RESILIENCE:
For Media Free of Hate and Disinformation

HATE SPEECH, PROPAGANDA AND DISINFORMATION IN ALBANIAN MEDIA

Ilda Londo

ALBANIA

RESILIENCE : For Media Free of Hate and Disinformation

The regional project 'RESILIENCE: Civil society action to reaffirm media freedom and counter disinformation and hateful propaganda in the Western Balkans and Turkey' is implemented with the support of the European Union by partner organizations SEENPM, the Albanian Media Institute, Mediacentar Sarajevo, Kosovo 2.0, the Montenegro Media Institute, the Macedonian Institute for Media, the Novi Sad School of Journalism, the Peace Institute and Bianet.

Info: https://seenpm.org/
Contact: admin@seenpm.org

HATE SPEECH, PROPAGANDA AND DISINFORMATION IN ALBANIAN MEDIA

ALBANIA

Author: Ilda Londo

Editor, regional lead researcher: Brankica Petković

Language editor: Fiona Thompson

Design: Špela Kranjec for Filip Kranjec s.p., Ljubljana, Slovenia

Publishers: SEENPM, Tirana, Peace Institute, Ljubljana and Albanian Media Institute, Tirana

Ljubljana, September 2020

CONTENTS

HATE SPEECH, PROPAGANDA AND DISINFORMATION IN ALBANIAN MEDIA

Ilda Londo

1. INTRODUCTION

The public debate in Albania is increasingly divisive, especially among political parties and individual politicians. The heavy influence of political discourse also further polarizes other areas of life in Albania. The media is certainly not immune to this trend. In fact, since it is one of the main tools of communication and shaping of the public debate, it can also be considered partly responsible, though not necessarily of its own will, for this climate of division and discord. In the 30 years following the change of the political regime, the Albanian media has made significant achievements, but it also suffers drawbacks due to a variety of factors. The lack of transparency in ownership and especially funding patterns, the unclear economic mechanisms that lead to a fragmented and chaotic market, and the failure of a section of the media to improve professionally are only a part of the challenges the media faces in the country. In this context, media are increasingly working with smaller newsrooms, with the staff facing heavier workloads, and with increasing pressure for economic gains. The advent and development of online media has been a significant factor contributing to this economic pressure, leading to a race for faster news, while quality often comes in second.

In this context, the purpose of this paper is to highlight the main models and elements that media in Albania manifest regarding hate speech, propaganda and disinformation. The research focuses mainly on online media, as they are identified as the main carriers of disinformation and hate speech, with a few exceptions, but traditional media are also present. The analysis is based on previous research studies, interviews with experts, and public statements and case studies, but mostly on the direct monitoring of models that are identified as manifesting problematic elements in the framework of this research. The content monitoring was carried out in the period June–August 2020, and focused on several media outlets and social media networks, mainly on particular narratives and case studies. The paper does not intend in any way to single out particular media, programmes or individuals, but rather to provide an overview of the main tendencies regarding hate speech, propaganda and disinformation in Albanian media, and also identify ways of countering these narratives.

4

2. MEDIA LANDSCAPE TRENDS

The media landscape in Albania is quite dynamic in terms of the number of media outlets. Currently, there are 15 daily newspapers, including sports newspapers, even though the population is under three million and the press is not distributed across the whole country. The situation with audiovisual media is also quite significant in numbers: there are five licences issued for national digital platforms and 45 local television stations, and the public broadcaster, which currently operates 12 channels through its digital platform, including two regional television centres[1]. Regarding radio broadcasting, there are two national radio stations, 53 local ones, and four community radio stations. In addition, there is public radio, which operates six radio stations as well as four regional radio centres.[2]

The landscape of online media is much more chaotic, and in the absence of official statistics or ways of documenting online media, the size of this part of the landscape remains prone to speculation. According to estimates by the Union of Albanian Journalists, there are supposed to be more than 800 online media operating in the country[3]. The explosion of online media is also facilitated by the relatively low operational costs compared to other media, and by the spread of the internet across the country. According to the official regulator on electronic communications, at the end of 2019, the internet penetration rate was 75%[4]. The presence of Albanians on social networks, especially Facebook, is also significant, with an estimated 1.4 million accounts on Facebook, or a penetration rate of almost 49% at the end of January 2020[5].

The landscape of online media is much more chaotic, and in the absence of official statistics or ways of documenting online media, the size of this part of the landscape remains prone to speculation.

The sources of financial support for this relatively sizable number of media across all genres in Albania do not seem numerous or substantial, even though transparency on the media economy has been scarce, especially for online media. According to the data presented by the economic magazine Monitor, the estimate for the country's advertising market ranges from 37–40 million euros in recent years, with a gloomy forecast for 2020 in view of the expenses that advertisers will probably cut to cover losses[6]. The lion's share of this market goes to television stations, with about 70% of the market, and more specifically, to the two national television stations, which account for 11 million of the roughly 30 million euros that goes to all television stations[7]. Radio seems to be stable in its advertising revenue,

---

1   *Audiovisual Media Authority, List of TV Stations, http://ama.gov.al/subjekte-audiovizive/*

2   *Audiovisual Media Authority, List of radio stations, http://ama.gov.al/subjekte-audio/*

3   *Interview with Aleksander Cipa, chairman of the Union of Albanian Journalists, 25 May 2020.*

4   *Internet World Stats, https://www.internetworldstats.com/europa2.htm#al*

5   *Ibid.*

6   *Monitor magazine, "Tregu i reklamave në ngërç, furnizonte mediat me rreth 40 milionë euro në vit,"*
[Advertising market stuck, it provided about 40 million Euro per year to the media], 28 March 2020, https://www.monitor.al/tregu-i-reklamave-ne-ngerc-furnizonte-mediat-me-40-milione-euro-ne-vit/

7   *Ibid.*

with almost 1 million euros of advertising revenue. Print media's advertising revenue has plummeted and brings in no more than 1.5 million euros, while online media has continuously increased its share of the market, although with a tendency to stagnate currently, amounting to 2.5 million euros in the last report[8]. However, all of these data include a laborious process mainly undertaken by Monitor magazine, in cooperation with advertising agencies, and verifying the data from the annual balances of the media outlets, while an official audit or statistics on the real situation of the advertising market for the media, or media finances in general, are lacking. In this context, given the lack of transparent and reliable data, the questions on the likelihood of a large number of media surviving in this market still do not have a plausible or definitive answer.

