



Corruption and Anticorruption

Narratives in Bulgarian Media 2021-2022

Media Environment in Bulgaria

- 01 **Media Environment in Bulgaria**
- 02 Methodology
- 03 Influence Networks
- 04 Corruption Narratives
- 05 Anti-Corruption Narratives
- 06 Example 1 – Corruption Story
- 07 Example 2 – Anti-Corruption Story
- 08 Findings & Conclusions
- 09 Recommendations
- 10 Q&A



Media Environment in Bulgaria

Media Ownership & Indirect Influence

- Non-transparent ownership, often intertwined with political and business entities. 500+ media outlets without public information about ownership or editorial staff (mostly anonymous “Mushroom Websites”, part of Influence Networks).
- Media ownership by political parties (Ataka, BSP)
- Regulators

Media Business Model

- [Only 12% of news consumers in Bulgaria payed for online news in 2021](#) (down by 3 p.p. compared to 2020);
- Substantial dependence on revenue from public sector entities (through EU funding and contracts for various “PR services”, not only with central and local government administrations, but also with non-transparent public sector entities);
- Most of the Ad revenue is captured by the national TV channels;
- “Fight for clicks” leading to [low journalism standards and media ethics](#)

Judicial harassment, political pressure, and intimidation

- [Reporters without Borders \(RSF\) describes](#) media freedom in Bulgaria as “fragile and unstable” and “the few independent voices in Bulgaria work under constant pressure”;
- Investigative journalists and media independent outlets are regularly victims of abusive proceedings like SLAPPs (Strategic lawsuit against public participation);
- Death threats against investigative journalists and physical violence against journalists [\[2021, RSF\]](#).

Methodology

01 Media Environment in Bulgaria

02 Methodology

03 Influence Networks

04 Corruption Narratives

05 Anti-Corruption Narratives

06 Example 1 – Corruption Story

07 Example 2 – Anti-Corruption Story

08 Findings & Conclusions

09 Recommendations

10 Q&A

📄 Methodology (1/2)

Media Analysis Report Coverage

- The analysis cover the period between **January 1st 2021** and **December 31st 2022**
- **3,289** x Online Websites
 - Online Media Outlets, Blogs, Portals and Websites of Traditional & Broadcast Media Outlets (in Bulgarian language)
 - Online Media Aggregators
 - “Mushroom Websites” (forming Influence Networks)
- **1,014** x Facebook Pages (in Bulgarian language)

Keywords Research & Taxonomy Building

- Sensika’s Analytical Team conducted deep research and developed custom taxonomies for each narrative to avoid false positive matches
- The taxonomies for each narrative and all analyses are performed in Sensika Media Monitoring & Analysis platform
- Corruption and anticorruption stories were indicated in the report through deep dive research in the Bulgarian media content
- Each story was assessed in terms of the ratio of mentions of keywords directly related to corruption/anticorruption and such associated with corruption/anticorruption practices

Methodology (2 / 2)

Source Type Classification

Source Type	Ownership & Contacts				Advertisement Policies			Editorial Policies					
	Known Ownership	Known Editorial Team	Contact Details	Internet Domain Ownership	Serving Online Ads	Serving Harmful Ads ¹	Public Ads Rates	Publishing Unsourced Content	Coordinated Publishing ²	Manual Content Republishing	Presenting other media's reporting as own	Automatic Content Republishing	Original Source Attribution
Online Media	✔ Yes	✔ Yes	✔ Yes	✔ Public	✔ Yes	▶ No	✔ Yes	▶ No	▶ No	▶ No	▶ Varies	▶ No	▶ Yes
Media Aggregator	⚠ Varies	N/A	✔ Yes	✔ Public	✔ Yes	▶ No	✔ Yes	▶ No	▶ No	▶ No	▶ No	▶ Yes	▶ Yes
Influence Network	✘ No	✘ No	✘ No	✘ No	✔ Yes	▶ Yes	✘ No	▶ Yes	▶ Yes	▶ Yes	▶ Yes	▶ Yes	▶ No

¹ Serving potentially harmful Ads, such as for alternative medical procedures and medicines, Ponzi schemes, unlicensed gambling, etc.

² Publishing the same content within 2-5 minutes through multiple (10-100) different web domains or sub-domains, posing as separate media outlets.

Influence Networks (Mushroom Websites)

01 Media Environment in Bulgaria

02 Methodology

03 Influence Networks

04 Corruption Narratives

05 Anti-Corruption Narratives

06 Example 1 – Corruption Story

07 Example 2 – Anti-Corruption Story

08 Findings & Conclusions

09 Recommendations

10 Q&A

Mushroom Websites 101

Viral Spread

It's all over the "news" and social media, coming from all kinds of sources, as well as from "trusted friends", **without paid boosting and advertisement.**

Organic Amplification

Unsuspecting **social media users** spread disinformation, propaganda and fake news by sharing posts on their personal newsfeeds, often **without reading beyond the headlines.**

Targeted Distribution for Artificial Amplification

Troll and bot factories (cheap manual labor + automated bots) spam-share and engage with thousands of groups, pages and forums, **tricking the social media Recommendation Engines** that the content is viral, and it's worth suggesting it to users.

Seeding / Implantation

Initial Seeding in Tier 3 "Mushroom Websites" with high degree of automation. The same piece of content is **published in a coordinated manner on tens or hundreds** of centrally controlled websites.



Mushroom Websites (part of Influence Networks)

WORLD TODAY	BG-SEGA	KRIMI	SPORT	 ZANAS	BGTV	KULTURA
NOVINI2216	RIJI	PAZVANTOV	VIPNOVOBG	168CHASA	BG-UTRO	BG7
SKIPPY	SAVIP	ALLBG	TSOLOFFN	NOVDEN	NEWSVIEWS	DIR
BESTOF7NUS	B4AC	NOVINILIVE	NEWSNOWBG	KARI	YANETA	OFERTI

Corruption Narratives

01 Media Environment in Bulgaria

02 Methodology

03 Influence Networks

04 Corruption Narratives

05 Anti-Corruption Narratives

06 Example 1 – Corruption Story

07 Example 2 – Anti-Corruption Story

08 Findings & Conclusions

09 Recommendations

10 Q&A

 **Top Stories Related to Corruption (1-5 of 10)**

Feb 2021-Oct 2022

Втора съмнителна поръчка за коли на МВР. Антikorупционният фонд сезира ОЛАФ

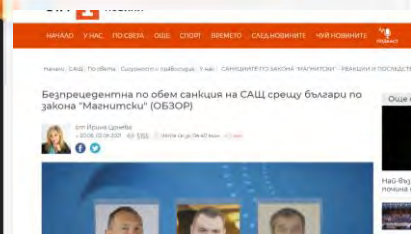


OLAF investigation into public procurement of police cars

OLAF closed investigations into fraud and misappropriation of EU funds for the purchase all-terrain vehicles for the police by the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior.

[Link](#)

Jun 2021 – Dec 2022

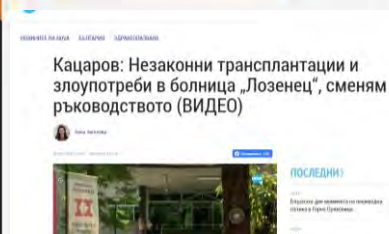


Magnitsky sanctions against Bulgarian individuals

In June, 2021, the US Government sanctioned five Bulgarian individuals for their involvement in corruption, including some ex-parliamentary members.

[Link](#)

June 2021-Dec 2022

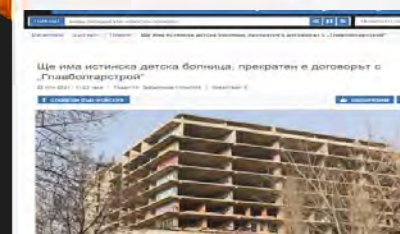


Illegal organ transplant scandal at Lozenets Hospital

Minister of Health disclosed that Lozenetz Hospital carried out illegal organ transplants.

