



Source: © Stoyan Nenov, Reuters

Investigative Journalists in Bulgaria

An Endangered Species?

Petar Karaboev/Hendrik Sittig

Although investigative journalism still exists in Bulgaria, it is on the decline. Over the last few years, this EU country has been steadily sliding down the press freedom rankings. Investigative journalism is often misused for image purposes, and alternative investigations conducted outside traditional newsrooms and in civil society groups raise questions about adherence to professional standards. Restoring trust in the media and solidarity among journalists is no easy task. The motivation to conduct investigative research is also dwindling because the Bulgarian judiciary often simply ignores journalistic revelations.

Investigative research is an essential element of journalism worldwide. In fact, for many journalists, it is the pinnacle of their profession. Time and again, investigative reporters who may have spent weeks or months working on a story cause a stir and hit the headlines with information they uncover. They report on failures, misconduct, and corruption in politics, business, and society and fulfil their role as democracy's fourth estate that keeps a close eye on the other three. This is how journalists do justice to the Latin origin of the word "investigative": *investigare* means, to track someone or something.

In Bulgaria, too, facts unearthed by investigative journalists sometimes grab the headlines. In 2019, several politicians had to resign in the wake of revelations that they were purchasing apartments well below market value. At home and abroad, these incidents became known as "Apartment Gate"¹. However, such disclosures tend to be rare in Bulgaria. Some respected journalists even maintain that the label "investigative journalism" is a mere alibi for sensationalist reporting, and question whether this genre still exists at all. For this article, the authors interviewed a number of journalists who are well-versed in the investigative journalism sector in Bulgaria. Their statements are included as quotes in this article.

According to the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index², Bulgaria has long been one of the most corrupt countries in

Europe. Here, there should actually be no shortage of cases for the Bulgarian media to investigate. For some time now, Bulgaria has been the lowest-ranked EU country in the Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index³, and last year it dropped one more place, from 111 to 112 – partly due to a beating received by one investigative journalist, and the death threats received by another as a result of his work. In its country analysis, the international organisation states: "The situation of the media is very worrying because no one is interested in investigating or condemning violence against journalists." The European Commission⁴, European Parliament⁵, Council of Europe⁶, the US⁷, and the United Nations⁸ have all negatively assessed media freedom in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian public tends to have only a fleeting interest in specific journalistic revelations as it is more interested in potential outcomes – such as ministerial resignations or the conviction of high-ranking officials or businesspeople. As a rule, there are no lasting consequences or improvements in the fight against corruption, the rule of law or the media situation, especially in the investigative field.

What Is the State of Investigative Journalism in Bulgaria?

Firstly, it is important to note that no Bulgarian media outlet has a special department devoted to investigative journalism. This points to a serious deprofessionalisation of journalism. In addition,

editors do not have teams of journalists who spend weeks or even months working on a story. Indeed, there are some journalists who work on longer reports and features in both print and electronic media – such as at the two largest private TV stations, bTV with its “bTV Reporterite” (bTV Reporter) programme⁹, and NOVA with “Temata na NOVA” (The Issue on NOVA)¹⁰. These broadcasts also cover investigative topics, but their main focus is on producing longer, in-depth news reports. Bulgarian National Public Television (BNT) has no discernible investigative journalism section – “Otkrito s Valja Ahtschieva” (Transparency with Valja Ahtschieva), a programme that began in 1994, was terminated in 2019 (though it can still be found on the BNT website).

Good examples of investigative work can be found in print media such as the weekly paper Kapital and the daily Sega, alongside the online portals Dnevnik, Za istinata, KlubZ, Mediapool, and OFFNews. Some of the articles published there are then included in an annual compilation, the “Black Book of Government Waste in Bulgaria”.¹¹

There is little collaboration between Bulgarian media outlets. They are more likely to have partnerships with foreign media – despite it being a rather rare phenomenon as well. One example is the collaboration between the weekly newspaper Kapital and the well-known investigative journalism collective Bellingcat. Their 2019 report on the attack on Bulgarian arms dealer Emilian Gebrev by Russian intelligence agents¹² was taken up by major outlets such as the New York Times for a series about Russian intelligence operations around the globe. The paper won a Pulitzer Prize in 2020 for its reporting.¹³ Freelance Bulgarian journalist Boryana Dzhambazova¹⁴, who assisted with the investigation, was also among the winners of this shared Pulitzer Prize. Bivol, an investigative online portal, also provides a long list of international partners on its website, including newspapers such as Le Monde, the Süddeutsche Zeitung, and Le Soir, as well as international networks of investigative journalists such as the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) and the

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ). Since 2011, Bivol has also been an official partner of the Wikileaks website in Bulgaria and the Balkans.¹⁵

Investigative Journalism or PR?

