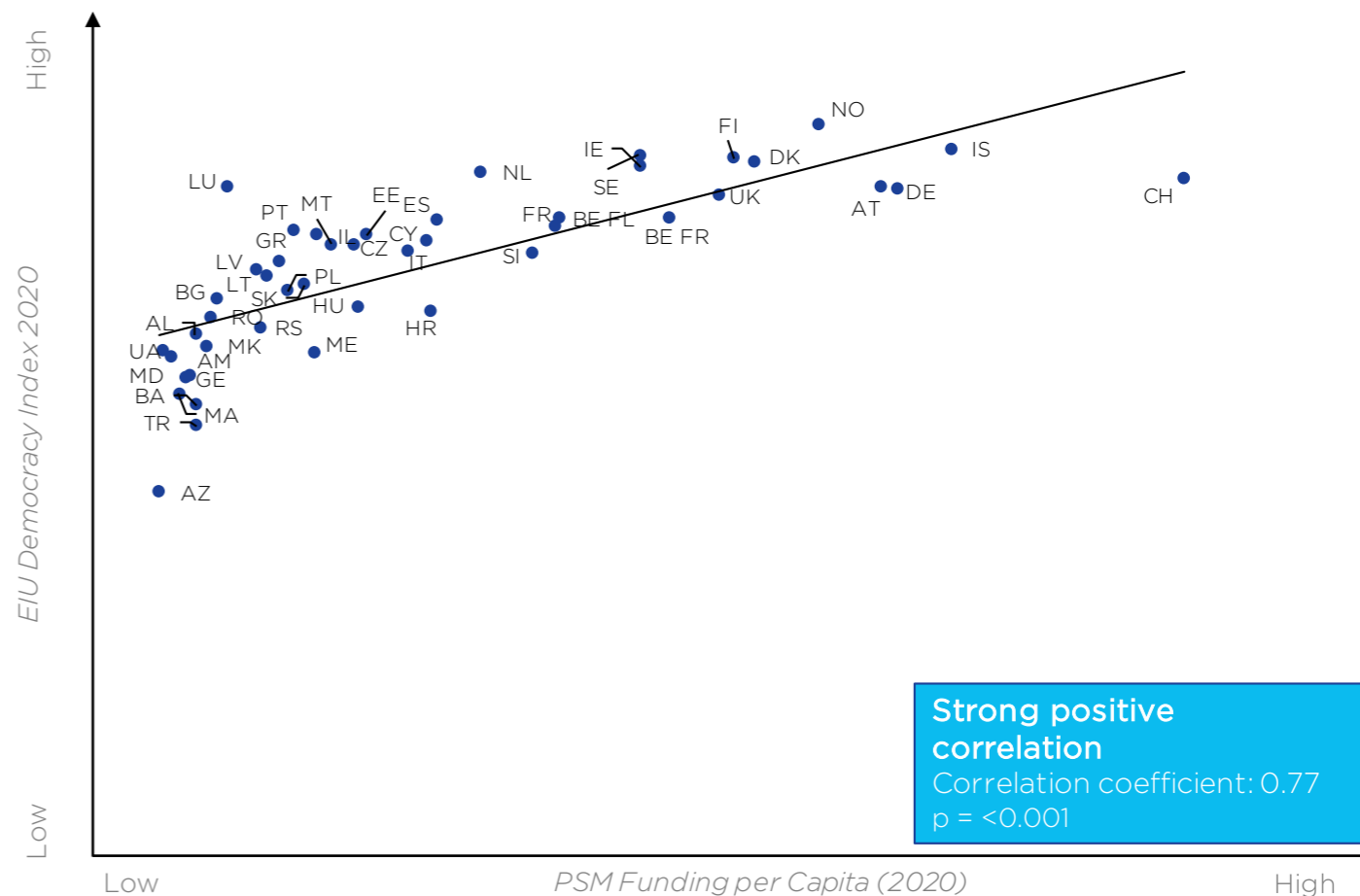
A significant correlation also exists for higher PSM radio market shares and greater quality of democracy: here, the correlation coefficient equals 0.59 as well.



BETTER-FUNDED PSM IN STRONGER DEMOCRACIES

Stronger democracies invest more in their national PSM

The correlation indicates that the better-funded national PSM are, the higher the degree of democratic quality as measured by the *EIU Democracy Index*.



STRONG POSITION OF PSM LINKED TO SATISFIED CITIZENS

Well-funded PSM tend to go hand in hand with citizens' satisfaction with democracy

Citizens in countries with better-funded PSM are more satisfied with the way democracy works within their country.



Note: Satisfaction with democracy based on agreement with statement "On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in our country"?

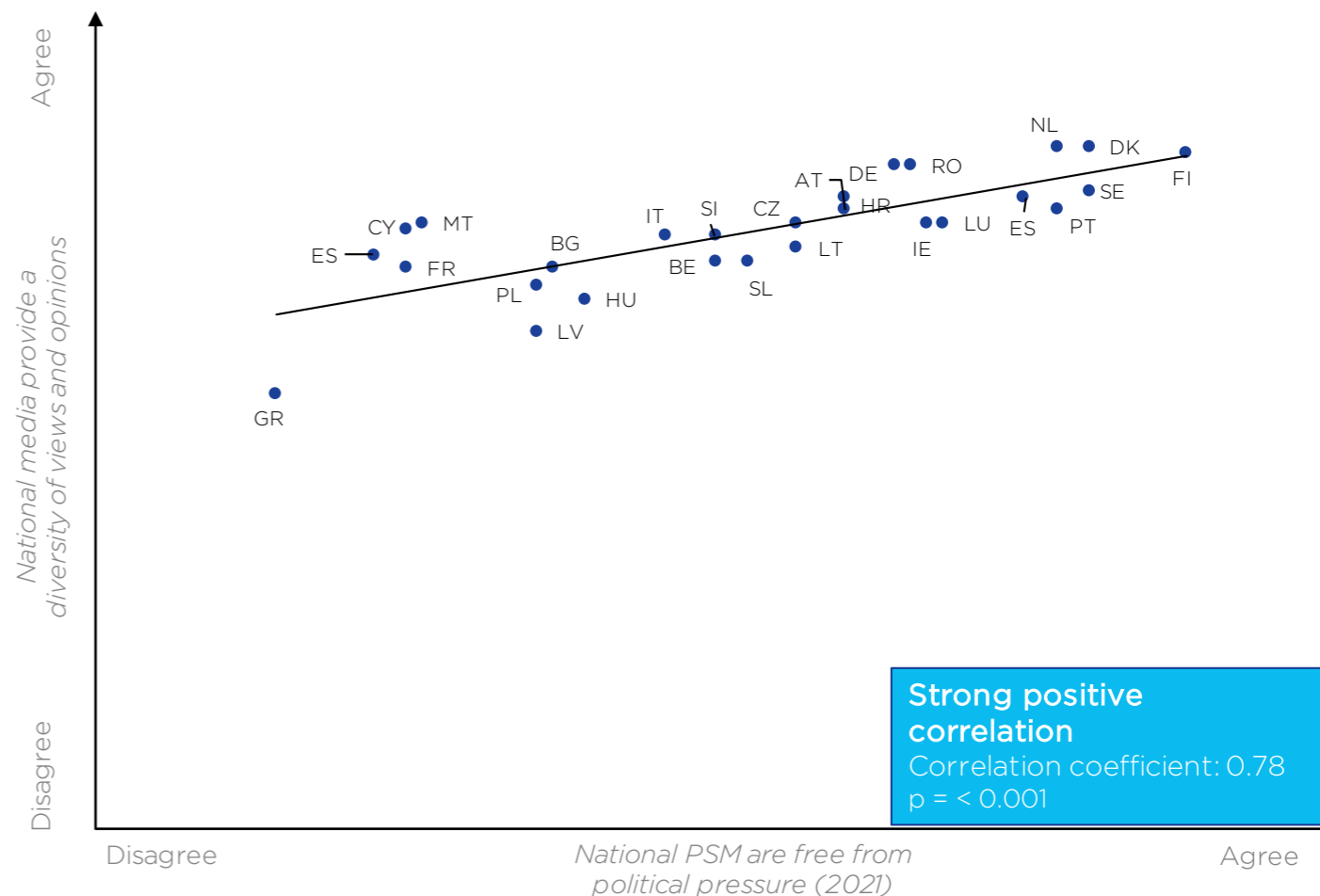
FREEDOM FROM POLITICAL PRESSURE AND DIVERSITY OF OPINIONS

Free and strong PSM go along with citizens' satisfaction with the diversity of opinions in news coverage

The strong positive correlation indicates that where PSM are perceived to be free from political pressure, more citizens are convinced that their national media provide a diversity of opinions. This makes the case for strong and independent PSM which enable many voices to be heard, and ultimately benefits a sound opinion climate within a country.

A study by Castro-Herrero et al. (2018) has demonstrated that in countries with greater PSM market shares, citizens were more likely to come across non-likeminded news media content.

PSM may provide citizens with a diversity of viewpoints, including those differing from their own beliefs. The remit of PSM to provide politically balanced news and cater to the whole of society enables PSM to bridge gaps between different groups, serving as an antidote to strong partisanship and polarization in society.



Based on agreement with the statement "(Nationality) public service media are free from political pressure". Low pressure: agreement $\geq 50\%$, medium pressure: 26-49%, high pressure: $\leq 25\%$

Source: EBU based on Standard Eurobarometer 94.

