

**EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION
THROUGH THE EYES OF THE SERBIAN
MEDIA - MYTHS VS. FACTS**

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From the Atlantic Council of Serbia

Dear readers,

We would like to take this opportunity and on behalf of the Atlantic Council of Serbia thank all of the workshop participants who have recognized the importance of the project 'Euro-Atlantic Integration: In the Eyes of Serbian Media - Myths and Facts', and who have shown their interest and responded to the invitation to participate. Furthermore, we are grateful to the U.S. Embassy Belgrade and NATO Public Diplomacy Division, the institutions that have supported and enabled this project. We would also like to thank you in advance for being a reader of this publication which represents the collection of the selected authorized texts of our participants; thank you for deciding to pay close attention to the issues of particular importance to our citizens, the media, our country and the society in general.

The research conducted in recent years has shown that the knowledge of an average citizen of the Republic of Serbia is not satisfactory when it comes to Euro-Atlantic integration as well as the cooperation of the Republic of Serbia with NATO and the EU. The lack of relevant, reliable and timely information as well as the insufficient knowledge of particular topics, practice and of the way the institutions work, will always be fertile ground for the emergence of a large number of prejudice, misinformation, partial information, and more and more often, complete untruths. Stereotypes, tendency to generalize, irrational suspiciousness, emotional and sentimental bias, often produce negative attitudes and opinions, which, accompanied with non-objective and uncritical judgment, are an obstacle to further social development and the creation of a stable environment.

For that reason, certain topics should be kept open and in the public eye all the time, thus enabling all citizens, along with the media, to become an important correction factor in the future processes. But for the citizens to be a correction factor, they need to receive accurate, objective and relevant information, which directly shows the role, the significance, but also the responsibility of the media and journalists in this field.

Therefore, the public's right is to know, and the right of journalists to ask and objectively inform citizens in order to protect public interest. The degree of the responsibility and the democracy of a society, depends on the extent to which the citizens can get information freely and form their own opinion on the basis of which they will make decisions later on.

Taking everything into account, in 2017, the Atlantic Council of Serbia has conducted a series of workshops, discussions and debates, dealing with the topics of the cooperation of the Republic of Serbia with NATO, 'the Balkan Question' in the context of the great powers, and the place that Euro-Atlantic integrations take in the local media, with the review of the experience of the countries in the region, but they have also covered other topics, such as the freedom of the media and the challenges of contemporary journalism, journalism ethics and the problems of objective reporting.

The main idea behind the process of creating this project was to bring together the students of journalism and young journalists who are beginning their professional careers, as well as the reputable journalists, the representatives of local and foreign media, the professors and analysts who deal with the issues of security and defense, so that all of them could discuss the above mentioned issues in the most direct and transparent manner possible.

We believe that it is a common interest of all of us, that, through a partnership, we fight against the falsehood, misinformation and stereotypes we are exposed to, in order to find the truth. Because truth is the foundation of every profession and all further standards are based on it. The truth about an event, a phenomenon or a process, apart from accuracy and relevance, must include understanding, and understanding implies knowledge.

We believe that, during the realization of this project and through quality discussions, lectures and debates, our participants have gained a better insight into the partnership and mutual cooperation that the Republic of Serbia has with NATO, but also into the position of local media and the challenges they face today. This publication is the result of their work, and I hope that, after reading the selected texts, you will gain a better insight into the subject matter as well.

Vlade Radulović
Executive Director of the Atlantic Council of Serbia

FOREWORD

The attitude of Serbian politicians is that signing the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) brings Serbia to NATO's doors, but the concept of military neutrality excludes NATO membership as a controversial move for public opinion. Regardless of the distance from the theme of membership, Serbia as a state assumed an official affirmative view of NATO by signing the IPAP. To quote the IPAP: "The Republic of Serbia intends to conduct an active and comprehensive information campaign on the most important issues in the field of defence sector reform, as well as on the nature, scope and benefits of cooperation with NATO within the Partnership for Peace, including IPAP."

Everyday political emphases and media representation of cooperation with other partners such as Russia and China as well as creating a mirage of the existence of alternative security-integrative processes such as the CSTO, have created a confusing picture of Serbia's position towards NATO in public opinion. At first glance, by following Serbian media, one could reach a conclusion that Serbia is on the front-line of a cold war, existing in the East-West gap in anticipation of a possible regional armed conflict. Countless articles that compare the capabilities of the armed forces of Serbia with those of Croatia and other countries of the region, encourage a paranoid atmosphere in public opinion and generate an image of a weapons race in which the countries of the region threaten each other with highly offensive combat systems.

The real political map depicts Serbia as an island in a sea of NATO members or countries that have ambitions to join their flags to the series of 29 masts in front of the Alliance's Brussels headquarters. The great discrepancy between the media representation and reality is drastically narrowing the manoeuvring space of the Serbian authorities in the presentation of the real achievements in international military cooperation with NATO members as well as other partners, including Russia. The extremely negative attitude of the public opinion towards NATO prevents a substantial public dialogue on the current position of Serbia and the perspectives of military and security policy.

However, open public dialogue with arguments as the sole means for conclusions in shaping future security policy would achieve a positive effect on the initiation of argued dialogue on the complexity of modern security issues and Serbia's place. A precondition for this is the freedom of expression and appearance in the media. Subsequently, it is important for

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THE POSITION OF REPUBLIC OF SERBIA IN THE CONTEMPORARY GEOPOLITICAL CONSTELATION

Introduction

The geopolitical position of a country or any other region represents the most conceptual and the most dynamical constitutive element of the complex geographic position. It includes natural, economical, political and geographic factors which pervade the complex assessment natural potential, geodemographic processes and contemporary cultural and political reality. (Grčić, 2000)

Contemporary geopolitical position of the Republic of Serbia is determined by global, continental and local determinants and is the result of the influence of a large number of dynamic factors and their interaction. (Grčić, 2000)

Elaboration

Starting from the fact that the contemporary geopolitical scene is extremely dynamic and that the environment of our country is in constant change, it is clear that, after achieving an elementary social consensus, the Republic of Serbia must be determined in relation to the European Union, NATO and the South-Eastern Europe. This cannot be achieved without defining Serbia's relationship with the leading countries in the world (the USA and the Russian Federation), and also without empowering multilateral cooperation. Improving and strengthening the status of the Republic of Serbia in international organizations is also one of the goals to strive for.

The Balkans and its stability, during the contemporary political history of the 19th and the 20th century, have largely depended on the influence and interest of the great powers. Although we can conclude that the world today is still unipolar, it is clear that over the past few years it has been transforming into "uni-multipolar"¹. Taking into account that the US is currently the leading force and has a decisive role in many international organizations such as United Nations, NATO, The World Trade Organization etc. The Republic of Serbia should certainly strive to develop partnership relations with this country. This implies the strengthening of political relations, as

¹ According to: Samuel P. Huntington, "Global Perspectives on War and Peace or Transiting a Uni-Multipolar World"

well as the cooperation in the fields of security, economy, culture, education, environmental protection etc.

Under the influence of the Democratic Party of Serbia², a minority coalition partner in the Government of the Republic of Serbia back in 2007, the Resolution on the Protection of Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity and the Constitutional Order of the Republic of Serbia was adopted by the National Assembly on December 25, 2007. The Point 6 of the resolution points to the unlawful character of the bombing of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999, without the prior decision of the United Nations Security Council. The resolution also states that the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia declares military neutrality to the existing military alliances until the announcement of a possible referendum. If we look objectively at the state of public opinion, it is possible that calling a referendum on NATO membership would essentially mean the blocking of future membership in this military alliance.

As a military neutral country, the Republic of Serbia opted for cooperation with both the NATO Alliance and The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which made its political and security situation much more complex.

The bombing of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1999 only further radicalized the previously unfavorable public attitude towards this organization. This is unambiguously presented in the public opinion research where only around 11% of Serbian population supports its membership in NATO.³

Also, research has shown that as many as 40% of citizens consider our country's entry into NATO a prerequisite for joining the European Union.

When it comes to the reasons for the bombing of Serbia, the research showed that slightly less than 40% of citizens consider the policy of former president Slobodan Milosevic as the main reason, 17.6% claims that the ethnic cleansing of Serbs in Kosovo is a cause, 11.3% cite political interests, while around 7% of citizens do not know the reason.

² „Declaration on the Military Neutrality of Serbia”, The Democratic Party of Serbia, Belgrade, 28th October 2007, taken from: <http://www.dss.rs/deklaracija-o-vojnoj-neutralnosti-srbije/>

³ According to the survey conducted by the European Affairs Institute from 10th -17th March 2017 shows that Serbia's membership in NATO is supported by 11% of Serbian citizens, while 84% of citizens are against our country's membership in this organization, and 5% of citizens are undecided.

One fifth of the population sees benefits from membership in NATO, and every tenth citizen does not know how to answer this question, while 70% of Serbian citizens consider that Serbia won't benefit from the membership in this organization.

In addition to the fact that the Republic of Serbia became a member of the Partnership for Peace on November 29, 2006, it is clear that the leading political parties in the country do not want to be clearly determined when it comes to the membership in the North Atlantic Alliance.

The relations between the Republic of Serbia and the North Atlantic Treaty, however, should be considered in a wider context. First of all, this means searching for the country's security identity, and realizing the reality that Serbia is largely in the region of NATO member states.⁴ It should also be borne in mind that Bosnia and Herzegovina will definitely become a NATO member in the next few years, and after the accession to the Adriatic Charter and the beginning of an intense membership dialogue. FYR Macedonia will become a member of the North Atlantic Alliance after it settles the dispute with the neighboring Republic of Greece in connection with its constitutional name.

It is clear that when deciding on the eventual membership of Serbia in NATO the spotlight is pointed to the dominant attitude of public opinion, not to objectively considering the geostrategic position of the country and the analysis of how much NATO membership would contribute to overcoming many security risks and challenges. However, it should not be a priori conclusion that the eventual absence of Serbia from membership in NATO would lead to the country's isolation. This is certainly denied by the example of the Republic of Austria, which, since the end of the Second World War, is a military neutral country, but it cannot be said that its isolated. It could be said that, using all possibilities of cooperation within the NATO Partnership for Peace program, Serbia could achieve stable functioning and create conditions for the interoperability of the defense system with countries embroiled in European security structures and programs.⁵

Relations between the Republic of Serbia and the Russian Federation,

4 The Republic of Hungary became a member of NATO in 1999, while Romania and Bulgaria joined the Alliance in 2004. At the beginning of April 2009, the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Albania became full members. Montenegro officially became a member on 5th June 2017.

5 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, October 2009, taken from: <http://www.voa.mod.gov.rs/documents/national-security-strategy-of-the-republic-of-serbia.pdf>

after the changes that happened following October 5th 2000, ranged from solid to extremely close. The resolution of the Kosovo issue was the main reason for strengthening these relations. The contributions to stronger ties were made when the number of energy agreements had been signed.

The establishment of the “Russian-Serbian Humanitarian Center” in 2012 in Niš has raised the Serbian-Russian relations to a higher level. However, in the public, the opening of this center was perceived as the installation of a Russian base on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. (Rakić & Beriša, 2016)

As a significant event in the contemporary Serbian-Russian relations is that the Parliamentary Delegation of the Republic of Serbia became an observer in the Parliamentary Assembly of The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) in April 2013.

The strengthening of relations between Serbia and Russia represents the opposite process in relations between Serbia and NATO.

