

# 'MML' PROPAGANDA LAB SARAJEVO

CHRISTIAN SPAHR

KAS MEDIA PROGRAM S.E.E., 19-09-2017



## 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*

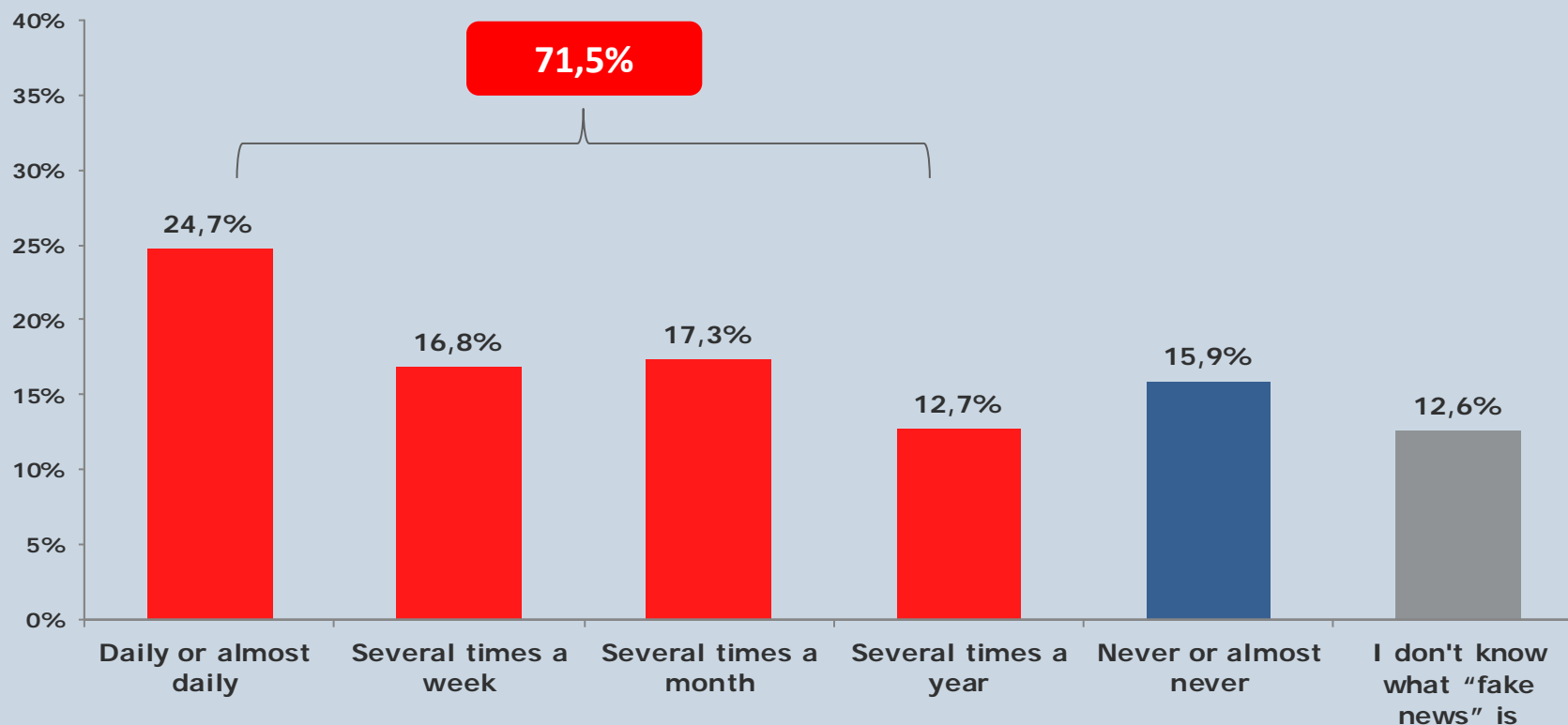
## SURVEY ON FAKE NEWS IN BULGARIA

- Target: Population, 18+, Bulgaria
- Method of registration: Face-to-face interview
- Sample design: Nationally representative for urban and rural population
- Sample size: 1,024
- Fieldwork: May 2017
- Conception of questionnaire: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Media Program SEE; Alpha Research
- Fieldwork and data analysis: Alpha Research