EBU Media Intelligence Service - Democracy & PSM

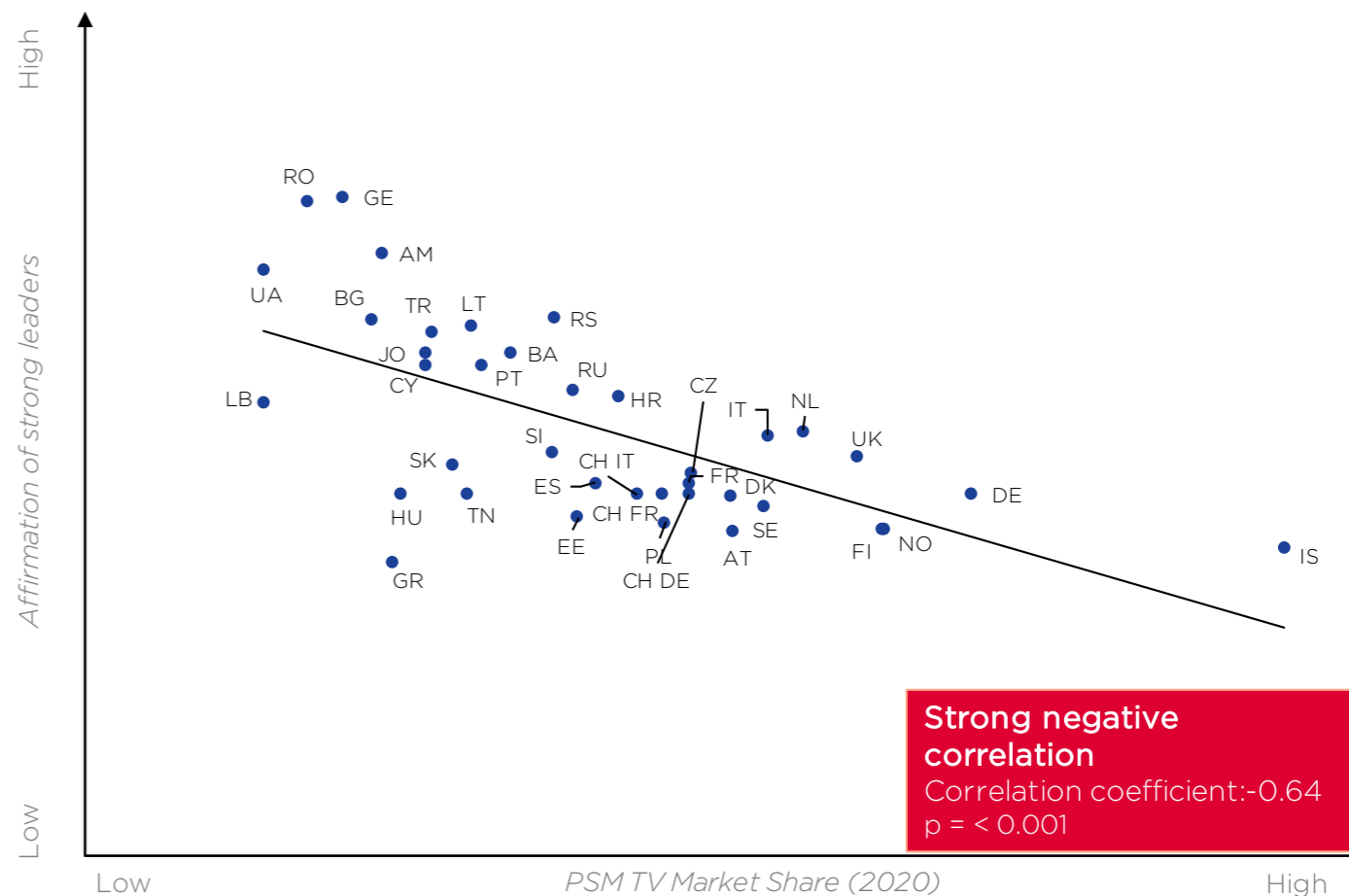
PSM AND THE REJECTION OF AUTHORITARIANISM

The greater the PSM audiences, the fewer citizens think of authoritarian leaders as a good way of governing

This strong negative correlation points out that in countries with higher PSM TV market shares, citizens are less likely to think of authoritarian leadership as a good way of governing their country. This also holds true when comparing radio market shares and affirmation of strong leaders: here, the correlation coefficient equals -0.55.

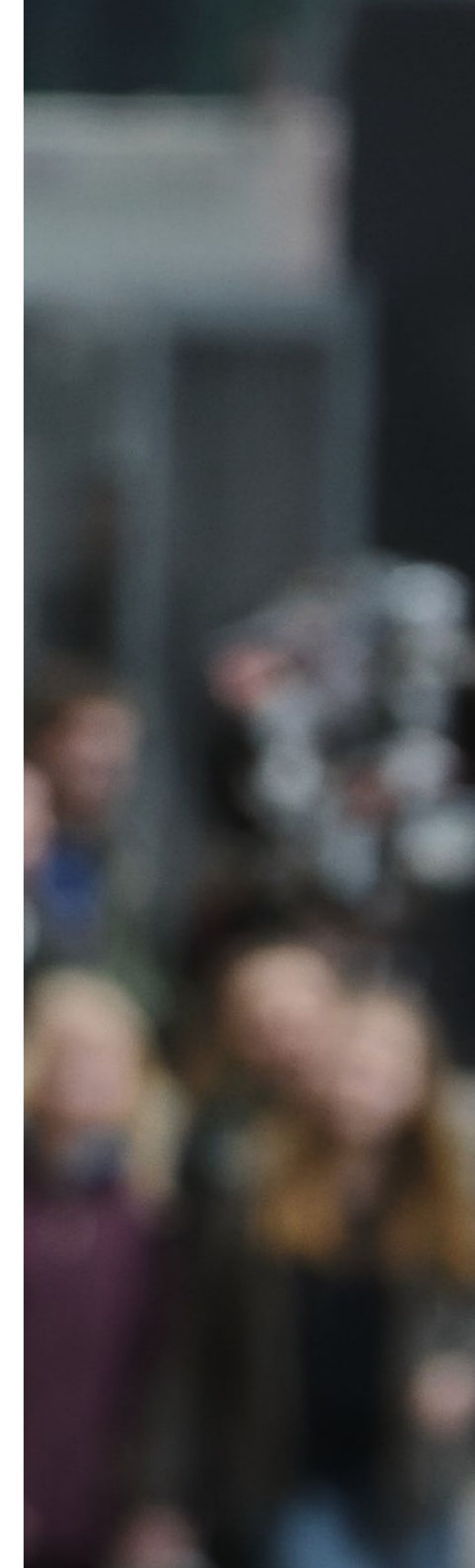
Strong and well-equipped PSM may thus contribute to a greater appreciation of democratic decision-making, ultimately reinforcing trust in and a sense of belonging to a democratic society.

This is supported by research from Goidel et al. (2017). Juxtaposing television viewing patterns and opinion survey data in Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the US, they found that citizens watching PSM news were better informed and consequently more supportive of democracy and more rejecting of principles of authoritarian rule.

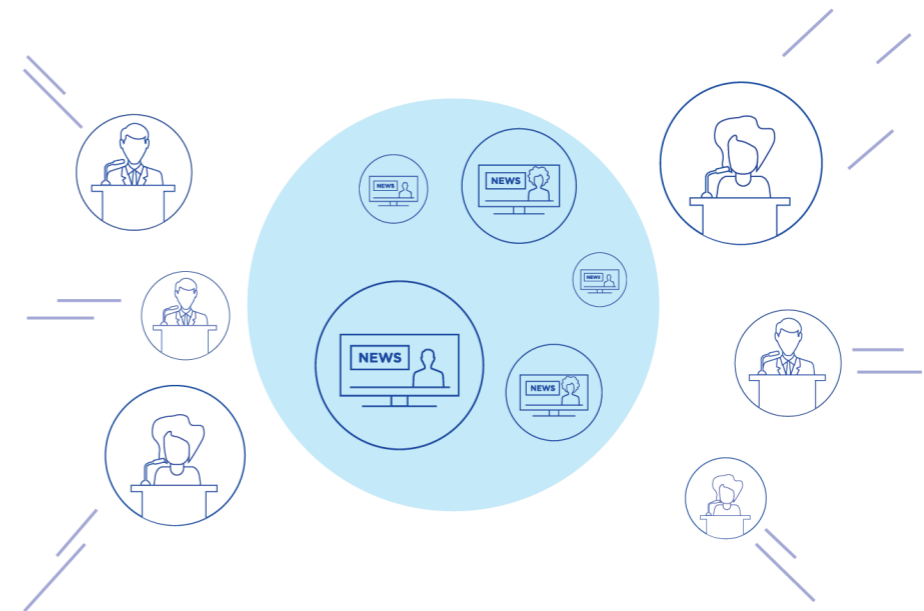


Based on statement "Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections. Would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad way of governing this country?"

CIVIC DISENGAGEMENT



Higher PSM market shares come along with a greater political interest of citizens and greater confidence in their ability to participate



HOW PSM SUPPORT CITIZENSHIP

The *universal* remit of PSM allows public media to reach out to citizens through a holistic approach, rather than just stepping in to remedy market failures. PSM are tasked with contributing to the different virtues of citizenship. Enabling audiences to become strong citizens is thus at the core of the PSM remit and closely related to its commitment to democracy.

Consequently, strong PSM might counter the tendency towards civic disengagement, i.e., a sense of detachment and loss of interest in participating in civil society. This might include a loss of interest in politics and a growing cynicism concerning public issues, but also a loss of interest in what happens in one's community, along with a loss of trust in other people. Karen Donders, renowned PSM researcher and director of public engagement at Flemish PSM VRT, has described four key areas in which PSM could contribute to a strong society by empowering its citizens: political citizenship, cultural citizenship, social citizenship, and civic citizenship.