[Link](#)

July 2021-Apr 2022



Irregularities in construction of National Children's Hospital

The Specialized Prosecution Office instituted pre-trial proceedings over suspected irregularities related to the construction of a national children's hospital

[Link](#)

Feb 2022 – Dec 2022



Corruption and Russian Influence in Turkish Stream

The construction of the Turkish Stream gas pipeline through Bulgaria (Balkan Stream) evoked allegations of corruption against the former Borissov government.

[Link](#) 2021-Dec 2022

Top Stories Related to Corruption (6-10 of 10)

Jan 2022-Dec 2022

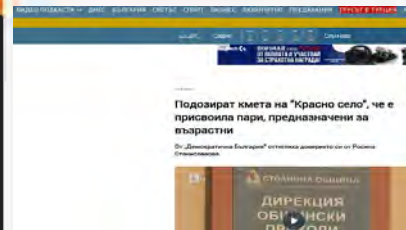


Irregularities in Sofia street lighting public procurement

Sofia Municipality ordered, by way of a public procurement, the purchase of street lightning equipment at prices between 3 and 77 times higher than market prices.

[Link](#)

Feb 2022-Dec 2022

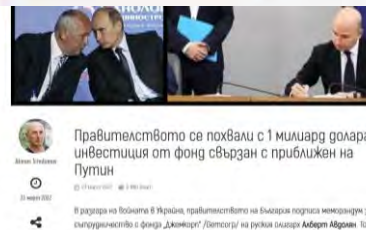


Krasno Selo Mayor investigated by CACIAF

The mayor of the Krasno Selo district was accused of embezzlement of European funds under the project "Patronage care for the elderly and people with disabilities."

[Link](#)

Mar 2021-Dec 2022

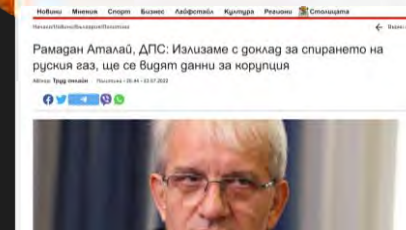


Gemcorp Scandal

Gemcorp MoU signed by the anti-graft Petkov government brought the party under scrutiny for potential corruption due to alleged Russian connection.

[Link](#)

July 2022-Oct 2022



Report exposes abuses behind Gazprom supply cuts

A parliamentary ad hoc committee looked into the circumstances that led to the cutoff of Russian natural gas supplies for Bulgaria.

[Link](#)

Dec 2022



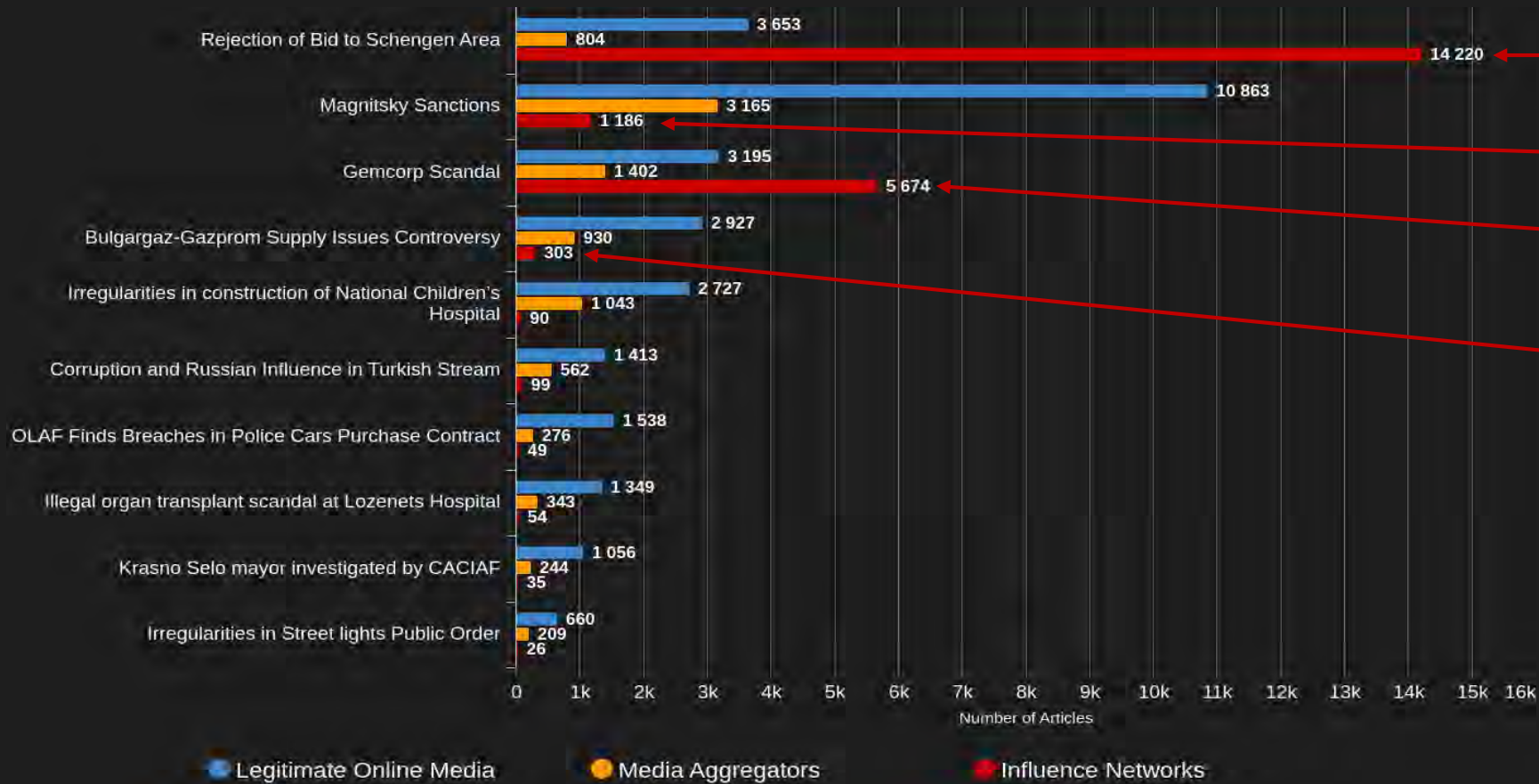
Rejection of Bulgaria's bid to join Schengen Area

The Netherlands quoted unaddressed rule-of-law concerns and pending pieces as a reason to vote against Bulgaria's bid to join the Schengen Area.

[Link](#)

Corruption Narratives – Total Volume by Story

Corruption & Anti-Corruption Stories (volume breakdown Influence Networks vs. Media)



Aggressive Anti-EU Rhetoric & Disinformation (most "Mushroom Websites" activated after Aug 2022)

Downplaying the significance of the sanctions & instigating doubt due to "lack of hard evidence"

"Active Measures" campaign to discredit Kiril Petkov's government by accusing it of double-standards & dealing with entities related to Putin

Manipulating public opinion that Gazprom suspended gas supply, because Bulgaria violated its contract with Gazprom, not the other way around.

Anti-Corruption Narratives

01 Media Environment in Bulgaria

02 Methodology

03 Influence Networks

04 Corruption Narratives

05 Anti-Corruption Narratives

06 Example 1 – Corruption Story

07 Example 2 – Anti-Corruption Story

08 Findings & Conclusions

09 Recommendations

10 Q&A



Feb 2021-Dec 2022



Establishment of Revision Commission

The Bulgarian Parliament created a temporary commission to review how public funds have been spent by government departments and public sector entities.

[Link](#)

Nov 2021-Dec 2022

Наг 10 души са арестувани заради злоупотреби при строителството на "Хемус"

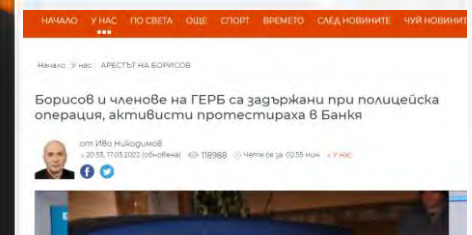


Abuses in the construction of Hemus Motorway

In early November, 10 people were arrested in relation to embezzlement of a large sum of money during the construction of the Hemus highway.

