

SOUTH EAST EUROPE & EU MUTUAL PUBLIC DIPLOMACY CHALLENGES

CHRISTIAN SPAHR, KAS MEDIA PROGRAM
PRO.PR CONFERENCE, 8 APRIL 2017



THE KONRAD-ADENAUER-STIFTUNG (KAS)

- A German political foundation
- A non-profit organization, influenced by Christian democratic values and principles
- Present throughout Germany with 16 regional offices
- Active around the world with offices in 100 countries
- In South East Europe: 11 country offices, two regional programs (Media/Rule of Law)



MEDIA PROGRAMS OF KAS



★ KAS Media Program
South East Europe
(2007), Sofia, Bulgaria

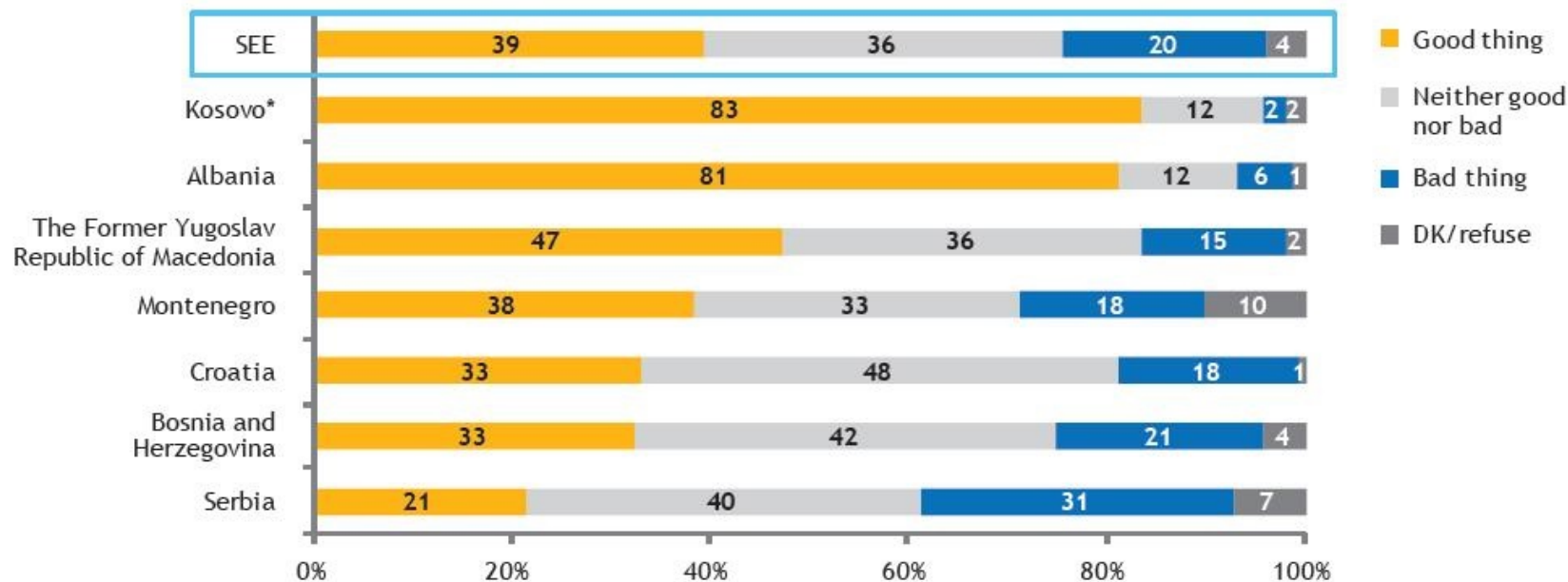
★ KAS Media Program
Asia (1996),
Singapore

★ KAS Media Program
Sub-Saharan Africa
(2002), Johannesburg,
South Africa

INCONSISTENT PERCEPTION OF THE EU IN S.E.E.

Do you think that EU membership would be (is - for Croatia) a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad?