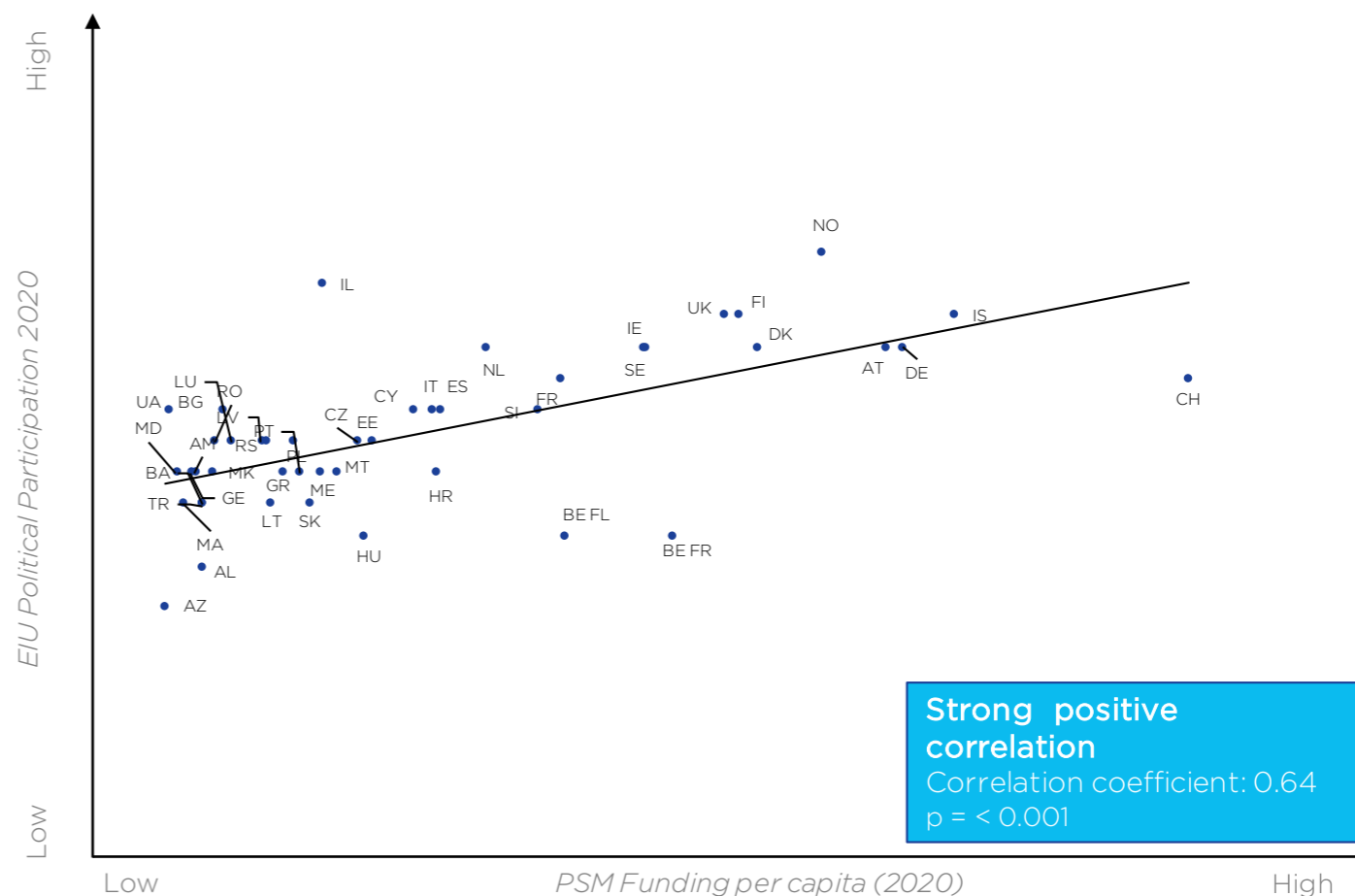


PSM FOSTERING PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY

The better-funded are PSM,
the higher the degree of citizen participation

As indicated on the right, there is a positive correlation between PSM funding per capita and the degree of participatory democracy as measured by the *EIU Democracy Index*. A moderate correlation exists for PSM radio (coefficient: 0.5) and TV market shares (coefficient: 0.46) respectively.

Also, academic research has illustrated the potential impact of PSM on a citizenry attached to fundamental issues in society. In an analysis of over 250 studies on the performance of PSM news, Cushion (2012) concluded that public service media provided far more news that were more likely to empower citizens in a democracy, compared to market-driven media.

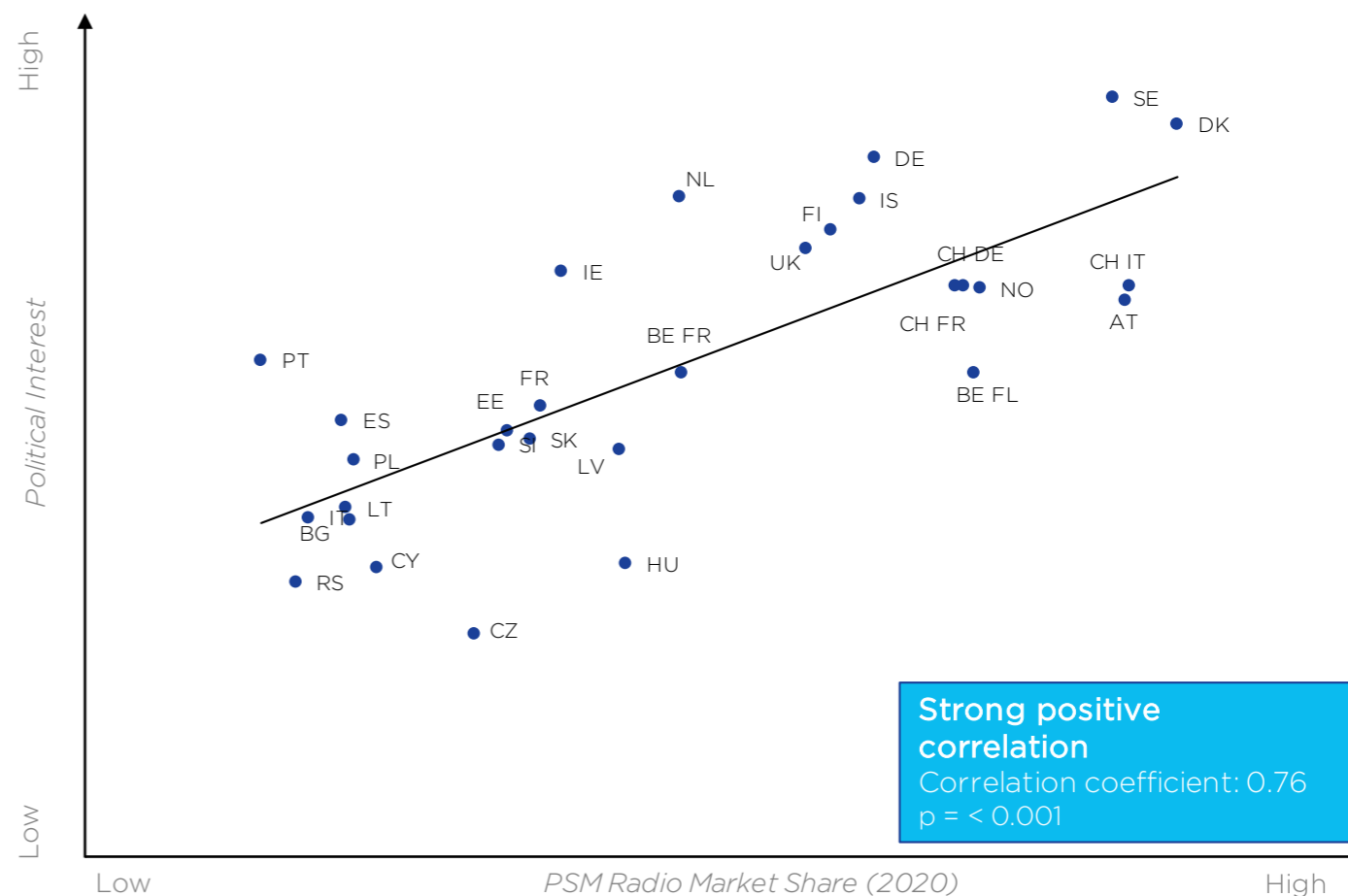


WELL-USED PSM GO HAND IN HAND WITH INTEREST IN POLITICS

The higher PSM market shares,
the greater citizens' interest in politics

As indicated on the right, there is a nexus between higher PSM radio market shares and greater levels of political interest among citizens, as measured by the *European Social Survey* (ESS). A similar picture emerges when juxtaposing PSM TV market shares and political interest: here, the correlation coefficient equals 0.65.

Academic research has pointed out that PSM seem to contribute to greater political knowledge among citizens as well. For example, a survey on six countries by Soroka et al. (2013) found that watching PSM TV News enhanced people's knowledge about public affairs. A study by Iyengar et al. (2010) on four countries concluded that public-service oriented media systems deliver "hard news" more frequently than more market-driven systems.



Note: Political interest based on question „How interested would you say you are in politics”, share of population “Very interested” and “Quite interested”.

Source: EBU based Members' data and European Social Survey (ESS), round 9.

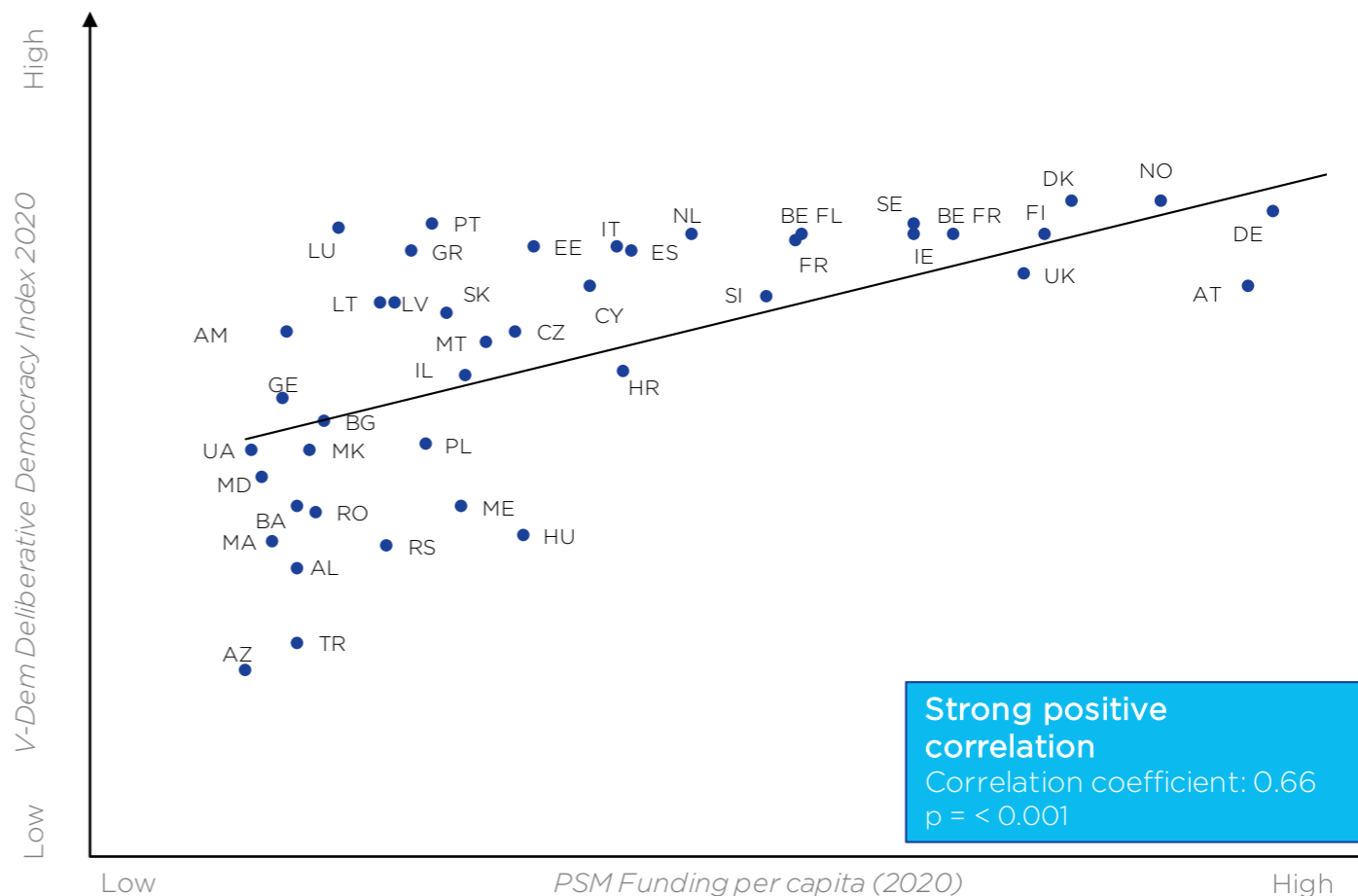
EBU Media Intelligence Service - Democracy & PSM