[Link](#)

Mar 2022-Dec 2022



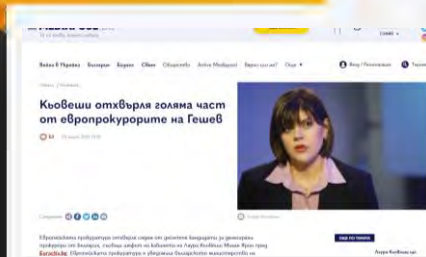
Arrest of former Prime Minister Boyko Borissov

Borissov was detained during a large-scale police operation on suspicion of several crimes, including extortion and misuse of European funds.

[Link](#)



Mar 2022

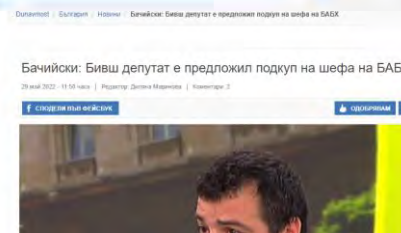


Visit of European Chief Prosecutor Laura Kövesi to Bulgaria

European Chief Prosecutor Laura Kövesi visits Sofia at the invitation of Prime Minister Kiril Petkov.

[Link](#)

Apr 2022-Dec 2022

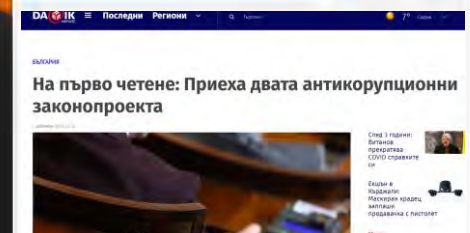


Kapitan Andreevo border checkpoint scandal

Petkov Government uncovers mobster seizure of a key EU border crossing that undermines food safety and internal market common standards.

[Link](#)

Aug 2022- Dec 2022



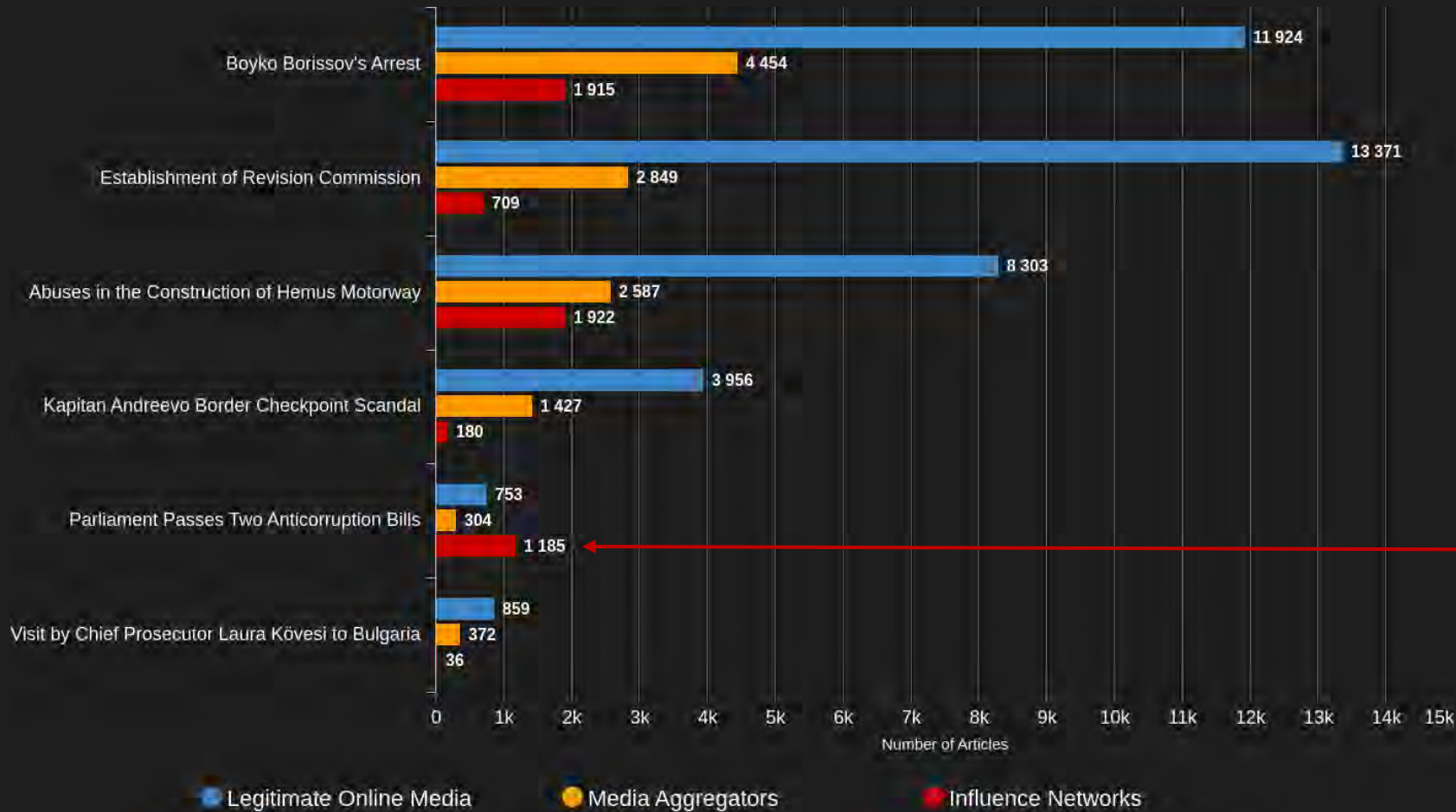
Parliament passes two anticorruption bills

After months of discussions, Parliament passed two anticorruption bills submitted by the Council of Ministers and PP.

[Link](#)

Corruption Narratives – Total Volume by Story

Corruption & Anti-Corruption Stories (volume breakdown Influence Networks vs. Media)



Aggressive personal smear campaign against the Minister of Justice Krum Zarkov, aiming to undermine his credibility, and to question his moral and ethical standards

