



European Integration Discourse in the Albanian Newspapers

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December 2016



Published by: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Office Tirana
Rr. Abdi Toptani
Torre Drin, Kati i 3-të
Kutia Postare 1418
Tirane, ALBANIA

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Introduction

Albania's relationships with the European Union have entered a new phase. After receiving the candidate country status, the next step is the opening of the EU accession negotiations. Therefore, a greater engagement is required to undertake substantial reforms in the country. In the process of EU accession and domestic reforms, there is a greater need for public inclusiveness and information. In this context, the role of the media (with all its forms and information channels) is very significant, not only to inform the public, but also to shape public perception and opinion on the European integration process and EU related issues. Generally speaking, Albanians have a positive stand on the European Union integration, showing the highest appraisal in the entire region, except for Kosovo, where 81% of its citizens perceive the EU membership as a good thing.¹ According to a recent national survey, Albanians are interested in getting information on the EU (only 4% of the Albanians are not looking for information on the European Union); the 22% of the Albanian people use the daily newspapers as a source of information; while 25% of them read the daily press *every day or almost every day*, although only 43% of the Albanians have a tendency to trust the media.²

Despite the positive attitude of the Albanian public towards the European Union and the non-primary use of the traditional press (newspapers),³ there is a research gap concerning the role of the press discourse in framing the public opinion. This study reviews the European integration discourse in the Albanian press and the way the European integration process is reported.

1. See: Regional Cooperation Council (2016) "Balkan Opinion Barometer"; Question *Do you think that EU membership would be (is - for Croatia) a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad for your economy?*

2. See: OSFA (2015) "Final report: National survey on perceptions & expectations towards a potential EU membership of Albania, Tirana.

3. The majority of the Albanians (74%) request EU-related information or (80%) receive information on European political issues. The television is the most reliable source (73% of the Albanians) and the most used information channel (Albanian citizens spend an average of 2 hours and 40 minutes per day). See: OSFA (2015) "Final report: National survey on perceptions & expectations towards a potential EU membership of Albania", Tirana.

1. Methodology of study

In order to study the European integration discourse in the Albanian press, four daily newspapers were monitored (*Mapo*, *Panorama*, *Gazeta Shqiptare* and *Shqiptarja.com*) for a period of 6 months (January – June 2016).⁴ The selection of this sample of newspapers is based on: 1) their relevance as a general source of massive information for the Albanian citizens;⁵ as well as 2) their ownership.⁶ Such a selection of newspapers enables us to give a more complete overview of the European integration discourse in the Albanian written media.

For the purpose of this study, the discourse on “the integration process in Albania” shall mean every article published in the newspapers, in which one of the selected words below appears at least once:

Anti-corruption, EU, European Union, EURALIUS, MEP, Fleckenstein, Gjoshë, Hahn, opening of the chapters, European integration, Juncker, European Council, Commissioner, European Commission, Head of Delegation, Kukan, Mogherini, European Parliament, 5 priorities, Progress Report, Tusk, Vlahutin, Bregu, Bushati)

Note: We search for the corresponding words in the Albanian language, where option of the letter (for example the use of *e* or *ë*) as well as the possible declination of the words have been considered.

The study is divided into two analyzing stages. The first phase focus on a quantitative analysis of the received database, in order to have an overall view on the frequency, the authorship, the relevance of the article on the European integration with reference to the number of words, the rubrics, the use of photos and the appearance in the front page. A searching engine helped to find the articles containing at least one of the keywords identified above. The research indicated a total of 2782 articles for the four newspapers subject to our study for a period of 6 months.⁷ The 662 articles, out of the total were duplicates, as they were published both in the front page and inside the newspaper, while 108 other articles fall under the category ‘advertisement’, they are tenders or vacancy announcements (total 2120 – 108= 2012).

In addition to the data received from the database (such as the title, the article date, the name of the author, the rubric, the number of the page where the article appears, the size of the article expressed in centimetre squares and number of words), we monitor the database and extract additional information

4. Time span of the study: 05 January to 30 June 2016.

5. “Panorama” is the largest newspaper in the country in terms of circulation, with more than 10 thousand copies, while other newspapers circulate less than 5000 copies per day, according to data from the printing houses. “Shqiptarja.com” is both a written and online media (See: Liperi, 2016). Despite the circulation, calculations indicate that the newspapers distribute approximately 1000 copies, of which only some hundred copies are sold (IREX 2016: 12). Shqiptarja.com and Mapo newspapers are not published on Monday and Sunday, respectively.

6. According to their ownership: newspapers funded by the business (Panorama), companies Mapo and GazetaShqiptare, and shareholding between companies and journalists (Shqiptarja.com), referred to data from the National Registration Centre. Meanwhile, the study does not take in consideration newspapers that belong to political parties (See: ISHM, 2014).

7. Mapo Newspaper = 633; Gazeta Shqiptare=709; Panorama = 691; Shqiptarja = 754.

according to the codebook compiled for the purposes of this study (such as, size and relevance of the photo used for the news/event, the presence and position of the article in the front page, the context and relation of the article to the European integration issues, as well as the number of keywords used in the text, see Annex 2: Codebook).

In order to make sure that the articles do address European integration issues and don't just use the keyword tangentially, the authors manually checked the articles that were found, in order to assess whether they were relevant to the European integration process (the relevance variable), or whether the keyword was irrelevant to the article (the variable of the number of keywords in a text).⁸ According to this second evaluation, a total of 1259 articles discuss the European integration issue, while 649 of them are evaluated as totally irrelevant for the concrete study, despite the fact that the majority of them do contain some (1-4) keywords, they have been used beyond the European integration context. A simple assessment indicates a correlation between the variables of relevance and the number of keywords.⁹

Table 1: Cross tabulation of tables: Relevance of European integration articles with the number of keywords in the text (Relevance * No. Keywords)

		No. Keywords (Number of keywords in the text)																Total
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15+	
Relevance (Relation of the article to the European integration issues)	0 = no relevance	185	231	128	52	25	10	3	7	1	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	649
	1 = low relevance	7	171	177	128	57	31	21	9	6	7	7	2	2	1	1	4	631
	2 = high relevance	2	50	82	108	65	75	78	36	30	21	18	16	11	9	4	23	628
Total		194	452	387	288	147	116	102	52	37	30	28	20	13	10	5	27	1908

Note: The evaluation indicates the absence of 212 data in the system, due to the failure to codify them because of their difficulty to be classified.

The second phase focus on a qualitative analysis based on the assumption that the news coverage of the EU integration tends to be cyclical, meaning that EU integration information is usually missing in the editorial policies of the national newspapers, culminating only around significant events. The qualitative analyses enable us a portrayal of the contextual information during significant events, providing a greater and deeper understanding, as well as an assessment of the media coverage tendency during key European or national events, such as the justice reform when news occupy a significant part of the newspapers' daily agenda, and during routine periods without any relevant news on European integration, both at the national and EU level. The case of bilateral (EU-Albania) meetings on Albania's progress, with the participation of high level representatives, is an important event for the country's European integration and as such the generated debates are a good case study, mostly for providing a media coverage; while the Europe Day event and related debates have fewer chances for media coverage, as it is merely a symbolic

8. For example: the word BE (EU) (is a word group that can be found/an integral part of one word, such as *besim, Tabelë, humbet, mbetet*).

9. Coefficient of Pearson correlation between the variable of relevance and keywords in a text has a significance of 0.490 at a level of 0.01 (2-tailed). Kendall and Spearman correlation coefficients are also satisfactory (0.511 and 0.598, respectively). See: Riffe et al. 2014: 155.

event related to the European Union values and identity, not directly related to Albania's EU integration. We monitored the media on the special day of the event, as well as 2 days before and after the event.

