

DIS!NFO

BRIEF



October 2021

ANNUAL DFC MEDIA MONITORING

DFC ANALYSIS

DFC published a report based on the analysis of the annual media monitoring of the most read Serbian media in Montenegro, implemented from October 1, 2020, to September 30, 2021. The report identified the primary narratives about Montenegro created by the portals *Alo*, *Espresso*, *Blic*, *Srbija danas*, *Kurir*, and *Informer* in the previous 12 months and included 15,825 articles with Montenegro as a keyword.

Their reporting was full of sensationalism, often followed by violation of journalistic ethics with the clear goal of creating prejudices against Montenegro, its citizens, and institutions. In addition, such reporting contributes greatly to the radicalization of societies and the escalation of divisions.

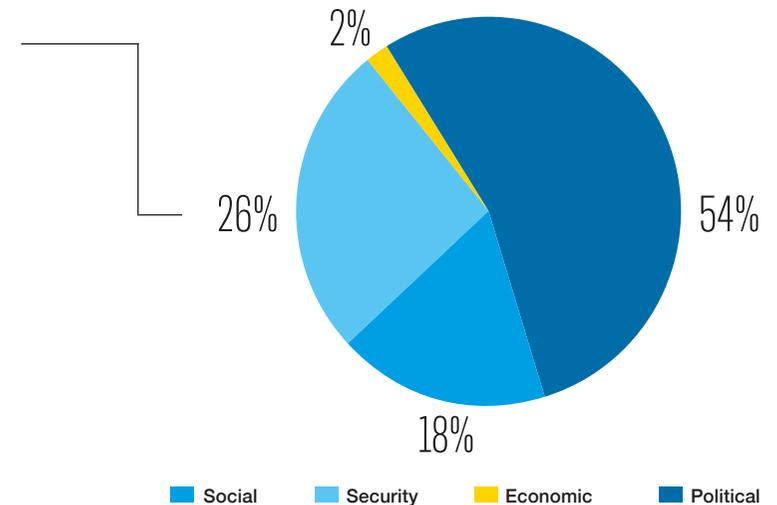
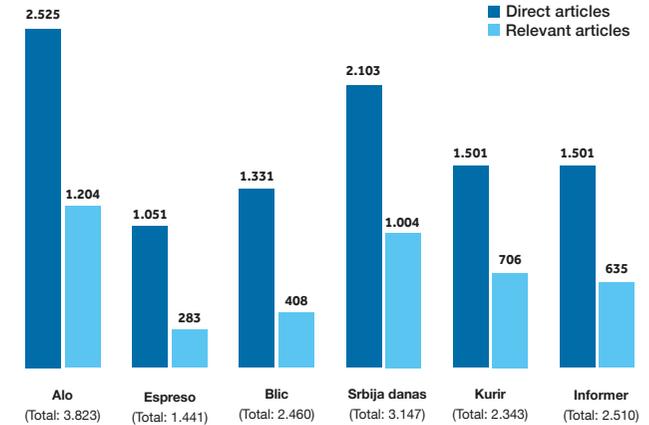
The monitored contents generated a total of 15,825 texts containing the keyword Montenegro, while 9,698 of them directly

targeted Montenegro and ongoing events in it. For monitoring purposes, 4,265 relevant articles were identified, out of 9,698 direct ones.

Relevant articles are qualitatively divided into **four domains - political, social, security, and economic**. The number of articles mainly related to politics is a total of 3,012 (54%). A total of 1,433 articles (26%) related to the field of security, followed by 981 (18%) articles on the social domain, and 141 (2%) articles on the economic domain.

The narrative repeated the most (1,754 times) in the mentioned media is that *Montenegro is a captured and criminal state*. The second narrative in terms of numbers is *that Krivokapic, Abazovic, and Becic are traitors* (700 times). More details and an integral report can be found on the [DFC website](#).

Number of monitored and analysed articles



POLL AGAINST SERBS

DISINFORMATION

The Center for Civic Education (CCE) announced on October 25, 2021 results of public opinion research which, among other things, point out that the number of citizens who believe that Montenegro is going in the wrong direction after the change of Government has increased. The research showed that citizens who declare themselves as Serbs by nationality and those with a lower level of education believe that Montenegro is going in the right direction.

Certain members of the ruling structure in Montenegro, as well as part of the national and regional media, claim that the background of this research is an attempt to discredit Serbs. Numerous Serbian portals described the survey as a *poll against Serbs*. Some media and politicians also targeted Daliborka Uljarevic, which caused a barrage of insults directed at the CCE director.