Serbia’s attitude towards its neighbors is conditioned by modern political and geographical processes, but also by attempts at regional cooperation and special ties.

The quality of interstate relations significantly influences the geostrategic sensitivity of the borders, in our case as many as 55% of the borders refer to the geopolitically unstable neighborhood (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and FYR Macedonia). It is a very unfavorable geopolitical fact that Serbia, according to the Resolution 1244 of the UN Security Council, does not control 157 km of the border to FYR Macedonia and 111 km of the border to the Republic of Albania. Serbia has not yet solved the issue of borders with some neighboring countries such as Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and FYR Macedonia.

Regional security initiatives have special significance for the consolidation of peace and stability in SEE region: South East European Cooperation Process - SEECP, NATO’s South Eastern Europe Initiative - SEEI, Regional Cooperation Council - RCC, South Eastern Defense Ministerial - SEDM, Adriatic-Ionian Initiative - AII, Adriatic Charter - AC), Southeast European Cooperative Initiative - SECI and the South East Europe Consultants - SEEC.

The involvement of Southeast European countries in the work of these

initiatives, the institutionalization of their activities and the development of bilateral relations make a significant contribution to the building of cooperation and trust, and hence security in the region. The point is that Serbia should be open to both West and Russia, as well as to all others. But the key is not to make any difference between them and the main reasons are the specific circumstances in which Serbia is located. This represents the only real alternative.

The establishment of good neighborly relations in the Western Balkan is a prerequisite for the accession of all countries to the European Union. At the same time, the full stability of Southeast Europe can only be constituted after strengthening good relations in the region and resolving remaining bilateral problems.

When looking at the position of states in contemporary international relations, the most important thing is that there is an inherent predictability of their actions in the framework of bilateral and multilateral relations at the regional and global level.

Conclusion

Geopolitical position determines the Republic of Serbia as an indispensable area in connecting North, West, East and Southeastern Europe. In geostrategic terms, it represents a physical connection between Europe, Asia, Middle East and Mediterranean.

The placement of Kosovo and Metohija under the protectorate significantly undermined the geopolitical position of Serbia. Serbia's existential geopolitical issue is the preservation of its territorial integrity and sovereignty over this area. The geopolitical position of Serbia can be successfully valued under conditions of its full European integration. The only way in which that could be possible is the stabilization of internal factors, the harmonization of relations with regional countries and cooperation with European and world's institutions and associations. That is why the priority geopolitical interest of Serbia is its integration in European economic, political and security systems.

Balkan on a fast track to NATO membership: Myths and Facts

Hungary became a NATO member in 1999, Romania and Bulgaria in 2004, Albania and Croatia in 2009 and Montenegro in 2017. Macedonia signed the Membership Action Plan in 1999 and Bosnia and Herzegovina started a dialogue about membership back in 2008.⁶ According to the media reports, Serbia seems to be the only country⁷ in the region that has no aspirations towards NATO membership.

In the first part, we will discuss the reasoning behind Montenegro's decision to join NATO, especially having in mind that it is the newest member and that Montenegro and Serbia share a common history with the Alliance. In the second part, the question will be why Macedonia wants to become a member and what obstacles are in front of it. The last part is reserved for Serbia. Multiple questions should be answered and this article will just open certain topics for a proper debate. Is Serbia a neutral country or is it on a track to NATO membership? What are the most common deceptions and what are the facts?

Montenegro

Overview

Not just Serbia, Montenegro has also suffered civilian casualties and severely damaged properties during NATO's air strikes in 1999.⁸

However, Montenegro got the invitation in 2006 to become a member of the Partnership for Peace, a NATO programme, and by the end of that year, the first contract between the Alliance and Montenegro was signed.⁹ In 2009, it was invited to join the Membership Action Plan, but only in 2015 it finally received the invitation to start accession talks to join NATO. The opposition asked for a referendum on a membership¹⁰, but that did not

6 <http://nato.int/cps/en/natohq/index.htm> 09/11/2017

7 The author is not expressing any opinions on the topic of Kosovo's independence because that is not the aim of the article. Opening the topic would take the article in another direction and, moreover, special relations between NATO and Kosovo need additional research and article on its own.

8 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/balkans/stories/montenegro050399.htm> 09/10/2017

9 http://www.natomontenegro.me/nato-info/Kljucni_datumi/ 09/09/2017

10 <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/crna-gora-podijeljena-okolo-ulaska-u-nato>

happen. On 5th June 2017 Montenegro formally became a NATO member.¹¹

The Math

Montenegrin government states that military neutrality is too expensive for a small country such as Montenegro. If they wanted to be neutral, they would have to enhance their military budget to secure full capacities for a defence and a military service for every citizen over 18 years of age. Those are big costs and benefits are too small, especially because no country can successfully defend itself alone against all the treats in globalized world.¹² Some calculations say that Montenegro would have to spend additional 150 million per year for neutrality.¹³ For example, neutrality would mean buying at least 6 F15 that cost up to 50 million per plane, plus pilots, plus weapons, plus airport, plus repairs, but not just that. In 2014 Montenegro had 1.600 soldiers. If neutral, it would need at least 6.000 if not 11.000 soldiers.¹⁴

NATO membership reduces those costs, but that does not mean that Montenegro will not have any costs. All countries agreed that they will invest in defence at least 2 percent of its BDP by 2024. The only direct financial obligation towards NATO for Montenegro is a membership fee of 450.000 euros per year that is taken from those 2 percent. Another 20 percent of that money should be used for modernization and Montenegro has made progress in that direction. Montenegro spends 1,66 percent of BDP for defence, not needed parts of equipment are already sold, and buying medium-size helicopters, radars and armoured vehicles is the priority in near future.¹⁵

On the other hand, being a part of this alliance is very good for civilians, too. In case of any civil disaster, the Alliance assists the country in question in numerous ways. The most important ones would be crisis management and equipment supply, but also building civilian catastrophes prevention systems for the future.¹⁶

09/10-2017

11 http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49736.htm# 09/09/2017

12 <http://www.natomontenegro.me/lista-pitanja> 09/09/2017

13 <http://finomen.me/crna-gora-i-nato-ekonomski-aspekti-uclanjenja/> 09/10/2017

14 <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/koje-su-prednosti-ulaska-crne-gore-u-nato/25351496.html> 09/10/2017

15 <http://www.vijesti.me/tv/koliko-ce-crna-gora-trositi-kao-clanica-nato-946549> 09/09/2017

16 <http://www.natomontenegro.me/lista-pitanja> 09/09/2017

NATO membership also affects state's economy in numerous ways. New member countries get more investments from other member countries, as experience of last new members has shown. NATO has a 500 times bigger budget than Montenegro and by becoming a part of the alliance, Montenegro now has right to participate in its tenders. Also, it is expected that its credit rating will improve, which in practice means that companies and citizen will be able to take credits and pay lower interest rates. Better allocation of resources will be implemented.¹⁷

Therefore, NATO membership was labelled as the second most important strategic goal of Montenegrin foreign policy (right after joining EU)¹⁸, as they recognized NATO as an alliance that can guarantee country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as security of a state and its citizens. Moreover, it is an alliance that will provide preconditions for a stable economic development and open the doors for further Euro-Atlantic integrations, namely integration into the EU.¹⁹

Clearly, there were many arguments against NATO membership and the most important would be the NATO intervention from 1999, relatively big costs and pacifistic ideology, but also traditionally good relations between Montenegro and Serbia and Russia.²⁰

New steps

US Vice President Michael R. Pence visited Montenegro in August 2017. He spoke at the Adriatic Charter Summit and met with the Montenegrin Prime Minister.²¹ The Adriatic Charter Summit is important because it was founded with the help of USA and now it gathers all countries from the region: Montenegro, Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania (as members) and Serbia and Kosovo (as observers).²²

That visit consolidates the position of Montenegro, strengthens its devotion to the western values and gives Montenegro a special position in the region that is currently under the influence of both USA and Russia,

17 <http://finomen.me/crna-gora-i-nato-ekonomski-aspekti-uclanjenja/> 09/10/2017

18 <http://www.mvp.gov.me/ministarstvo/spoljno-politicki-prioriteti> 09/10/2017

19 <http://www.natomontenegro.me/lista-pitanja> 09/09/2017

20 <http://www.vijesti.me/forum/zasto-crna-gora-treba-da-postane-nato-clanica-839847> 09/10/2017

21 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2017/08/02/vice-president-pence-europe-montenegro> 09/09/2017

22 <http://www.ambasadat.gov.al/otan/en/adriatic-charter-summit-was-held-participation-us-vice-president-mike-pence> 09/09/2017

but also China and Turkey, states former Montenegrin Minister of Foreign Affairs Branko Lukovac²³.

However, NATO membership is not the end of the road. Piers Cazalet, NATO spokesperson, reminded the public that Montenegro vowed to stay committed to the rule of law and a fight against corruption and organized crime.²⁴

Republic of Macedonia

Overview

The Republic of Macedonia is blocked on its way towards EU and NATO membership since 2004 because Greece would not accept its membership in either of those organizations by the name Republic of Macedonia, although it was admitted as a member of United Nations in 1993 under the provisional description the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).²⁵

Greece has a region called Macedonia within its borders. The origin of its name dates to the Hellenistic Greece and refers to the specific kingdom as a part of Greek culture and history. On the other hand, for Macedonia this is a matter of national identity. Geography made the issue even more complicated as Macedonia geographically represents a wider region now covering parts of Greece, Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria and Albania.²⁶

The name issue was mentioned for the first time in the 1940's, but it is after the breakup of Yugoslavia and the newly gained independence of the former Socialist Republic of Macedonia in 1991 when the name dispute was reignited and became a significant issue. There were numerous attempts to solve the existing issue, but both sides were reluctant to agree on a compromise solution.²⁷

23 <http://www.vijesti.me/vijesti/pred-istorijsku-posjetu-crnoj-gori-put-ka-zapadu-948739> 09/09/2017

24 <http://www.vijesti.me/vijesti/kazalet-clanstvo-u-nato-vazan-korak-ali-drzava-da-nastavi-borbu-protiv-kriminala-948574> 09/09/2017

25 <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201706151111562802-makedonija-zaev-referendum-grcka-1/> 9/6/2017

26 <http://www.mfa.gr/en/fyrom-name-issue/> 9/6/2017

27 Matthew Nimetz, diplomat and UN mediator, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-40781213> 9/6/2017

The Name Issue

First big step towards a solution was made in 2007 when Greece agreed to a composite name that would include the word 'Macedonia' in the state's name.²⁸ Before and after that, an extensive list of proposals has been made, but until today none of them was accepted.

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia can be one of the options for a new name, since this is a name already used by the international community²⁹ and under this name Macedonia was admitted to the UN, IMF and the World Bank.³⁰ The main problem about this proposal is the legacy of Yugoslavia and its socialist past.