Monitored events that will be analysed in details are as follows:

- *8 February 2016*: Visit of the Members of the European Parliament, Knut Fleckenstein and Eduard Kukan, Rapporteurs on Albania (high level European personalities, directly related to the European integration process in Albania);
- *3 March 2016*: Visit of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini (high level European personality– symbolic nature);
- *30 March 2016*: 6th Meeting of the High Level Dialogue EU-Albania with the participation of Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy & Accession Negotiations (essential European integration policy, EU-Albania);
- *9 May 2016*: Europe Day (Constructive connotation – Europeanization as a value and identity).

Throughout both phases of the analyses, we considered the identification of specific issues related to the European integration, the extent of discussion (length of the articles) and the density of information (addressing the issue thoroughly and in details, based on facts, not simply opinions), the topic discussion, the reference (mainly) to EU or national actors and institutions, as well as view point in addressing the issue (the political versus the civic point of view). The framing and tone of the articles are the key objectives of the qualitative analysis of the case studies, in order to understand whether the articles show neutral, positive or negative tones and to whom this sensitivity are addressed; whether the framing is argumentative, mentioning two or more different perspectives of an issue; contradictory, if the article refers to some conflict or disagreement; or an entirely personal opinion or evaluation.

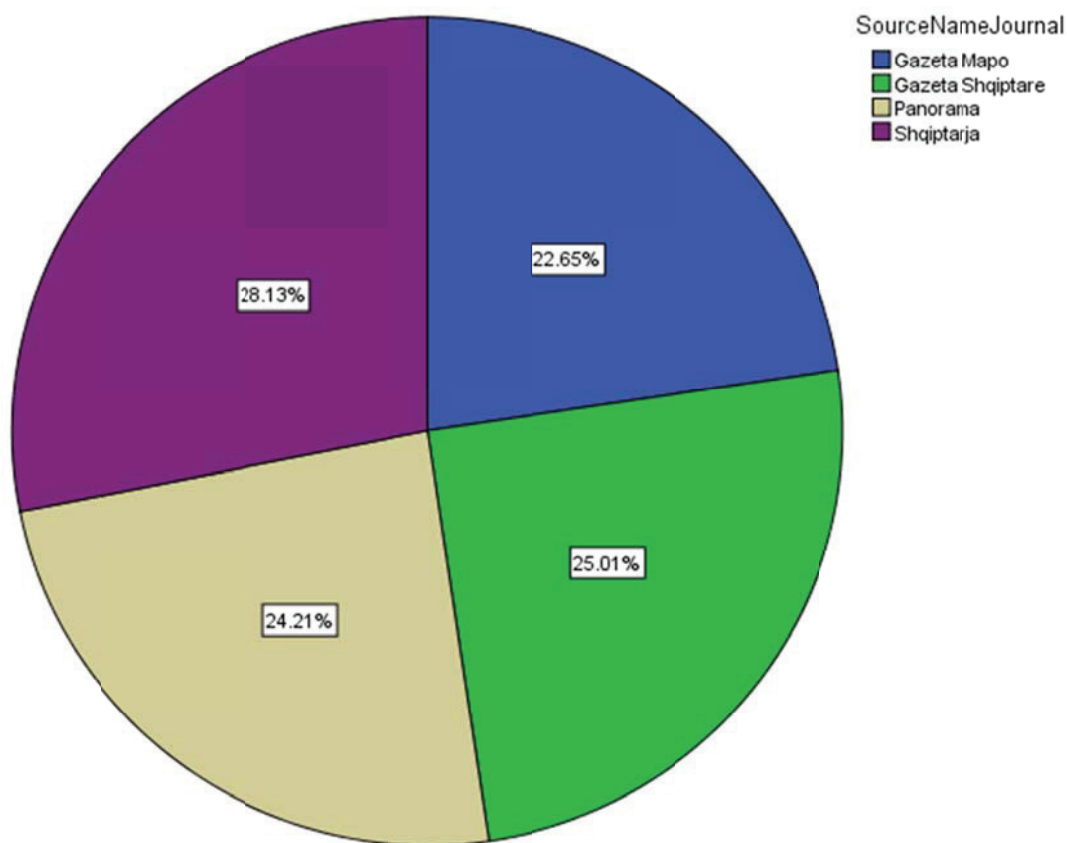
Semi-structured interviews were also carried out with the chief editors of all four newspapers, asking their opinion on some key general questions, in order to generally evaluate editorial policies, perceptions, knowledge and stances of journalists on issues related to the European integration (see Annex 3).

2. Quantitative analysis

This study contains 2012 relevant articles (related to the European integration), out of which: 443 articles appears on Mapo newspaper; 509 articles on GazetaShqiptare; 476 articles on Panorama, and 585, the highest number of articles, on Shqiptarja.com.

It is evidenced that the distribution of the articles in the four analysed newspapers is approximately the same, all newspapers have a similar tendency as regards the coverage of the articles/news related to the European integration, although as indicated by our analysis, the modality of addressing these news / events is different and varies depending on the visits of the EU representatives to Tirana or symbolic dates.

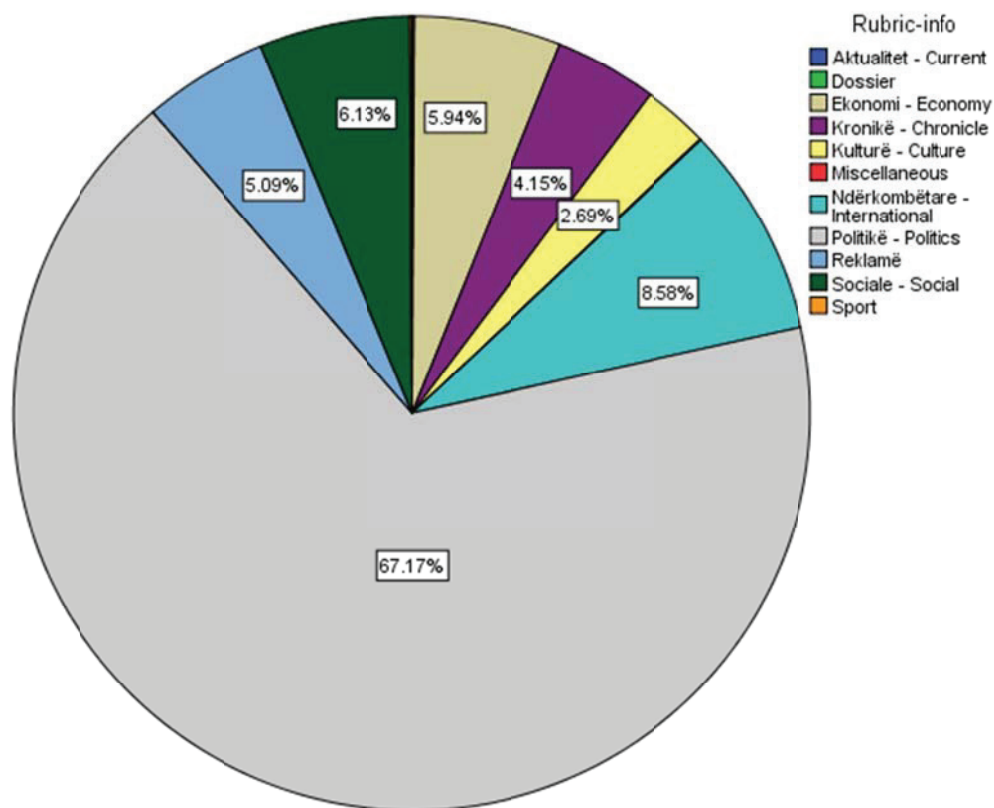
Figure 1: Distribution of articles on 'European integration' issues according to the newspaper



The distribution of the articles according to *rubrics* is disproportional. The majority of identified articles fall under the category *politics*, more than 70%, followed by *international* news category in the second place with 9%, which focus mainly on developments outside Albania and have a low relevance (figure 2). Meanwhile, a low number of articles, approximately 15.6% in total, focus on 3 key rubrics, such as: *economy*, *culture* and *social*, addressing specific topics in the respective fields. The *social* and *sports* rubrics, specifically, are less considered in relation to the EU topics, this also due to the fact that

integration topics relate mostly to technical discussions and /or generic issues, not enable to address specific topics of the *social* area that may relate with European Integration (figure 2).

