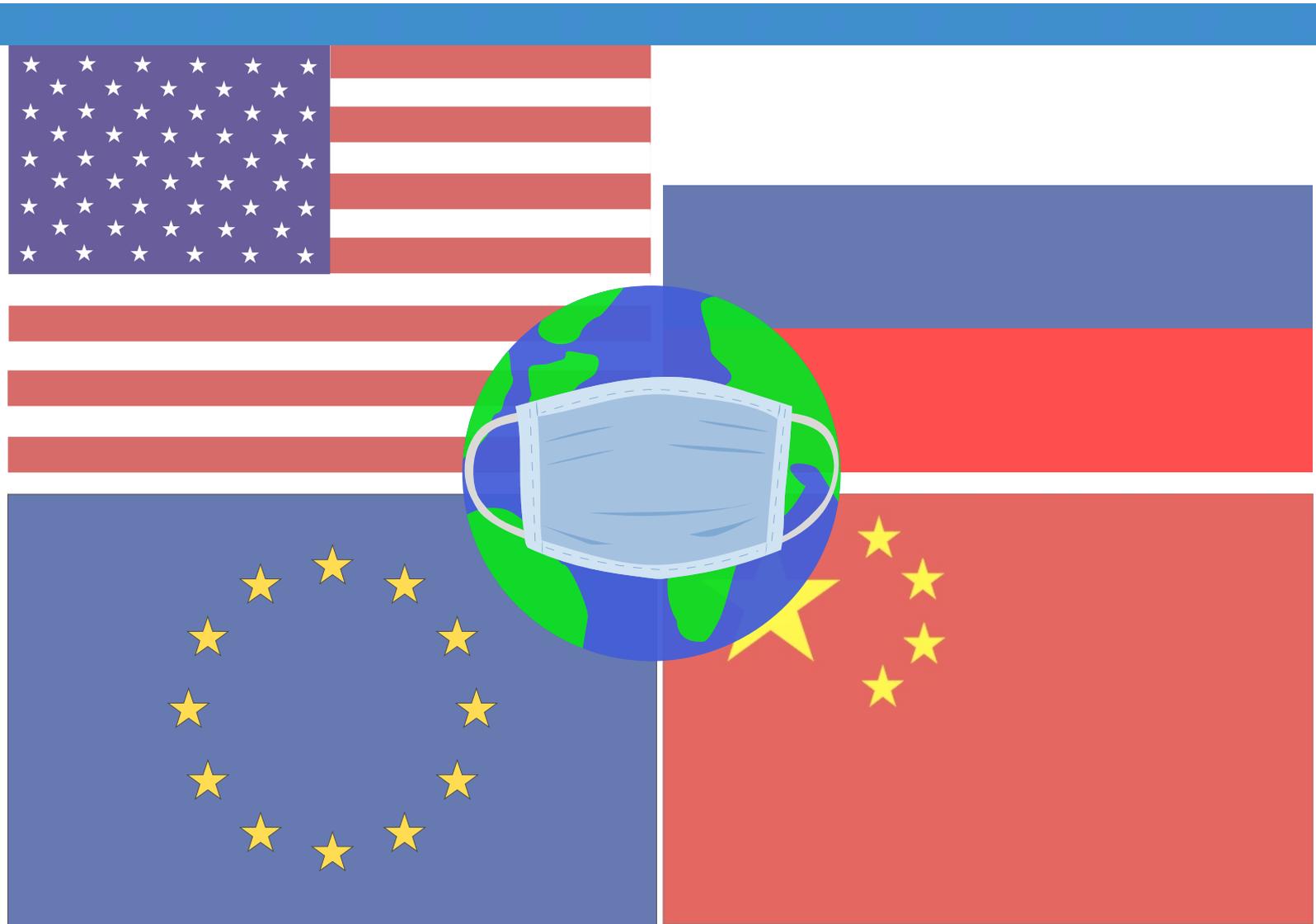


THE REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF
RESEARCH "**FOREIGN POLICY
CONSEQUENCES OF THE COVID-19
CRISIS REGARDING SERBIA**"



This project was realized in cooperation with the **Embassy of the United States of America** in the Republic of Serbia



Serbia

Belgrade, 2021.

Preface

Dear readers,

In front of You is research called **“Consequences of COVID-19 crisis on Serbia’s foreign policy”** which was conducted by a team of young professionals from the Council for Strategic Policy with the support of the **Embassy of the United States of America in Belgrade**. The research consists of two parts and deals with the following topics: fake news on the front pages of daily newspapers in Serbia during 2020, as well as student’s views on topics related to the foreign policy of the Republic of Serbia during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The target group in this project were students of the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Belgrade, who helped us to understand the stances of young people and future decision-makers, and the way their views are formed.

The crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic also had its foreign policy dimension, which was mostly reflected in the humanitarian aid that the Great powers provided to the rest of the world, and their mutual accusation of the origin and spread of the virus. Less developed countries such as Serbia have found themselves in a position to coordinate their policies with their partners to overcome the crisis more easily. The consequences of these decisions are yet to be seen in the years to come.

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President of the Council for Strategic Policy



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Report on the results of the analysis of the front pages of the daily press in Serbia



The analysis of daily newspapers in Serbia (*Večernje novosti, Danas, Blic, Kurir, Politika, Informer, Alo and Srpski Telegraf*) included **2,673** front pages in the **period from January 1 to December 31, 2020**. The aim of our research was to analyze the way in which Western partners - **the United States, the European Union and NATO** in the past year were presented on the front pages of the domestic press, what was the connotation, and how often they were published as fake news. For the sake of comparative analysis, we paid attention to the **People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation**. The analysis of the title pages was performed by setting various methodological variables, and entering encrypted data, which were processed in the IBM SPSS statistics program.

In terms of time, during January and February, the largest number of titles were dedicated to the events in **Montenegro** on the occasion of the adoption of the disputed Law on Freedom of Religion. From the end of February to the end of May, the headlines were dominated by news about the **COVID-19** virus in general, as well as those headlines concerning epidemiological measures. June and July were dedicated to the parliamentary elections and election results, negotiations between Belgrade and Priština in Washington scheduled for June 27, as well as civil protests in Belgrade which took place in early July. In August, news from Montenegro appeared on the front pages again. September was convincingly marked by the "Washington Agreement" reached between the representatives of Belgrade and Priština. From the second half of October and during the month of November, the most current titles referred to the American presidential elections, and in December, the largest number of titles were dedicated to vaccination against the COVID-19 virus.

Statistically, on the front pages, the main topic was the news related to the COVID-19 virus - a total of **26.9%**, followed by daily politics with **17.5%**, Montenegro with **7.2%**, celebrities with **6.7%**, Crimes and Accidents pages with **4.7%**, Kosovo and Metohija with **2.3%** and other topics. As the main topic on the front pages, the United States appeared **170** times, the Russian Federation **84** times, the European Union **50** times, the People's Republic of China **29** times and NATO **25** times. Of the **2,673** main topics, fake news accounts for **16.8%**.