In 2008 five other names were proposed and some of them were repeated through the years:³¹ The proposal of the Upper Republic of Macedonia came out together with a proposal that language used by its citizens should be called Macedonian and that citizens themselves should be referred as Upper Macedonians.³² It was once again proposed and refused in 2014, but it reappeared in 2017 and it is now believed that it is the solution that could satisfy both Greeks and people of Macedonia.³³ An alternative option is New Macedonia, but it does not seem promising considering that Macedonians insist on the heritage and it is not likely that they would like to be labelled as a new nation. Constitutional Republic of Macedonia, Democratic Republic of Macedonia and Independent Republic of Macedonia were the other three options, but none of those were even taken in consideration.³⁴

28 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/16/macedonia-open-to-changing-its-name-to-end-24-year-dispute-with-greece> 9/6/2017

29 <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/evropa/201706121111535324-Stoltenberg-Ukraina-NATO/> 9/6/2017

30 <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/01/26/world/compromise-likely-to-take-macedonia-into-un.html> 9/6/2017

31 https://web.archive.org/web/20080228043120/http://www.enet.gr/online/online_text/c%3D110%2Cdt%3D22.02.2008%2Cid%3D81896072 9/6/2017

32 <http://www.balkaneu.com/proposal-name-upper-republic-macedonia/> 9/6/2017

33 Nikola Dimitrov, Macedonian Minister of Foreign Affairs, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201706151111562802-makedonija-zaev-referendum-grcka-1/> 9/6/2017

34 In 2017, new three new proposals were shortlisted: Republic of Upper Macedonia, New Republic of Macedonia and Republic of Macedonia – Skopje. <https://web.archive.org/web/20090809123206/http://www.utrinski.com.mk/?ItemID=86447574CFD-4D748998828E31E075A41> 9/6/2017

Macedonia could also become a NATO member under the 'temporary reference' meaning that membership could be accepted before the final resolution of the name issue.³⁵

New Steps

The fact is that situation did change in 2017 with the new Macedonian government taking control over the country: the dialogue is again active, after more than a decade, and it does look like there is possibility of a compromise. Of course, there are certain issues present.

During and shortly after the elections, politicians were determined to make Macedonia the 30th NATO member. All the issues with Greece should be solved through a dialogue and with great mutual respect, and with the help of Macedonian citizens, opposition parties and the international community. However, it is not clear what can be expected from the Macedonian people because they feel as, and they are already, recognized by the international community as Macedonians.³⁶ This rhetoric changed (a bit) within few months.

Macedonian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs have met in August this year. The conversation was mainly about the process of solving disputes rather than about the disputes themselves, but the message aired in the media afterwards was clear: Greece supports Macedonian efforts to become a NATO (and later EU) member, but Macedonia must fulfil some tasks before that. On the other hand, Macedonia hopes that Greece will not make those tasks more difficult, but is also aware that it will be the one making the biggest change.³⁷ However, the key is to build good bilateral relations because that will improve the understanding between two countries, especially when it comes to (foreign) politics, economy, education and security.³⁸

Additional efforts that Macedonia is ready to put in to show its serious intention and commitment towards a Euro-Atlantic integration are also an-

35 Nikola Dujovski, professor at Sv. Kliment Ohridski University, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/28709430.html> 9/6/2017

36 Zoran Zaev, current Macedonian Prime Minister and at the time a candidate for this position, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/20170510111119237-zaev/> 9/6/2017

37 Nikola Dimitrov, Macedonian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nikos Kotyias, Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/08/30/dimitrov-process-resolving-name-dispute-begins/> 9/6/2017

38 <http://www.dw.com/mk/косијас-влезот-на-македонија-во-нато-е-добар-и-за-грција/a-40314115> 9/6/2017

nounced. One of the measures is increasing the presence of international missions by 20 percent, but the more important one is doubling the budget for defence.³⁹

Serbia

Overview

Serbia is practically surrounded by NATO members and countries that intend to become part of this Alliance. However, there is no debate in the media whether Serbia should go towards NATO or not. NATO is usually mentioned only in connection to the intervention in 1999 and after that there is no room left for the arguments, no room for pro and contra debates. Additionally, only two organizations that deal with this topic (ISAC Fund and Atlantic Council Serbia) and only on special occasions are visible in media, which also sends a certain message. To go even further, media usually reports about special relations to Russia and, if absolutely needed, about Serbia's neutrality.

With no intention to get into the topic of media freedom and especially education and objectivity, the most common perceptions in the media will be briefly analysed in next 2 pages.

Neutrality

The first myth is that Serbia is neutral country and that is guaranteed by a Resolution on Neutrality.

However, the facts are telling another story. There is no Resolution on Neutrality. In 2007, the Resolution on the Protection of Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity and Constitutional Order of the Republic of Serbia was adopted by the National Assembly.⁴⁰ Other than one article in that Resolution, that states that Serbia will stay out of all alliances due to the overall role of NATO, there is no single document on neutrality. Not even a strategy.

Serbia is not in a (economic) position to be neutral. Just before Croatia became a NATO member, a calculation of (potential) costs was made. The estimation was that Croatia could spare 3 billion Euros in 10 years if it doesn't have to have its own defence system, but joins NATO. Also,

³⁹ Nikola Dimitrov, the Head of Macedonian diplomacy, <https://europeanwestern-balkans.com/2017/08/30/dimitrov-process-resolving-name-dispute-begins/> 9/6/2017

⁴⁰ <http://pescanik.net/rezolucija-narodne-skupstine/> 09/10/2017

for modernization it would have to pay 90 million Euros on its own and only 30 million as a part of NATO.⁴¹ Additionally, Serbia has no control over 15% of its territory. Having all of that in mind, calculations for Serbia should be made, but the conclusion is obvious and the same as it was in cases of Croatia and Montenegro: Serbia cannot afford to be neutral.

The argumentation does not end here. Serbia exports weapons and cooperates quite closely with NATO, which suggests other intentions than neutrality. Weapons export is a very important part of the overall Serbia's export and in that sense, Serbia cooperates with Iraq, USA and Afghanistan. Since 2008, when Serbia opened its mission in NATO Headquarters, there have been numerous reforms made by the Ministry of Defence that applied NATO standards⁴².

Can a country really be neutral with no adopted documents – no plans how to achieve the neutrality, with no money, no control over 15% of its own territory, while in practice connected to NATO and the media connected to Russia? Hardly.

Russia

There are certain fears that Russia will stop supporting Serbia if Serbia decides to be more pro West than pro East oriented and there is understanding that its support is so significant that it cannot be replaced.

This is partially true because Russia is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and every ally is important, but this can also happen if Serbia decides to be completely pro East. In international relations, what matters are interests and there is not romantic love between countries and its leaders, as many people in Serbia like to believe. Currently, Serbia does have Russians support when it comes to Kosovo because of Russia's internal and external interests, such as Crimea, but that does not have to be situation tomorrow. However, it is possible that within the next few years, Serbia finds support of Spain, Slovakia, Greece, Cyprus and Romania⁴³ more important than Russia's because these are the EU members that do not recognize Kosovo.

41 http://www.danas.rs/danasrs/dijalog/vojna_neutralnost_srbije.46.html?news_id=227187 09/10/2017

42 http://www.danas.rs/danasrs/dijalog/vojna_neutralnost_srbije.46.html?news_id=227187 09/10/2017

43 <http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/politika/aktuelno.289.html:425644-Ambasadori-zemalja-koje-nisu-priznale-Kosovo-Ne-menjamo-stav> 09/12/2017

Furthermore, it is commonly believed that Russia is the biggest donor to Serbia. It is not. Since 2000, EU and its members combined have given Serbia 2, 1 billion of Euros⁴⁴. USA has also an elevated position, but Russia not so much. During 2/3 of that time, Serbia did not get any money from Russia.⁴⁵ On the other hand, it is also believed that Russia economically supports Serbia by providing weapons free of charge. Namely, from the media reports it is possible to conclude that during last few years, Russia has sent a lot of planes and weapons, but it is all in a form of announcements. Rarely is any of those announcements followed through by the media: did it really come to Serbia, what did, can we use it and for what, was it free and does it need additional investments. The newest example are six planes announced to be coming last year, which are still not in Serbia, and that the planes need prior maintenance that could be done in Russia and financed by Serbia.⁴⁶

In the end, there is a belief that a Eurasian Economic Union can be alternative for EU and NATO. It cannot. Not economically, not geopolitically. Take a closer look at the map.

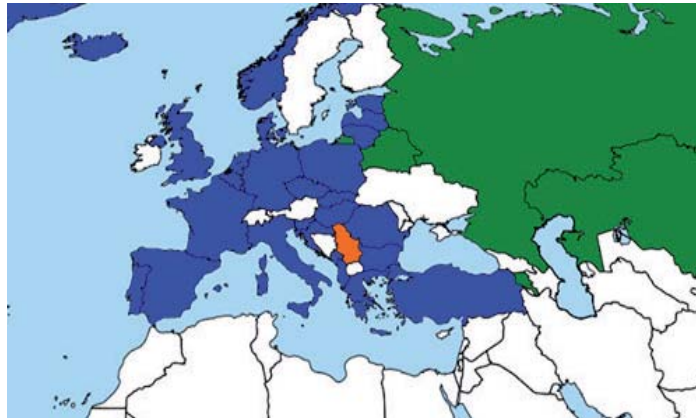


Picture 1. NATO members (blue), Euroasian Economic Union (green) and Serbia (orange)

44 <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/02/06/47-of-citizens-support-serbian-membership-to-the-eu/> 09/10/2017

45 <http://www.blic.rs/vesti/tema-dana/nemacka-najveci-donator-srbije-rusija-na-dnu-liste/wygvf72> 09/10/2017

46 <http://www.vestinet.rs/tema-dana/general-radinovic-evo-da-li-ce-i-kada-stici-s-300-i-ruska-eskadrila-mig-29-video> 09/10/2017



Picture 2. Close-up

Conclusion

Montenegro

Although the relations between Montenegro and NATO are burdened with the past, Montenegro has decided to leave it all behind. It is not probable that all the issues are forgotten, but the decision to measure costs and benefits and then to act upon those conclusions is a mature one that can only bring good for the Montenegrins. Montenegro is a small country with small economy in a not that stable region and a decision to join the alliance, to jump on the train, seems to be the rational one.

Macedonia

For years, Greece has rejected all proposals for the name of Macedonia, but at this moment it looks like it is more willing to cooperate than before. This is a 'historic' chance to find a solution that will be a "win-win" situation for both sides. Whatever the motivation is, this is a chance that Macedonia should not miss because both states are currently under the scope of Western countries that are eager to minimize Russian influence on the Balkans by maximizing theirs. Solving the name problem is not just one dispute less for Macedonia – it opens a lot of doors that are currently shut.

However, the position of Macedonia is not easy. At the same time, it must confirm that it does not have a territorial dispute with Greece, but also to keep its (national) identity, which is shaped by history. Some of the

politicians asked for unity among government, opposition, citizens and international community on Macedonia's path towards NATO (and EU), but the situation is more complexed. If the Prime Minister decides to hold a referendum, the question is not just logistic and procedural one, but also what will be the outcome of it. If not, a way to include as many actors as possible in a public debate should be found and there is not much time for doing so. Additionally, internal consensus that will allow a change of the Constitution and secure the country, which is not divided on the questions what national identity and national interests are, must be provided.

Serbia

The analysis of yet another myth - that Serbia must join NATO and all western countries are pressuring it all the time - can be the closing argument.

Serbia does not have to join NATO and NATO does not need Serbia. Naturally, 'the merrier, the better' principle is on, but it is not obligatory. Serbia is a small economy that cannot give a substantial contribution when it comes to, for example, USA's security. Furthermore, there are enough similar countries in the region that can play a role in the case of need and all of them are either NATO members either interested in membership.

