

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION SOUTH EAST EUROPE TRENDS AS A EUROPE-WIDE CONCERN

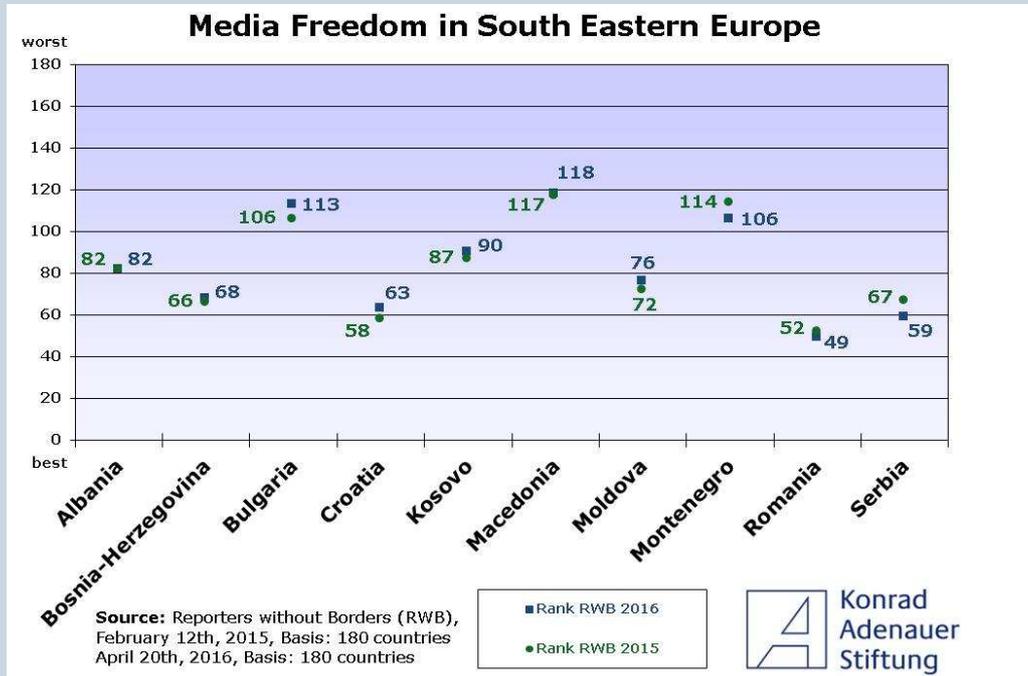
**CHRISTIAN SPAHR, KAS MEDIA PROGRAM
CLUB OF VENICE, 11 NOVEMBER 2016**



CONTEXT: CHANGE OF INFORMATION CULTURE

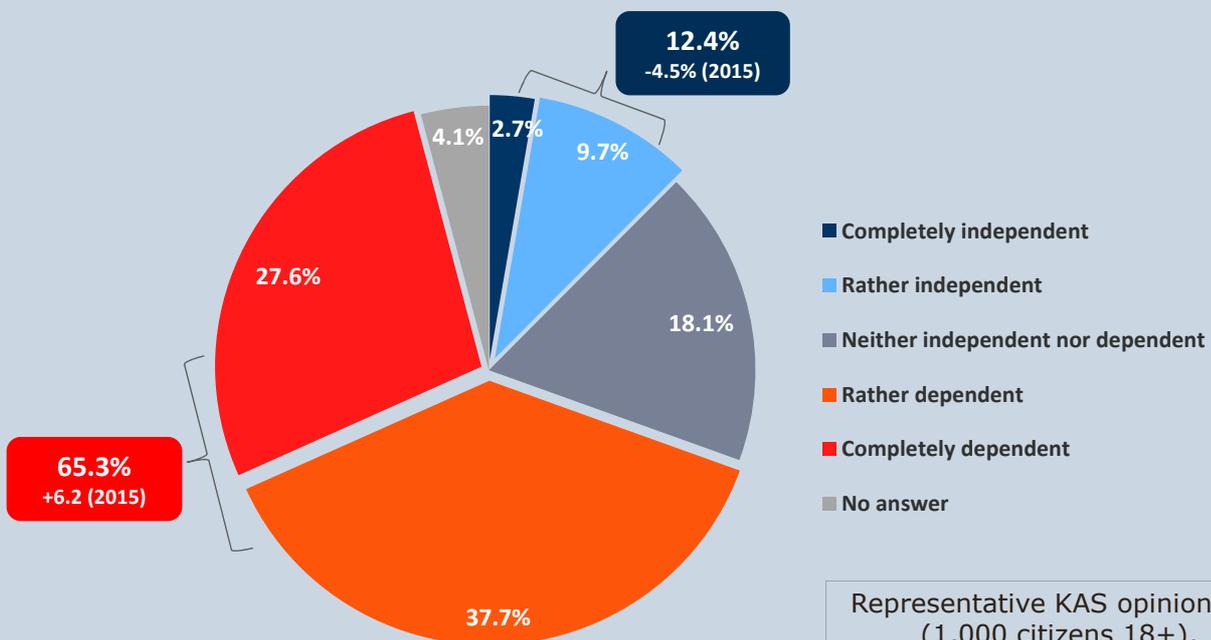
- Due to internet, no borders between consumers and producers of information
- Every second Serbian, Romanian, Bulgarian uses the internet (Germany 84%)
- Most internet users read news portals, some discuss politics online
- Every fifth internet user creates content (Romania, Bulgaria; Eurostat 2015)
- Citizens' protests via internet (Bulgaria 2013, BiH 2014, Macedonia 2015)
- Independent news portals and investigative media platforms gain popularity