The West "in general"

The West as a term has been used a total of **35** times on the front pages, counting both the main and secondary topics. The context of the news in which the West is mostly mentioned is related to the headlines according to which "the West is blackmailing Serbia", which represents **34.3%** of the total number of headlines about the West. Then, **20%** are titles that are in the context of supporting the so-called. Kosovo by the West, and **11.4%** of the news referred to "turning Serbia towards the West". Other headlines mentioning the West concerning the Republika Srpska (an entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina), the West's distrust of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation.

As for the connotation of reporting on the West in the daily press, only **28.6%** of the headlines were neutral. As many as **71.4%** of news about the West had a negative connotation - of which **40%** were extremely negative, and **31.4%** were mostly negative. Out of a total of **35** titles - **15** are fake news, and for other **4** it was not possible to estimate. In terms of sensationalism, headlines about the West in which there were no sensations at all or mostly no sensations made up **42.8%**, while **57.2%** were very or mostly sensationalist headlines.

As for the newspapers themselves, the West is mostly mentioned in *Večernje novosti* - as much as **48.5%** of the total number of headlines about the West, and almost half referred to the blackmail of Serbia by the West and mostly had a negative or extremely negative connotation. Out of **17** mentions in *Večernje novosti*, **10** were fake news, while for two headlines it was not possible to assess whether it was fake news or not. The West is mentioned in the *Informer* a total of **6** times with sensationalist headlines, while in other print media it is mentioned a maximum of **3** times.

NATO

Counting the main and secondary topics, **NATO** is mentioned a total of **43** times on the front pages. Of that, **58.1%** of the total number of titles were related to the bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 and a third of those titles were placed as fake news. Then, with **23.3%**, there are headlines that state that the President of Montenegro, Milo Đukanović, "steals shrines on the orders of NATO" and two-thirds of such headlines are fake news, mostly with negative or extremely negative connotations. Two headlines, or **4.6%**, concern the connection between depleted uranium during the NATO bombing and the emergence of the COVID-19 virus, and one of them from July 23 in the *Informer* reads: "Shock claim of Dr. Dane Grujicic: Coronavirus kills us because of NATO bombs."

The other **14%** of the headlines fall into the "something else" category, and one of them is on the front page of *Večernje novosti* from October 25 and read: "NATO wants to monitor the entire planet from space."

Of the total number of titles related to NATO, as many as **67.4%** of them had mostly or extremely negative connotations, while there were **27.9%** having neutral titles. Only two headlines about NATO had a mostly positive connotation: the first was in the *Srpski Telegraf* newspaper, February 13, which read: "NATO supported the litigation in Montenegro", and was marked as fake news, but with a positive connotation. The other news was from the daily newspaper *Kurir* from July 2, on the occasion of the interview with the head of the NATO office in Belgrade, which read: "NATO appreciates the Serbian soldier"..

Out of a total of **43** NATO-related headlines in the daily press in Serbia during 2020, as many as **41.9%** were fake news, and for **9.3%** of them it was not possible to assess whether they were fake news or not. As for sensationalism, as many as **62.8%** of NATO-related news was mostly moderate or very sensationalist, while **37.2%** of headlines did not have elements of sensationalism at all or mostly did not have them.

When it comes to newspapers, headlines about NATO, like the West, appeared mostly on the front pages of *Večernje novosti* - **53.5%** of the total number of news about NATO in all daily newspapers, and **72.7%** of them had a negative connotation. *Večernje novosti* reported on NATO mostly in the context of the 1999 bombing, and then on "the seizure of shrines in Montenegro on the orders of NATO". Of the total number of news items in *Večernje novosti*, as many as **68.2%** are mostly sensationalist or very sensationalist. Fake news in *Večernje novosti* made up as much as **50%** of headlines about NATO. The daily *Politika* also reported on NATO exclusively in the context of the 1999 bombing, but no headline was marked as fake news and there was no sensationalism at all. In other daily newspapers, NATO appeared on the front pages a maximum of **3** times.

The fact that out of the total number of titles about NATO in 2020, **67.4%** had titles with a negative connotation, of which **41.9%** were characterized as fake news, and the topic of the bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 occupied **58.1%** of the total number of titles on NATO, and this leads to the fact that **72.4%** of the surveyed students through focus groups believe that Serbia should not become a member of NATO. On the other hand, having in mind that **23.3%** of the headlines about NATO was in the context of "Milo steals shrines on the orders of NATO" and that two-thirds of the total number of headlines on that topic are fake news, we come to **51.3%** The students believe that relations between Serbia and Montenegro have deteriorated since Montenegro became a member of NATO.

The United States of America

The total number of news items about the **United States of America** (hereinafter referred to as the USA) on the front pages during 2020 was **463**, together with the main and secondary headlines. Of that, **28.7%** were fake news, and **3.2%** of the headlines could not be estimated. In terms of connotation, **51.1%** of news related to the USA had a neutral connotation, **29.3%** had mostly or extremely positive connotations, while the lowest percentage of headlines had mostly or extremely negative connotations - **19.6%**.

Of a total of **463** U.S. headlines, **46.9%** were mostly or very sensationalist, while **53.1%** of the news had no or mostly no elements of sensationalism. The *Večernje novosti* had an equal number of headlines about the United States that had moderate or very pronounced elements of sensationalism and those that did not. *Politika*, *Danas* and *Blic* had a very small percentage of headlines that contained elements of sensationalism - about **10%**, while *Informer*, *Alo* and *Kurir* had twice as many sensationalist headlines about the United States as those that did not. The *Srpski Telegraf* had 85.7% of sensationalist headlines about the United States, some of which read: "Trump gives Serbia access to the sea" from September 26, or "They are preparing a coup against Belgrade: Antifa destroys the division of Kosovo" from June 5 and "Evidence that the pandemic was directed: the end of the coronavirus after the defeat of Trump" from November 9.

The largest number of headlines about the USA was found in the *Večernje novosti* - a total of **82** headlines, followed by *Politika* with **76** headlines, *Srpski Telegraf* with **70**, *Informer* with **57**, *Kurir* with **58**, *Blic* **45** headlines, *Danas* **43**, and *Alo* had the least - a total of **32**. Of all the daily newspapers in Serbia, *Večernje novosti* reported the most negatively on the USA with a total of **29.2%** of headlines with a negative connotation and *Kurir* with **27.6%**. Of those that had the largest number of titles with a positive connotation about the United States, *Informer* is in the first place with **50.1%**, followed by *Srpski Telegraf* with **44.3%**. *Politika* reported neutrally on the United States - even in **80.2%** of headlines, while **15.8%** of headlines in these newspapers had a positive connotation and only one fake news. The smallest number of fake news about the USA, besides *Politika*, was in *Danas* and *Blic*, and the largest number of them were found in *Srpski Telegraf*, *Kurir* and *Večernje novosti*. It is important to point out that mostly all the fake news with a positive connotation that referred to the United States were related exclusively to Donald Trump and his attitude towards Serbs and Serbia.