Not even rich countries such as Sweden or Switzerland are being pressured as they are very active as members of Partnership for Peace and/or UN. This is a model that is good for both countries in question and for NATO. Actually, this is the model that Serbia is currently using and it seems that NATO is perfectly fine with it. The real question is: is this a model that works in Serbia's favour?

Right now, yes, but on a long-term basis definitely not. Serbia must come up with a realistic foreign policy that will be based on national interests and to promote it in the same manner in and outside its borders. That is the only way to a consensus. If the government continues to be pro-West outside (EU integration process) and pro-East inside the borders (picture sent to the media), the lack of consensus will not be the only consequence, but also deep division of the society that will not be easy to overcome in another 100 years.

THE MEDIA IN SERBIA – WHAT IS PUBLIC INTEREST?

Nedeljka Borojevic, journalist

‘There is nothing that training cannot do. Nothing is above its reach or below it. It can turn bad morals to good, good morals to bad; it can destroy principles, it can re-create them; it can debase angels to men and lift men to angelship. And it can do any one of these miracles in a year—even in six months’⁴⁷ - As regards patriotism, by Mark Twain

We live in a world where the media’s influence on the shaping and re-shaping of social reality is greater than ever before. Due to their informative, communicative and symbolic functions, they are key intermediaries in the transfer of the value systems. The media represent the forum of the public words, a channel through which messages are transmitted, and, as such, they are key factors in the political socialization and intercultural dialogue - an open exchange of views between individuals and social groups of various nationalities, social origin, religious and political beliefs, and lifestyle. Thanks to their influence in the formation of public opinion, the media can contribute to the creation of an open and tolerant society as well as the development of human rights culture, equality, peace and non-violence, but they are also a powerful tool for inciting racism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of hate, bigotry and intolerance towards the others and the different. That is exactly the key point in the responsibility of the media and media activists⁴⁸.

Responsibility! The key word, but it seems that it has almost completely disappeared from the media scene in Serbia. Journalism in our country has touched bottom. Today, those who actually take the responsibility for their texts and stories are very rare. We live in a time when everyone calls themselves a journalist, even though they are not educated nor sensitized for such a job, isn’t it so? In addition, an unenviable position and miserable wages have only further sped up the process of degrading this profession, because it is due to a daily struggle for survival that the enthusiasm for work is gradually lost and creativity smothered. The commercialization of the media led to the tabloidization of the political landscape and all the

⁴⁷ In Serbian translation of this quotation from Mark Twain, the word ‘training’ was translated as ‘the press’

⁴⁸ The **Commissioner for the Protection of Equality**, *Media in Serbia - From discrimination to equality, a handbook for men and women journalists*; **Belgrade, 2012. pg. 8**

other serious topics as well. Open debates and argumentative conflicts of opinion almost do not exist. Today, the sensationalism has become the norm, and banalizing things the principle of journalists' work.

Despite the fact that Munich's *Declaration of the Duties and Rights of Journalists*⁴⁹, **adopted in 1071, prescribed professional standards of journalism, and despite the fact that two-thirds of the media in Serbia have adopted the code on the coverage of vulnerable groups, and the fact that, in practice, the Code of Journalists of Serbia**⁵⁰, which was jointly adopted by the Association of Journalists of Serbia (UNS) and the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) in 2006, is effective **in most newsrooms**, its violation by many media is evident.

This can be supported by the latest report of the Press Council (which monitors abiding the Code), which shows that sensationalist headlines, fictitious authors, and the violations of the "other side" rule, typically lead to the breaches of the Code of Journalists. The Appeals Committee of the Press Council considered 43 appeals this year and only in three cases found that the Code had not been breached. For the first eight months of this year, 'Informer' breached the Code six times, 'Politika' five times, 'Srpski telegraf' four times, 'Alo' and 'Blic' three times. Many others, if we may say so, violated the code of ethics, to which they had committed themselves, only one time.

Some examples of the titles are:

'Europe Teaches Serbian Students That Lesbians Lick Vaginas!'

'He Killed His Wife Because She Had Asked for Sex'

'Lovers, Be Cautious, from now on, Blatant Courtship Can Put You in Jail'

'Scandalous - Students Are Taught that Being Gay is Great!'

49 *Declaration of the rights and Duties of Journalists* - Professional rights of journalists are freedom of expression and criticism, as well as the defense of these rights, the protection of professional independence and integrity, seeking the truth while searching and processing information, not using dishonest methods to obtain information, respecting sources of information, respecting the people who are the subject of information, equal treatment of all people and the elimination of all forms of discrimination.

50 Code of Journalists of Serbia http://www.savetzastampu.rs/doc/Kodeks_novinar_Srbije.pdf

Despite strong competition, the winner of the period from January to August is the text which cannot be found in the digital edition, because it had been removed by 'Politika' - it is, as they say, an article of a man who does not exist, with a photograph of a German actor who also filed a complaint to the Press Council. This period is also characterized by a large number of unpublished decisions - 10 out of 14.

Apart from acting upon complaints, the Commission does the monitoring on a daily basis, which is shown by the fact that every day there are 20 to 25 undeniable violations in eight newspapers.⁵¹

The cause of the ever-increasing number of the Code and professional standards' violations could be an inadequate implementation of the Law, even though it is well regulated. If the public prosecutor did his job, a half of the print media would be closed.

It is known that before the news goes public, the authors, editors and media owners decide whether, and if so, what kind of attitude about a particular news will be taken and presented. Such decisions are affected by a variety of factors: one must take into account the standards of journalism, media laws, deadlines and social occasions, and, very often, the form in which it is published. Also, authors' personal views play a significant role, as well as their moral values, and the fact that this work provides for their living. All of these contribute to the quality of work, but also whether the story, news or the show will promote good or bad.⁵²

Despite the Code of Journalists, which says that journalists are responsible primarily to their readers, listeners and viewers, and that this responsibility cannot be subordinated to the interests of others, and in particular to the interests of publishers, the government and other governing bodies, these rules are not obeyed in local media. Although the censorship is not formal, it is implemented informally by the management and important editors of the program. Thus, autocensorship is present among media representatives, and it consists of: avoiding to criticize the government and the sensitive issues, avoiding to take the statements of certain guests and experts, the selection of topics and information, using euphemisms and softened characterizations, shifting that small amount of the sensitive content for the after hours, the absence of discussion

51 More on N1 website - *A growing number of media not interested in the decisions of the Press Council* <http://rs.n1info.com/a317764/Vesti/Vesti/Odluke-Saveta-za-stampu.html>

52 The **Commissioner** for the **Protection of Equality**, *Media in Serbia - From discrimination to equality, a handbook for men and women journalists*; **Belgrade, 2012. pg. 9**

shows in the live broadcast, disproportionate praise for the government politics, and the like.

The fact is that, today, social networks have become the dominant source of information, but the influence of traditional media is still very significant. In a society in which two-thirds of the population are functionally illiterate and do not entirely know what public interest is, the only source of information are still the print media and television stations with national frequency. In order to make a profit, media pander to the tastes of these people. The government promotes that very kind of press, because it also has to pander to the tastes of the majority. In Serbian tabloid press there is a 'hunger for sensations', so editors try to attract larger audience by using shocking headlines. In the media there is no debate; the media are divided into (the) friends and enemies of the government, causing public debate to move to social networks. Similarly, a former member of the Regulatory body for electronic media, Gordana Suša, has recently said – 'A public space in which there is a debate has been lost, the media bombard us with millions of meaningless information to disguise the important things, such as, how Bratislav Gašić will decide on various things now. Vučić is getting even with Twitter users on the television stations with the national frequency, which makes unequal shares in the media if you have a situation in which the Serbian president uses a television with the national frequency to deal with a Twitter user.'⁵³

EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION IN THE EYES OF THE MEDIA IN SERBIA

The media are an important means of informing and educating the public, as well as an important factor in the formation of attitudes and public opinion. However, daily use of the press, television and the media in general, brings us to the conclusion that media representatives are acquainted with discrimination, and that they are not sensitive enough to distinguish between close concepts such as prejudice and stereotypes. In the race for timely and attractive news, educational and sensitive journalistic language and style are sometimes lost.⁵⁴

53 More on N1 website – *Gordana Suša: The government promotes tabloid journalism* <http://rs.n1info.com/a315705/Vesti/Vesti/Gordana-Susa-Vlast-promovise-tabloid-no-novinarstvo.html>

54 The **Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, Media in Serbia - From discrimination to equality, a handbook for men and women journalists; Belgrade, 2012. pg. 9**

In the last few decades, the interpretative journalism has become the dominant mode of expression in the media, although this kind of journalism existed since the beginning of journalism itself. Interpreting in journalism is the result of dual needs. On the one hand, the public is becoming more educated and curious: apart from wanting to know who, what, where, when and how, the audience wants to know why something happened. On the other hand, engaged and active journalism needs to put the information in the coordinates of its deeper meaning, to give it a so called third dimension. Explaining the causes of certain events and occurrences as well as giving deeper meaning to the information that media transmit, sometimes lead to the fact that in interpreting an event some journalists exaggerate and distort reality, insult, underestimate and diminish the importance of it, or are prone to overstating the truth and to sensationalism.⁵⁵

An example of this is the coverage and interpretation of reality during the war in the 90's.⁵⁶ The influence of the media and the timely and accurate reporting is an important factor in civil wars, and often a means of a "special war". The media war in this region is proof of that. The civil war in the late twentieth century, which led to the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, but also NATO bombing, 5 October, the arrest of Slobodan Milošević and the Hague indictees, mass graves, the assassination of the Prime Minister on the streets of Belgrade - are just some of the crucial events of the modern history of Serbia, in which the media played an important and active role, including the shaping of public opinion.

Media are unavoidable in the formation of collective consciousness and the influence on public opinion. Hence the great power and the responsibility of the media in spreading half-truths, hate speech, inciting discrimination. After the murder of Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić, during the investigation, the media were analyzed thoroughly, because it was to be determined, among other things, whether the "inflammatory language" had fueled the atmosphere and led to the fatal outcome.

Today, informal sources, like the social networks Facebook and Twitter, have become important factors of informing, but also of the launching of historical events (such as the Arab Spring). In a way, the balance of the power of informing is shifting, and networking is becoming a key factor, whereas the ability to control information is becoming limited, which is positive on one side, but can also lead to large-scale abuse.⁵⁷

55 Neda Todorović, *Interpretative journalism*

56 More detailed in the publication - '*Words and Misdeeds - Calling or Inciting to War Crimes in Serbian media in 1991 and 1992*', Center for Transitional Processes

57 The **Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, Media in Serbia - From discrim-**

Nowadays, an analytical and studious approach to the topics is a rarity. In the Serbian media, very serious topics, such as the Euro integration, the global challenges of the 21st century and NATO membership, are simplified, trivialized and interpreted in accordance with the interests of media owners or editors. An excellent example of this is the reporting on the Ukrainian crisis, that took place a few years ago.

Vladimir Putin's first press conference about the crisis in Ukraine, in March 2014, divided the media in Serbia into those who supported the policy of the Kremlin and those who understood the position of post-revolutionary Kiev, or who simply reported on everything in a balanced way. The latter was significantly less in number.

From the outset, the media in Serbia, carefully followed the development of the Ukrainian crisis. Initially, the events on Maidan were covered superficially, but in a balanced way. Ukraine drew attention of the Serbian media after the Russian annexation of Crimea, when a large number of media in Serbia were uncritically supportive of Russia, despite their declarative commitment to the European path. It had been like that until Putin made the analogy between Crimea and Kosovo, which was a signal to some media to back off.

