

# UEFA NATIONAL ASSOCIATION RESEARCH

**FOOTBALL FEDERATION OF MACEDONIA** 







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#### RESEARCH SCOPE

#### **UEFA GROW RESEARCH PROGRAMME**

#### **METHOD**



- The fieldwork was conducted using CATI methodology
- Fieldwork took place between 7<sup>th</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020.
  - The 2016 wave was also completed via CATI methodology and took place between 21<sup>st</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016
- The average length of interviews was 27 mins

#### **SAMPLE GROUP**



- 1015 nationally representative respondents per market
- Representative on age / gender & region within each market

#### **SURVEY CONTENT**



 The same questionnaire script as used in all UEFA Grow projects was used

Questionnaire contents include

- Sports Interest / participation / barriers / (for men, women and children)
- Competition interest and imagery
- Football Following (including attendance)
- Club and National Team following and perception
- National Association image perception
- Sports & Football media consumption
- Country specific questions
- COVID-19 section



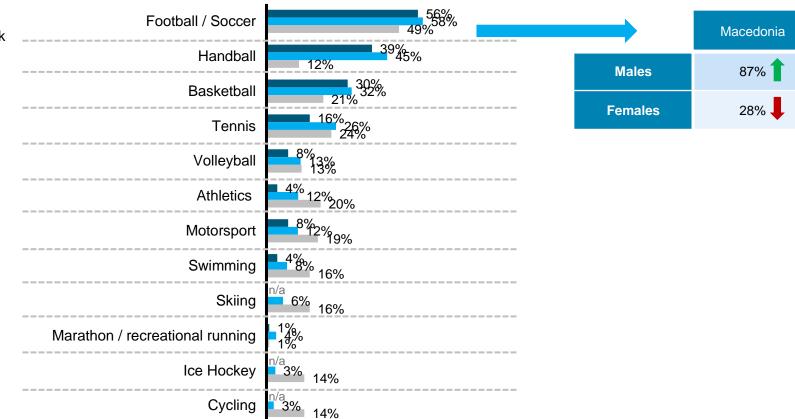
#### **SPORTS INTEREST**

Football is by far the most popular sport in Macedonia with 58% of the general population showing an interest. Interest has increased slightly since 2016 (when it was 56%).



Macedonia 2020

■ European Benchmark



European

**Benchmark** 

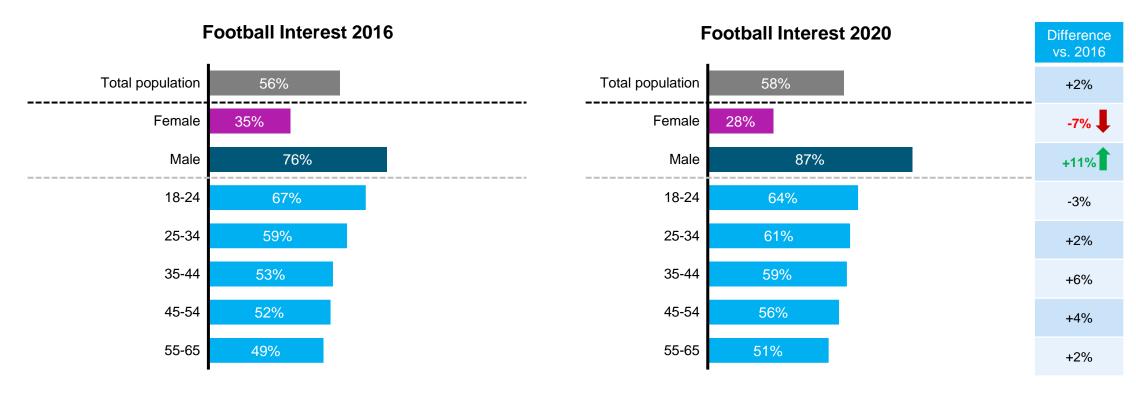
64%

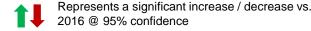
35%

#### SPORTS INTEREST OVER TIME

#### **SPLIT BY GENDER AND AGE**

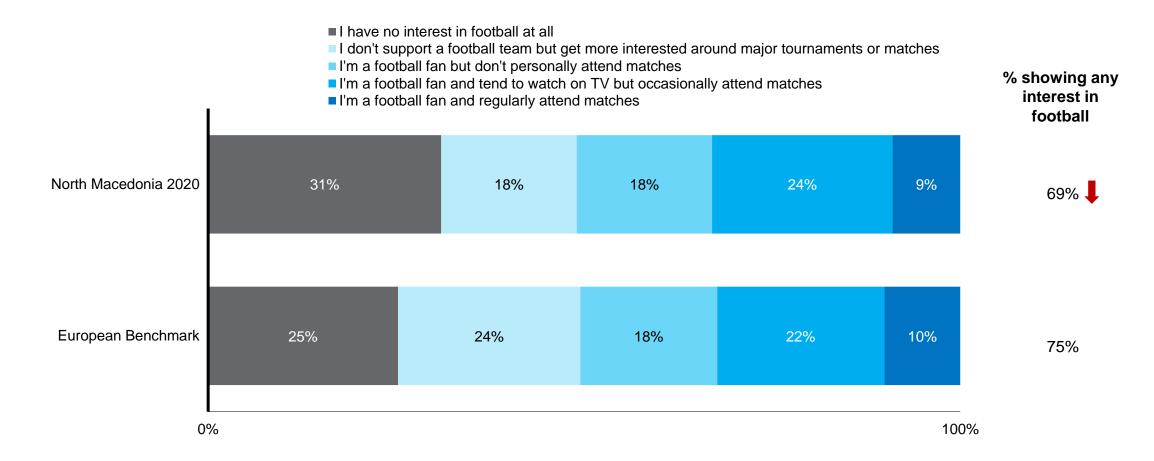
While male interest in football has significantly increased since 2016, female interest dropped from 35% to 28%. Football interest slightly dropped among 18-24 years old (67% vs 64%).





#### **FOOTBALL INTEREST**

69% of the Macedonian population show an interest in football; this is significantly lower than the European benchmark (75%).



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# 2. FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION ADULTS & CHILDREN



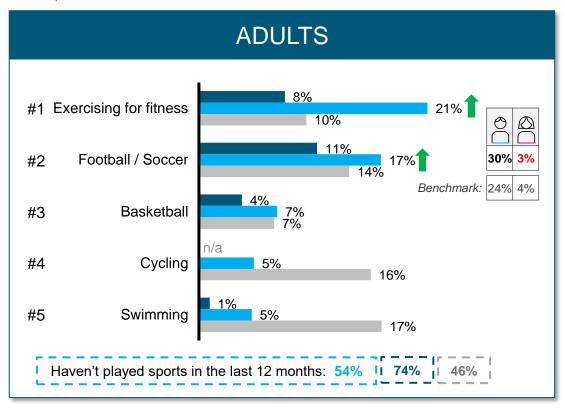


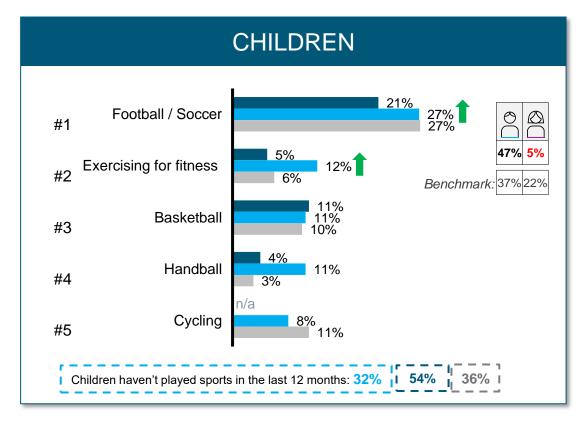


#### **SPORTS PARTICIPATION: ADULTS & CHILDREN**

For adults, football is the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest participation activity in Macedonia (17%), behind exercise (21%). For children, football (27%) is the biggest participation sport by a significant margin. Football participation for girls is significantly below the European average (5% vs. 22%).

