



MEDIA ANALYSIS

OF THE REPRESENTATION
OF THE LGBTI COMMUNITY
IN THE SERBIAN MEDIA
DURING **2020.**

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Media analysis of the representation of the LGBTI community in the Serbian media during 2020

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Labris – Lesbian Human Rights Organization

Vojvode Milenka 7/12, Belgrade

www.labris.org.rs

[@labris.org.rs](https://www.instagram.com/labris.org.rs)

Authors:

Aleksandra Đorđević (printed media)

Anesa Omeragić (dital media)

Proofreading and editing:

Milena Beran

Layout and design:

Ljiljana Đajić

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INTRODUCTION

In Serbia, the visibility of the LGBTI community in the media has increased significantly in recent years. As the visibility of the LGBTI community has grown, so has the reporting of the problems facing this community. While in previous years (especially in the first decade of the 2000s) reporting mostly concerned the (non) holding of the Pride Parade, the media in Serbia in the previous year reported on various topics when it comes to the LGBTI community.

Serbia has been facing a problem in the area of media freedom for several years, for which it has been criticized year by year by independent institutions and the European Union.¹ The problem of media freedom is closely linked to the rule of law and democracy in a society. The situation caused by the corona virus pandemic has only worsened the already significantly weakened situation when it comes to these topics. Members of the LGBTI community, as a vulnerable group, also felt the effects of the pandemic significantly. Their position was further aggravated by the fact that they are often in an environment that does not accept them, and from which they could not "escape" during the pandemic. The poor state of LGBTI rights was also stated in the annual report of the State Department.²

This analysis aims to map news that mentions members of the LGBTI community and analyses how these topics have been presented to the Serbian public in the past year. LABRIS has done analyses of the media representation of the LGBTI community in the past. The last analysis was done for 2017³. Meanwhile, other organisations also produced analyses.⁴ Accordingly, LABRIS will use this analysis to answer the question of how and in what way LGBTI topics and its members were presented to the Serbian public in the previous year.

¹ Report of the European Commission, European Commission. Working document of the commission - Republic of Serbia Report for 2020, p. 38 - 39. The report is available at: https://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/eu_dokumenta/godisnji_izvestaji_ek_o_napretku/serbia_report_2020_SR.pdf

² State Department report on the situation of human rights in 2019: Numerous human rights challenges in Serbia (paragraf.rs)

³ <http://www.labris.org.rs/sites/default/files/milimetar%20srpski%20web.pdf>

⁴ The Gay Straight Alliance has done media monitoring for 2018, which is available at:

<https://www.dijalog.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Monitoring-medija-2018.pdf>

In recent years, the Novi Sad School of Journalism has conducted numerous analyzes in which hate speech was also reported in the Serbian media, in which members of the LGBTI community were also mentioned: <https://novinarska-skola.org.rs/sr/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/publikacija-o-govoru-mr%C5%BEenje-srp.pdf> ;

Da se zna also made a report for 2018, which is available at: <https://dasezna.lgbt/attachments/Podaci-a-ne-zvona-i-praporci2.pdf>

The narrative of reporting on this topic in 2020 in Serbia was mostly neutral and the principles of journalistic ethics and non-discrimination were respected. However, reduced coverage of the LGBTI community in electronic media (on TV) has been observed, especially when it comes to national frequency television. Since television is still the most widespread medium in Serbia, the lack of reporting on these topics is worrying. On the other hand, the transmission of statements by certain MPs or church members in which members of the LGBTI community are insulted and belittled, and their way of life is called “sinful” or guilty of a pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus, contributes to the creation of negative and homophobic attitudes in society.

This publication presents individual analyses of media reporting divided by months, topics, and type of media (digital, which include TV and Internet portals, and traditional, which includes daily and monthly newspapers). Finally, LABRIS provides guidelines for journalists, editors, and regulators regarding information on this topic.

Briefly about the year behind us

Several topics dominated during 2020 in the press, electronic media, and internet portals. Although the year began with reports from around the world about the corona virus, the same virus quickly spread to Serbia and led to the imposition of a state of emergency on March 15⁵ which lasted until May 6⁶ 2020. This led to a postponement of the elections, to some extent the course of the pandemic influenced the homogenization of the population, and it also had certain implications in how the government was represented in public.⁷ Then, on May 6, the campaign for the elections continued, which after the postponement were finally held on June 21. In its annual report, the *Novi Sad School of Journalism* pointed out that members of the LGBTI community were almost no topic in the ongoing political campaign. There were topics that spoke about gender equality and it mostly came from right-wing parties such as the list Movement “I Live for Serbia“ by Dr. Jovana Stojković, which promoted women on the right in a new way. However, we also had positive comments from Socialist Party of Serbia’s (SPS) member, Boris Milicevic, while it was the SPS United Serbia coalition partner Dragan Markovic Palma who repeated his already well-known views.⁸ After the election, which was won by the ruling Serbian Progressive Party, the summer was seemingly peaceful and the proclamation of a new government awaiting

⁵ <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/451323/proglaseno-vanredno-stanje-na-teritoriji-citave-srbije.php>

⁶ <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/464097/skupstina-srbije-ukinula-vanredno-stanje.php>

⁷ For more on the media representation of political parties and actors, see the report of the non-governmental organization CRTA. The report is available at: https://crt.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Parlamentarni-izbori-2020_Crta_Zavrzni-izvestaj.pdf Accessed: 18.4.2020

⁸ <https://novinarska-skola.org.rs/sr/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/publikacija-o-govoru-mr%C5%BEenje-srp.pdf>

the post of prime minister was awaited⁹, the summer was seemingly peaceful and the proclamation of a new government was awaited, in which the prime minister's position, according to numerous media speculations, was not guaranteed to Ana Brnabić.¹⁰

At the end of August, the delegations of Belgrade and Pristina went to Washington to meet with US President Donald Trump. On that occasion, on September 4, an agreement was signed which apparently resolved numerous bilateral issues, but also involved Serbia and Kosovo in some world issues.¹¹ Point 13 of the *Washington Agreement* obliges the members to work together to decriminalize all 69 countries where homosexuality is punished. After that, a new government was announced in which Ana Brnabić confirmed her mandate as Prime Minister for the second time.¹² The end of the year marked the beginning of the debate on the law on same-sex unions.¹³

The year that is behind us is primarily special because it was marked by a global pandemic caused by the COVID-19, the consequences of which were felt in every corner of the planet. Members of the LGBTI community felt the consequences just like everyone else, with their position being further aggravated by the fact that they are members of a community that is often located in a hostile environment that does not accept them. Due to the global lockdown that kept them in the environment of people who do not accept them, some of them did not even have the psychological help they needed.¹⁴ The poor state of LGBTI rights was also stated in the Annual report of the State Department, which again showed that members of this community often suffer physical violence.¹⁵ However, the main event that this community organises on an annual level is the Pride Parade, which, precisely because of the living conditions caused by the pandemic, was not held for the first time since its holding became possible in Serbia.¹⁶

⁹ <https://www.danas.rs/politika/izbori-2020/rik-za-sns-6065-odsto-biraca/>

¹⁰ The Minister of Agriculture, Branislav Nedimović, was mentioned as one of the candidates with potentially the best chances, who was also the first on the list of Aleksandar Vučić - For our children.

¹¹ For an analysis of the Washington Agreement by the Center for Social Dialogue and Regional Initiatives, see: https://cddri.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Analiza-dokumenata-potpisanih-u-Bejoj-ku%C4%87i_WEB001.pdf

¹² <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2020/10/28/srbija-dobila-novu-vladu-brnabic-drugi-put-premierka>

¹³ <https://www.021.rs/story/Info/Srbija/259728/Comic-U-pripremi-zakon-i-o-istopolnom-partnerstvu.html>

¹⁴ Labris conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the position of LGBTI people during the Covid - 19 crisis, in which it gave recommendations for further action. Analysis is available:

<http://www.labris.org.rs/sites/default/files/LGBT%20Covid-19%20kriza%202020.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.glasamerike.net/a/srbija-stejt-department-izvestaj-ljudska-prava/5834093.html>

¹⁶ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/beogradska-nedelja-ponosa-solidarni-i-u-4-zida/30842134.html>

METHODOLOGY

The media market in Serbia is characterized by non-transparency in business, tabloid character and many formally registered media. In November 2020, the Association of Journalists of Serbia announced that there were 2,508 registered media in Serbia. Most of the print media are: 937. There are also 751 internet portals, 333 radio stations and 244 registered televisions at the national and local level.¹⁷ A survey conducted in 2020 by the *Centre for Media Research* at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade pointed out that the majority of respondents in Serbia use television the most, as many as 82%, followed by online media with 46%.¹⁸ In the same research, the respondents also said that, although they follow the print media, they don't buy newspapers, but mostly use print media sites (internet portals) as a choice of information.¹⁹ That was the "media sky" under which the citizens of Serbia welcomed the announcement of the elections, the state of emergency caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the continuation of the election campaign and the holding of elections, the signing of the Washington Agreement and the proclamation of the new government. Undoubtedly, these topics left a deeper impression on the citizens themselves than human rights issues, but the demands related to human and minority rights issues, as well as media pluralism, led to the recognition of the importance of LGBTI rights, primarily in the media and then in Serbian society.

This media analysis covers the period from **January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020**. During the research, a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis was used, which included content analysis and a case study. Content analysis as a quantitative-qualitative method included print and online media and television programming. The content of a total of **23** daily, weekly and monthly newspapers (printed) of tabloid and non-tabloid character, **daily newspapers** (*Danas, Kurir, Alo, Srpski Telegraf, Politika, Večernje Novosti, Dnevnik (Novi Sad), Narodne novine (Niš), Informer, 24 sata, Blic*), **weekly** (*NIN, Vreme, Nedeljnik, Nova ekonomija, Novi magazin, Ekspres, Pečat*) and **monthly lifestyle editions** (*Elle, Biz Life, Cosmopolitan, Karakter and Lepota i zdravlje*) **26 internet portals** (*N1, nova.rs, B92, Blic, Direct, Lens, Hello, Espresso, Informer, Voice of America, News, Free Europe, o21, Euractiv, Novi magazin, Peščanik, Serbia Today, Noizz, Mondo, Weekly, Lepota i zdravlje, Cosmpolitan, NIN, Glas Šumadije, Vreme, Politika, 24 online and Telegraf*) **eight TV stations** (*RTS 1, Pink, Happy, B92, N1, Prva TV, RTV and Kanal 9*). The criterion for selecting online media was its relevance, diversity of readership

¹⁷ <https://www.uns.org.rs/sr/desk/UNS-news/107199/u-srbiji-registrovano-2508-medija.html>

¹⁸ Center for Media Research - Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade. Information in the digital environment in Serbia. 2020.p. 7-8.

<http://centarzamedije.fpn.bg.ac.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/informisanje-u-digitalnom-okruzenju-2020.pdf>

¹⁹ Ibid.

and distribution. Also, the choice was made to cover media with different approaches (tabloid, semi-tabloid, non-tabloid), editorial policies (extremely critical to openly pro-government) and with different rates of publication (daily, weekly, monthly). The sample of print media consists of **69** printed texts, **240** texts on portals and **26** shows and TV reports. Both national and local media were analysed.

The following method of determining articles for analysis was used in the analysis of articles from newspapers, portals, and TV reports: **press clipping** and **search by key phases**. For analysis, each text from selected media was taken, which contained the words: **gay, lesbian, bisexual, homosexual, gay, same-sex, LGBTI, whether it was about events in Serbia or from around the world.**

During the content analysis, the following was observed:

Research topics

Is it narrative reporting or is there a positive / negative discourse

What sources are used in reporting

The analysis is divided by months - into print media and digital media. Within the digital media, an analysis of the material of TV stations was done.

JANUARY

Printed media

- Numerous activists summarized the previous year 2019 during January. Although topics from the domain of discrimination dominated, Jovanka Todorović from the Geten organisation reminded that **Serbia is late with the adoption of the law on gender equality and same-sex communities**. Todorović also underlined that the prosecution punished the attacker only with a suspended sentence on a man who was beaten in the city centre, just because he was carrying a purple bag, and because of which the attackers thought he was of homosexual orientation.²⁰
- *Vecernje Novosti* brings an article dedicated to the right entitled "Latent Hitlerism" by their columnist Filip Rodić, which connects some false stereotypes about opponents of same-sex communities with the anti-national activities of certain Serbian intellectuals. During January, another text, which appeared in the *Official Gazette* from Nis, will problematize the so-called "gender ideology" from the right positions, and according to which the introduction of the third sex is envisaged, which could allegedly lead to the terms "parent 1" and "parent 2", the interlocutors will be psychotherapist Zoran Milivojevic and professor with Faculty of Philology Zorica Ivanovic, while the authors of the article quote the current President of Russia Vladimir Putin who says that the word mother cannot be replaced with anything.²¹
- *Danas* will mentioned once again the Law on Same-Sex Communities in the author's text by Bojan Lađevac, coordinator of the Friedrich Ebert Belgrade office, on the occasion of the book *The Light Has Gone Out*, which talks about the experiences of Western societies that cannot be replicated in Eastern societies.²²
- In an interview with the weekly *Express*, Commissioner Brankica Janković mentioned that members of the LGBTI community suffer discrimination, but also points out the case when Minister Nenad Popović did not listen to her recommendation to apologize for insulting members of the LGBTI community. She also give a statement that it is necessary to "eradicate stereotypes in the employment of Roma and the LGBTI community" and also presented the plans of the Ministry in the protection of

²⁰ Provide conditions for the independence of the judiciary, *Danas*. 3.1. 2020.

²¹ They introduce the third sex to us and abolish "moms and dads", *Narodne novine Nis* 10.1.2020.

²² Imitators in front of the endless world, *Danas* 17.1.2020.

LGBTI people.²³ At the end of January, *Novi magazin* will bring an article about discrimination at work, which has recognized the LGBTI community as one of the discriminated social groups.²⁴

Digital media

Digital media covered the following topics in January:

- **Adoption of laws on non-discrimination, same-sex unions, gender identity and gender equality.**²⁵ Portal *Danas* mentions this on the side lines of the news about the necessity of judicial reform and broadcasts the statement of Jovanka Todorović from Geten. This news did not meet with much response in the media.
- On January 15, a **Human Rights Watch report** was released by B92.²⁶ The report says "attacks and threats against members of the LGBT community" are worrying.
- The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, Brankica Janković, **presented the annual report "Discrimination in the Labor Market"**. The report shows that a third of all discrimination concerns business relationships, and that LGBTI people are one of the discriminated groups. This was covered by *N1*²⁷ i *Blic*²⁸. This is one of the rare topics that was also talked about on television - Janković's statement was broadcast on H1 TV and RTS.
- **Trial for hate speech against LGBTI people.** The trial of Vladimir Dimitrijević, president of the Dveri political council, began in January. Due to the statements that "homosexuality is imposed on Serbs", that "homosexual relationships are not emotional, but lustful", as well as that "the main goal of political homosexuality is the destruction of the natural family" and that "homosexual aspirations are cured by fasting and prayer", and after for refusing to apologize, a lawsuit was filed against him. The news about this event was transmitted by *Mondo*²⁹ i *Danas*.³⁰
- The statement of the then Minister of Labor, Employment, Social and Veterans Affairs, Zoran Djordjević, **that stereotypes should be eradicated when hiring**, among

²³ Eradicate stereotypes, *Danas*, 30.1.2020.

