

HUMAN RIGHTS,
DEMOCRACY
AND THE RULE OF LAW

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

DROITS DE L'HOMME,
DÉMOCRATIE
ET ÉTAT DE DROIT

Kristiansand



Presentation

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Anniversary of the European Convention of Human Rights

**Challenges to media freedom:
Information disorder and fake news**

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PASTE
COPY
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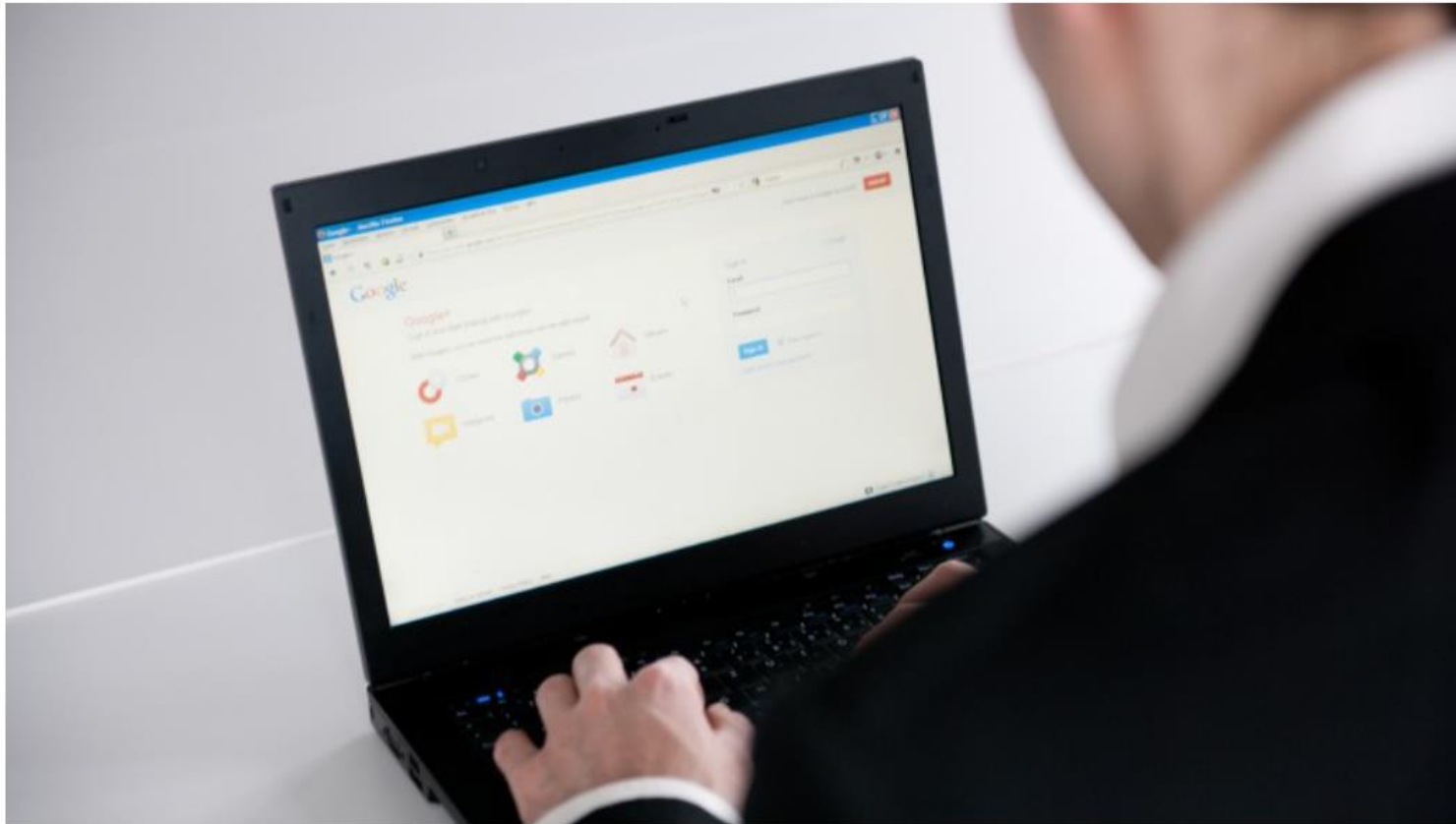
TOP 5 RECURRING DISINFORMATION NARRATIVES ABOUT COVID-19



- 1 US CREATED IT
- 2 EU FAILS TO RESPOND
- 3 THE CORONAVIRUS IS NOT SERIOUS
- 4 IT'S A SECRET PLAN OF THE GLOBAL ELITES
- 5 THE CORONAVIRUS WAS PROBABLY MADE BY NATO