PSM PROVIDING SPACES FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND DIALOGUE

Greater investment in PSM goes along with a greater quality of deliberative democracy

The higher PSM funding per capita, the higher a country ranks at the *V-Dem Deliberative Democracy Index*. This index measures to what extent national decision-making processes reflect the deliberative principles of democracy. These include, according to V-Dem, political decisions grounded in public reasoning and respectful dialogue at all levels. The index also takes into account indicators related to the quality of elections. Higher TV market shares (correlation coefficient: 0.54) and radio market shares (correlation coefficient: 0.51) correlate with better scores concerning deliberative democracy as well.

A study by Strömbäck (2017) on the effects of television news consumption among Swedish citizens revealed that watching PSM news had stronger effects on their political knowledge compared to commercial TV news. Sound public reasoning is dependent on a knowledgeable public.

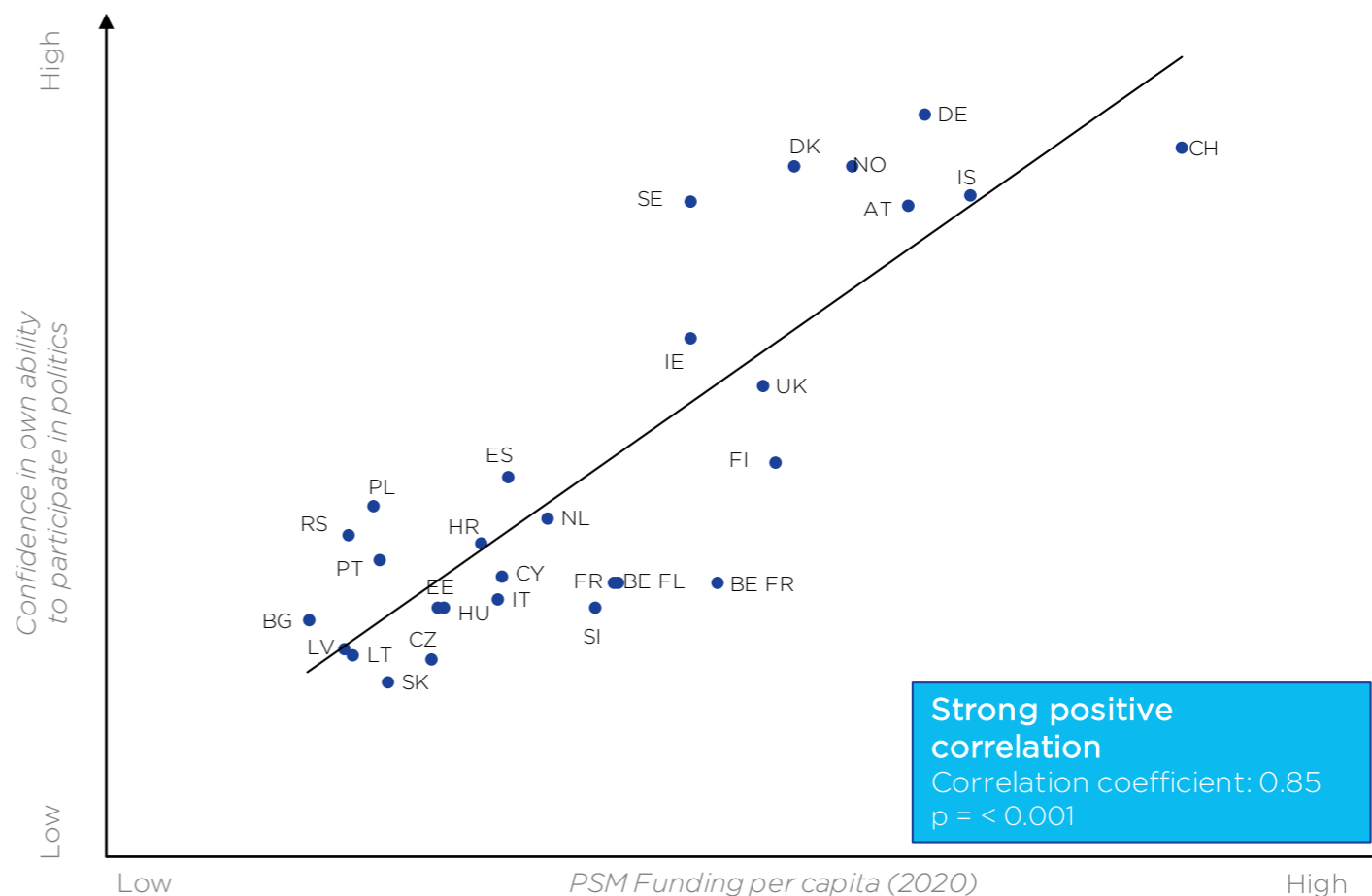


PSM EMPOWERING CITIZENS TO PARTICIPATE

Citizens are more confident in being able to participate in politics in countries with well-funded PSM

The greater the PSM funding per capita in a given country, the more its citizens feel confident in their own ability to participate in politics as measured by the *European Social Survey* (ESS).

This observation also holds true when contrasting the ESS results with PSM TV market shares (correlation coefficient 0.58) and PSM radio market shares (correlation coefficient 0.78).



Note: Confidence to participate in politics based on answers to question „And how confident are you in your own ability to participate in politics?“, share of population replying “Very confident” and “completely confident”.

Source: EBU based on Members' data and European Social Survey (ESS), round 9.

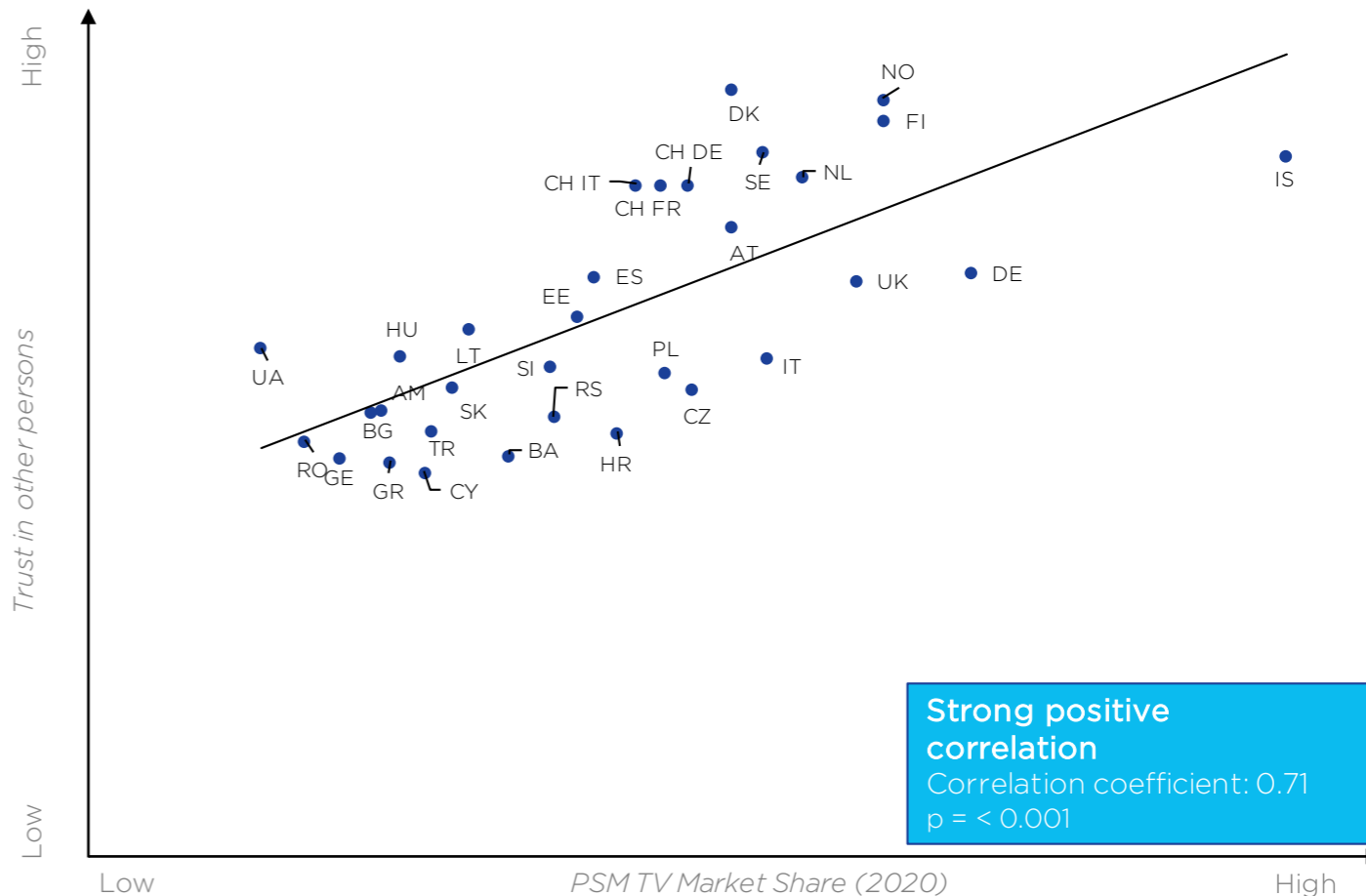
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PSM ARE ASSOCIATED WITH SOCIAL TRUST

Citizens tend to trust each other more in countries with higher PSM market shares

There is a strong positive correlation between higher PSM TV market shares and the degree to which citizens agree with the statement that most people can be trusted, an indicator commonly termed *social trust* or *interpersonal trust*. This observation also holds true for greater PSM radio market shares (correlation coefficient: 0.84) and for higher PSM funding per capita (correlation coefficient: 0.80).