Figure 2: Distribution of articles according to rubrics



Relevance, as a term used to indicate the existence of an inherent relation with the subject, is one of the key indicators in this study, as it shows the existence of a fair distribution of the ‘relevance’ among newspapers, if we were to refer to all articles in total. Out of 2012 studied articles, only 1289 (64%) of them have been considered as *relevant*, of which 654 have a low *relevance*, 633 have a high *relevance* for the European integration, and the other 724 articles have been considered as *not relevant* to the EU integration process.

Table2: Relevance of the articles

		Frequency	Valid percentage (%)
Relevance	Zero (0)	724	35.5
	Low (1)	654	32.6
	High (2)	635	31.9
	Total	2013	100.0

Table 3: Relevance depending on the rubric

		Relevance			Total
		None (0)	Low (1)	High (2)	
Rubric-info	Current	1	0	0	1
	Dossier	0	1	0	1
	Economy	51	39	36	126
	Chronicle	58	24	6	88
	Culture	35	18	4	57
	International	68	62	52	182
	Politics	439	466	518	1423
	Advertisements	0	0	2	2
	Social	70	43	17	130
	Sports	1	1	0	2
Total		724	654	635	2012

But, referring to specific newspapers, “Gazeta Shqiptare” has the highest level of *relevance*, where 40% of its articles have the “highest level of relevance” and 25.3% of them have an average level of relevance, while approximately 55% of the articles of “Shqiptarja.com” have the lowest level of relevance. This clearly indicates the different coverage of the ‘integration’ topic by specific newspapers.

Table 4: Relevance depending on the newspaper

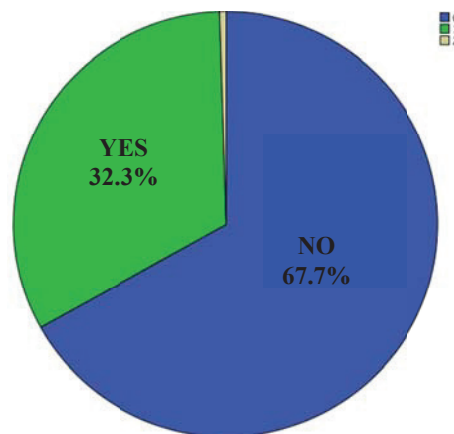
		Relevance			Total
		None (0)	Low (1)	High (2)	
SourceNameJournal	Mapo	147	143	152	442
	GazetaShqiptare	156	129	224	509
	Panorama	100	235	141	476
	Shqiptarja.com	321	146	118	585
Total		724	653	635	2012

A general view of the four selected newspapers also indicates that the majority of the articles have a domestic context and are directly linked to issues of the Albania’s European integration in different aspects, mainly politics, as mentioned. This could be explained with the fact that political news refer mainly to the political discourse and are directly attributed to public figures. The majority of debates in this category are for daily political consumption, unable to go to the bottom of the issues. Information reporting, based on political statements, is the behaviour line of political reporters, while very few articles are part of significant rubrics addressing various issues, such as: *economy*, *social*, *culture*, etc. Articles pertaining to those rubrics require consideration, physical time and specific expertise related to the integration context.

Table 5: Relevance according to the context

		Context				Total
		1 Domestic issues	2 Regional	3 International	4 Miscellaneous	
Relevance	None (0)	558	54	55	44	718
	Low (1)	478	50	68	56	654
	High (2)	469	49	76	38	632
Total		1505	153	199	138	2004

The front page is a key aspect for the visibility and significance that a daily newspaper gives to articles addressing European integration aspects or issues. Front page analyses may provide primary data on editorial policies and public interest, which is concretely displayed in the ranking in the front page of titles directly related to the EU integration (Figure3).

Figure 3: Presence in the front page

It is generally noticed that approximately 1 in 3 integration articles has managed to appear in the front page of the respective newspapers, or approximately 33.5% of the articles. But the overwhelming majority is positioned as second hand titles (27.5%), and less than 6% were headlines. Of 658 titles appearing in the front pages of the four daily newspapers during the monitored period, 61 titles are in the aperture of Shqiptarja.com, 15 titles in Gazeta Shqiptare, 26 titles in Mapo and 14 titles in Panorama, respectively.

Table 6: Position in the front page according to the newspapers

	Position Front Page			Total
	0 Does not appear	1 Yes, Headline	2 Yes, Secondary title	
Mapo	338	26	77	441
GazetaShqiptare	337	15	156	508
Panorama	278	14	183	475
Shqiptarja.com	398	61	126	585
Total	1352	116	542	2009

The length of the article is another indicator of the deep addressing of the issues in the identified articles. We noticed that only 18.6% of the articles are 'extended', while approximately 50.7 % of them are short articles, unable to go into authentic analysis to address various aspects of the EU integration (table7).

Table 7: Length of the articles in all newspapers

	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)
1 = Short (0-500 words)	1022	50.7
2 = Medium (500 – 1000 words)	618	30.7
3 = Extended (more than 1000 words)	374	18.6
Total	2014	100.0

The majority of the 'extended' articles have a 'domestic' context, which means that the integration issues have been consumed in public debates within the country, where 117 extended articles out of a total 1614 stand out (approximately 72%). The other 28% is focused on public debates in the EU countries and decision-taking bodies in Brussels (table8).

Table 8: Length of the articles depending on the context

		Context				Total
		1 Domestic issue	2 Regional	3 International	4 Miscellaneous	
Length of the article CM2	1 = Short(<¼)	989	103	113	66	1280
	2 = Medium(¼ - ½)	399	39	65	57	560
	3 = Extended (>½)	117	11	21	15	164
Total		1505	153	199	138	2004

An analysis of the correlation between the length of the article and the front page, indicates the fact that 54% of the articles of the second group (500-1000 words) have appeared in the front page, compared to only 19% of the *short* articles (less than 500 words).

This is also reflected in the position they occupy in the front page, where only 4% of the *short* articles are positioned as *leading articles*, compared to 8.3% and 9.7% 'extended' or 'very extended' articles, respectively.

Table 9: Size of the article depending on its front page position

		Position in the front page			Total
		Does not appear	Leading article	Secondary article	
Length of the article CM2	Short	1038	53	194	1285
	Medium	266	47	247	560
	Extended	48	16	101	165
Total		1352	116	542	2010

Articles of a 'domestic context', covering mainly topics that affect the country and its domestic politics/ events, prevail in the 'extended' category with 117 articles, giving more significance to domestic issues

of the Albania's EU integration. This is also reflected in an analysis of the front pages of the newspapers, where: out of 662 articles that appear in the front pages, 529 have a *domestic* context, 65 are classified as '*internationals*' and the rest as '*region*' or '*miscellaneous*' (table 10).