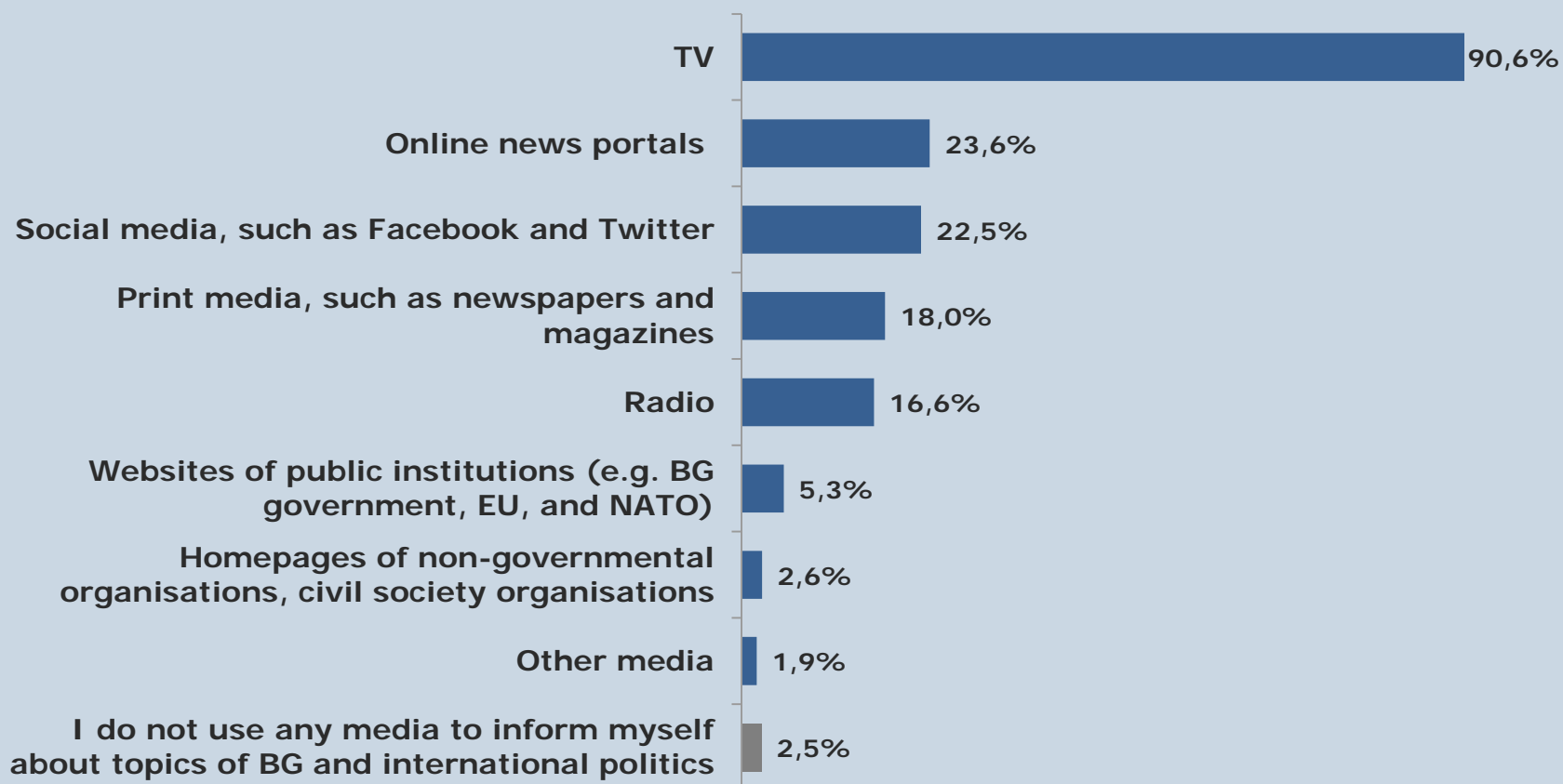
## 7 out of 10 Bulgarians see fake news about politics

How often do you see news that contains false facts connected with political topics ("fake news")?