²⁴ The hardest job is – to find a job, *Novi magazin*, 30.1.2020.

²⁵ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/vladavina-prava/obezbediti-uslove-za-nezavisnost-pravosudja/>

²⁶ https://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2020&mm=01&dd=15&nav_category=12&nav_id=1642227

²⁷ <http://rs.n1info.com/Vesti/a561080/Poverenica-Gradjani-se-najvise-zale-na-diskriminaciju-u-oblasti-rada.html>

²⁸ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/godisnja-analiza-svih-drzava-u-regionu-problemi-srbije-hrvatske-i-bih-kao-prepisani>

²⁹ <https://mondo.rs/Info/Drustvo/a1273583/Sudjenje-Vladimiru-Dimitrijevicu-iz-Dveri-zbog-LGBT.html>

³⁰ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/odrzano-pripremo-rociste-pred-visim-sudom-u-postupku-protiv-vladimira-dimitrijevicu>

others, members of the LGBT community, was transmitted by all agencies, *Pink*³¹ i *Novi magazin*³².

In addition, discrimination against members of the LGBTI population was discussed at *RT Vojvodina 1*, during a visit by the local ombudsman in Novi Sad, Marina Popov Ivetić, where she said that the ombudsman's office had previously dealt with "children's rights, LGBTI rights, the elderly people, then women, gender equality. " On January 17, 2020, Tatjana Prijić, Assistant Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, was a guest on *Prva TV* in the show "150 Minutes". She spoke about the problems that discriminated groups face, and included LGBTI members in that group. At the end of January, Minister Djordjević talked about discrimination against Roma and LGBTI on *TV Happy*. Discrimination in the field of work and employment was the topic of a guest appearance by Petar Antić, manager at GIZ, on *N1 TV* in the show "Dan uživo".

The article recorded on *Happy TV* on January 30 was broadcast as part of the *National Daily*. The article was filmed with Milo Bošković, a criminologist, who says that pedophilia makes up 30% of sexual deviations, and that 30% of them are "20% male pedophilia or homosexuality, and 80% is heterosexuality".

³¹ <https://pink.rs/politika/182510/djordjevic-iskoreniti-stereotipe-prilikom-zaposljavanja-roma-i-lgbt-osoba>

³² <https://novimagazin.rs/vesti/ministar-neophodno-je-iskoreniti-stereotipe-prilikom-zaposljavanja-roma-i-pripadnika-lgbt>

Printed media

Serbian Telegraph reports that a ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation was voted in a referendum in Switzerland.³³

Digital media

When it comes to internet portals, February was the month in which the media dealt with LGBTI people on several occasions.

- **The first verdict for a hate crime committed against a member of the LGBTI community** was the news first published on *Beta*. This news was transmitted by *o21*³⁴ i *Autonomija*³⁵ (The verdict was passed by the Basic Court in Smederevo, which explains the interest of local portals), *Danas*³⁶ i *N1*³⁷. The media took over the agency news, which was the announcement of the organisation that deals with the rights of LGBTI people.
- The Council of Europe's Independent Body against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), in its report expressing **concern over growing support for ultranationalist and populist policies**, states that "LGBTI people continue to face harassment, threats and violence." were broadcast by Tanjug and Beta, and from the media N1 TV³⁸, *New Serbian Political Thought*³⁹, *Nova*⁴⁰ i *Free Europe*⁴¹.
- **Vladimir Dimitrijević, President of the Political Council of the Dveri party**, was active in the media in February as well. He was a guest on the show *Vaseljenska*, and that

³³ To forbid sexual discrimination, *Srpski telegraf*, 10.2.2020

³⁴ <https://www.o21.rs/story/Info/Srbija/233759/NVO-Prva-presuda-za-krivicno-delo-pocinjeno-iz-mrznje-prema-LGBT>

³⁵ <https://www.autonomija.info/nvo-prva-presuda-za-krivicno-delo-pocinjeno-iz-mrznje-prema-lgbt-osobama.html>

³⁶ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/nvo-prva-presuda-za-krivicno-delo-pocinjeno-iz-mrznje-prema-lgbt-osobama/>

³⁷ <https://rs.n1info.com/vesti/a566462-nvo-prva-presuda-za-krivicno-delo-pocinjeno-iz-mrznje-prema-lgbt-osobama/>

³⁸ <https://rs.n1info.com/svet/a573069-ecri-alarmantno-pojacanje-ultranacionalisticke-i-ksenofobne-politike-u-evropi/>

³⁹ <http://www.nspm.rs/hronika/savet-evrope-suoceni-smo-sa-pojacanim-uticajima-ultranacionalisticke-politike-rasistick>

⁴⁰ <https://nova.rs/svet/se-u-evropi-napreduju-ksenofobija-rasizam-i-mrznja/>

⁴¹ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30457717.html>

was transmitted by *Espresso*.⁴² In his visit, he said that the Vatican "breaks us through gays", and for the lawsuit filed against him, he said that it was a "means of the New World Order" to shut the mouths of dissidents. "It is worrying to convey such news and give space to such a narrative.

- Mentioning LGBTI as a side of other news was the case when *Danas* reported that a debate had taken place "You really think that" („Stvarno tako misliš“),⁴³ whose focus was on the treatment of women in the media space of Serbia. One of the participants in the debate wrote the text "Useful fool" („Korisna budala“)⁴⁴ The local Vojvodina portal *Autonomija* dealt with the statement of the Member of Parliament Marija Janjušević, in which she gave her support to the Family Walk, which was organised by *Dveri*. Janjušević says that the walk "is not directed against someone, not even against the LGBTI population, but FOR something - to protect families, to help mothers, to support and increase the birth rate." In March, the global civil society network CIVICUS announced that Serbia's rating had been downgraded, and it was ranked among the group of countries in which basic freedoms for the work and activities of civil society organisations were obstructed. On that occasion, Maja Stojanović from Civic Initiatives said that organizations dealing with LGBTI rights have been facing a difficult situation in Serbia since the 1990s. She dealt with this topic, in addition to *Danas*,⁴⁵ i *Radio Free Europe*.⁴⁶ In the text of the latter, they point out that the target of the attack were most often LGBTI activists, as well as the premises of the Pride Info Centre in Belgrade.

⁴² <https://www.espresso.co.rs/vesti/politika/516683/vatikan-mrzi-srbe-lome-nas-preko-gejeva-nvo-i-cg-srpski-profesor-tvr-di-da-antihrist-i-vatikan-imaju-isti-cilj>

⁴³ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/bobicic-zenama-u-javnosti-se-nista-ne-prasta/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.danas.rs/kolumna/darko-mitrovic/korisna-budala/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/funkcioneri-i-tabloidi-u-borbi-protiv-civilnog-drustva/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/nevladine-organizacije/30460270.html>

Printed media

- During March, several events occurred that preceded the imposition of a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Already on March 2, an incident occurred when the **Pride Info Center in Belgrade was attacked**.⁴⁷ The Protector of Citizens, Zoran Pašalić, reacted immediately and issued a statement, which was transmitted by: *Alo*⁴⁸, *Večernje Novosti*⁴⁹ *Blic*⁵⁰ i *Nedeljnik*⁵¹. It is not known whether this news affected high school students in Leskovac, but the next day the news spread on social networks that the Pride Parade **would be held in Leskovac**, which caused revolt among them and who used the opportunity to leave classes and protest in the center of the city. On that occasion, a journalist who reported from the scene was attacked, as reported by *Danas*, *Blic* and *24 sata*⁵². The next day, the Protector of Citizens Zoran Pašalić will react and order inspections in eight schools in Leskovac.⁵³ The weekly *Novi magazin* will also report that one journalist was attacked.⁵⁴
- In the *Cosmopolitan* magazine, in the article *Is there a Fair Play* in life, in which people who face discrimination daily speak, gay activist and member of the organizing committee of the Belgrade Pride Marko Mihajlović speaks, pointing out that the LGBTI community in Serbia is insufficiently visible. and yes, it is then mostly the subject of sensationalism in the tabloids.⁵⁵ In an interview with NIN, the Commissioner for Gender Equality spoke about the law on same-sex unions that should be adopted, and referred to some of her decisions and underlined that her job is to defend the discriminated..⁵⁶
- *Blic* reports to **the State Department on the situation of human rights in Serbia**, which states that: "sexual connotations in everyday speech and behavior are understood as a joke and generally accepted as a form of communication and not if

⁴⁷ Attack on Pride Info Centre, *Danas* 2.3.2020

⁴⁸ Pašalić condemn attackers on Pride Info Centre, *Alo* 2.3.2020

⁴⁹ Effective reaction needed, *Večernje Novosti* 2.3.2020

⁵⁰ Attacks on Pride Info Centre - again, *Blic* 2.3.2020

⁵¹ Leskovac, *Nedeljnik* 3.3.2020.

⁵² Arrested because of the attack on journalist in Leskovac, *24 sata* 4.3.2020

⁵³ Schoolers on the street called for the attacks on LGBTI, *Blic* 4.3.2020

⁵⁴ Pašalić questions Ministry of Education and schools in Leskovac, *Novi magazin* 5.3.2020

⁵⁵ Does fair play exists? *Cosmopolitan*, March 2020.

⁵⁶ I will not be silent, that is not my job, NIN 12.3.2020

serious harassment."⁵⁷ Actor Miloš Timotijević will confirm these views of the State Department, consciously or accidentally, in his interview with *Blic* two weeks later, when he will state that even children threaten him through social networks due to his gay role in the crime series *South Wind*.⁵⁸ What perhaps reflects Serbian society even better is the fact that Timotijević said that it is harder for him that these children, or the public, are bothered by the fact that Stupar's character is played by a gay man than by a corrupt policeman, which fits into research conducted in Serbia on the prevalence of discrimination and the degree of corruption.

Digital media

- **The attack on the Pride Info Center** was condemned by the Serbian media. *Blic* reminded that the Pride Info Center is a constant target of attacks.⁵⁹ The news was also transmitted by the *Voice of America*.⁶⁰
- The next day, **the attack caused by hatred towards the LGBTI community** was repeated - this time in Leskovac. The false news about the Parade in that city led to an attack by hooligans. This news resonated in the Serbian media - it was reported by all agencies, *Blic*⁶¹, *Espresso*⁶² *Nova*⁶³, *Danas*⁶⁴, *Nedeljnik*⁶⁵, *Južne vesti*⁶⁶, *Novi magazin*⁶⁷... The narrative of the reporting is condemning towards the attackers or neutral - the media mostly broadcast a statement issued by the Youth Initiative for Human Rights and the association "To be known". *Free Europe* calls "Attacks on LGBT community in Serbia without judicial outcome" in its news expresses concern over "two incidents in three days".⁶⁸ *NIN* says that, although it seems that Serbia has become more tolerant towards the LGBTI community in previous years, "not a breath

⁵⁷ They blame us for discrimination, corruption, the Bytyci brothers, *Blic* 16.3.2020

⁵⁸ Miloš Timotijević, Even children threaten me because of my gay role, *Blic* 30.3.2020

⁵⁹ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/drustvo/homofobija-i-nasilje-izbliza-prajd-info-centar-napadnut-11-put-od-2018-godine-vandali/ynjm5y>

⁶⁰ <https://www.glasamerike.net/a/napadnut-prajd-info-centar---11-put-za-prvih-10-napada-osu%C4%91enih-nema/5311434.html>

⁶¹ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/drustvo/pretili-su-da-ce-me-polomiti-rekao-sam-napravicu-gej-paradu-do-skandaloznog-skupa-u/dc65syc>

⁶² <https://www.espresso.rs/vesti/drustvo/519245/ubij-zakolji-da-peder-ne-postoji-ovo-su-skandirala-deca-na-protestu-pr>

⁶³ <https://nova.rs/vesti/drustvo/udruzenja-vlasti-hitno-da-reaguju-na-homofobiju-u-leskovcu/>

⁶⁴ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/mup-uhapsen-zbog-napada-na-novinara-u-leskovcu>

⁶⁵ <https://www.nedeljnik.rs/napad-na-novinare-i-policiju-kad-srednjoskolci-u-leskovcu-protestuju-zbog-prajda/>

⁶⁶ <https://www.juznevesti.com/Hronika/Napad-na-policiju-i-novinara-u-Leskovcu-na-protestu-posle-lazne-najave-o-paradi-ponosa.sr.html>

⁶⁷ <https://www.novimagazin.rs/vesti/216489-inicijativa-mladih-povodom-incidenta-u-leskovcu-vlasti-hitno-da-reaguju-na-homofobiju>

⁶⁸ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/srbija-napadi-lgbt-sudstvo/30466944.html>

of that understanding has reached Leskovac."⁶⁹ The Protector of Citizens blamed the education system for intolerance towards the LGBTI community and that was reported by *Blic*.⁷⁰

- The next news that was most reported in March, before the declaration of the state of emergency, **was related to the State Department report**. The report draws attention to violence against LGBTI people in Serbia. They are transmitting this news *N1*⁷¹, *Danas*⁷² i *Blic*⁷³. The LGBTI community and the problems it faces are not the focus of this news - LGBTI is mentioned only as one of the problems that Serbia has been criticized for. More attention is paid to the problems of the LGBTI community in the author's text on *Danas*.⁷⁴
- LGBTI in domestic cinema, after the news that "Inspector Stupar Gay" (a character from the popular series "South Wind") was a topic dealt with by Serbian portals. First, the *BBC* published an article on the history of LGBTI representation in Serbian films, and then the text was taken by *Danas*⁷⁵ i *o21*.⁷⁶

In addition to this news, *B92* wrote about the proposed changes to the Russian constitution which defines marriage as a heterosexual community. *B92* states in the text that this decision was condemned by many Russian liberals and the European Court of Human Rights, believing that it will serve as a cover for harassing activists who are fighting to improve the position of the LGBTI population in Russia..⁷⁷

IDEAS' text⁷⁸ on violence and discrimination against LGBTI women was reported by – no one. During March, there was a lull in this topic, as the entire public space was taken over by reporting on the pandemic, which was intensifying.