As for the content of the news itself, most was written about the presidential elections, which were held on November 4, 2020 - as many as **22.9%** of the headlines.

Politika and *Večernje novosti* reported on that the most. This topic was divided into three types of titles: **46** titles related to Donald Trump as a presidential candidate, **32** titles about the American presidential elections in general and **28** were dedicated to Joseph Biden. Trump as a presidential candidate was mostly reported with a neutral connotation - a total of **52.2%**. Then, there are headlines with mostly or extremely positive connotations and their share is **34.8%**, while **13%** are news with mostly negative connotations. It is interesting to point out that "American elections in general" were reported with an exclusively neutral connotation. On the other hand, Biden as a candidate was also mostly reported neutrally - a total of **57.1%**, followed by headlines with a negative connotation and they make up **28.6%** of the total number of news about Biden, while only **4** headlines, i.e., **14.3%** were in a mostly positive context. Bearing in mind that Biden was mostly reported neutrally (about **5%** more than Trump), it is interesting that **71.3%** of the surveyed students do not agree with the statement that Joseph Biden is a friend of Serbia

From the aforementioned analysis, it can be concluded that the print media in Serbia mostly "cheered" for Trump as a presidential candidate, and it even went so far that **23.9%** of titles related to him were placed as fake news in a positive context. The fact that the American elections make up the largest percentage of the total number of headlines about the United States in the Serbian daily press only confirms their great importance in the public discourse of Serbia. Also, when it comes to Trump, **10** headlines were dedicated to him "returning Kosovo" and such headlines were mostly marked as fake news.

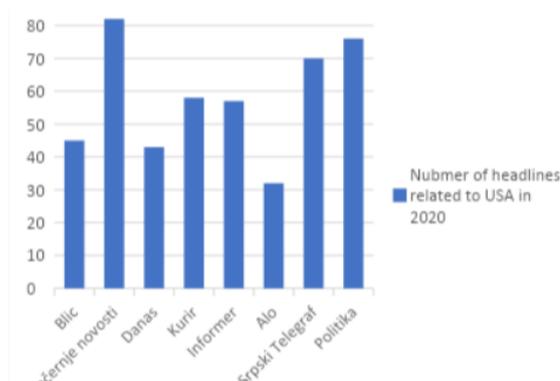
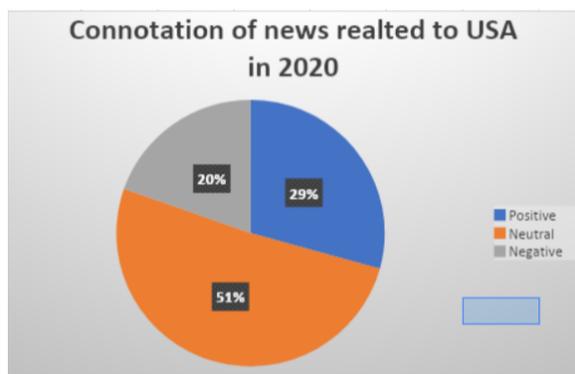
The next most reported topic was the role of the United States in the dialogue between Belgrade and Priština - as much as **20.5%** of the total number of headlines about the United States, mostly in *Večernje novosti* and *Blic*, while in the daily *Alo* this was mentioned only twice. It is interesting to note that most people wrote about this topic with a neutral connotation - as many as **50.5%**, while **34.7%** of the titles had mostly or extremely positive connotations. However, as many as **26.3%** were fake news. Headlines with negative connotations about the role of the United States in the dialogue between Belgrade and Priština made up a total of **14.7%** of the total number of headlines about their mediating role. The third most reported topic on the United States was the "Washington Agreement" - a total of **9.9%** of titles. It is important to point out that only **5** titles, or **10.1%**, had mostly negative connotations about this agreement. Regarding that, **28.2%** of the news was presented with neutral connotations, while as many as **60.9%** of the headlines had mostly or extremely positive connotations. It is interesting that only one fake news was on the topic of the „Washington Agreement“, in the *Srpski Telegraf* newspaper from September 7, which read:

"Enemies of Serbia on cameras: Shiptars and Croats are dying of anguish - Vučić received a billion, but did not recognize Kosovo."

Note: The US mediation process and the achievement of the "Washington Agreement" were viewed as separate entities for methodological reasons, as the agreement itself had a significant place in the public discourse that dominated the second half of the year.

In the circumstances of the anti-vaccine mood in Serbia, as well as the prevalence of conspiracy theories about the origin of the COVID-19 virus, it is useful to point out that there was not a single news with negative connotation about vaccines from American manufacturers. It was reported exclusively neutrally or with a very positive connotation, and there was no fake news at all. On the other hand, one of the most widespread conspiracy theories since the beginning of the pandemic in Serbia and beyond is that the American philanthropist Bill Gates "released" the corona virus, and advocates forced vaccination through which he will chip the world's population. However, in the Serbian daily press, such headlines appear only twice - in *Večernje novosti* and *Kurir*. Also, only in these newspapers was the news on two front pages that "the Americans released the corona virus in order to take revenge on Russia, China and the European Union." In this regard, the "American deep state, Freemasons and Satanists" were reported a total of **14** times, mostly in *Srpski Telegraf*.

Given the fact that neutral reporting on the United States accounts for **51.1%** of the total number of titles, it is not surprising that **48.8%** of surveyed students do not have a clear position on the claim that Serbia has good bilateral relations with the United States. On the other hand, titles with mostly or extremely positive connotations made up **29.3%** of the total number of titles, while **20%** of respondents believe that Serbia has good relations with the United States. Also, negative headlines about the USA made up **31.2%** of the total number, while **19.6%** of students think that Serbia does not have good relations with the USA. On the basis of this, we can conclude that the perception of the United States in the past year was predominantly neutral compared to previous years. However, it is contradictory that **87.5%** of the surveyed students do not agree with the statement that the negotiations on the status of Kosovo and Metohija should be led by the USA, considering that the daily press reported on the role of the USA in the dialogue between Belgrade and Priština in 2020 mostly neutral and positive, in as many as **85.2%** of cases.



The European Union

During 2020, there were a total of **200** headlines about the **European Union** (hereinafter EU) in the daily press in Serbia. Of the total number of headlines, **20%** were fake news, while **1.5%** could not be determined if they were fake news or not. Out of the total number of fake news, the largest number was found in *Večernje novosti* - **38.4%**, while in all other newspapers this percentage is incomparably lower. In most cases, the EU was reported neutrally - **47%** of the total number of headlines, **36.5%** was news that have mostly or extremely negative connotations, while only **16.5%** of headlines had mostly or very positive connotations.

When it comes to sensationalism, it is important to note that **30%** of headlines about the EU had moderate or very pronounced elements of sensationalism, while **70%** of news was not sensationalist at all or mostly not. In *Večernje novosti* and *Kurir*, there was an equal number of headlines with sensationalist elements to those that do not have them. In *Politika* and *Danas*, two headlines related to the EU generally had sensationalism, while all other headlines about the EU in these papers did not have these elements. In the *Informer* and *Srpski Telegraf*, the headlines were mostly sensationalist.