Example 1

Corruption Story

01 Media Environment in Bulgaria

02 Methodology

03 Influence Networks

04 Corruption Narratives

05 Anti-Corruption Narratives

06 Example 1 – Corruption Story

07 Example 2 – Anti-Corruption Story

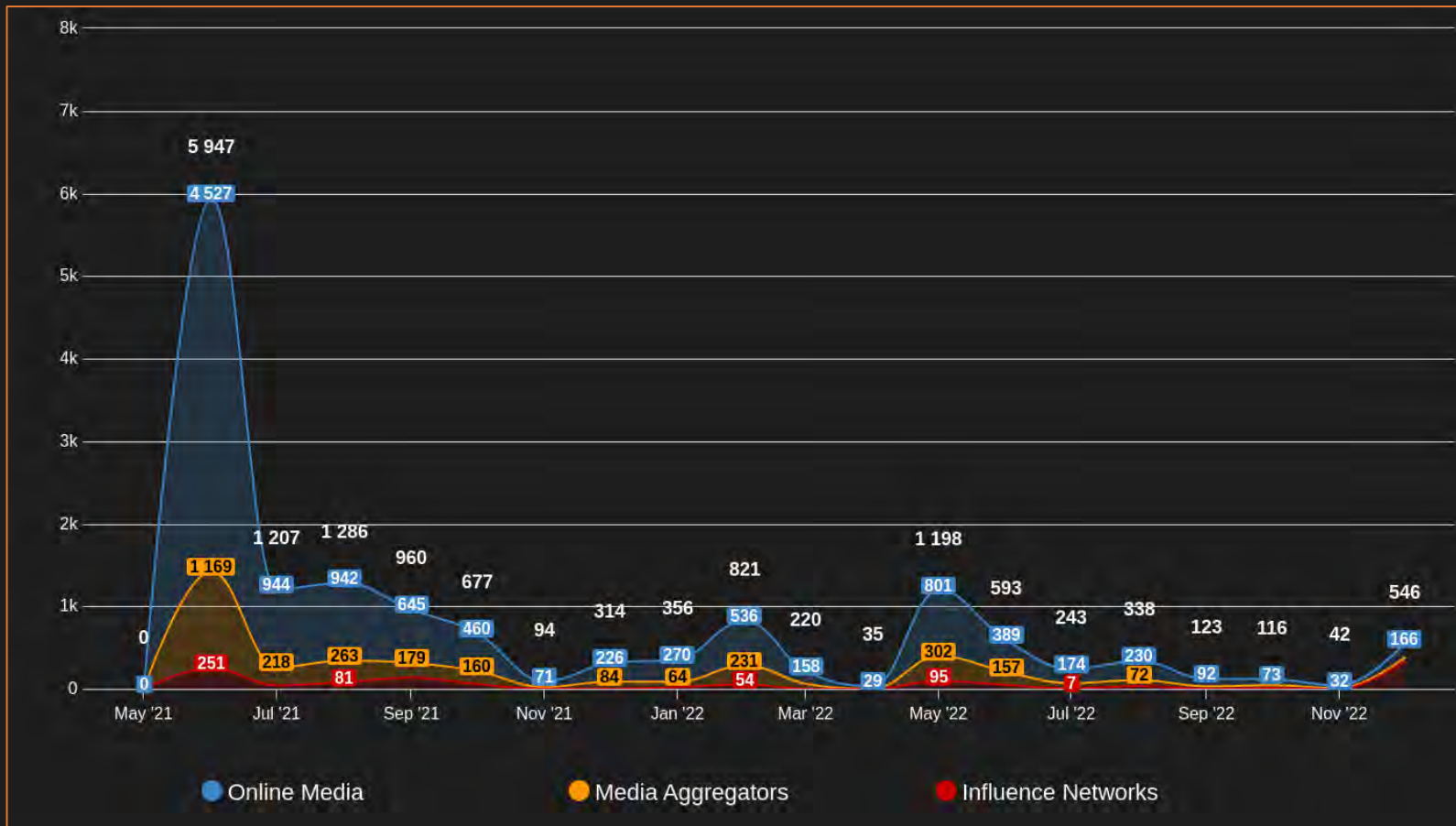
08 Findings & Conclusions

09 Recommendations

10 Q&A

Example 1: Corruption Story – Magnitsky Sanctions

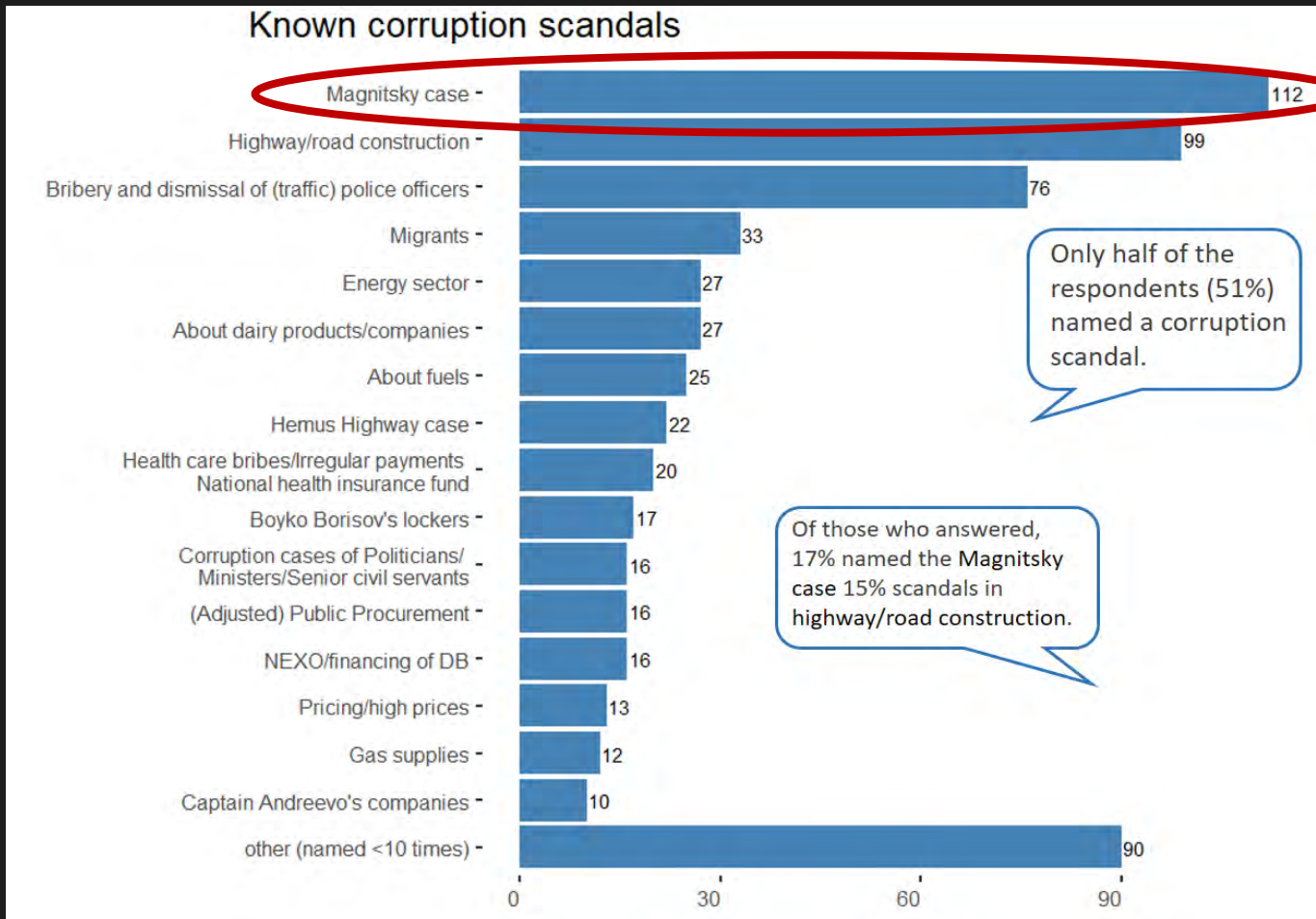
Volume over Time (per source type)



- The Magnitsky Sanctions story received substantial media coverage, both initially, and overtime with periodic follow-ups in the media.
- The Influence Networks were active mostly during the initial news coverage, mainly trying to seed doubt about the implications and the justification of the sanctions.
- In this particular case the public discourse, both in the media and on Social Media, was focused on the particular persons that were sanctioned, as well as on their political connections.



Magnitsky Sanctions – Influence Networks Reactions



- In early 2023, more than one year after the latest update of Magnitsky Sanctions List, in the Social Survey conducted by Basel Institute, 17% of respondents who provided answers were aware of this corruption scandal.
- Media’s proactive approach with follow-up stories, the fact that there were particular political persons sanctioned for corruption, the inactivity of the Influence Networks and the lack of “white noise” usually coming from them, all contributed to attracting the public interest and rising the awareness about this corruption scandal.