⁶⁹ <http://nin.co.rs/pages/article.php?id=102352170>

⁷⁰ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/drustvo/packa-obrazovnom-sistemu-zastitnik-gradana-o-nasilju-leskovckih-srednjoskolaca-zbog/crqwftl>

⁷¹ <https://rs.n1info.com/vesti/a577096-izvestaj-stejt-departmenta-o-ljudskim-pravima-u-srbiji-2019/>

⁷² <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/izvestaj-stejt-departmenta-u-srbiji-u-2019-brojni-izazovi-u-domenu-ljudskih-prava/>

⁷³ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/stejt-department-o-ljudskim-pravima-u-srbiji-marija-lukic-milan-jovanovic-i-braca/do>

⁷⁴ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/vladavina-prava/ignjatovic-ekstremnoj-desnici-vrata-otvorila-desnica-na-vlasti/>

⁷⁵ <https://www.danas.rs/bbc-news-serbian/lgbt-i-domaca-kinematografija-snimanje-filma-u-svoja-cetiri-zida-ili-nesto-vise/>

⁷⁶ <https://www.o21.rs/story/BBC/238575/LGBT-i-domaca-kinematografija-Od-Pukotina-raja-do-Juznog-vetra-Snimanje>

⁷⁷ http://www.b92.net/bbc/index.php?yyyy=2020&mm=03&dd=04&nav_id=1662202

⁷⁸ <https://ideje.rs/lgbt-i-zene-izložene-su-nasilju-i-diskriminaciji/>

Print media

- For vulnerable groups (minority communities, women, people with disabilities, LGBTI ...) isolation caused by the corona virus is more difficult than for other residents of Serbia due to their specific position. That is exactly why the organization "Da se zna" launched a chat with its users in the middle of a pandemic, which was reported by *Danas*.⁷⁹

Digital media

In April, there was a big drop in reporting on LGBTI issues. Public discourse is still preoccupied with the state of emergency and pandemics, and all other topics have been ignored this month. From the transfer of greater importance, we single out:

- **Guest appearance of Miloš Timotijević**, an actor from the series "South Wind", who received several threats via social networks due to his role as a person of homosexual orientation. Timotijevic was a guest on the show "Belgrade Chronicle" on RTS.⁸⁰
- **Breaking ties with states that criminalize homosexuality.** The administration of (then) US President Donald Trump is considering breaking severing diplomatic ties with countries that criminalize homosexuality, said Richard Grenell. This news is broadcast by RTS.⁸¹
- **Criticism of the views of Muamer Zukorlić**, member of Serbian Parliament, presented in a press release by the association "Da se zna", was reported by *Tanjug*, and the news was taken over by *Mondo*.⁸²
- *Novosti* reports **the statement of the Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Novi Sad**, in which he says that "in the field of values, the crisis is covered by a stubborn insistence on a gradual cultural transformation into a kind of nihilism. In it, homosexuality becomes a pattern for shaping the family, so young people have to import themselves with the so-

⁷⁹ Ugao, *Danas* 28.4. 2020.

⁸⁰ <https://www.rts.rs/page/tv/sr/story/20/rts-1/3715019/beogradska-hronika.html>

⁸¹ <http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/10/svet/3931202/sad-grenel-homoseksualnost-obavestajna-saradnja.html>

⁸² <https://mondo.rs/Info/Drustvo/a1316924/LGBT-Muamer-Zukorlic-optuzbe-diskriminacija.html>

called of the global east, and physical sanctioning in education is prohibited, so children become teachers to their parents.“⁸³

MAY

Print media

- In May, the day of the fight against homophobia and transphobia is marked, and on that occasion, several texts were found in the press that, through research, problematized the position of the LGBTI community. Novi Sad's *Dnevnik* brought the news about the competition for the annual Duga award, on the day of the fight against homophobia and transphobia on May 17.⁸⁴
- *Narodne novine* from Nis reported the statements of the Commissioner for Gender Equality Brankica Janković and the Protector of Citizens Zoran Pašalić in which it is pointed out that during the pandemic caused by the Covid-19 virus, this community was particularly affected.⁸⁵
- *Danas*⁸⁶ transferred the research concerning the position of LGBTI people, in which it was pointed out that Serbia leads in the Region in terms of intolerance towards LGBTI people, that percentage is as high as 51%, while the average in the EU is 40%. In the research conducted by GLIC in cooperation with Ideas, which was transmitted by *Politika*,⁸⁷ as many as 82% of the LGBTI community stated that Serbia is not a good place to live.

Digital media

- **The results of the research on the consequences of the corona virus pandemic on the LGBTI community** were transmitted by *Telegraf*.⁸⁸

⁸³ <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/politika/aktuelno.289.html:857313-Prof-dr-Branislav-Ristivojevic--Korona-unist>

⁸⁴ Duga Award Competition, *Dnevnik* 17.5.2020

⁸⁵ Hate speech and physical attacks everyday, *Narodne novine Niš*, 18.5.2020

⁸⁶ EU research: The position of LGBT people in Serbia is better, but still bad, *Danas* 18.5.2020

⁸⁷ Because of possible violence, they hide their sexual orientation, *Politika* 19.5.2020

⁸⁸ <https://www.telegraf.rs/vesti/srbija/3187046-korona-virus-naneo-stetu-i-lgbt-populaciji-tvrde-da-su-ostali-bez-posla-doma-i-zdravstvene-zastite>

- Two news items - the first **"Hartefact Fund organizes a discussion in the Public project"** and the second **"Protect LGBT people from violence at home and in public"**, which was transmitted by *Tanjug*, was not taken over by any media.
- **The Council of Europe has urged member states to better protect the LGBTI community during a pandemic.** This news was transmitted by *Danas*.⁸⁹
- **The Pride Parade in Albania was** a topic covered by several domestic portals, and among those analyzed, *Mondo*.⁹⁰
- **The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights conducted a survey on the position of the LGBTI community in the EU, Serbia, Northern Macedonia and the United Kingdom.** The results of the research are news transmitted by *Noizz*.⁹¹
- *Slobodna Evropa*⁹², *Danas*⁹³, *N1*⁹⁴ are the media that transmitted the results of the **Annual Report on the Position of the LGBTI Community**.
- **On the occasion of the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia**, the EU High Representative for the Western Balkans, Josep Borelj, emphasized the need to protect LGBTI people. This news was transmitted by *Mondo*,⁹⁵ *N1*⁹⁶ i *Beta*⁹⁷. The Protector of Citizens, Zoran Pasalic, also issued a statement that members of the LGBTI community must be better supported and that changes in legislation are necessary. The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, Brankica Janković, also spoke. This news was transmitted by *Glas Amerike*⁹⁸, *RTV*⁹⁹, *Nova S*¹⁰⁰ *Danas*¹⁰¹, *RTS*¹⁰², *24 online*¹⁰³, *Espereso*¹⁰⁴ i *Beta*¹⁰⁵.

⁸⁹ <https://www.danas.rs/svet/savet-evrope-trazi-bolju-zastitu-lgbt-osoba-tokom-pandemije/>

⁹⁰ <https://mondo.rs/Info/Svet/a1324511/Gej-parada-virtuelna-odrzana-u-Albaniji.html>

⁹¹ <https://noizz.rs/noizz-news/izvestaj-eu-o-stanju-lgbt-zajednice-u-srbiji/ddbkyz1>

⁹² <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30614167.html>

⁹³ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/cak-82-odsto-ispitanika-smatra-da-srbija-nije-dobro-mesto-za-zivot-lgbti-osoba/>

⁹⁴ <http://rs.n1info.com/Vesti/a600038/Cak-77-odsto-ispitanih-smatra-da-Srbija-ne-vodi-racuna-o-polozaju-LGBTI-gradj>

⁹⁵ <https://mondo.rs/Info/Svet/a1324684/Medjunarodni-dan-borbe-protiv-homofobije-EU-Zozep-Borelj.html>

⁹⁶ <http://rs.n1info.com/Svet/a600264/Borel-EU-odaje-pocast-razlicitostima.html>

⁹⁷ <https://beta.rs/vesti/politika-vesti-svet/127426-borel-eu-odaje-pocast-razlicitostima>

⁹⁸ <https://www.glasamerike.net/a/lgbt-diskriminacija-homofobija-poverenica-ombudsman/5423296.html>

⁹⁹ http://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/drustvo/jankovic-ne-smeju-da-se-ugrozavaju-prava-lgbt_1125279.html

¹⁰⁰ <https://nova.rs/drustvo/jankovic-ne-smeju-se-ugrozavaju-prava-lgbt/>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/zastitnik-gradjana-izmene-zakona-neophodne-za-poboljsanje-polozaja-lgbti-osoba/>

¹⁰² <https://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/125/drustvo/3956776/-lgbt-prava-dan-borbe-protiv-homofobije.html>

¹⁰³ <https://www.24online.info/jankovic-pripadnici-lgbt-populacije-su-ravnopravni-clanovi-naseg-drustva/>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.espereso.co.rs/vesti/drustvo/561549/cak-59-lgbti-osoba-je-poslednjih-godinu-dana-dozivelonasilje-1-podatak-je-posebno-zabrinjavajuc-foto>

- **Albania banned treatment for homosexuals** this month. This news is transmitted by Nova S.¹⁰⁶
- An analytical text on the steps taken by countries in the region in their fight for the equal position of the LGBTI community was published on the BBC website, and transmitted on the B92 portal, entitled "**LGBT, advertisements and brands: Can a bottle of juice sell LGBT equality to the people in Serbia and the region.**"¹⁰⁷ This text was transmitted by *Danas*¹⁰⁸ and *021*.¹⁰⁹
- **The situation of LGBTI people in Kosovo**, that is, the statement given by EULEX, was the topic of news on the portal *Novi magazin*.¹¹⁰ The situation with the rights of the LGBTI community in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the news that *Free Europe* was dealing with.¹¹¹
- **Why LGBTI people are forbidden to donate blood was the news that Free Europe** was dealing with.¹¹²
- **All you wanted to know about the LGBTI community but didn't dare to ask** was the text published by Nova S.¹¹³
- **In May, Hungary banned gender reassignment.** The condemnation of this procedure came from European Union officials, non-governmental organizations and certain politicians. This was announced by the media in Serbia - *N1*¹¹⁴, *Telegraf*,¹¹⁵ i *Politika*.¹¹⁶ *Free Europe* wrote about the support that the LGBTI community from Serbia provided to the community in Hungary.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁵ <https://beta.rs/vesti/drustvo-vesti-srbija/127451-zastitnik-gradjana-upozorio-na-nepovoljan-polozaj-lgbti-osoba-u-srb>

¹⁰⁶ <https://nova.rs/svet/albanija-zabranila-terapije-lecenja-homoseksualaca/>

¹⁰⁷ https://www.b92.net/bbc/index.php?yyyy=2020&mm=05&dd=17&nav_id=1684811

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.danas.rs/bbc-news-serbian/lgbt-reklame-i-brendovi-moze-li-flasica-soka-da-proda-ravnopravnost-lgbt-lj>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.021.rs/story/BBC/243565/LGBT-reklame-i-brendovi-Moze-li-flasica-soka-da-proda-ravnopravnost-LGB>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.novimagazin.rs/vesti/221591-sef-euleksa-mnoge-lgbti-osobe-na-kosovu-i-dalje-u-riziku-od-diskriminacije-i-nasilja>

¹¹¹ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30617098.html>

¹¹² <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/za%C5%A1to-je-homoseksualnim-i-biseksualnim-mu%C5%A1karcima-zabranjeno-ili-ograni%C4%8Deno-darivati-krv/30614122.html>

¹¹³ <https://nova.rs/zena/lifestyle/sve-sto-vas-kopkalo-o-lgbt-ljudima-a-niste-smeli-da-pitate/>

¹¹⁴ <http://rs.n1info.com/Svet/a601218/Madarska-zabranila-promenu-pola.html>

¹¹⁵ <http://rs.n1info.com/Svet/a601218/Madarska-zabranila-promenu-pola.html>

¹¹⁶ <http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/454443/Madarska-zabranila-promenu-pola>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/madarska-trans-osobe-srbija-podrska/30638187.html>

May marked the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the institution of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality. This was the news in which the LGBTI community was mentioned, as the Commissioner was very concerned with improving their position. In the news about how the corona virus virus pandemic affected migrants, the LGBTI community is also mentioned as one of the most endangered groups due to the pandemic, *Blic* reported.¹¹⁸ Another news item on vulnerable categories, when it comes to discrimination, also mentions LGBTI people.¹¹⁹

On TV, the LGBTI community was topic only on N1 TV during May, twice - on the occasion of the presentation of the Annual Report on the Position of LGBTI, and on the occasion of the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia.

JUNE

Printed media

- Topics that dominated the print media were mainly related to the June 21 parliamentary elections. The Helsinki Committee conducted a survey on the values of high school students, which was reported by the daily *Danas*, which shows that young people have nationalist views on the wars of the 1990s, but also homophobic and transphobic opinions in a high percentage.¹²⁰ Also, a week later, *Politika* transmitted this research in which it points out that the greatest social distance exists towards the LGBTI community.¹²¹ Novi Sad's *Dnevnik* reported a survey of non-governmental organizations on LGBTI students, which states that more than half of them suffer psychological violence from their families and surroundings, while 8% of respondents also experienced physical violence and 2% of cases suffered sexual violence. *Danas* also reported the results of this research.¹²²
- In an interview for *Karakter*, Commissioner Brankica Janković summarized her impressions of 10 years of work of the institution Commissioner for Gender Equality, in which, among other things, she pointed out that the Office of the Commissioner helped people who changed their gender and whose institutions did not want to new identity.¹²³

¹¹⁸ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/drustvo/evropa-je-strahovala-od-novog-talasa-migranata-a-onda-je-dosla-korona-i-optuzbe-da/059drov>

¹¹⁹ https://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2020&mm=05&dd=27&nav_category=12&nav_id=1688297

¹²⁰ High school students are also extremely homophobic and for Kosovo in Serbia, *Danas* 4.6.2020

¹²¹ Every other high school student considers abortion a sin, *Politika* 13.6.2020

¹²² More than half of LGBT high school students have experienced some form of violence, *Danas*, 27.6.2020

¹²³ Fight for equality – first 10 years, *Karakter*, 19.6.2020

Digital media

- **The report of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights** on the value orientations of high school students in Serbia was one of the topics covered by the media. At the forefront of the report, due to the high percentage of intolerance, are the attitudes towards the LGBTI community. *Danas*¹²⁴ i *B92*¹²⁵ reported about the results of this research.
- **Research on violence in schools, which shows that more than half of LGBT students** are exposed to violence, reports *Telegraf*¹²⁶ and *Danas*.¹²⁷
- **Elections in Poland in the name of hate speech against LGBTI**, is the topic of news covered by Beta.¹²⁸
- **Actor Milan Timotijević is the winner of the "Duga" award** - the news was also broadcast by *Danas*,¹²⁹ *Telegraf*¹³⁰, *N1*¹³¹ i *o21*.¹³²
- **The statement of the Protector of Citizens of Serbia** that attacks on the LGBTI community should be treated as racism and intolerance, given on the occasion of the International Pride Day, reports *Slobodna Evropa*¹³³ and *Danas*¹³⁴. *Danas* on this day, also transmitted the announcement of the Association for the protection of the rights of LGBTI people in Serbia.¹³⁵ This was also reported by *Autonomija*¹³⁶ i *N1*.¹³⁷

The statement of Metropolitan Amfilohije, transmitted by *Mondo*, is problematic, in which speaks to the same sexual orientation in the following way: "to deify death and nothingness, to hate man and his nature, his eternal meaning and dignity. Do those seeking same-sex

¹²⁴ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/vladavina-prava/srednjoskolci-izrazeno-homofobicni-i-za-kosovo-u-srbiji/>

¹²⁵ https://superzena.b92.net/roditeljstvo.php?yyyy=2020&mm=06&nav_id=1694056

¹²⁶ <https://www.telegraf.rs/vesti/srbija/3197766-nasilje-nad-lgbt-ucenicima-se-najcesce-desava-u-blizini-skole-mali-broj-dece-prijavio-maltretiranje>

¹²⁷ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/vladavina-prava/vilicic-lgbti-osobe-izlozene-diskriminaciji-i-nasilju/>

¹²⁸ <https://beta.rs/vesti/politika-vesti-svet/128837-kampanja-pred-predsednicke-izbore-u-poljskoj-u-znaku-govora-mrznje-protiv-lgbt>

¹²⁹ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/milosu-timotijevicu-urucena-nagrada-duga-za-borbu-protiv-homofobije-i-transfobije/>

¹³⁰ <https://www.telegraf.rs/pop-i-kultura/film-tv/3206261-milos-timotijevic-dobitnik-lgbt-nagrada-duga>

