



**EBU**

OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO

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# **COVID-19 CRISIS PSM AUDIENCE PERFORMANCE**

## PUBLIC VERSION

MEDIA INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

MARCH 2020

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report aims to provide an overview of the impact of coronavirus COVID-19 disease sweeping across Europe at the start of 2020 and how Public Service Media (PSM) are responding to the challenge of keeping citizens informed as this unprecedented crisis develops.

This is an urgency report to respond to these exceptional times for which we are lacking references. In this sense, it looks at news, core of what PSM deliver. An extended and broader report with additional insights will follow in the coming weeks.

By doing this, the European Broadcasting Union shows external stakeholders both the actions taken by public service broadcasters across Europe to support citizens during this crisis, and the response of the citizens to that programming to tackle the coronavirus COVID-19 challenge.

At the time of writing this report the global confirmed cases stood at nearly 250 000 cases, 40% of them in the countries where the EBU has Members. Italy, Spain, Germany and France were the countries with the highest number of diseases within the EBU area.

# METHODOLOGY

## GLOBAL CONTEXT

Desk research to provide an overview of the state of crisis across the EBU Area. Using key sources from the [WHO situation reports](#) and latest data on global cases from the [Johns Hopkins University \(JHU\) dashboard](#).

## NEWS AND CRISIS CONTENT PERFORMANCE

In collaboration with the GEAR network, the MIS team collected the recent performance data of EBU PSM main news broadcasts on TV and performance of online news services when available.

The data was collected over 17 - 18 March 2020. Focusing on the start of the year, 1 January - 15 March 2020, and comparing with the same period in 2019.

We also asked broadcasters to provide an overview on dedicated coronavirus content from information on health to talk shows, information complemented by desk research and by the EBU's Media Department, Member Relations & Communications Department and the Knowledge & Information Service of the Legal & Policy Department.

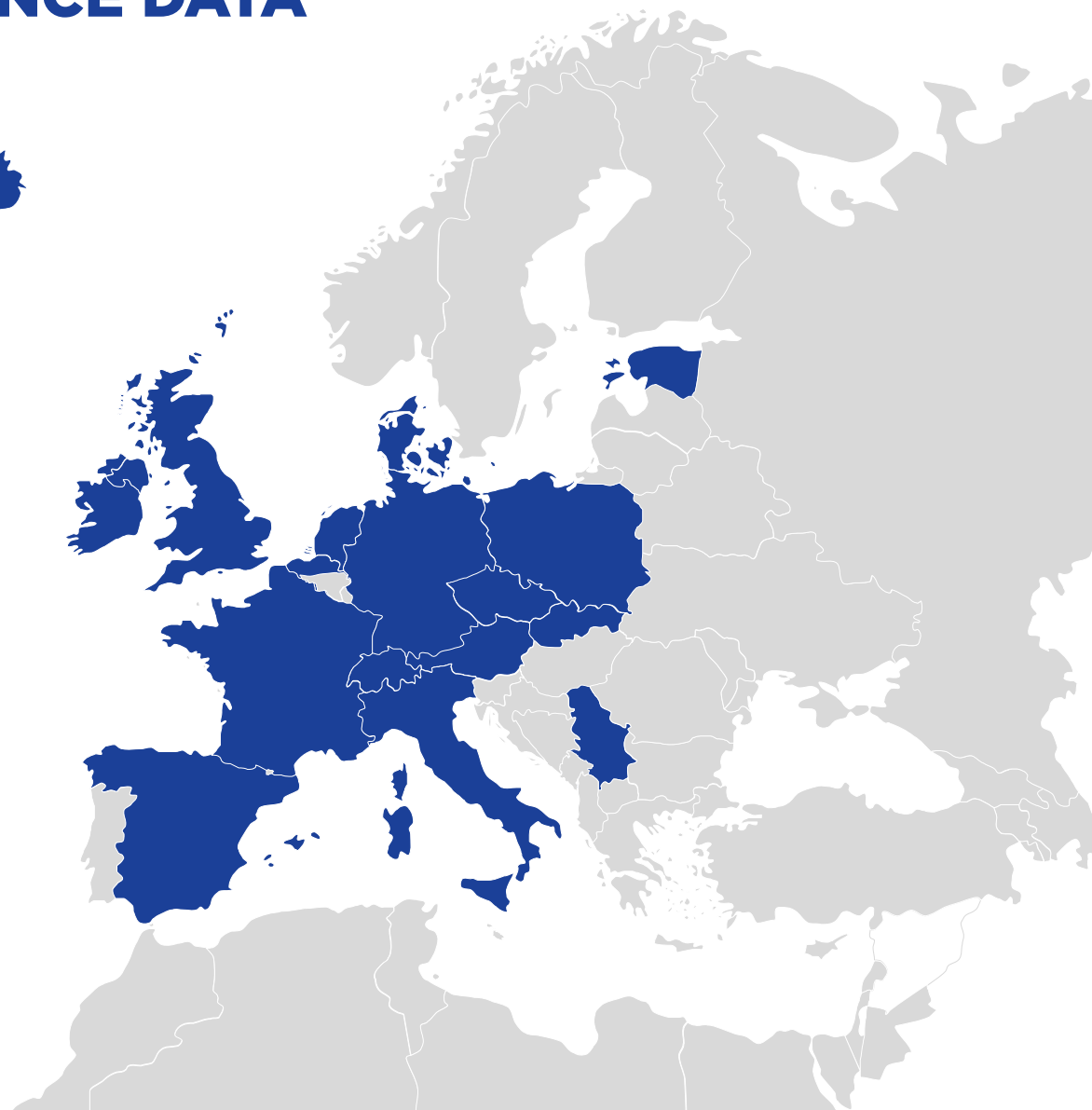
Thank you to our colleagues across all 18 PSM organizations that supported us by providing data on a very short deadline.