Example 2

Anti-Corruption Story

01 Media Environment in Bulgaria

02 Methodology

03 Influence Networks

04 Corruption Narratives

05 Anti-Corruption Narratives

06 Example 1 – Corruption Story

07 Example 2 – Anti-Corruption Story

08 Findings & Conclusions

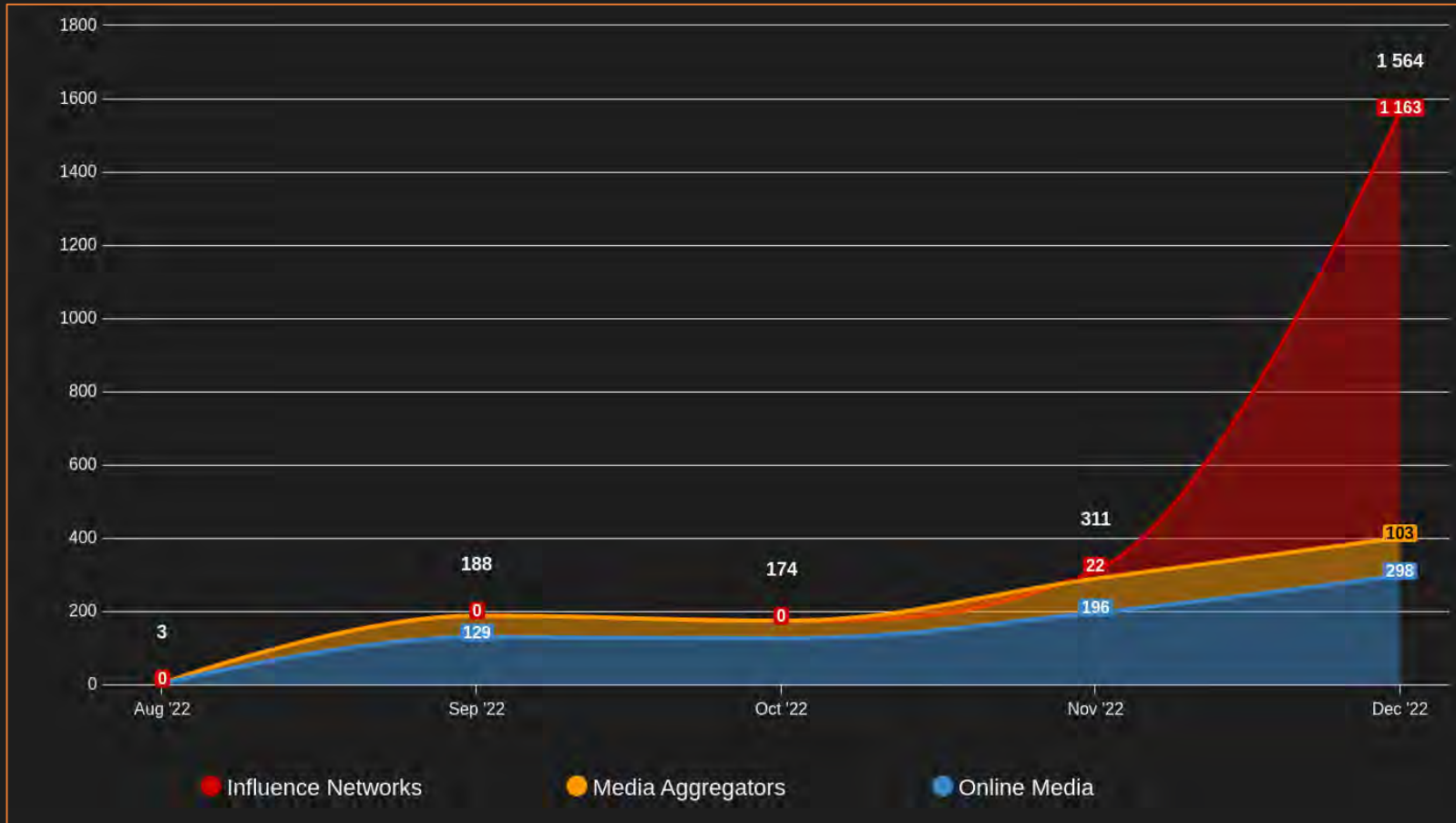
09 Recommendations

10 Q&A



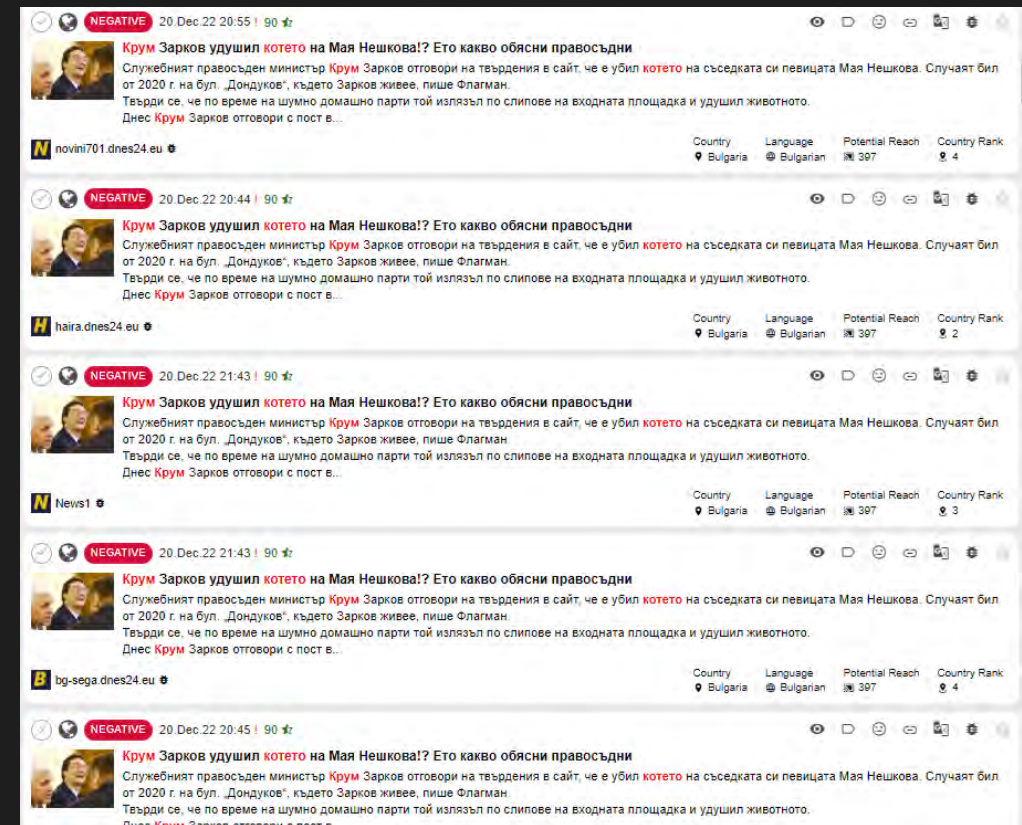
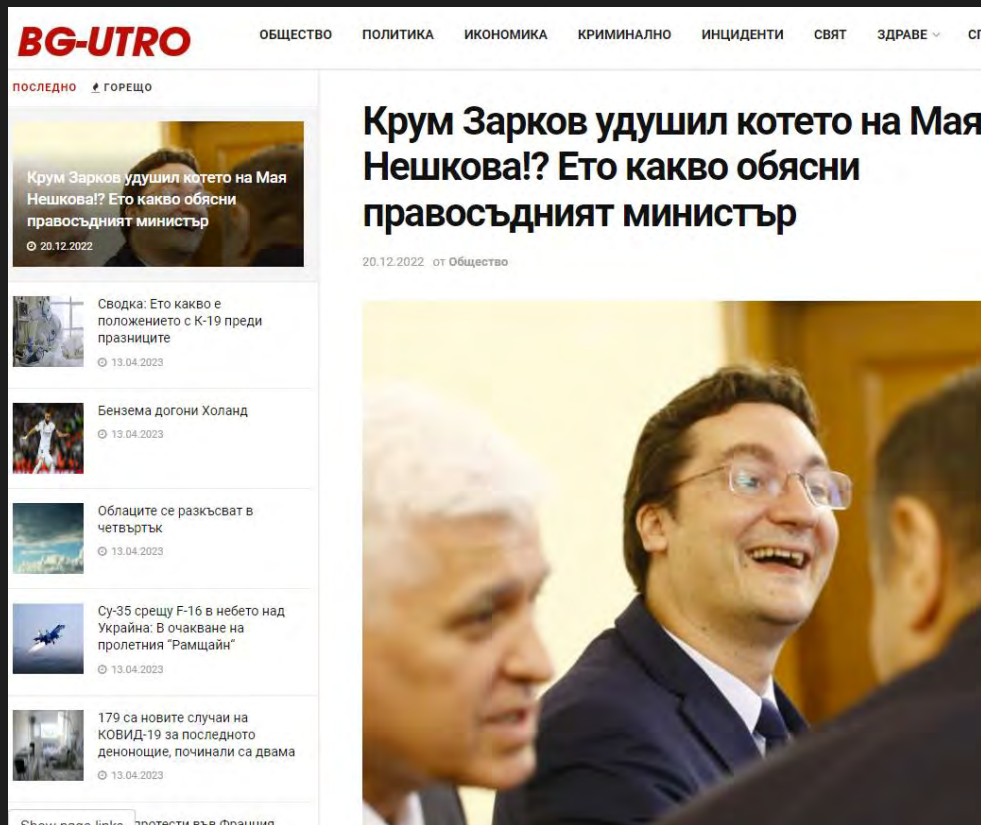
Example 2: Anti-Corruption Story - Parliament Passes Two Anti-Corruption Bills