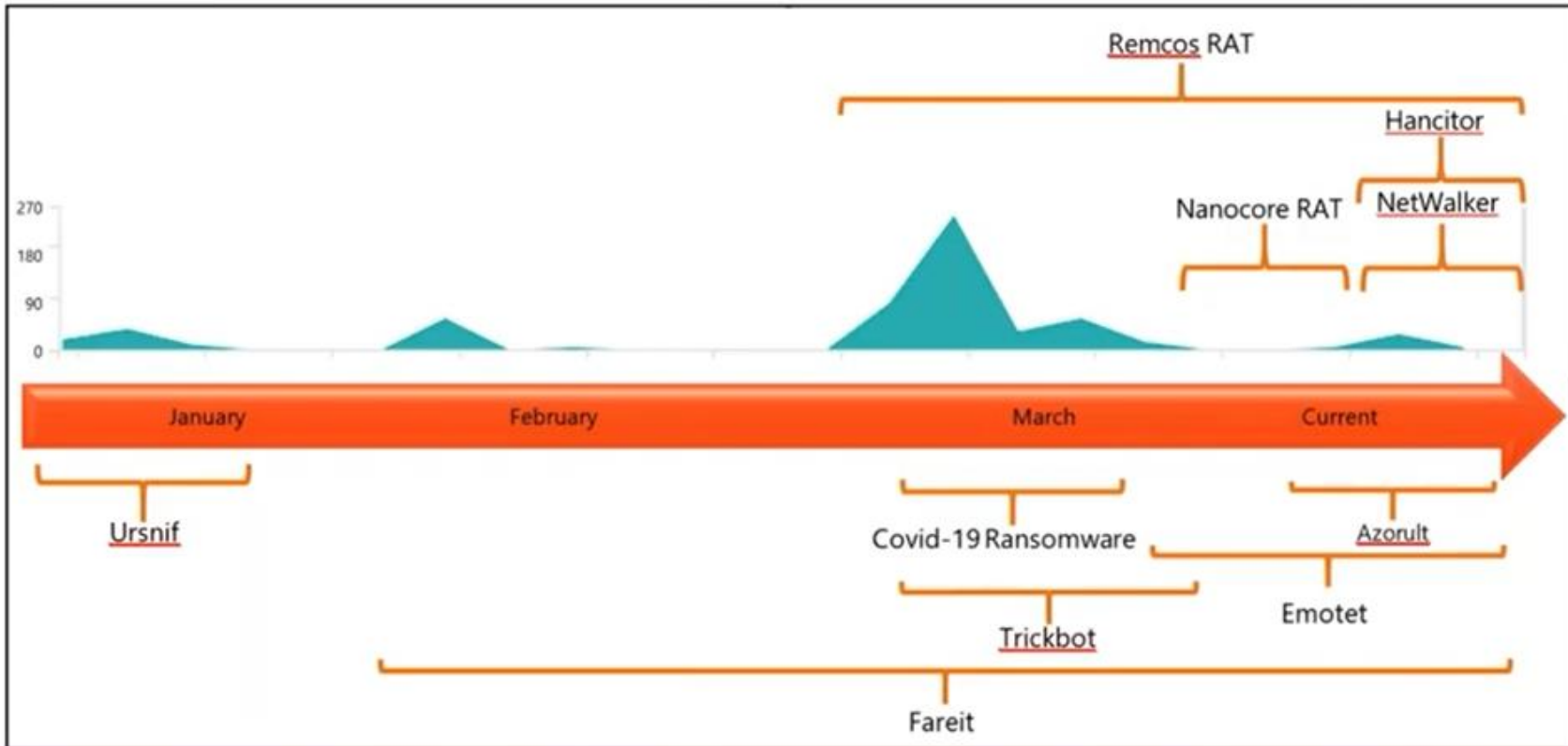
Nearly half of the population has read fake news about the Coronavirus

TOPICS: Coronavirus In Norway COVID-19 Fake News About The Coronavirus



Disinformation pandemic?