Table 10: Size of the article depending on the context

		Context				Total
		Domestic	Regional	International	Miscellaneous	
Presence in the front page	0 (not present)	968	128	134	103	1341
	1(present)	529	25	65	32	652
Total		1497	153	199	135	1993

Considering that political articles generally dominate in numbers, *political* articles related to the EU integration are not quite randomly the focus of the newspapers that dedicate huge spaces to political debates on the integration issues (table 11).

Table 11: Size of the article depending on the rubric

		Rubric											
		current	Politics	Economy	Social	Culture	International	Chronicle	Dossier	Miscellaneous	Advertisement	Sports	Total
Length of the article	Short	1	943	71	67	17	126	58	1	0	1	1	1286
	Medium	0	374	37	49	29	47	25	0	0	1	1	563
	Extended	0	107	18	14	11	9	5	0	1	0	0	165
Total		1	1424	126	130	57	182	88	1	1	2	2	2014

The same trend is also reflected in specific newspapers that maintain the same distribution, but Mapo newspaper stands out for giving more space to integration articles, followed by Gazeta Shqiptare. Shqiptarja.com seems to have dedicated less space, with 80% of its integration articles being telegraphic.

Table 12: Size of the article depending on the newspaper

		Length			Total
		Short	Medium	Extended	
Mapo	Nr	214	187	42	443
	%	48.3%	42.2%	9.5%	100.0%
GazetaShqiptare	Nr	288	167	54	509
	%	56.6%	32.8%	10.6%	100.0%
Panorama	Nr	314	117	45	476
	%	66.0%	24.6%	9.5%	100.0%
Shqiptarja.com	Nr	469	92	24	585
	%	80.2%	15.7%	4.1%	100.0%
Total	Nr	1285	563	165	2013
	%	63.9%	28.0%	8.2%	100.0%

This approach is also reinforced by a survey on the **authorship** of the articles; where approximately 64% of the articles in total have *no author*, mostly falling into the category of simple reporting of events or issues, and enable to go into authentic analysis from journalists or experts of the field.

Table 13: Authorship of the article depending on the newspaper

Newspaper versus Author		Newspaper				Total
		Mapo	GazetaShqiptare	Panorama	Shqiptarja.com	
Author	0 (absent)	336	301	283	372	1292
	1(present)	107	208	193	213	721
Total		443	509	476	585	2013

Texts/articles with an ‘author’ have the tendency of being deeper and more focused analysis, mainly from well-known journalists of the respective fields or external experts. Therefore, this indicator speaks a lot about the articles.

A general view of the newspapers concerning the ‘authorship’ of the articles indicates that each newspaper has its specific journalists, who directly or indirectly cover the integration issues, but on the other side articles from experts of the field are random and scarce in all four newspapers. Mapo newspaper stands out, with approximately 75.8% of its articles without an author.

Articles that have an ‘author’ have more chances to be in the front page, as lead or secondary news. In addition, it is noted that journalists covering *domestic policies* do report more, as compared to journalists covering economic, social and cultural issues. Out of 656 titles in the front page focussed on the ‘European integration’, 63% of them have an *author*, or differently said, 57% of the articles with an author appear in the front page.

Table 14: Authorship in front page articles

		Front Page			Total
		Absent	Lead Article	Secondary Article	
Authorship	No Author	1041	243	7	1291
	With Author	305	413	3	721
Total		1346	656	10	2012

The analysis indicates that the ‘domestic context’ has prevailed, even when the integration articles were positioned as ‘*apertures*’, with 107 articles with of ‘*domestic context*’, referring mainly to current news. Headlines have never been from the ‘*region*’ rubric and very rarely from the ‘*international*’ - only 2 (table 15).

Table 15: Position in the front page depending on the context

		Context				Total
		Domestic	Regional	International	Miscellaneous	
Position Front Page	Not Present	971	128	134	106	1347
	Headline	107	0	2	5	114
	Secondary news	425	25	62	27	540
Total		1503	153	198	138	2001

More specifically, as concerns the **rubric**, we notice that 45.3% of the articles included under the “*social*” category in all newspapers do have an *author*, while in the case of Gazeta Shqiptare this figure reaches up to 58%. But this is not occurring with the most diffused rubric ‘*politics*’, where articles with an ‘*author*’ reach to 34.4%, and in some specific newspapers, such as the case of Mapo, the figure goes up to 13.3%.

Table16: Authorship depending on the rubric

		Rubric								
		current	Politics	Economy	Social	Culture	International	Chronicle	Dossier	Miscellaneous
Authorship	No Author	1	934	73	71	36	122	53	1	0
	With Author	0	490	53	59	21	60	35	0	1
Total		1	1424	126	130	57	182	88	1	1

Approximately 80% of the titles of the integration articles without an *author* do not appear in the front page. Meanwhile, titles of 58 % of the integration articles *with an author* appear in the front page.

Table 17: Authorship depending on the front page

		Front Page			Total
		Absent	Headline	Secondary Article	
Authorship	NoAuthor	1041	243	7	1291
	With Author	305	413	3	721
Total		1346	656	10	2012

Used **photos** are another important element of the article, which transmit a message and influence the illustration of the article. Therefore the size and relevance of the photo in relation to the article are significant indicators to understand the visibility and importance that is dedicated to the photos in a newspaper.

41.5% of the articles in total are characterized by *small photos*, and this is explained by the fact that the majority of the integration articles occupy a small place and are short, considering the number of their words. Data from the graphic below indicate that 24.2 % of the articles related to the EU integration have *a large photo* or *two or more photos*, 56.6% of them have *small* or *medium photos*, while approximately 13% of them have no photos at all, thus indicating the low relevance of the article/news, which is mainly served to fill in the remaining spaces of the pages.

Table 18: Size of the photo in all the articles

	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Not estimated	123	6.1
0 = Without photo	261	13.0
1 = Small (less than ¼ of the article)	571	28.3
2 = Medium (¼ to ½ of the article)	571	28.3
3 = Large (Larger than ½ of the article)	253	12.6
4 = Two or more photos	233	11.6
Total	2012	100.0

The indicator of the relevance of the photo was divided into 3 levels, in order to enable understanding the purpose of the photo next to a written article: ‘*illustrative*’ (when the photo serves to the context of the article); ‘*real*’ (when the photo is real and has a direct link with the event/character); ‘*undecided*’ when the photo has no direct link with the event, but is relevant to the article. Mostly, 43.6% of the photos that have been used are ‘*illustrative*’, without necessarily having a direct link with the event/topic and they contain a specific message related to the interpretation of the event. Gazeta Shqiptare and Shqiptarja.com have the tendency of using more “*illustrative*” photos, where only 10.5% of the photos used by Shqiptarja.com and 9.4 % of the photos used by Gazeta Shqiptare respectively, are ‘*real*’.

Table 19: Relevance of the photo depending on the newspaper

	Relevance of the photo					Total
	Not estimated	No photo	Illustrative	Relevant	Undefined	
Mapo	118	75	123	100	27	443
GazetaShqiptare	1	44	106	346	12	509
Panorama	5	93	288	89	1	476
Shqiptarja.com	1	50	56	344	133	585
Total	125	262	573	879	173	2013

3. Qualitative analysis: Case studies

Multiple studies indicate that media exercises a huge influence on public opinion and contributes in shaping perceptions on various issues of political, economic or social nature.¹⁰ The way news is conveyed to the citizens – due to (non)combination of different sources and used language – affects the absorption of the news and citizens respective reaction to such events.