# MARKETS PROVIDING AUDIENCE DATA

## 18 EBU PSM ORGANIZATIONS

PROVIDED DATA ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR BROADCAST AND ONLINE NEWS SERVICES

Austria ORF, Belgium FL VRT, Czech Republic CT, Denmark DR, Estonia ERR, France Radio France, Germany ARD and ZDF, Iceland RÚV, Ireland RTÉ, Italy RAI, Netherlands NPO, Poland TVP, Serbia RTS, Slovakia RTVS, Spain RTVE, Switzerland SRG SSR, United Kingdom BBC.

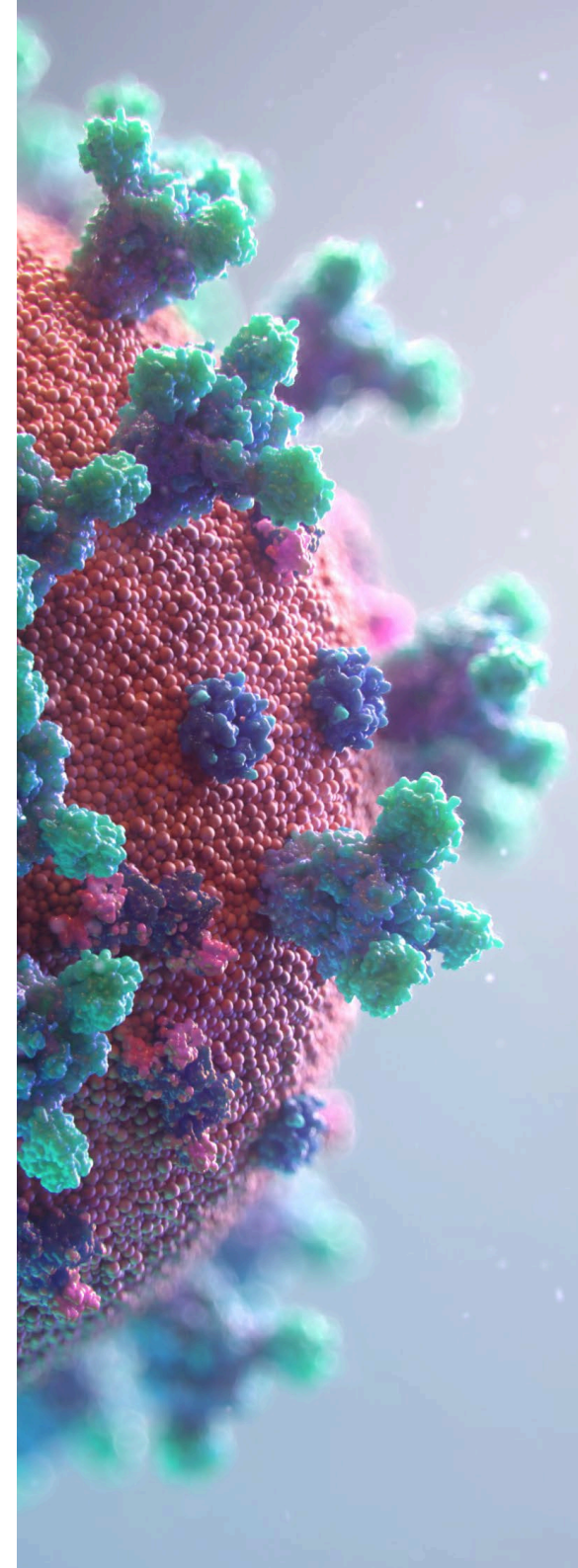


# VIRUS ESCALATION IN EUROPE AT UNPRECEDENTED PACE



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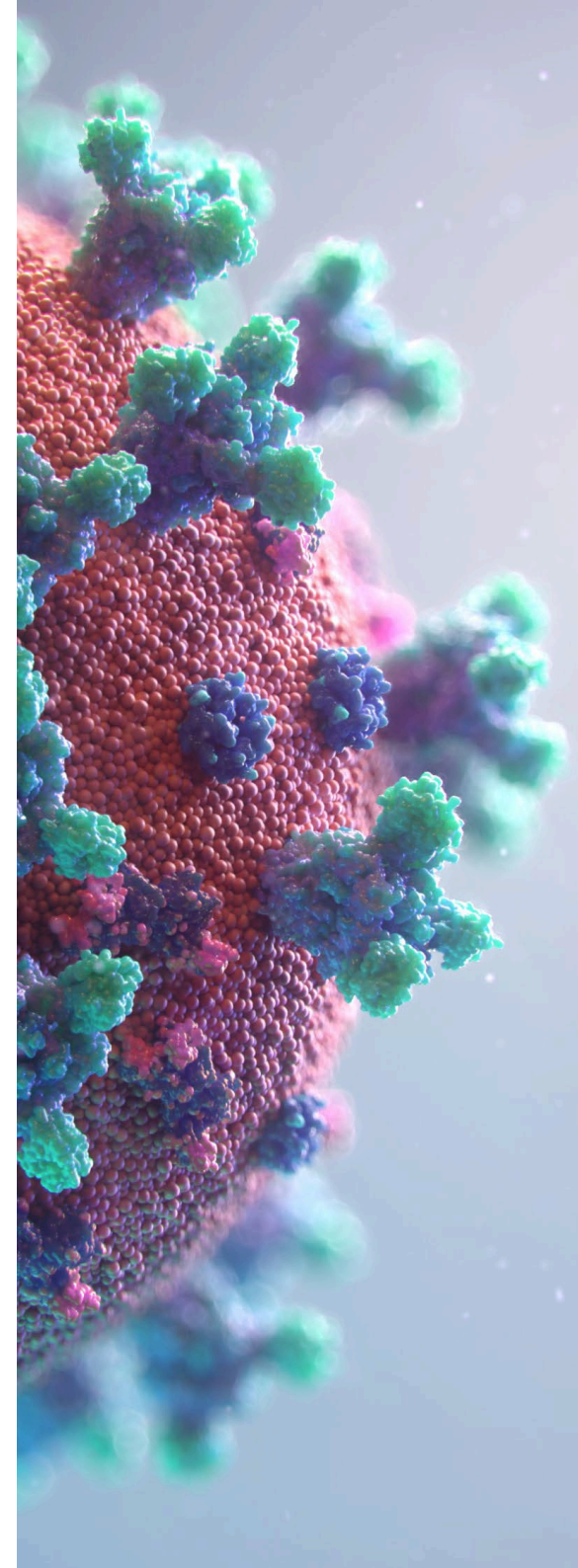
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# PSM TV NEWS AUDIENCE