“There is currently no investigative journalism in Bulgaria.” This unequivocal statement was made during a conversation with bTV reporter Kanna Racheva, who has worked in the media for many years, mainly focusing on judicial affairs. “Investigative research does not usually end with a single report or film. This kind of investigation means taking a long view and building on every finding.” In an interview with the authors, journalist and producer Gena Trajkova took a more optimistic view: “Even though you can count on one hand the examples of good investigative journalism over the last few months, and particularly with regard to the general election in April 2021, it certainly does still exist.” She said she has colleagues who for many years have been involved in investigative reporting and are experts in this genre. However, the media outlets they work for have a comparatively small audience, so their work fails to get the public attention it deserves. Silvia Velikova, too, a presenter at the public Bulgarian National Radio (BNR), often finds that investigative journalism has no lasting impact – but believes this is due to a persistent indifference towards scandals. “For many reasons, journalists have lost the public’s trust and cannot count on the kind of support that we see in other countries when journalists reveal political corruption or scandalous behaviour on the part of public figures.” Vessislava Antonova, a journalist and longstanding observer of the interactions between the media and public relations, witnesses a steady decline in investigative journalism. “It’s as if the media, including public service media, have forgotten their role in democracy – namely, to hold those in power to account or, as the journalism textbooks put it, to be society’s watchdog.” Antonova remarked that journalists who do not believe they should hold the powerful accountable do not stand for journalism but rather for PR and propaganda.

An Academic Study That Deserves Attention

Genka Shikerova is a well-known contributor of investigative reports for the private television channels bTV and NOVA. She also obtained her doctorate from the University of St. Kliment Ohridski in Sofia in 2020 with a thesis titled “Investigative Journalism between Law and Ethical Standards”. This analysed the investigative reporting conducted by bTV and NOVA between 2009 and 2018. Her study of the functionality and public value of investigative journalism using the example of the bTV programme “bTV Reporterite” and the NOVA programmes “Razsledvane” (Investigation) and “Temata na Nova” drew conclusions that are far from optimistic. The term “investigative journalism” is subject to broad interpretation in Bulgaria. Shikerova believes this is due to the lack of tradition and professional standards in journalism there. This also contributes to certain topics being passed off as journalistic revelations without offering any investigative clarification.¹⁶ She also claims reports are regularly launched to enable law enforcement agencies to initiate action against certain individuals. After studying 1,580 programmes on the two TV stations, the sobering conclusion of her dissertation is that, over the ten-year period, only 155 editions actually met the criteria of investigative journalism.

This scepticism and lack of trust in journalism is also highlighted by the results of recent surveys commissioned by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Media Programme South East Europe in Bulgaria. In 2018, almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of respondents believed that the Bulgarian media is unable to work independently. Merely ten per cent believed the media could offer independent reporting.¹⁷

In late 2020 – a year marked not least by months of massive anti-government protests – more than half of those surveyed (56 per cent) said that Bulgaria’s ranking at number 111 in the Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index was well deserved.¹⁸ And in a survey on the coverage of the parliamentary elections in April 2021, almost 70 per cent said they could definitely or

to some extent see dependencies between the media and certain political parties.¹⁹

Every survey carried out over recent years has shown that TV continues to be the main source of information for Bulgarians. In the aforementioned survey conducted in the run-up to the general election, when asked which media they most often used to get information about the election (multiple answers were allowed), a large majority said television (59 per cent private TV channels and 44 per cent public TV), with social media and online portals lagging far behind²⁰. The broad influence of television as a source of information in Bulgaria explains why stations like bTV and NOVA air so many pseudo-investigative programmes. They primarily focus on the sensational and spectacular. For the audience, the motives behind such broadcasts are generally unclear, writes Genka Shikerova in her thesis²¹. She lists the following characteristics of these programmes: they do not provide any sources, or at most a single source. The concrete facts and documents are insufficient for formulating an objective argument. The evidence comes from ethically questionable sources – such as hidden cameras, secret recordings, images of unclear origin, and anonymous statements. They seek to be sensational by pursuing the interviewees, creating conflict situations, and provoking both verbal and non-verbal violence. However, Genka Shikerova does not limit herself to describing the methods and means used to produce these programmes. She gets to the root of the issue and identifies the criteria used to define whether it is actually investigative journalism.