(All respondents - N=7002, share of total, %)



NEW MEMBER STATES: HIGHER TRUST IN EU

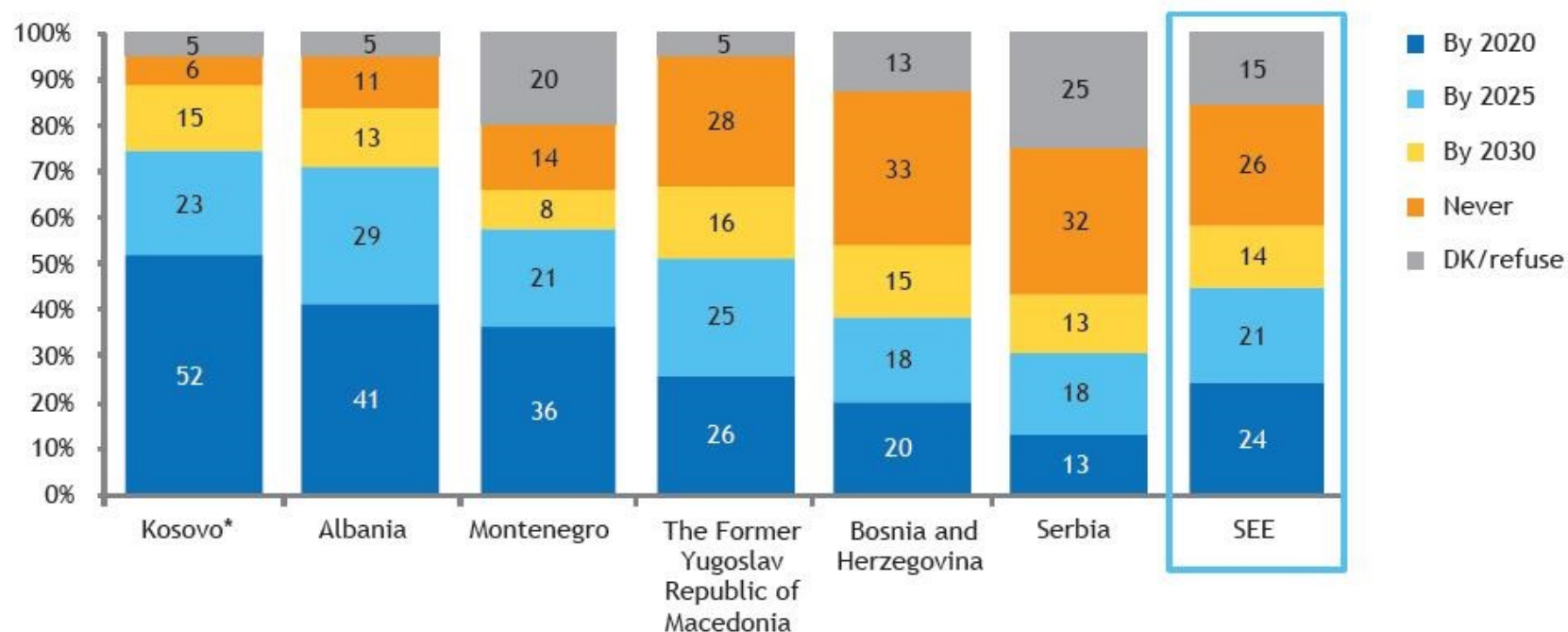
- Widespread mistrust in EU because of political uncertainties
- Trust in EU is higher in Romania/Bulgaria/Croatia than EU average
- Eurobarometer 2016:

| Tend to | European Union | | | Parliament | | | Government | | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| | Trust | not to trust | don't know | Trust | not to trust | don't know | Trust | not to trust | don't know |
| EU (n= 27 705) | 36% | 54% | 10% | 32% | 62% | 6% | 31% | 64% | 5% |
| BG (n= 1 012) | 49% | 34% | 17% | 15% | 77% | 8% | 22% | 70% | 8% |
| HR (n= 1 062) | 43% | 50% | 7% | 24% | 73% | 3% | 26% | 71% | 3% |
| RO (n= 1 005) | 52% | 41% | 7% | 22% | 74% | 4% | 29% | 66% | 5% |

TOO HIGH AND TOO LOW EXPECTATIONS

In general, when do you expect the accession to EU to happen?