EBU PSM organizations broadcast news updates throughout the day on their main TV channels and dedicated 24-hour news channels, providing citizens with real time reliable information on the evolving COVID-19 crisis.

This section looks at how citizens have turned into this increased PSM news offer during this crisis period. The focus is on the **main evening news bulletins** of PSM to provide a comparable evolution of TV news consumption over the crisis period.



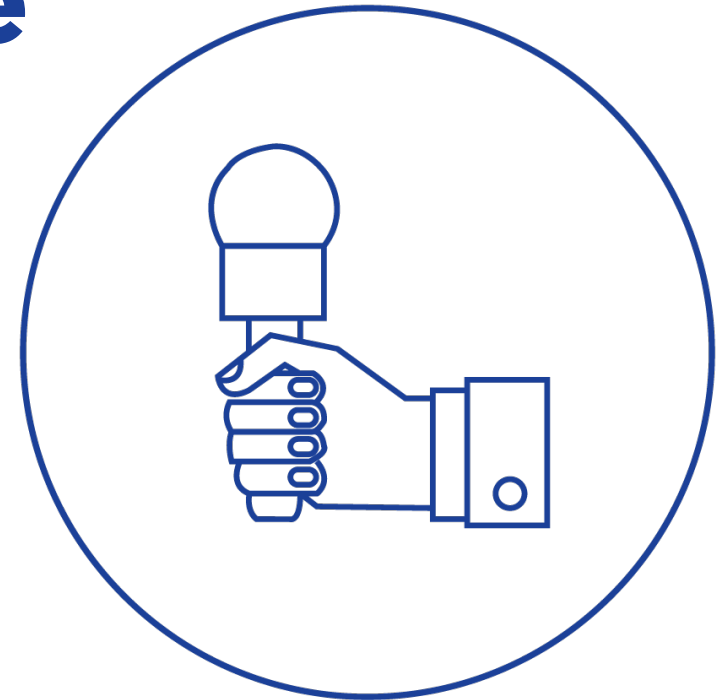
# Reach of PSM evening news up to **x2** the average during peak days of COVID-19 crisis

in the most affected markets, on days where key announcements were made; declared state of emergency, restriction of movements, etc.



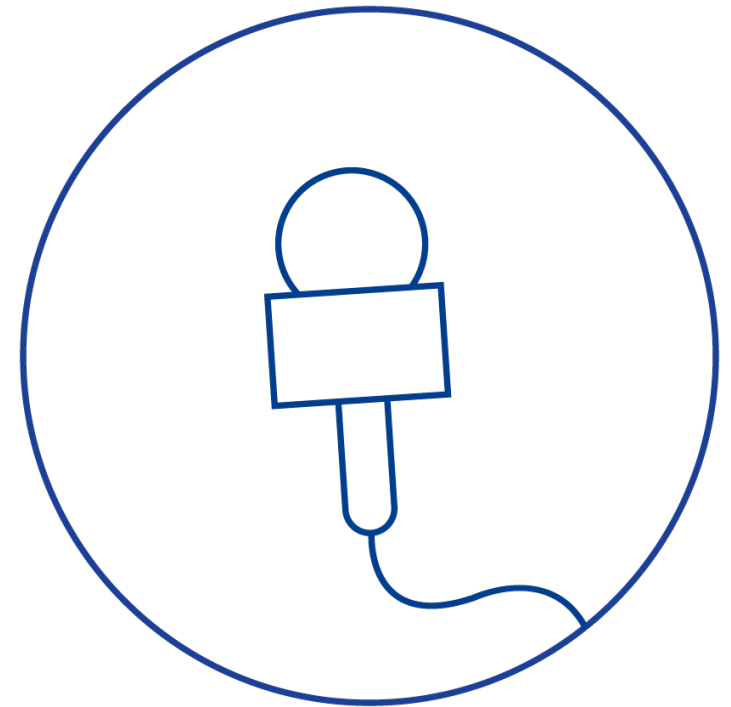
# Citizens turning more to PSM evening news in times of crisis:

daily viewing **+14%**  
on average





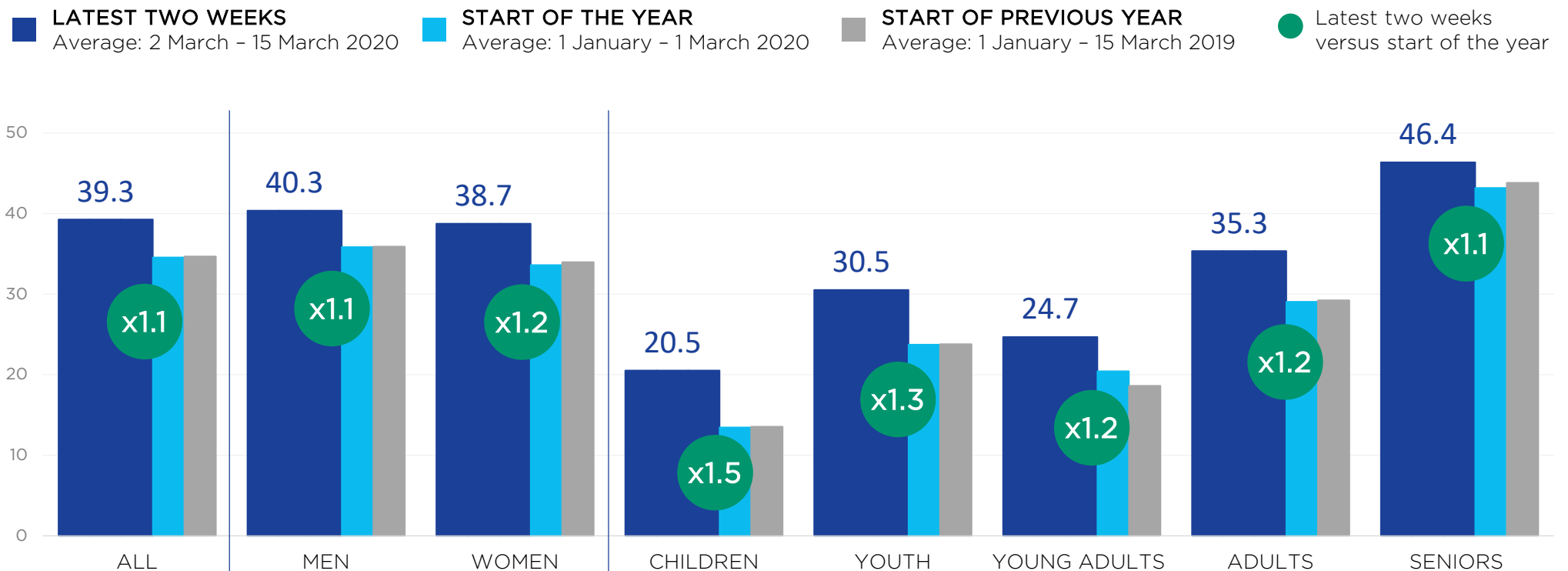
**Young citizens  
turning more to  
PSM evening news  
in times of crisis:  
daily viewing **+20%**  
on average**



# PSM EVENING NEWS GROWS ACROSS ALL DEMOGRAPHICS

PSM evening news viewing continues to grow daily. The start of the COVID-19 crisis saw younger viewers turning to PSM evening TV news bulletins for trustworthy updates on key announcements in their countries as well as developments across the globe.

Average daily Viewing Share ( % ) of PSM Evening News by target groups



Age definitions: Children 4-14, Youth 15-24, Young Adults 25-34, Adults 35-59, Seniors 60+. Definitions may vary slightly by country.

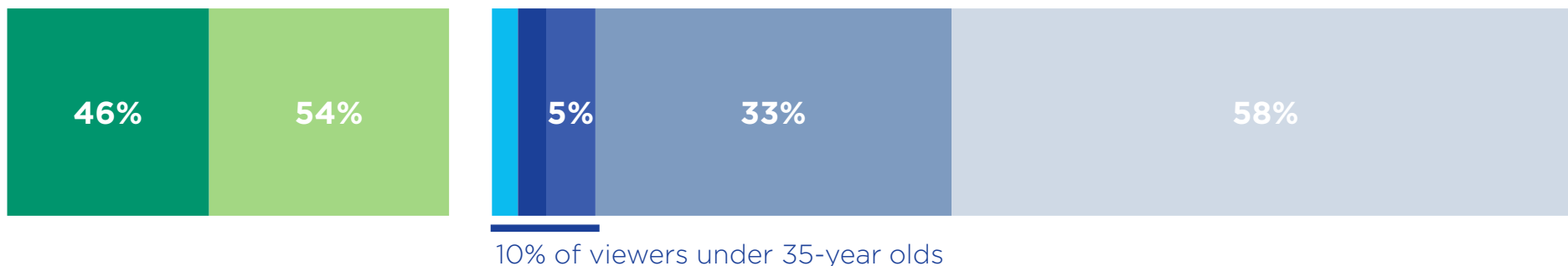


# VIEWER PROFILE ( % ) OF PSM EVENING NEWS

At the start of 2020, PSM evening news continued to deliver a similar profile to that of the previous year, but as the COVID-19 crisis began to develop the number of younger viewers is slightly shifting the viewer profile.