¹³¹ <https://rs.n1info.com/showbiz/a613500-glumac-milos-timotijevic-dobitnik-nagrade-duga/>

¹³² <https://www.o21.rs/story/Info/Srbija/246817/Glumac-Milos-Timotijevic-dobitnik-nagrade-Duga.html>

¹³³ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30692721.html>

¹³⁴ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/zastitnik-gradjana-lgbti-osobe-u-srbiji-meta-nasilja-potrebna-bolja-krivicna-zastita/>

¹³⁵ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/vise-paznje-posvetiti-lgbt-i-drugim-ugrozenim-grupama/>

¹³⁶ <https://www.autonomija.info/medunarodni-dan-ponosa-lgbt-osoba.html>

¹³⁷ <https://rs.n1info.com/svet/a614534-medjunarodni-dan-ponosa-ove-godine-skromniji-pod-maskama-ili-onlajn/>

marriage have the consent and blessing of their parents, especially mothers? We know the moans of many mothers of such children... ".¹³⁸

When it comes to television, during the month of June, the LGBTI community was "present" twice - for the first time on June 1, 2020 in the show "Right Angle" on RTV, in which politician Milica Đurović Stamenkovski said that she would fight against same-sex marriage.¹³⁹, and for the second time on June 29, 2020, within the show "New Day" on H1 TV, on the occasion of the International Pride Day.¹⁴⁰

JULY

Printed media

- July was marked by post election time. In some places, the elections were repeated several times, but there was also an increase in the number of people infected with the corona virus. This again led to the demand of the medical profession for the introduction of certain measures of imprisonment, which led to mass protests in Belgrade, which dominated the media content. From the news, a statement appeared in the media from the organization LABRIS on the adoption of the law on same-sex partnerships in Montenegro, emphasizing that it is time for Serbia to allow the law on same-sex partnerships and reminding that although Prime Minister Ana Brabić is a lesbian communities and raises a child who by law cannot be a parent¹⁴¹; Blic also brings a text about that Montenegro legalized gay marriage.¹⁴² At the end of the month, the Informer will spread the news that the United States is banning Chechen leader Ramazan Kadyrov from entering its territory because he used the pandemic to violate human rights. The text itself states that there are also camps for members of the LGBTI community in Chechnya.¹⁴³

Digital media

July was one of the most active months in spreading the news about the LGBTI community. The following news dominated the media:

¹³⁸ <https://mondo.rs/Info/EX-YU/a1338764/Amfilohije-o-homoseksualcima-i-abortusu-istopolni-brakovi.html>

¹³⁹ http://media.rtv.rs/sr_ci/pravi-ugao/56590

¹⁴⁰ <https://rs.n1info.com/svet/a614534-medjunarodni-dan-ponosa-ove-godine-skromniji-pod-maskama-ili-onlajn/>

¹⁴¹ It's time for Serbia to allow same sex marriages, *Danas* 4.7.2020

¹⁴² Montenegro legalised same sex marriages – what does that mean for the region? *Blic*, 4.7.2020

¹⁴³ Kadirov ready to go to war with Americans, *Informer*, 22.7.2020

- July was one of the most active months in spreading the news about the LGBTI community.** The following news dominated the media: *Telegraf*¹⁴⁴, *Srbija Danas*¹⁴⁵, *Alo*¹⁴⁶, *Nedeljnik*¹⁴⁷, *Slobodna Evropa*¹⁴⁸, *Mondo*¹⁴⁹, *Happy TV*¹⁵⁰, *RTV*¹⁵¹, *Novosti*¹⁵², *Espresso*¹⁵³, *Glas Amerike*¹⁵⁴, *Blic*¹⁵⁵... The narrative of media coverage on this topic is mostly neutral. The statements of the LGBTI association about how a big step was made are transmitted, as well as the statements of Montenegrin politicians who welcome the adoption of the law. Negative on the occasion of this news were only **Novosti**, which in the author's text say that the Montenegrin regime "knelt under the pressure of Western powers." Aleksandar Apostolovski also has a slightly negative attitude in *Nova S*, explaining in detail what the LGBTI community in Montenegro gets with this law.¹⁵⁶ The adoption of this law was also welcomed by LABRIS, and their statement on whether it is time for Serbia to adopt a similar law was reported by *Danas*¹⁵⁷ and *N1*¹⁵⁸. Other organizations dealing with LGBTI rights in Serbia also commented on the adoption of this law, and that was reported by *Noizz*¹⁵⁹ and *Blic*¹⁶⁰¹⁶¹.
- Why homosexuality is still considered a disease in some countries** and how widespread conversion therapies are is a topic addressed by *Free Europe*¹⁶².

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.telegraf.rs/vesti/jugosfera/3208661-crna-gora-izglasala-zakon-o-zivotnom-partnerstvu-lica-istog-pola>

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.srbijadanas.com/vesti/region/crna-gora-izglasala-zakon-o-zivotnom-partnerstvu-lica-istog-pola-ovo-je-sledece>

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.alo.rs/vesti/region/osobe-istog-pola-od-sada-mogu-da-sklope-brak/323210/vest>

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.nedeljnik.rs/u-crnoj-gori-izglasana-zakon-o-zivotnom-partnerstvu-lica-istog-pola/>

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30701060.html>

¹⁴⁹ <https://mondo.rs/Info/EX-YU/a1343543/LGBT-Crna-Gora-Zakon-zivotno-partnerstvo-lica-istog-pola-Istopolni-brakove>

¹⁵⁰ <https://happytv.rs/vesti/region/238235/cnogorci-izglasali-zakon-o-istopolnim-brakovima>

¹⁵¹ http://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/region/crna-gora-izglasana-zakon-o-zivotnom-partnerstvu-lica-istog-pola_1140898.html

¹⁵² https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/crna_gora.713.html:873736-Crna-Gora-dozvolila-istopolne-brakove

¹⁵³ <https://www.espresso.rs/svet/crna-gora/585049/u-crnoj-gori-od-danas-mozete-stupiti-u-brak-sa-partnerom-istog-pola>

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.glasamerike.net/a/crna-gora-zakon-lgbt-parlament/5484864.html>

¹⁵⁵ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/drustvo/crna-gora-usvojila-zakon-o-istopolnim-brakovima/9750x7k>

¹⁵⁶ <https://nova.rs/bebaiporodica/sta-lgbt-zajednica-u-cg-tacno-dobija-novim-zakonom/>

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/vladavina-prava/vreme-je-da-i-srbija-dozvoli-istopolna-partnerstva/>

¹⁵⁸ <http://rs.n1info.com/Vesti/a616098/Labris-o-istopolnim-partnerstvima-u-Srbiji.html>

¹⁵⁹ <https://noizz.rs/big-stories/legalizacija-istopolnih-brakova-u-srbiji/m2b35p5>

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/drustvo/da-li-ce-u-buducnosti-i-srbija-poput-crne-gore-legalizovati-gej-brakove/eqbmhsb>

¹⁶¹ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/region-rekao-da-istopolnim-zajednicama-kod-nas-su-na-cekanju-vise-od-decenije-je-li/9gdj5zz>

¹⁶² <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/lgbt-diskriminacija-bolest-who-popis-prava/30710024.html>

- **A letter sent by members of the LGBTI community in Serbia to Ana Brnabić** is called "Comrades, liars" and she is criticized for not doing enough to improve the position of the LGBTI community, Nova S reported.¹⁶³
- **The European Commission has suspended funding for partnership projects to Polish municipalities that have declared themselves "LGBTI-free zones"**. The news about the reactions of the Polish authorities was transmitted by *Free Europe*¹⁶⁴ and *Nova S*.¹⁶⁵

News transmitted by *Danas*¹⁶⁶ on whose margins the LGBTI community is mentioned is the news of radical right-wing organizations. People who, among other things, threatened LGBTI people in the past are called "people that Serbia does not want to see." *Blic*¹⁶⁷ calls these people "social sediment." LGBTI is also mentioned in a letter sent to members of the European Parliament by Jelena Milić, director of the Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies (CEAS), in which she draws attention to certain members of the opposition with whom the EU wants to establish an expert group to capture media and the state in Serbia. This news was widely spread in Serbia (*Kurir*¹⁶⁸, *Happy TV*¹⁶⁹, *Mondo*¹⁷⁰, *B92*¹⁷¹ and *Informer*¹⁷²). The only time the LGBTI community is mentioned on TV during the month of July is on the occasion of this news - on July 21 on *B92* and *Studio B*. *Free Europe*¹⁷³ reports the news of the imposition of sanctions on Ramazan Kadyrov, the Chechen leader, for violating human rights, including the rights of members of the LGBTI community. *Free Europe*¹⁷⁴ also broadcasts the news of charges against lawyers for threatening LGBT members in Montenegro. In July, a short news item was published about the support that Porche provided to members of the LGBTI community. This news was transmitted by *B92*.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶³ <https://nova.rs/vesti/drustvo/drugarice-lazjivice-niste-ucinili-nista-za-lgbt-zajednicu/>

¹⁶⁴ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30755471.html>

¹⁶⁵ <https://nova.rs/region/eu-ko-diskriminise-lgbt-u-poljskoj-ostaje-bez-novaca/>

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.srbijadanas.com/vesti/info/ni-protesti-im-nisu-bas-pomogli-dizu-i-komanduju-opstem-haosu-ali-i-pored-toga-ova-tri-lica-srbija-2020-07-12>

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/uzdizanje-agresije-drustveni-talog-je-digao-glavu-i-sad-komanduje-haosom-i-drzi/28>

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/3501461/brisel-uzdrman-ostrim-pismom-jelene-milic-direktorke-ceas-ne-sluzite-ka>

¹⁶⁹ <https://happytv.rs/vesti/politika/241381/jelena-mili%C4%87-pismom-uzdrmalu-brisel-ne-slucite-ka-korisni-i>

¹⁷⁰ <https://mondo.rs/Info/Srbija/a1352054/Evropska-unija-zahtevi-opozicije-Jelena-Milic.html>

¹⁷¹ https://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2020&mm=07&dd=21&nav_category=1262&nav_id=1709306

¹⁷² <http://informer.rs/vesti/politika/535732/sluzite-ka-korisni-idioti-brisel-uzdrman-ostrim-pismom-direktorke-ceas-jelen>

¹⁷³ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30737938.html>

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30749385.html>

¹⁷⁵ https://www.b92.net/automobili/razno.php?yyyy=2020&mm=07&nav_id=1713159

AUGUST

Printed media

- In early August, Danas reports that due to the increase in homophobia in Poland, the European Commission has decided not to fund projects in cities that have signed anti-LGBTI declarations.¹⁷⁶ In August, the news appears for the first time that Pride will be held online this year.¹⁷⁷

Digital media

August is usually a calmer month in the media, both with activities and reporting. Several news items were in focus this month:

- **The situation in Poland was also covered during August.** News of the protests at which LGBTI activists were arrested was transmitted *Novi Magazin*¹⁷⁸, *Danas*¹⁷⁹, *Beta*¹⁸⁰
- **The acquittal of the Dean of the Faculty of Law** was the news transmitted by N1¹⁸¹ and o21¹⁸². In these texts, the media also reported the statement of Commissioner Brankica Janković, who said that the acquittal was disappointing.
- **The Pride Parade will be held online**, is the third news broadcast by the media in August. The news was transmitted by agencies, as well as portals, among which *Espresso*¹⁸³ and *Srbija Danas*¹⁸⁴.

SEPTEMBER

¹⁷⁶ EU doesn't want to fund „anti-LGBT“ cities, *Danas* 4.8.2020

¹⁷⁷ Pride week and Pride Parade will not be the same, *Dnevnik* 20.8. 2020

¹⁷⁸ <http://novimagazin.rs/svet/na-protestima-u-varsavi-policija-uhapsila-48-lgbt-aktivista>

¹⁷⁹ <https://www.danas.rs/svet/na-protestima-u-varsavi-policija-uhapsila-48-lgbt-aktivista/>

¹⁸⁰ <https://beta.rs/vesti/politika-vesti-svet/131659-na-protestima-u-varsavi-policija-uhapsila-48-lgbt-aktivista>

¹⁸¹ <https://rs.n1info.com/vesti/a630486-dekan-pravnog-fakulteta-u-novom-sadu-oslobodjen-optuzbi-za-diskriminaciju/>

¹⁸² <https://www.o21.rs/story/Novi-Sad/Hronika/250900/Dekan-Pravnog-fakulteta-u-Novom-Sadu-oslobodjen-optuzbi-za-diskriminaciju-sporni-tekst-ocenjen-kao-sloboda-izrazavanja.html>

¹⁸³ <https://www.espresso.rs/vesti/beograd/610269/ove-godine-nista-od-prajda-doneta-je-konacna-odluka>

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.srbijadanas.com/vesti/drustvo/doneta-odluka-ove-godine-bez-prajda-2020-08-19>

Printed media

- In September, news from the field of politics dominate, and most of the news is about the Washington Agreement. Among other things, it says that Serbia and Kosovo will work on the improvement of LGBTI rights, together with the rest of the world. This news was first transmitted by *Danas*¹⁸⁵, with Goran Miletić's comment that although this point does not refer to any specific action that Serbia and Kosovo should carry out, but that they should work together at the international level to decriminalize homosexuality. Also, *Blic* transmitted the news immediately after the signing of the agreement and analyzed Point 13, which deals with this issue.¹⁸⁶
- In *Blic*, the Commissioner for Gender Equality Brankica Janković, speaking about how celebrities are victims of discrimination, also cited the example of Prime Minister Ana Brnabić and how the media treat her sexual orientation.¹⁸⁷
- Business magazine *Biz Life* brings an interview with Darko Sokolović from the Propulsion Fund on the topic of marketing campaigns aimed at promoting the LGBTI community.¹⁸⁸
- The head of the Council of Europe mission in Belgrade, Tobias Flesenkemper, pointed out in an author's text for the daily *Danas* that the Belgrade Pride promotes diversity and equality despite the fact that it was organized online due to the pandemic..¹⁸⁹

Digital media

- **More than half of the employees in Serbia are outside the zone of decent work.** On the other hand, trade unions and the LGBTI community are not sufficiently connected. News transmitted by *N1*.¹⁹⁰
- **With the Washington agreement,** Serbia also committed that "both sides will cooperate with 69 countries that criminalize homosexuality in order to advocate for decriminalization." When the agreement was signed, this went almost unnoticed, but

¹⁸⁵ Serbia and Kosovo among the countries that respect LGBTI rights, *Danas* 7.9.2020

¹⁸⁶ What did Serbia sign in Washington, *Blic* 13.9.2020

¹⁸⁷ It is easier to insult than to make political programmes, *Blic* 13.9.2020.