8   Ibid.

3.   HATE SPEECH NARRATIVES IN THE ALBANIAN MEDIA

There is an inherent difficulty in monitoring hate speech trends in the media, due to the challenge of defining hate speech in the first place. In fact, there are not many monitoring reports on this topic. Those that exist are mainly carried out by organizations or activists of minorities, as they feel more threatened and prejudiced in the media. That is particularly the case for LGBTI organizations or organizations that focus on minority rights. For example, representatives of Roma and Egyptian minorities complain of the media nurturing the existing clichés and prejudices against these minorities, leading to negative coverage[9]. In addition, activists indicate that there is sensationalism or discriminatory discourse from public figures vis-à-vis the LGBTI community or individuals[10]. However, even from these organizations, monitoring is sporadic and often limited to a few media, which leads to a general lack of data in this regard.

Earlier surveys and monitoring from the Albanian Media Institute have indicated two main trends related to hate speech in the media. First, the primary source of hate speech in the media seems to come from politicians, especially their direct quotes[11]. The findings from the monitoring of print media by LGBTI organizations, which claimed that 60% of articles containing hate speech elements came from the politics section of the newspapers[12], confirms this. Another survey carried out among television journalists also led to the Institute's conclusion that 56% of the hate speech discourse in television comes mainly from prime time political and current affairs television debates.

User-generated content is a rich source of hate speech, producing inflammatory comments, insults and derogatory speech against all possible groups, peoples or individuals.

Second, "user-generated content is a rich source of hate speech, producing inflammatory comments, insults and derogatory speech against all possible groups, peoples or individuals" and the source of this content is found almost exclusively in online media.[13] In fact, most online media outlets allow the public to comment and very often do not filter or moderate the comments, leading to the comments section being a battlefield of insults and offences. However, while online media seem most prone to hate speech, this phenomenon is certainly not limited only to online media. A survey of 50 journalists and editors from the country's leading television stations country revealed that half of them believe that there is an increasing trend of hate-speech-related content in television.[14] Furthermore, 67% of them said that in their media outlets, little or no attention is paid to hate speech.[15]

---

9   M. Gremi, "Grupet e margjinalizuara ne syte e medias shqiptare," Historia ime, 2018, https://ahc.org.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/MEDIA-PARA-PASQYR%C3%8BS_01.06.2018_Tip-1.pdf

10   Ibid.

11   UNESCO, "Hate speech in online media: Albania."

12   E. Kaziaj, "Monitorimi i Gjuhës së Urrejtjes dhe Gjuhës Diskriminuese në Median Online," Historia ime, 2017.

13   UNESCO, "Hate speech in online media: Albania."

14   L. Axhami, "Gjuha e urrejtjes dhe profesionalizmi i gazetareve," in AMA, "Gjuha e urrejtjes ne mediat audiovizive," 2018.

15   Ibid.

4.   MAIN TRENDS FACILITATING HATE SPEECH NARRATIVES IN THE MEDIA

There are several factors or typical elements that are common to the media outlets that engage in or facilitate hate speech directed at various groups or propaganda that benefits particular actors. In this instance, though, rather than narrowing matters down to hate speech, it would be more correct to speak more broadly of unethical coverage, including hate speech.

First of all, one of the factors that are more often connected to the practising of hate speech by media outlets is the degree of transparency of the newsroom and ownership of said media or lack thereof. The media that fall squarely into the category with a remarkable lack of transparency are online media. While print and audiovisual media have to be registered as businesses, and audiovisual media also have other detailed obligations in their licence conditions, the case of online media is quite the opposite. "Most online media do not publish their address, information on their staff, or any other identifying information."[16] Unless seeking domains ending in ".al", online media do not even have an obligation to register. Even in cases when they want to have a domain with this ending, there are no particular obligations other than registering with the hosting service.

> The media that fall squarely into the category with a remarkable lack of transparency are online media.

In this respect, navigating through the landscape of online media is no easy task; while most of the well-known journalists who migrated to online media do make their ownership or involvement in newsroom known, the overwhelming majority of online media lacks contact information of any kind, and it is even harder to find information on their newsroom staff. An initiative of the Albanian Media Institute to map the online media landscape in 2018 highlighted this problem, concluding that "the endeavour to identify all media outlets in the country is an impossible job at the moment and that even identification of the people behind the portals is a complicated task."[17] This survey of online media was conducted by contacting news portals and asking them to fill in a simple form, and a number of them refused to provide any data[18], which shows a lack of willingness to be more transparent in this field. Of the 121 online media that participated in the survey, 12% declared that they were not registered in any form[19]. Having in mind that the survey included only a portion of available news portals, which could number more than 800[20], it would be safe to conclude that there is a severe lack of transparency and significant anonymity in online media, which can be favourable conditions for engaging in practices that fall into disinformation, hate speech and propaganda models.

---

16   *IREX, "Media Sustainability Index 2019: Albania," https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/pdf/media-sustainability-index-europe-eurasia-2019-albania.pdf*

17   *AMI, "Mapping online media in Albania: Survey on online media," 2018.*

18   *Ibid.*

19   *Ibid.*

20   *According to the Union of Albanian Journalists, more than 800 online media are operating in Albania.*

8

Along the same lines, and closely tied to the lack of obligation to register, there is also the absence of transparency of funding of online media. Consequently, the fulfilment of other requirements which would be expected in the functioning of media enterprises, such as declaring their revenues, their sources of income, the list of employees and payment of social contributions, paying taxes, etc., are also not easily identifiable with the current landscape of online media. In this respect, it can be said that the landscape of online media seems to be in a phase of total anarchy.

However, this information does not necessarily mean that the traditional media is totally transparent in its funding sources and revenue, as well as the list of staff and the respective contributions paid. Quite the opposite, various research studies through the years have continuously documented the abnormalities in the media market from the economic point of view, as well as the possibilities to have a clear picture from the economic data provided. Nonetheless, traditional media registered with the National Business Center have to provide annual balances and respective documents, which are readily accessible online, along with their ownership status. Such transparency is not a requirement for online media unless they are registered as businesses. In this respect, even though there are constant doubts about the independence of the traditional media, the context allows for even greater speculation on funding sources and financing of online media. In the public debate, there have been constant allegations of news portals supported by particular politicians or political parties. Although it impossible to prove in this context, looking at the editorial content of some websites, it is clear that they support a particular politician or political party, or that they are particularly active in fighting against some other politician.