This is backed by previous findings. Investigating data from the *European Social Survey* (ESS), Schmitt-Beck & Wolsing (2010, 477) concluded that “the more of a society’s TV time is devoted to watching programs on public instead of private channels, the more trusting its members are, regardless of their personal TV habits”. Following scholar Ken Newton (2016, 35), this result points to a “rainmaker effect” of PSM: “Public service broadcasting has a beneficial effect on country populations as a whole, and not just on those who tune into it with any regularity.”



Note: Trust in other persons based on answers to question „Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?“, % of population answering “most people can be trusted.”

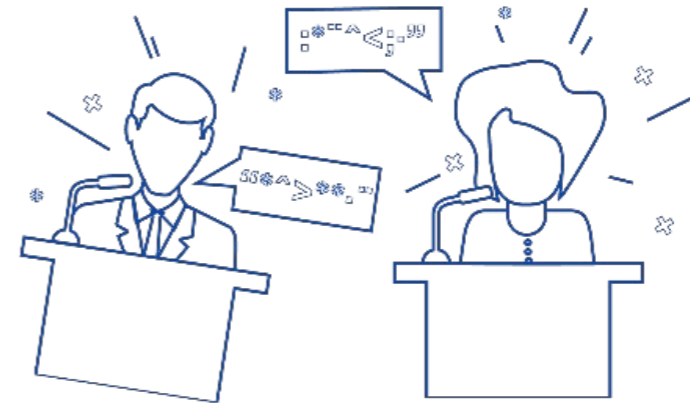
Source: EBU based on Members’ data and World Values Survey Wave 7.

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MEDIA CAPTURE



Citizens are more satisfied with democracy in their country when they think of their national PSM to be free from political pressure



CAPTURE OF PSM FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE (1/2)

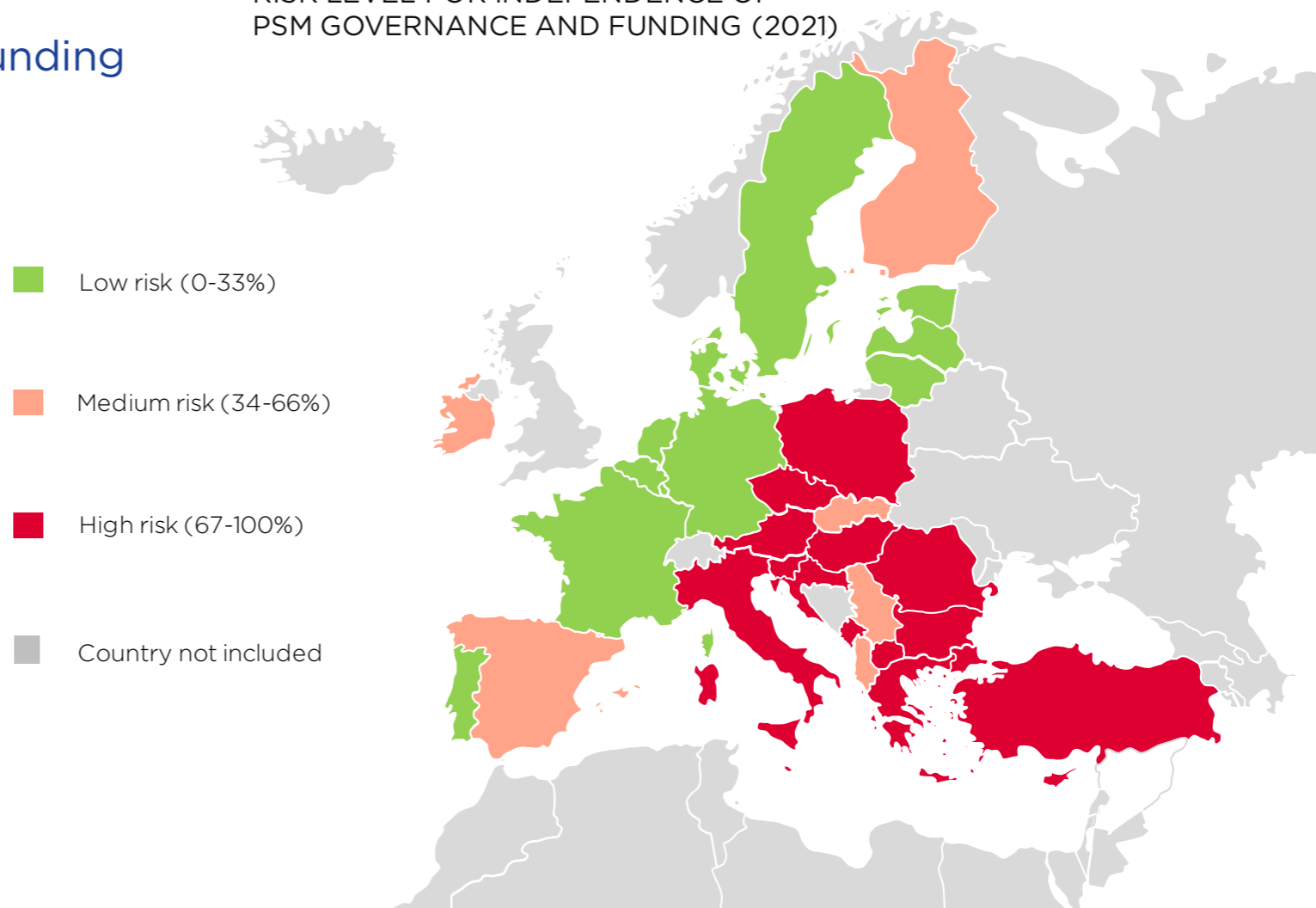
Independence of PSM governance and funding is at risk in almost 50% of countries

According to the *Media Pluralism Monitor 2021*, the independence of PSM governance and funding is at high risk in 15 of the 32 countries covered (47%). In only 11 countries, the risk of PSM funding mechanisms and governance bodies to be captured is low (34%). Six countries (19%) have medium risk levels according to the expert-based assessment.

The values underlying PSM and their legitimacy in society are challenged by various external actors, including authoritarian leaders, populist political parties and commercial actors. A high degree of independence makes PSM less vulnerable to fall prey to commercial, regulatory or political pressure and, ultimately, capture.

As leading media capture expert Anya Schiffrin (2019, 1039) has written, a range of challenges notwithstanding, public broadcasting is “still one of the best ways to ensure that at least one major media outlet is not captured and can still serve as a standard setter”.

RISK LEVEL FOR INDEPENDENCE OF PSM GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING (2021)

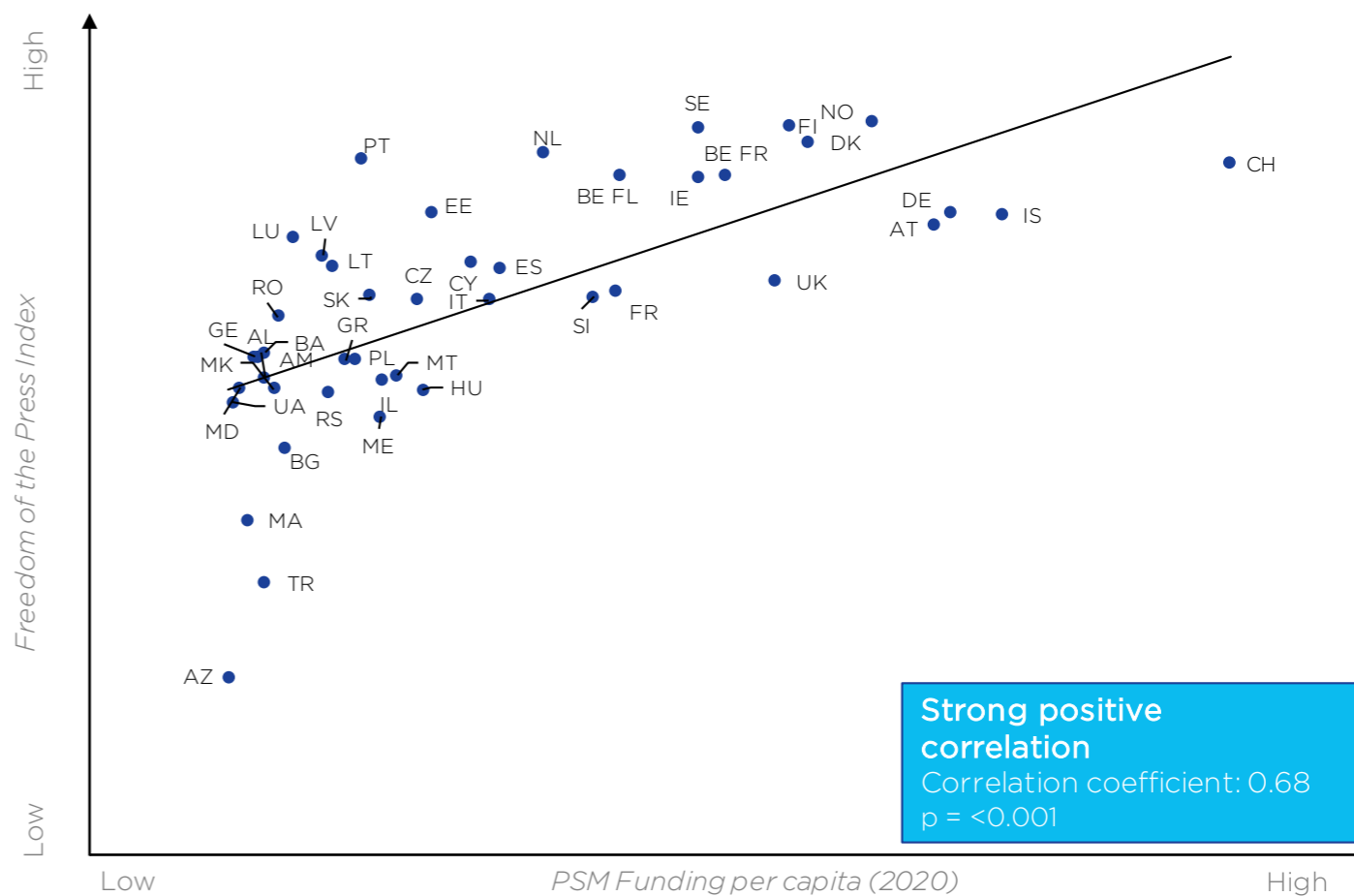


Source: EBU based on Media Pluralism Monitor.
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PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA AND PRESS FREEDOM

Press freedom is higher in countries with well-funded PSM

This correlation indicates that higher PSM funding per capita tends to go along with greater press freedom. The same goes for countries with greater PSM radio market shares (correlation coefficient: 0.61) and greater public TV audiences (0.49).