We found the largest number of headlines about the EU in *Politika* - **50**, followed by *Večernje novosti* with **39** headlines, *Blic* with **30**, *Danas* with **28**, *Kurir* with **26** headlines, *Informer* with **14**, *Srpski Telegraf* with **9** headlines about the EU and *Alo* with a total of **4** headlines in which the EU was mentioned. *Politika* had **56%** of neutral headlines about the EU, **10%** of positive headlines and **34%** of headlines with mostly or distinctly negative connotations. *Večernje novosti* had only **30.8%** of neutral headlines about the EU, while all other news about the EU had a negative connotation - **69.2%** of them. In *Blic*, there were **73.3%** reportings on the EU with a neutral connotation, then **20%** of positive headlines, and only two headlines, that is, **6.7%** mostly negative connotations. In *Danas*, the EU was mostly reported neutrally - **82.1%** of titles, and **17.9%** of titles had positive connotations.

In *Kurir*, the most dominant was positive news about the EU - **46.1%**, followed by neutral **34.6%** and only **4** headlines, i.e., **19.3%** with a negative connotation. In *Informer*, there were **50%** of titles with a neutral connotation and the same number with a negative connotation, while there were no titles in a positive context. The *Srpski Telegraf* daily also represented news about the EU with mostly negative connotations, with as much as **88.9%** share. As for the content of news about the EU, there was most was written about the EU's mediating role in the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Priština - as much as **29%** of headlines about the EU were dedicated to this issue. Fake news made up **12%** of headlines related to the EU's role in the Belgrade-Priština dialogue.

The largest number of titles had a neutral connotation - as many as **65.5%**, then **12.1%** had a positive connotation, while **22.4%** of titles had a negative connotation. The largest number of news about the EU and the dialogue between Belgrade and Priština was found in *Blic* - **27.6%**, then in *Večernje novosti* **22.4%** of headlines, followed by *Politika* with **20.7%** of headlines, *Kurir* with **15.5%** of headlines, while headlines on this topic in all other media had slightly less than **5%**. For example, such news was found in *Informer* only once.

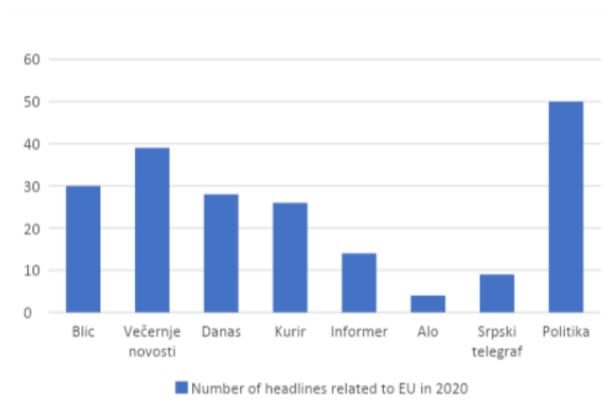
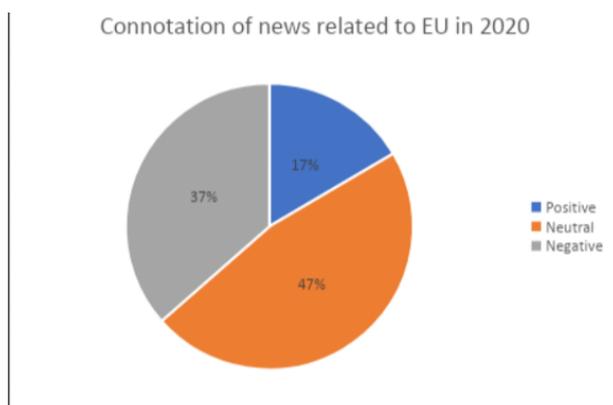
The next topic with the highest representation is Serbia's entry into the EU in general with **15.5%**, it is interesting that there was no related fake news at all. Of the total number of titles dealing with Serbia's European integration - **51.6%** of them were neutral, **19.4%** had a positive connotation, while **29%** had mostly or extremely negative connotation. *Politika* wrote the most about Serbia's European integrations, and then, *Danas* and *Kurir*. Also, **15.5%** are headlines according to which the EU blackmailed and conditioned Serbia and **45.2%** of headlines on this topic were fake news with mostly or extremely negative connotations. *Večernje novosti* wrote the most about this topic - **38.7%** of the total number of news on this topic, followed by *Srpski Telegraf* with **19.4%** of headlines and *Informer* with **12.9%** of headlines. In other dailies, such headlines were found a maximum of twice.

It is important to point out that EU assistance to Serbia during the COVID-19 pandemic was never found as the main topic on the front page, while it was found as a secondary topic only **7** times, which represents **3.5%** of the total number of titles about the EU. However, in these **3.5%** of titles on European aid, there were no titles with negative connotation, but only with a neutral or positive one.

Although in the public discourse there was often talk of "non-existence of European solidarity" or "disintegration of the EU due to the COVID-19 virus", still, in the printed daily newspapers in Serbia, many topics were not dedicated to this topic - only **3%**. However, even those **3%** were placed through fake news, exclusively in *Večernje novosti* and *Politika*.

If we look at the relationship between the connotation with which the EU was reported and the attitudes of students about the relations between Serbia and the EU, we see a rather small difference in percentages and that the statistical data mostly match. So, the EU was reported neutrally in **47%** of the titles, so **48.8%** of students did not have a clear position on the issue of the claim that Serbia had good relations with the EU. Titles with a negative connotation about the EU made up **36%** of the total number of titles about the EU and there was **28,7%** of students who did not agree that Serbia had good relations with the EU. Finally, **16.5%** of the titles had a mostly positive connotation, so **22.5%** of students agreed that Serbia and the EU had good bilateral relations.

As for the European integration of Serbia, also, the headlines on that topic in the daily newspapers coincided with the views of the students. About Serbia's membership in the EU, **71%** of the titles had a neutral or positive connotation, and **62.5%** of students believe that Serbia should become an EU member. On the other hand, **29%** of the titles had a mostly or extremely negative connotation, which is correlated with the fact that **20%** of students did not agree with the European integration of Serbia.



The Russian Federation

During 2020, the **Russian Federation** appeared on the front pages of the daily press in Serbia a total of **209** times. The largest number of headlines was in *Večernje novosti* - **49**, followed by **41** headlines in *Informer*, **25** headlines in *Politika*, **24** in *Kurir*, **24** in *Srpski Telegraf*, **21** headlines in *Alo*, **14** in *Danas* and **11** headlines in *Blic*.

The Russian Federation was mostly reported in mainly or extremely positive manner - **66%** of headlines, then neutrally in **25.9%** of cases, and mostly or extremely negative headlines were found in **8.1%** on front pages. So, these data largely coincide with the attitudes of students about good relations between Serbia and the Russian Federation - **63.8%** of them agreed with that statement, **30%** of respondents did not have a clear position while **6.3%** of them do not agree with it. Also, if we look at the fact that neutral and positive news about the Russian Federation made up **91.9%** of the total number, it is not surprising that **86.3%** of students believe that Serbia should not impose sanctions on the Russian Federation.