Newspaper monitoring during the first six months of 2016 pointed out the fact that the frequency of coverage of the European integration news is directly related to the political agenda of the country and is not a priority per se. The examined period indicates that in general the coverage of news related to the EU integration is casual, except in cases of visits or issues affected by the EU. An analysis of the data with a considerable presence of predefined indicators shows that the intensity of the articles is stimulated by the international factor, as it coincides with days in which Tirana has been officially visited by MEPs and Commissioners of the European Commission, statements issued by Brussels high-level representatives, or high activation of foreign ambassadors in the capital, which spontaneously attract a positive coverage not only in the inner pages, but also in the front page. In several cases there has been a coincidence with regional and international events that have an impact on Albania, such as the recommendation for the visa liberalisation granted to Kosovo or the consequences of the British referendum of June 2016.

As indicated in figure 4, the peak of the European integration news is reached during the day/s of EU high official visits to Tirana, followed by a constant decline (see Annex 1).

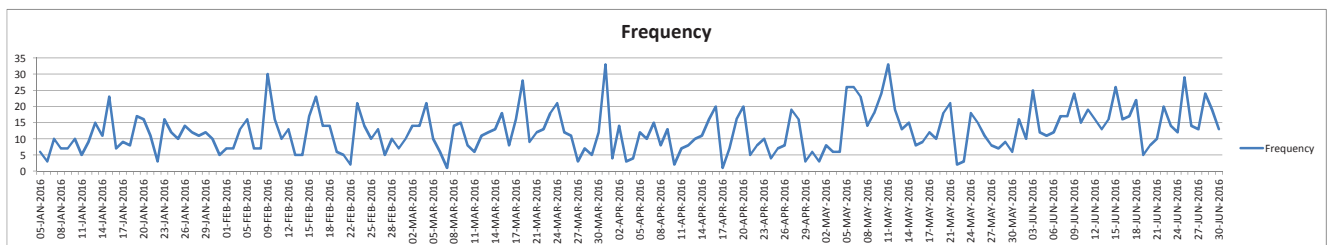


Figure 4: ‘The heart bits’ of the European integration discourse in the press

In order to have a more detailed picture of the content of the European integration articles– which is believed to directly influence the absorption of the news by the citizens – four concrete activities that have occurred during the analysed time span have been reviewed from the qualitative point of view:

- Visit of the Members of the European Parliament, Rapporteurs on Albania, Knut Fleckenstein and Eduard Kukan, on February 8, 2016;
- Visit of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, on March 3-4, 2016;

10. See: Silke 2009 on the European Integration argument, or Price 1988 and Gamson & Modigliani 1989 for a more generic argument.

- Visit of the EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood & Accession Negotiations Johannes Hahn, on March 30, 2016; and,
- 9 May – Europe Day.

This analysis enables to identify the way news papers structure their news and frame the event. For this purpose the framing instrument has been used, in order to define how media event coverage affects the shaping of public opinion.

1.1 Knut Fleckenstein and Eduard Kukan visit

The analysed case study is the visit to Albania, on February 8, 2016, of Albania's Rapporteurs and MEPs Knut Fleckenstein and Eduard Kukan. Despite the fact that during the study period there has been a series of visits from EU different representatives, the MEPs visit was considered as significant in the framework of the progress of the political developments in the country, in relation to the approval of the justice reform. Although Rapporteur Fleckenstein has visited Albania several times, the analysed visit relates to the specific moment of the approval of the decriminalization law in Albania and submission to Venice Commission of the final draft of the justice reform. For the purposes of this case study articles from 4 – 12 February 2016 were examined and a total of 23 articles were identified, respectively divided according to the newspapers in figure 5.

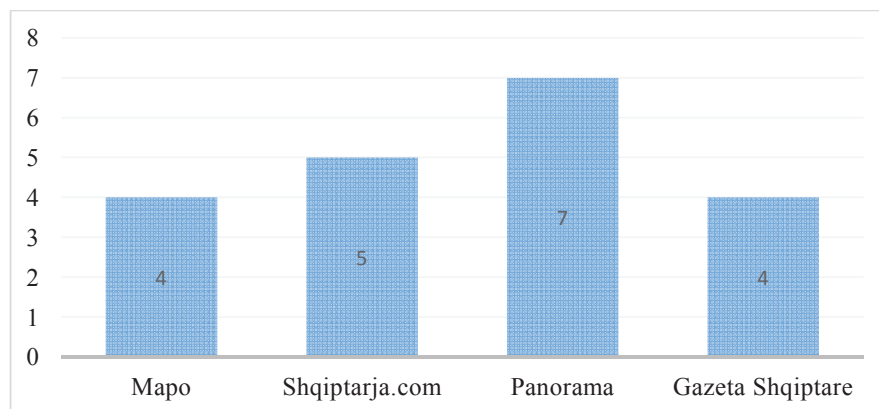


Figure 5: Number of articles according to the newspapers

As noticed, the greatest number of articles has been identified in Shqiptarja.com. However, it is noticed that only 14 articles in all four news papers have reported the visit of the MEPs and only 3 of them have displayed the authorship of the journalists:¹¹ Shqiptarja.com has reported the visit in 5 articles, Panorama in two, Gazeta Shqiptare in 3 and Mapo in 4 articles. The other evidenced articles have reported events and statements by the chairs of the parliamentary groups or the DP Chairman, where the visit of the MEP is superficially mentioned, as a moment that indicates the continuity of the latest agendas or statements, for example, Shqiptarja.com writes: *“As the Democrat Chairman Basha declared on Monday following the meeting with MEPs Kukan and Fleckenstein”*¹².

11. Leonard Quku and Mimoza Haxhiraj for “Shqiptarja.com” and Valentina Madani for “Gazeta Shqiptare”.

12. Shqiptarja.com, “Reform, the essence of consensus, not the number of votes”, 10.02.2016.

Concerning the coherence of reporting the visit, almost all articles have been published between 9 and 10 February 2016, except for an article in Panorama newspaper published on February 11, which mentions a meeting between the DP representatives and Fleckenstein and Kukan, as part of the DP negotiations in the framework of the issue of the National Investigation Bureau: *“Together with the Chairman Basha, we participated these days in intensive meetings with MEPs Eduard Kukan and Knut Fleckenstein”*¹³.

Name of newspaper/ number of words	≤ 300	301 - 600	≥ 601	Total
Mapo	3	1	2	6
Shqiptarja.com	4	3	1	8
Panorama	1	1	2	4
GSH	3	1	1	5

Table 20: Classification of the articles according to their length¹⁴

Meanwhile, this analysis indicates no correlation between the number of the words and the photos that have been used for the articles. The way the news is reported in the front pages of the newspapers is interesting. Mapo and Panorama displayed none of the titles closely related to Fleckenstein and Kukan visit in their front pages, unlike Shqiptarja.com, that displayed in its front page all the titles of the articles related to this issue. Gazeta Shqiptare has displayed one article in its front page, as a secondary title. The only article related to one of Fleckenstein’s statements during his visit to Tirana, positioned in the headline of the front page, is to be found in Shqiptarja.com. However, even for this title, it was decided to select Fleckenstein’s statement in relation to the Socialist Party, due to the specific moment when the SP was preparing for the election of its Chairman, considering that this issue occupied a huge space in the news range.

As concerns the titles of the articles, three newspapers: Shqiptarja.com, Gazeta Shqiptare and Mapo have generally emphasized the issues mentioned in the statements issued by MEP Fleckenstein: National Investigation Bureau, justice reform and the Socialist Party model. Fleckenstein’s emphasize on the significance of the approval of the justice reform and fulfilling other criteria related to the decriminalization law as a condition for Albania’s European integration, is only noticed in one article in Shqiptarja.com, titled: *“EP, MEP: Pass the “justice” for the EU to open the negotiations”*, and Panorama titled: *“Justice reform - a condition for the EU negotiations”*. Reports on this visit underline the statements issued by Mr. Fleckenstein, while Kukan’s statements have been briefly mentioned at the end of the articles. There are only two articles related to Kukan, but they have no relation to the agenda of his visit, except at the moment when Kukan took a number of photos, for example: *“Eduart Kukan, with a “photograph” mission in the joint conference with Meta”* (GazetaShqiptare, dated 10.02.2016).