MEDIA FREEDOM – NEGATIVE TREND IN S.E.E.



Only one in eight Bulgarians thinks the media are free

How dependent or independent are the media in the country?



OBSTACLES FOR MEDIA FREEDOM & DIVERSITY

- Media owners pursue **political interests** (internal censorship)
- → participation of media in political **campaigns**
- **Monopoly** tendencies in print media
- Non-transparent **ownership** and financial sources of media
- State authorities are the biggest **advertisement clients** of print media
- Partly unequal **access to distribution networks**
- Insufficient **legal guarantees** for freedom of reporting
- Unattractive **working conditions** of journalists (due to economic crisis)
- Weak **self-regulation** and lobbying of media outlets and journalists
- Lack of consensus about **ethical standards** of reporting

ALTERNATIVES TO OLD STRUCTURES

- **Online news portals** often report more independently and need less seed money – but also have quality issues
- Foundation of **independent editorial offices**, research associations and media NGOs
- **Investigative journalism** (facilitation through further education, grants, contests/awards ...)
- **Social media** (limited): taboo topics and protests are spread via Facebook, blogs and Twitter – but cannot replace quality journalism
- **International broadcasters** of Western countries (Deutsche Welle, Radio Free Europe, Radio France Internationale, etc.)



FURTHER APPROACHES

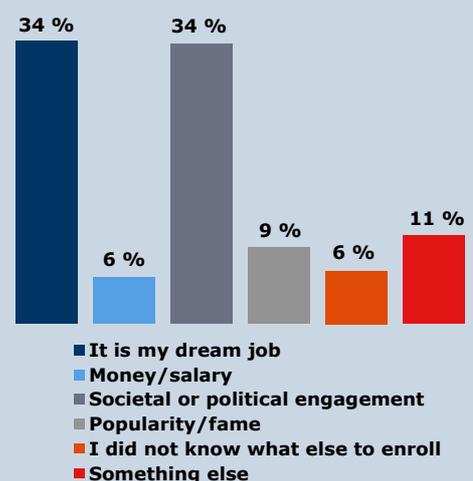
- **Dialogue with politicians** in candidate countries during accession process (by EU institutions, governments, NGOs)
- **Schengen and EU subsidies** as leverage
- **Further education:** media ethics, EU facts
- Advancement of **public debate:** relations of media and politics; journalism education; media legislation and self-regulation
- Promotion of **professional and ethical communication** in politics (→ SEECOM)
- New **info platforms** for experts and citizens



JOURNALISM EDUCATION: VIEWS OF STUDENTS

- **Survey at universities in five countries:** Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia
- More than 100 participants per country
- **Key messages:**
 - Every third student not satisfied with learning conditions
 - Every second criticises technical equipment of universities
 - Majority bewails lack of practical exercises
 - Only half of the students wants to stay in media after graduation
 - TV is most popular job perspective
- Presentation at South East Europe Media Forum 2016: Book with recommendations

What is your motivation to study journalism?