In *Večernje novosti* and *Politika*, there were no headlines about the Russian Federation with a negative connotation, and in *Večernje novosti*, news with a distinctly or mostly positive connotation made up as much as **81.6%** of the total number of headlines about Russia. On the front pages of *Danas* and *Blic*, there were no headlines about Russia with a positive connotation, but an equal number of neutrals and negatives. There were only **4** headlines with neutral connotations on the front pages of *Informer* and *Kurir*, while all the others related to Russia were extremely positive.

Fake news made up **24.4%** of the total number of headlines related to the Russian Federation, and for **5.74%** of the news it was not possible to assess whether it was fake or not. *Danas*, *Blic* and *Politika* had the smallest number of fake news about the Russian Federation (maximum **2**), while in *Večernje novosti*, *Informer* and *Srpski Telegraf*, more than one-third of the news about Russia was fake news. Titles in which there was mostly or no sensationalism made up **51.7%**, while **48.3%** were titles with moderate or pronounced sensationalist elements. By far, the largest number of sensationalist headlines about Russia were found in *Srpski Telegraf* and *Kurir* (almost two-thirds of the total number of headlines about Russia), followed by *Večernje novosti* and *Informer* - **30%** of the total number of headlines, while *Danas* and *Politika* had only **2** headlines with elements of sensationalism.

In terms of content, the largest number of titles was related to the Russian vaccine "Sputnik V" - **15.3%** of the total number of titles about Russia. However, **31.2%** of vaccine

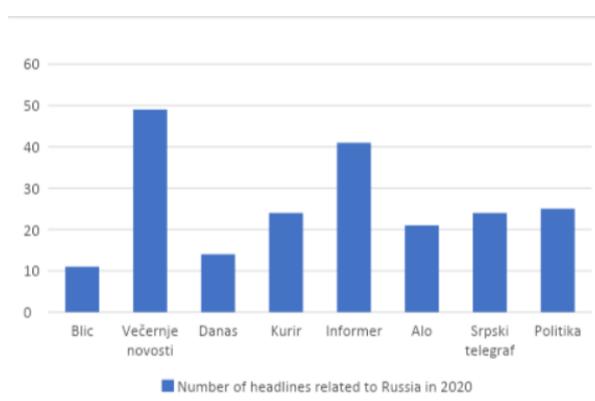
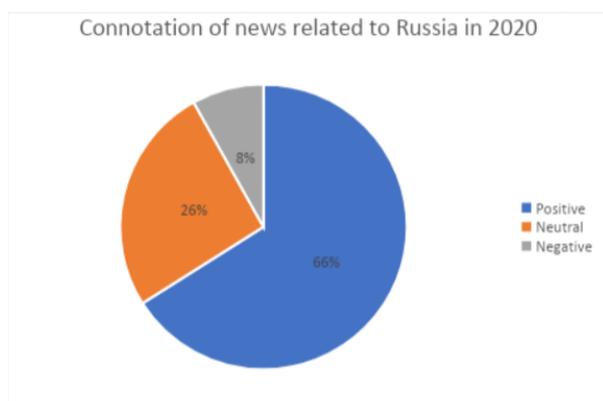
titles were marked as fake news, and for **3** titles it was not possible to assess whether they were fake news or not. There was no negative news, neutral titles made up **29%** of the total number of titles related to the Russian vaccine, while the rest of the titles had mostly or extremely positive connotations, as much as **71%**. It was *Informer*, *Kurir* and *Večernje novosti* that wrote the most about the vaccine, while other daily newspapers dedicated a maximum of **3** headlines to it.

Then, titles on the procurement of Russian weapons made up **10%** of the total number of titles on Russia. Only **3** titles on that topic had a neutral connotation, also, **3** titles had mostly negative connotations, while all the others related to Russian weapons had a distinctly positive connotation. It is interesting that *Politika* did not have a single title related to this topic, and they wrote a lot about Russia. *Večernje novosti* and *Informer* paid the most attention to this topic, while *Danas*, *Kurir* and *Srpski Telegraf* almost did not consider this topic.

A lot of attention was paid to Russian aid to Serbia during the COVID-19 virus pandemic, and that share amounts to **9%** of the total number of titles about Russia. Of that, **36.8%** were fake news. There were no neutral or negative, but only news with mostly or extremely positive connotations. Only **3** headlines were given in the context that "Russia helps Serbia and Italy more than the EU" and all **3** were placed as fake news. As was the case with the news about the Russian vaccine, *Večernje novosti* and *Informer* wrote the most about this topic.

Slightly less than **5%** of the front pages were dedicated to headlines such as "Russians are returning Kosovo", "Vladimir Putin is fighting for Kosovo" and, as expected, they all had very positive connotations. *Večernje novosti* wrote the most about that. Only **4** front pages dealt with the Russian factor during the protests in Serbia in July 2020, and all of them had a mostly negative connotation. *Kurir* wrote twice on this topic, and *Alo* and *Blic* once.

It is interesting that **20%** of the surveyed students believe that Serbia should become a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, while that military alliance had never been on any front page during 2020.



The People's Republic of China

News about the **People's Republic of China** (hereinafter China) appeared **102** times on the front pages of the daily press in Serbia during 2020. There were **22** headlines in *Večernje novosti*, **18** in *Politika*, **16** in *Informer*, **11** in *Srpski Telegraf*, **10** in *Alo*, **9** in *Danas* and only **3** in *Blic*. Of the total number of headlines about China, **21.6%** are fake news, while **1.96%** of them could not be estimated. There were no fake news about China in *Danas*, *Politika* and *Blic*, while in *Večernje novosti*, *Kurir* and *Informer*, fake news made up close to **35%** of the total number of headlines about China.

About **55%** of the titles did not have elements of sensationalism at all or mostly did not, while **45%** of the titles can be said to have been mostly or very sensationalist. There were no sensationalist headlines about China in *Politika*, *Blic* and *Danas*, while the highest degree of sensationalism was on the front pages of *Večernje novosti*, *Kurir* and *Informer*.