Another factor that affects the ethical level of media in general, although it is more pronounced for online media, is the anonymity of staff, coupled with the generally low investments in human resources in journalism. In most online media outlets, it is impossible to find any contact details or name of staff, while in some of them, only the editorials or opinion pieces are signed, while there is no sign of reporters. Furthermore, while there are shortages of staff across all media genres, this applies even more to online media, where, as a rule, the same content or article circulates over several media, only with slight changes. This leads to a situation where there is a large number of media, but the information that reaches the public is more or less the same, with slight tweaks. In the above-mentioned survey of online media, only 19 out of 121 media outlets said that staffing was sufficient, and 67% of the respondents said that if they could, they would increase the number of professional staff.[21]

Another factor that might facilitate the spread of hate speech in the media is related to the overall professional level and ethical awareness of journalists.

Apart from the general business model and the lack of transparency of media outlets, another factor that might facilitate the spread of hate speech in the media is related to the overall professional level and ethical

---

21   AMI, "Mapping online media in Albania: Survey on online media," 2018.

awareness of journalists. Various studies through the years have indicated that there is no fair, merit-based competition for appointing editors or hiring journalists, and that "there is a major trend towards a decline in the role of editors within the Albanian media and their exertion of weaker influence, as the media owners and other figures, mainly politicians, seem to become more assertive."[22] A proper and complete discussion on ethics, resulting in a serious self-regulatory process is yet to take place in the Albanian media, thereby affecting the chances for media self-regulation, even in those areas which are not necessarily sensitive to media owners.

Finally, the quick spread and explosion of social media in Albania, especially Facebook, has also facilitated the dissemination of hate speech narratives in some respects. What makes matters worse is that Albanian media tend to report on statements or posts of public figures made on Facebook, often without questioning or following up on them, and even inviting them to participate in television programmes. These opportunities double the audience for these persons, who might have particular agendas, such as anti-government, anti-Soros, anti-LGBT, or who might propagate conspiracy theories, while a fact check or proper verification of the information they spread is generally missing.

> The quick spread and explosion of social media in Albania, especially Facebook, has also facilitated the dissemination of hate speech narratives in some respects.

Hate speech in the media appears mainly in the coverage of the combative exchanges between political opponents, as well as in articles engaging in character assassination of critical journalists and media, or persons supporting a view or actor different from the one that the media in question supports. Another favourite target is George Soros, but only by particular individuals, usually but not exclusively linked to conspiracy theorists. The main opposition groups also mentioned Soros as a supporter and mentor of current Prime Minister Edi Rama and as an organization that meddles into and manipulates many aspects of life in Albania, in particular judicial reform. These narratives are covered in the respective media that are closer to these political parties and figures. Another less frequent type of content, but a strong one, is found in those articles where journalists attack their colleagues, not speaking of arguments, but by attacking their privacy, personal choices, looks, career moves in general, etc. Although this kind of narrative is not affected by gender, it often happens that female journalists are more easily prone to these attacks through their appearance or private life.

---

22   *SEENPM, "The Role of Editors in Albanian media," 2016.*

5. MECHANISMS AND RESPONSES TO HATE SPEECH IN THE MEDIA

Unfortunately, there is not any intense, regular, or organized effort against the spread of hate speech narratives in the media. Civil society initiatives include sporadic monitoring efforts on particular topics of media coverage, such as the LGBTI community and ethnic minorities. Efforts to raise awareness among the public and the media are also ongoing, but mainly in the form of public campaigns, and also sporadic training offered for journalists. There is only one fact-checking platform in the country, but its main focus is on verifying public statements from politicians and does not involve media monitoring.

In terms of regulation, Albanian legislation does regulate hate speech in a general manner. Although not specifically mentioning the term hate speech, the Constitution of Albania includes among its founding principles of the state the need to respect human rights and freedoms, religious co-existence and respect for minorities.[23]

Albanian legislation does regulate hate speech in a general manner.

More specifically, hate speech is regulated in the Penal Code, which means that it applies to all citizens, and it is not media-specific. Article 265 of the Penal Code states: "Incitement of hatred or conflicts between nationalities, races, and religions, as well as the preparation and dissemination of articles with such content, is punishable through a fine or up to ten years of imprisonment." In addition, Article 266 further details the prohibition of hate speech: "Endangering public order by calling for hate against parts of the population by insulting and or defaming them, or by demanding the use of violence or arbitrary actions against them, is punishable through a fine or up to five years of imprisonment." So far, there have been no public cases of use of these articles against the media.

Regarding media-specific regulation, the Law on Audiovisual Media lists among its principles that audiovisual media should comply with "the right to information, political and religious beliefs, personality, and dignity and with other human fundamental rights and freedoms."[24] In addition, broadcasts should also be guided by "non-allowance of broadcasts inciting intolerance among citizens," and "respect for good neighbourly relations among peoples," among others[25]. Furthermore, Article 32 states: "Audio and/or audiovisual media services must not contain any incitement to hatred based on race, sex, religion or nationality."[26] Also, Article 120 forbids the public broadcaster from engaging in political and religious propaganda, which, in theory, can also be a source of hate speech.

---

23   *Constitution of the Republic of Albania, Art. 3, 1998, amended in 2007, available at: http://www.osce.org/albania/41888*

24   *Law 97/2013, "On Audiovisual Media," Art. 4, available at: http://institutemedia.org/Documents/PDF/Law%20on%20Audiovisual%20Media.pdf*

25   *Ibid.*

26   *Ibid, Art. 32.*

11

The audiovisual media law provides for the establishment of a Council of Complaints at the Audiovisual Media Authority. The Council is in charge of handling complaints on content, specifically ethical ones, based on the Broadcasting Code, a bylaw detailing the main professional rules audiovisual media should abide by. The complaints received by the Council are mainly focused on privacy, treatment of minors in the media, and advertising, while there are no particular complaints regarding hate speech narratives or practices.[27]

Apart from the Council of Complaints of the audiovisual media regulator, citizens can also resort to the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, in charge of reacting to cases of discrimination of every kind, either following the complaints of interested actors or ex officio. There have been only limited cases of the Commissioner dealing with complaints about media regarding hate speech and discrimination: there were four such cases in 2019, four in 2018 and one in 2016[28]. Most of these complaints came from cultural minority activists and one from the LGBTI community, and only one inquiry was initiated by the Commissioner. The Commissioner regarded only two of these complaints as discriminatory, requesting a public apology from the media outlet in question. However, this is not always issued, as the Commissioner has no binding power.

Apart from audiovisual media regulation, there have been several attempts in recent years to pass regulation for online media, citing mainly the need to impose professional rules on the sector given the numerous complaints concerning its lack of ethics.