- Macedonia 2016
- Macedonia 2020
- European Benchmark



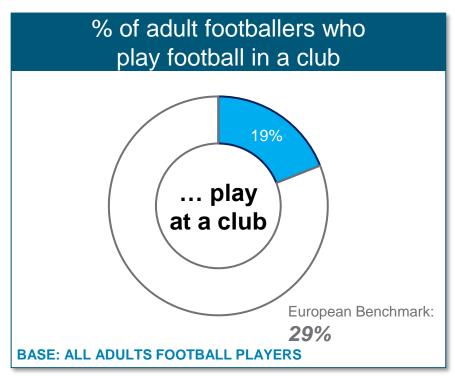


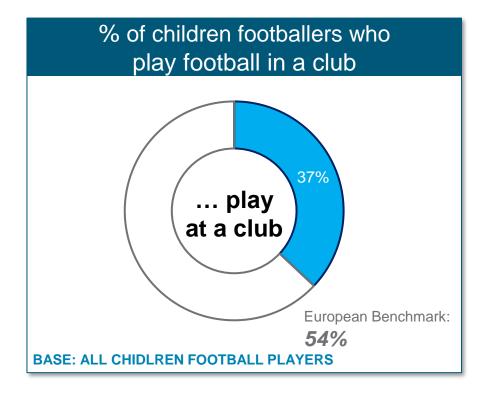
#### **CLUB FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION**

#### **ADULTS VS CHILDREN**

Registered football participation in Macedonia is low among both adults and children. 19% of adult football players in Macedonia play at a club (European benchmark 29%) while 37% of children football players play at a club (European benchmark 54%).

- Macedonia 2020
- European Benchmark

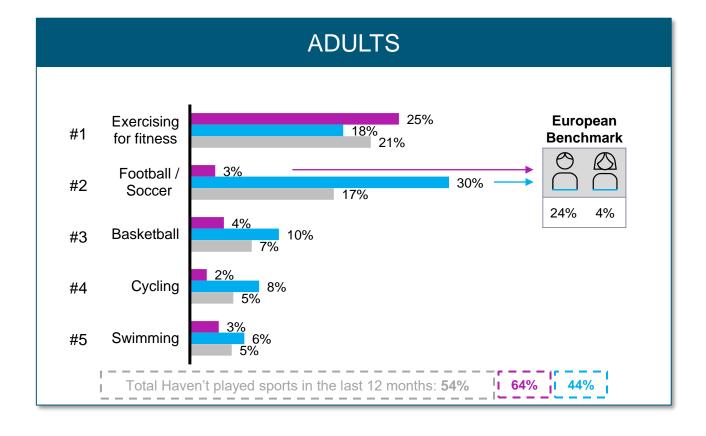




#### SPORTS PARTICIPATION: ADULTS BY GENDER

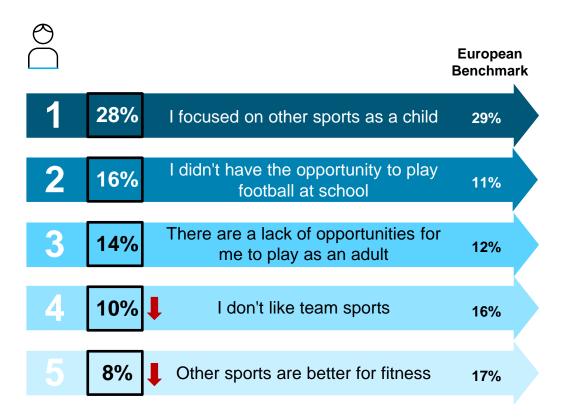
Male football participation in Macedonia is significantly above the European average (30% vs. 24%). However, football participation for women (3%) is slightly below the European average (4%). For women, exercise for fitness is by far the number one participation activity (25%).

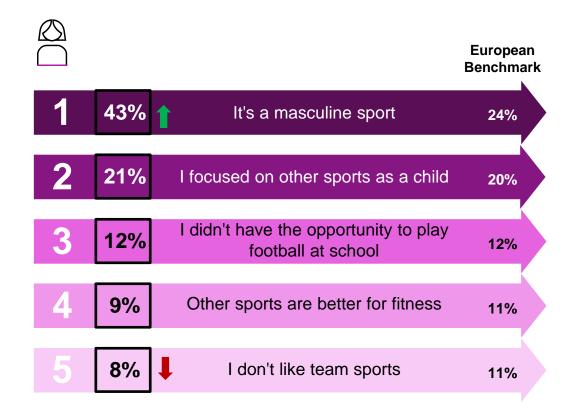




#### BARRIERS TO FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION: ADULTS

Being focused on other sports as a child is the top barrier to playing football for males (28%) and the second biggest barrier for females (21%). For men, not having the opportunity to play at school is also a big barrier (16%) while, for women, the clear biggest barrier is the perception that football is a masculine sport (43%).

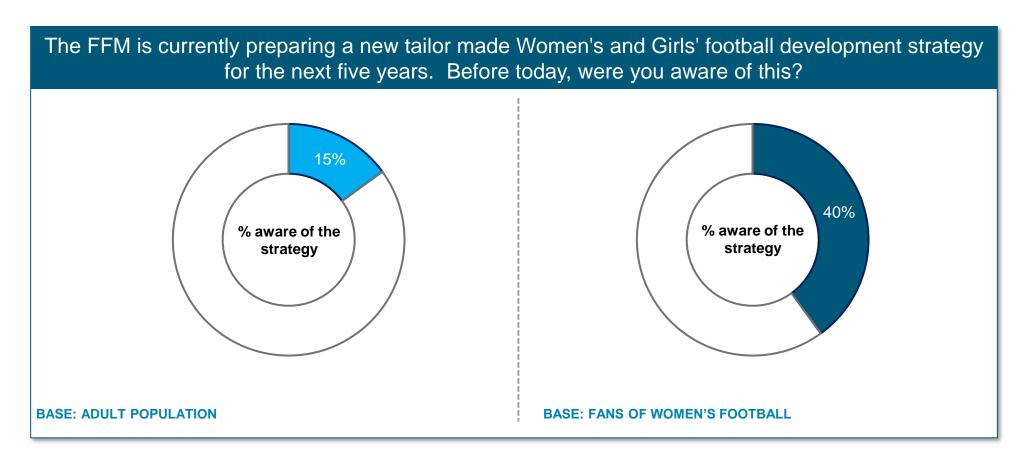




#### **WOMEN'S FOOTBALL AWARENESS**

#### **ADULT POPULATION & FANS OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL**

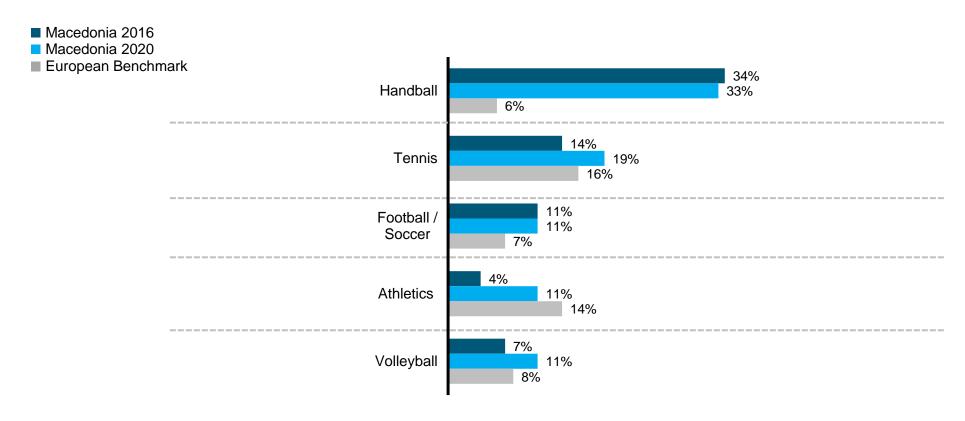
15% of the adult population were aware that the FFM is preparing a new female football development strategy. This rises to 40% among fans of women's football.