Volume over Time (per source type)



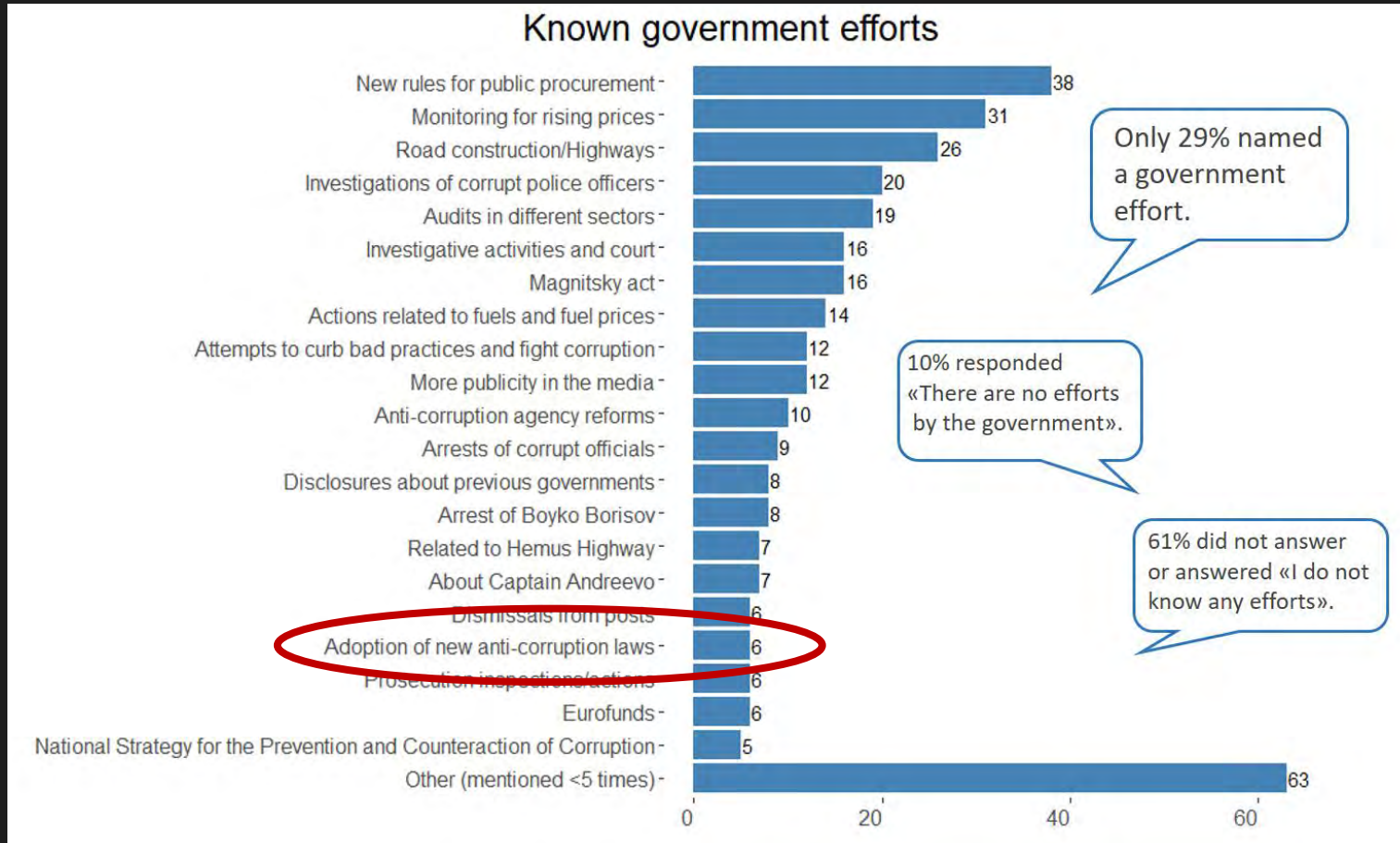
- Legislative initiative by the Minister of Justice **Krum Zarkov**, appointed by the caretaker government in August 2022.
- Initially, **during Aug-Nov 2022** period, the Anti-Corruption initiative proposed by Mr. Zarkov **received quite flat media coverage**, predominantly by legitimate online media.
- As soon as the proposed Anti-Corruption Bills were passed by the Parliament, **all Influence Networks** initiated massive smear campaign targeting Mr. Zarkov personally.

Influence Networks in Action



The personal attack and smear campaign against the Minister of Justice Krum Zarkov was initiated by a made-up story about him being a pet abuser (strangling his neighbor's cat when he was young)

The Aftermath: Actual Public Awareness of the Anti-Corruption Efforts



- In early 2023, just a few months after the two Anti-Corruption bills were passed, the respondents in the Social Survey, conducted by Basel Institute, have no recollection of the reforms.
- Only 6 out of 1209 respondents (0.5%) were aware of the new Anti-Corruption legislation.
- 61% of the respondents could not give (or refused to answer) a single example of Anti-Corruption efforts.

Findings & Conclusions

01 Media Environment in Bulgaria

02 Methodology

03 Influence Networks

04 Corruption Narratives

05 Anti-Corruption Narratives

06 Example 1 – Corruption Story

07 Example 2 – Anti-Corruption Story

08 Findings & Conclusions

09 Recommendations

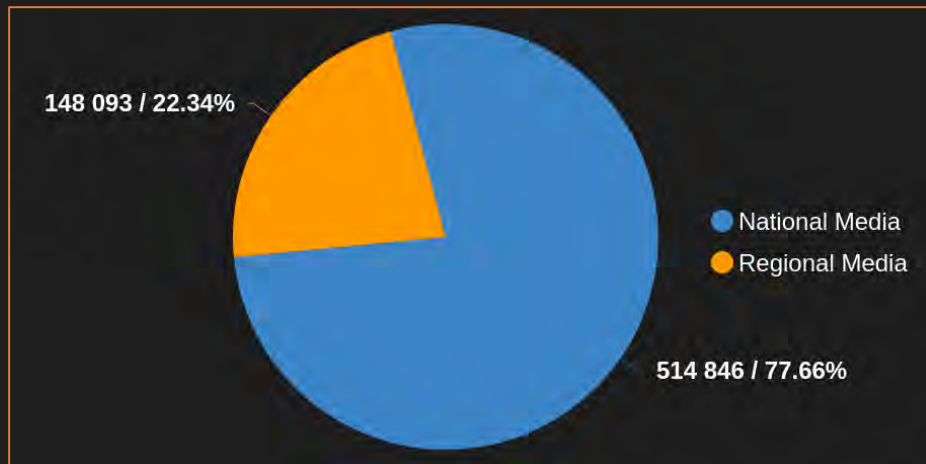
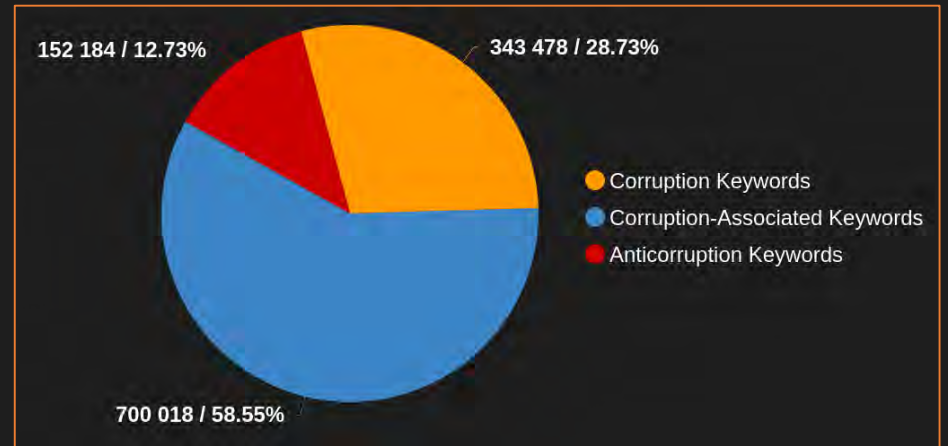
10 Q&A