(All respondents - N=7002, share of total, %)



S.E.E. CITIZENS NOT WELL INFORMED ABOUT EU

- Although EU confirmed accession perspective for SEE, many do not expect to enter the EU
- Citizens in SEE are not well informed about EU
- E.g. Serbians think biggest donors are: Russia (25%), EU (21%), China (21%) – in reality: EU (1st), USA (2nd), Germany (3rd) (Source: SEIO – December 2016, N = 1054)
- Eurobarometer 2016: „To what extent do you think that you are well informed or not about European matters?“



| | Well informed | | Not well informed | | Don't know | |
|----------------|---------------|-----|-------------------|-----|------------|----|
| EU (n= 27 705) | 38% | -3 | 60% | +2 | 2% | +1 |
| BG (n= 1 012) | 34% | -4 | 63% | +3 | 3% | +1 |
| HR (n= 1 062) | 37% | -11 | 63% | +11 | 0% | = |
| RO (n= 1 005) | 39% | -10 | 60% | +10 | 1% | = |

GEOPOLITICAL COMPETITION

- EU enlargement process slowed down + drawback of USA = power vacuum
- Perceived lack of credibility because EU accession does not seem realistic to citizens
- Vacuum of soft power is being filled by Russia, Turkey, Arab states, China
- In their narratives towards SEE, Russia, Turkey and Arab states emphasise on common religious values and/or cultural similarities
- EU must appear as reliable partner to SEE – giving security by intensive dialogue



FAKE NEWS – CHALLENGE FOR EU

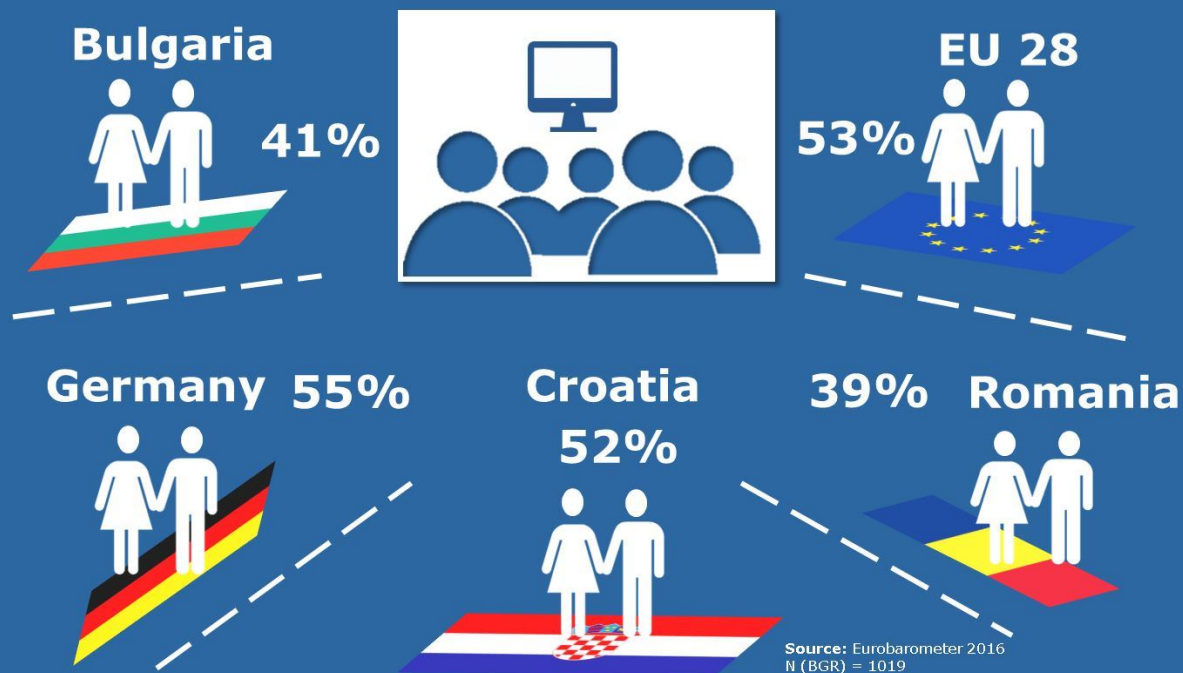
- **Countermovement (amongst others):**
 - **EEAS East Stratcom Task Force** (+Balkan)
 - **NATO Stratcom COE Riga:** Analysing and disconfirming Russian disinformation
 - **Facebook & Google:**
 - Preparation of media indicators for fake news
 - + exclusion of news fakers from ad systems
 - **Fact-checking tools** (e.g. StopFake.org, Cooperation Facebook/Correctiv)