The definitions provided by international investigative journalism associations – such as the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ), Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE), and the Dutch-Flemish Association for Investigative Journalists (VVOJ) – demonstrate that investigative journalism works primarily for the public interest and keeps a close eye on those in positions of power – whether in politics, public agencies, businesses, or religious organisations. It also includes considering facts in context and checking them for quality and reliability, as well as the personal

commitment of journalists who strive to investigate and reveal something previously unknown. But it must not stop there – merely listing facts does not yet constitute investigative journalism; it also requires a clear, well-thought-out argument. According to Shikerova, few investigative journalists in Bulgaria fulfil these criteria.

What Is the Position of Public Service Media?

In light of the above-described situation, it is striking that the public broadcasters BNT (television) and BNR (radio) seem to play only a marginal role in investigative reporting. In conversation with the authors, Vessislava Antonova remarked that their investigative reporters often uncover abuse of power or the embezzlement of public funds, such as EU grants, and made the following point: “We shouldn’t forget that public broadcasters in Bulgaria are funded from the national budget, which is approved by the Ministry of Finance and then adopted by Parliament. In the past, we have often witnessed how the government kept these media outlets on a tight leash by cutting their budgets.” This could lead to BNT and BNR being more reticent when reporting on such issues in order to avoid being sanctioned through more budget cuts.

Gena Traikova has observed a decline in quality investigative journalism since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, but she cautions against jumping to conclusions: “Newsrooms faced the challenge of producing the same or even more volume as prior to the pandemic, but with far fewer staff.” Silvia Velikova of public broadcaster BNR also sees a general staffing problem, saying that it is difficult for public service media to free up staff members so that they can conduct investigative research instead. “According to their mandate, public broadcasters have to report on daily events. Private media, on the other hand, have more freedom to pick and choose which topics to include in their programmes.” Along with the necessary financial resources, investigative journalism also requires a great deal of time. This means journalists have to be taken out of their normal daily work, thus increasing the pressure on other colleagues. Kanna Racheva takes

a similar view: “The money has to be available for public media to publish these kinds of reports. And people have to trust the media. Otherwise, they’re also unwilling to give information to journalists.”

In this context, it is also necessary to consider the basic conditions for reporting and the public media’s prerequisites for receiving information. A recent study carried out by the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University analysed the information sources of BNT1 and BNR’s news channel, Horizont. It concluded that government and public agencies are the main source of information for public broadcasters’ reports.²² Between August 2020 and February 2021, both media outlets largely followed the agenda set by these institutions and reported on issues and events that were part of that agenda. Milena Jakimova, a lecturer in the Department of Sociology at Sofia University and co-author of the study, pointed out that BNT and BNR seldom report on social policy. Other important topics such as education are also largely ignored. She sees a discrepancy between the public interest and media reporting.

The study also documents which guests are invited to take part in discussion programmes. On BNT, politicians dominated discussion panels on domestic policy issues, with barely an expert in sight. Unlike certain radio programmes in Bulgaria, members of the public are not invited to participate in TV debates. This approach gives the public the impression that they are assigned a passive role in which they sit idly until decisions are made by others. And if they do ever get a chance to speak, they are given very little airtime. Milena Jakimova: “The public are mainly there to let off steam. They are always portrayed as sufferers, as victims.” The sensible question: “What should we do” is replaced by “Who is to blame?” But this does not resolve the problem. Thus, the conclusion is that there are limited opportunities for public service media to obtain high-quality information for their investigative research. The voices of experts who would be able to identify and name a problem are never or only very rarely heard.

Alternative Spaces for Investigative Journalism

Yet, there are always opportunities to bring investigative reporting to the public. Gena Traikova said some colleagues publish investigative reports that regularly unleash a whole wave of additional information from the public. This, in turn, sheds even more light on the events in question. Although authorities sometimes tend to ignore the results of certain investigative reports, she considers it a great success when journalists manage to gain the public's trust. "A strong public response is a sign that the public is hungry for this kind of reporting."