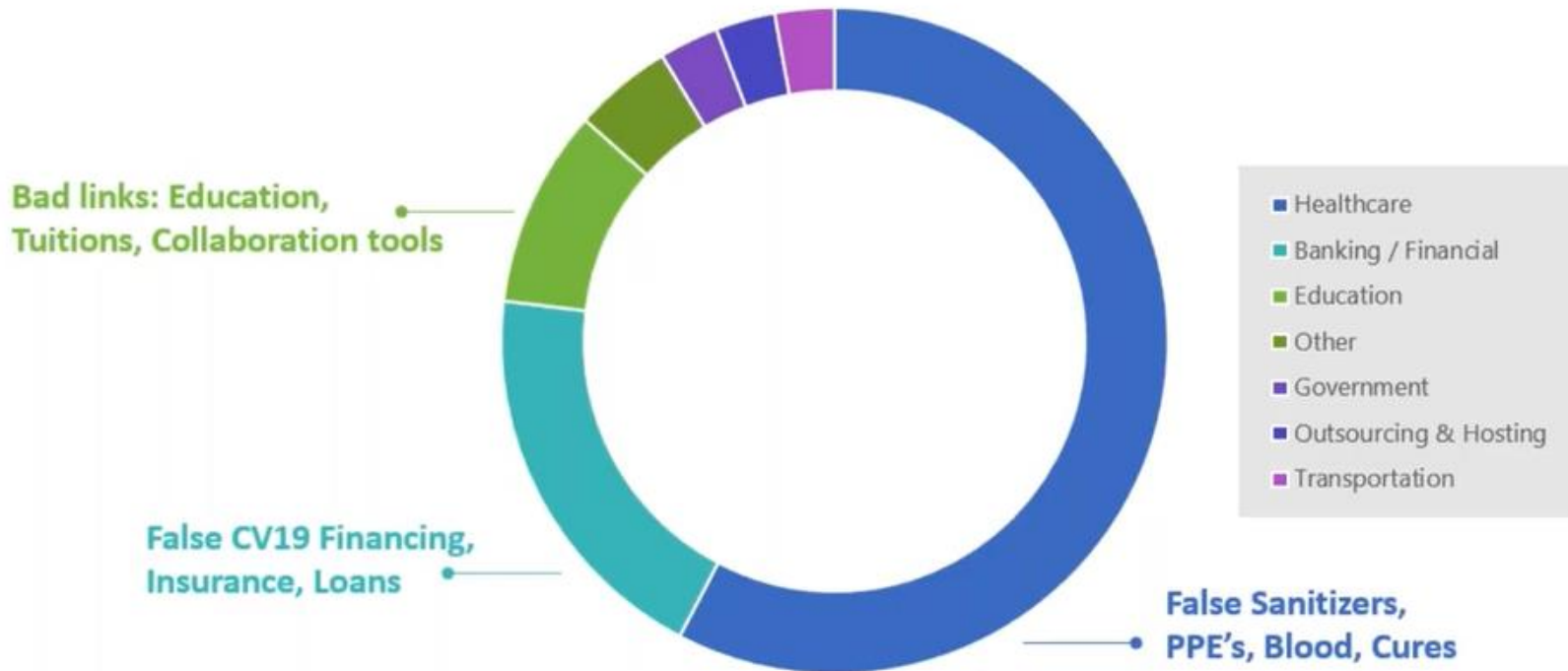
500% increase in COVID related SPAM mails in March



These COVID related SPAM emails are further used to spread prevalent malware like Fareit, Trickbot and COVID ransomware.

Sectors Targeted

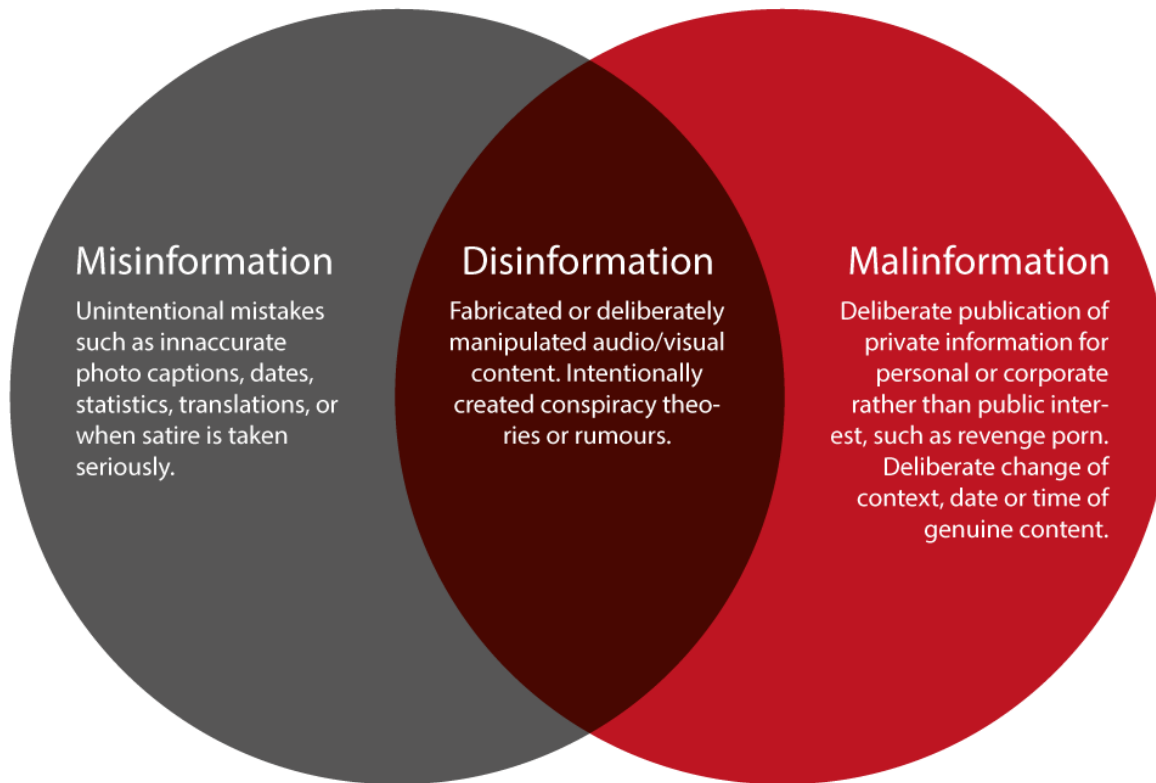
The volume of threats related to Covid-19 has been significant, with lures used in all manner of attacks. Tracking these campaigns reveals the most targeted sector is healthcare, followed by finance, and then education.