■ MEN   ■ WOMEN   ■ CHILDREN   ■ YOUTH   ■ YOUNG ADULTS   ■ ADULTS   ■ SENIORS

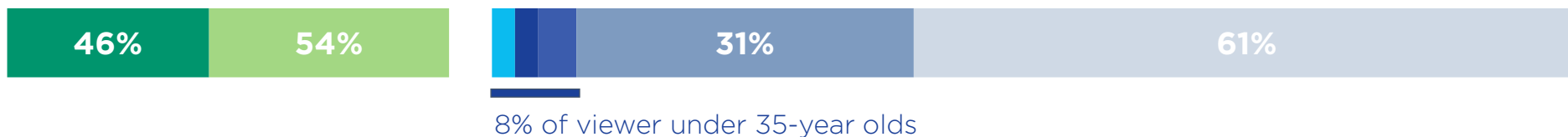
## LATEST TWO WEEKS ( 2 March – 15 March 2020 )



## START OF THE YEAR ( 1 January – 1 March 2020 )



## START OF PREVIOUS YEAR ( 1 January – 15 March 2019 )



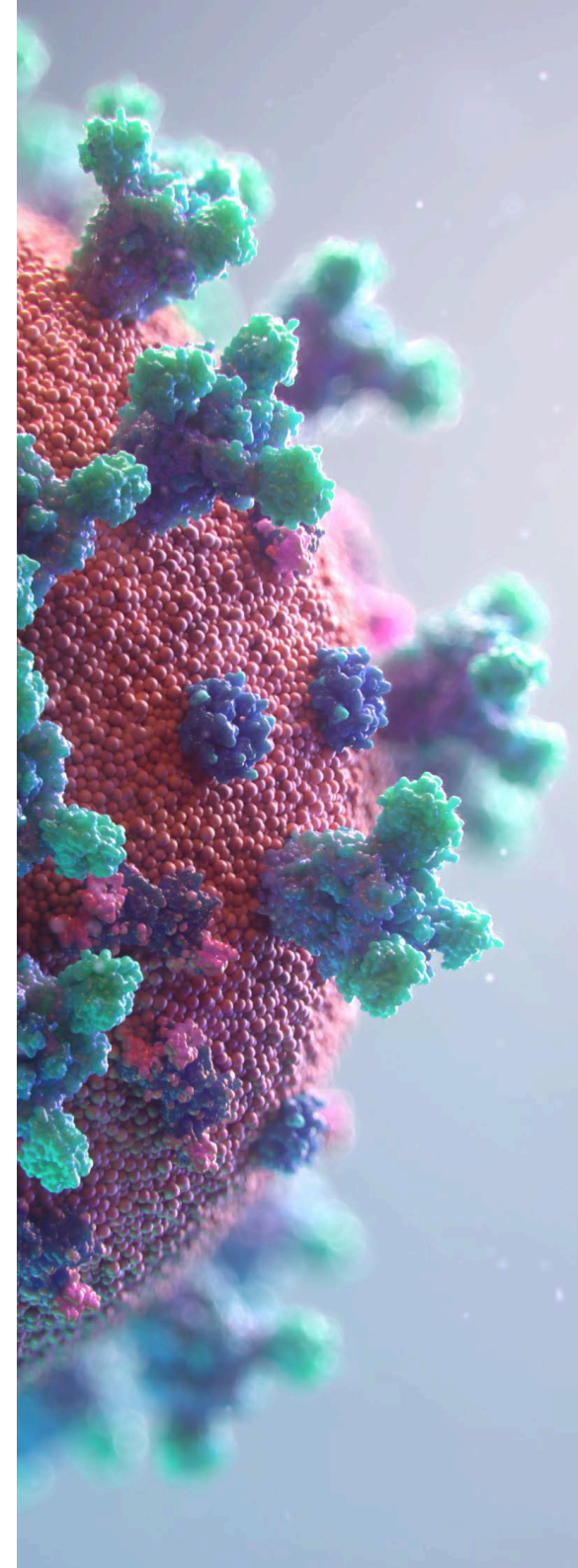
Age definitions: Children 4-14, Youth 15-24, Young Adults 25-34, Adults 35-59, Seniors 60+. Definitions may vary slightly by country.  
No data label below 5%

Source: EBU based on Members' data.

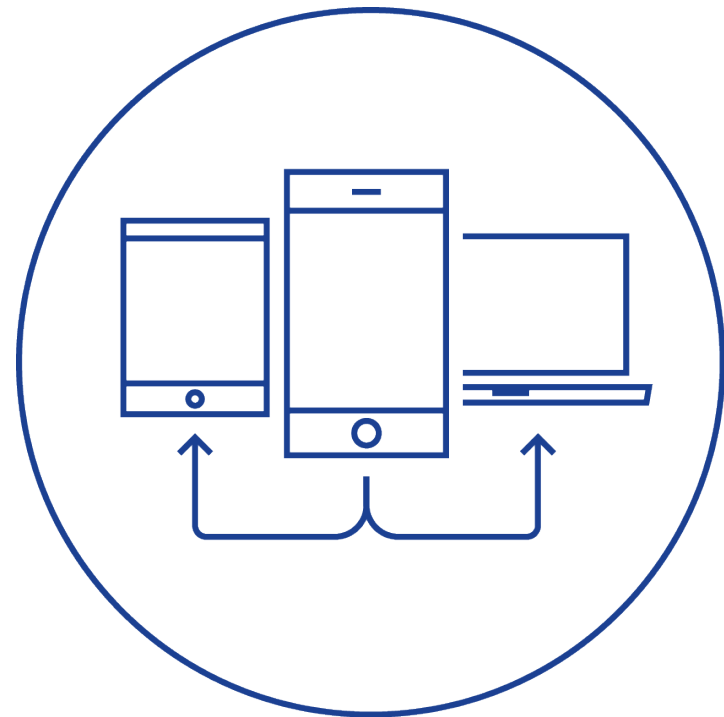
# PSM ONLINE NEWS AUDIENCE

PSM online offer provides citizens with a continuous stream of the latest reliable information on the developments in their countries and across the globe.