#### **WOMEN'S SPORTS INTEREST**

Interest in women's football has remained stable since 2016 (11%); it is significantly higher than the European average (7%). Women's football is the joint 3<sup>rd</sup> most popular women's sport behind handball (33%) and tennis (19%).

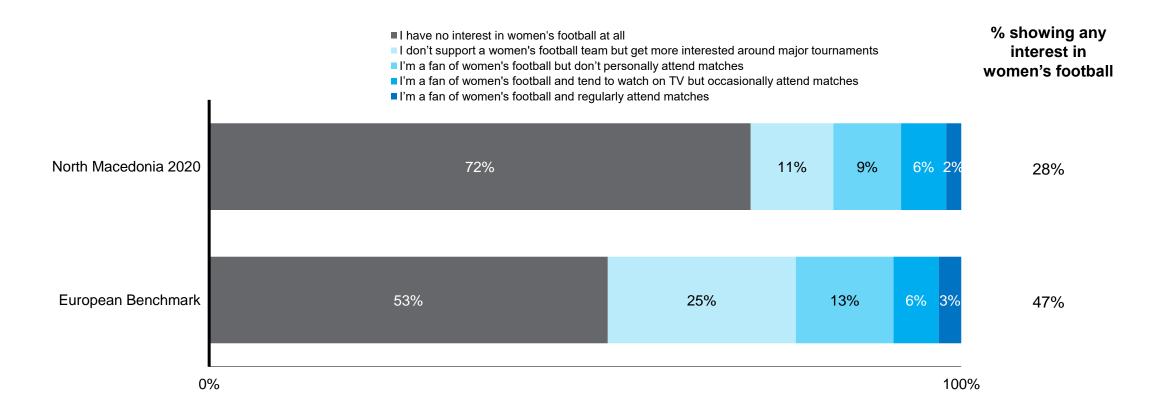


<sup>\*</sup>Interest is defined as "interest in women's competitions" and "interest in both men and women's competitions"

<sup>\*</sup>Sport following is defined as "anything from supporting a team / player through to watching the sport on TV, reading about in newspapers or online"

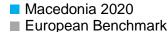
#### WOMEN'S FOOTBALL INTEREST

Just over a quarter (28%) of the adult population show some interest in women's football – significantly below the European average (47%).

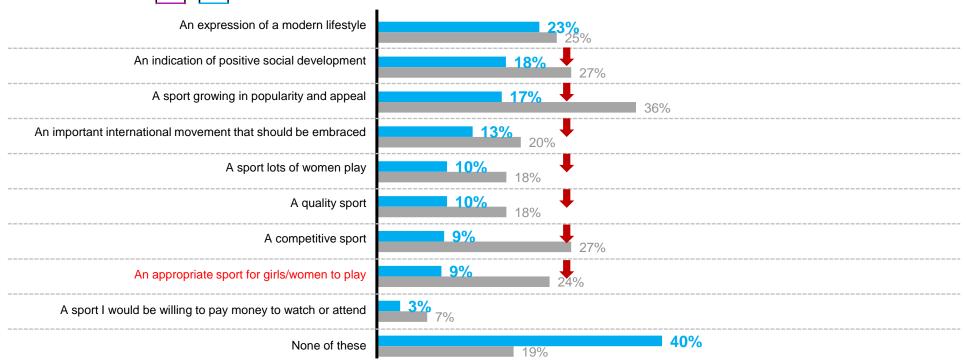


#### ATTITUDES TO WOMEN'S FOOTBALL (%)

Just under a quarter (23%) of Macedonians agree that women's football is an expression of a modern lifestyle and 18% agree that it is an indication of positive social development. However just 9% believe that is an appropriate sport for girls/women to play (vs. 24% benchmark).

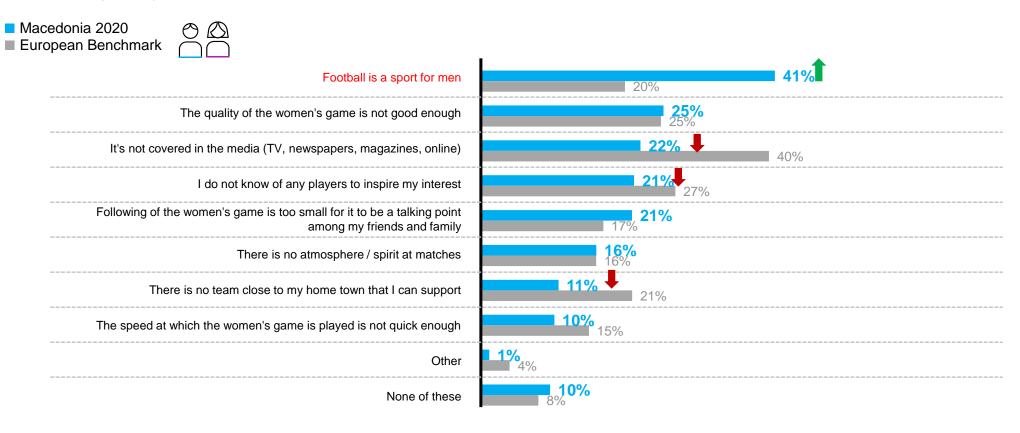






#### BARRIERS TO FOLLOWING WOMEN'S FOOTBALL (%)

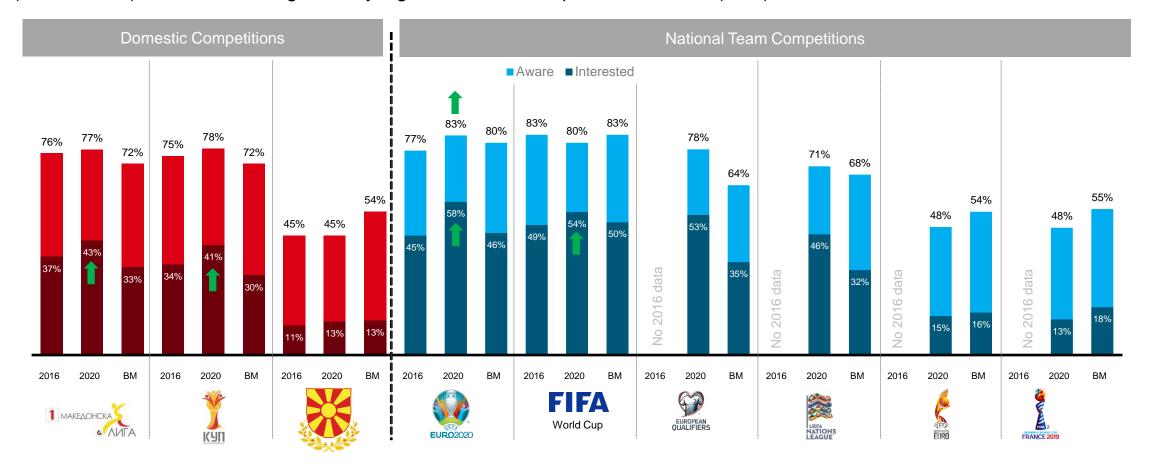
The biggest barrier to following women's football is the perception that football is a sport for men (41% vs. benchmark score of 20%). A quarter (25%) also mention a lack of quality while 21% say that they don't know of any players to inspire interest.