¹⁸⁸ Parade of success, *Biz Life* 21.9.2020

¹⁸⁹ Belgrade Pride Week promotes equality and diversity, *Danas*, 21.9.2020

¹⁹⁰ <https://rs.n1info.com/biznis/a635995-debata-o-sindikatu-polovina-zaposlenih-u-srbiji-van-zone-dostojanstvenog-rada/>

it became a topic that the media became interested in. LGBTI communities said that it was hypocritical that Serbia committed itself to the mentioned member, without resolving the situation "in its own backyard". The news "Vučić defends gays in Togo, and they are persecuted in Serbia" is transmitted by Nova S..¹⁹¹ News with a similar title is also broadcast via direktno.rs.¹⁹²

- **Pride Week held in September** was one of the topics covered by the media. The Ambassador and Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Serbia, Sam Fabrizi, provided support to the LGBTI community during his visit to the Pride Info Center, and the news was reported by *Danas*¹⁹³ and *B92*¹⁹⁴.
- **Nataša Bekvalac provided support to the LGBTI community.** Bekvalac has been open with the LGBTI community for a long time, and in September she supported the adoption of the Law on Same-Sex Communities and the "What is bothering you" campaign. News about that is transmitted by *Nova S*,¹⁹⁵ *Espresso*¹⁹⁶, and *Informer*.¹⁹⁷
- **The "What's bothering you"** campaign was the topic of reporting. The news is broadcast by Prva TV.¹⁹⁸

The report on women's rights in the labor market mentions Roma women, women with disabilities, women living in rural areas, and women belonging to the LGBTI population as particularly vulnerable categories. The news is transmitted by *Espresso*.¹⁹⁹

The LGBTI community was also mentioned on TV. As part of the show *New Day* on N1 TV on September 9, the guest was Nedim Sejdinović, and the topic in which LGBTI was mentioned was the Washington Agreement.²⁰⁰ Zorica Mršević from the Institute of Social Sciences was a guest in the *Review of the Day* on N1 television, and she spoke about the rights of LGBT people in Serbia and Serbia's progress in the field of human rights.²⁰¹

¹⁹¹ <https://nova.rs/vesti/drustvo/vucic-brani-gejeve-u-togou-a-u-srbiji-ih-proganjaju/>

¹⁹² <https://direktno.rs/vesti/drustvo-i-ekonomija/300365/vucic-sporazum-vasington-kosovo-lgbt.html>

¹⁹³ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/fabrici-podraska-lgbti-pravima-je-podraska-pravima-svih-ljudi/>

¹⁹⁴ https://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2020&mm=09&dd=15&nav_category=12&nav_id=1733349

¹⁹⁵ <https://nova.rs/zabava/kako-je-natasa-bekvalac-postala-gej-ikona/>

¹⁹⁶ <https://www.espresso.rs/showbiz/zvezde/629469/natasa-bekvalac-cerka-osude-komentari-lgbt-prava>

¹⁹⁷ <https://informer.rs/zena/poznati/550704/pevacica-pokrenula-inicijativu-sklapanje-istopolnih-brakova-natasa-bekvalac-bolje-deca-rastu-gej-porodicama-nego-sirotistima>

¹⁹⁸ <https://www.prva.rs/zivot/urban/328258/a-sta-tebe-zulja>

¹⁹⁹ <https://www.espresso.co.rs/vesti/drustvo/630371/zene-posao-radnici-diskriminacija-lgbt-romkinje>

²⁰⁰ <https://rs.n1info.com/vesti/a637861-sejdinovic-o-ukidanju-presude-drzava-spreca-za-ubistvo-curuvije/>

²⁰¹ <https://nova.rs/vesti/drustvo/newsmaxadria-pregled-dana-17-09-2020/>

Print media

- Autumn is already the time when the Law on Same-Sex Communities began to be discussed more seriously. Although this law has been announced for several years, it has somehow become clear from the fall of 2020 that it will be adopted during the mandate of this government. First, NGOs launched an online petition signed by more than 6,500 people, including a number of public figures and activists from abroad.²⁰²
- In an interview with *Alo*, activist Predrag Azdejković denied that he would be the new Minister for Gender Equality, but pointed out that one day he could possibly be the Minister for Human and Minority Rights. The title is tendentious and speculates that Azdejković could be the new minister, although there is no public mention that the ministry could be opened in the new government of Ana Brnabić..²⁰³
- Marko Srejić wrote the novel *Room* in which he problematized the topic of homosexuality and the difficult attitude towards it in a small environment.²⁰⁴ Ten days later, Vuk Raičević, a lawyer from the Belgrade Center for Human Rights, spoke about the difficult position of the LGBTI community in the newspaper *Danas*.²⁰⁵ *Danas* also reported on the trial initiated by the organization *To be known* against the president of the Political Council of the Dveri party, Vladimir Dimitrijevic, after a private lawsuit. According to the text, the lawsuit was initiated after Dimitrijevic refused to publicly apologize on the recommendation of the Commissioner for Gender Equality, regarding his author's text "In Defense of the Family", in which he insulted members of the LGBTI community by making incorrect claims.²⁰⁶ Also, the Deputy Ombudsman for Gender Equality, Jelena Stojanović, told the *Beta* agency that local governments should allocate more money to improve the position of LGBTI people in their communities, as reported by the newspaper *Danas*.²⁰⁷
- The organization *Belgrade Pride* has launched a media campaign on the request for the adoption of a law on same-sex unions, the adoption of which is delayed by year after year. Goran Miletić from Civil Rights Defenders Belgrade spoke on their behalf for *Nedeljnik* magazine, pointing out all the legal aspects this law will bring for the

²⁰² Gay rights are human rights, *Danas* 5.10.2020

²⁰³ Predrag Azdejković says: I will be new minister for human rights, *Alo* 7.10.2020

²⁰⁴ It's hard to be gay in the Serbian periphery, *Kurir* 10.10.2020

²⁰⁵ The position of LGBTI is still hard, *Danas* 20.10.2020

²⁰⁶ The trial of Dimitrijevic for discrimination has begun, *Danas* 13.10.2020

²⁰⁷ Local governments to allocate funds to improve the position of LGBT people, *Danas* 23.10.2020

LGBTI community, and Aleksandar Miletić from the McCann Belgrade marketing agency, who spoke about the *What is bothering us* campaign, which they launched symbolically by rolling pebbles in rainbow colors towards state institutions. Singer Nataša Bekvalac was one of the promoters of this campaign.²⁰⁸

- In October, newspapers in Serbia will follow the statement in a documentary by Pope Francis that homosexuals are "God's children" and in several articles will examine public opinion in Serbia not only on religion and the LGBTI community but also on the law on same-sex unions. has been announcing for some time. And while *Politika*²⁰⁹ a little more cautious in its text and points out that the church did not change its position on gay marriage, but that Pope Francis only supported the civil registration of same-sex unions, *Blic*²¹⁰ brings an article with a rather tendentious and enthusiastic title *How Pope Francis changed the Catholic Church from the ground up*. In the text in *Kurir*²¹¹ the authors of the article probably had in mind that the adoption of the law on same-sex unions was being prepared, because the interlocutors themselves mentioned the law in the article. Commissioner Brankica Janković mentions in the article that no one should be discriminated against, while Predrag Azdejković says that the adoption of the law will most likely take place in the new Government. The courier also asked for the opinion of religious analyst Draško Đenović on whether such attitudes could be found in the Serbian Orthodox Church, which replied that there were no such attitudes, but also that such an attitude could cause earthquakes in the Vatican itself. *Danas* also conducted a short poll on the question of Pope Francis' statement, in which LGBTI activists from the non-governmental sector, Maja Šenk, Goran Miletić and Predrag Azdejković, participated. In addition to the activists, the theologian Aleksandar Ninković also gave a statement in which he pointed out that the statement itself did not surprise him because it was slowly becoming the position that all baptized and believing people are God's children. Unfortunately, *Danas* missed the opportunity to examine its interlocutors about the difference in the position of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church.²¹²

Digital media

²⁰⁸ How did the campaign "What stings us" come about at the best moment?, *Nedeljnik* 8.10.2020

²⁰⁹ Pope Francis gave the wind in the back to same-sex communities, *Politika* 23.10.2020

²¹⁰ How Pope Francis changed the Catholic Church fundamentally, *Blic* 23.10.2020

²¹¹ We are investigating: Is Serbia ready for gay marriages?, *Kurir* 23.10.2020

²¹² Question & Answer: How do you comment on Pope Francis' statement to support same-sex partnerships, *Danas* 24.10.2020.

- In October, the media also wrote about the support that **celebrities, including Natasa Bekvalac**, provide to the LGBTI community and the adoption of the Law on Same-Sex Partnership. It is transmitted by Nova S.²¹³
- Portal o21 writes about **a petition signed by more than 6,500 people** in less than two weeks, which supports the adoption of the Law on Same-Sex Partnership. More than 800 signatures arrived from Novi Sad.²¹⁴ The news was also transmitted by Danas.²¹⁵
- Free Europe brings the text entitled **"The burden that Ana Brnabić transfers to the second term"**.²¹⁶
- Whether the **introduction of the two ministries** will lead to any changes is the topic of the text transmitted by Nova S.²¹⁷ The text says that the LGBTI community was not helped by the fact that the Prime Minister is someone who is openly LGBTI.
- **The position of the LGBTI community in employment and business relations**, ie trade unions and community participation is a topic that *Novi magazin* deals with.²¹⁸
- **The EC report on Serbia in 2020, according to the EC**, particularly affects human rights defenders and LGBTI people. The report is being addressed by *Free Europe*,²¹⁹ and mentions that this position is shared by the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality.
- **Second hearing against Dimitrijević** for his attitude towards LGBTI people. *Danas* wrote about this topic ²²⁰.
- **The state is not taking any steps to help the LGBTI community**, LGBTI activists say. This was reported by *Beta*²²¹, *Novi magazin*²²² and *Danas*²²³.

²¹³ <https://nova.rs/zabava/gej-je-ok-poznati-podrzali-zakon-o-istopolnom-partnerstvu/>

²¹⁴ <https://www.o21.rs/story/Novi-Sad/Vesti/255007/Vise-od-6500-ljudi-potpisalo-peticiju-za-istopolne-brakove-iz-Novo>

²¹⁵ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/vise-od-6-500-ljudi-potpisalo-peticiju-za-usvajanje-zakona-o-istopolnim-partnerstvima/>

²¹⁶ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/breme-koje-ana-brnabi%C4%87-prenosi-u-drugi-mandat/30878455.html>

²¹⁷ <https://nova.rs/vesti/politika/dobili-smo-dva-nova-ministarstva-lepo-zvuce-ali-cemu-sluzi/>

²¹⁸ <https://novimagazin.rs/vesti/230923-sindikati-i-civilno-drustvo-solidarno-u-borbi-za-radna-prava>

²¹⁹ <https://pescanik.net/izvestaj-ek-o-srbiji-2020-pravosudje-i-vladavina-prava/>

²²⁰ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/pocelo-sudjenje-predsedniku-politickog-saveta-dveri-zbog-diskriminacije/>

²²¹ <https://beta.rs/vesti/drustvo-vesti-srbija/135329-sparavalo-drzava-ne-preuzima-nikakve-korake-da-pomogne-lgbt-za>

²²² <http://novimagazin.rs/vesti/sparavalo-drzava-ne-preuzima-nikakve-korake-da-pomogne-lgbt-zajednici>

²²³ <https://www.danas.rs/dijalog/reakcije/kritikujem-ideologiju-politickog-homoseksualizma/>

- **It is necessary for the state to protect the participants of the festival "Mirdita, dobar dan"**, is another topic that was broadcast by the media in October, and in which it was mentioned that members of the LGBTI community face problems, threats and discrimination, writes *Nova S.*²²⁴
- **Homosexuality, human rights and TV: How Libres advertisements for pads stirred up the Balkans** is the title of an author's text published on the BBC regarding the criticism of the pads advertisement, which was transmitted by the portals *o21*²²⁵ and *Danas*²²⁶.
- *Noizz*²²⁷ reports the news about Đani Jovanović, one of the biggest gay activists in Germany.
- **The election of Ratko Dmitrović as Minister was a topic of media coverage** as the Minister had several statements that were against LGBTI communities. This was reported by *Noizz*²²⁸.
- **The Christian right close to Trump in Europe is funding ultra-conservative goals**, according to research reported by *Nedeljnik*²²⁹ and *Euractiv*.²³⁰

On the margins of the news about free legal aid, there is information that members of the LGBT population can also receive free legal aid, regardless of their financial situation. This was reported by *Novosti*.²³¹ The difficult position of the LGBTI youth community is also mentioned in the report on the position of young people during the corona, which is also reported by *Novosti*.²³² In October, the attitude of the EU towards the LGBTI community is discussed, where it is said that Norway has a far better attitude.²³³

²²⁴ <https://nova.rs/kultura/festival-mirdita-dobar-dan-umetnici-program/>

²²⁵ <https://www.o21.rs/story/BBC/256528/Homoseksualnost-ljudska-prava-i-TV-Kako-su-Libres-reklame-za-uloske-uzb>

²²⁶ <https://www.danas.rs/bbc-news-serbian/homoseksualnost-ljudska-prava-i-tv-kako-su-libres-reklame-za-uloske-uzburkale-balkan/>

²²⁷ <https://noizz.rs/big-stories/rom-geji-deda-42-godini-djani-jovanovic/3nj7gtl>

²²⁸ <https://noizz.rs/noizz-news/ratko-dmitrovic-novi-ministar-za-porodicu-i-demografiju/wqczglh>

²²⁹ <https://www.nedeljnik.rs/hriscanska-desnica-bliska-trampu-u-evropi-finansira-ultra-konzervativne-ciljeve-milioni-dolara-za-borbu-protiv-afirmacije-ljudskih-prava/>

²³⁰ <https://euractiv.rs/10-ljudska-prava/179-vesti/15534-hriscanska-desnica-bliska-trampu-u-evropi-finansira-ultra-konzer>

²³¹ <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/drustvo/922256/27-000-gradjana-dobilo-pro-bono-savet-ili-advokata-navrsilo-godinu-dana-primene-zakona-besplatnoj-pravnoj-pomoci>

²³² <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/drustvo/922985/kako-pandemija-uticala-devojke-14-19-godina-srbiji-istrazivanje-pokazalo-zabrinjavajuce-podatke>

²³³ <https://www.danas.rs/svet/norveska-bolje-primenjuje-zakone-eu-nego-njene-clanice/>

Antonela Riha and Srdjan Milosevic spoke on TV about violence and hatred of others (*N1, Novi dan*²³⁴). Same-sex partnerships were one of the topics of *Prva TV*, within the show *Prelistavanje*.²³⁵ The position of the LGBTI population was the topic of the *Dan uživo* on N1 TV, and the guest was the executive director of the association "Da se zna" Dragoslava Barzut.²³⁶

NOVEMBER

Print media

- In an interview for *Blic*, Commissioner Brankica Janković talks about gender equality and mentions the Washington Agreement, which, among other things, mentions LGBTI rights. She notes that this agreement is welcome because it gives a clear signal and encouragement for the promotion of human and minority rights in Serbia.²³⁷
- The end of the year is also the time for some of the traditional polls on who are the most powerful people in certain social spheres from sports through politics to the most powerful people in the media. *Blic* conducts a survey every year, which includes the most powerful people in Serbia, and in 2020, a survey was conducted on the most powerful women, where the Prime Minister Ana Brnabić was the first on the list. Unfortunately, there were no members of the LGBTI community on the list yet, and the list was mostly dominated by women from culture and business.²³⁸
- *Danas*, on 14.11, transmitted a story from Twitter where the writer and activist Dragoslava Barzut addressed the public with a request for any job in order to be able to finish her new book. *Danas* approached this topic from a different angle, first of all reminding of the case of Aida Ćorović who once also looked for a job as a cleaner through social networks, but also opened the debate on the position of writers in Serbia and why that job is not paid enough. Also, in the same issue, *Danas* reported on the presentation of the analysis on the labor rights of the LGBTI community,

²³⁴ <https://rs.n1info.com/video/info/a662033-riha-i-milosevic-o-nasilju-nad-romima/>

²³⁵ <https://www.prva.rs/web-tv/emisija/jutro/87627/jutro-23102020/317443/1-deo>

²³⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAf-RT1kqI>

²³⁷ The change without women, and in the name of women, are impossible, *Blic* 8.11.2020

²³⁸ We are researching who are the most powerful women in Serbia, *Blic* 9.11.2020

whose author is Saša Gajin.²³⁹ Takođe, u istom broju je Danas izvestio i o predstavljanju analize o radnim pravima LGBTI zajednice a čiji je autor Saša Gajin.²⁴⁰

- *Blic* brings one and one positive message with a happy ending about Đani Jovanović, a gay activist of Roma origin who managed to overcome all social obstacles and become one of the leading LGBTI activists in Germany.²⁴¹ In the newspaper *Večernje novosti*, columnist Filip Rodić drew a parallel with Serbian and American society by comparing liberal and right-wing views of the LGBTI community through his attitude towards prominent American activist Mile Janopoulos, who is right-wing, and who claims that he was most attacked by liberals. *Danas* published on the occasion of the case of the attack on journalist Zaklina Tatalović by the singer Ace Lukas, in which she called the guests of the Hit tweet, although they are male, "female graces".²⁴²
- At the end of November, the Minister of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue Gordana Čomić pointed out in an interview with the weekly *NIN* that she expects the adoption of the law on same-sex unions soon and that the injustice done to one minority.²⁴³

Digital media

- **Zašto su izbori za Senat istorijski za LGBTI zajednicu**, bila je tema kojom se bavila *Slobodna Evropa*.²⁴⁴
- *Mondo*²⁴⁵ početkom meseca najavljuje ono što će uslediti nekoliko dana kasnije – **zabrana usvajanja dece istopolnim parovima u Mađarskoj**. Nekoliko dana kasnije, ovo najavljuje i *Politika*.²⁴⁶
- **Prva strategija za jednakost LGBTI osoba u EU** jedna je od vesti koja je najčešće prenošena tokom novembra. Od analiziranih medija, preneli su je *Novi magazin*,²⁴⁷ *RTV*²⁴⁸, *Danas*²⁴⁹ i *Nova S*²⁵⁰.