Citizens can turn to PSM content via news websites and dedicated news apps. This section of the report is based on data collected on usage of EBU PSM news websites.

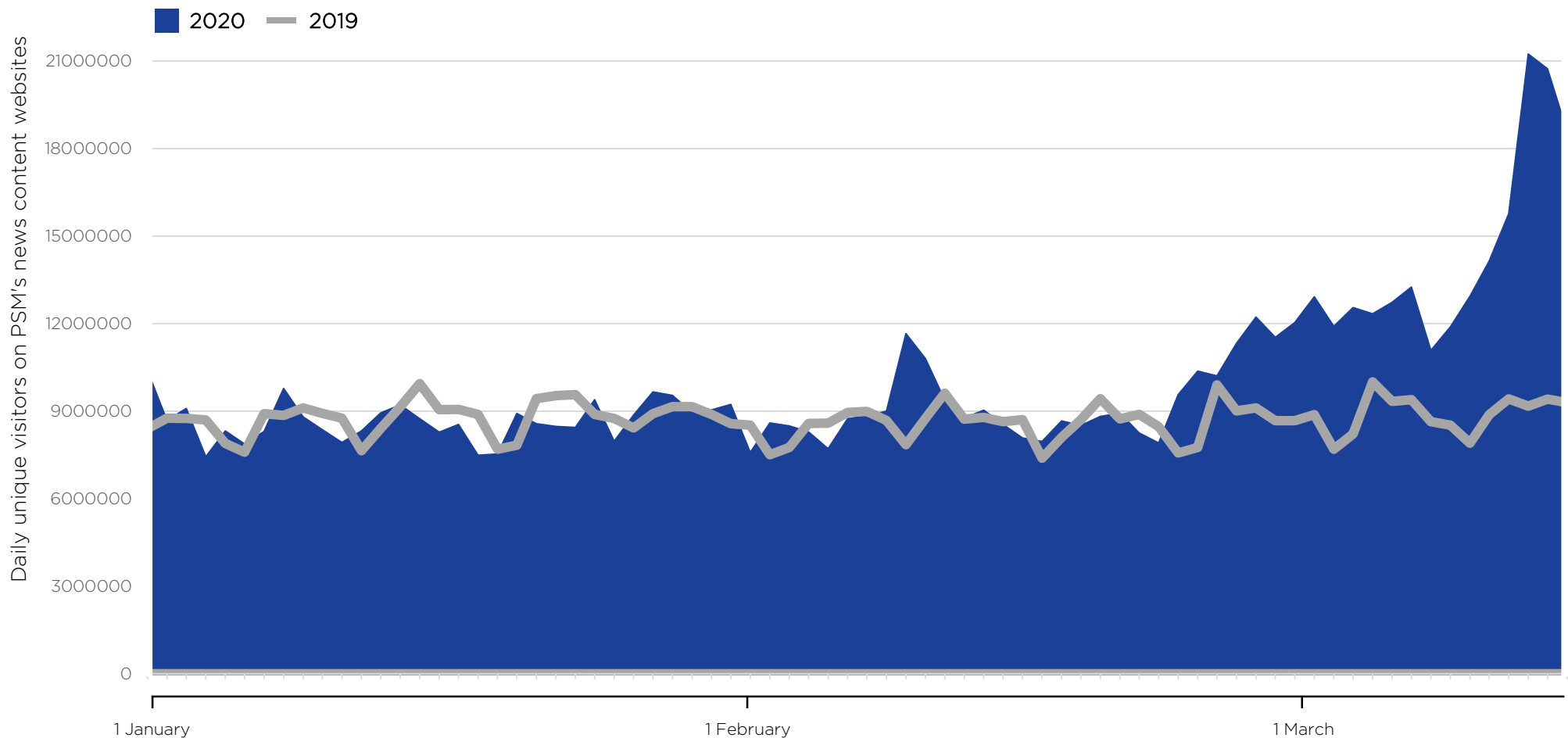


# PSM daily reach of online news website **up x2.7** as citizens turn to trusted news sources during COVID-19 crisis



# THE MORE DRAMATIC THE CRISIS BECOMES, THE MORE CITIZENS TURN TO PSM ONLINE

People visited PSM's website to read, listen and watch news content amid the COVID-19 crisis. The number of unique visitors started to significantly increase in the end of February to reach a peak on March 12 with more than 21 million unique visitors for news content.