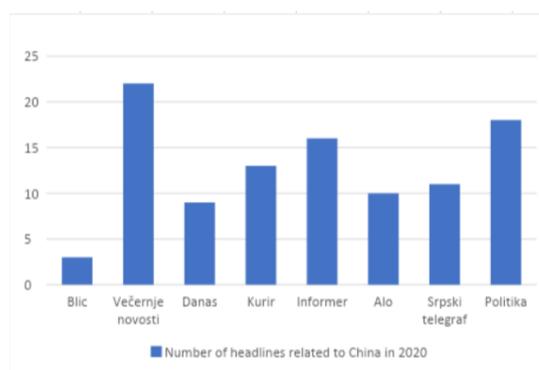
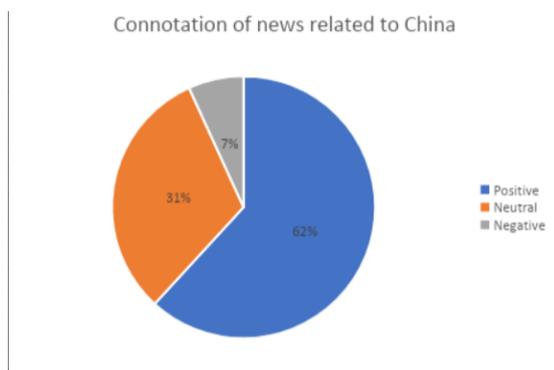
The largest number of titles had distinct or mostly positive connotations about China - **61.8%** of them, while neutral reporting was found in **31.4%** of cases. Only **6.8%** of titles about China had mostly negative connotations. The largest number of news with a very positive connotation was in *Večernje novosti*, and the smallest in *Danas*.

China was mostly reported in the context of Chinese aid to the Republic of Serbia during the COVID-19 virus pandemic - as many as **35.3%** of the headlines were dedicated to it. About **27.8%** of news on this topic was placed in the form of fake news. As many as **87%** of titles on this topic had a very positive connotation, while only **4** titles were presented neutrally. *Večernje novosti* and *Kurir* wrote the most about Chinese aid during the pandemic, followed by *Informer*, *Alo* and *Srpski Telegraf*, while *Danas*, *Blic* and *Politika* dedicated a maximum of **3** headlines to this topic throughout the year.

Then, **8.8%** of the total number of titles about China were dedicated to the procurement of Chinese weapons. There were no headlines that could be labeled as fake news. Only *Politika*, *Informer* and *Večernje novosti* reported on Chinese weapons.

Headlines about China stating that "the Chinese released the corona virus" made up **6.9%** of the total number of headlines on the subject, mostly in the *Alo* newspaper, while the connection between the 5G network and the COVID-19 virus appears only **twice** in *Kurir* and *Srpski Telegraf*. These topics were reported with an exclusively negative connotation. The Chinese vaccine appeared on the front pages only **3** times, in *Politika*. The headlines referring to the fact that "China helped Serbia more than the EU" were found twice, in *Blic* and *Informer*.

If we take into account the fact that the largest number of headlines about China is occupied by news about Chinese aid during pandemics, and that EU aid during pandemics was never found as the main topic on the front page, but only **7** times as a sideline, it is not surprising that more students believe that China's help was more crucial in the fight against COVID-19 than the EU's.



Conclusion

While the West was described very negatively as a "determinant", and much more neutral headlines dominated for individual headlines about the US and the EU, over **62%** of the total number of news items had a positive connotation regarding Russia and China. However, the surveyed students, through focus groups, least want Serbia's foreign policy to focus exclusively on good relations with Russia and China. There is a much higher percentage of those students who think that Serbia should turn to the West (United States of America and the European Union), which should not be surprising considering that **62.5%** of students support Serbia's European integration. Also, of all the major powers, the EU has the relatively highest percentage of support in mediating the dialogue between Belgrade and Priština. This topic was mostly written about in the daily press during 2020 in a neutral connotation - as much as **65.5%**.

As far as the newspapers themselves are concerned, it is noticeable that we find the convincingly largest percentage of fake news and headlines with a distinctly negative connotation about the West, NATO, the USA and the EU in *Večernje novosti*. As for Russia and China, *Večernje novosti* and *Politika* reported on them the most, with a very positive connotation. Considering the prevalence of conspiracy theories related to the origin and spread of the COVID-19 virus, especially when it comes to the West, and that such headlines make up only **0.5%** of **2,673** front pages, it can be concluded that most of it was written on internet portals. and through social media.

The report on the results of research on the attitudes of the students of the Faculty of Political Sciences



This research was conducted in the period from **5 to 13 December 2020** on a sample of **80** students, where **40** were females and **40** were males. Out of the total number of respondents, **25%** attend master's studies, **18.7%** are graduates or in the extended year of study, **17.4%** are third-year students, **16.3%** are second-year students, **12.5%** are fourth-year students, **8, 8%** are students enrolled in doctoral studies, while **1.3%** are the first-year students. Regarding the geographical representation of respondents, **50%** of them come from the City of Belgrade, while **16.3%** of students come from Šumadija and Western Serbia, **11.3%** from southern Serbia, **8.8%** from Vojvodina, **6.3%** from Bosnia and Herzegovina, **3.8%** from Montenegro, **2.5%** from Kosovo and Metohija and **1%** from Eastern Serbia.

In this questionnaire, there were 36 statements to which the students were offered one of the following answers: I do not agree at all; I do not agree; neither agree nor do not agree; I agree and I agree completely

1. The majority of respondents do not have a clear position on the statement that **Serbia has good relations with the United States - 48.8%**, while **26.2%** do not agree with this statement and **5%** of them do not agree at all. While **18.7%** of respondents agree with this statement only **1.3%** completely agree

Regarding the level of studies, it is noticeable that the majority of respondents who do not agree with the statement that Serbia has good relations with the United States are attending the second year of study. With higher level of studies, the percentage of students who agree with the statement also goes higher, as well as of students who do not have a clear position on the issue, while the percentage of undecided is extremely high among the master's students.

2. For the claim that the **International reputation of Serbia has improved** in the previous 5 years, the largest number of students give a negative answer - **42.5%** of

them do not agree with that statement, while **12.4%** do not agree at all. Only **1.3%** of students fully agree with the statement, while **18.8%** of them agree and **25%** give the answer "neither agree nor do not agree".

3. As to the statement that the **Great Powers have their exponents in every Government of the Republic of Serbia**, the students respond as follows: **75%** of them agree with it, where **50%** agree and **25%** completely agree. While **15%** of respondents do not have a clear position on this issue, **1.3%** do not agree at all, and **8.7%** do not agree.

4. There are **66.2%** of respondents who believe that **Serbia should further modernize its weapons and military equipment**, out of which **42.5%** agree with this statement, while **23.7%** of students completely agree. There are **20%** of students who do not agree with this, while **1.3%** do not agree at all. The other **12.5%** have no opinion on this issue.

5. The majority of respondents believe that **Military service in Serbia should be mandatory**. There are **30%** of students who completely agree, while **27.5%** agree, **16.3%** do not agree with this at all, **13.7%** do not agree and **12.5%** of them do not have a clear position.

It is noticeable that an equally high percentage of those who fully agree with this statement attend the second year of study, i.e., master's studies, while the highest percentage of those who do not agree at all attend the third year of study.

6. There are **48.8%** of respondents who have no opinion on the statement that **Serbia has good relations with the EU**; **25%** of them do not agree with that, while **3.7%** do not agree at all. The other **22.5%** agree that Serbia has good relations with the EU.