### AWARENESS & INTEREST: DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS ADULT POPULATION

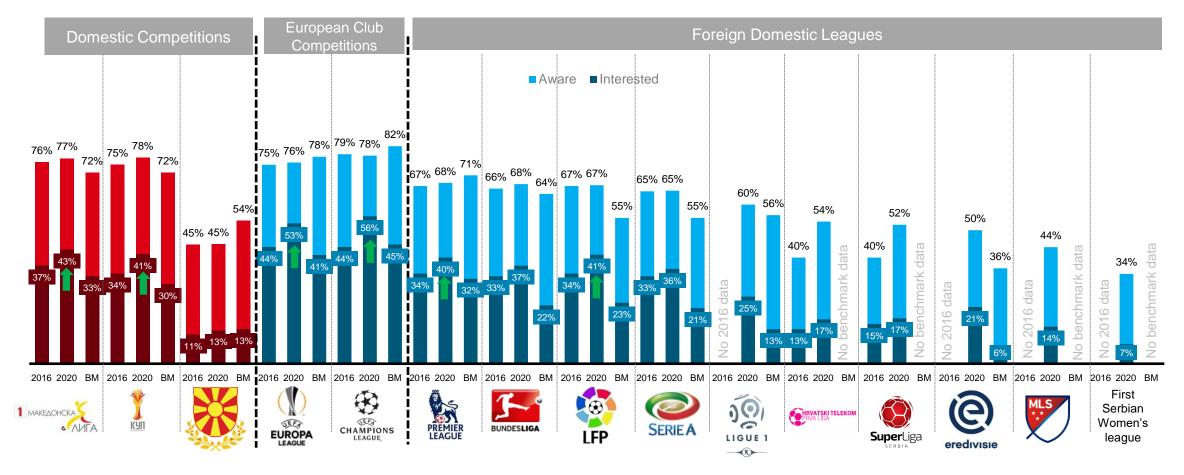
Interest in all 3 domestic Macedonian leagues has increased since 2016 – significantly so for the Macedonian First Football League (43% vs. 37%) and the Macedonian Football Cup (41% vs. 34%). Both of these scores are significantly higher than the European benchmarks (33% and 30% respectively). Interest in UEFA EURO has increased significantly since 2016 (58% vs 45%) while it is also significantly higher than the European benchmark (46%).



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## AWARENESS & INTEREST: DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS ADULT POPULATION

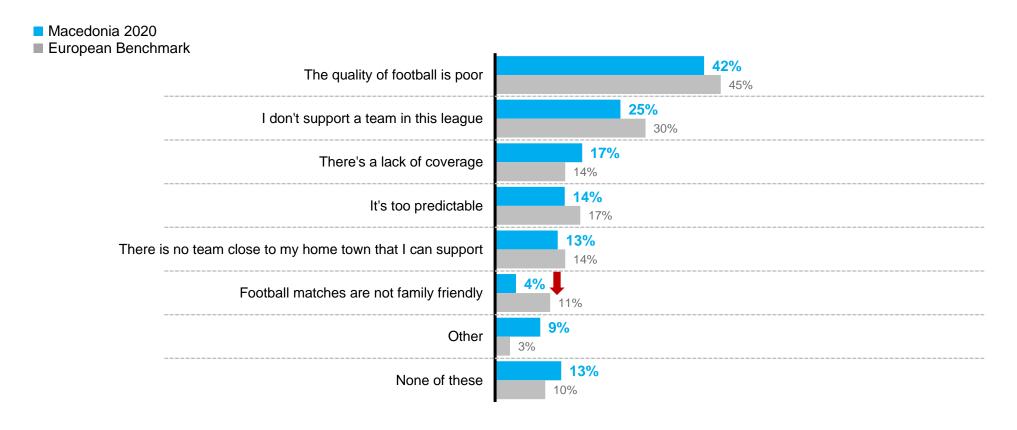
Interest in The Macedonian First Football League (43%) is behind only the UEFA Champions League (56%) and the UEFA Europa League (53%) in terms of the European men's domestic club competitions.



#### REASONS FOR LACK OF INTEREST IN THE MACEDONIAN FIRST FOOTBALL LEAGUE

#### **FOOTBALL FANS (%)**

Among football fans, the biggest reason for a lack of interest in the Macedonian First Football League is by far the poor quality of football (42%). This is in line with the European benchmark (45%). 25% said they don't support a team in the league (slightly below the European benchmark of 30%).

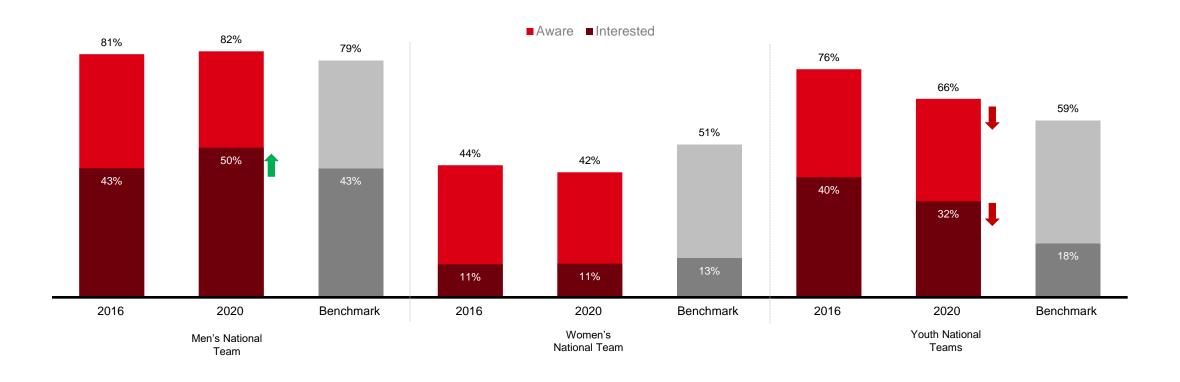




#### NATIONAL TEAM AWARENESS AND INTEREST

#### **ADULT POPULATION**

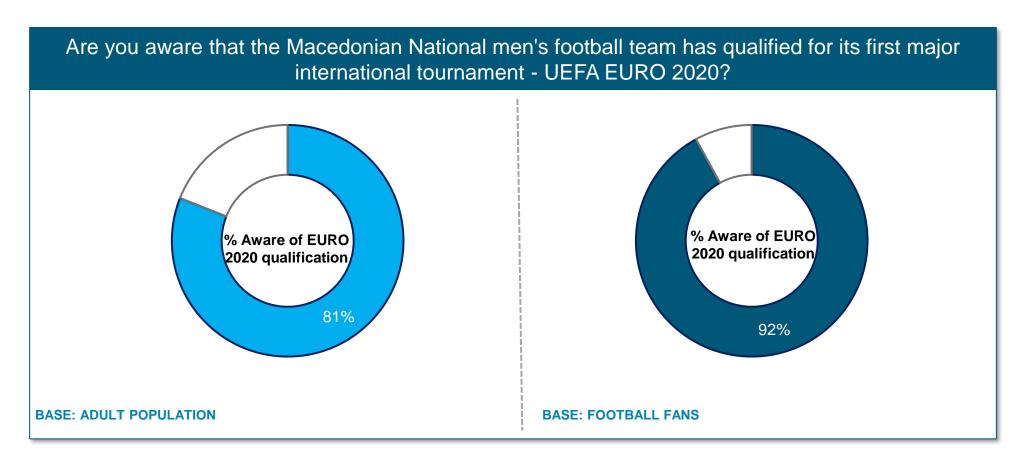
Interest in the Men's National Team has increased significantly since 2016 (50% vs 48%). Interest for the Women's National Team is flat while there have been significant decreases for Youth National Teams (32% vs 40%). Interest in the Youth National team remains significantly higher than the benchmark (18%).