Disparity between the Public Perception & Media Coverage about Corruption Stories

Known Corruption Scandals / Stories	% of Respondents	% of Media Volume	Media Corruption Story	Comment
Magnitsky Sanctions	9.26%	18.30%	Magnitsky Sanctions	
Highway/Road Construction	10.01%	12.55%	Hemus Construction	
Hemus				
Bribery and Dismissal of Police Officers	6.29%	0.26%	Investigation / Dismissal of Police Officers (4 stories total)	Not in Top 10 Media Stories
Migrants	2.73%	0.38%	Border Police Corruption / Migrant Smuggling	Not in Top 10 Media Stories
Energy Sector	2.23%	2.03%	Corruption & Russian Influence in Turkish Stream	
Dairy Products/Companies	2.23%	1.02%	Fake Cheese / 60%+ Water in White Cheese	No Mentions of Corruption
Fuels	2.07%	0.86%	CPC Investigation of LukOil / Parliamentary Commission Inquiry about LukOil	Not in Top 10 Media Stories
Health Care	1.65%	1.71%	Illegal Organ Transplants Scandal at Lozenetz Hospital	
Boyko Borissov Drawers	1.41%	16.58%	Establishment of Revision Commission (findings)	
Politicians/Ministers/Senior Civil Servants	1.32%	1.31%	Krasno Selo mayor investigated by CACIAF	
Public Procurement	1.32%	6.82%	OLAF Finds Breaches in Police Cars Purchase Contract	
			Irregularities in construction of National Children's Hospital	
			Irregularities in Sofia Street Lights Tender	
NEXO/DB Financing	1.32%	0.45%	NEXO/DB Financing	Not in Top 10 Media Stories
Pricing/High Prices	1.08%	0.30%	Consumer Price Speculations / Cartels (w/o Fuels)	Not in Top 10 Media Stories
Gas Supplies	0.99%	14.14%	Gemcorp	
			Bulgargas-Gazprom	
Captain Andreevo Companies	0.83%	5.45%	Captain Andreevo Companies	
Other	7.44%	18.30%	Rejection of Bid to Schengen Area	

Findings & Conclusions (1 / 2)

- Media and **journalists tend to avoid strong wording**, and rarely use the word “*corruption*” when referring to corrupt practices or cases.
- In general, **Anti-Corruption stories gain relatively lower interest** by the media, especially when the narrative is about complex matters involving policy initiatives or legislative changes, and not particular actions with immediate results.



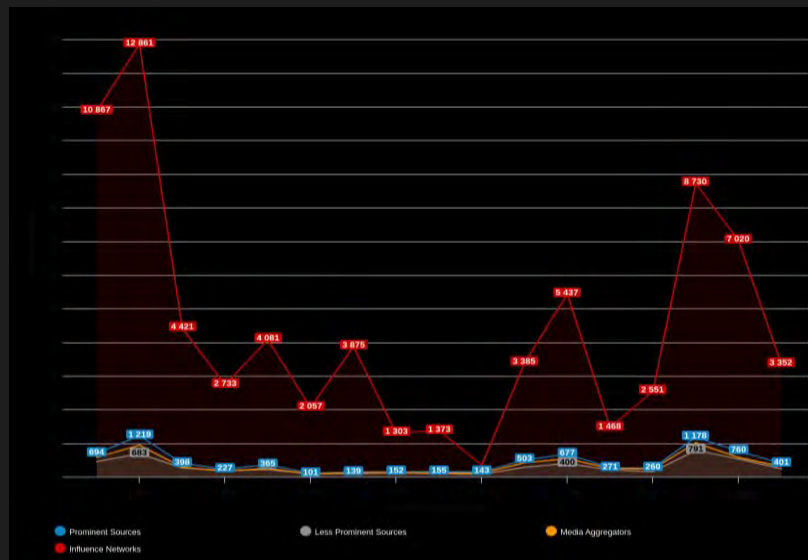
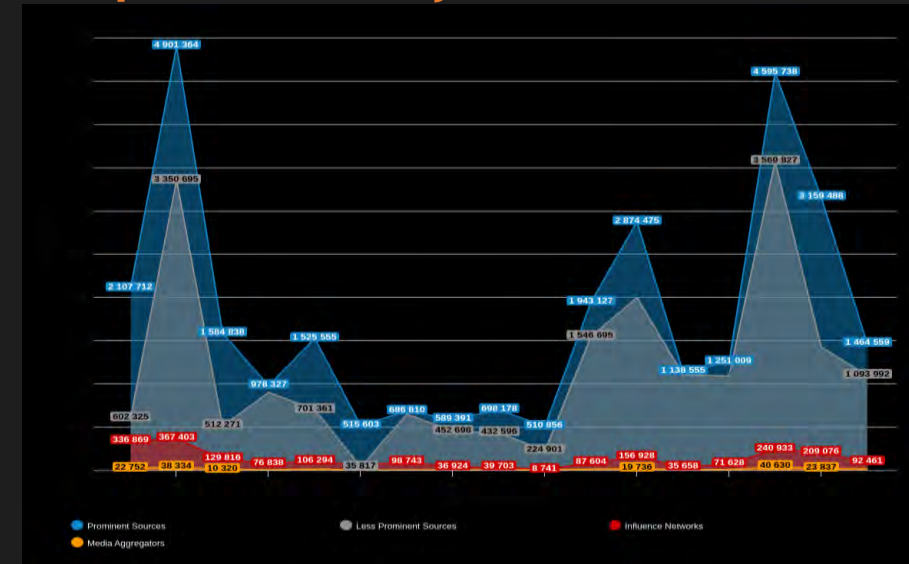
- Scandals and **corruption stories are covered mostly by national media.**
- Cases of **municipal and local corruption are often neglected by regional / local media.**

 **Findings & Conclusions (2 / 2)**

- There is a **notable disparity between public perception** and awareness of corruption-related stories, **and the actual media coverage** and attention given to particular stories.
- The **general public is more aware** of scandals and news stories **concerning particular perpetrators of corruption** (e.g. the [Magnitsky](#) sanctions).
- Stories that were “**easy to assimilate**”, and “**easy to relate to**”, are **preferred by both the media and the general public**.
- In general, **Anti-Corruption stories gain relatively lower interest** by the media, especially when the narrative is about complex matters involving policy initiatives or legislative changes, and not particular actions with immediate results.

Prosecutor General's Assassination Attempt and the Proposal for Early Dismissal

- Beginning – May 1st - **Geshev's assassination attempt**
- On May 1st through May 2nd – **more than 20 000** mushroom websites republished news about the **assassination attempt** of the Bulgarian prosecutor Ivan Geshev
- Several Mushroom websites peaks:
 - May 1-2 – Assassination attempt
 - May 12th – Pro-Geshev and pro-GERB publications
 - May 15th – May 16th - Demand of Geshev's dismissal + pro GERB publications

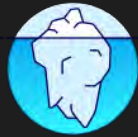


- On May 7th, there was a surge of interest in **Krum Zarkov**, particularly among mushroom websites. These websites chose to highlight a specific part of the news—the phone call with Geshev—while **overlooking the broader coverage** provided by larger publications.
- Among the top sources in the Online media are media outlets such as **Epicenter, Blitz, Lupa, Petel** (sensationalist reporting style)

Recommendations

- 01 Media Environment in Bulgaria
- 02 Methodology
- 03 Influence Networks
- 04 Corruption Narratives
- 05 Anti-Corruption Narratives
- 06 Example 1 – Corruption Story
- 07 Example 2 – Anti-Corruption Story
- 08 Findings & Conclusions
- 09 Recommendations**
- 10 Q&A