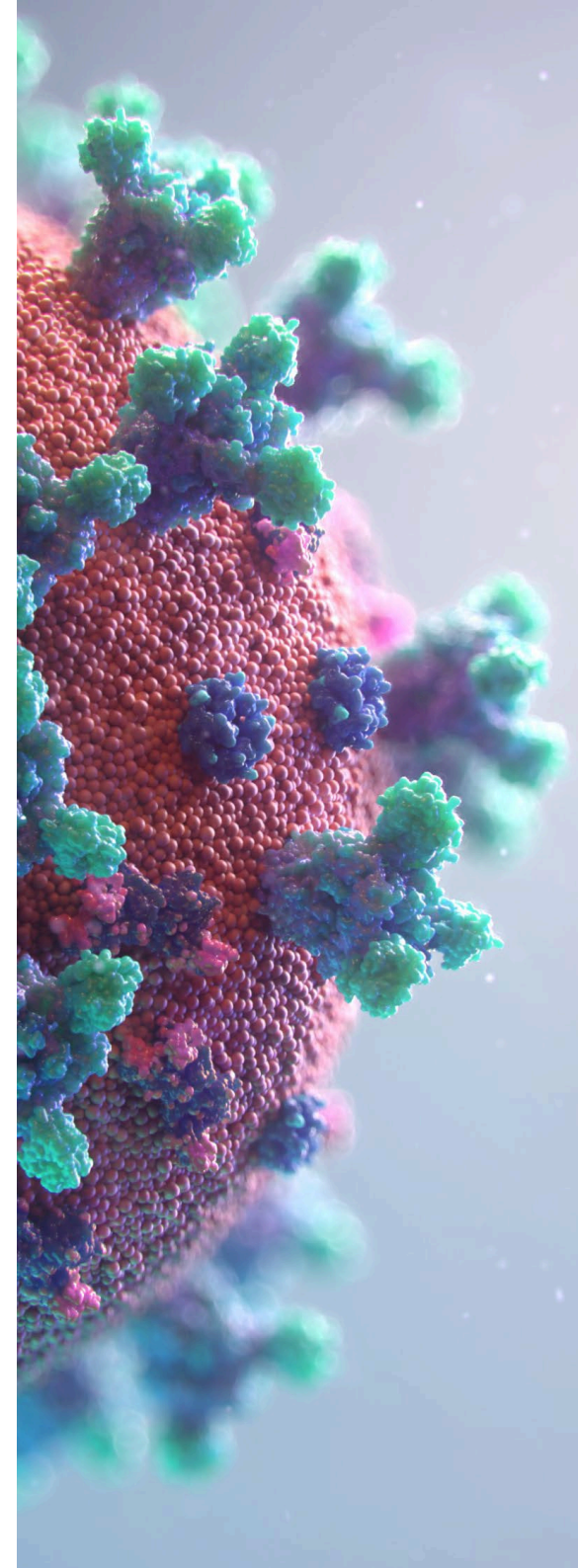


Source: EBU based on Members' data - data for PSM's news content websites - excluding BBC (UK), RTVE (Spain), ERR (Estonia), ZDF (Germany). For Rai (Italy) unique visitors include apps, For RTVS (Slovakia) all the website's content is included.

# DEDICATED COVID-19 CONTENT

Putting the needs of the citizens at the center, PSM have reacted quickly to the challenges of the pandemic by modifying their programs and offers at fast speed.

The following section presents a summary of the plethora of measures EBU members have taken. Far from being comprehensive, it provides some key inspiring examples of how PSM content has been adapted.





# FULFILLING THE PSM REMIT IN TIMES OF CRISIS



**INFORM**

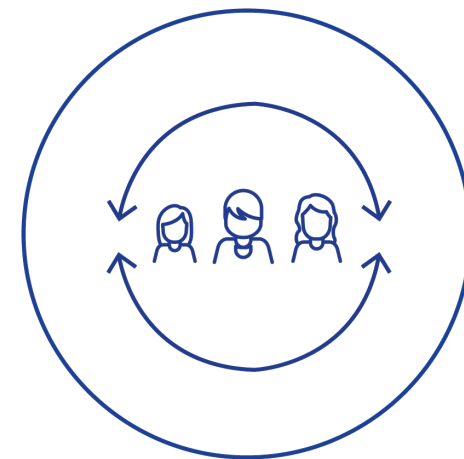


**EDUCATE**



**ENTERTAIN**

**+**



**SUPPORT**

**Traditional components of PSM remit**

**Even higher importance  
of PSM  
social responsibility  
in times of crisis**

# INFORM



## **CITIZENS HAVE TRUSTED AND TIMELY COVERAGE OF COVID-19 CRISIS THANKS TO PSM**

EBU members have extended the number of news broadcasts, providing regular prime-time special broadcasts, fighting misinformation surrounding the virus, giving airtime to government declarations and press conferences.

PSM also broadcast medical advice from experts, dedicated talk shows or have created special Covid-19 podcasts - to just name a few of the manifold examples.

In many cases, information programming is open for audience participation, allowing citizens to address their most pressing issues and ask urgent questions during a period of uncertainty.

# INFORM: EXAMPLES OF DEDICATED COVID-19 CONTENT



**ARD** <sup>1</sup>

In Germany, ARD established the daily primetime special "ARD Extra", offering interviews with experts and politicians, reports from across the country and explanatory content.

**BBC**

In the UK, the BBC announced regular radio phone-ins with listeners questions on its 5 Live radio station as well as open phone lines and expert advice for local communities between 6am and midday at local radio breakfasts.

**DR**

In Denmark, DR broadcasts special emissions of its medical TV show "Lægens Bord". Viewers can ask questions to DR's own health expert and other experts. Until further notice, DR1 offers this service as an extension of its evening news show "TV Avisen" from Monday to Thursday. The first two episodes reached market shares of around 30%, better than average at that programming slot.