In addition to these mechanisms, there is also the Code of Ethics drafted by a group of experts in 2018, led by the Albanian Media Institute and the Albanian Media Council. The latter is an organization that aims to engage the media in the self-regulation process and improve professionalism in the media. The Code contains a specific provision warning journalists against hate speech, and also allows for the deletion or removal of hateful or abusive comments[29]. The Albanian Media Council created the Alliance for Ethical Media in early 2020, intending to start a self-regulation mechanism to take complaints from the public, with the participation of 19 media outlets[30]. However, it is too early to see the progress of such an initiative.

Apart from audiovisual media regulation, there have been several attempts in recent years to pass regulation for online media, citing mainly the need to impose professional rules on the sector given the numerous complaints concerning its lack of ethics[31]. After a controversial process, the parliament approved such a law at the end of 2019, amidst opposition from media organizations and human rights activists. The law was regarded as providing the regulator with quasi-judicial competences to sanction media outlets, suggesting that Albania already has sufficient laws to regulate cases in

---

27   Council of Complaints Bulletins, http://ama.gov.al/buletini/

28   Rulings of the Commissioner for Protection Against Discrimination, available at: https://www.kmd.al/vendime-te-komisionerit-2017/?lang=en

29   Code of Ethics of Journalists.

30   https://kshm.al/2020/02/12/krijohet-aleanca-per-media-etike/

31   AMI, "Online media regulation and self-regulation," 2016.

which media outlets violate the rights of others. In this context, there are precedents decided on in Albanian courts[32]. In response to this opposition and also criticism of the law by international organizations, the Council of Europe decided to seek the opinion of the Venice Commission on the law.[33] The final opinion, published in June 2020, stated that the amendments "are not ready for adoption in their current form. The law suffers from vagueness and would likely have a 'chilling effect' suppressing free discussion and political speech in the Albanian sector of the internet."[34] While the media organizations reiterated their call for the government to withdraw the law, Prime Minister Rama also appeared determined in a tweet to continue with the approval of the law. He announced that they would take on board the recommendations and guarantee the right of each man to be protected from defamation, as well as the obligation of each news portal to be identified as the subject of the law[35].

The law suffers from vagueness and would likely have a 'chilling effect' suppressing free discussion and political speech in the Albanian sector of the internet.

---

32   http://www.institutemedia.org/2020/01/11/international-and-albanian-media-freedom-organizations-strongly-criticize-the-two-draft-laws-on-online-media/

33   https://a2news.com/2020/01/22/paketa-antishpifje-kie-con-draftin-ne-venecia-ps-rrezon-presidentin/

34   https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2020)013-e

35   https://www.reporter.al/opinioni-final-i-venecias-rrezon-ligjin-e-qeverise-per-mediat-online/

13

6. EXAMPLES AND MODELS OF HATE SPEECH AND DISINFORMATION IN ALBANIA

In order to have a clearer picture of the main trends and models of hate speech, disinformation and propaganda in the Albanian media, the following section will try to describe and classify the kind of media that fall into this category and the content they disseminate. The media were selected after reviewing previous research, previous monitoring efforts, and public statements by human rights NGOs following the media, as well as interviews with experts. In addition, monitoring of the media was also a substantial part of the analysis, identifying hate narratives and examples of propaganda and disinformation. This list is by no means exhaustive, neither in terms of identifying media outlets, nor in terms of spotting models of functioning of this media; it aims instead to provide an introduction and overview of the main models that randomly appear in the media landscape regarding hate speech, disinformation and propaganda trends.

6.1. Influence and propaganda from other countries in the Albanian media

The phenomenon of influence from other countries on the Albanian media has not been strongly visible, at least compared to other countries in the region, mainly due to Albania's history and also various geopolitical interests. In 2018, a news article was published claiming that the Greek Government had established a secret fund that was used to pay Albanian associations, journalists, and media, to further Greek interests in Albania,[36] but this was later exposed as fake news, made up from a personal blog[37]. However, in recent years, it can be said that various online media exhibit increasing closeness and affiliation to other countries, mainly Turkey and Iran. While these are not necessarily influential or highly popular media, they do present hate narratives or publish propaganda content favouring foreign countries and denigrating their rivals or political opponents. Although by no means an exhaustive list, the following is a short description of some of the media that have been identified in this category.

Various online media exhibit increasing closeness and affiliation to other countries.

6.1.1. Gazeta Impakt

Gazeta Impakt is an online news portal covering general news. This media outlet lacks any impressum and is not retrievable in the database of the National Business Center, nor is there any information on staff, registration, contact details, or editorial policy. Almost all the articles are signed as Gazeta Impakt, apart from few republications of foreign journalists. What sets this

---

36   https://shqiptarja.com/video/greqia-miliona-per-portalet-dhe-gazetaret-shqiptare-tsipras-e-pranon-e-bejme-prej-vitesh

37   http://www.gazetadita.al/nje-person-i-njohur-si-komandat-cami-shperndau-lajmin-e-financimeve-greke-ne-shqiperi/

14

outlet apart from most other media outlets is especially its pro-Islamic and pro-Iranian stance. The main format is that of online posts and news, but Gazeta Impakt also has almost weekly video programmes. These are video statements mainly of historian Olsi Jazexhi, whose views are openly pro-Islamic.

Gazeta Impakt has a strong emphasis on exposing what it claims is Islamophobia in Albania, and in covering news from the Muslim population all over the world. They have a special section on their website called Islamophobia[38], where they report on Albanian or foreign personalities who express dissenting opinions on what they consider symbols of Islam. This section is rather descriptive, mainly publishing the statements, but the fact that all those quoted are labelled as Islamophobes reveals the stance of the newsroom.