#### **UEFA EURO 2020: QUALIFICATION AWARENESS**

#### **ADULT POPULATION & FOOTBALL FANS**

Over 4 in 5 Macedonians (81%) are aware that the Men's National Team has qualified for UEFA EURO 2020; this rises to 92% among football fans.



FFM1: Are you aware that the Macedonian National men's football team has qualified for its first major international tournament - UEFA EURO 2020 - following a play off win against Georgia on November 12th?

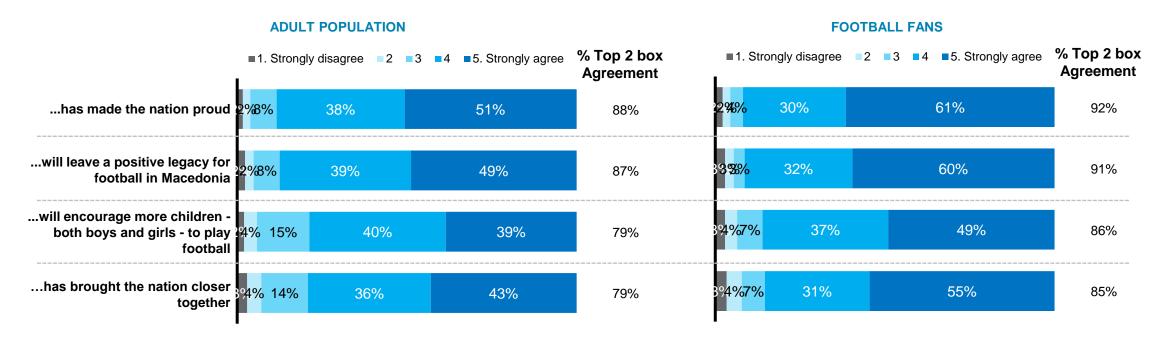
Base: All respondents 2020 (1015) Football Fans (587)

#### **UEFA EURO 2020: QUALIFICATION IMPACT**

#### **ADULT POPULATION & FOOTBALL FANS**

Almost 9 in 10 Macedonians (88%) agree that the men's national team's qualification for UEFA EURO 2020 has made the nation proud while 87% agree that it will leave a positive legacy for football in the country. The corresponding figures for football fans are 92% and 91% respectively.

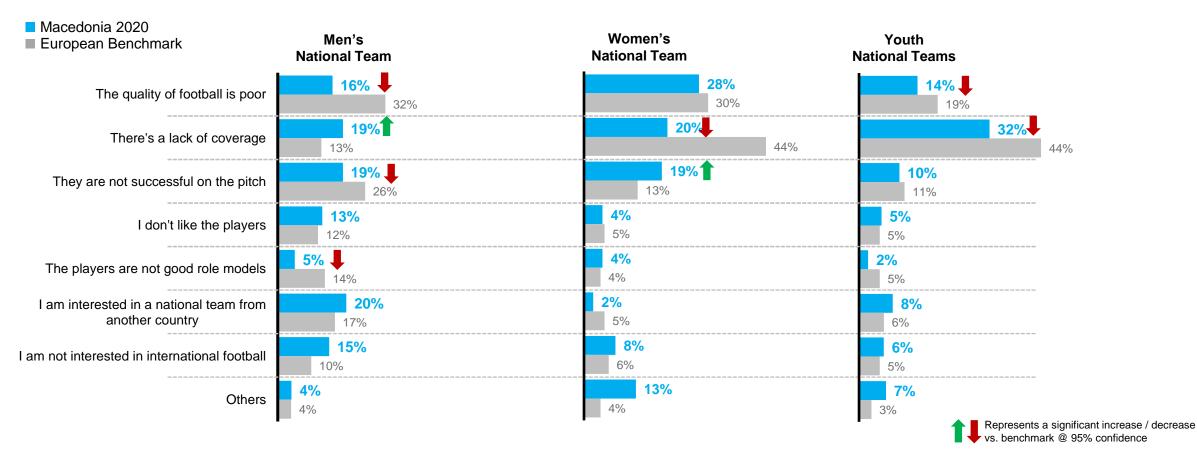
The success of the men's football team in qualifying for UEFA EURO 2020...



#### REASONS FOR LACK OF INTEREST IN NATIONAL TEAMS

#### FOOTBALL FANS NOT INTERESTED IN EACH TEAM (%)

The biggest reason for a lack of interest in the Men's National Team is an interest in a national team of another country (20%) followed by a lack of coverage and being unsuccessful (both 19%). The main reason for not following the Youth National Teams is a lack of coverage (32%) while a lack of quality is the biggest interest barrier for the women's national team (28%).





# 6. FFM PERCEPTIONS & COMMUNICATIONS

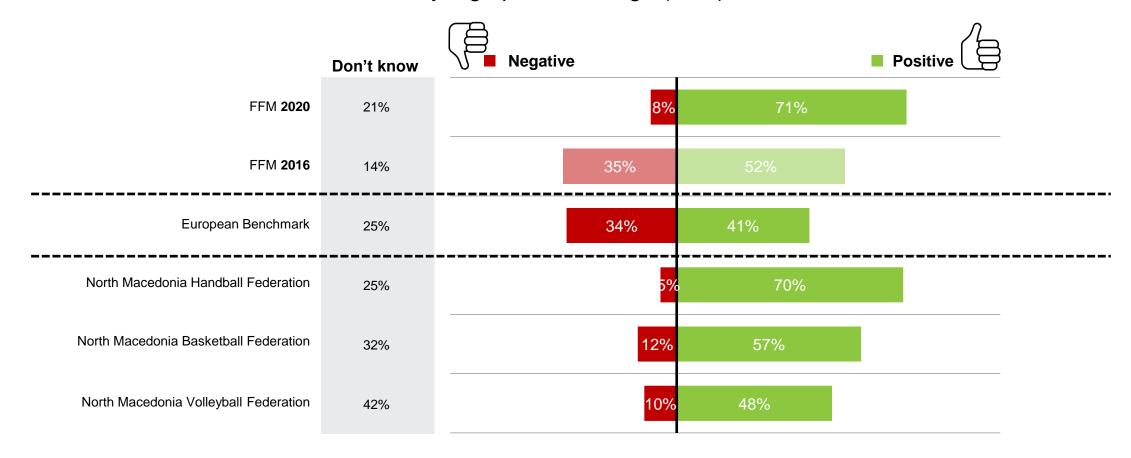






#### **IMAGE OF SPORTING ORGANISATIONS (%)**

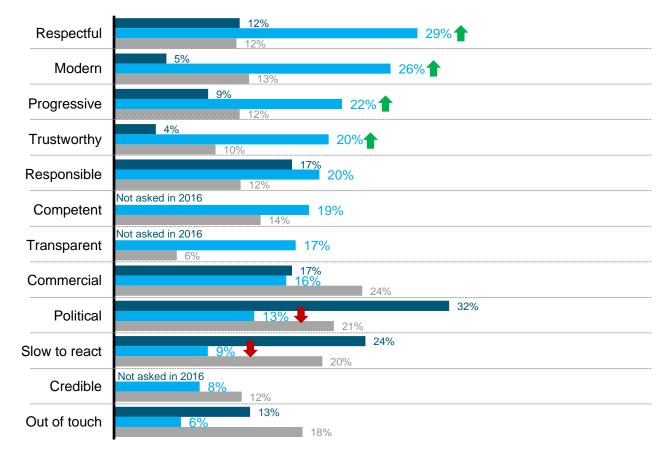
71% believe that the FFM has a positive overall image which is a big improvement and a significant increase vs. 2016 (52%) positive. Scores are now significantly above the European benchmark (41%). The Handball Federation has a similarly high positive image (70%).