**NDR**  
**radiofrance**  
**BBC**

Several broadcasters have created dedicated podcasts to inform about the crisis. In "Das Coronavirus-Update mit Christian Drosten", German PSM NDR talks to a renowned virologist daily. "Radiographies du Coronavirus" (France Culture) sheds light on the pandemic from a scientific perspective, too. "The Coronavirus Newscast" from BBC discusses the most recent developments.

Source: EBU based on Members' information.

# EDUCATE



## CHILDREN AND YOUTH CAN NOW ACCESS A HUGELY INCREASED EDUCATIONAL OFFER FROM PSM

Following the closure of schools in many countries, educational content has been newly gathered or even created by a lot of PSM organizations within notably short time.

PSM provide support to learn from home and help kids to maintain routines. Children and educational programming hours are extended, educational content is spread throughout TV, radio, online platforms and social media. Some EBU members cooperate with education authorities or teachers' unions to provide remote schooling material, others develop content helping parents to teach at home.

An extensive list of EBU PSM dedicated Covid-19 content in this field can be found [here](#). Recommendations on children's programming during the crisis are available [here](#).

# EDUCATE: EXAMPLES OF DEDICATED COVID-19 CONTENT



In Austria, ORF has developed the three-hours-TV show “Freistunde” starting at 9am on weekdays, compiling documentaries and an exclusively created news show (“ZIB Zack”). Students and teachers are invited to participate in the programming through videos.



Lessons for elementary school are aired on channel RTS 3 in Serbia from 8am to 8pm. Classes for secondary school are provided at the online platform “RTS Planeta”.



In Spain, RTVE launched the tool “EduClan” as a web and mobile application and on connected TVs, gathering videos covering topics from all school subjects. RTVE works together with the Spanish Ministry of Education and educational publishers.



France TV announced far-ranging educational programming, including the newly-created daily magazine “La Maison Lumni” for children aged 8 to 12 years.

# ENTERTAIN



## PSM PROVIDE RELEASE FOR THOSE CITIZENS CONFINED AT HOME

Across the EBU area, PSM organizations intend to entertain their audiences, in many cases forced to stay at home alone and deprived of many used-to leisure activities.

While cultural and sports events are being cancelled, PSM programming allows the public to attend all the same. PSM use their well-filled archives to distract their audiences, but also invite artists to come up with new (living room) recordings. Some members have even created new TV channels to keep their audiences in good mood.

Some EBU members have increased the number of religious services broadcasts to fill the gap left by the cancellation of religious events, providing believers with an opportunity to assemble all the same.

# ENTERTAIN: EXAMPLES OF DEDICATED COVID-19 CONTENT



In Italy, RAI launched a new TV sports channel with archived sports events to fill the content gap in that area of programming, with (almost) all main national and international events cancelled. It is on air between midday hours and midnight every day.



The BBC announced a “virtual festival of the art” named “Culture in Quarantine” across radio and TV channels and online platforms “to give British culture an audience that can’t be there in person”, including e.g. performances, guides to shuttered exhibitions, or quarantine diaries from creative visionaries.



Created the label “Miteinander stark” (“Stronger together”) to assemble a variety of content aiming, amongst others, to entertain citizens who need to stay at home. This includes a social media challenge inviting artists to record music videos at their homes as well as two additional TV hit shows to be aired in March and a special entertainment show in April.



Czech TV has created the new linear channel “CT3” for elderly people starting on 23 March, aiming to provide the most vulnerable in society with content tailored to their needs and newly produced magazines. According to CEO Petr Dvořák, CT wants to bring the audience a good mood and evoke pleasant memories.

# SUPPORT



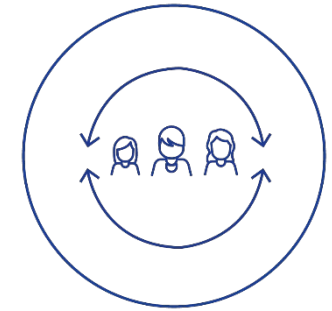
## PSM FOSTER SOLIDARITY BY SUPPORTING CITIZENS AND INDUSTRIES

EBU members stimulate local help across people in a community in times of confinement and quarantine. They support creatives who are severely put at risk due to shrinking incomes.

PSM take over responsibility and contribute to solutions which allow society to tackle this unprecedented crisis – be it through changes in programming or other measures aimed to support those in need.



# SUPPORT: EXAMPLES OF MEASURES TAKEN BY PSM DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS



**SRF**

In the German-speaking part of Switzerland, SRF increases the amount of Swiss music played across its radio channels to support local artists during the crisis. At SRF3, an average amount of 50% Swiss music shall be reached.

**yle**

In Finland, Yle announced investments in cultural content, offering home-theater experiences that bring Finns together and support diverse cultural offerings under exceptional circumstances.



The two German public broadcasters, ARD and ZDF, announced to step in for fifty percent of the crisis-caused extra costs of production companies working on commissioned productions.



Under the umbrella “Make A Difference”, BBC local radio stations will join up with local volunteer groups to help co-ordinate support for the elderly, housebound or at risk, providing people with information about what help is available in their area.

# WHAT SHOULD I READ NEXT?

## DEMOCRACY & PSM

'Democracy & PSM' demonstrates how countries with robust public service broadcasting systematically rank higher in core democratic indicators. Our correlations show the benefits associated with a strong and well-funded public broadcaster.

The research shows that in countries where PSM is well-funded and enjoys a high market share:

- People are more active in politics
- There is more political stability and an absence of violence
- Corruption is under control



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MIS provides Member broadcasting organizations with the latest market data, research and analysis needed to plan their future strategies and stay ahead of the game.

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.

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