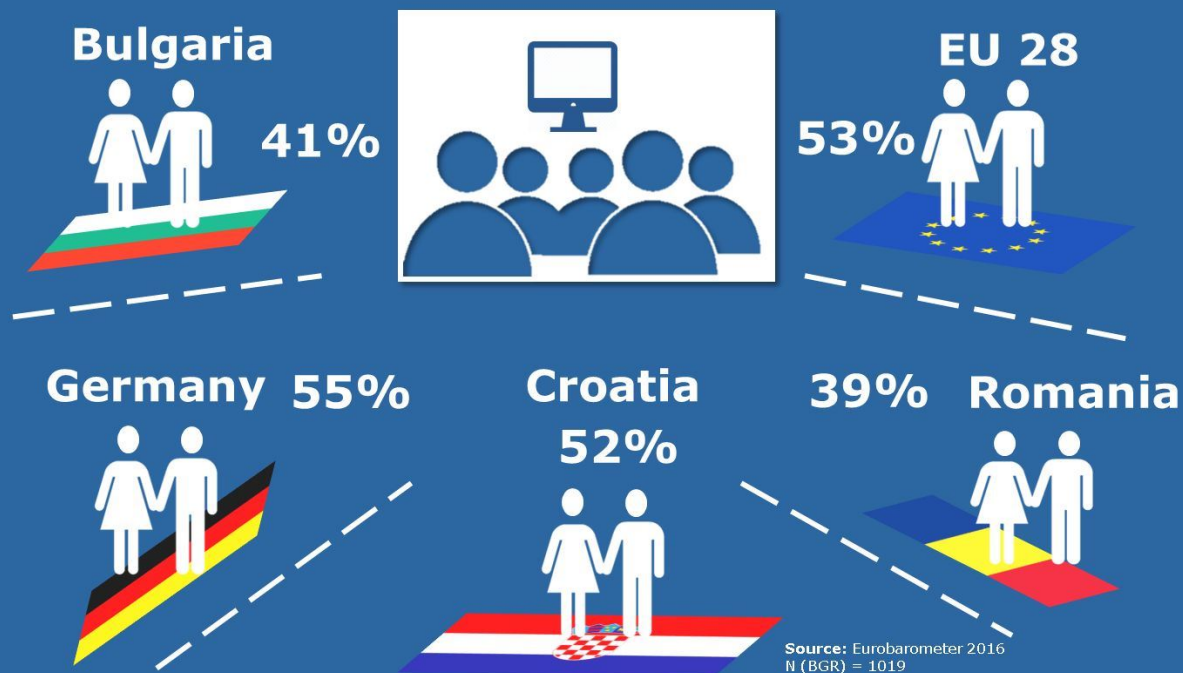
## TV is most popular information source on politics

Which of the following media types do you use to inform yourself about topics of Bulgarian and international politics? (multiple answers possible)