TYPES OF INFORMATION DISORDER

FALSENESS

INTENT TO HARM



Why is disinformation a problem

The right to free
and fair elections

➤ **Incorrect information** may influence the way that individuals vote.

The right to
non-discrimination

➤ **Disinformation is often targeting specific individuals** and their reputation.

The right to health

➤ **Disinformation sometimes focuses on particular groups in society**, especially refugees and migrants, or ethnic minorities; intentionally or involuntarily inciting violence, discrimination or hostility.

The right to freedom
of expression

➤ **False information about health** and disease prevention can lead to serious risks for people.

➤ **Inappropriate, rash or too restrictive responses** to disinformation pose risks to freedom of expression and media freedom.

What facilitates disinformation?

Advances in technology make it easy to create fake images and videos.

New gatekeepers of information - search and social media platforms - exert a strong influence on how individuals are informed and form their opinions.

The shift of communication and information to the internet has caused a shift of audiences away from the mainstream media to social media.

Fewer media manage public debate and influence public opinion, as the success of the platforms translated into a loss of ad revenue for the media.

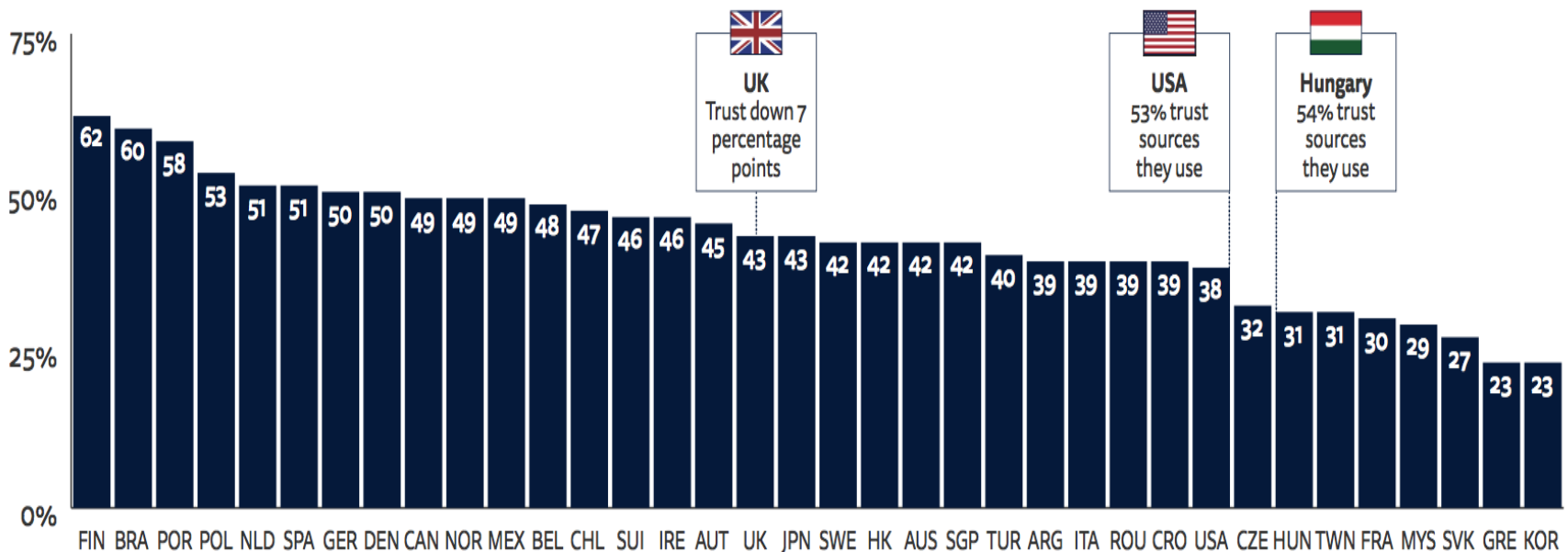


Result: Decline of trust in information and media as people consume both established and unreliable news sources without distinction, and become confused what is true and whom to believe.

OVERALL TRUST IN NEWS MEDIA

ALL MARKETS

- ✓ Fragmentation of public media spaces
- ✓ Polarisation
- ✓ Ideologically laden echo-chambers



Q6_2016_1/6. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. - I think you can trust most news most of the time/I think I can trust most of the news I consume most of the time Base: Total sample in each market.

WORRY ABOUT QUALITY INFORMATION

Percent who agree

The media I use are **contaminated**
with **untrustworthy information**

⊥
57%

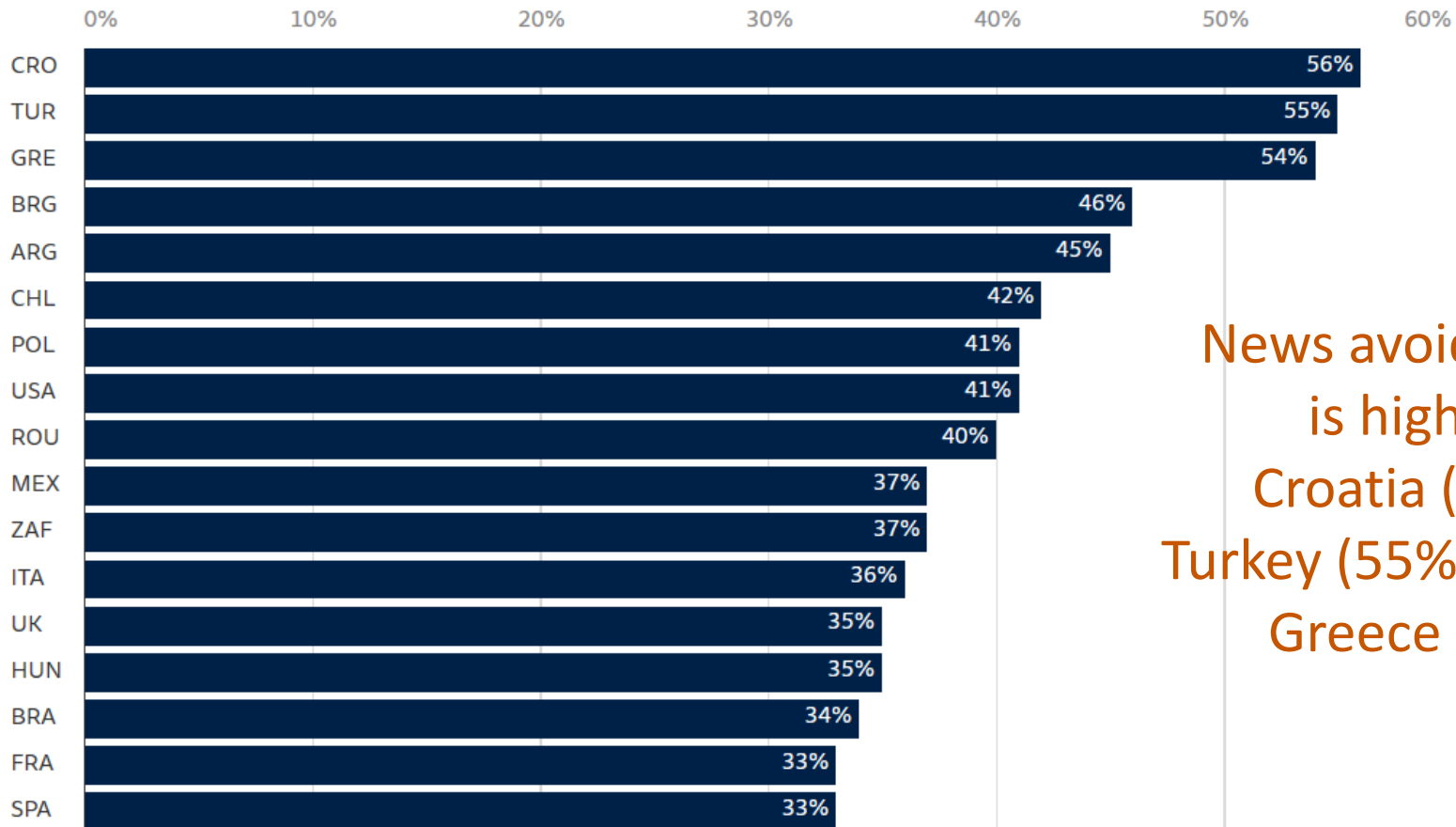
I worry about false information or **fake**
news being used as a weapon