BALKANMEDIA



[MEDIA NEWS](#)
[EVENTS](#)
[MEDIA MAP](#)
[PUBLICATIONS](#)
[RESOURCES](#)
[ABOUT US](#)

[MEDIA NEWS](#)
[EVENTS](#)
[MEDIA MAP](#)
[PUBLICATIONS](#)
[RESOURCES](#)
[ABOUT US](#)

Balkamedia - Events

Events Calendar

Get updates:

Nov 2015

- Thursday, November 5th 2015
All Day [South East Europe Media Forum \(...\)](#)
Bucharest, Rumänien
- Friday, November 6th 2015
All Day [South East Europe Media Forum \(...\)](#)
Bucharest, Rumänien
- Saturday, November 7th 2015
All Day [South East Europe Media Forum \(...\)](#)
Bucharest, Rumänien

Balkamedia - Media Map - Serbia

Serbia

Media Situation:

Although after the democratic changes in 2000 it was expected that the Serbian media will quickly develop and gradually reach the European standards, some of the key problems have still remained unsolved even 14 years later. Non-transparent ownership, endangered independence of the media, unfinished media reform and increasingly difficult financial situation are the biggest problems that Serbian media are facing with. [More](#)

Media Freedom:

Serbia's European course is no longer a matter of internal debate – all major political factions have committed to the project. Now that accession talks with the European Union have officially been launched, the country's task to implement the necessary and already initiated reforms in one of the key areas – media freedom – seems ever more urgent. Not outright attacks against journalists but lingering soft-censorship is the most pressing obstacle for media freedom in the Balkan country. [More](#)

Media Outlets:

Despite the fact that the Serbian media market is characterized by a large number of public and private broadcasters, as well as print and online media, media pluralism still isn't satisfactory. The independence of journalists and editors is limited by direct or indirect impact of political parties and the private sector, which is particularly evident in the situation when the minimum number of media is profitable and doesn't depend on government assistance or powerful advertisers. [Therefore, self-censorship in the Serbian media becomes more...](#)

Media Situation

Media Freedom

Media Outlets

Media Usage

Links

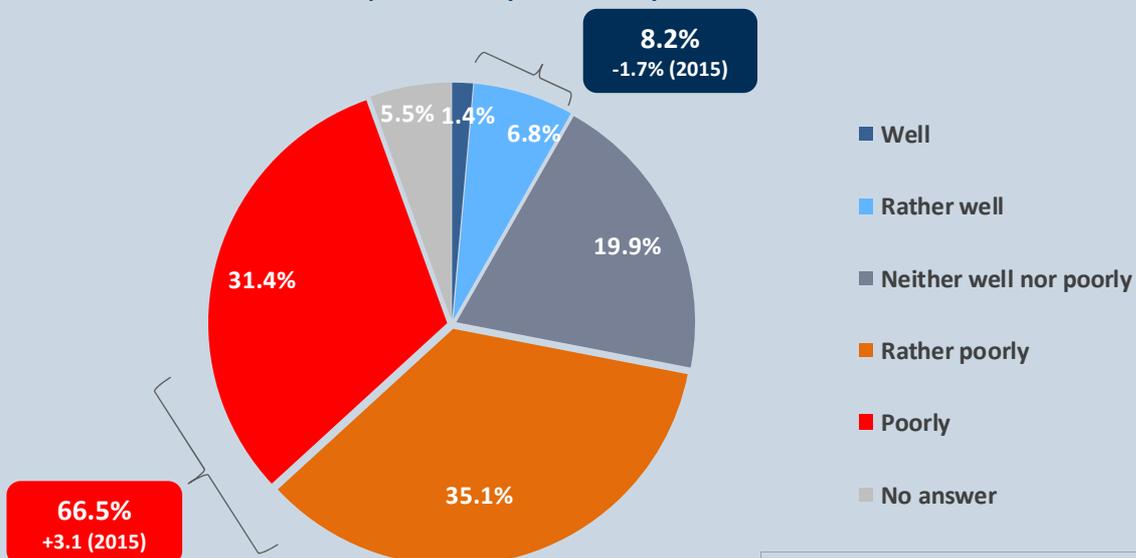


Official name	Republic of Serbia
Capital	Belgrade
Population	7.2 million
Government form	Parliamentary republic

<http://balkanmedia.org>
<http://www.kas.de/wf/en/71.12814>

Low trust in political communication (Bulgaria)