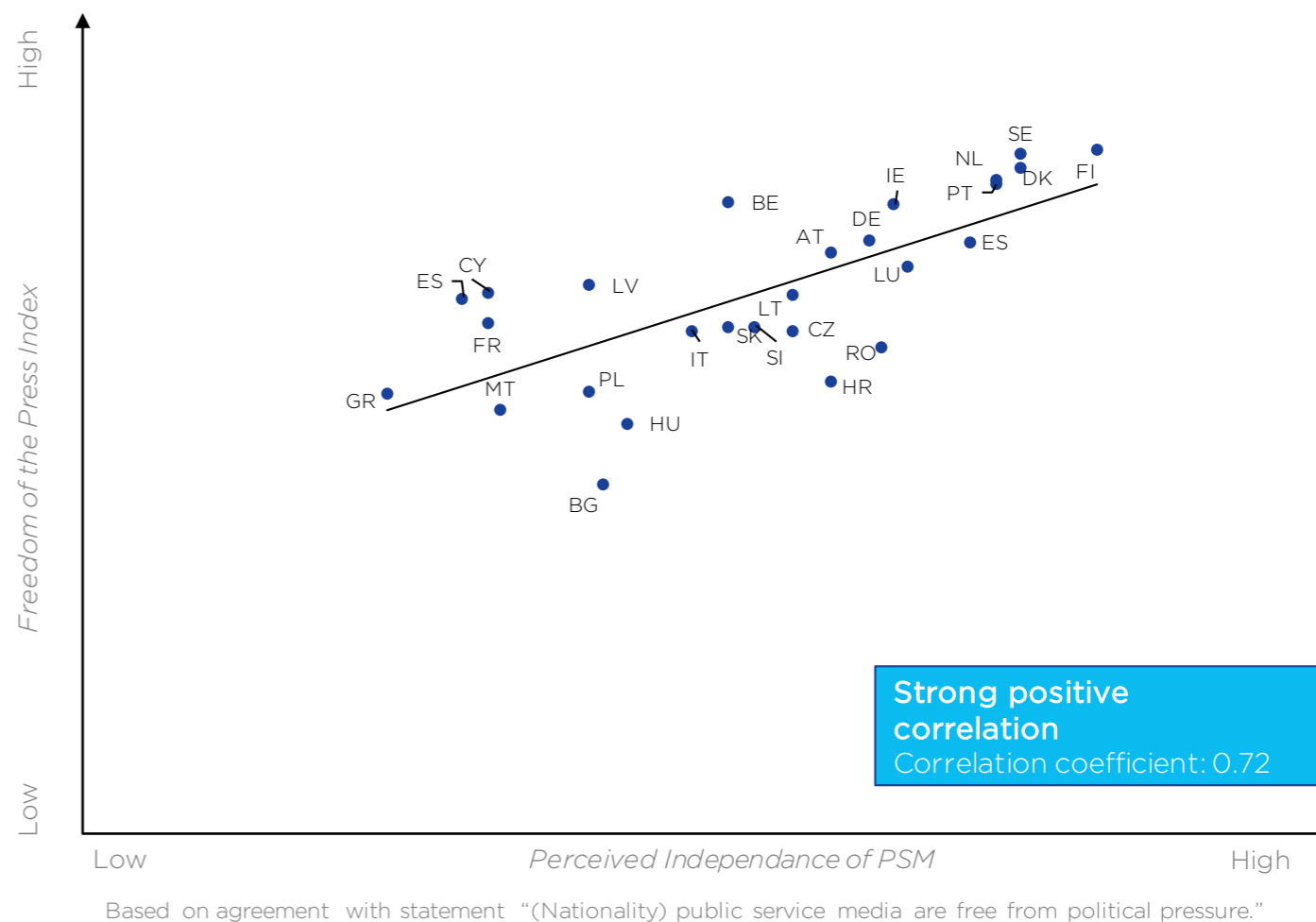
Source: EBU based on Members' data and RSF 2021 World Press Freedom Index.

EBU Media Intelligence Service - Democracy & PSM

INDEPENDENT PSM FLOURISH WITH GREATER PRESS FREEDOM

Citizens perceive PSM to be free from pressure in countries with higher press freedom

This correlation indicates that the more citizens perceive their national PSM to be free from political pressure, the higher the level of press freedom in the given country.

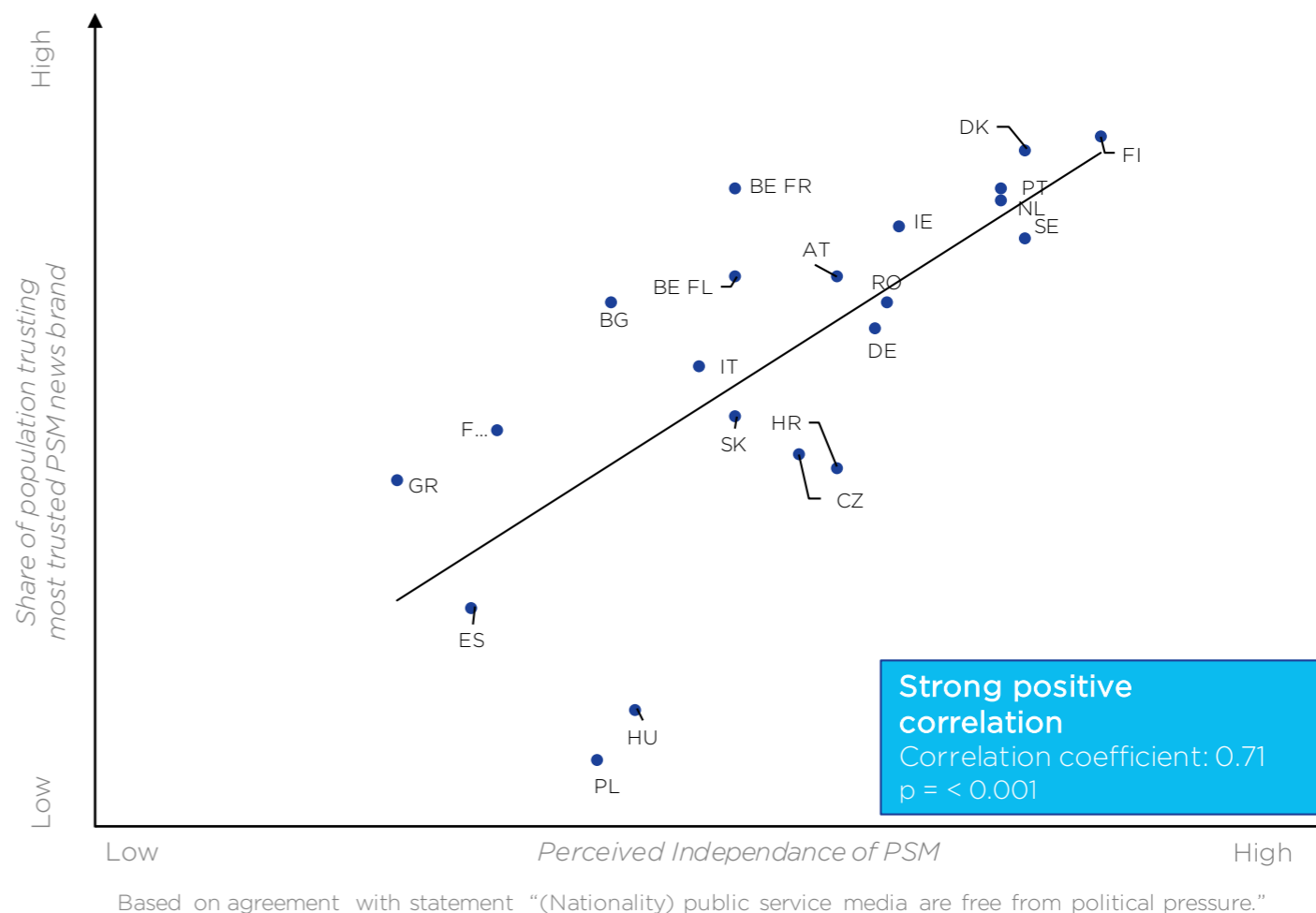


CITIZENS VALUE STRONG AND INDEPENDENT PSM

Citizens tend to trust public service news more when they think PSM are free from pressure

The more citizens think of their national PSM as free from political pressure, the greater trust citizens place in the most trusted PSM news brand within their country. Citizens thus seem to value PSM which are able to perform their tasks free from political control.

Note: Assessment of top trusted PSM news brands based on answers to question "How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is?" List of brands include broadcasters, print, and digital outlets. Perceived pressure on PSM based on agreement with statement "(Nationality) public service media are free from political pressure."



INDEPENDENT PSM AND SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRACY

When citizens perceive their PSM to be free from pressure they are also more satisfied with the way democracy works

The correlation reveals that the more citizens perceive their national PSM as free from political pressure, the greater the share of population satisfied with the way democracy works in their respective country.



Note: Satisfaction with democracy based on agreement with statement “On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in our country”? Perceived pressure on PSM based on agreement with statement “(Nationality) public service media are free from political pressure.”

Source: EBU based on Standard Eurobarometer 94.