⊥
76%

+6
pts
Change,
2018 to 2020

PROPORTION THAT OFTEN OR SOMETIMES ACTIVELY AVOIDS THE NEWS

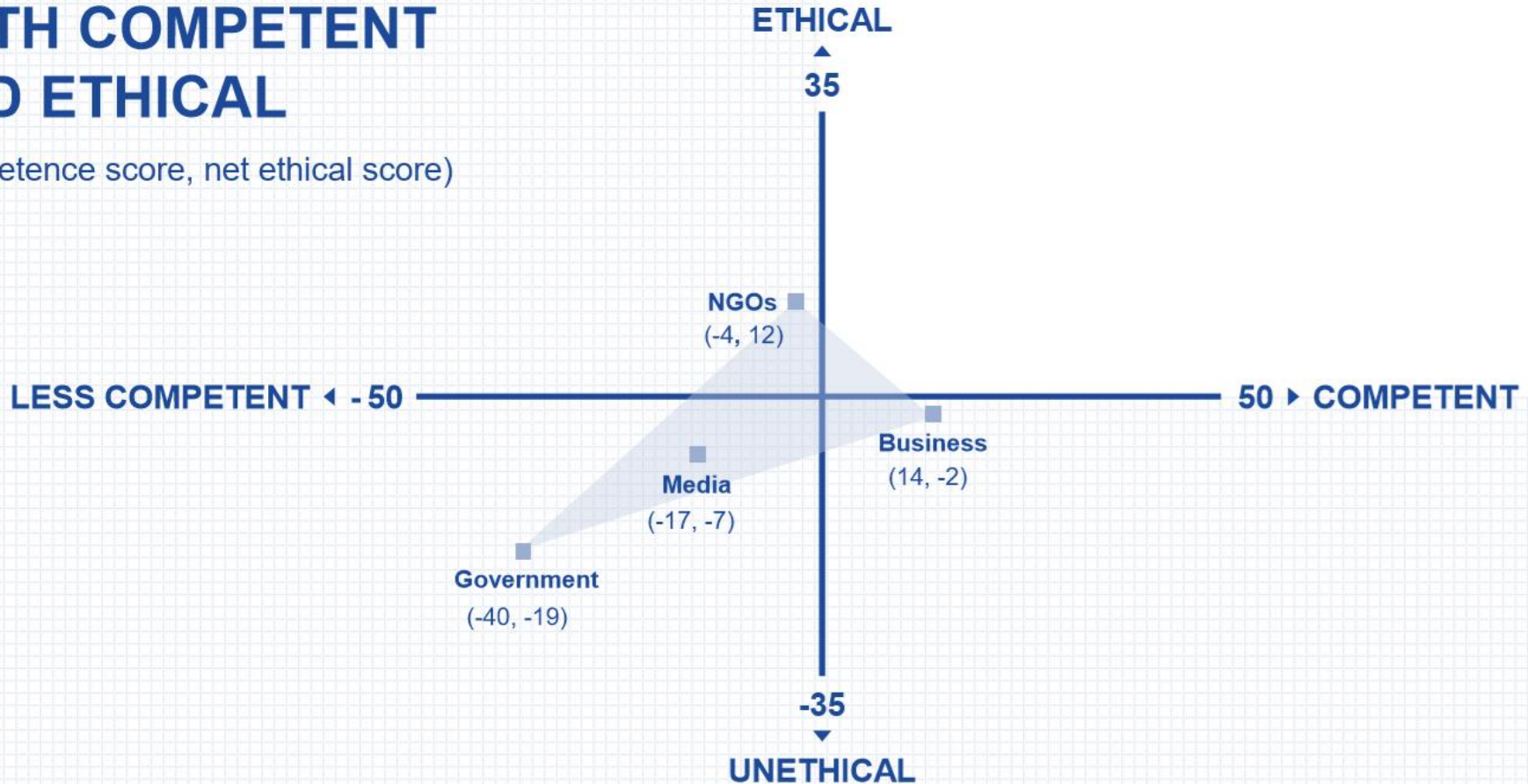
All markets



News avoidance is highest in Croatia (56%), Turkey (55%), and Greece (54%)