After that first press conference of President Putin, the Serbian media began to compare the Ukrainian crisis with the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and speculate on the possible renewal of the Cold War.

Here is what the Serbian media wrote back then:

In the opening column, editor-in-Chief of 'Nedeljnik', Veljko Lalić, wrote that journalists in their editorial offices 'anxiously' followed Putin's speech in Moscow. Lalić believed that 'if anyone should be afraid of the Ukrainian crisis, apart from the Ukrainians themselves, than those are the Serbs, for they have always got the worst out of the whirlwinds of the world's conflicts.'

At the same time, Milorad Ivanović, executive editor of the weekly magazine *Novi Magazin*, posed a question: 'And where are we on this?', and answered: 'While the whole world is expressing their view - siding either Kiev or Moscow - Belgrade and the capitals of the region are silent, which can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, according to Ivanović, for decades, Serbia has been focusing on itself, and secondly - it is possible that we are talking about the political maturity of Belgrade and its readiness not

ination to equality, a handbook for men and women journalists; Belgrade, 2012. pg. 23

to meddle in at least one of the world's conflicts and complicate it even further.' 'I would rather say that it is all about a kind of autism that can, perhaps, save us from additional problems,' the executive editor of Novi Magazin concluded.

The columnist of the same weekly magazine, Momčilo Pantelić, interpreted the doubts of the official Belgrade as follows: 'two of our foreign policy priorities have clashed in Ukraine.' The first was the tendency towards the European Union, which was, in fact, the reason why 'the transitional government in Kiev brought down the previous regime to separate the country from the Russian domination.' Moscow denied that to Ukraine, claimed Pantelić, while '(Moscow) is Belgrade's mainstay of preventing 'the international stamp' from being put on the separation of Kosovo from Serbia.'

Great attention of Serbian media was drawn by five volunteers from the Chetnik movement, who travelled to Crimea to defend the Orthodox brotherhood. The Chetniks, with all the folklore props, gave their statements to the media about the experience of the war in Kosovo in 1999, and said that in case of the intensification of the armed conflicts, they were ready to send more volunteers to Ukraine.

Most Serbian media emphasized that the victory of Euromaidan also involved Ukrainian extremist and nationalist organizations, but they commented their influence and importance in various ways. While the public broadcaster, Radio and Television of Serbia, mostly merely registered the course of Euromaidan events, the daily press mostly described the events as the victory of the Ukrainian radical extremists. Most tabloids in Serbia - that normally lead by circulation, and whose influence for that reason cannot be ignored - supported the pro-Russian stance and passionately criticized Maidan.

Serbian highest circulation tabloids condemned the 'state overthrow' in Kiev and largely justified military intervention and annexation of Crimea. Here are some typical Serbian tabloid headlines of the period: 'World War III looming', 'Vladimir Putin: Crimea must have the same rights as Kosovo', 'Groups of neo-Nazis ravage in Kiev' (Kurir, 5 March 2014), 'He would defend us, too: If Putin had ruled in 1999, NATO wouldn't have attacked Serbia' (Informer, 6 March 2014).

Serbian society is largely traditional and with a strong influence of patriarchal values, 'burdened' with the past and deep-rooted myths. A large

part of the population believes that the international tribunal in the Hague is biased and unfair to the Serbs. NATO intervention against Serbian security forces in Bosnia in 1995, and the bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999, as well as the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence, influenced the existence of distrust in the large part of the Serbian community, and not only towards the West, but also towards liberal democracy as a system of the Western model.⁵⁸

On the other hand, in Serbia, the new wave of 'political Russophilia' is more and more noticeable, steaming from the anti-Western sentiment, the decline of the West and the rise of Putin's Russia, but also from the balancing of the foreign policy of Belgrade and 'sitting on the fence' attitude with the desire to politically and economically profit from both the West and Moscow. Correlation between Belgrade and Moscow is greater now than during the Cold War, and is mostly manifested in preventing the declaration of the independence of Kosovo. In addition, Serbia is completely tied to Russia in terms of energy.⁵⁹

That love for Russia is present among the broad masses, is shown by the latest results of the Agency for Public Opinion Research, Demostat, that are entitled 'Serbia between East and West'. 'Serbia's heart is in the East, and its pocket in the West' is a paraphrase of this study which showed that in the military and security terms, Serbian citizens prefer Russia to NATO. The love for Russia goes so far that even 20 per cent of the population would like to have Russian military bases on the territory of Serbia. Even 53 per cent of citizens supported Serbian policy of the military neutrality, and answering the question 'What would be the best for Serbia when it comes to military bases of the great powers?', they responded that they do not want them on the territory of their country. A fifth of the respondents are in favor of Russia setting a base in Serbia, and two per cent only want that kind of presence of the United States. The Kosovo myth which was dominant for a long time, has now been replaced with the resistance to NATO. Resistance to NATO presents a junction point of a new identity in Serbia, which is, in its essence, anti-Western. This conflict is defined as a kind of new identity of this nation.

58 Varga Boris, *Belgrade and Kiev between Brussels and Moscow: The Wrap of the Serbia Identity - Anti-westernism, russophilia, traditionalism...*Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade 2016, pg. 176

59 Varga Boris, *Belgrade and Kiev between Brussels and Moscow: The Wrap of the Serbia Identity - Anti-westernism, russophilia, traditionalism...*Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade 2016, pg. 197

The examination of this research and publishing center, showed that, on the one hand, Serbian citizens would like to have legal security and the standard of living of the Western countries, and that even 11 per cent of them would like to live in Germany. Three per cent only would seek a better life in Russia, despite the fact that 41 per cent of the respondents believe that this country is Serbia's greatest friend. The survey showed that younger people mostly want the cooperation with the West, while pensioners and senior citizens are mainly in favour of the East.

The inconsistency of the foreign and domestic policy of the authorities contributes to the division of Serbia between East and West, which is reflected in the media that deliver information on a daily basis and it looks like we are just about to be attacked by the Western countries, and that it is only a matter of time when they will carry out assassinations, just as it seems that Vladimir Putin is ready to die in order to defend us. It just encourages the creation of a completely schizophrenic picture.⁶⁰

The situation is similar when it comes to the Euro integration. Most of the texts boil down to a mere transmission of information or banalization of things. There are no studious and analytical articles on important topics that concern all Serbian citizens. From the beginning of the process of Serbia's obtaining candidate status to this very day, it seems, that the most important issue that media deal with is whether the Serbian farmer will be able to bake brandy and slaughter pigs. If you google the words European Union and browse the news, you will find a handful of such texts. This paper singles out the example found in Blic as it is one of the most popular dailies. What they all have in common, as it can be seen from the accompanying text, is that this topic was presented entirely arbitrarily, to the extent that the average citizen, by reading such content, can only conclude that the European Union is actually our great enemy that wants to impose its own rules, to conquer us and destroy everything that is Serbian and that is part of our identity.

Example: BLIC

The EU Has Just Declared War on Rakija (Brandy)

9 December 2014

⁶⁰ More on the website Radio Free Europe, *Serbian Citizens: the Best Are Russian Weapons and German Medicine* <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/anketa-vojska-srbija/28718290.html>

Residents of EU countries can no longer make brandy at will – first they have to pay a separate lump sum, while, for their own consumption, they are allowed to produce up to 50 liters.

Thus, each brandy maker in Croatia, who does not register before baking brandy and does not pay a lump sum of 100 kuna (14 euro) per cauldron, risks to pay a fine of up to ten thousand kuna.

For each liter of baked brandy, that exceeds the paid cote, they need to pay the excise duty of 21.20 kuna.

All the distillers will have to prove to the customs inspectors, if they 'knock on their doors', how much brandy they have actually produced. Croatian media report that customs officers in the EU have broad authority for reviewing taverns and households to determine what amount of brandy is made. New EU rules are very strict and even the small producers of alcoholic beverages are obliged to submit annual reports to tax collectors!

The deadline for the submission of an annual report on the total quantity of wine and brandy is 20 January next year, and the deadline for payment of excise duty is 31 January. To facilitate inspection and in order to avoid scams, many places will have only one cauldron in which everybody will bake their brandy, according to manufacturers.⁶¹

TENDER CO-FUNDING OF PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE SPHERE OF PUBLIC MEDIA INFORMING

Even though the procedure of a country media egress should contribute to better situation regarding media, it did not meet the expected results. This is due to the fact that nowadays most of the media instead of being supported by a state, they are supported by tycoons who achieve their personal interests through means of mass communication. One of the projects which was supposed to contribute to media development, once the state backs out from the media ownership, is the Tender Co-funding of Public Interest in the Sphere of Public Media Informing.

Tender co-funding introduces a completely different principle into state-media relations. It also means that the state, though backing out from the ownership, still holds responsibility for the sphere of public informing. Instead of the state subsidies, media bid with project proposals estimated

61 More on the website BLIC – *the EU Has Just Declared War on Rakija (Brandy)*
<http://www.blic.rs/vesti/svet/eu-je-upravo-objavila-rat-rakiji/eqg12ly>

by the independent expert group taking the determined public interest into account. At least, this is how it should work in theory, nevertheless, it turns quite different in practice.

There are local self-governments and government bodies within the local self-governments which have carried out tenders strictly by obeying legal regulations in a manner which deserves praise. But they are a minority. There are far more of those who have, in so many different ways, either circumvented the law, finding a hole in it, or even breached the law, sometimes even drastically – and in most local self-governments the issue of tender co-funding is not properly defined, without the defined criteria. Thus the funds are distributed to politically fit and obedient media, with an absolute government promotion in local media as the end result. Due to the breach of Tender Co-funding of Public Interest in the Sphere of Public Information regulations, from April, 2015 up to April, 2016, the Coalition has intervened about 40 times. The greatest problems tender co-funding of public media informing deals with are undefined regulations, insufficient process transparency, lack of evaluation of authorized projects and the very process, as well as the absence of penalties for the public information business in case of law violation. There are no mechanisms which will provide that local self-governments distribute adequate means for public interest in the sphere of public information. Certain local self-governments do not invite media bids. A great number of violations or circumventions of the law was recorded regarding tender co-funding, and even though regulation is provided, there is no answer in respect of quality, since process evaluation is not legally defined.

The number of irregularities in the tender text is decreasing, but still there are local authorities which do not comprehend or do not want to understand the essence of tender funding which is quite obvious in the very content of the tender. The most common examples of negligence are found in the “criteria” section. The most common goal is to narrow the number of potential applicants beforehand, that is to favour certain media. A huge disproportion regarding the amount of the means which certain local authorities set aside for public media is quite evident, but these data should be carefully interpreted, since there is no evaluation mechanism, i.e. establishing the effects of the money spent. That is, it does not necessarily imply that providing more funds for public media means automatic benefit of the citizens.

Election of unofficial association representatives into expert boards by local authorities is most often the sign of numerous irregularities and anomalies, and it is, as by a rule, accompanied with process non-transparency. The transparency of the tender co-funding process significantly decreases the possibility of malpractice and circumvention of the law. Work experience of expert boards shows, in general, low quality of project proposals, although the evident improvement has been noted in the past period.