Since 2016, part of the Iranian opposition movement the MEK has been permitted to build their camp and live in Albania. The MEK is a constant target of Gazeta Impakt, which treats it in line with the Iranian regime, as a terrorist group. Furthermore, their narrative often depicts the MEK as a dangerous group for Albania and the population near their camp. They have reported that the MEK will spread coronavirus in Albania[39], or that Albania might become a target of Iranian missiles due to the presence of MEK members[40]. Likewise, Gazeta Impakt also exposes and targets any public figures that become part of MEK activities.[41]

MEDIA OUTLET AND TYPE: GAZETA IMPAKT, ONLINE	
Table 1	
OWNERSHIP	N/A
FUNDING	N/A
MISSION AND EDITORIAL POLICY	Pro-Muslim, against Islamophobia, pro-Iranian
REACH	Facebook: 522 followers

---

38   https://gazetaimpakt.com/category/tetjera/islamofobi/

39   https://gazetaimpakt.com/koronavirusi-i-jep-mundesine-e-vetme-kryeministrit-shqiptar-edi-rama-per-te-kontrolluar-mek/ , https://gazetaimpakt.com/kulti-iranian-i-mek-ne-shqiperi-paraqet-rrezik-per-shendetin-publik/

40   https://gazetaimpakt.com/dritan-goxhaj-tregon-rrezikun-qe-mek-u-sjell-per-shqiperine/

41   https://gazetaimpakt.com/ja-se-kush-jane-politikanet-shqiptare-qe-mbeshteten-terrorizmin-e-mek-ut-kunder-iranit/

15

6.1.2. ePerditshmja.com

A similar news portal is eperditshmja.com [daily.com], which is influenced by and often reports on developments in Turkey. The impressum on the media outlet's web page contains a phone number and a general newsroom e-mail, but no information at all on the staff or the newsroom. The reports are not signed, while the editorials by are a mix of foreign and Albanian authors, including Turkish ones. The only description of the medium is the following: "ePerditshmja.com is an independent online newspaper which aims to establish a new trend in online media, adhering rigorously to the true principles of journalism and the highest values of Albanian society."[42]

Frequently, the website's lead articles come from Turkey, which is an unusual practice, as the news stories on the region or world are usually further down the page in Albanian media. For example, on 23 July 2020, among the ten top news stories that appear first on the page, three of them were related to the reopening of Hagia Sophia as a mosque and the reactions that followed[43], one to a consumer index in Turkey[44], Turkey's right and power to search for gas in the Mediterranean,[45] and how Turkey provided 29% of global humanitarian aid in 2019[46]. These are all news stories the primary source of which is the official Turkish news agency Anadolu Agency, and they all cast a favourable light on Turkey and tend to depict it as a powerful actor in the region and the world acting in its own legitimate right. Eperditshmja.com also often includes news from the same agency on Turkey's support or sponsorship of other Balkan countries, such as in North Macedonia, or even more generally, on aid Turkey has distributed regarding coronavirus, and statements of Erdogan and other Turkish government officials are frequently present, perhaps even more than statements of the Albanian Government.

MEDIA OUTLET AND TYPE: EPERDITSHMJA.COM/, ONLINE *Table 2*	
OWNERSHIP	N/A
FUNDING	N/A
MISSION AND EDITORIAL POLICY	Pro-Turkish, focusing on republications of Anadolu Agency and supporting Turkish policies
REACH	Facebook: 15,057 followers

42   https://eperditshmja.com/turqia-fuqine-e-saj-ne-ekuacionin-e-energjise-ne-mesdhe-e-merr-nga-e-drejta-nderkombetare/

43   https://eperditshmja.com/cdo-orvatje-per-ta-delegjitimuar-vendimin-e-turqise-mbi-ajasofjan-eshte-e-kote-dhe-e-paarsyeshme/ ; https://eperditshmja.com/kryetari-i-bfi-se-leter-kryeparlamentarit-te-turqise-per-xhamine-ajasofja-2/ ; https://eperditshmja.com/ajasofja-rihapet-si-xhami-pas-86-vitesh/

44   https://eperditshmja.com/turqi-bie-indeksi-i-besimit-te-konsumatorit-ne-muajin-korrik/

45   https://eperditshmja.com/turqia-fuqine-e-saj-ne-ekuacionin-e-energjise-ne-mesdhe-e-merr-nga-e-drejta-nderkombetare/

46   https://eperditshmja.com/ndihma-humanitare-boterore-e-turqise-perben-26-per-qind-ne-vitin-2019/

16

6.1.3. Frekuenca.net

Similarly to Eperditshmja.com, Frekuenca.net is significantly influenced by Turkish sources and pro-Erdogan and pro-Muslim propaganda. Their ownership status is not retrievable in the Albanian business register, but their contact e-mail is akmmediagroup, which is thought to be a Turkish company. They have also reported on the Turkish ambassador visiting this media outlet and meeting the administrator Semih Güler and editor Malik Hasa[47]. Their impressum provides information on their contact address, e-mail, and telephone, but not on the newsroom.

While the general news is not that different from other Albanian media, their analysis section shows marked pro-Turkish and pro-Muslim influence. For example, the editor recently has criticized those who expressed disappointment at the re-conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque, claiming that the debate is one-sided as no one mentions the mosques converted into churches over the years[48]. These pieces often present a sort of historical revisionism or the newsroom's perception of history, stating among other things that the "Ottoman army liberated"[49] countries and then turned the churches into mosques as a symbolic act and never forcefully, and considering the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque a return to its own identity. Some of these editorials are also re-published from eperditshmja.com.

This media outlet also often includes republications from Anadolu Agency, featuring news from Turkey, mainly with a positive narrative for the Turkish Government and other aspects of Turkish life. Frekuenca.net also often publishes negative coverage, mainly from Anadolu Agency, on the movement of Fetulah Gulen (FETO) and the successful fight of the Turkish Government against this movement's terrorist acts.[50]

MEDIA OUTLET AND TYPE: FREKUENCA.NET, ONLINE *Table 3*	
OWNERSHIP	N/A, but supposedly belongs to AKM Media Group
FUNDING	N/A, supposedly from the Turkish company or sources
MISSION AND EDITORIAL POLICY	Pro-Turkish and pro-Muslim
REACH	Facebook: 21,275 followers

---

47   *https://frekuenca.net/ambasadori-turk-m-ahmet-yoruk-viziton-ambientet-e-akm-media-group-foto/*
48   *https://frekuenca.net/xhamia-e-shen-sofise-nxori-lakuriq-mediat/*
49   *Ibid.*
50   *https://frekuenca.net/?s=gulen*

17

6.2. Conspiracy theories and disinformation in the Albanian media

The Albanian media is certainly not immune to conspiracy theories and plots, and in recent years there has been increasing space and attention devoted to local proponents of conspiracy theories, including in prime-time slots on important television stations. While topics related to conspiracies at the global level are pushed by ongoing developments, local conspiracies sometimes also tend to emerge from political debate or struggle in the country. In addition, the curious nature of conspiracies as promoting a truth that powerful people want to hide seems to attract many readers, also providing a motive for economic profit for online media. The country's lack of media literacy programmes and education promoting better knowledge and critical judgment of information also does not help in the overall understanding of this content by a good chunk of the country's population. News stories referring to conspiracies are published randomly across various media, and the following examples are only a few of these instances.