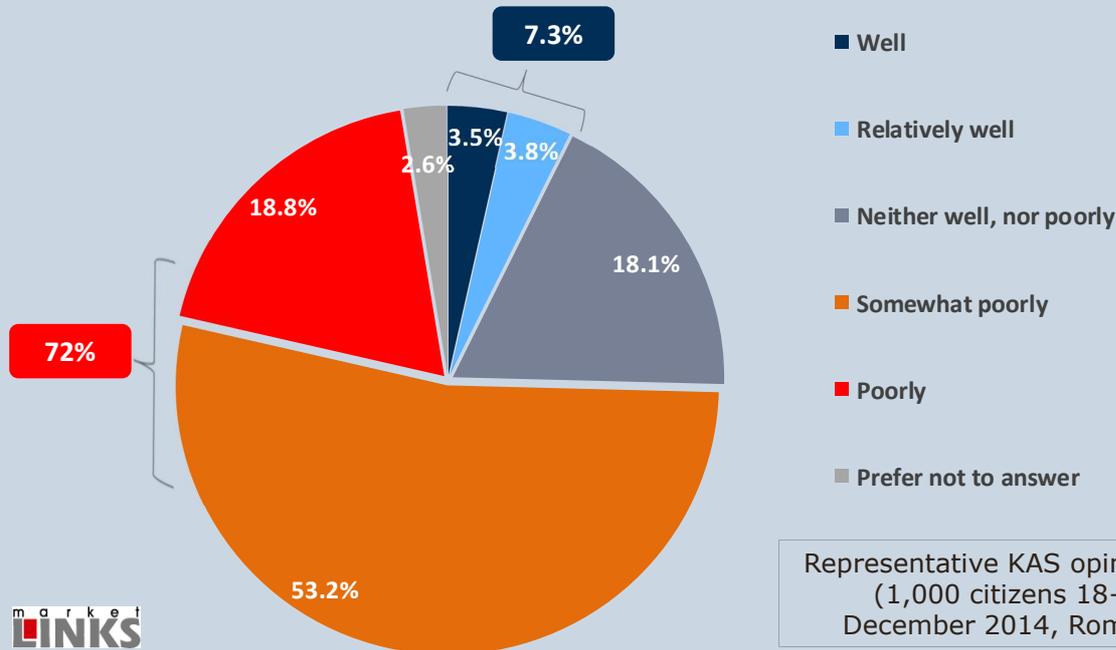
How well or poorly are Bulgarian politicians informing the citizens about the decisions they make? (1 answer)



Representative KAS opinion poll (1,000 citizens 18+), December 2015, Bulgaria

Low trust in political communication (Romania)

How well or poorly are Romanian politicians informing the citizens about the decisions they make? (1 answer)



PR: REALISTIC AIMS OR WISHFUL THINKING?

- **Leaders: Give room to spokespersons** and PRs, let them do their jobs
- **Be as transparent/open as possible**
- **Have a true dialogue with citizens** and listen to them
- **Treat journalists well**, to respect their professional and societal roles
- **Don't oppress or blackmail media** (many citizens and the EU will see it)
- **Domestic and international messages** must not be contradictory

REINVENTING ROLE OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATORS: CORE PRINCIPLES AND ACTION POINTS

- **Transparency and Openness**
Treating public policy as service, not product
- **Inclusiveness and Participation**
Treating people as assets, not target audiences
- **Integrity, impartiality and public interest**
Sustaining public's trust in government comms
- **Internal communication**
Communication as integral part of policy making
- **Professional exchange and cooperation**
Promoting peer support and sharing
- **Innovative approach**
Using technology to facilitate communication



<http://seecom.info>

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES FOR THE EU

- EU needs to find new forms of dialogue with civil society, simpler and clearer messages, addressing not only facts but also sensibilities
- EU has to deal with effects of globalisation and must find a language to confront fears
- Competing with other political models, EU has to be more successful in explaining principles
- Clear and unambiguous messages from the EU are of great importance for enlargement
- Strengthening ties between spokespersons in candidate countries and their peers in the EU



COMMUNICATION, MEDIA AND POLITICS: KEY INSTRUMENTS

- **Public fora:** South East Europe Media Forum (SEEMF), Belgrade, 21-23 November 2016
- **Informal dialogues:** Round table SEECOM Steering Committee, Chişinău, December 2016
- **Panel discussions:** "Terrorism and responsibility of media", Sofia, March 2017
- **Summer schools:** Political Communication, Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 2017
- **Conferences:** SEECOM Conference, Oct. 2017
- **Partnerships:** PRO.PR conference (Croatia), IPI World Congress (Hamburg), and others
- **Training exchanges, Monitoring/evaluation**



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Media Program South East Europe

Ul. Konrad Adenauer 19, 1504 Sofia, Bulgaria
Phone: +359 2 94249-71
E-Mail: media.europe@kas.de
www.kas.de/medien-europa/en
www.facebook.com/kasmediaeurope
<https://twitter.com/KASmediaSEE>
https://twitter.com/c_spahr