The solution to this problem is not to decrease funds for the media tender but to provide mechanisms so that the funds are assigned by following strict procedures and rules, which include the expertise and independence of the board, absence of discrimination in all aspects and process transparency. It is also highly important to define penalty mechanisms for government authorities violating the law in this sphere, which has not been done so far. Also, associations, which hold the right to recommend candidates for the expert board should develop their own capacities in order to adequately respond to challenges which the process of the tender co-fundings imposes⁶².

RTS – PUBLIC MEDIA SERVICE OF THE EUROPEAN SERBIA?

Regarding the situation in media and their manner of informing, we must reflect the manner in which it is done by public media services – Radio Television of Serbia and Radio Television of Vojvodina.

RTS is defined by the law as a public media service of the republic and independent legal subject which, by performing its primary activity, enables achieving public interest in the domain of public media and provides general and full scale media service including informative, educational, cultural and entertainment contents intended for all society structures⁶³.

Almost identical, with completely formal changes regarding the Province, is the legal regulative of the public service of the Autonomous Province which is defined into more details in its Statute⁶⁴.

The Law on Public Media Service (“Official Gazzete RS”, No. 83/2014) as a primary activity of the public service means production, purchase, pro-

62 Coalition of journalists and media associations: The White Book of the Tender Co-funding of the Public Interest in the Sphere of Public Media, April, 2015 – April 2016; Novi Sad 2016.

63 A group of authors, RTS – Our Right to be Informed?, Prokuplje, 2015; p. 21

64 More on RTV web site/Statute; <http://static.rtv.rs/pdf/2015/01/29/statut-jmu-rtv-pdf.pdf>)

cessing and announcing radio, television and multi-media contents, particularly informative, educational, cultural-artistic, junior, entertainment, sport , religious and other ones which are of citizen's public interest. The work of the public media service is based on the following principles:

1. truthful, impartial, complete and timely informing;
2. autonomy of editorial policy;
3. independence from its funding sources;
4. forbidding any kind of censorship and illegal influence on the performance of the public media service, redaction and journalists;
5. application of internationally recognized regulations and principles, especially respect of the human rights and freedom and democracy values;
6. respect of professional standards and codex.

RTS is obliged by the law to respect the public demands by its performance and corresponds to the public for its performance. The responsibility of the public media service toward the public and the public influence on its performance is particularly achieved via public procedure for the appointing of the public media service bodies, participation of the public in improvement of radio and television programme, by the obligation of the public media service to timely and fairly inform the public about its actions by publishing work plan, financial plan and report on work and business, submitting report on work and business of the public media service to the National Assembly and Regulatory Council and timely regulation of the obligation prescribed by the law which defines free access to the information of public interest.

This is how the Public Media Service of the Republic is perceived by the legislator. Actual reality of RTS is drastically far from the projected role and function. A financial and professional irresponsibility, susceptibility to political influence, absence of public influence in the key work segments, editorial chaos built into and un-suspicious business-political arrangements are just some of the details which are part of realistic presentation of RTS.

Apart from these, irrational, unusual and unjustifiedly increased expenditure in certain segments, absence of clear, familiar and non-discriminatory procedures in the sphere of independent production selection,

non-existence of any visible and objective criteria based on which co-productions are created, and the terms according to which contracts are signed with marketing agencies are the key spheres where inconspicuous and secret operations of the public media service are carried out.

Regarding the program quality, RTS remained a prisoner of the past, that recent history where television was a powerful weapon of propaganda and mass control. Lacking creativity, vision and trying not to 'make that much waves', a tacky scenario was used – relentlessly repeating broadcast of war and partisan movies from the Tito and Milošević era which was replaced by repeating the 'obsolete' comedy shows. Citizens of Serbia pay the subscription so that, with the help of their media service, they can reminiscence the glorious past in 'Those Were the Days My Friend' style, to moan about the present and not to think about the future.

The public media service has slipped into a comfortable position of self-proclaimed guardian of the national treasure/heritage and tradition, some kind of an ethnography media museum or a public service of the Academy of Science and Arts. According to the statement of the management board 'it is a preservation of the cultural and national identity of the Serbian nation and all ethnic minorities and groups'. Naturally, since Serbian nation is a majority, RTS has adapted its editorial concept to the celebrity logic that the 'the ones who pay more (subscription), have the right to choose'.

This lead toward the situation in which the subscriber of the public media service knows everything about the national history (of course, the glorious one), but almost nothing or 'just bits' about the future – their own future, the future of the country they live in, the future of Europe and the global world. The average RTS subscriber knows all about the glorious peaks of Serbian state and historical battles but does not receive a piece of advice, ideas or signals what he should do with his life and with his children in future.

I cannot remember the last time I have heard someone saying that they have heard something useful or learnt something new, seen something on RTS which made them ponder. There is no child or a young person who can claim that something broadcasted on RTS has become a benchmark or a model for education or business.

The entire infrastructure of this Service has manifested its incapability to follow what the former Prime Minister, and current President of the Re-

public of Serbia calls strategic national decision of Serbia – a membership in the European Union. Instead of tracking similarities of Serbia and the EU, to check and test the efforts of the Serbian state in accepting the legislation heritage of the EU – the response of the ‘European RTS’ is usually at the level of bizzare: subscribers are still offered with ‘maybe we do not have to rush since the EU is about to collapse’ option as the real one, and the correspondent from Brussels serves only to report when some of the Serbian politicians is visiting the European Union or when the Union is ‘trembling’ due to some ‘misfortune’.

The European spirit, the European way of thinking, its life philosophy, its work policy, the European legislation heritage, the European debate on the future of multinational community, its culture and tolerance seeking ... none of them are integrated into editorial concept of each separate program of the Public Media Service of Serbia. It is completely different from what media Service practices by ‘distorting the perception’ of subscribers by occasionally throwing in some ‘European’ topic in some individual and glamorous ‘talk show’ with an attractive host (used as a distraction) and mostly between two ‘soap operas’. This model ‘Crumbs on EU’ (and mostly upon some conflict) cannot replace the strategic input/implementation of the European way of thinking into daily TV program and vocational (journalism/editorial) DNA of the modern public media service.

It is not only informing (seen from the European perspective of Serbia) whose state is quite bad. Not even one other segment of the public media service (story coverage, entertainment program, culture) is able to think in the European manner, nor they know how to produce European program.

Although Croatian Public Media Service is not quite good, it can serve as a role model to our own. In fact, the very moment Croatian society, led by the political elite, opted for integration in Europe – subscribers of Croatian radio-television were given a chance to find out more about living and working in the newly admitted EU state members and in the old ones as well. Nothing was hidden, not even one single problem which citizens of any country face was ignored. Thus, the subscribers of the Croatian Public Media service were able to see the solution of the problem at the level of a common citizen. Accordingly, the program of this Public Media Service covered stories on how a catholic church in Poland advises farmers to use the money from the European funds, how the Netherlands has solved the social residence issue, how the youth in Estonia establishes their own start-up companies in the field of Information Technologies, etc.

If the political elite proclaimed joining of Serbia to the EU as a national goal and interest, it certainly raises a question what Public Media Service has done to help citizens who are not well informed about the whole process, since not all of them want to pay for the subscription solely to watch folk singers, soap operas and 'have the right to be informed'. Instead, they want to learn something new and begin to 'think in European way', to invest in the education for the future. The Public Media Service of Serbia lacks of all of these, although it is ranked, having 3.000 employees, as one of the largest single employers in Serbia and no one can measure up with them by the number of journalist teams. The essence of the answer to this issue is that media employees, primarily editors, agreed and still agree to be politically exploited⁶⁵.

CONCLUSION

With the growing influence and development of the media, their responsibility inevitably grows as well. The role of a journalist is to criticize – not to agitate. A journalist should inform – but must not use the hate speech. The truth is that nowadays various means are used for the sake of ratings. Commercializing media has led to vulgarization and the use of discriminatory language. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that each profession has its norms, ethics and codex, and journalism is surely one of such professions. Apart from being a profession, journalism is at the same time a social institution whose purpose is monitoring of all those who have social, economic and political power. In that sense, journalists are spoken of as 'the guardians of democracy'⁶⁶.

Unfortunately, journalists in Serbia are far apart of being the guardians and it is necessary to change many things so that this syntagma has a meaning in Serbian media. As first, in order for the citizen society to have a competent and efficient insight into the performance of the public media services and influence on public costs for media informing, it has to be engaged quite more and in different manner than it acts now. This also applies to independent, regulatory and self-regulatory bodies. Subscription payment of each citizen, makes him symbolically small, but rightful shareholder of RTS and RTV.

And if we have not previously pondered on the reason for paying the subscription, then it is high time to do that – Why do we pay the fee, what do we expect and what are our rights?

65 Group of authors – RTS – Our Right to Be Informed?, Prokuplje 2015;

66 Verič D. and others, Relations With Media; Media Center and Pristop, Belgrade 2002.

Apart from restructuring the public media service, it is necessary to start applying the Law on Media. Although media legal framework is good, some of the regulations should be changed and media strategy, which is already a year late, should be changed.

The essence of journalist vocation, which is not understood by many of the colleagues, is that their job is to inform the citizens on the events which occurred and are of public interest. However, nowadays more and more events are created solely for the journalists to report on them, and the word public interest has lost its meaning.

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DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF RADIO AND TELEVISION OF MONTENEGRO BEFORE MONTENEGRO WAS INVITED TO JOIN THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)

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Introduction

The topic of Montenegro's joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (hereinafter: NATO/Alliance) is very specific because of the historical background of this country and the Alliance. In 1999, Montenegro was part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Hence, NATO bombed the village of Murin in Montenegro, on 30 April, when five civilians and one soldier died. Today, the situation is completely different, there is cooperation between the Alliance and Montenegro, and, on that very spot, the Square of the Victims of NATO Bombing has been established. Describing the context through historical facts serves to clarify the situation, but also to introduce the research that was conducted in November and that analyzes the discourse of the community. The focus is on how the public broadcasting service portal worked.

Today, the public broadcasting service is, in all countries in which it exists, a complex media organization with several programs, and its own, more or less developed, music and audio/video production. Along with their program capacities, these establishments also have accompanying organizational and technical capacities that enable a complete program-production process, which means efficient independent functioning (Veljanovski, 2007:33).

The main task of public broadcasting is to inform, educate and entertain, as well as to work, as its own name says, in public service. Article 3 of the Law on Public Broadcasting Services of Montenegro says:

'The activity of the national public broadcaster referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article, is the provision of public audiovisual services for which Montenegro provides independent funding, in accordance with the law and the rules on the state aid for public broadcasting services.'⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Law on Public Broadcasting Services of Montenegro (Serbian: *Zakon o javnim radio-difuznim servisima Crne Gore*)

Editorship of the Internet portal of Radio and Television of Montenegro has created a special section 'Openly about NATO', containing all the articles downloaded from other sources and their original texts, as well as television and radio reports of the colleagues who work for other editorial staff, and all connected to NATO.

Until 2006, Montenegro was in a union with the Republic of Serbia. During the last years of their union, the theses about the cooperation with European Union and NATO were popular. Then-spokesman of the Military of Serbia and Montenegro, Miroslav Mladenović, in the article 'Defense Reforms in Serbia and Montenegro,' explained the complexity of the process of defense reform and speculated on how the changes would happen regarding the perception and organization in the fields of: security, administration and institutions, the democratization of civil and military relations, redefinition of the tasks and impartiality of armed forces as well as their restructuring and inclusion in the regional and global processes -

'According to the traditional concept of security, a man feels secure when surrounded by strong armed forces that protect his country and the region, whereas current attitudes reflect different facts and conclusions, showing that a person is secure if there are economic, political and spiritual security and freedom; military component is less significant. Taking this viewpoint into account, the perception and organization of security should be seen as a specific cultural environment of Serbia and Montenegro.'(Mladenović, 2005: 23).