> There has been increasing space and attention devoted to local proponents of conspiracy theories, including in prime-time slots on important television stations.

6.2.1. "360 grade" weekly programme on Ora TV

The emergence of coronavirus gave a more prominent spot and media coverage to several conspiracy theorists, who were already present on Albanian media, even on national television and prime time. Currently, perhaps the most representative programme in this regard is the Ora TV's weekly show 360 grade, hosted by analyst Artur Zheji. In general a serious current affairs programme, the programme's topics in the last few months have shifted to a mix of conspiracies regarding the virus and nationalistic topics regarding the Albanian language and culture, and a more nationalistic stance on Albania's relations with neighbours and its overall geopolitical position in the region.

Regarding coverage of coronavirus, it is difficult to find a programme without the presence of conspiracy theories pushed by individuals who have engaged in promoting conspiracy theories for years, but also other people, even of scientific training or background, who do not believe in coronavirus or on the measures to contain and fight it. For example, one of the June programmes was titled "Coronavirus: Wars and dictatorships?"[51] based on claims made by analysts that the psychological effect of the virus would be such that would lead to a state of war and booming of dictatorships.

In addition to the discussion of conspiracies on coronavirus, the programme often also addresses topics that may be considered nationalist. Often focusing on aspects such as the Albanian language, Albanian hero Scanderbeg, or Albanian history in general, the persons invited to speak on these topics tend to highlight the ancient origin of the Albanian people and language, and

---

51   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFJq8pinVkc

the achievements in history, often casting a favourable light on Albanians, especially vis-à-vis their neighbours. For example, the July programme called "Is it worthy being Albanian?"[52] featured several speakers who analyzed several aspects of the Albanian language, history and literature, reinforcing the idea of Albanian being one of the most ancient languages in the region, and how it might be even more ancient than Greek, or the superiority of Albanian culture in various periods of history.

MEDIA OUTLET AND TYPE: ORA TV, "360 GRADE" PROGRAMME Table 4	
OWNERSHIP	Private media, Yldon group, owned by Ylli Ndroqi
FUNDING	Advertising
MISSION AND EDITORIAL POLICY	Originally a news channel, now transformed into a more generalist television channel, the channel's editorial policy has been neutral, tending to be closer to the opposition recently. The programme 360 grade tends to be critical of the government and also engages in nationalistic and sensationalistic topics, often related to conspiracies.
REACH	360 grade: Facebook: 16,247 followers, YouTube: views of specific programmes range from 23K to 267K, depending on episodes.

6.3.   Sensationalism and unconfirmed information in the Albanian media

In general, the Albanian media suffers a shortage of staff in newsrooms, often leading to the practice of publishing unconfirmed news, especially for online media. Furthermore, even in cases when the news is accurate, it is often presented in a sensationalist manner, in an effort to gain as many views or clicks as possible. In the economic battle for readership or audience, even what were considered more reliable and prestigious media outlets have not escaped the trend of using sensationalist headlines, or in general the practice of clickbait. Mentioning specific examples, in this case, would be difficult, as it is a widespread phenomenon and it would not be fair or realistic to single out particular media.

Even what were considered more reliable and prestigious media outlets have not escaped the trend of using sensationalist headlines, or in general the practice of clickbait.

However, a media outlet or platform that deserves more attention in this regard is Jeta osh qef [Life is fun.] This is a platform that started mainly as a User Generated Content platform publishing reports and information from the users. In their page information, they state that this is the "biggest platform of unique, entertaining and social news in the Albanian-speaking area"[53] and that the content comes from the page's users and the community.

52   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LeA6lnBCb6o
53   https://joqalbania.com/faqe/rreth-nesh.html

They state that "all your material is welcome, and we will determine if it is suitable to share with others or not."[54] They also claim to expose wrongdoing through notifications of the page's users in the introductory note: "Jetaoshqef. al functions as a regulator for your life, promoting positive phenomena and denouncing negative ones. We will get in touch with you, engage with you in the hope that time after time, we will be able to change your life." However, various events have cast doubts on whether there is such a verification or filtering process in the information they publish.

The content published on this website and Facebook page can be considered mainly sensationalist, of a light, entertaining nature. More recently, they have started to engage in what they claim to be the exposition of the wrongdoing of particular government officials or businesspeople, a role consisting mainly in monitoring the distribution of official tenders[55]. However, the practice of often relying on information, photos, or videos sent by users without verifying them can lead to the possibility of publishing unverified information, often sensational, and sometimes also tending to spread hate. For example, in June 2020, Jeta osh qef published an article[56] claiming that the increased presence of Syrian refugees in Tirana had made the city unsafe, noting several incidents. They also published a video that claimed that Syrian refugees had threatened some local boys, while the video shows that it is the Albanian boys that push the Syrian refugee, while they claim they took a knife from his hand. Similarly, based on citizens' reports, there has been a thread of anti-migrant narrative, while at the same time, correct news stories have also been published on this topic.

More prominently, though, the practices of Jeta osh Qef became particularly problematic in the aftermath of the deadly 26 November 2019 earthquake in Albania. A few days after the earthquake, the police pressed charges against the two administrators of the website, claiming they had published fake news and spread panic, and the webpage was blocked. The website had published earlier information sent by citizens that claimed that there was a large number of victims in the Tirana morgue[57], but this information was kept secret.

MEDIA OUTLET AND TYPE: JETA OSH QEF, NEWS WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE *Table 5*	
OWNERSHIP	N/A
FUNDING	Advertising
MISSION AND EDITORIAL POLICY	News website often relying on User Generated Content including light, entertaining information, but also articles claiming to expose corruption.
REACH	Facebook: 41,226 followers

54   *Ibid.*

55   *https://joq-albania.com/artikull/776489.html*

56   *https://joq-albania.com/artikull/745670.html*

57   *https://gazetamapo.al/policia-procedohen-administratoret-e-joq-perhapen-lajme-te-rreme/*

20

6.4.   Hate spread by users in Albanian media

Hate narratives generally are not present in the Albanian media, at least not in an active, repeated, and visible manner. A 2020 monitoring of the most popular online media by the Albanian Media Council concluded that "hate speech in general comes in a camouflaged way. In general, the provocative comments users leave below the article are its primary source, and not the content of the articles themselves."[58] This finding confirms the conclusions of previous monitoring efforts, too, indicating the comments in the online section as the primary source of hate speech in the media.