#### FOOTBALL FEDERATION OF MACEDONIA IMAGERY

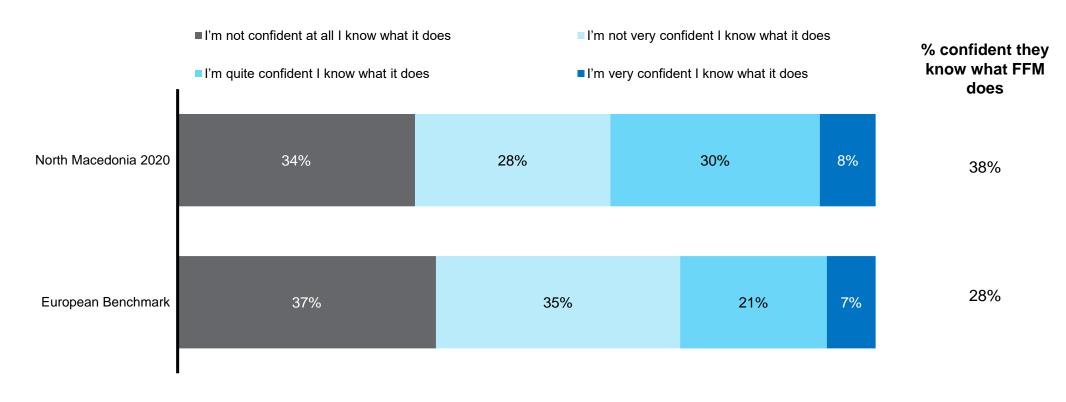
Positive perceptions of the FFM have increased significantly since 2016. The Federation is now most closely associated with being Respectful (29% vs. 12% in 2016), Modern (26% vs. 5%), Progressive (22% vs. 9%), and trustworthy (20% vs. 4%). Negative perceptions have also decreased significantly (e.g. political & slow to react).





#### **AWARENESS OF ORGANISATIONAL ACTIVITY**

Almost 4 in 10 (38%) are confident that they know what the Macedonian Football Federation does. This is significantly higher than the European average (28%).

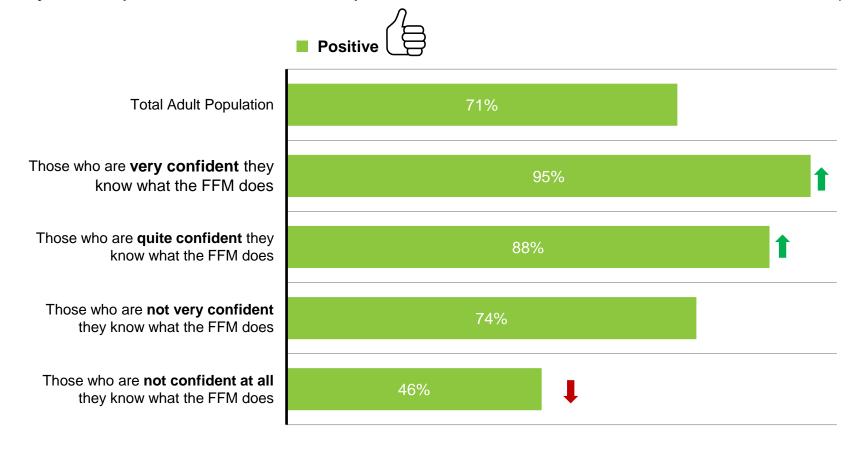


Represents a significant increase / decrease vs. European benchmark @ 95% confidence

#### IMAGE OF FOOTBALL FEDERATION OF MACEDONIA

#### IMPACT OF KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT THE FFM DOES

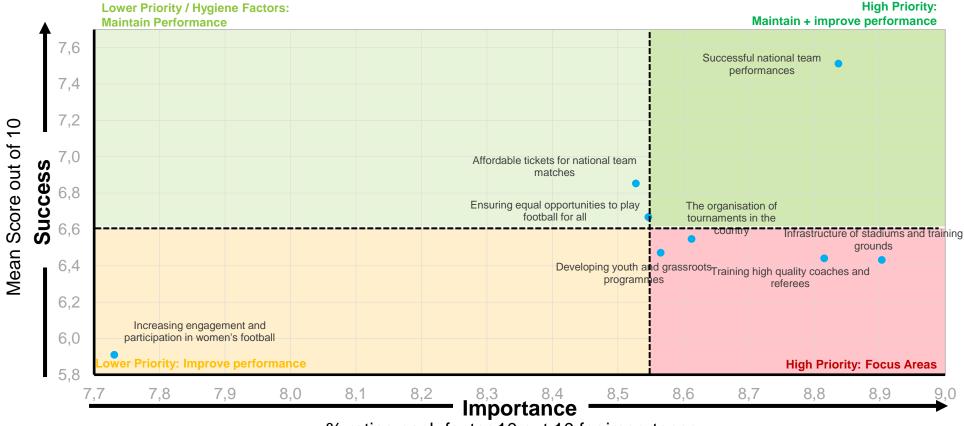
Those who are either very (95%) or quite (88%) confident they know what the FFM does are significantly more positive about it compared to those who are not confident at all (46%).



#### IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS VS. SUCCESS OF FFM

#### **FOOTBALL FANS**

The FFM's best performance is in relation to the second highest priority – successful national team performances. High priority areas for the FFM include football infrastructure and the training of high quality coaches and referees.



% rating each factor 10 out 10 for importance

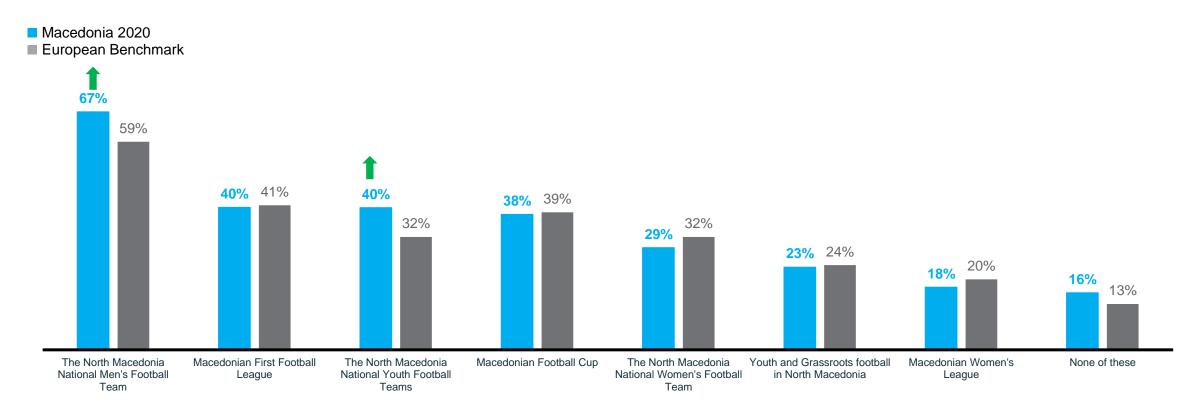
NA9. How important are each of these factors in running a successful football federation?

NA10. How do you rate the success of the Football Federation of Macedonia in each of the following?

Base: Football Fans (587)

## FOOTBALL PROPERTIES' ASSOCIATION TO THE MACEDONIAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION

Around 7 in 10 (67%) are aware of the connection between the Macedonian Football Federation and the Men's National Team – this is significantly higher than the European average (59%).