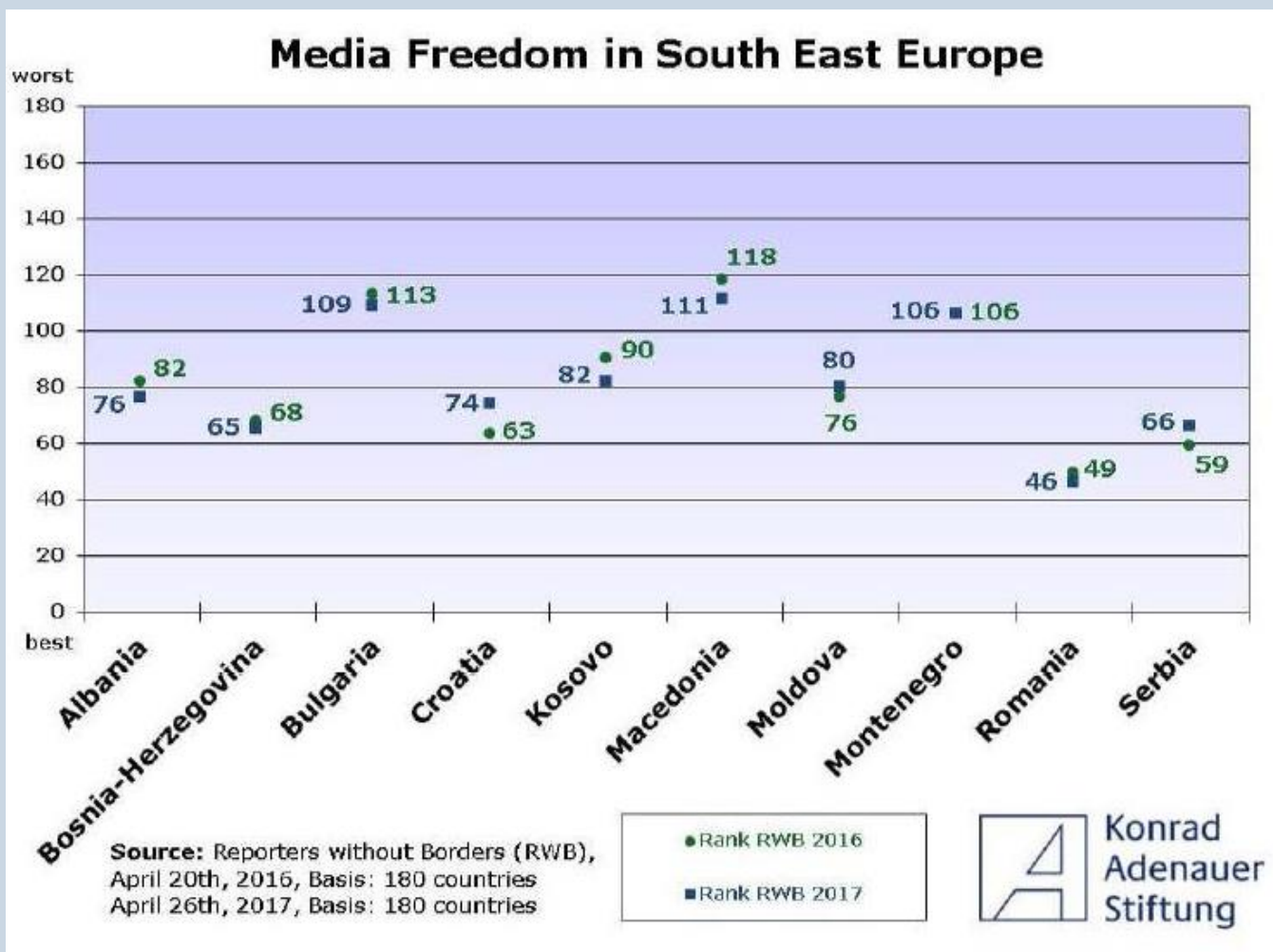
## SOCIAL MEDIA – MORE AND MORE POLITICAL