In 2020, Ilia Valkov, a journalist and lecturer in journalism at Sofia University of National and World Economy, commented in Medialog magazine that the public do not necessarily share their opinions with the country's traditional media. He spoke of the emergence of "new forms of alternative opposition journalism, which in some cases can even turn into a guerrilla war with those in power".²³ For the first time in Bulgaria, media formats were being offered that rely on alternative financing models and seek support from the public. In his article, he wrote that society is looking for an alternative to a "distorted reality" created by the media. This should attempt to "not only redefine the functions and public mission of journalism, but also the public image of the media".

The investigative online portal Bivol repeatedly makes headlines with its own research. For example, in 2018, two journalists who were looking into fraud involving EU funds in Bulgaria for the portal were briefly detained by police and had to spend a night in custody.²⁴ And the Anti-Corruption Fund, a Bulgarian NGO, published a series of YouTube videos in 2020, telling the story of the illegal takeover of a company. The journalist who conducted research for the videos subsequently received death threats.²⁵

But are investigative journalism and new alternative media compatible? Is it not the role of traditional media to increase their focus on

investigative journalism and thus uncover potential abuses? There is also the question of whether "alternative" investigative journalism can and should also be publicised by traditional media.

In an interview with the authors, Kanna Racheva stresses this last point: "A revelation only unleashes a wave when the media is united, when they act as a team, when they help each other and add to and continue the revelations. Because investigative research not only affects a news outlet's own readers, viewers or listeners." However, Vessislava Antonova criticises the lack of professional solidarity among journalists. "Bulgaria has long been in the throes of a bitter media dispute, the only outcome of which is the devaluation of the journalistic profession." For her, the emergence of alternative spaces is "an attempt to rip investigative journalism out of its natural environment, the traditional media", and move it into organisations with potentially opaque goals. She believes there are enough serious media outlets that deserve support with their own investigative research. "It would be fairer if journalists with good reputations and proven experience could apply for funding for their investigative work, rather than setting up new organisations to take over the function of the media." These new organisations often uncover documents and do the initial research, then turn to traditional media outlets to finish the investigation – so to do the bulk of the work – and bring it to the public domain. As a result, Antonova questions the need for such new organisations. When such actors support investigative research or offer topics for investigation, it raises questions and doubts in her mind as to whether they are doing this for their own ends. It is always important to look at the aims and donors behind the work of such organisations. She believes the best way forward is for the media to work on their own investigative projects. They alone can maintain trust and recognition for their work as the "fourth estate in a democracy."

Silvia Velikova of BNR is also sceptical about whether it is really the job of non-media organisations to initiate investigations. These are often financed by people wanting to gain national

publicity for the findings. “But I can’t say whether this harms the traditional media or makes up for their shortcomings. More importantly, the traditional media needs to take a critical look at the research and recognise whether it has been done to order and is therefore biased.” In this respect, care must be taken to ensure that these investigations are not abused by politicians or institutions, such as the public prosecutor’s office or even the intelligence services.

Basic Quality Standards

The foundation of serious journalism, regardless of genre, is adherence to quality standards. Many media experts believe this is what is lacking in Bulgaria. Kanna Racheva: “It’s important to ask the right questions and, above all, to listen actively. Many colleagues don’t do that.” Silvia Velikova adds that journalists often do not ask politicians questions, for example, because they are afraid of getting into trouble or being publicly ignored. On top of this, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the switch to online formats and merely sending out press releases has seriously curtailed opportunities to ask any questions at all. Communication has shifted to social networks like Facebook and thus become one-sided.

Vessislava Antonova criticises the fact that journalistic principles are all too often ignored in investigative research. Examples include failure to check information against several sources; not naming sources (even with concealed identities); failing to provide any or sufficient evidence; and not inviting comment from protagonists as well as from the authorities in question. Yet this is the only way to document that everything has been done to get to the truth. “Investigative journalism has to be part of a medium’s value system”, says Antonova. “It should be recognised as important and necessary. But this requires time and effort.”

In Bulgaria, as in other countries in South East Europe, there is a fundamental need for a broader awareness of the importance of quality journalism. Society has a duty to call for and reinforce the principles of serious journalism

such as impartiality, objectivity, thorough research, and reliable information – as a key element of democracy. It is the duty of politicians to improve the basic conditions for this. To date, no Bulgarian government – of any shade – has placed great emphasis on promoting independent media. Unfortunately, politicians regularly treat journalists with contempt and disrespect – simply for asking a probing question.²⁶ This creates a society and atmosphere where it is impossible for independent media to flourish if they are keen to focus more on investigative reporting.