NO INSTITUTION SEEN AS BOTH COMPETENT AND ETHICAL

(Competence score, net ethical score)





WEAPONS OF MASS DISTRACTION

Most disinformation is created, launched and spread with either political or economic objectives by:

- ✓ A range of antidemocratic movements
- ✓ Partisan political actors
- ✓ Powerful economic forces
- ✓ Foreign states can benefit from deploying disinformation campaigns
- ✓ Various individuals using online infrastructure to earn money

STATES

- **Often entrust the important task** of deliberating “what is true and what false”, together with the liability, to search and social media platforms
- **Some states have enacted legislation** for specific cases of disinformation

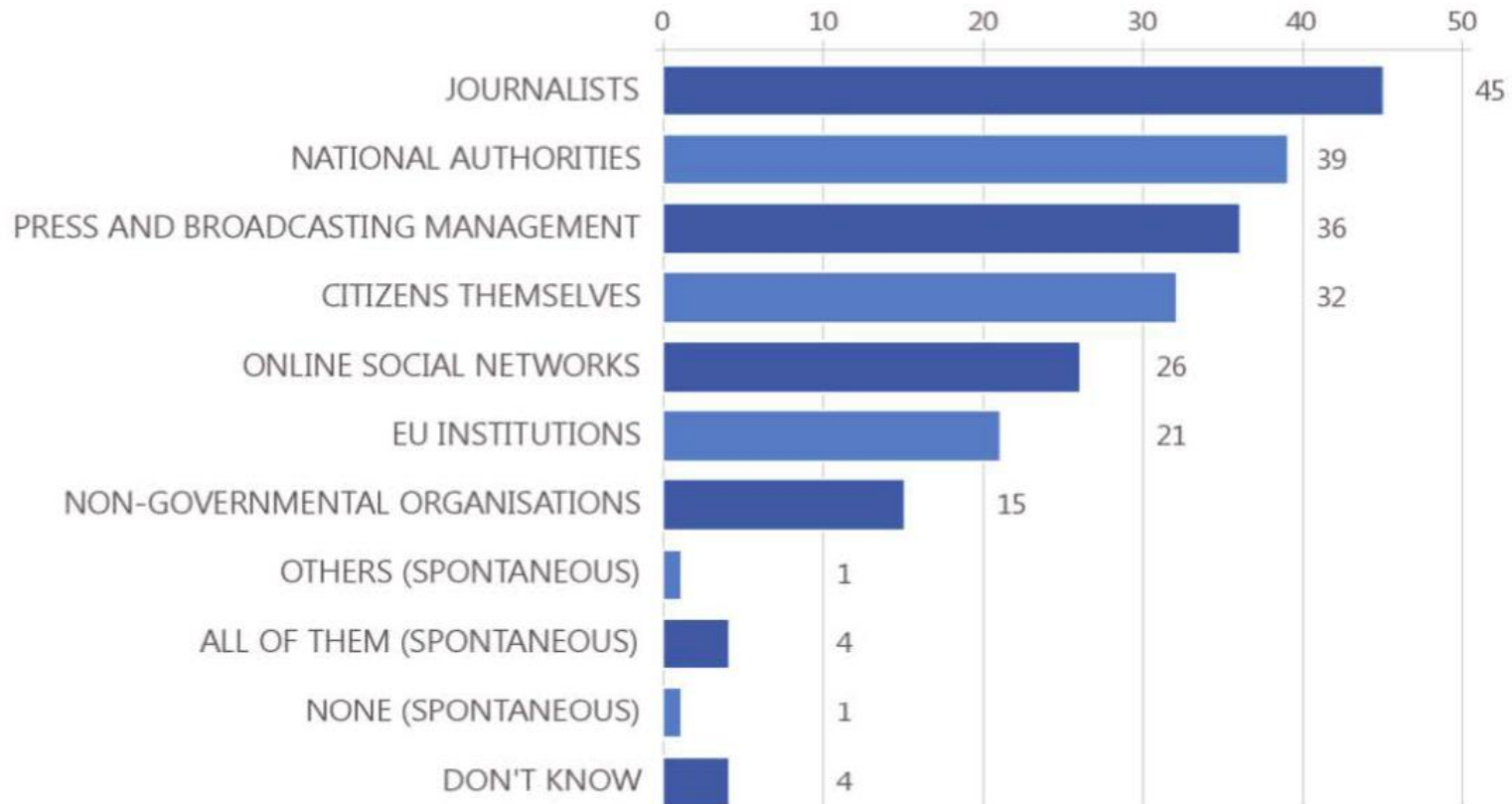


PLATFORMS

- **Routinely remove or block content** without explaining why, based on “community standards” rules
- **There is no independent oversight** of their takedown practices

Who should act?