²³⁹ The writer is looking for a job as a cleaner on Twitter, *Danas* 14.11.2020

²⁴⁰ LGBTI victims of discrimination, *Danas* 11.14.2020

²⁴¹ Gay, Roma, and grandpa in 42nd year, *Blic* 21.11.2020

²⁴² When is okay to be gay? *Večernje novosti*, 15.11.2020

²⁴³ Gordana Comic: What I am doing now is the politics of the DS, *NIN* 26.11.2020

²⁴⁴ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/za%C5%A1to-su-izbori-za-senat-sad-a-istorijski-za-lgbtq-zajednicu-/30931949.html>

²⁴⁵ <https://mondo.rs/Info/Svet/a1396667/madarska-novi-zakon-zabrana-uvajanja-dece-lgbt-osobama-istopolni-brakovi.html>

²⁴⁶ <http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/466693/Orban-i-EU-u-klincu-oko-LGBT-prava>

- **LABRIS-ovu analizu o tome da su LGBTI osobe žrtve diskriminacije** preneli su samo *Danas*²⁵¹ i *N1*²⁵².
- **Podrška Žaklini Tatalović** nakon seksističkih komentara Aleksandra Vuksanovića – Ace Lukasa, stigla je od udruženja „Da se zna“. Njihovo pismo podrške u celosti prenosi *Nova S.*²⁵³

When it comes to television, the LGBTI community has been mentioned mostly sporadically in other news, or in the bullying of vulnerable categories. The latter was the case when Mateja Norčić Štramcar, Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to Serbia, mentioned LGBTI as one of the endangered categories on *Dnevnik RTS1*. On November 16, the Minister of Human Rights and Social Dialogue, Gordana Čomić, was on *Dnevnik N1 TV*, and she talked about the adoption of the Law on Same-Sex Communities. Čomić also talked about the adoption of that law on *TV Prva*.²⁵⁴

DECEMBER

Print media

- As early as December 1, the tabloid *Alo* opens the topic of the law on same-sex unions. The floor was given to the deputies of the position, MP Vladimir Djukanovic spoke against with the argument: "God created Adam and Eve and not Adam and Steve", while SNS MP Dragan Shormaz is also said to be in favor of the law on same-sex unions. Minister Gordana Čomić defended the law by stating that this law is not against the majority, but gives the constitutionally guaranteed rights to a distinct minority.²⁵⁵ On the same day, *Kurir* will also transmit the statement of Minister Gordana Čomić that the law on same-sex partnership should be in the parliamentary procedure by the end of the year.²⁵⁶ It seems that this issue has raised a storm among the opposition and not only the position, so the right-wing party *Dveri* issued a statement "Progressives, let's prevent embarrassment in the announcement" in

²⁴⁷ <http://novimagazin.rs/svet/prva-strategija-za-jednakost-lgbtiq-osoba-u-eu>

²⁴⁸ http://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/evropa/ek-predstavila-prvu-strategiju-za-ravnopravnost-lgbtik_1178353.html

²⁴⁹ <https://www.danas.rs/svet/prva-strategija-za-jednakost-lgbtiq-osoba-u-eu/>

²⁵⁰ <http://rs.n1info.com/Svet/a671219/Predstavljena-strategija-EU-za-jednakost-LGBTIQ-osoba.html>

²⁵¹ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/poslodavci-najcesce-nesvesni-diskriminacije-lgbti-osoba/>

²⁵² <https://rs.n1info.com/vesti/a671639-labris-lbgt-osobe-zrtve-diskriminacije-na-poslu-i-prilikom-zaposljavanja/>

²⁵³ <https://nova.rs/zabava/lgbt-udruzenje-nakon-lukasovih-uvreda-podrska-za-zaklinu/>

²⁵⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1810250572446375>

²⁵⁵ A rift in power over gay marriage, *Alo* 1.12.2020

²⁵⁶ By the end of the year, the law on same-sex partnership will be drafted, *Kurir* 1.12.2020

Danas' column Personal position, ie that the adoption of this law should be prevented because he is a "slap to patriotic Serbia". In the newspaper *Danas*, two days later, the organisation *Da se zna* with the counter-argument that same-sex marriages do not affect the fall in the birth rate answered them. The same organisation also issued a statement that due to violence against LGBTI, there were as many as 430 reports during 2020.²⁵⁷

- On the occasion of Human Rights Day on December 10, several organizations will respond in a *Danas* survey on the current position of the LGBTI community in Serbia. Goran Miletić from the Belgrade Pride pointed out that the position of LGBTI people is far better than it was in the 1990s, when even declaring oneself was punishable, but also that in a traditional country like Serbia, it is important to have a lesbian as prime minister. For Maja Šenk from Labris, the position of LGBTI is still bad, but she also points out that Prime Minister Brnabić herself did not contribute to improving the position of this community. Jovanka Todorović from Geten pointed out that the stigma towards trans people is still strong.²⁵⁸ Minister for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue Gordana Comić reiterated that all people have the same rights regardless of their gender, race, disability or sexual orientation.²⁵⁹ Bojana Jokić also spoke for *Danas*, on behalf of the Progress Forum from Montenegro, and on that occasion pointed out that the level of transphobia and homophobia is still high in Montenegro, although this Balkan country adopted a law on same-sex partnerships in July of that year..²⁶⁰
- *Danas* did not fail to mark the 25th anniversary of the non-governmental organization for lesbian human rights LABRIS with an appropriate text.²⁶¹
- Politician and member of the SPS presidency Boris Milicevic, and a representative of the Gay-Straight Alliance, in an interview with the weekly *Express*, criticized the LGBTI community in the sense that they themselves did not do enough to find political support for the adoption of this law. He also points out that non-governmental organizations have only made legal proposals, but that they have not gone a step further, but expect everyone else to "die" in order for the law to be passed.²⁶² Contrary to his views, Antonijević from the Foundation for Open Society complains that the adoption of the law took so long.

²⁵⁷ As many as 430 reports of LGBT people for violence in 2020, *Danas* 8.12.2020

²⁵⁸ What do the representatives of LGBTI organizations think about the current position of that organization in Serbia, *Danas* 10.12.2020

²⁵⁹ Gordana Čomić: Whose are our human rights? *Danas*, 10.12.2020

²⁶⁰ There is a very high degree of homo / bi / transphobia, *Danas* 10.12.2020

²⁶¹ Labris celebrates 25 years of existence, *Danas* 11.12.2020

²⁶² Mr. Wife and Mrs. Husband, *Ekspres* 11.12.2020

- In the New Year's issue of the *Serbian Telegraph*, Prime Minister Brnabić showed a picture of her son for the first time.²⁶³

Digital media

- Dragoslav Bokan, President of the Institute for National Strategy, was a guest on TV Prva together with LGBTI activist Predrag Azdejković. He called the LGBTI community a **"group of selfish people."** The media that carried this news condemned these words - among them B92²⁶⁴ and Noizz²⁶⁵ who say Bokan "insulted the LGBTI community."
- The reaction to the article published in the print edition of *Danas*, **"Progressives, let's prevent shame in the announcement,"** appeared in the online edition of *Danas*.²⁶⁶
- *Danas*²⁶⁷ also wrote about the closing of the queer film festival "Merlinka". B92 also dealt with this topic²⁶⁸.
- TV Show *Usijanje dana on Kuriru*²⁶⁹ - the guests were Predrag Azdejković, editor of the magazine "Optimist" and LGBTI activists, and Aleksandra Gavrilović from Labris. The topic of the visit was the **Law on Same-Sex Partnerships**.
- **Since the beginning of the year in Serbia, there were 430 reports of violence or discrimination against LGBT people**, show the results of the association "Da se zna". This is conveyed by *Free Europe*.²⁷⁰
- **In Serbia, 62 percent of respondents believe that LGBT + is an immoral and decadent ideology**, and 32 percent believe that the LGBT + population should be guaranteed rights. This is one of the data from the public opinion poll organized by GLOBSEC. Although this data is not in the focus of media coverage (low confidence in

²⁶³ The Prime Minister showed a picture of her son for the first time, *Srpski Telegraf* 31.12.2020

²⁶⁴ https://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2020&mm=12&dd=01&nav_category=12&nav_id=1773351

²⁶⁵ <https://noizz.rs/kontra/bokan-uvredio-lgbt-zajednicu/owpff63>

²⁶⁶ <https://www.danas.rs/dijalog/reakcije/istopolni-brakovi-i-populaciona-politika/>

²⁶⁷ <https://www.danas.rs/kultura/završen-12-merlinka-festival-najbolji-film-letu-85-fransoa-ozona/>

²⁶⁸ https://www.b92.net/kultura/vesti.php?yyyy=2020&mm=12&dd=07&nav_category=1864&nav_id=1776572

²⁶⁹ <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/drustvo/3581223/predrag-azdejkovic-i-aleksandra-gavrilovic-u-usijanju-dana-da-li-ce-zakon-o-istopolnim-partnerstvima-otkloniti-sve-nepravde>

²⁷⁰ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30988037.html>

vaccination is highlighted), many media outlets have reported it. Among them are RTV²⁷¹ and Nova S²⁷².

- **What do the representatives of LGBTI organizations think** - what is the position of the LGBTI community in Serbia, was, on the occasion of the International Human Rights Day, a topic covered by *Danas*.²⁷³
- **The Ombudsman recommended to the Ministry of Human Rights measures to improve the position of LGBTI in December**. This was conveyed by *Danas*²⁷⁴, *Espresso*²⁷⁵, *N1*²⁷⁶ and *Nova S*²⁷⁷.
- In mid-December, **Hungary banned same-sex couples from adopting children**. This was conveyed by *o21*²⁷⁸, *Espresso*²⁷⁹ and *N1*²⁸⁰.
- **Montenegro Pride** is a topic that was most often covered by the media in Serbia in December when it comes to the LGBTI community. The news that the Parade was held in Montenegro was conveyed *Blic*²⁸¹, *Alo*²⁸², *N1*²⁸³, *Danas*²⁸⁴ and *Glas Amerike*.²⁸⁵

²⁷¹ http://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/drustvo/globsek-poverenje-u-vakcinu-41-odsto_1187298.html

²⁷² <https://nova.rs/vesti/drustvo/globsek-u-srbiji-41-odsto-gradana-ima-poverenja-u-vakcinu/>

²⁷³ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/sta-misle-predstavnici-e-lgbti-organizacija-o-trenutnom-polozaju-te-zajednice-u-srbiji/>

²⁷⁴ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/ombudsman-preporucio-ministarstvu-za-ljudska-prava-mere-za-unapredjenje-polozaj>

²⁷⁵ <https://www.espresso.co.rs/vesti/drustvo/684575/vazne-mere-ombudsman-preporucio-ministarstvu-za-ljudska-prava-mere-za-unapredjenje-lgbti-polozaja>

²⁷⁶ <http://rs.n1info.com/Vesti/a683865/Ombudsman-preporucio-mere-za-unapredjenje-polozaja-LGBTI-osoba.html>

²⁷⁷ <https://nova.rs/region/orbanove-gestapo-metode-novi-zakon-napad-na-lgbt-populaciju/>

²⁷⁸ <https://www.o21.rs/story/BBC/261044/LGBT-i-usvajanje-dece-Madjarska-zabranila-istopolnim-parovima-da-usvajaj>

²⁷⁹ <https://www.espresso.rs/svet/planeta/685531/ova-eu-drzava-ukida-gej-prava-otac-je-musko-majka-je-zensko>

²⁸⁰ <http://rs.n1info.com/Svet/a684445/Grupe-za-ljudska-prava-osudile-zakon-o-zabrani-usvanja-dece-istopolnim-parovi>

²⁸¹ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/svet/nedjelja-ponosa-osmi-montenegro-prajd-održan-u-podgorici/fhgyxjo>

²⁸² <https://www.alo.rs/vesti/region/u-podgorici-održan-osmi-montenegro-prajd/366896/vest>

²⁸³ <https://rs.n1info.com/region/a685683-montenegro-prajd-obeleden-defileom-automobila-u-podgorici/>

²⁸⁴ <https://www.danas.rs/svet/crna-gora-prajd-defile-automobila/>

²⁸⁵ <https://www.glasamerike.net/a/crna-gora-prajd-defile-automobili/5706660.html>

I CASE STUDY MEDIA NATIONAL TEAM OF ANA BRNABIĆ - "I AM NOT AN LGBT PRIME MINISTER BUT A LGBT PRIME MINISTER"

In the last few years, the LGBTI community has experienced a real media boom in the Serbian public. In part, he can thank his most outspoken representative, Prime Minister Ana Brnabić, and in part thanks to the legal regulations that have changed and led to debates in the Assembly on same-sex unions.²⁸⁶ Ana Brnabić's activities, even now in the past half a decade, have left their mark on the political scene of Serbia on the position of the LGBTI community, which LABRIS has already written about in its report for 2017.²⁸⁷ Her political promotion, first to the Minister of State and Local Government in 2016, stimulated the first open positive reactions in the direction of the LGBTI community and, more importantly, established a trend in which the sexual orientation of the Minister, and since 2017 the Prime Minister, cannot speak in a negative context.²⁸⁸ Also, Jelena Visnjic believes that the treatment in the media towards the political activities of Ana Brnabic is somewhat predictable because it is a product of homophobia, misogyny and sexism in the Serbian patriarchal society.²⁸⁹ As Bilic notes, negative comments about Brnabic are sanctioned even when it comes to the coalition partners of the Serbian Progressive Party in Parliament, or the comment is rudely answered if it is about someone from the ranks of the right-wing opposition.²⁹⁰ Here, we must mention that Ana Brnabić does not emphasize her sexual orientation in the foreground and that the media are the ones who are more interested in her private life, especially since she started appearing in public with her partner.