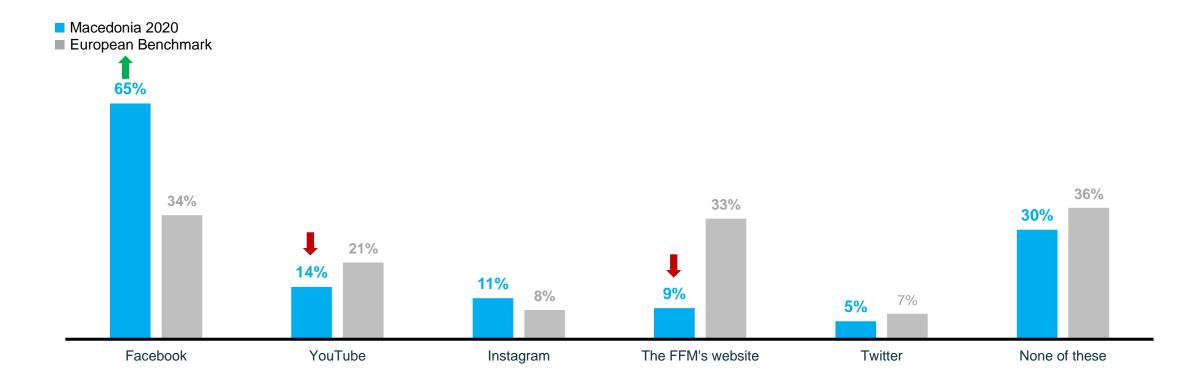


NA8: Which of the following, if any, do you associate with the Macedonian Football Federation? Base: All respondents 2020 (1015) Benchmark 2020 (39717)

#### **USAGE OF FFM'S COMMUNICATION CHANNELS (%)**

#### **AMONGST FOOTBALL FANS**

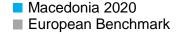
For football news, the most popular FFM owned media channel is Facebook (65%) followed by YouTube (14%). The FFM's website is an underused channel amongst football fans when compared to the European benchmark (9% vs. 33%). The FFM's Instagram account performs well vs. the European benchmark (11% vs 8%).

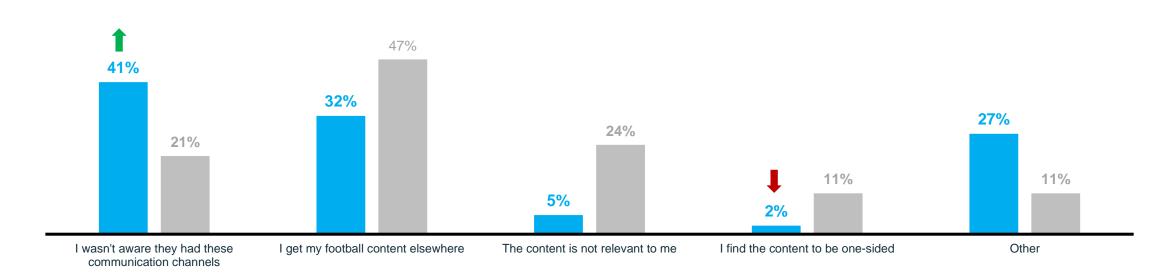


#### REASONS FOR NOT USING FFM COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

#### AMONGST FOOTBALL FANS WHO DO NOT USE FFM CHANNELS

The biggest reason why fans don't visit the Macedonian Football Federation's channels is that they simply weren't aware of them (41%). This lack of awareness is as significantly higher levels than the European benchmark (21%).

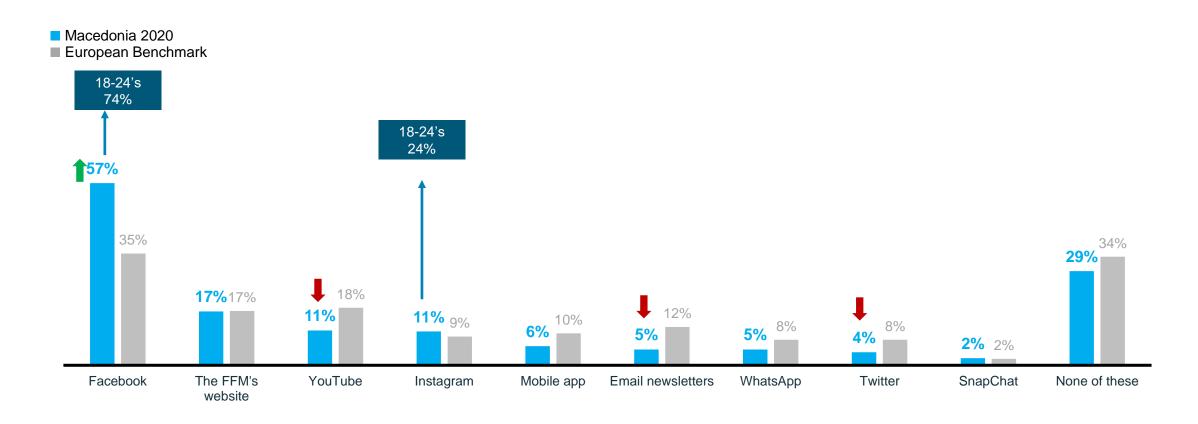




#### PREFERRED CHANNELS TO RECEIVE NEWS FROM THE FFM

#### **AMONGST FOOTBALL FANS**

Football fans would most like to receive news from the Macedonian Football Federation via Facebook (57%) and the FFM's website (17%). This is followed by YouTube and Instagram (both 11%).

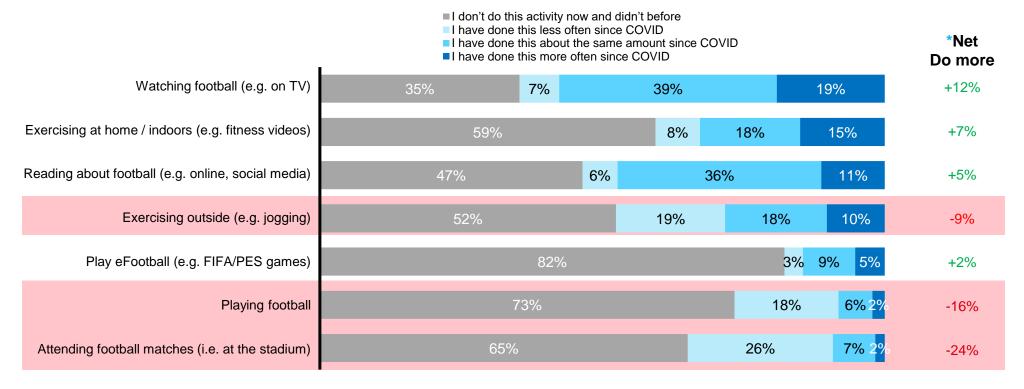




#### **COVID-19: IMPACT ON ACTIVITIES DONE SINCE**

Macedonians are watching more football on TV (+12%) than before the pandemic and also exercising more both at home / indoors and outdoors. However, people are playing football less frequently (-16%) and attending football matches less frequently (-24%).

For each, please indicate whether the COVID-19 pandemic has seen you do this more, less or the same amount as before



V4. We're going to show you some activities. For each, please indicate whether the COVID-19 pandemic has seen you do this more, less or the same amount as before.

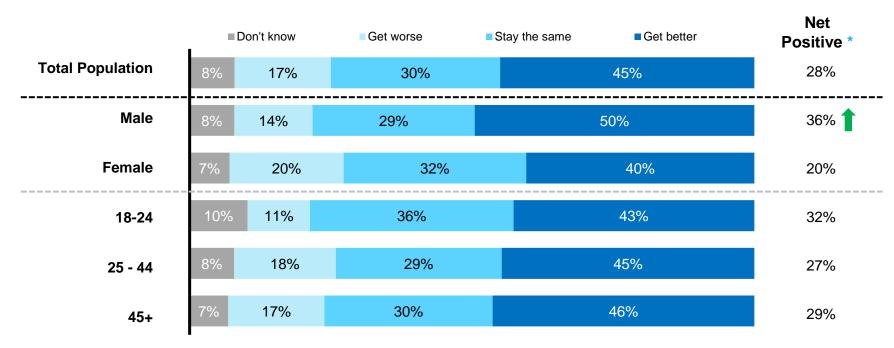
Base: All respondents (1015)

<sup>\*</sup> The % of people who do this more often minus those who do this less often

#### **COVID FUTURE OPINION**

Almost half of Macedonians (45%) think that the Covid-19 situation will improve in the next 6 months. Males (50%) are more likely than females (40%) to think that things will improve.