FAKE NEWS

SOCIAL MEDIA – MORE AND MORE POLITICAL

Citizens who follow debates on social media

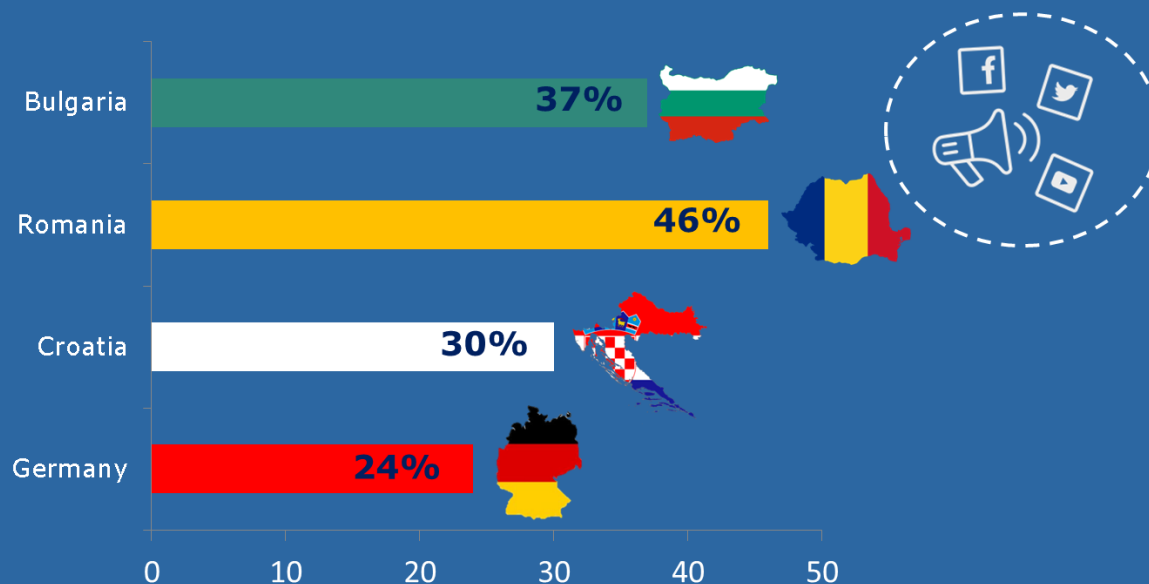


Source: Eurobarometer 2016
N (BGR) = 1019
N (RO) = 1006
N (HR) = 1007
N (DE) = 1537
N (EU) = 27 768
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SOCIAL MEDIA – BLIND TRUST?

Citizens who consider social media totally reliable

(social networks, blogs, video hosting websites, etc.)



Comparison:
12 % of Bulgarians
and 28 % of
Romanians believe
in independence of
media (surveys
KAS 2016/2015)

EU 28

32%



Source: Eurobarometer 2016
N (BGR) = 1019
N (RO) = 1006
N (HR) = 1007
N (DE) = 1537
N (EU) = 27 768

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 PR experts** in candidate countries and their peers in the EU



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>

KAS PROJECTS 2017: POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

- **Conference “Fake news and geopolitics”:**
Media, PR & security experts, Sofia, June
- **Summer School of Political Communication**
for young professionals, Chişinău, July
- **SEECOM Conference**, Berlin, October:
Communication of EU, fake news, populism
- **Intl. Conference f. Political Communication**
(campaigning/polit. parties), Berlin, October
- **Seminars** for PR experts of political parties



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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