EBU Media Intelligence Service – Democracy & PSM

MISINFORMATION



The greater audiences of PSM, the lesser citizens' concern about and perceived exposure to misleading or false information



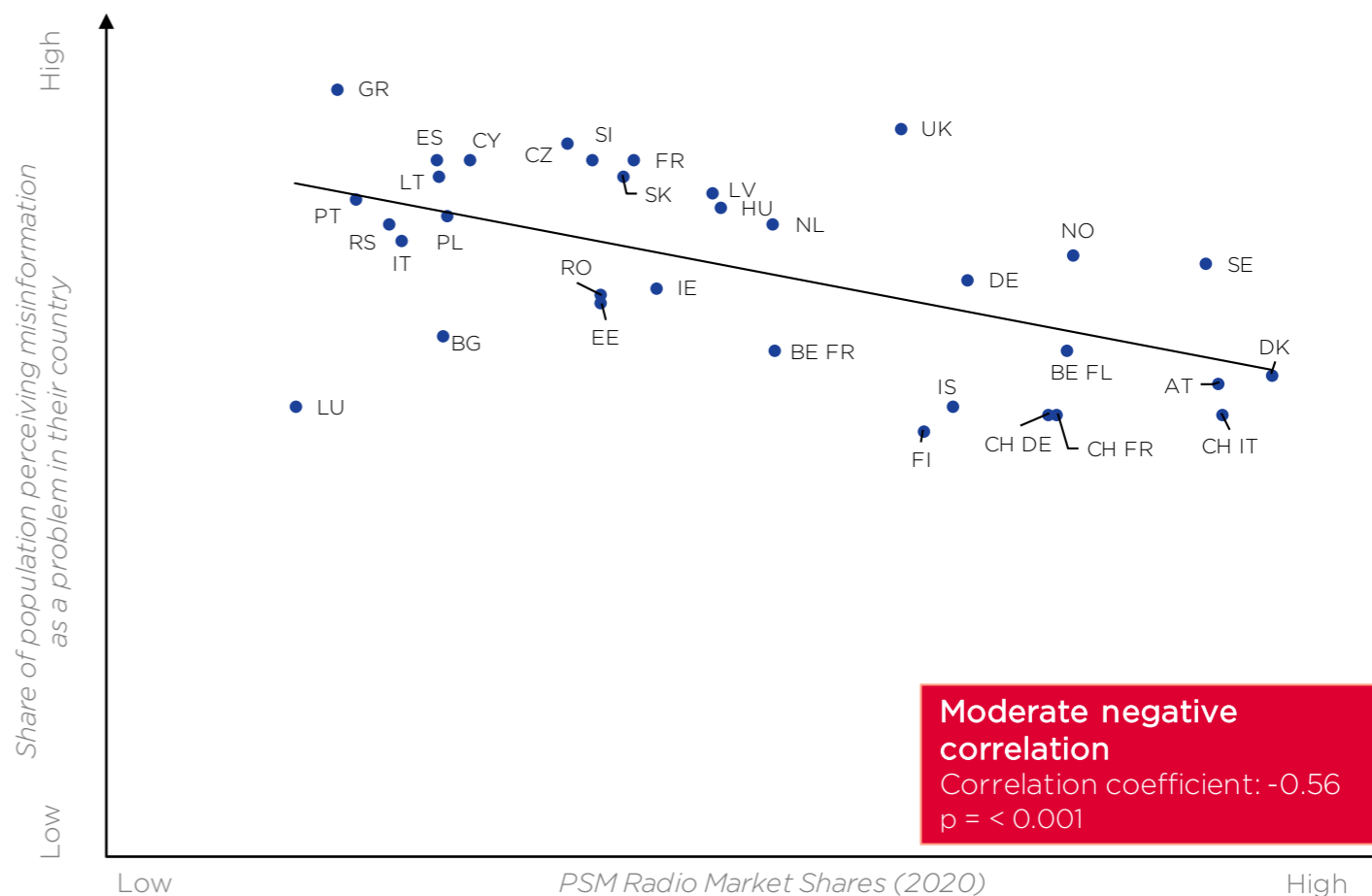
PSM AUDIENCES VS. CONCERN ABOUT MISINFORMATION

Greater audiences of PSM go along with less concern about misinformation

This correlation indicates that the greater are PSM radio market shares, the fewer citizens perceive misinformation as a problem in their country.

A similar picture emerges for PSM funding per capita (correlation coefficient: -0.54) and PSM TV market shares (-0.42).

A comparative study by Humprecht et al. (2020) established that a cluster of countries sharing some key features of their media and political systems, a strong position of PSM being one of them, were more likely to demonstrate high resilience to online disinformation. Strikingly, they found the US to be the country most vulnerable to the spread of online misinformation – a country with, compared to the European context, a rather weak position for PSM.



Based on statement "the existence of news or information that misrepresent reality or is even false is a problem in our country."

Source: EBU based on Members' data and Standard Eurobarometer 94.

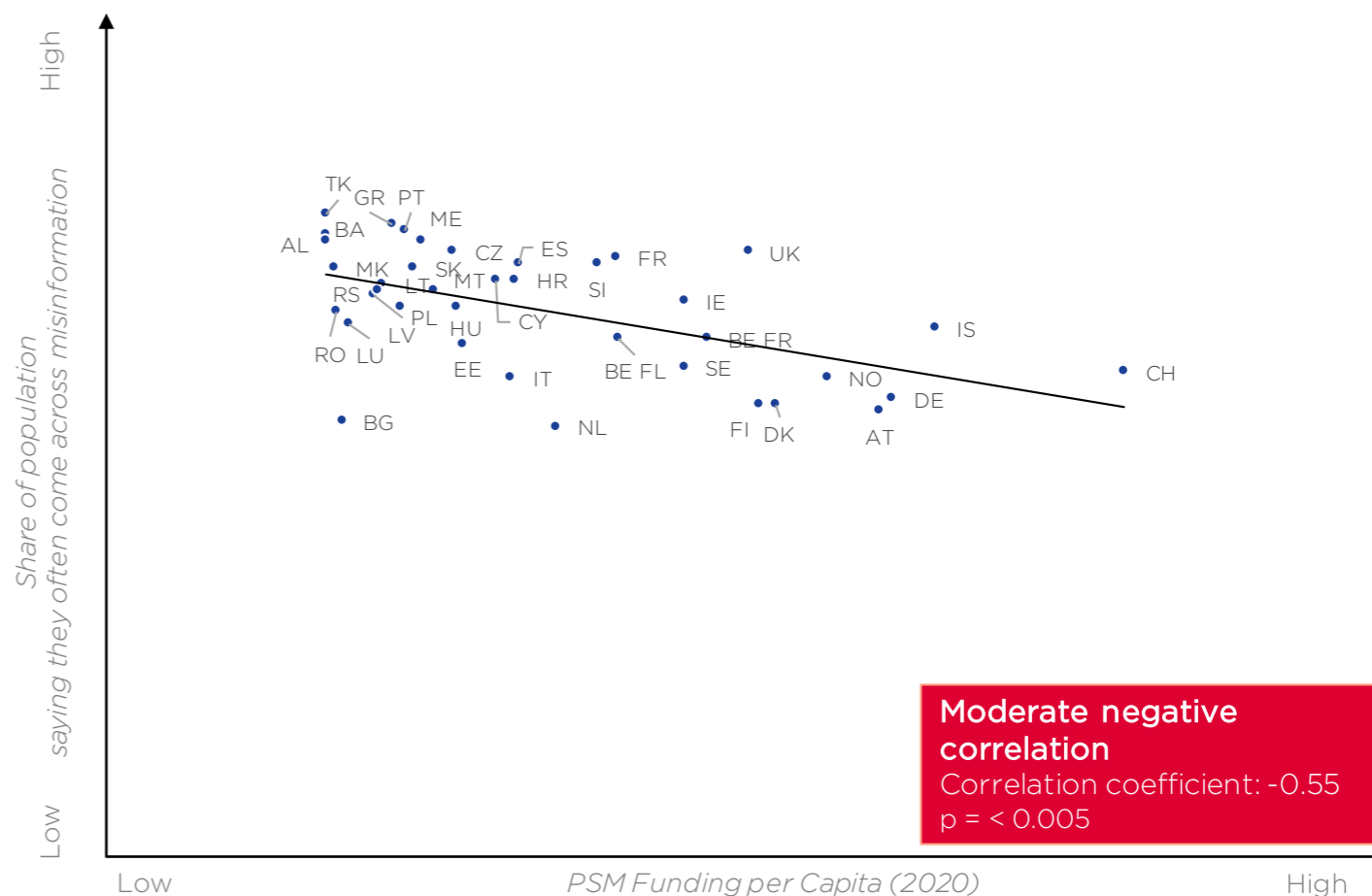
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INVESTMENT IN PSM PAYS OFF IN TERMS OF FIGHTING FAKE NEWS

Well-funded PSM go hand in hand with a lower exposure to misinformation

The higher the PSM funding per capita in a country, the lower the share of its citizens saying that they often come across information that they believe to misrepresent reality or even be false. A similar correlation can be found for PSM radio market shares (correlation coefficient: -0.59).

The concern about misinformation may be seen in the light of current debates on the surge of “fake news” spreading via digital platforms. A study of online news content by Humprecht & Esser (2016) has demonstrated that in countries with stronger PSM, a more sophisticated online news landscape has emerged, meaning that there is greater transparency in linking to sources, greater provision of background information and follow-up communication with the audience. The presence of well-equipped PSM thus seems to contribute to higher editorial standards.



Based on statement “You often come across news or information that you believe misrepresent reality or are even false.”

Source: EBU based on Members’ data and Standard Eurobarometer 94.