In many cases, the judiciary in Bulgaria also does not actively support journalists and investigative reporting. All too often, legal action in the wake of revelations is delayed or simply not started by the investigating authorities – as, for example, in the aforementioned case that was investigated and made public by the NGO Anti-Corruption Fund. Here, even one year after the publication of findings, the public prosecutor’s office either would or could not respond to verbal or written press inquiries about the results of the investigation to date²⁷.

There are times when it is not the perpetrators of potential crimes who are investigated, but the journalists who uncovered and reported on them, along with their informants. For example, in September 2021, the crime reporter for the newspaper *Sega* was summoned by police for questioning after he sent questions to the Ministry of Interior regarding alleged police brutality against demonstrators. The Association of European Journalists in Bulgaria viewed this as “an attempt at intimidation and repression, which probably aims to make the media not interested in such illegal actions of the police”.²⁸ Another case involves the President of the Bulgarian Pharmaceutical Union. When interviewed in 2020, she warned of an impending shortage of drugs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the prosecutor’s office accused her of spreading fake news and causing panic.²⁹ However, after several hearings, the charges against her were dropped.

All these points are the reason why the media in Bulgaria – and especially investigative

journalists – find themselves under constant pressure. This, too, contributes to the country's consistently poor ranking in the Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index and, together with the many cases of corruption that regularly come to light, gives the country a bad image.

There are two things hindering investigative journalism in Bulgaria: structural problems within the media, such as funding and staffing issues, and the country's difficult social conditions. Along with a need for greater investment in the editorial field, a broader awareness of the role of journalists in democracy, and greater public acceptance of quality journalism, there is also a need for more solidarity among journalists and the media in order to provide fresh impetus to the difficult genre of investigative journalism in Bulgaria.

– translated from German –

Petar Karaboev is Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Bulgarian online news portal dnevnik.bg.

Hendrik Sittig is Head of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Media Programme South East Europe based in Sofia, Bulgaria.

- 1 Wöflf, Adelheid 2019: "Apartment-Gate": Billige Wohnungen fuer Bulgariens Politiker, Der Standard, 5 Apr 2019, in: <https://bit.ly/3GcUaEu> [9 Jan 2022].
- 2 Transparency International 2021: CPI 2020: Western Europe & European Union, in: <https://bit.ly/3q89igA> [9 Jan 2022].
- 3 Reporters Without Borders 2021: Bulgaria. Press freedom trapped, in: <https://rsf.org/en/bulgaria> [10 Jan 2022].
- 4 Europäische Kommission 2020: Доклад за върховенството на закона за 2020 г. Съобщение и глави по държави (Rule of Law Report 2020 – Communication and country chapters), 30 Sep 2020, in: <https://bit.ly/3zHftvc> [10 Jan 2022].
- 5 Resolution of the LIBE Committee in the European Parliament, 2020/2793(RSP), 2 Oct 2020, in: <https://bit.ly/3zFzK4m> [10 Jan 2022].
- 6 Council of Europe 2020: Hands off Press Freedom: Attacks on Media in Europe Must Not Become a New Normal. 2020 Annual Report by the partner organisations to the Council of Europe Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists, Mar 2020, in: <https://bit.ly/3f9wHYI> [10 Jan 2022].
- 7 U.S. Department of State 2021: 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bulgaria, 30 Mar 2021, in: <https://bit.ly/34rmcOo> [10 Jan 2022].
- 8 United Nations Human Rights Council; Universal Periodic Review – Bulgaria; National report, Third Cycle, 6 Nov 2020, in: <https://bit.ly/3GcDGw9> [10 Jan 2022].
- 9 bTV: bTV Reporterite, in: <https://btv.bg/shows/btv-reporterite> [10 Jan 2022].
- 10 NOVA: Темата на NOVA, in: <https://nova.bg/shows/view/34/темата-на-nova> [10 Jan 2022].
- 11 Antonova, Vessislava et al. 2021: Черна книга на правителственото разхищение в България (Black Book of Government Waste in Bulgaria), in: <https://chernakniga.bg> [10 Jan 2022].
- 12 Bosev, Rosen 2019: Отрова, оръжия, или войната за "Дунарит" (Poison, weapons, or the war for "Dunarit"), Капитал (Capital), 25 Jan 2019, in: <https://bit.ly/33fR6bZ> [10 Jan 2022].
- 13 Schwirtz, Michael 2020: How a Poisoning in Bulgaria Exposed Russian Assassins in Europe, The Pulitzer Prizes, in: <https://bit.ly/3I67kUr> [10 Jan 2022].
- 14 Association of European Journalists (AEJ) Bulgaria 2020: Боряна Джамбазова от АЕЖ е част от екипа, спечелил "Пулицър" за международна журналистика (Boryana Dzhambazova of the Association of European Journalists is part of the team that won the Pulitzer Prize for International Journalism), 5 May 2020, in: <https://bit.ly/3td5jBi> [10 Jan 2022].
- 15 Биволъ (Bivol) 2010: За Бивола (About Bivol), 7 Nov 2010, in: <https://bivol.bg/about.html> [10 Jan 2022].