Coverage from the analysed newspapers is almost identical, with the only difference noted in the space and number of articles “dedicated” to this visit. Shqiptarja.com stands out among the others, with special articles on several issues discussed by Fleckenstein and Kukan during the joint conference with the Speaker of the Assembly Meta. The other newspapers have summarized their statements and positions in two or three articles.

13. Panorama, “Basha’s debate in the DP group revealed, Selami: You are taking personal decisions”, 11/02/2016.

14. An article is considered “short” if it contains 300 words or less, “medium” if it contains 301 to 600 words, and “long” with more than 601 words.

The tone of these articles is generally positive, due to the fact that the statements issued by both MEPs contained optimistic and encouraging tones for both political parties concerning the achievement of an agreement for the approval of the justice reform. Articles reflecting Basha's statement contain negative tones, this related to the debate of the moment between the political parties. What is noticed is the lack of coverage of the discussions between the MEPs and Prime Minister Rama and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Bushati. The latest have mainly been mentioned at the beginning of the articles, as part of Fleckenstein and Kukan agenda. The articles contain a brief report on Meta's statement in the joint conference. Meanwhile, the Minister for the European Integration Klajda Gjoshaj is only mentioned in one article published by Mapo newspaper (dated 09/02/2016, titled "*Integration, Gjoshaj criticizes ministries for negligence*"), which has no relation to the visit of the MEPs.

The visit of the European Parliament Rapporteur on Albania was not covered by the monitored newspapers prior to their arrival in Albania. Reports on their visit start on February 9, 2016 and the "echo" of this visit, as mentioned above, lasts until February 10, this also related to the visit of the American Secretary of State John Kerry on February 14, 2016, which was largely covered by the newspapers.

3.2 Federica Mogherini visit

Federica Mogherini is the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission since November 2014. She had her first visit in Tirana on 3 and 4 March 2016.

Mogherini's visit is a significant moment not only for Albania, when at the moment of her arrival the keyword of political developments was the justice reform, but also in a regional context, where the refugee crisis and violent extremism were issues for which Albania should take its appropriate commitments. Despite the regional context or Albania's own issues in the framework of the European integration, news published by the analysed newspapers focus on messages delivered by Mogherini in the framework of the justice reform.

As mentioned in the methodology of survey and selection of the case studies concerning the key moments, articles that reflect Mogherini's visit in Albania are mostly found on March 4, a date that coincides with the second day of the EU High Representative visit. As such, news given the day after the event, while visual and online media had directly broadcasted the visit, brought no novelty or additional information to the reader.

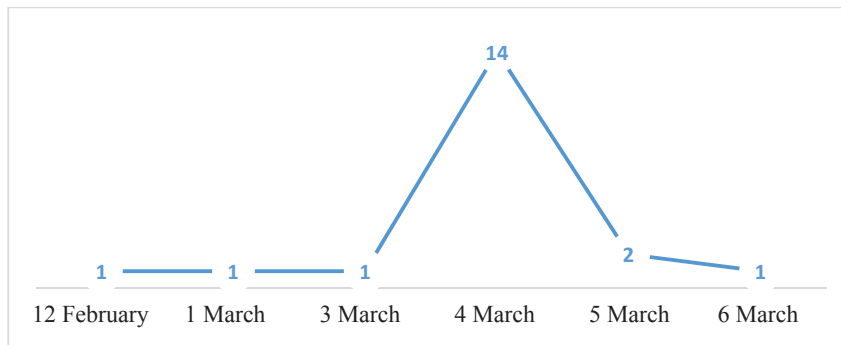


Figure 6: Classification of the articles according to dates

This case study has monitored articles of high relevance as concerns the European integration, which superficially mention the visit of the EU High Representative. From the database covering the period from 1 to 8 March 2016, a total of 20 articles have been identified, of which 14 reflect Mogherini's speeches in meetings held the day before (March 3). Concerning the other 6 articles related to her visit: 3 of them cover the statement by the Speaker of the Assembly Meta on the achievement of the consensus between SP and DP, issued right after the end of the parliamentary session where Mogherini delivered her speech, thus having a non-direct relation with Mogherini's visit; two articles analyse the justice reform (GazetaShqiptare, dt. 04/03/2016, Mimoza Koçiu "Time to speak with concrete names") and the refugee crisis (Mapo, dt. 05/03/2016, Vladimir Karaj - "Albania, a country that sends and receives refugees"), which also mention Mogherini's speech and the purpose of her visit.

Panorama newspaper has dedicated 6 articles to Mogherini's visit in Albania and compared to the other newspapers has the highest number of articles on this issue. Meanwhile, Mapo has reported Mogherini's visit in two articles; Shqiptarja.com in six articles; and Gazeta Shqiptare in 2 articles. Generally speaking, all the articles were included under the politics **rubric** of each newspaper, except for two articles included under "opinion" and "social" rubrics.

The authorship appears only in 6 out of 20 articles. There is a difference among the analysed newspapers in the space that articles occupy in their pages (table 21), the relevance of the news suggested by its positioning in the front page and the number of articles (figure 7) covering Mogherini meetings with every Albanian political representative.

Name of the newspaper/ number of words	≤ 300	301 - 600	≥ 601	Totali
Mapo	1	2	1	4
Shqiptarja.com	2	3	0	5
Panorama	4	1	2	7
GSH	1	1	2	4

Table 21: Classification of the articles according to their length

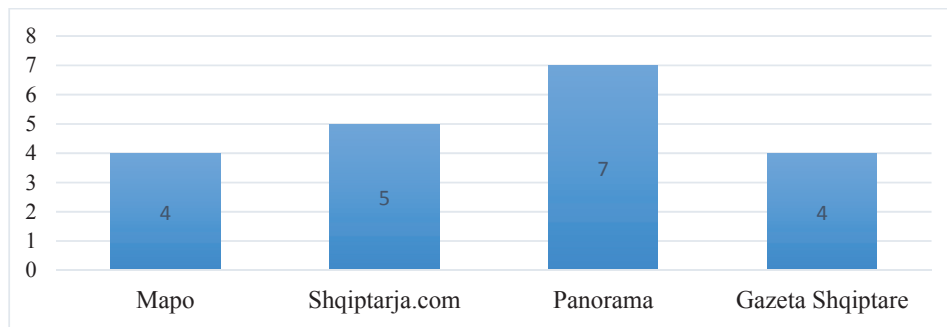


Figure 7: Classification of the articles according to the newspapers

10 out of 20 articles identified in this analysis, have also been positioned in the **front pages** of the newspapers, where only one of them is a headline, while the other 9 are secondary titles. The only article occupying the headline in the front page is an analysis of the refugee crisis “*Albania, a country that sends and receives refugees*”, published by Mapo Weekend. This front page news was accompanied by a cartoon, where Prime Minister Rama and the EU Representative Mogherini are the leading characters.

Photos that have been used to report the news are mainly small and medium sized, and they all relate to the activity. Illustrative photos have been used to contextualize the reported event in the case of articles that mention Mogherini’s visit superficially, or in the case of articles covering the agenda of her visit. Generally, all four newspapers deliver a “dry” reporting of the news, “transcribing” Mogherini’s speech in the Assembly or speeches delivered in the press conference with the Prime Minister Rama. As indicated by the figures above, such coverage and lack of inside analysis from the editorial staff or individuals and experts of the field, is evidenced in the number and intensity of the articles published the day before and after the visit.