Recommendations



Media Ownership Transparency



Media Funding Transparency



Smart Support for Civil Society



Fact Checking 2.0



Modern & Proactive Communications

Questions & Answers

01 Media Environment in Bulgaria

02 Methodology

03 Influence Networks

04 Corruption Narratives

05 Anti-Corruption Narratives

06 Example 1 – Corruption Story

07 Example 2 – Anti-Corruption Story

08 Findings & Conclusions

09 Recommendations

10 Q&A

Appendix 1:

Glossary & Definitions





Technical Glossary

Term	Definition
Aggregators	News aggregators republish automatically web content from variety of media sources, such as online news sites, blogs, and podcasts in one location, for easy viewing.
Boolean Operator	Boolean Operators are simple words (AND, OR, NOT, or AND NOT) used as conjunctions to combine or exclude keywords in a search, leading to more focused and productive results. Corporuses of keywords linked to each other with different combinations of those operators lead to complex query syntax and a high level of precision.
Dimension	A component of the system that contains all inherent attributes of a regular query. The dimension can be attached to an existing feed or widgets in the platform.
Domestic Rank	Calculated monthly, using purchased statistical data for the source audience and page views for the month, utilizing percentile rank calculation formula across sources in a given country part of the Sensika catalog.
Global Rank	Calculated monthly, using purchased statistical data for the source audience and page views for the month, utilizing percentile rank calculation formula across all sources globally.
Influence Networks	Websites that share similar design and structure and publish news in a seemingly coordinated manner.
Less Prominent Sources	Less and/or the least essential sources on the domestic or global level (Domestic Rank 4-10 or Global Rank 4-10) with unclear or hidden ownership and lack of transparent editorial policy.
National Media Sources	Websites without an explicit focus on regional news stories and/or issues.



Technical Glossary

Term	Definition
Potential Reach	Estimation of the potential reach of a piece of content, based on the total number of views generated by the source and divided by the number of content items published by the source for the last 30 days.
Prominent Sources	The most influential sources on the domestic or global level (Domestic Rank 1-3 or Global Rank 1-3).
Query	A "query" refers to the action of retrieving data from the database. The Boolean query is a type of search that makes possible the combination of keywords or phrases with operators such as AND, AND NOT, and OR.
Regional Media Sources	Regional-based media outlets focused on local/regional news stories and/or issues, among others national or global news.
Sensika Operators	Custom operators (content_language, source_country, etc.) designed to filter result sets based on the metadata collected for each media item.
Sensika Tiering	Hierarchical classification of the sources from the most influential to the less influential, accordingly Tier 1 (Domestic rank and global rank 1 to 3), Tier 2 (Domestic rank and global rank 4 to 6), and Tier 3 (Domestic rank and global rank 7 to 10).
Story	Stories are contained within the general narrative of a Topic. They appear, develop, and “die out” over a limited time period (e.g. days, weeks). A story could reappear in the future, usually triggered by a sudden development.
Topic	Broad or general theme or topic of interest pre-defined by the customer. Topics remain permanent for a long period of time. (e.g. Corruption; Anticorruption).



Political Parties Mentioned in the Report

Party	General Information
Bulgarian Rise (BV)	A national conservative political party, established in 2022 by Stefan Yanev, former caretaker Prime Minister and Defense Minister.
Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP)	A center-left, social democratic political party, formally founded in 1990, and a direct descendant of the Bulgarian Communist Party. It is a member of the Socialist International, the Party of European Socialists, and the Progressive Alliance. Its current chairperson is Korneliya Ninova.
Democratic Bulgaria (DB)	An electoral alliance formed in 2018 by three political parties: Yes, Bulgaria!, Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria, and The Greens. It's often associated with Yes, Bulgaria! leader Hristo Ivanov.
GERB	A conservative, populist political party with a center-right orientation. It was the ruling party of the country between 2009 and 2021. It is strongly associated with its chairman, former Prime Minister Boyko Borissov.
Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS)	A centrist political party established in 1990 and known to represent the interests of the country's Muslim minority communities. Its MP Delyan Peevski was placed under US sanctions through the Magnitsky Act mechanism in May 2021.
Revival	An ultranationalist political party, founded in 2014. Its chairman is Kostadin Kostadinov. The party employs strong anti-EU, anti-American, and pro-Russian rhetoric.
Spasi Sofia	Spasi Sofia is a Bulgarian non-governmental watchdog organization which monitors the work of the Sofia Municipality administration. In January 2023, the organization registered as a party and Spasi Sofia founder Boris Bonev was elected as Chairman.
Stand Up.BG! We are coming! (IBG-NI)	A Bulgarian non-governmental organization and political party founded by Maya Manolova in 2019. Later on, the entity was joined by the so-called "Poisonous Trio" (lawyer Nikolay Hadzhigenov, sculptor Velislav Minekov, and PR expert Arman Babikyan).
There is Such a People (ITN)	A populist political party established in 2020 by Bulgarian singer, TV host, and politician Slavi Trifonov.
We Continue the Change (PP)	A centrist, anticorruption political party and an electoral alliance led by Kiril Petkov and Asen Vassilev. The party was founded ahead of the November 2021 Bulgarian National Assembly elections.

Appendix 2: Extended Slides





Disparity between the Public Perception & Media Coverage about Corruption Stories

- There is a **notable disparity between public perception** and awareness of corruption-related stories, **and the actual media coverage** and attention given to particular stories.
- The findings of the Social Survey indicate that **respondents did not draw a connection between Bulgaria's failed bid to join the Schengen Zone and the evaluations provided by several EU member states regarding the precarious state of the Rule of Law and the pervasive corruption** within high-levels of power, including the judiciary system. Despite the extensive media coverage of Bulgaria's failed bid to join the Schengen Zone, which generated nearly 19,000 publications in less than two weeks, none of the respondents in the survey recognized the story as being related to corruption.
- **Several of the top 10 corruption-related stories mentioned by respondents** in the social survey **received minimal coverage in online news outlets, constituting less than 1% of the media volume** dedicated to corruption scandals. These stories include instances like "Bribery and Dismissal of Police Officers," "Corruption Involving Migrants," "Corruption in Dairy Products/Companies," "Corruption in Fuel Prices," and others.
- According to the social survey results, it appears that **the general public is more concerned about corruption that affects food and commodity prices**, as well as the quality and safety of food, compared to political or judicial corruption. The general public do not fully recognize the connection between corrupt judiciary and politicians, and how this can lead to poor governance and unfair market practices, ultimately resulting in economic and safety problems for society.



Appendix Slides: Recommendations (1/2)

- **Media Ownership Transparency**
 - Legislative initiative @ EU level with careful consideration of the balance between transparency and freedom of speech
 - GDPR revisions or negotiations with ICANN / domain registrars - since the introduction of GDPR in 2017 web domain registration is anonymous by default
- **Media Funding Transparency**
 - Strict and consistent application of the existing Tax code and legislation, as well as Consumer Protection regulations, as many anonymous media outlets rely on revenue from Ad networks by serving specific Ads that violate certain regulations;
 - Public register of all public sector entities (there are 14 000+ public sector entities as of Apr 2022, according to custom dataset compiled by NSI). Media contracts with public sector entities (e.g. companies controlled by municipalities or other government entities) shall be public;
- **Smart Support for Civil Society**
 - Literacy – Journalists / Media / Citizens
 - Easy to Use & Sustainable Tools for Journalists & Media to check trustworthiness of sources, and detect manipulated pictures & videos
 - Collaboration & Networking between Government, NGO and Tech

 **Appendix Slides: Recommendations (2/2)**

- **Specific Measures to amplify the impact of Fact Checking organizations**
 - Public Media Outlet Registry with attributed debunked stories (either initially published or republished by the outlet)
 - Twitter Community Notes like crowdsourcing of context and debunking of disinformation and propaganda stories
 - Fact Check Federation & AI Assisted Multilingual Support
- **Proactive Informational Campaigns**
 - Accessible language and concise messaging - the typical institutional long-text forms and “dry language” shall be avoided;
 - Accessible formats – short posts and video on mobile platforms are the predominant forms of media consumption;
 - Collaboration with citizen-journalists and social media influencers without compromising their creative freedom