### 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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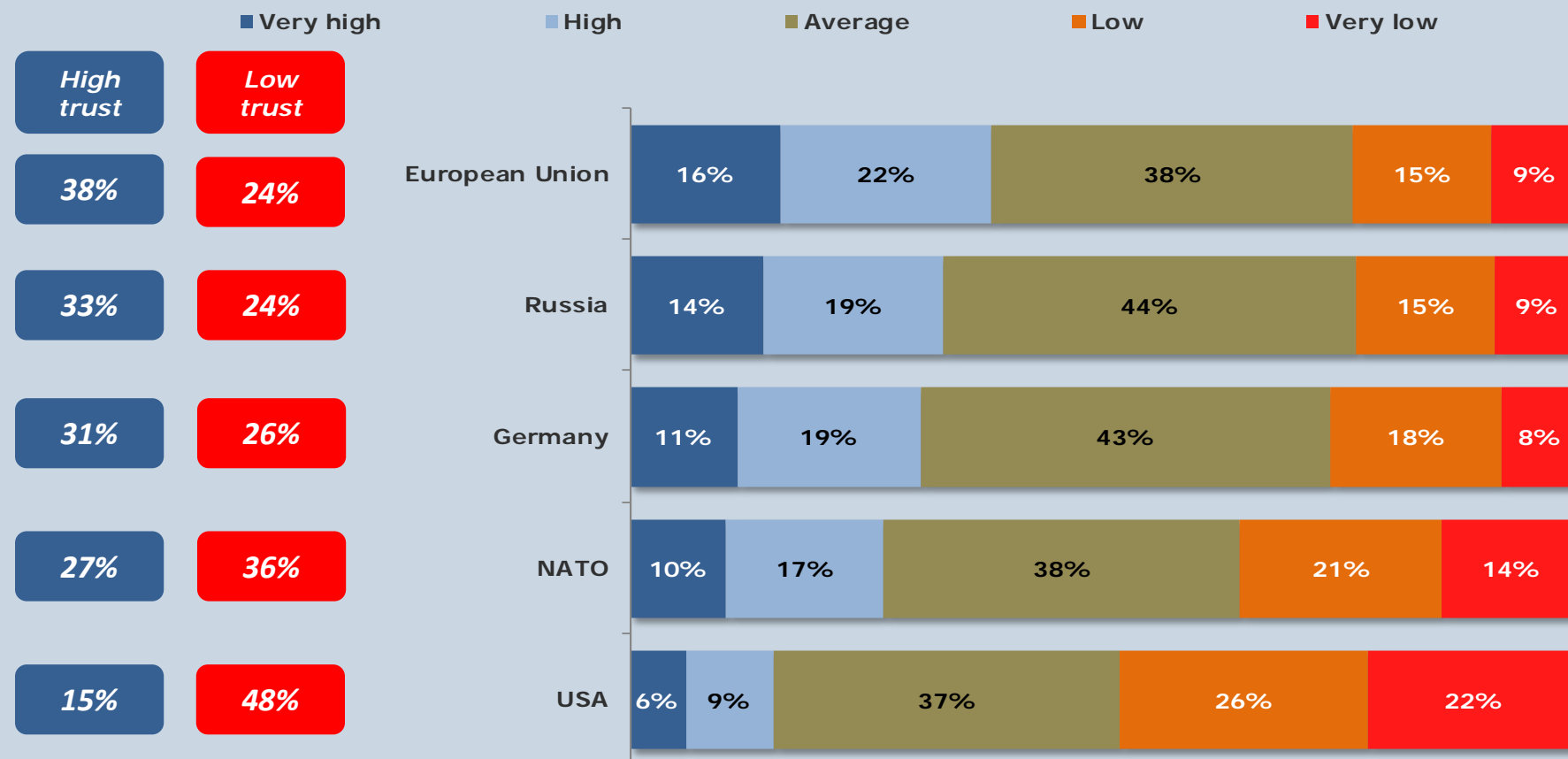
## NO REAL PROGRESS IN MEDIA FREEDOM





# Institutions & states: EU enjoys highest confidence

In general, how much do you trust the following institutions and countries?