Mogherini’s agenda and visit in Albania were not appropriately preceded in the days before March 3, except in 3 articles covering her agenda: **Shqiptarja.com**, in a brief article dated February 12, 2016, wrote: “*After the visit of the American Secretary of State, another high official is expected to visit Albania in March, the Chief of Foreign Policy Mogherini*”; **Panorama** on 1 March 2016 and **Shqiptarja.com** on 3 March 2016, respectively.

The articles of the last category mentioned above, indicate an erroneous reporting of Mogherini’s visit dates, with Panorama and Shqiptarja.com writing: “*The EU High Representative will visit Tirana from 4 to 6 March*”¹⁵ and “*Mogherini will address the Assembly of Albania, on Friday, at 11:00 a.m.*”¹⁶, while Mogherini visited Albania on 3 and 4 March 2016 instead, and delivered her speech in the Assembly at the afternoon of March 3. In addition, the articles fail to mention the source of their news.

Mogherini’s visit was not covered by the newspapers the following days, except for 3 articles on March 5: one from Shqiptarja.com and one from Gazeta Shqiptare—covering the meeting between the DP Chairman Lulzim Basha and Mogherini, which is not the essence of the article. The same day, March 5, Mapo has dedicated an analysis to the refugee crisis in its weekly editorial Mapo Weekend, also referring to Mogherini’s visit. In the following days, only a short article in Panorama is noticed, covering a statement issued by Mogherini for the media. This article too lacks the source of the news, failing to explain where the statement was issued and for which media.

15. Shqiptarja.com, Integration, Chief of Foreign Policy in March in Tirana”, 12.02.2016.

16. Panorama, “Mogherini’s speech in the Assembly”, 01.03.2016.

Despite the identical reporting style, the difference in covering Mogherini's visit from one newspaper to the others is noticed in the issue which has been mostly emphasized in the title and content of the article, as well as the tone that has been used.

The way this visit was covered complicates an objective definition of the tone and framing of the articles. The **tone** of the articles relates to the tone used by political figures and the way they have addressed the justice reform and the integration issue. 7 of the analysed articles contain positive tones and they report mainly Rama, Meta and Nishani's statements. Meanwhile, 4 other articles contain negative tones: two articles reflecting the meeting between Basha and Mogherini and the opposition's critics on justice reform and lack of agreement between parties, one is an opinion analysing the events and political parties debates that are impeding the justice reform and the European integration; while another article (not directly related to Mogherini's visit) reflects the disagreement between political parties on the approval of the secondary legislation. Generally, articles defined as "negative", report conflict situations between the main political parties, while articles defined as "positive", despite the critical tone of Mogherini's statements, simply report statements issued by the abovementioned politicians.

Mogherini's visit is a significant event for the Albanian politics, reported by all the monitored newspapers. **Titles** used for this purpose focused on the justice reform/decriminalization, as a condition for opening the negotiations and Albania's EU integration, such as: "*Mogherini: You have made progress, approve the justice reform*" (Gazeta Shqiptare, dt. 4/03/2016); "*Mogherini: Justice reform, a condition for the EU integration*" (Panorama, dt. 4/03/2016); "*Mogherini: Do the right thing, approve the reform*" (Mapo, dt. 4/03/2016); "*Mogherini: Approve the justice reform, bring Albania to the EU*" (Shqiptarja.com, dt. 4/03/2016). Unlikely, 2 articles covering the statement by the Chairman of the opposition contain the word "integration" –and due to the negative tone of the statement –the justice reform is laughed at using the name "Prenga" ("*Basha: Our country in the EU, not belonging to Prenga*" - Gazeta Shqiptare).

All four newspapers have reported Mogherini's speech to the Assembly and Rama's statement at the joint press conference. However, not all of them have reported in the same way. For example, Panorama is the only newspaper to have dedicated special articles to: (i) Mogherini's speech at the Assembly; (ii) Rama's conference; (iii) meeting with President Nishani; (iv) and meeting with Basha. In addition, unlike other newspapers, Panorama has fully published Mogherini's speech at the Assembly, dividing it according to the addressed topics. Meanwhile, Gazeta Shqiptare has jointly addressed these parts of the agenda of Mogherini's visit, while Mapo and Shqiptarja.com have published an article for each of them. As concerns the most emphasized topics in titles and articles, an article by Mapo newspaper makes a difference, emphasizing the refugee crisis while covering the Prime Minister speech at the press conference. This is an approach that has only been noticed in this newspaper, unlike the others that emphasize the justice reform and its significance for Albania's EU integration.

The analysis indicates that Mogherini's agenda has not been equally covered by all the newspapers. In particular, Mogherini meeting with President Bujar Nishani was covered only by Panorama; her meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs was not covered by any of the newspapers, while the meeting with the Chairman of the Democratic Party Lulzim Basha was only covered by Panorama and Gazeta Shqiptare.

The uniformity in the way news is covered from the analysed newspapers and differences among them in

elements mostly related to the length of the article and full or partial coverage of the official statements, does not address in essence Albania's EU integration issue. Almost all evidenced articles, address (or mention) the European integration issue due to the reporting period, which coincides with debates on the approval of the justice reform as one of the conditions established by the European Commission for opening the negotiations. But the coverage of the events lacks analytical or argumentative articles by the editorial staff. No other issues related to the conditions and priorities for the country's EU integration seem to have been addressed during this period.

3.3 Johannes Hahn visit

On March 30, the sixth round of the High Level Dialogue between Albania and the European Union was held, with the presence of the EU Commissioner for the Neighbourhood Policy and Accession Negotiations Johannes Hahn. The meeting took place in aggravated political conditions, due to the impasse of the justice reform. Parties considered Commissioner Hahn presence as that of a potential negotiator to find a compromise among political parties.

In addition to the meeting in the framework of the High Level Dialogue, Commissioner Hahn had a tight agenda of other meetings with the key personalities of the political life in the country, where emphasis was given to the implementation of the five priorities, in particular to giving an end to the wandering related to the justice reform and finding a common language among political parties.

In addition, on March 31, Commissioner Hahn participated in the Ministerial of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Durrës, in the framework of the Berlin Process. However, this part of the agenda of Commissioner Hahn in Albania (due to its focus and potential influence on the finale results) was not covered in the following analysis.

Commissioner Hahn's agenda of March 30 was covered in the written media in a total of 31 articles. This included the **time span** from 29 March – 2 April. As indicated in graphic 5, Mapo newspaper leads with a considerable coverage of 10 articles, while Panorama has the lowest number of articles - 6. As concerns the **rubrics**, 29 articles were included under "politics" and only 2 under "economy" (i.e. Mapo). The coverage of the news coincides mostly with the coverage of Commissioner Hahn agenda the day before his visit to Tirana, as well as the event itself, the day after taking place.