Thinking about the overall COVID-19 pandemic in Macedonia over the next 6 months, do you think the situation will...



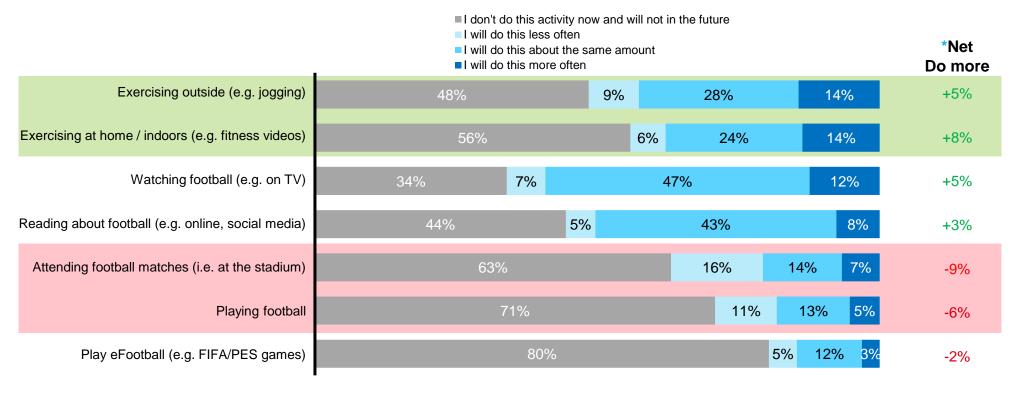
Represents a significant increase / decrease vs. total sample @ 95% confidence

V1. Thinking about the overall COVID-19 pandemic in Macedonia over the next 6 months, do you think the situation will... Base: All respondents (1015), Male (515), Female (500), 18-24 (136), 25-44 (456), 45+ (423)

#### **COVID-19: IMPACT ON FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

Even in 6 months time, people believe they will both be attending football matches less frequently (-9%) and playing less football (-6%).



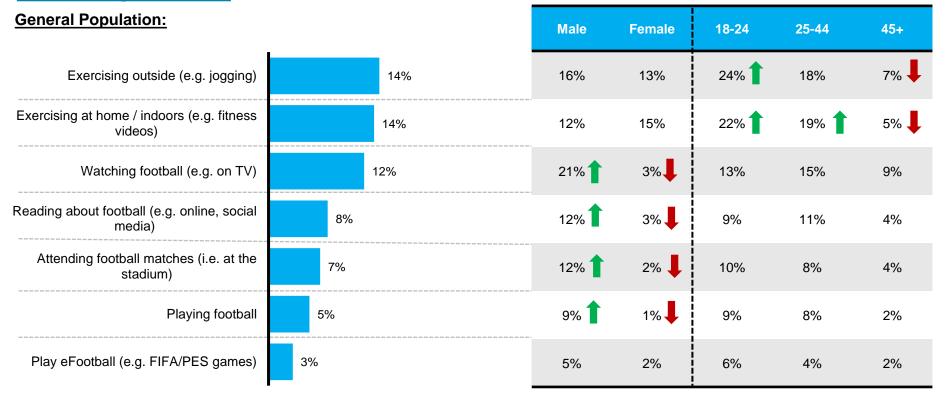


V5. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, do you think you will do this activity more or less in the next 6 months? Base: All respondents (1015)

#### **COVID-19: IMPACT ON FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

The younger age groups are more likely to continue to exercise more (both indoors and outside) in the next 6 months.

#### Activities will be doing more often in next 6 months:





#### **SUMMARY**

#### **Football Interest**

Football is #1 sport in Macedonia (58%); However, women's interest has declined (28% vs. 35%)

- The Men's National Team qualifying for UEFA EURO 2020 and the pride surrounding qualification provides an opportunity to boost overall interest even further
- The younger 18-24 audience has the highest interest in football maintain and improve by developing youth-focused strategies (e.g. be present with relevant content on relevant digital channels)
- The upcoming FFM Strategy and Women's and Girls' football strategy should address the shortfall in women's football interest

#### **Football Participation**

Football is the #2 participation sport for adults (17%) and #1 children (27%)

- Football participation has grown, but exercising has grown at a higher rate (also due to COVID-19 impact)
- In 6 month's time, people and children may be reticent to play football and to attend matches 🗪 Work with government, clubs and grassroots orgs to provide necessary reassurance
- For men, focus on grassroots initiatives to keep players from moving away from football and also to boost registered participation
- Biggest barrier to female participation is the perception that football is a masculine sport (43%) Address perceptions of football being a sport for men
- Boys' participation is strong Continue to invest in the Children's Leagues project and the School Football project to build participation and to encourage club registration
- Just 5% of girls aged 6-17 currently play promote football as sport for girls to play in school as part of the Women's and Girls' football development strategy

#### Women's Football

3 in 4 people have no interest in women's football; #3 sport behind handball (33%) and tennis (19%)

- 41% of the adult population do not follow women's football as they believe it is a sport for men while only 9% see it as an appropriate sport for girls/women to play The Women's & Girls' development strategy should incorporate a comms campaign challenging these cultural preconceptions
- Consider setting up workshops with local grassroots clubs / educators / Macedonian Women's League clubs in order to gather the opinions of relevant stakeholders
- Also focus on addressing below average interest in women's national team

#### **Domestic Football**

Macedonian First Football League interest up by +6%; Women's League interest in line with benchmark (13%)

- Macedonian First Football League: the youngest age groups (18-24s and 25-34s) have the highest interest Build on this by developing strategies to further engage with younger football fans. Ensure presence and individual content plans on relevant digital platforms
- Leverage high interest around the Men's National Team among 18-24s by framing the domestic league as the place where the next generation of superstars are beginning their careers
- Macedonian Women's League: In order to increase the league's profile among children/families and to boost attendance 🗪 Encourage links with local schools
- To build interest further among general football fans 🗪 Consider feasibility studies into whether the men's clubs could also incorporate women's teams

#### International Football

MNT interest has increased significantly since 2016 (from 43% to 50%)

- MNT interest could increase further with a comms campaign building up to the UEFA EURO 2020. Promotional activity around the national team should focus on success, excitement and pride
- After UEFA EURO 2020, FFM should focus on legacy initiatives that give all national teams the best chance of qualifying for other major tournaments in the future > Specific areas of focus should be the training of high quality coaches and referees, improving football infrastructure and developing youth grassroots football
- A lack of coverage is the 2nd biggest reason for a lack of interest in the Women's Team (28%) and the biggest reason for the Youth Teams (32%) Increase the volume and accessibility of content for both teams. Use the most relevant of FFM's own digital channels
- Increase interest in the youth national teams by showing path of MNT players who moved from the youth team to reach UEFA EURO 2020

#### FFM Image and Communications

71% believe that FFM has a positive overall image (sig increase vs. 2016: 52%)

- Greater knowledge of the FFM's role leads to a significantly improved FFM perception The challenge is to communicate the FFM's role and activities more widely
- Develop campaigns showcasing real initiatives achieving pre-defined and measurable goals related to the training of high quality coaches and referees and developing youth and grassroots programmes
- Increasing engagement and participation in women's football is seen as the lowest priority by the general population
   The Women's and Girls' football development strategy should address this issue
- FFM should develop a communications strategy to increase awareness of organisational activity



## DISCUSSION / NEXT STEPS