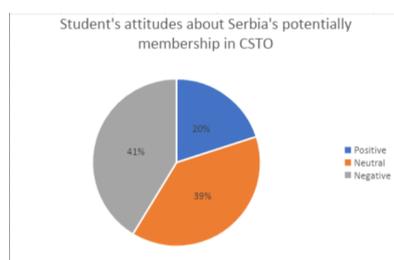
7. Regarding the statement that the **Serbian Orthodox Church is the biggest opponent of the government when it comes to resolving the status of Kosovo and Metohija**, **55.1%** of respondents give a negative answer. There are **33.8%** of students who do not agree, while **21.3%** do not agree at all and **23.7%** of students do not have a clear position on this issue. The answer "I agree" was given by **12.5%** of students, while **8.8%** of them completely agree.

In the second year of study, respondents who agree with this statement dominate, while with the higher level of studies there is a growing number of students who do not agree. Among the respondents who have the status of a graduate, the most dominant are those who do not have a clear attitude. There are no students who are doing master's studies to agree with this statement, and the most convincing are those who believe that the Serbian Orthodox Church is not the biggest opponent of the government when it

comes to resolving the status of Kosovo and Metohija. Among the respondents who come from Belgrade, there is undoubtedly the largest percentage of those who do not agree with this statement.

8. There are **23.8%** of students who do not agree with the statement that **Serbia should become a member of the CSTO**, while **17.5%** do not agree at all, which makes a total of **41.3%** of students who do not agree with that, while a large number of students, **38.7%** of them do not have an opinion on this issue - The other **20%** agree that Serbia should become a member of the CSTO.

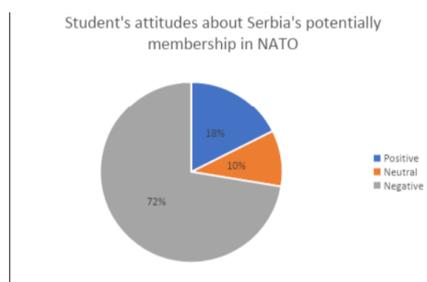
Respondents from Southern Serbia do not agree with this statement, while a few do not have a clear position. In Vojvodina, the most numerous are those who do not have a clear position, followed by those who agree. Among students who come from Belgrade, the most dominant are those who do not agree with that, but there is a very high percentage of those who do not have a clear position. It should not be overlooked that **25%** of respondents from Belgrade agree with the statement that Serbia should become a member of the CSTO. The second-year students agree with this statement. In the third year, those who do not have a clear position are the most represented. As the level of studies increases, so does the percentage of respondents who do not have a clear position or do not agree with that statement at all, while in doctoral studies there are no those who agree.



9. The largest number of respondents believe that the **Great Powers have their exponents in the relevant opposition parties / movements**. There are **45%** of them who agree with this statement and **17.5%** of them who completely agree, **27.5%** has no clear position, while **8.7%** do not agree and **1.3%** do not agree at all.

10. The largest number of respondents give a negative answer to the claim that **Serbia should become a member of NATO** - a total of **72.4%** of respondents, of whom **33.7%** do not agree, while **38.7%** do not agree at all. A total of **17.6%** give a positive answer where **11.3%** agree, **6.3%** agree completely while **10%** of respondents do not have a clear position on Serbia's membership in NATO.

In the group of the second-year students, there are no undecided respondents or those who agree with the claim that Serbia should become a member of NATO. In the group of doctoral studies students, an equal percentage of those who agree and those who do not agree is noticeable, while other groups of students, those who do not agree at all are the most dominant. Among graduates, there are several respondents who completely agree with the statement. In Vojvodina and in the South of Serbia, no one agrees with this statement.



11. The majority agrees with the statement that **Serbia should remain militarily neutral** - **43.7%** of them agree and **18.8%** completely agree. There are **15%** of respondents who do not have a clear attitude, **13.7%** do not agree, while **8.8%** do not agree at all.

12. There are **60%** of respondents who do not have an opinion on the statement that **Emanuel Macron is a friend of Serbia**. There are also **23.7%** of the students who do not agree, **5%** who do not agree at all and **11.3%** of students who agree.

13. The majority of respondents, that is, **65%** of them, do not agree with the statement that **Serbia should base its foreign policy exclusively on good relations with the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China**. Of these, **47.5%** do not agree and **17.5%** do not agree at all. There is also **22.5%** of respondents who do not have a clear attitude, while **7.5%** of students agree and **5%** agree completely.

It is noticeable that among the respondents who are doing master's and doctoral studies, no one agrees with this statement as well as among those who come from Vojvodina. In Belgrade, so as in Šumadija and Western Serbia, a certain percentage of undecided respondents is noticeable, but the most dominant attitude is that Serbia should not base its foreign policy exclusively on good relations with the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China

14. The largest number of respondents believe that **Serbia has good relations with the People's Republic of China** - **61.2%** of them agree, while **8.7%** completely agree. There is no whom **33.7%** do not agree, while **38.7%** do not agree at all. A total of **17.6%** give a positive answer where **11.3%** agree, **6.3%** agree completely while **10%** of respondents do not have a clear position on Serbia's membership in NATO.

15. As to the statement that the **Serbian Orthodox Church was under the direct influence of the authorities in Serbia**, the majority of students respond affirmatively. Of these, **37.5%** agree, while **17.5%** agree completely. There is **20%** of respondents who do not have a clear

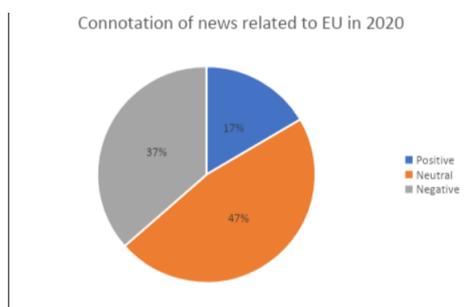
position on this issue, **21.2%** do not agree, while **3.8%** do not agree at all.

16. The largest number of respondents give a negative answer to the statement that **Serbia should impose sanctions on the Russian Federation**. Of these, **48.7%** do not agree with the statement, while **37.4%** do not agree at all and **8.8%** of respondents do not have an opinion on this issue. There is **5.1%** of students who agree with this statement, and it is interesting that everyone comes from Belgrade. Everyone else is strongly against imposing sanctions or undecided.

17. Most students believe that the **Serbian Orthodox Church has a great influence on politics in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina** - **51.2%** of respondents agree, while **25%** of them completely agree, **18.7%** of them do not have an attitude while **3.8%** do not agree and **1.3%** of respondents do not agree at all.

18. Most students believe that **Serbia should continue on the path of European integration to full membership in the European Union**. Of these, **38.7%** completely agree, while **23.8%** agree, **17.5%** do not have a clear position, **15%** do not agree and **5%** of respondents do not agree at all.

It is noticeable that the respondents from the second year of study are strongly against Serbia's membership in the EU, but there is also a high percentage of undecided people. At other levels of study, the most dominant responses by far are those that agree with this statement. In Vojvodina, Šumadija and Western Serbia, the South of Serbia, and especially in Belgrade, the respondents who fully agree with the European integration of Serbia dominate.



19. There is **51%** of the surveyed students who do not have a clear answer to the statement that **Vladimir Putin is a friend of Serbia**. Among them, **26.3%** agree, **5%** completely agree, **16.4%** do not agree, while **1.3%** do not agree at all.