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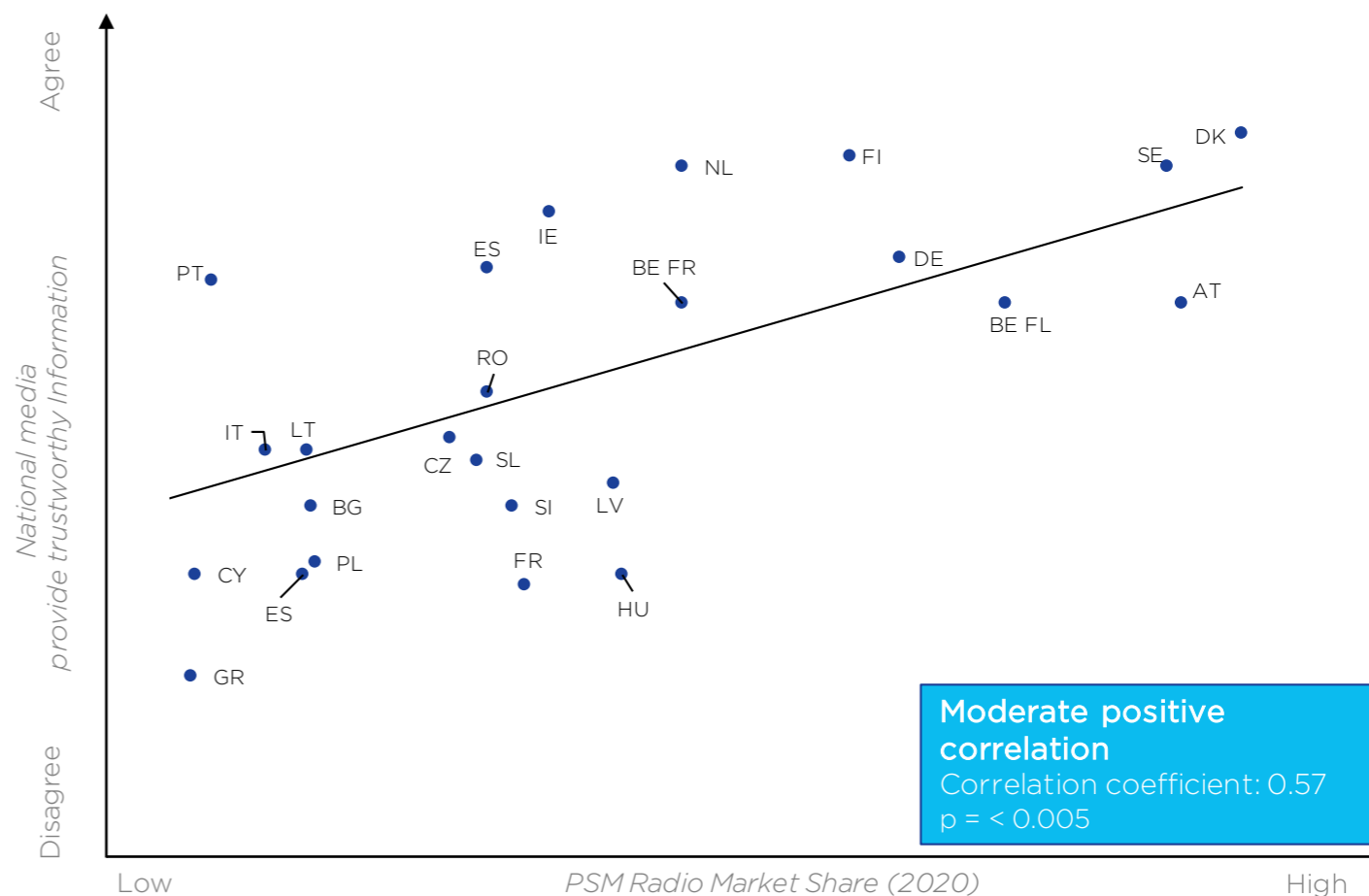
A NATION'S MEDIA LANDSCAPE BENEFITS FROM STRONG PSM

Higher PSM radio market shares go along with greater trust in national news

The data reveals that the greater public radio audiences are within a country, the more citizens tend to trust information provided by national media.

Consequently, a strong position for PSM seems to be to the advantage of its competitors in national media landscapes as well.

Such *spill-over effects* of PSM performance to other media have also been found by academic research. A study of 16 Western countries by Reinemann et al. (2016) concluded that editorial standards of reporting political information were significantly higher in markets with a stronger position for PSM. The stronger PSM are, the more other media adapt to their high standards. Such a *race to the top* with PSM as trendsetters may contribute to citizens' trust in the media system as a whole.



Based on agreement with statement "National media provide trustworthy information."

Source: EBU based on Members' data and Standard Eurobarometer 94.

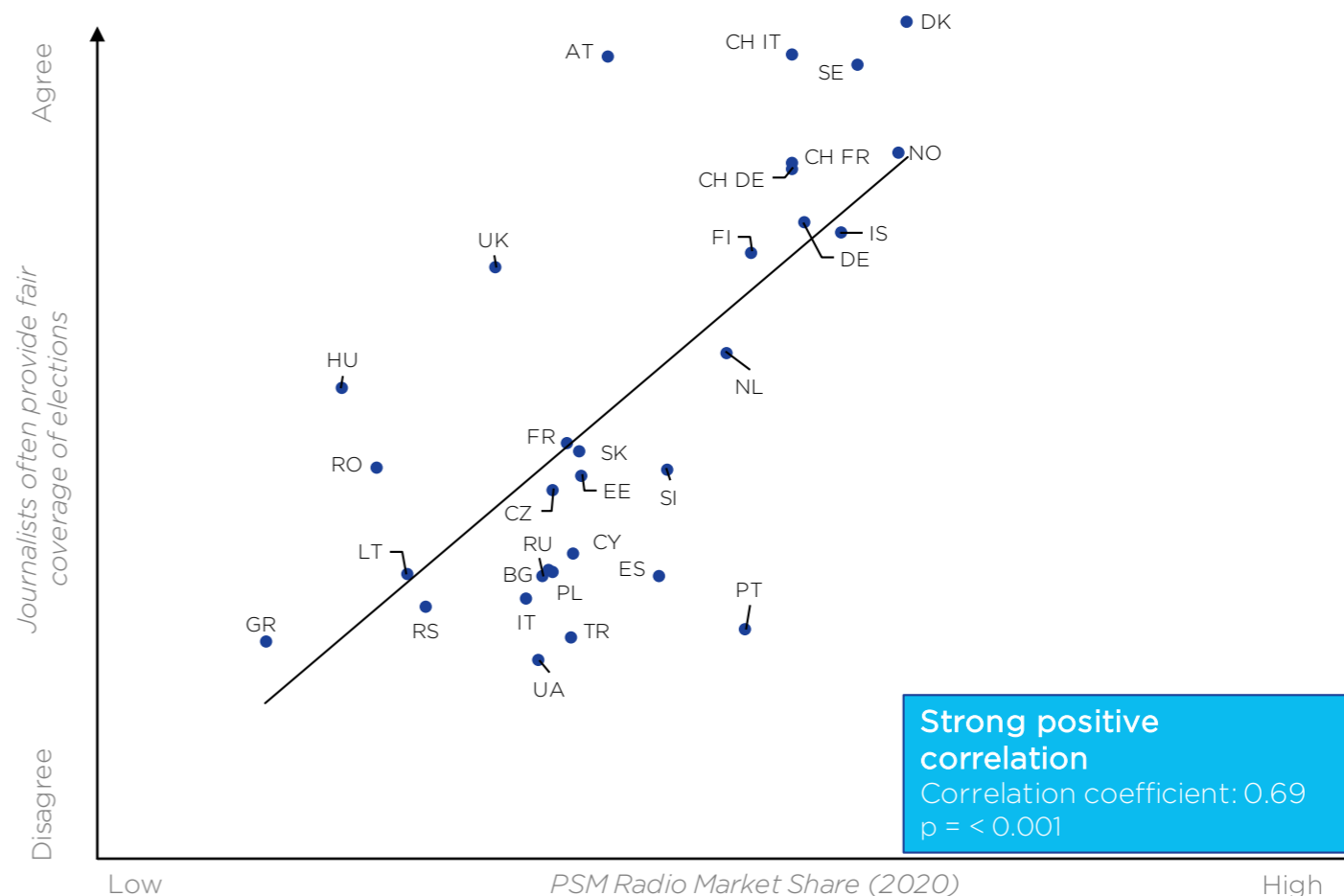
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PSM MARKET SHARES VS. SATISFACTION WITH ELECTION COVERAGE

A greater audience for PSM goes hand in hand with greater confidence in election reporting

Elections have proven to be particularly vulnerable to misinformation and “fake news” campaigns in a range of countries. The positive correlation suggests that the greater the audience of public TV in a country, the more citizens perceive news coverage of elections to be generally fair. A similar correlation can be found for TV shares: here, the correlation coefficient equals 0.59.

Again, this may point to a positive impact of PSM on citizens' overall perceptions of a national news media landscape and to its influence on the editorial standards of other media.



Based on statement “How often in country’s elections: Journalists provide fair coverage of elections”, share of population answering “very often” and “fairly often.”

Source: EBU based on Members’ data and World Values Survey Wave 7.

EBU Media Intelligence Service – Democracy & PSM

EBU ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE DEMOCRATIC VALUES



CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

The Contribution to Society Initiative demonstrates how essential PSM are to securing a strong national media industry, a healthy democracy and a cohesive society. It also helps EBU members set up a strategy to measure, analyze and demonstrate their impact on society.

More information [here](#)

In 2020, it released the casebook “The Value of PSM: Democracy & Citizenship” collecting best practices of how EBU members showcase the value their organization brings to democracy and citizenship.

Download it [here](#)



MEDIA AND POLARIZATION

On the occasion of the 2020 EBU News Assembly, EBU member organization Czech Radio shared insights on how it deals with increasing levels of polarization in society. PSM researcher Annika Sehl presented findings on populist attacks on PSM.

Watch the event [here](#)



PUBLIC SERVICE JOURNALISM

News and current affairs are the core and defining content for public service media (PSM). Informing citizens with independent, impartial, accurate and relevant news and helping them to better understand the world in which they live is crucial for a democratic society. PSM must also be an influential voice in the debate on disinformation. The EBU supports its members to provide indispensable news and information services to citizens.

More information [here](#)

In 2020, EBU released the report “Fast Forward – Public Service Journalism in the Viral Age”.

Download it [here](#)



JOURNALISM TRUST INITIATIVE (JTI)

A joint industry effort to protect audiences from disinformation and diagnose, optimize and promote accurate journalism by providing a tool for self-assessment of media organizations. It has been developed by the EBU and its partners, Reporters Without Borders, Agence France Presse and the Global Editors Network, in collaboration with over 130 organizations and individuals.

More information [here](#)

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PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA AND NEWS 2021

We're proud to share this focus report on a topic which lies at the core of the PSM remit: news. Take a look at an overview of public service media's outstanding commitment, exceptional offer and strong performance in news.

[Download full report here or take a look at the slide deck](#) (public)

MEDIA INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

This report is published by the European Broadcasting Union's Media Intelligence Service (MIS).

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Our experts cover a broad range of topics, including TV and radio trends, new media developments, market structure and concentration, funding and public policy issues.

mis@ebu.ch

PUBLICATION

Produced by:
Dominik Speck
mail@dominikspeck.de

Dr. Florence Hartmann
hartmann@ebu.ch

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