Not all online media choose to allow users to comment, but most of them do: a 2018 survey of online media revealed that 80% of the 220 online media that participated in the poll did allow users to comment below their articles and that 74% of them did moderate the comments[59]. However, when looking at the quality of the comments, it is generally difficult to see moderation of any kind.

Many online media manifest the problem of unethical comments, but perhaps the most exemplary case is that of Gazetatema.net, partly due to its popularity. It claims to be the most read online newspaper in the country, and the readers tend to flood the articles with comments, a problem that the publisher himself has recognized: "Tema is the most popular online media outlet in the country and the pressure of people who comment is unimaginable. In a 24-hour period, there are about 4,000 people that write to provide their comments and opinions. It is not physically possible to glance at them, let alone edit and moderate."[60] While in the context of the overall shortage of staff in the newsrooms editors do recognize that having someone to moderate comments is impossible, it is also true that the comments section in online media becomes a space for people to vent their anger, feelings, or even offend gratuitously, just for the sake of it. Offensive language is related mainly to personal life, sexual preferences and behaviour, ethnicity, and religious or political affiliation, becoming in this way an active channel for the dissemination of hate speech.

> Many online media manifest the problem of unethical comments.

The situation with derogatory comments by users of online portals and social media led then-MP Majlinda Bregu to propose a bill regulating online comments to the parliament in 2015, also encouraged by the Strasbourg court decision on Delfi vs Estonia[61]. After several discussions, in 2016, Majlinda Bregu clarified that she had withdrawn the amendment. However, the situation on this trend is a constant topic of discussion and proposals for regulation are continuous. Editors and journalists also recognize this concern, and some are also in favour of a law regulating this space that is

---

58   Albanian Media Council, "Ethical media violations in Albanian media," 2020.

59   AMI, "Mapping online media in Albania: Survey on online media," 2018.

60   Mero Baze, qtd. in https://al.ejo-online.eu/etika-dhe-cilesia/lufta-e-komenteve-ose-interneti-qe-flet-shqip

61   AMI, "Online media regulation and self-regulation," 2016.

wide open to hate speech. Furthermore, some media representatives claim that this situation is also intimidating to young journalists. "Young journalists are intimidated by derogatory comments and sometimes force themselves to self-censor, due to a fear of the lynching that takes place online. Media should agree among themselves on the practice of moderating comments,"[62] the Dita newspaper editor said during a newsroom meeting on this topic.

6.5.   Hate speech and disinformation in social media

Hate speech and disinformation is readily available in social networks, due to their ease of access, lack of filtering or regulation, and the immense possibility for fast dissemination of the content. In this respect, anyone with a social media account can potentially become a vehicle for spreading hate speech or disinformation. In Albania, Facebook, which is especially popular, is also widely used by famous people with a large number of followers, such as political leaders, journalists, showbusiness celebrities, or even individuals who push different conspiracies in the public realm.

In the public debate, hate speech has continually been present in the statements or exchanges between politicians, mirroring the political fight in the country. These cases are often depicted as the main proponents of hate speech in the Albanian public sphere, but sometimes, hate speech is directed not only against one another but against other groups. For example, in May 2020, after the Tirana Municipality hung rainbow flags on the façade of its building to mark the International Day Against Homophobia, Flamur Noka, former Minister of Internal Affairs, published a Facebook status filled with offensive language against the municipality and the LGBTI community[63], which was condemned by human rights organizations, and this was by no means an isolated case.

Facebook has also been used to spread disinformation and fake news. Prime Minister Edi Rama distributed a video in spring 2020 to convince Albanians to respect lockdown rules, claiming that the police were being violent in Spain trying to enforce these measures[64], while it soon turned out the video was actually from Algeria and not related to coronavirus. Former Prime Minister Sali Berisha also is very active on Facebook, often publishing unverified information from what he refers to as Digital Citizen, or information coming directly from citizens. For example, in March 2020, he posted a video of doctors dancing in a hospital, claiming this to be how the health system was preparing for the pandemic[65]. It turned out that the video was filmed in Iran and not related to this at all.

Facebook has also been used to spread disinformation and fake news.

62   https://kshm.al/2020/03/02/takim-per-etiken-ne-redaksine-e-gazetes-dita/

63   https://euronews.al/al/sociale/2020/05/16/komuniteti-lgbti-ne-shqiperi-ndihemi-te-paperfaqesuar-nga-asnje-parti-politike?fbclid=IwAR1ym_FHuvaPcoBIWGmVxFWlhgE-6ujkJNCceiZvLKvoYZz0rWepA8SaIUs

64   https://shqiptarja.com/lajm/ne-radhe-si-ushtare-ose-me-vrap-e-pa-bere-dot-as-pazar-rama-poston-videon-cfare-u-ben-policia-njerezve-respektoni-distancen

65   https://www.newsbomb.al/berisha-u-tall-me-mjeket-e-infektivit-ne-tirane-komentuesit-e-nxjerrin-bllof-pamjet-video-jane-bere-ne-iran-198090

Another category of Facebook users spreading disinformation, propaganda or hate speech are public figures dealing with conspiracies, having a particular political agenda, or even being controversial on their positions. For example, Alfred Cako, who is not politically affiliated, but is heavily focused on conspiracies, ranging from Soros to the Illuminati and the White Brotherhood, uses his Facebook page[66] with more than 11,000 followers to express his opinions and comments on ongoing events, especially in the time of coronavirus, as he also organized a no-vaccine protest. However, he is also present on television.

However, the use of Facebook or social media for disinformation is not limited only to public figures. Following the earthquake of November 2019, the police arrested a citizen, Xhuliana Aliaj, in Durres, claiming she was spreading panic and false information by publishing a Facebook post calling for citizens in the area of the earthquake to evacuate for fear gas deposits might explode.[67] Similarly, after the first infections of coronavirus cases in Albania, a series of prank messages purporting to come from public health officials was circulated via WhatsApp and SMS, spreading false information and causing panic. The information was promptly denied, and citizens were advised to follow only official sources.

> Another category of Facebook users spreading disinformation, propaganda or hate speech are public figures dealing with conspiracies, having a particular political agenda, or even being controversial on their positions.

---

66   https://www.facebook.com/alfredcakoKA
67   https://www.ocnal.com/2019/11/25-year-old-xhuljana-aliaj-arrested.html

23

7. CONCLUSIONS

Models of hate speech or hate narratives are not obviously visible in Albanian media. Even though the media is rarely active in fighting hate speech in the country, it cannot be said that it is a source of hate speech or that it is actively promoting it. Politicians often push hate speech narratives, which the media publishes or reflects, provoking protest from some human rights organizations. This hate speech is mostly directed within the political sphere and towards personalities, as a reflection of the highly unethical public debate ongoing in the country for many years, but it can sometimes also affect other groups, based on ethnicity, sexual orientation, origin within the country, etc.