The second-year students believe that Vladimir Putin is a friend of Serbia, while among graduates, master's and doctoral students, there is the largest percentage of those who do not have a clear position on this issue.

20. The majority of students do not agree with the statement that the **Negotiations**

on the Status of Kosovo and Metohija should be led by the European Union.

This means that **37.5%** of them do not agree, **26.2%** do not agree at all, **10%** of students do not have a clear attitude, **20%** agree, while **6.3%** of respondents completely agree.

21. The majority of students do not agree with the statement that the **Negotiations on the status of Kosovo and Metohija should be led by the United States of America**. Namely, **52.5%** of them do not agree, while **35%** do not agree at all and **8.8%** of students do not have a clear attitude. There is **3.7%** of students, coming mainly from Belgrade and Šumadija and Western Serbia who agree.

22. Most respondents believe that **The biggest security threat in the region is endemic corruption** - **50%** of respondents agree with this statement, **21.2%** completely agree, while **16.3%** do not have an attitude and **12.5%** of students do not agree.

23. The majority of students do not agree with the statement that the **Negotiations on the status of Kosovo and Metohija should be led by the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China**. That is, **55%** of them do not agree, **13.7%** do not agree at all, **17.5%** of students do not have a clear attitude, while **10%** agree and **3.8%** of them completely agree.

24. The answers to the statement that the **European Union assistance to Serbia was of crucial importance in the fight against COVID-19** shows the following results **41.2%** of students do not have the opinion, **25%** agree, **7.5%** completely agree while **18.8%** of respondents do not agree, while **7.5%** do not agree at all.

25. Most students believe that **Serbia has good relations with the Russian Federation** - **57.4%** of students agree, while **6.3%** agree completely, **30%** of respondents do not have an opinion and **6.3%** do not agree..

26. The majority of respondents do not have an opinion on the statement that **Angela Merkel is a friend of Serbia** - **53.7%** of them. The rest of **23.7%** do not agree, **12.5%** do not agree at all, **8.8%** agree, and only **1.3%** agree completely.

27. The majority of respondents do not agree with the statement that **Serbia should base its foreign policy exclusively on good relations with the United States and the European Union**. The results are as follows: **26.3%** of respondents do not agree, **13.8%** do not agree at all, **21.2%** of respondents do not have a clear position, while **25%** of students agree and **13.7%** of them completely agree.

It is noticeable that among the second-year students the respondents who do not agree with this statement at all prevail. In the third and fourth year, the largest percentage of those who agree with that statement is convincing, while among graduates and students in master's studies, those who do not agree prevail again. Among the respondents who come from Belgrade, the percentage of those who agree and those who do not agree is

equal. Students from Vojvodina do not agree with this statement. In the region of Šumadija and Western Serbia, those who agree are the most dominant, while in the South of Serbia, the largest percentage is undecided.

28. Most respondents do not agree with the statement that **The biggest security threat in the region is Islamic extremism in Sandžak and Bosnia and Herzegovina**. There is **45%** of students who do not agree, **10%** do not agree at all, while **25%** of respondents do not have an opinion, **17.5%** agree, and **2.5%** completely agree.

29. The majority of respondents agree with the statement that **The biggest security threat in the region is the unresolved status of Kosovo and Metohija**. There is **48.7%** of students who agree, while **21.3%** agree completely, **17.5%** has no attitude and **12.5%** of students do not agree.

30. Most students do not agree with the statement that **Serbia is in a real security threat because it is surrounded by NATO members**. There is **42.5%** of respondents who do not agree, while **12.5%** do not agree at all, **20%** of respondents do not have an opinion and **20%** of them agree with the mentioned statement. Only **5%** of students completely agree with this statement

It is noticeable that the second-year students believe that Serbia is in a real security threat because it is surrounded by NATO members. With the higher study level, there is a convincing growth in the percentage of respondents who do not agree, and in master studies, there is a very high percentage of those who are undecided.

31. Most respondents do not agree with the statement that **Joe Biden is a friend of Serbia**. This means that **35%** do not agree, while **36.3%** do not agree at all, **25%** has no attitude and **3.7%** agree.

32. The largest number of respondents believe that the **assistance of the People's Republic of China to Serbia was of crucial importance in the fight against COVID-19**. There is **37.7%** of students who agree and **5%** agree completely. A large number of students, i.e., **23.3%** of them do not have a clear position on this issue, **28.2%** do not agree, while **5.8%** do not agree at all.

Among the respondents who come from Belgrade, the percentage of those who do not agree with this statement is very low. They mostly agree, but there is also a high percentage of undecided respondents. However, respondents coming from Šumadija and Western Serbia are largely undecided or do not agree with the statement that Chinese assistance has been crucial in the fight against COVID-19.

33. The majority of respondents agree with the statement that **Albanians from**

Kosovo and Metohija should have their representatives in the Government of the Republic of Serbia, should Kosovo and Metohija be fully reintegrated into the political system of the Republic of Serbia. There is **38.7%** of students who agree, while **25%** of them completely agree, **12.5%** of respondents do not have an opinion, and **12.5%** do not agree with this statement. A total of **11.3%** of students do not agree at all with the given statement.

34. Most respondents believe that **relations between Serbia and Montenegro have deteriorated since Montenegro became a member of NATO.** There, **45%** agree with this statement, **6.3%** of students completely agree, **30%** do not have an opinion, **15%** do not agree and **3.7%** of respondents do not agree with the statement at all.

35. Most of the respondents do not have a clear position regarding the claim that **Xi Ji Ping is a friend of Serbia**, which represents a total of **48.7%**, while **23.8%** of students agree, **5%** of them completely agree, **15%** do not agree and **7.5%** do not agree at all.

36. Most respondents believe that **Serbia has an obligation to take care of Serbs in the region** - **40%** of them agree, while **46.3%** completely agree. There is **11.2%** who do not have a clear position and **2.5%** do not agree.

If we compare the attitudes of the respondents regarding which foreign policy partners Serbia should rely on, **we come to the conclusion that a much higher percentage of students believe that Serbia should turn to the West (United States of America and the European Union)**, while, on the other hand, **a very high percentage of those who do not agree or do not agree at all with the fact that Serbia should base its foreign policy exclusively on good relations with the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China.**

Although there is no doubt that **62.6%** of respondents say they support the **path of European integration of Serbia**, it is interesting that **86.3%** of them believe that Serbia should **not impose sanctions on the Russian Federation.**

If we compare the attitudes of students regarding the issue of assistance to Serbia during the COVID-19 pandemic, we come to **contradictory conclusions.** Namely, **40%** of respondents explicitly agree with the statement that the **assistance of the People's Republic of China was of crucial importance**, while the percentage in the case of **assistance coming from the European Union is 32.5%.** On the other hand, a much larger number of respondents **do not agree with the statement that China's assistance was crucial** - **39.8%** of them, while the percentage in the **EU case is much lower - 26.3%.**