[BA] Internet Penetration Rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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The Communications Regulatory Agency (*Regulatorna agencija za komunikacije* - RAK) recently published its research on the market of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2006.

The research questionnaire results were based on the sample of 43 licensed ISPs, showing that in 2006 in Bosnia and Herzegovina there were 237,660 Internet subscribers. An Internet user is, according to the International Telecommunications Union's (ITU) definition, any person aged 16-74 using the Internet during the year. Following this definition, the RAK assessed that the country had 950,000 Internet users in 2006. The Agency also estimates that the Internet penetration rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2006 was 24.5%.

Regarding the *modus operandi* of Internet access, the Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN), i.e. a system designed to allow digital transmission of voice and data via traditional telephone lines, was the dominant type. It represents 83.3% out of the total number of Internet subscribers, followed by 16.7% of broadband subscribers. As regards broadband Internet access, Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL), which is enabling faster data transmission via traditional telephone lines, attracts, so far, only 9.32% subscribers.

When compared to its neighbours - Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro - Bosnia and Herzegovina has substantially improved its Internet penetration rate, currently ranking next to Croatia (32.9%), and before Montenegro (17.6%) and Serbia (13.9 %).

These results differ from figures collected by Internet World Stats (IWS), an international website featuring free, up to date, worldwide Internet usage, population statistics and market research data for over 233 countries and territories (www.internetworldstats.com). According to the IWS, the Internet penetration rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina is 17.3%, however, this is based on there being 4,672,165 inhabitants, which is probably not a correct number. Despite the fact that there are no available facts (the last census was conducted in 1991), local estimations speculate that the total population in the country is less than 4 million.

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