Which of the following institutions and media actors should act to stop the spread of “fake news” ?



Eurobarometer 2018

Study: [Automated tackling of disinformation](#)

EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

The human rights approach

Empowerment of quality journalism

- **Recommendation on promoting a favourable environment** for quality journalism in the digital age

Empowerment of media and information literacy skills

- **Study on supporting quality journalism** through media and information literacy

Ensuring compliance of online platforms

- **Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)2** on the roles and responsibilities of internet intermediaries

Awareness of artificial intelligence systems manipulative capabilities

- **Declaration on the manipulative capabilities** of algorithmic processes
- **Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)1** on the human rights impacts of algorithmic systems



Serious impact of disinformation on individuals' right to health is a real threat.

Exceptional circumstances justify exceptional measures including some restrictions on freedom of expression.

Malicious spreading of disinformation may be tackled with ex-post targeted sanctions.

Media play a key role in this crisis and also has an increased responsibility to provide accurate, reliable information to the public.

Some governments are using the crisis as a pretext to introduce disproportionate restrictions to media freedom.



How people consume COVID-19 news:

- ✓ **People consume more news** than usually, with a staggering 99% accessing COVID-19 news at least once a day.
- ✓ **People use more traditional media**, especially public broadcasters, to get their COVID-19 news.
- ✓ **Official sources are not only used but also trusted**, while the social media have taken a back seat.
- ✓ **Disinformation and confusion about COVID-19 are present** but people are more aware and some check other sources.

Source: Ofcom [weekly research](#)

More regulation is needed



Image: The Economist

Mark Zuckerberg said he believed **new regulation was needed in four areas:**

- **Harmful content**
- **Election integrity**
- **Privacy**
- **Data portability**

([The Guardian](#),
30 March 2019)

Thanks for your
attention !



further resources:

www.coe.int/freedomofexpression

www.coe.int/dataprotection

www.coe.int/cybercrime

www.coe.int/AI

Facebook Page

Information Society Group

 Albania - Albanie Tirana	 Estonia - Estonie Tallinn	 Lithuania - Lituanie Vilnius	 San Marino - Saint-Marin San Marino - Saint-Marin
 Andorra - Andorre Andorre-la-Vieille Andorre-la-Vieille	 Finland - Finlande Helsinki	 Luxembourg Luxembourg	 Serbia - Serbie Belgrade
 Armenia - Arménie Yerevan - Erevan	 France Paris	 Malta - Malte Valletta - La Vallette	 Slovakia - Slovaquie Bratislava
 Austria - Autriche Vienna - Vienne	 Georgia - Géorgie Tbilisi - Tbilissi	 Republic of Moldova - République de Moldova Chişinău	 Slovenia - Slovénie Ljubljana
 Azerbaijan - Azerbaïdjan Baku - Bakou	 Germany - Allemagne Berlin	 Monaco Monaco	 Spain - Espagne Madrid
 Belgium - Belgique Brussels - Bruxelles	 Greece - Grèce Athens - Athènes	 Montenegro - Monténégro Podgorica	 Sweden - Suède Stockholm
 Bosnia and Herzegovina Bosnie-Herzégovine Sarajevo	 Hungary - Hongrie Budapest	 Netherlands - Pays-Bas Amsterdam	 Switzerland - Suisse Bern - Berne
 Bulgaria - Bulgarie Sofia	 Iceland - Islande Reykjavik	 Norway - Norvège Oslo	 "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" "L'Ex-République yougoslave de Macédoine" Skopje
 Croatia - Croatie Zagreb	 Ireland - Irlande Dublin	 Poland - Pologne Warsaw - Varsovie	 Turkey - Turquie Ankara
 Cyprus - Chypre Nicosia - Nicosie	 Italy - Italie Rome	 Portugal Lisbon - Lisbonne	 Ukraine Kyiv - Kiev
 Czech Republic - République tchèque Prague	 Latvia - Lettonie Riga	 Romania - Roumanie Bucharest - Bucarest	 United Kingdom - Royaume-Uni London - Londres
 Denmark - Danemark Copenhagen - Copenhague	 Liechtenstein Vaduz	 Russian Federation - Fédération de Russie Moscow - Moscou	