It is not easy to write about the media representation of the first LGBTI prime minister in Serbia, because her sexual orientation is not only not in the focus of her work, but the media themselves seem to have an ambivalent attitude towards it. In an interview with *Blic*,

²⁸⁶ For more on the history of the Law on Same-Sex Communities, see Labris's publication Analysis of the Legal and Political Situation in Serbia in the Context of Legal Regulation of Same-Sex Communities. The publication is available at:

<http://www.labris.org.rs/sites/default/files/Analiza%20pravno%20-%20opoliti%C4%8Dke%20situacije%20u%20Republici%20Srbiji%20u%20kontekstu%20zakonskog%20regulisanja%20istopolnih%20partnerstava.pdf>

²⁸⁷ Millimeter by millimeter right – left: Political representation of the LGBT community in the media during 2017, Labris 2018.

²⁸⁸ Politicians of a different orientation are not a novelty in Serbian politics, probably the most famous politician Boris Milicevic, a member of the Socialist Party of Serbia, but their actions in public did not lead to more visible reactions. Boris Milicevic has been a Serbian politician and LGBTI activist for several decades. He has been a member of the SPS Main Board since 2010, and during the mandate of the Government of Ivica Dačić, he was an advisor to the Minister without Portfolio Branko Ružić in charge of European integration. For more on his activities, see the SPS press releases at: <https://www.sps.org.rs/tag/boris-milicevic/>

²⁸⁹ Milimetar po milimetar, str. 15.

²⁹⁰ Bojan Bilić, Ana is here: figures of the gap, class privileges and the Prime Minister Ana Brnabić, Sociology LXIII, 2020, p. 379.

Brnabić will define her appearance in the media as a prime minister who is "LGBT committed and not as an LGBT prime minister."²⁹¹ Whether it was thanks to Brnabić or whether there was a real change of consciousness is debatable, but it is noticeable that the tone of reporting on topics from the domain of LGBTI rights has changed towards a neutral or slightly positive attitude. The media has an extremely positive attitude when it comes to the Prime Minister's orientation, her partner or the child she got from that relationship, whether it is the pro-government media or media that are critical of this government. In fact, individuals from the LGBTI community complained more about the treatment that the Prime Minister has, which undoubtedly stems from the political position she occupies, than the media properly opened this issue from the legal point of view.²⁹²

Ana Brnabić welcomed the previous year 2020 as the Prime Minister, and a member of the Serbian Progressive Party, which was preparing for the end of her mandate, ie for the beginning of the campaign for the regular parliamentary elections, which were originally supposed to be held in April 2020. The appearance of Ana Brnabić in the first half of 2020 was exclusively in the context of her political role. With the declaration of a state of emergency, her position was further strengthened by Brnabić being the head of the Crisis Staff.²⁹³ After the declaration of the end of the state of emergency on May 6, the campaign for the elections held on June 21 started again. According to the findings of the non-governmental organization CRTA, Prime Minister Brnabić visited 30 cities and municipalities from May 21 to June 16.²⁹⁴ Of course, in all these visits, Prime Minister Brnabić did not talk about the LGBTI community and their rights. The period after the elections was characterized by speculation in the media that the new prime minister could also be the Minister of Agriculture from the previous Government, Branislav Nedimović, or the Mayor of Novi Sad, Miloš Vučević.²⁹⁵ However, Ana Brnabić was elected in the second term as Prime

²⁹¹ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/intervju-ana-brnabic-ja-nisam-lgbt-premierka-nego-premierka-koja-je-lgbt/gwmvejv>

²⁹² For more on the debate among the activists themselves, see the article Legal gap: The Prime Minister of Serbia has no parental rights, *Danas* 22.2.2019. The article is also available at:

<https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/premierka-srbije-nema-nikakva-roditeljska-prava/>;

What Ana Brnabić has done for LGBT rights in Serbia, *Talas*, Available at:

<https://talas.rs/2019/02/05/sta-je-ana-brnabic-uradila-za-lgbt-prava-u-srbiji/> Accessed: 5.4.2021

²⁹³ <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/450999/obrazovan-krizni-stab-za-suzbijanje-covid-19.php> Accessed: 5.4.2021

²⁹⁴ Parliamentary Elections 2020 - Final Report, CRTA October 2020, p. 55. The report is available at:

https://crt.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Parlamentarni-izbori-2020_Crta_Završni-izvestaj.pdf

²⁹⁵ <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/907385/ana-vucevic-uzem-krugu-lider-naprednjaka-razmatra-bit-i-premier-nedimovic-mali-imaju-manje-sanse> Accessed 5.4.2021

Minister of Serbia on October 28, 2020.²⁹⁶ Her oath will be attended by her partner in the Serbian Parliament.²⁹⁷

This government is characterized by the fact that it has a large number of women as ministers, but also by the fact that, as announced in the media last year, the Law on same-sex partnership and the Law on gender equality have finally been adopted. First, announcements about the imminent adoption of the Law on Same-Sex Partnerships (during the fall of 2020) began to appear in the media, and in December, the Minister of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, Gordana Comic, initiated this topic. The law is currently being sent to ministries for comment, and a debate on it in parliament can be expected by the end of the spring session.²⁹⁸ Prime Minister Brnabić, as before, ie on other issues in the field of LGBTI rights, did not say anything.²⁹⁹

However, the very appearance of Ana Brnabić can have positive implications for the LGBTI community, although at first glance it does not seem so. Due to her presence in the media, a kind of political correctness has taken root in public speech where her sexual orientation is not talked about. Unlike other members of the LGBTI community, Brnabić was left free to speak to herself, without her interlocutors criticizing her. This is perhaps best seen in the way the media reacted when her partner gave birth and when positive comments came from the headlines.³⁰⁰ Although many activists have pointed out that Brnabić has no legal status, the Serbian president, for example, congratulated her on the birth of her son.³⁰¹ The existing legislative proposal, which will certainly be in the Parliament, does not even address the issue of children in same-sex communities, while Minister Čomić's explanation was that it was an issue in the domain of the Family Law.³⁰²

All these seemingly legal intricacies have nothing to do with the way the media treats Ana Brnabić. Her political role will be critically presented in the pro-government media, but also her family role if she wants to show it, while with a large dose of criticism, some media will treat her and her political work. It is in these media that her critics from the community to which, as she says she belongs, will find an interlocutor. In one of the rare interviews in which she talked about herself and her critics, she said: "There is a serious substitution of

²⁹⁶ <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/biografija/184/ana-brnabic.php> Accessed: 15.4.2021

²⁹⁷ <https://www.alo.rs/vesti/politika/partnerka-ane-brnabic-se-pojavila-u-skupstini-ekskluzivna-fotografija/352130/vest> Accessed: 15.4.2021

²⁹⁸ Available at : <https://www.paragraf.rs/dnevne-vesti/080321/080321-vest18.html>

²⁹⁹ <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/lgbt-zajednica-ceka-javnu-podrsku-premijerke-srbije/31194932.html>

³⁰⁰ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/partnerka-ane-brnabic-ana-brnabic-devojka-milica-djuridjic-slike/18280n4> ; <https://mondo.rs/Info/Srbija/a1167604/Ana-Brnabic-dobila-sina.html> ;

³⁰¹ <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/3209175/vucic-cestitao-sina-premijerki-brnabic-uzivo-na-tv-cestitam-ani-i-milici-da-igor-bude-ziv-i-zdrav-da-bude-pametna-srecan-i-uspesan>

³⁰² <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/comic-istopolna-zajednica-nije-brak-i-nema-usvajanja-dece/>

theses by those who criticize me. I am not the LGBT Prime Minister of Serbia, but I am the Prime Minister of Serbia who is LGBT. I am very aware of all the problems of the LGBT community in Serbia. I believe you all saw the news that my partner had given birth, but you could not see the news that I had become a parent because the law does not allow me to do such a thing. So I feel all that on my skin every day. What I tried to do was to use my example to positively influence people in Serbia who, for various reasons, challenge LGBT rights. I wanted them to see through me that the LGBT community is no different from the heterosexual one. To love this country. That we want to live in it, work in it, contribute to our society. It seemed to me that not hiding it would lead to some shift in society. And I don't think that's certainly enough, but it's a start, and a significant one at that. I'm sorry that the LGBT community doesn't think so and they don't recognize what I did. I will continue to work for the status of that community to be better in the future, as well as for everyone else in Serbia."³⁰³

It is difficult to determine the influence that Ana Brnabić had on the public opinion of Serbia in the past decade in the field of LGBTI rights, considering that she really and rarely spoke out on this issue. However, the latest research conducted by the NGO Civil Right Defenders showed that Serbian public opinion has become "more tolerant" of this issue, ie as Goran Miletic announced the research in *Danas*: "Serbia is ready for the law on same-sex unions."³⁰⁴ The findings of the research show that there was a change in attitudes in the research done in 2015 compared to what was done in 2020, where a significantly higher number of respondents said positively about the partner visiting his partner in a hospital or prison, or to exercise the right to health insurance or inheritance. However, these are some basic rights in which the average person does not see any particularity or "danger" in itself by the LGBTI community. Unfortunately, some things have not changed drastically, there is still a high percentage of people who think that homosexuality is a disease, 57% compared to 2015, when 66% of Serbian citizens thought the same, or the issue of adoption of children by LGBTI couples supports 23% 2020, in contrast to only 8% in 2015.³⁰⁵

At the end of 2020, in the traditional *Blic* poll, Brnabić was chosen as the most powerful woman in Serbia, and it is noticeable that there were no members of the LGBTI community in this poll besides her. This tells us that we need to work harder to free some social stigmas and start looking at them from a different angle, perhaps just as the Prime Minister said in an interview that members of this community are no different from members of the heterosexual community. Perhaps the best evidence of this is the cover of the tabloid *Srpski*

³⁰³ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/intervju-ana-brnabic-ja-nisam-lgbt-premijerka-nego-premijerka-koja-je-lgbt/gwmvejv>

³⁰⁴ <https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/istrazivanje-srbija-spremna-za-zakon-o-istopolnim-zajednicama/>

³⁰⁵ See the entire research at:

<https://crd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ENGLESKA-VERZIJA-1.pdf>

Telegraf, on which the Prime Minister showed a picture of her son in a New Year's interview and congratulations to the citizens.³⁰⁶ However, the impression is that Ana Brnabić is more recognized in the world as the LGBTI Prime Minister than in Serbia, where she is "only" the Prime Minister of LGBTI orientation, as evidenced by the news about Brnabić's promotion on the Instagram story of American actress Jennifer Aniston in January this year. as one of the persons who contribute to changes in the world, he points out the Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabić.

II CASE STUDY - LGBTI IN THE MEDIA DURING THE COVID

The position of the LGBTI community is certainly difficult in Serbia, but when a global epidemic caused by the Covid-19 virus occurs, it can only make the position of the LGBTI community more difficult. The epidemic that first appeared in Asia at the end of 2019 spread very quickly to Europe. In Serbia, the first case was registered at the beginning of March, and already on March 15, the Government introduced a restrictive state of emergency with limited movement, which lasted until May 6.³⁰⁷ The global characteristic of the so-called lockdown is that the majority of the population was forced to stay in their homes. For members of this community, this can be somewhat of a traumatic experience, given that just locking up means staying in the house with people who don't have to be friendly towards them. Last year, Labris conducted an analysis dedicated to their position during the state of emergency, in which it listed young people as a particularly vulnerable group who were forced to return to an environment that does not accept them due to the economic situation.³⁰⁸ A Handbook on protection measures during the Covid-19 crisis for LGBTI people has also been prepared ³⁰⁹, which is very important because this crisis has been going on for the second year.

Although March started violently for the LGBTI community with another attack on the Pride Info Center and the false news that the Pride Parade will be held in Laskovac, this trend will not continue when the state of emergency is introduced on March 15. The news that will dominate in March concerning the LGBTI community was mainly related to the publication of the State Department report on the human rights situation in Serbia, which also included a section on LGBTI rights stating that the position of this community is under constant pressure and violence, which was reported by both the print and electronic media.³¹⁰ In the

³⁰⁶ The Prime Minister showed a picture of her son for the first time, *Srpski Telegraf* 31.12.2020

³⁰⁷ <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/464097/skupstina-srbije-ukinula-vanredno-stanje.php>

³⁰⁸ <http://www.labris.org.rs/sites/default/files/LGBT%20Covid-19%20kriza%202020.pdf>

³⁰⁹ Handbook on protection measures during the COVID 19 crisis for LGBTI people, LABRIS, Belgrade 2021

³¹⁰ They blame us for discrimination, corruption, the Bytyci brothers, *Blic* 16.3.2020

<https://rs.n1info.com/vesti/a577096-izvestaj-stejt-departmenta-o-ljudskim-pravima-u-srbiji-2019;>

interview, the actor Miloš Timotijević³¹¹ will point out that he suffers criticism and threats from the mostly younger population on social networks, while some portals such as the BBC in Serbian will also broadcast the history of LGBTI scenes in Serbian films.³¹² From time to time, members on this topic also appear in lifestyle magazines, so in March an article was published titled *Is there a Fair Play in life*, in which, among other things, gay activist Marko Mihajlović talks about the life of LGBTI people in Serbia.³¹³ The Commissioner for Gender Equality, Brankica Janković, announced several times during the state of emergency and warned that the discrimination that took place also mentioned the LGBTI community.³¹⁴

In April, most of the news published was related to the COVID-19 virus, and LGBTI topics were significantly less. Some organizations, such as *Da se zna*, recognized the peculiarity of the situation in which members of the LGBTI community found themselves and started a chat through which they communicated with them and gave them psychological support.³¹⁵ The same association will point to Muamer Zukorlic's discriminatory and homophobic views, in which he tried to attribute responsibility for the COVID-19 pandemic to the LGBTI community, and he blamed fornication, immorality and deviations such as homosexuality for spreading the virus.³¹⁶ The dean of the Faculty of Law in Novi Sad also spoke about unscientific attitudes, claiming that homosexuality had become a model for shaping the family and that it had been imported from the West.³¹⁷ At the end of April, actor Miloš Timotijević repeated once again the claims that he received threats because of the role of a gay policeman he played in the *South Wind*.

The state of emergency lasted until May 6, and the print media did not report on LGBTI issues. Only *Blic* in its electronic edition commented on how modern societies view the appearance of corona virus, ie how minorities such as LGBTI people, migrants and foreigners are to blame.³¹⁸

The existing analysis of various forms (if you know a better word, say) of the media has shown that in times of emergency, the issue of LGBTI not only becomes secondary but

<https://www.danas.rs/drustvo/izvestaj-stejt-departementa-u-srbiji-u-2019-brojni-izazovi-u-domenu-ljudskih-prava/> ; <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/stejt-department-o-ljudskim-pravima-u-srbiji-marija-lukic-milan-jovanovic-i-braca/do> ;

³¹¹ Miloš Timotijević, Even children threatens us because of my role, *Blic* 30.3.2020

³¹² <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-52108992>

³¹³ Does Fair Play exist? *Cosmopolitan* March 2020.