After the disintegration of the state of Serbia and Montenegro, Montenegro's criticism of NATO gradually ceased and, eleven years later, the ruling political elite in Podgorica achieved one of its key tasks, which was its full membership in NATO. When it comes to the region, the first to join NATO were Slovenia in 2004, and five years later Croatia and Albania, while Bosnia and Herzegovina was invited to solve its internal issues, being a signatory to the Partnership for Peace, just like Serbia which, since 2007, has been implementing a policy of war neutrality, but also maintaining good relations with everyone.

According to the opinion polls conducted by Damar Agency, which were published in late October 2015, shortly before the membership invitation, 44.9 per cent of the citizens were for NATO membership, 38.9 per cent were against and 16.2 per cent were undecided.

Content Analysis

The analysis of 42 articles published on the portal of Radio and Television of Montenegro (hereinafter: RTCG) in November 2015, show the way in which this media reported for the period of one month before the invitation itself. 'Openly about NATO' section started working on 15 January 2014, and has had more than a thousand articles on this subject published so far.

The opinion poll as an independent genre, rarely appears, in all media, as a separate genre, and when it does, it is about issues connected to that very day, week or month. Most frequently, it is part and parcel of an article, but in this section, during the whole month, RTCG did not have a single poll conducted among the citizens. The journalists did not write reports either, but that was in a way justified because of the complexity of the genre that requires creativity, which is often impossible in the section dealing with politics.

Two interviews were published. The first one was a media initiative of the Television, but since it was just transferred to the portal, it cannot be treated as such here. The second interview was taken from the magazine *Partner Admiral*, published by the Ministry of Defense of Montenegro, and the interviewee was Dragan Samardžić, the **Chief** of the General Staff of the Military of Montenegro, who took the opportunity to promote the Military of Montenegro. Samardžić also spoke about the membership invitation emphasizing its positive aspects, such as the increase of the level of safety protection and new opportunities for the young. Journalistic approach was neutral.

Within a month, the portal released two television reports and one article. The article covered three specific topics: why Montenegro needed NATO, achieved results and the membership invitation itself. The interviewee was Vesko Garčević, Montenegro's national NATO coordinator, and he spoke about Montenegro and its citizens, NATO and Russia's interests. A positive approach of 'a subject' towards 'an object' was present when he talked about NATO, Montenegro and the citizens, and neutral when he spoke about Russia, for he emphasized that visas for travelling to this country would not be introduced.

Hybrid genres were present at the portal and their main examples were downloaded blogs, like the text downloaded from the blog of Mirsad Mulić, Director General of the Directorate for Emergency Situations, and signed by

NATO Membership Council's Communication Team. It presented a huge discrepancy in editorial policy and showed how this sector was in the service of NATO PR team, and not in the service of the citizens. Furthermore, the text spoke positively about the Alliance and the member countries, and the title was 'In the state of emergency, NATO helps faster'⁶⁸. It was about the obligations and results that Montenegro had fulfilled and achieved, and, more importantly, about the role of the Alliance in emergency situations. Mulić wrote about how Montenegro would, in case of all kinds of natural and other disasters, receive fast, efficient and adequate assistance, because all member countries help each other. Montenegro would also acquire new knowledge and skills through trainings so it would be able to quickly respond to various situations. Later in the text, the author promoted the project 'the improvement of the capacities for finding, transportation and destruction of unexploded ordnance (UXO)' and he described in detail its realization as well as the equipment - in the form of underwater detectors and diving equipment, the drone with the camera for reconnaissance of UXO from a safe distance - and all that and much more, as he said, would be used by the officials of the Directorate during the actions of rescuing and searching for people, in cases of fires, floods and the like.

Another example was the text written using the similar principle of an event report, whereas it was actually taken from the blog of **Godrun Steinacker**⁶⁹, German Ambassador, and it had been originally published on the same website Natomontenegro. **Steinacker's** assessment was that Montenegro had a great chance to join NATO, which was strategically important and desirable, and that it had indispensable support of Germany in that endeavor. Journalistic approach in the lead was positive and it transferred the words of praise of the Ambassador.

The Ambassadors of various member countries of the Alliance, were frequently interviewed for the texts and reports, and they all provided support for Montenegro's membership.

One more example of a taken blog was 'NATO strengthens country's sovereignty'⁷⁰. The author of the text was Andrija Klikovac, but at the end of the text there was a signature of **NATO Membership Council's PR Team**. This was the second PR text which had been downloaded and it was exactly

68 <http://www.rtcg.me/vijesti/otvoreno-o-nato-u/109104/kad-je-vanredno-nato-brze-pomaze.html>

69 <http://rtcg.me/vijesti/otvoreno-o-nato-u/110582/dobre-sanse-za-poziv-u-nato.html>

70 <http://www.rtcg.me/vijesti/otvoreno-o-nato-u/111324/nato-jaca-suverenitet-zemlje.html>

the same as the original, and by that time there were more of those texts than the articles released within a month. Klikovac wrote about a democratically regulated state and the rule of human rights guaranteed by security and safety measures provided by the NATO Alliance to Montenegro. He recalled that safety standards in the member countries are high, and he finished the text with the conclusion that it was necessary to preserve peace and stability in the Western Balkans, which the membership could do, and that the final goal was, by all means, freedom and the benefits provided by the membership.

Another example of a hybrid genre at the portal of the RTCG was found in the text which was written in the form of two statements of the journalist and analyst Mirnes Kovač, and downloaded from a Pobjeda's interview. The writer noted that when Kovač spoke about Russia, he had an openly negative attitude towards its authorities, whereas he expressed a positive attitude towards NATO: 'In his interview for Pobjeda, he emphasizes that the North Atlantic Alliance is the most rational choice. He thinks that Russia is waging a dangerous policy and is looking for someone who will implement it.'⁷¹

When this portal's journalists take articles from other media, they publish them without proper citations, thus leaving the first impression that those are their own sentences. The lead looks like a beginning of a column, and only at the end of a sentence, you can see the phrases like 'was emphasized by' or 'is said by', and such. It is also important to emphasize that the journalists, in their articles, always write statements first and, only at the end, they mention the name of the person who said those statements. This method of reporting confuses the audience and can be interpreted as manipulation.

The beginning of the research shows many downsides in the journalist work, the only (military) analyst who speaks for the portal being Aleksandar Radić. He spoke at almost all the stands (pseudo events) held last month and commented on current events for the portal. Apart from him, Mirnes Kovač speculated on the attitudes of Russia for Pobjeda, Igor Tubak, the Obris portal analyst, discussed the terrorist attack in Paris and how it could affect Montenegro's membership invitation, while the analyst Ivan Vuković, in the program 'Challenge' ('Izazov') of the Television Montenegro, spoke about the absolute security that NATO membership brings.

When it comes to politicians, the Ministry of Defence, Milica Pejanović

71 <http://rtcg.me/vijesti/otvoreno-o-nato-u/109192/buducnost-cg-u-nato-u-dru-go-je-lutrija.html>

Đurišić, appeared frequently, always to give the same information but in a different way, but she never included the statistics about what Montenegro had done having all the data summarized, nor how much money it had allocated for the military budget and how it would be allocated after joining the Alliance. If such information had been published prior to this study and were not included in the analysis of the content, it is certainly not an argument for not reminding the public of the crucial information on the management of the state budget.

The topics discussed during the month before the membership invitation, were the same, positively oriented towards: the Alliance, Montenegro, the allies and the officials of all the countries that offered their open support to the Montenegrin authorities. On the stands in Petnjica 'Montenegro on the doorstep of NATO', which was organized by the NGO ALFA Center, the Association of the Municipalities of Montenegro and **NATO Membership Council's Communication Team, they talked about** the positive attitude towards the North Atlantic Alliance, as well as about why Montenegro needs NATO.

Journalistic approach in the report from this pseudo-event was positive, since it expressed the positivity on behalf of all citizens when introducing each of the speaker: 'He said that we were optimistically waiting for 1 December', 'the strategic interest of all citizens of Montenegro is security', etc.

At the panel held in Podgorica, Vesko Garčević, NATO's national coordinator, directly expressed a positive attitude about the campaign waged for the membership in NATO. For the opposition parties, that emphasize that 200 thousand Euros needed for NATO integration make a big impact on the state budget, he had a negative attitude. Garčević was sure about the validity of this decision, and he accused the opposition of leading a campaign against NATO, while nobody knows how much they were paid for it. The President of the Committee for Foreign Affairs of Hungarian Parliament, Zsolt Nemeth, spoke about the security provided by the Alliance and he emphasized the importance of the support given by the United States of America.

Joining NATO is, perhaps, a necessary condition for the Western Balkan countries to be safer, but it is not enough. Besides, a membership in the Alliance brings along costs as well as the risk which must not be neglected. (Zagorcheva, 2012: 8)

One part of the media airtime is devoted to the riots and protests in

Montenegro, which took place in October and 'ended' with a number of injured and arrested people. In November, this topic was mentioned twice in this section. The first time it was the text titled: 'The protests have increased the support for NATO', but the journalist (who was neutral in this text), in order to write such a title, needed to mention that the statement itself was said by the CEO of Alfa Center, Aleksandar Dedović, who was contradictory in this statement, just as he was in the ones that followed. There was no real foundation nor argumentation to explain why the number of the citizens in favor of NATO membership had increased, but that was more than obvious from the percentage value that rose by 13 per cent. According to the previous opinion polls (Damar Agency)⁷², the increase started at the beginning of 2015. The protests did not last for that long, and this was just a simple marketing technique with its purpose to blur reality.

For the second text, the unknown author wrote the lead only. It is mainly about the citizens (the mass) and according to the author of the blog from the website Natomontenegro, who is a Teaching Assistant at the Faculty of Management in Igalo and a member of the Executive Board of the Socialist - Democratic Party of Montenegro (the list of members of the Executive Board of this party: <http://www.dps.me/nasapartija/izvrsni-odbor>, accessed 3 February 2016 18.00), Tamara Vukašinić, they did not protest but simply, just as she did, attended the stands at which the speakers negatively talked about NATO: 'The other group of people visited those stands at which the speakers were the opposition politicians as well as the prominent members of the NGO sector, and who talked loudly and clearly about all the possible damages our country would suffer in case it really joined the North Atlantic Alliance.'⁷³

Vukašinić mentioned several resolutions on which she debated afterwards:

- Democracy is beautiful, all pseudo-events should be visited;
- A Croatian citizen was killed by terrorists because of NATO;
- NATO is the United States of America;
- NATO guarantees safe future.

⁷² <http://www.cdm.me/politika/istrazivanje-damar-a-za-ulazak-u-nato-421-odstogradana/>

⁷³ <http://www.rtcg.me/vijesti/otvoreno-o-nato-u/109837/vukasinovic-protiv-cegaste-vi-u-stvari.html>

When it comes to the general resolution, which reads 'For the NATO membership', Vukašinović did, thanks to the previously debated situations as well as the arguments on the topic, clearly represent the affirmative team. The fact is that yet another PR text with no analytical approach, has found its place on the RTCG Internet portal which is regulated in the way that it should be edited by the journalists who work in the public interest of all citizens.