On the other hand, something online media are responsible for is the comments section on their websites, which often lack moderation of any kind. In most cases, these sections are an open invitation for readers to express all their hate, frustration, and opposition, not so much against the article, but the journalist, or even the persons the article is focused on. Seen as a highly problematic current trend of online media, this has been used as a justification for proposing legislation that has been considered as vague at best and restrictive at worst.

Contrary to hate speech narratives, which are rarely present, attempts to misinform and spread propaganda are a constant trend in the Albanian media. A very small category of existing online media is clearly under the influence of foreign countries. It engages in spreading their propaganda, putting their achievements and foreign policy in a very favourable light, or continually putting down their opponents, often engaging in the revision of history and referring to biased sources. This situation is also facilitated by the lack of requirement for online media to register and be transparent on their contacts, funding or policies.

While the furthering of foreign propaganda is confined to a limited number of media, the use of conspiracy theories and sensationalism to further media popularity, unfortunately, is not. Few online media outlets have escaped the trend of publishing conspiracy theories, which turned into a frenzy especially with the emergence of the coronavirus. Even television stations, which are supposed to have more filters and be more responsible about their content, have intensified this kind of coverage. Proponents of conspiracy theories are readily present in a few television stations in their main current affairs programmes, amplifying these theories and information, which leads to an increasingly greater influence on the public, especially given the lack of programmes or education on media literacy.

The degree of freedom in the online media does not correspond to an equal degree of professional responsibility on their part.

The degree of freedom in the online media does not correspond to an equal degree of professional responsibility on their part. In addition, even though television channels are more regulated and are under greater supervision from the regulatory authority, they also are far from engaging in professional self-inspection of their practices and self-regulating accordingly. It remains to be seen whether current self-regulation efforts in the country will impact the situation positively.

24

8.   POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

• The media should be more proactive in making transparent the data on their contacts, ownership, staff and funding. They should also offer an option for users to reach them for complaints and respect the principles of publishing corrections or confutations if necessary.

• Online media should seriously and responsibly address the issue of the moderation of their comments in such a way that it does not affect freedom of expression, yet respects the right to privacy and dignity.

• Both existing bodies within the regulator of audiovisual media and the self-regulation initiative the Albanian Media Council should be more proactive in monitoring violations, encouraging media to self-regulate and correct their mistakes, and also promote a greater sense of responsibility among the media for their flaws in coverage.

• Civil society organizations should be more vocal when encountering cases of hate speech in the media, calling for the correct coverage of the issues at stake and leading a public debate in this regard. Efforts should not be limited to identification of such narratives or cases, but also to offering their counter-narrative, such as debunking these cases through fact-checking platforms.

• Efforts for the improvement of media literacy efforts should be ongoing from all actors. Government should engage in the adoption of a strategy and clear policies on the adoption of media literacy as part of the curriculum in an appropriate form. Civil society actors should continue and intensify their efforts to raise awareness of critical thinking and media literacy in society. Public institutions and civil society should coordinate in this regard, possibly also engaging the media as a supporter of these initiatives and policies.

Literature and sources

Albanian Media Council (2020.) *Ethical media violations in Albanian media*. Tirana: Albanian Media Council (2020). Available at: https://kshm.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Studimi-Layout.pdf

Albanian Media Institute (2018.) *Mapping online media in Albania: Survey on online media.* Tirana: Albanian Media Institute (2018).

Albanian Media Institute (2016.) *Online media regulation and self-regulation*. Tirana: Albanian Media Institute (2016).

Axhami, L. (2018) *Gjuha e urrejtjes dhe profesionalizmi i gazetareve* in Audiovisual Media Authority (2018) *Gjuha e urrejtjes ne mediat audiovizive*, available at: http://ama.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/HATE-SPEECH-1.pdf

Gremi, M. (2018) Grupet e margjinalizuara në sytë e medias shqiptare, [pdf] qtd in Komiteti Shqiptar i Helsinkit (2018) Media para pasqyrës. Available at: https://ahc.org.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/MEDIA-PARA-PASQYR%C3%8BS_01.06.2018_Tip-1.pdf

IREX 2019, "Media Sustainability Index 2019: Albania", available at: https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/pdf/media-sustainability-index-europe-eurasia-2019-albania.pdf

Kaziaj, E. (2017) Monitorimi i gjuhës së urrejtjes dhe gjuhës diskriminuese në median online, [pdf], Tirana: Historia ime (2018), available at: https://www.historia-ime.com/te-drejtat-e-njeriut/raport-monitorimi-mbi-gjuhen-e-urrejtjes/

Londo, I. (2013), qtd. in Albanian Media Institute (2013) *Hate speech in online media in Southeast Europe*. Available at: http://www.seenpm.dit.rs/wp-content/uploads/Hate-speech-in-online-media-in-SEE.pdf

Londo, I. (2016) *Decline in role and influence of editors in Albania*. Peace Institute (2016): available at: https://mediaobservatory.net/sites/default/files/Decline%20in%20the%20Role%20and%20Influence%20of%20Editors_0.pdf

Monitor magazine, "Tregu i reklamave në ngërç, furnizonte mediat me rreth 40 milionë euro në vit," [Advertising market stuck, it provided about 40 million euros per year to the media], 28 March 2020, https://www.monitor.al/tregu-i-reklamave-ne-ngerc-furnizonte-mediat-me-40-milione-euro-ne-vit/

Audiovisual Media Authority. (2020). List of television Stations. http://ama.gov.al/subjekte-audiovizive/

Audiovisual Media Authority. (2020). List of radio stations. http://ama.gov.al/subjekte-audio/

Internet World Stats. (2020) Europe Statistics. https://www.internetworldstats.com/europa2.htm#al

LIST OF INTERVIEWS:

Aleksander Cipa, chairman of the Union of Albanian Journalists, 25 May 2020.

Lutfi Dervishi, media expert, 12 June 2020.

Valbona Sulce, media and diversity expert, 3 June 2020.

Arben Muka, programming director at AMA, 29 May 2020.

About the author

Ilda Londo holds a degree in Journalism/Political Sciences. She holds the position of Research Coordinator at the Albanian Media Institute. She is the author of several research works, focusing on media development issues, media ethics and professionalism, and analyzing media content.

27

RESILIENCE
For Media Free of Hate and Disinformation