- 16 Shikerova, Genka 2020: Разследващата журналистика между закона и етичните стандарти (Investigative Journalism between Law and Ethical Standards), doctoral thesis, author's abstract, Sofia University, 22 Jun 2020, in: <https://bit.ly/3G2wpPp> [10 Jan 2022].
- 17 Sittig, Hendrik 2018: Bulgaria: Trust in Media Is Still Low, Country Reports, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Media Programme South East Europe, 22 Nov 2018, in: <https://bit.ly/3f9zRMk> [10 Jan 2022].
- 18 Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Media Programme South East Europe 2020: Bulgaria: Trust in Media Declines Further, 16 Dec 2020, in: <https://bit.ly/3K8aEQL> [10 Jan 2022].
- 19 Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Media Programme South East Europe 2021: Trust in Media Declines Further 2021: Election campaign in Bulgaria: Influence of social media grows / Criticism on party communication, 14 Apr 2021, in: <https://bit.ly/3feona5> [10 Jan 2022].
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Shikerova 2020, n. 16.
- 22 Karaboev, Petar 2021: По обществените медии: ВМРО е оставена да говори за ценности, гражданите предимно се оплакват (According to the public media: IMRO is left to talk about values, the citizens mostly complain), Дневник (Dnevnik), 4 Mar 2021, in: <https://bit.ly/3f9NDOM> [10 Jan 2022].
- 23 Valkov, Пиуа 2020: Смяна на парадигмите: алтернативна журналистика е възможна (Paradigm shift: Alternative journalism is possible), Медialog (Medialog), 28 Nov 2020, in: <https://bit.ly/3FbwRte> [10 Jan 2022].
- 24 Radio Bulgaria 2018: Investigative Journalisten aus Bulgarien und Rumänien stundenlang in Haft (Investigative journalists from Bulgaria and Romania detained for hours), 14 Sep 2018, in: <https://bit.ly/3zOAa8K> [11 Jan 2022].
- 25 Bulgarian News Agency (BTA) 2020: Anti-Corruption Activist Placed under Police Protection after Receiving Threats, 4 Jul 2020, in: <https://bit.ly/31OTKoJ> [11 Jan 2022].
- 26 Nikolov, Krassen 2020: Another insult against a Bulgarian journalist, Euractiv, 8 Dec 2020, in: <https://bit.ly/3GpDjnF> [3 Feb 2022].
- 27 Mitov, Boris 2021: От “Осемте джуджета” до Върховната прокуратура. Как се издигна Димитър Франтишек Петров (From the “Eight Dwarves” to the Supreme Prosecutor’s Office. How Dimitar Frantisek Petrov rose), Svobodna Evropa, 7 Jun 2021, in: <https://bit.ly/3fbatWu> [11 Jan 2022].
- 28 Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) 2020: Bulgarian reporter Martin Georgiev summoned for questioning over request for comment on police brutality, 22 Sep 2020, in: <https://cpj.org/?p=58591> [11 Jan 2022].
- 29 Chipeva, Nadezhda 2021: Prof. Asena Serbezova: To this day, I do not understand how public data causes panic – Bulgaria, Darik.News English (from: Dnevnik), 31 Jan 2021, in: <https://bit.ly/33sU8Kd> [11 Jan 2022].