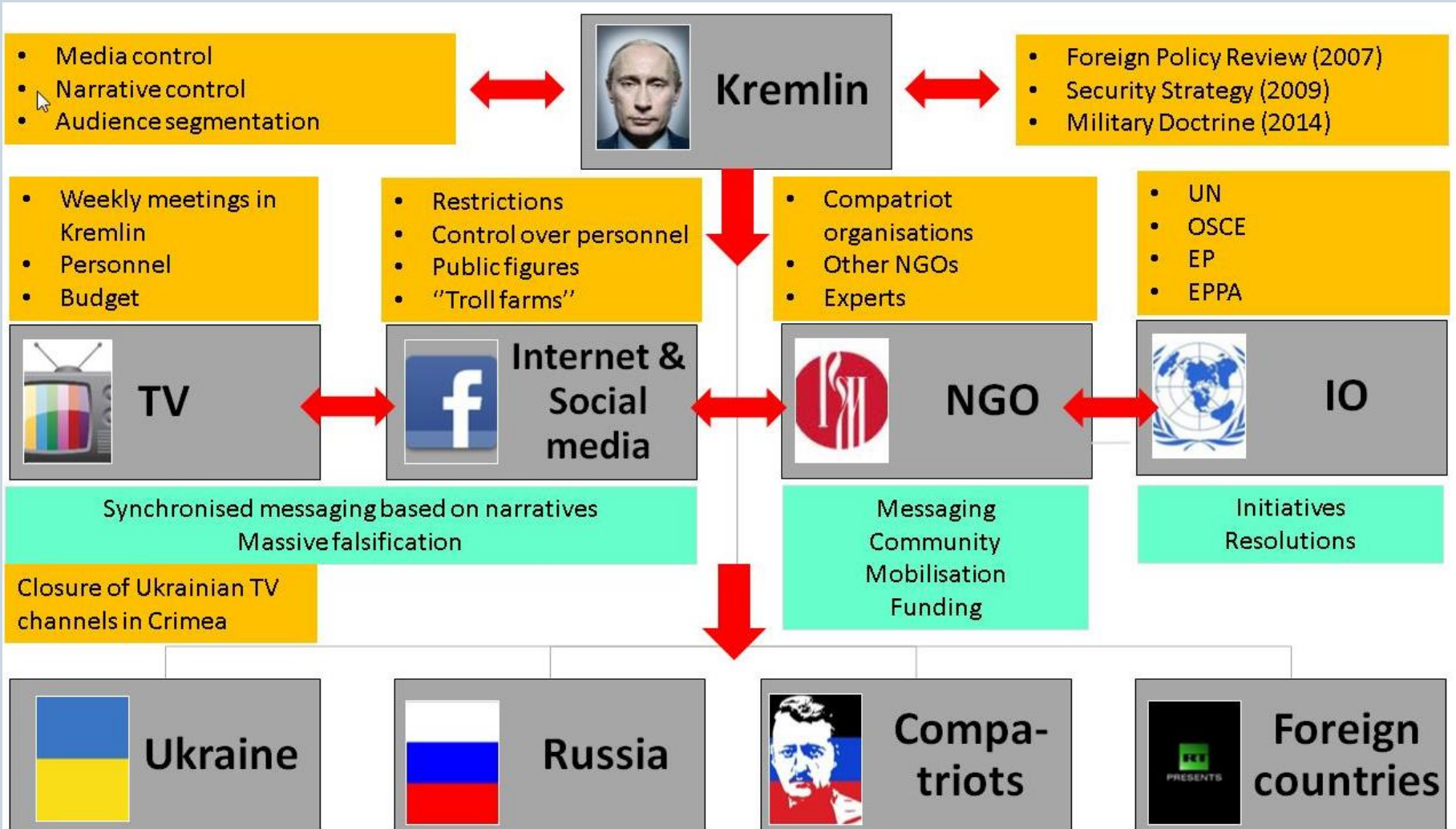
## GEOPOLITICAL COMPETITION

- 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



*Spiegel Online*

# KREMLIN PROPAGANDA MACHINE (NATO STRATCOM COE)



## 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)



## 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



## EX-YUGOSLAVIA: MEDIA AS CATALYSER FOR NATIONS

- Media did not only have to find position about the system change, but also found themselves in an ethnic conflict
- Expectation: Interpreting history & present in favor of one's own ethnicity (new historical continuum)
- Persuading people to feel like belonging to a national group
- Simple interpretation: innocent nation, made victim by another
- Most media followed the conflict course, supporting the smashing of a multi-ethnic society



## MEDIA AS WARMONGERS

### Individual aspects (Ex-Yugoslavia)

- Serbian advance on Vukovar (Croatia) 1991: Reporters in uniforms
- In some cases, battles were caused by media reports
- Before the massacre of Vukovar (200 dead civilians), media reports had spread untrue reports that Croats had murdered 41 Serbian children
- Condemned war criminals said: “Deeds inspired by television reporting”
- Serbian Prosecutor's Office 2009: “If lies are spread from the front, they animate the people in the field to kill”
- However: Direct link between media reporting and war crimes difficult to prove

## MEDIA SECTOR AFTER THE WARS

### Individual aspects (Serbia)

- 2000: Agitators were excluded from journalists' association
- Investigations by public prosecutor against journalists in connection with war crimes were welcomed by some of the media representatives
- Nationalist perspectives in the media, every ethnic group has its own truth
- Sometimes: neutral intonation, but details emphasize the guilt of others
- Hate speech in online forums
- In mass media little space for dealing with history
- Boulevardisation (war criminal Mladić: "He survived three heart attacks!")



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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