Certain Serbian tabloids used this text as an occasion to spread disinformation along with sensationalism and the already established narrative about the endangerment of Serbs in Montenegro

THE EU DOES NOT PREVENT PRO-SERBIAN PARTIES FROM ENTERING THE GOVERNMENT

DISINFORMATION

The international community and Montenegro's partners have repeatedly expressed concern over the possible entry of the DF into the executive power. The messages that arrived always emphasized that the foreign policy course of Montenegro must not change and that every Montenegrin Government that nurtures Euroatlantic values will have the support of the international community. Such views were also expressed by EU representatives in a text published by [Radio Free Europe](#).

However, certain Serbian tabloids used this text as an occasion to spread disinformation along with sensationalism and the already established narrative about the

endangerment of Serbs in Montenegro. In the articles, the Serbian tabloids [Alo](#), [Informer](#) and [Objektiv](#), claimed that the European Union was preventing Serbian parties from entering the restructured Government.

In a statement for RFE, Marko Makovec, director for the Western Balkans and the European External Action Service, said that if the DF is invited to the government, it must be clear that it will support the geostrategic orientation that implies a European path. This statement clearly indicates that the EU does not block the entry of Serbian parties into the Government, but that the EU's support for a possible restructured government depends on its foreign policy orientation.

EU AND PANDORA PAPERS

DISINFORMATION

On October 3, 2021, the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) published papers that reveal the financial secrets of a large number of world leaders, politicians, and celebrities who evaded taxes by opening offshore companies in various parts of the world.

A certain number of Serbian media, like [Nacionalist](#) and [Novosti](#), used this topic to spread disinformation on Montenegro.

In identical articles entitled *The ring around Djukanovic is tightening: Brussels has announced its involvement in shedding light on the Pandora's papers affair in Montenegro*, these media have announced the alleged involvement of the

The content of these texts did not correspond to the sensationalist headlines that were promoted

EU in the investigation of the affair in our country.

However, it is disinformation. Also, the content of these texts did not correspond to the sensationalist headlines that were promoted. The Delegation of the European Union (EU) to Montenegro said they do not comment on public allegations regarding individual cases mentioned in the Pandora Papers investigation and that it is up to the competent state authorities to decide whether there are elements for an investigation in the allegations.

CHAOS IN CETINJE, DIRECTED BY SERBIAN MEDIA

DISINFORMATION

On October 31, the Orthodox Church in Montenegro and its believers celebrate two holidays dedicated to St. Peter of Cetinje and the Apostle Luke. On that occasion, believers from all cities of Montenegro visited the Cetinje Monastery. The police were also present in front of the monastery, and numerous citizens with Montenegrin national symbols sang Montenegrin songs.

That was the trigger for Serbian tabloids to start with a series of sensationalist headlines. Serbian tabloids wrote in an identical or similar way that there was chaos in Cetinje, instructed by *komitas*. [Informer](#), [Novosti](#), [Alo](#), [Kurir](#) are just some of the tabloids that spread disinformation that day. However, in Cetinje, everything passed peacefully and without incident.

In Cetinje, everything passed peacefully and without incident



2BS FORUM

DFC INFO

At the recently finished 2BS Forum, a special panel was dedicated to disinformation and the negative foreign influence currently manifesting itself through this phenomenon. The panelists were Brian Whitmore, a non-resident Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council, and Vuk Maras, director at Media Association of South-East Europe.

Speaking at the panel on the impact of disinformation, Whitmore said that societies in which there is a high degree of corruption, a high degree of public distrust, and a high degree of polarization, are vulnerable to the threat posed by disinformation. As a solution to this problem, Whitmore suggests cooperation within the transatlantic community.

We need to strengthen the level of media literacy, civic education, increase resilience, as the Scandinavian and Baltic countries have done, he added.

Vuk Maras believes that in the fight against disinformation, the first step should be to strengthen the capacity of the media to be more responsive to readers and then more precise and professional and that this is what our societies lack. Maras believes that it is necessary to redefine the concept of media literacy and to find an adequate solution on how to reach young people. He adds that the Montenegrin authorities and the competent ministry must be involved in that process.

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Disinfo Brief provides a monthly overview of the key disinformation, narratives, and propaganda developments that the DFC team researched and debunked to raise awareness of the issue and its extent.



Disinfo Brief is part of the DFC project funded, in part, through a U.S. Department of State grant. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Government.