The Second Example of the Reporting

One of the better examples of the professional news reporting in the region is the media Al Jazeera Balkans. Late in October 2015, reporters working for this media made professional reports about the potential invitation for Montenegro's membership in NATO. The reports included the protests happening in Montenegro as well as the new protests which began to occur in November, organized by the opposition.

There were a lot of on scene reports, which did not use the air-time for 'empty rhetoric', but to thoroughly, quickly and argumentatively manage the facts, under stressful circumstances and with frenzy behind their back, broadcasting live.⁷⁴ Even though many texts on this subject were released through the agency news, the editorial staff gave their journalists the possibility to write a blog, distancing itself slightly from the presented information. The article that is certainly worth mentioning is 'How the Front destroyed the Montenegrin opposition'⁷⁵, written by the journalist Andrej Nikolaidis, which is not necessarily linked with Montenegro's membership in the Alliance, but it certainly analyzes the socio-political context of Montenegro before the invitation.

Conclusion

The thing that has not been explained in any of the texts during this entire media analysis, is exactly how much the citizens will pay for the membership in NATO. The membership fee is paid from the budget planned for the military obligations that would, in this way, be put to a standstill, but 1.4 per cent of the money from the entire state budget would be used for

74 <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/video/marinovic-o-novim-protestima-u-podgorici>

75 <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/kako-je-front-unistio-crnogorsku-opoziciju>

the settlement of these obligations. In more than 40 analyzed articles there is no further expert explanation. That is why there are articles of the NATO Council's Communications Team, which is an obvious use of media for the purpose of propagating the content, and such behavior of a public broadcaster cannot be justified.

For the period of one month, the media initiative in one section of the portal, almost did not exist. Pseudo-events that were also attended by the opposition, were converted into NATO meetings, and right after them, the texts in which the interviewees were the ambassadors of various countries, emerged. It is worth mentioning that all of those countries were, in fact, the member countries of the Alliance, and that they all gave open support and 'rooted for' the invitation.

The person who was certainly the subject at most times and who made an effort to include as many officials talking about the invitation as possible, was Milica Pejanović Đurišić. RTCG journalists successfully presented every step of the Minister, and sometimes, succeeded in making multiple pieces of news from her single visit abroad. In this way, they raised some media initiatives, redirecting the letters about the expenditure of the meetings, from the Minister's Cabinet, directly to the interested audience of the section 'Openly about NATO'. The overall analysis shows the minimalist pluralism of the opinion.

The media did not offer a good approach to reporting, did not show the real state of affairs, especially because there were no in-depth analyses. There were no analytical articles, no interviews, while most of the texts were actually taken from other media, or the TV coverage of RTCG was uploaded to the site, along with a brief introduction, as news. One of the possible explanations might be a lack of journalists for reporting on the portal. The main conclusion of this research is that the ruling party obviously spread the positive atmosphere on the subject of the invitation, while the opposition was sheltered and deprived of the media airtime. This can be characterized as the positive propaganda of political marketing, one of whose objectives is to mislead the public, which is far from the principles of the public broadcasting service.

Joining NATO was one of the main strategic goals of Montenegro, set after the separation from Serbia in 2006. With an invitation to join NATO partnership for peace, the relations between the Alliance and Montenegro started to develop. The official invitation for Montenegro to join NATO was sent on 2 December 2015. The official Montenegro decided to accept the

invitation for it was the ultimate fulfillment of the goal for which they had worked for nine years.

The request of the opposition to hold a referendum for the citizens to make the final decision, was not adopted. Montenegrin President, Filip Vujanović, said for N1 Television that the Assembly had full legitimacy to act on this issue.⁷⁶ Thus, on 5 June 2017, Montenegro officially became a member of the Alliance, which was marked by the ceremony of dignitaries in Washington.

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⁷⁶ <http://rs.n1info.com/a243957/Svet/Region/Vujanovic-Crnoj-Gori-ne-treba-referendum-o-clanstvu-u-NATO.html> accessed 16 September 2017

SERBIA BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

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The Republic of Serbia is situated in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula and as such it has a huge geo-strategic potential. This geo-strategic position primarily reflects in the fact that two main corridors intersect in Serbia. Corridor 7, that is the Danube River, as well as the Corridor 10, that is the international road and railway, provide Serbia with good connectivity with Western Europe as well as with the Middle East. The goal of the foreign affairs of the Republic of Serbia is to join the European Union, while on the military plan the politics on military neutrality is conducted by the Republic of Serbia, meaning that it is not a member of any military alliance. So, based on geographical, political and military position, Serbia is divided between two parties, the USA and NATO on one side and Russia and CSTO on the other.



Illustration 1: Presentation of Serbia's position regarding road traffic (the orange circle marks destinations reached in 24 hours and the potential travelling costs).



Illustration 2: Presentation of time needed to reach the major cities from Belgrade by airline transportation.

Factually, the Republic of Serbia is surrounded by NATO state members, or by the states with transparent ambition to become the members of the Alliance. After June 5, 2017, when Montenegro officially became NATO member as well, apart from Serbia, only Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia remained as the states which are not the full members of NATO (Macedonia has entered the admission process but due to the dispute on its state name with Greece, admission process is postponed, while Bosnia and Herzegovina still deals with certain issues regarding its military assets).

Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that, since 2006, Serbia has been the participant of NATO program - the Partnership for Peace, soon after the union with Montenegro broke up. The Partnership for Peace is the most significant initiative to maintain peace, particularly in Europe according to NATO experts' evaluation. Participation of Serbia in PfP is of great significance since it firms the reputation of Serbia and contributes to its cooperation in the fields of interest together with PfP state members. The very participation in PfP has a very positive effect on the security and defense system particularly regarding civil and democratic control, as well as possibilities to respond to the modern challenges and threats⁷⁷. "In accomplishing goals of defense policy, the effort of the state authorities is aimed at the reform and development of the efficient defense system, its stable operation and creating conditions for its interoperability with countries involved in the European security structure and the Partnership for peace program of NATO". (National Security of Republic of Serbia, 2009)

⁷⁷ <http://www.mfa.gov.rs/sr/index.php/spoljna-politika/sbp/partnerstvo-za-mir?lang=lat>, 23.9.2017, 18:33

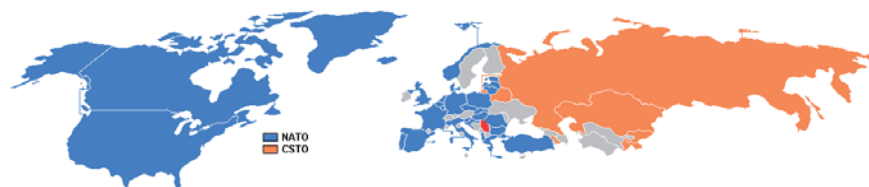


Illustration 3: Presentation of NATO state members and CSTO state members in relation to Serbia (colored in red)

Relations of Serbia and NATO are specific, mostly due to the reflection of the historical events, especially the conflict of former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and NATO, NATO's attitude regarding Kosovo, as well as participation in NATO/KFOR in formation of the so-called Kosovo Security Force. But both parties have shown awareness that development of partner cooperation contributes to stability on the Balkan Peninsula to a great extent⁷⁸.

On the other hand, in 2013, Serbia became a non-member observer state of Collective Security Treaty Organization CSTO. The Russian Federation is perceived with the domestic public as one of the greatest friend of the Republic of Serbia, due to its occasional intercession and appreciation of the Serbian national interests, particularly at the Security Council. Besides, the official politics of Moscow towards Serbia is supportive regarding Serbia's European orientation, but not of Serbia's admission into NATO, though there are no official mechanisms by which the Russian Federation could prevent its potential admission.

Also, it is highly important to emphasize that, in 2015, Serbia signed Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) and positioned one step closer to the NATO membership. Nevertheless, at potential decision on Serbia's admission in NATO, in a current situation, there would doubtlessly be certain turbulences since majority of public opinion has quite different attitude on NATO membership. Due to this historical relationship with NATO and "Kosovo issue", NATO would experience devastating results at the referendum. This is also shown by the results of public opinion survey:

- 69,4% is against NATO membership
- 64,8% supports military neutrality
- 59,3% supports joining the EU

⁷⁸ <http://www.mfa.gov.rs/sr/index.php/spoljna-politika/sbp/partnerstvo-za-mir?lang=lat>, 23.9.2017. 18:37h

- 15,6% supports joining NATO⁷⁹

However, apart from historical consequences, the great problem of the Republic of Serbia is a lack of the objective informing regarding the future cooperation of Serbia and NATO. In this case it is one of crucial problems. Although Serbia should keep its military neutrality, which is the politics of Serbian officials, media holds responsibility to present the things just as they are.

The Republic of Serbia has carried out 8 military drills with the Russian Federation, while it has performed 45 with the United States. Serbia, regarding neighboring countries, has the best cooperation with both, the USA and the RF. Thanks to the *Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defense*, The Russian-Serbian Humanitarian Center was open in Niš to help Serbia and states in the region in case of natural disasters. This part was of a great significance to Serbia during the floods in May, 2014.

On the other hand, with the help of NATO and countries in the region (former Yugoslav countries and Albania), ABHO center in Kruševac became regional training center where people from civil-military structure can be trained, as well as to be put completely at the service to cooperate with NATO state members, of the Partnership for Peace program, EU, UN⁸⁰.

The neutrality of the Republic of Serbia is evident since its armament consists of military products manufactured by NATO state members as well as by Russia. Last year in December, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed a contract with German company Airbus to buy 9 helicopters in total, 6 for the MD and 3 for the MIA. Serbia got a donation consisting of 19 'Humvee' vehicles from the United States of America, of 3.8 million dollar worth in total and they were delivered to the military quarters in Pančevo on the June 1 this year.⁸¹ On the other hand, the Republic of Serbia signed a contract with the Russian Federation regarding donation of fighter aircraft MiG 29. These planes should soon become the asset of the Republic of Serbia Military Airforce.

There are two perceptions of Serbia's neutrality. One is that neutrality

⁷⁹ <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/serbia/forrel-nato.htm>, 23.9.2017. 18:54h

⁸⁰ <http://www.vs.rs/index.php?content=ee25ebd2-de51-11e2-9157-00163e135009> 14.9.2017. 15:05h

⁸¹ <http://www.mod.gov.rs/lat/11080/donacija-sad-za-vojsku-srbije-11080> 14.9.2017. 15:56h

is means to achieve specific interests, and the other one is that neutrality is not sustainable since NATO led by the USA and CSTO led by the Russian Federation will 'charge the bill' eventually.⁸² On the other hand, NATO leaders find military neutrality sustainable and that turning toward the West and cooperation with the East are not mutually exclusive⁸³.

The current development of the situation in the world, tightening relations of Russia and the Unites States of America, as well as increasing jeopardy from North Korea, migrants influx from the Middle East countries, which represents a specific security issue, and with the increase of terrorist attack at the European ground, really opens the question whether neutrality as such is sustainable?

82 <http://rs.n1info.com/a291044/Vesti/Vesti/Koliko-je-odrziva-pozicija-vojne-neutralnosti-Srbije.html> 23.9.2017. 19:10h

83 <http://rs.n1info.com/a202631/Vesti/Vesti/NATO-Vojna-neutralnost-Srbije-apsolutno-odrziva.html> 23.9.2017. 19:23 h