³¹⁴ I don't want to be silent, that is not my job, *NIN* 12.3.2020

³¹⁵ Ugao, *Danas* 28.4. 2020.

³¹⁶ <https://mondo.rs/Info/Drustvo/a1316924/LGBT-Muamer-Zukorlic-optuzbe-diskriminacija.html>

³¹⁷ <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/politika/aktuelno.289.html:857313-Prof-dr-Branislav-Ristivojevic--Korona-unist>

³¹⁸ <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/drustvo/evropa-je-strahovala-od-novog-talasa-migranata-a-onda-je-dosla-korona-i-optuzbe-da/059drov>

almost over and disappears as a topic. This type of treatment of a minority community can only go deeper into the margins of people who are LGBTI and who do not have a legally regulated status in the field of same-sex partnerships, as the already mentioned Labris analysis concluded.³¹⁹ The state of emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic was made even more difficult for minorities in Serbia, but also for the majority of the population, because certain restrictions included disabling certain health services and restricting movement, which were crucial for people with mental disorders and important for normal functioning. As the pandemic continued in 2021, Labris has developed a special Handbook on protection measures during the COVID-19 crisis for LGBTI people.³²⁰ In the absence of wider social support, but also the state support, which was lacking for this minority community with a special package of measures, it is extremely important for the media to adequately address LGBTI issues.

III CASE STUDY - WASHINGTON AGREEMENT

The public in Serbia was informed about the signing of an agreement in Washington with the representatives of Pristina during June, and that the signing of the agreement itself can be expected on Vidovdan. However, that signing was postponed until the beginning of September, that is, the finish of the campaign for the American presidential elections. Although the main topic was supposed to be the signing of bilateral agreements between Belgrade and Pristina, it turned out that both sides were involved in some international matters that were not crucial for this type of bilateral agreements.

Point 13 of the Washington Agreement says: "Both sides will work with 69 countries that criminalize homosexuality in order to pressure decriminalization."

The public in Serbia was surprised by this point of the agreement, it can be said that in some way in the first place it reacted mockingly to the obligation arising from the agreement that Serbia works on the decriminalization of homosexuality in the world. This situation is probably best illustrated by the headline on the Nova portal: "Vučić defends gays in Togo, and they are persecuted in Serbia".³²¹ This was followed by a slightly more serious reaction from the LGBTI community, which was of the opinion that what Serbia committed itself to in Washington was hypocritical, because according to the State Department's report on the

³¹⁹Analysis of the position of LGBTI people during the crisis COVID -19 and recommendations for an adequate response of the state to the social needs of the LGBTI community, Labris Belgrade 2020. p. 17.

³²⁰ Handbook on protection measures during the COVID-19 crisis for LGBTI people, Labris, Belgrade 2021.

³²¹ <https://nova.rs/vesti/drustvo/vucic-brani-gejeve-u-togou-a-u-srbiji-ih-proganjaju/>

human rights situation, people from this community suffer serious violence.³²² Goran Miletic's comment³²³ from Civil Right Defenders was that this point of the agreement does not imply any concrete joint action of Belgrade and Pristina, while the Commissioner for Gender Equality Brankica Jankovic, commenting,³²⁴ among other things, said that this agreement encourages the development of minority rights in Serbia. However, there are also opinions that this point served more for the needs of the campaign of the then president and candidate for the new mandate in the White House, Donald Trump, and in which he wanted to show the expansion of the fight for LGBTI rights of his administration.³²⁵

Little has changed in Serbia since the signing of this agreement in September last year. Some points have been implemented, such as the recognition of Kosovo by Israel, but most have not or if they have, then they have been withdrawn like the head of the US DFC agency who came to Serbia but also withdrew shortly after Joe Biden took over as US president from Donald Trump . As for Point 13 of the Washington Agreement, it remains to be seen whether in the coming period Belgrade and Pristina will really join some international actions aimed at decriminalizing homosexuality, and until that happens, both sides are free to continue working in their communities on improving the lives of the LGBTI community.

ATTITUDES OF LGBTI COMMUNITY MEMBERS

For the purposes of this analysis, the research team spoke with members of the LGBTI community about how they saw the past year, marked by the COVID19 pandemic, in the context of the LGBTI community; what do they think about the fact that Serbia has undertaken to work on the decriminalization of homosexuality (Washington Agreement); what they expect from the adoption of the Law on Same-Sex Communities.

When it comes to pandemics, the interviewees agree that due to the pandemic, the LGBTI community has been pushed even further to the margins. Jelena Vasiljevic from the *Equal Rights Association (ERA)* said that many LGBTI people working in low-paid positions lost their jobs, and that they were forced to return to their smaller communities, which are in many cases intolerant.

Respondents were skeptical about whether Serbia would do anything about decriminalizing homosexuality. The answers are mostly that it will remain a dead letter on paper. Predrag

³²² <https://rs.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/235/Izvestaj-o-stanju-ljudskih-prava-u-Srbiji-za-2019.pdf>

³²³ Serbia and Kosovo with countries that respect LGBT rights, *Danas* 7.9.2020.

³²⁴ Change without women, and on behalf of women, is impossible, *Blic* 8.11.2020.

³²⁵ https://cddri.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Analiza-dokumenata-potpisanih-u-Beloj-ku%C4%87i_WEB001.pdf

Azdejkovic, editor of the gay magazine *Optimist*, director and selector of the *Merlinka Film Festival* and president of the *Gay Lesbian Info Center*, believes that Serbia will not do anything about this issue, but that activists can use the agreement to their advantage and for public advocacy.

The law on same-sex unions will probably be adopted, although the LGBTI community will not get much out of it when it comes to parenting and children, but this is a good start to fight for changes in the Family Law, through which the rights of LGBTI parents will be realized, our respondents say. The first registration will probably happen in a year or two, and the respondents do not expect a "perfect solution", as Stefan Sparavalo from the organization *Let It Be Known* says, but everyone agrees that the Law is a good start.

INTERVIEW WITH THE JOURNALIST OF THE *DANAS*, JELENA DIKOVIĆ

1. Your main topic you report on is transitional justice. How did you start reporting on LGBTI issues as well?

I have been dealing with LGBTI issues almost since I came to *Danas* at the end of 2006. And mostly on my own initiative because I am interested in both private and business. Even when I was a journalist in the political and foreign section, I always found time and ways to write about LGBTI topics because I think it is very important to constantly report on the difficult position of the LGBTI community, especially in a media such as *Danas*. And most importantly, in *Danas*, I have always had the freedom to write about these topics, without any of the editors reprimanding me or changing the titles and content of the text. That is why I am extremely happy and grateful, since LGBTI topics in Serbia are mostly reported sensationally in the majority of media, especially when it is Pride time. In the last few years, my sector has been human and minority rights, within which I mostly deal with transitional law and LGBTI stories. I follow almost everything related to the position of the LGBTI community, from press conferences, events, research, personal stories...

2. Can you tell us how much reporting on LGBTI issues has changed since you reported, has there been any improvement or deterioration in reporting?

I cannot say that the situation has not improved at all. Yes, but that is not enough. It seems to me that people in Serbia still leave the most negative comments on portals and social networks on LGBTI topics. LGBTI people are to blame for everything... I think that the biggest guilt for that lies with all countries that have not done anything all these years to promote LGBTI rights, point out that homosexuality is not a disease, explain to other citizens

that LGBTI people deserve the same rights as they. Apart from state institutions, there are also conservative parties and movements, which also influence the fact that the LGBTI community continues to be poorly reported in the Serbian media. That is why it is important that there are media like Danas that will report on the LGBTI community in an affirmative way.

3. You were awarded by the Commissioner for Gender Equality in 2019 for your reporting on tolerance, how much does that mean to you?

Yes, I received two awards from the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, and both were related to LGBTI topics. In the first text, I wrote about violence against LGBTI people, and in the second about the difficult life story of a trans woman from BiH who fled to Serbia. These awards mean something to me because they come from an independent state institution that recognizes all the difficulties LGBTI people face. Of course, awards and recognitions mean a lot to me personally, it's nice when someone recognizes my work, but it's my greatest pleasure when I help LGBTI people with my texts. I will be indescribably happy when I do something good for the LGBTI community.

4. How do you see the media image of Ana Brnabić? She enjoys the undisguised support of the pro-government media for her political role while the image sent about her private life is also in a positive tone or with very few negative comments.

For me, Ana Brnabić is the biggest disappointment on the political scene, precisely because, as an autobiotic lesbian in the prime minister's position, she did nothing to improve the position of the LGBTI community in Serbia. On the contrary, by enjoying all the rights that the LGBTI community still does not have - she just spat in the face of all LGBTI people in Serbia. She is an ordinary political ficus. The fact that it is supported by the pro-government media does not mean anything to other LGBTI people. They support her, not the entire LGBTI community.

5. What do you think about the situation in the media regarding the adoption of the Law on Same-Sex Communities?

The Law on same-sex unions could have already been adopted if Prime Minister Brnabić had made a little effort. But despite that, I am glad that this law could be adopted by the summer. I have objections to the proposals of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, but I still think that it is important that the law be passed as soon as possible, so that it can be amended in time. The pro-government media must not write badly about the law, but they should not try to promote it in particular. Given the kind of conservative and patriarchal country we live in, I give the media coverage of this law a passing assessment.

6. Do you have any recommendations to suggest for better media coverage of the LGBTI community?

I would like LGBTI organisations to cooperate more actively with the media that cover LGBTI topics. I think that a large number of representatives of LGBTI organizations do not know how the media work at all, so it would be good to organise workshops on such topics. Of course, LGBTI media seminars are always welcome to address LGBTI topics, but instructed by my experience, I think LGBTI organizations take the power of the media lightly, thinking that we are a newsletter that should only publish what suits them and when it suits them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis showed that most of the reporting in 2020 was of a neutral character. There was no use of offensive terms, and apart from individual texts, there was no negative reporting, in the sense that even texts and reporting against the legalization of LGBTI communities were rare. Below are tips on how to further improve reporting on LGBTI people. Journalists should be aware that by reporting on LGBTI people, they can affect the personal safety of these people and shape public opinion with their narrative, which is still very polarized when it comes to LGBTI people.

- Refer to the LGBTI identity of the person you are writing about only when it is important to the story itself. If you are reporting someone who is an activist, or someone is talking about their experience, then sexual orientation may be relevant. However, if you are doing an interview on another topic, which is not related to LGBTI rights, it does not matter for the story that the person is LGBTI;
- When conveying the attitudes of people who have a negative attitude towards the LGBTI community, refrain from these attitudes in the text. It can also be done by showing the other side of the story - if, for example, you interview someone who thinks that the LGBTI community is wrong, put the quotes from someone who thinks positively about it;
- Be prepared for negative comments. The portal on which the comments are published is responsible for the content on its platform and is obliged not to publish hate speech.

- Publishing about violence and the problems the LGBTI community face is a form of social activism. These topics should not be ignored even when they do not bring attention (clicks) like other news. Journalist must report and give space to members of the LGBTI community to speak from their own perspective;
- Whenever it is possible to have a statement from someone from the office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality, the Protector of Citizens or the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance when talking about topics in the field of protection of human rights of LGBTI people because it sends verified information to the public. Also, if you have a dilemma whether an interlocutor has violated the provisions of the law on discrimination, you can also consult with one of the non-governmental organizations first;
- In certain social circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it should be pointed out in media reports that although it affects the whole world evenly, there are still certain minorities who are particularly vulnerable due to their specific position. After all, this is the specificity of this crisis, which implies a long stay in one space, and which can be especially problematic for those who have psychological problems or a violent environment;

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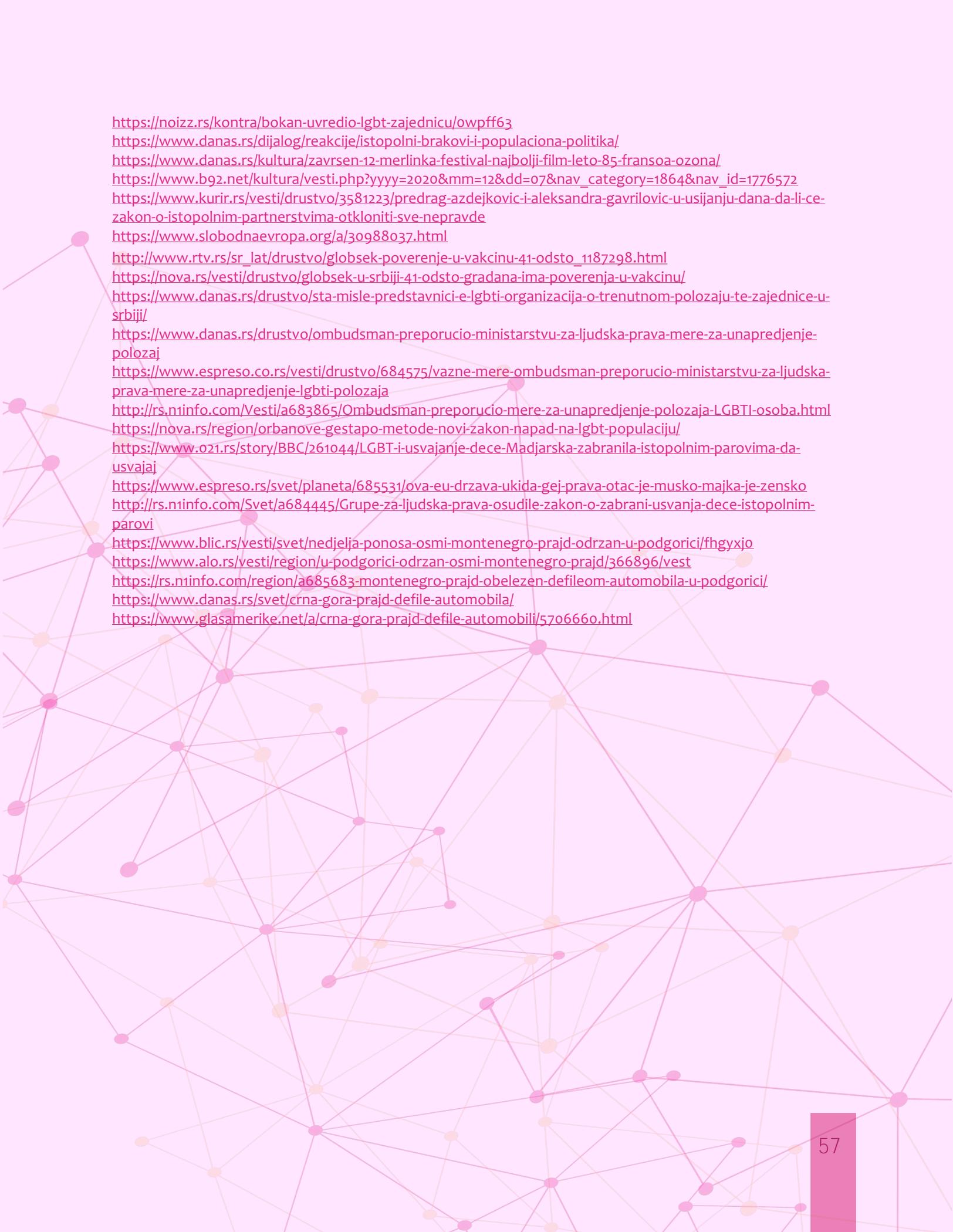
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