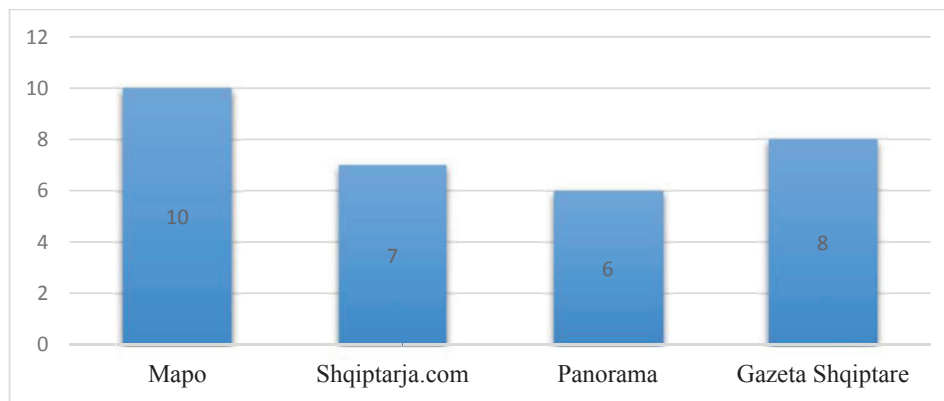


Figure 8: Classification of the articles according to the newspapers

Figure 9 indicates the number of the articles for each date, reaching the peak with 23 articles the day after the official visit. Focusing on the **coverage for each date**, on **29 March**, Mapo was the only newspaper to have dedicated an article to Commissioner Hahn visit, analysing the difficult political situation, issues remaining to be solved and the chances for a direct involvement of Commissioner Hahn as a negotiator with the country's leaders to overcome the impasse of the justice reform. The article is of a medium length (555 words) and contains an argumentative framing, mentioning the sources and respective positions of both political parties.

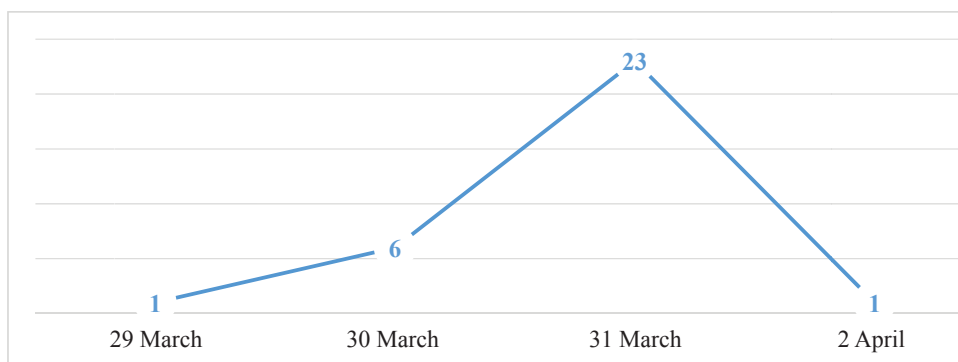


Figure 9: Classification of the articles according to the date

On **March 30**, both Gazeta Shqiptare and Mapo published two articles each, while Panorama and Shqiptarja.com one article each. Three articles are dedicated to the agenda of Commissioner Hahn meetings, while the other three cover the interview of Minister Gjoshka for News 24 TV on the expectancies of the visit. Coverage of Commissioner Hahn agenda is accompanied with details concerning the political situation in the country. Two out of three articles have specified authorships (i.e. Esiona Konomifor Shqiptarja.com and Darina Tanushi for GazetaShqiptare). Meanwhile, the coverage of Minister Gjoshka interview was equally “dry” from all the newspapers.

On **March 31**, Mapo dedicated 7 articles to Commissioner Hahn visit, Gazeta Shqiptare 6 articles, while Shqiptarja.com and Panorama 5 articles, respectively. Referring to the **position of the news** of this date, Panorama and Gazeta Shqiptare have dedicated *pages 2-3* to Commissioner Hahn visit, while Mapo and Shqiptarja.com have dedicated *pages 4-5*. In addition to the coverage of Johannes Hahn meetings with the key political figures, as well as the respective statements and messages for each party, it is evidenced that both Gazeta Shqiptare and Panorama have reported Commissioner Hahn's meeting with the *National*

Council for European Integration. While the article in *Gazeta Shqiptare* offers a “dry” report of the news, through a brief summary of statements issued by the main exponents of the Council, *Panorama* newspaper offers only a partial coverage of the speech delivered by Commissioner Johannes Hahn, as well as the statements of three representatives of the opposition within the Council – Mrs. Bregu, Mr. Mediu and Mr. Halimi.

Meanwhile, only *Shqiptarja.com* has submitted a *followup* of Commissioner Hahn visit on **April 2**, in the framework of the transcription of Minister Gjoshka interview for Report TV the night before.

Multiple studies carried out in the media field underline the existence of a correlation between the **length of the article** and its relevance.¹⁷ In this respect, based on the number of words for each article –excluding entirely the length of the title – it is evidenced that the overwhelming majority of the articles are average (12 articles) or short (11 articles).

	≤ 300	301 - 600	≥ 601	Total
Mapo	3	4	3	10
Shqiptarja.com	3	2	2	7
Panorama	1	4	1	6
Gazeta Shqiptare	4	2	2	8
Totali	11	12	8	31

Table 22: Classification of the articles according to their length

Only 8 articles were long and specifically dedicated to the positions of the key actors: three articles analyze Prime Minister Rama statement issued immediately after the meeting; two articles are dedicated to the statement of the Chairman of the opposition; two articles analyze Commissioner Hahn messages; and one article transcribes Minister Gjoshka interview delivered in the evening of April 1.

	30 March		31 March	
	Headline	Secondary title	Headline	Secondary title
Mapo		2	1	
Shqiptarja.com				2
Panorama		1		1
GazetaShqiptare		1		1

Table 23: Positioning of the articles in the front page

As concerns the **positioning of the news in the front page**, table 27 indicates that 9 titles out of a total 31 have been published in the front pages of all four newspapers. Three out of four titles published on March 30, specifically refer to Minister Gjoshka message issued during her interview for News 24 TV. Meanwhile, three out of the other four secondary titles refer to Commissioner Hahn message. *Gazeta Shqiptare* and *Panorama*, respectively, focus on the need to approve the justice reform without additional conditions, while *Shqiptarja.com* focuses on the invitation of Prime Minister Rama addressed to the Head of the opposition, as well as Commissioner Hahn statement on a positive Progress Report within

17. See: Cissel 2012: 71

the year for Albania. Mapo is the only newspaper to have published as a headline, on March 31, the progress achieved in solving the political impasse (“*Political impasse, Rama: Why do I invite Basha at the dialogue table*”). Meanwhile, Shqiptarja.com has dedicated it a place in the front page coverage only in March 31, with two headlines.

The analysis of the content of the articles evidences that the coverage of Commissioner Hahn meetings with the Albanian political personalities is divided in two levels, as concerns the **relevance**. The *first level* includes articles dedicated to the statements of the heads of the government and opposition, whose meetings with Commissioner Hahn are covered in details. These articles are characterized by a tone that reflects the disagreement between the main parties and the difficult situation faced by the parliamentary dialogue. Generally, articles covering Prime Minister Rama statements are characterized by a positive tone (dominated by the keywords: consensus, commitment, opening of the negotiations, agreement, etc.). Special focus was dedicated to the news of the invitation of Prime Minister Rama addressed to the Chairman of the opposition Basha, to seat together around the dialogue table, in order to push the process of State-consolidating reforms and Albania’s EU integration. On the other hand, the tone of the articles covering the statements of the Chairman of the opposition is negative (dominated by the keywords: hostage, disagreement, impasse, precondition, etc.), which indicates a conflicting situation and polarized climate.

Meanwhile, the *second level* includes the President, the Speaker of the Assembly and the Chairman of the Ad-hoc Parliamentary Commission for the Justice Reform, which meetings have been covered –partially or totally – through the publication of press statements drafted by the respective institutions. Considering that the news coverage is “dry” and the length of the articles is more or less the same, a case by case analysis of the titles indicates as follows:

- **Commissioner Hahn meeting with the Speaker of the Assembly** was covered by all the newspapers. All the titles mention the same group of words (Meta-Hahn) and refer to the justice reform. While Mapo underlines in its title that the justice reform will improve Albania’s international image, the other three newspapers focus on reaching a political agreement on the reform.
- **Commissioner Hahn meeting with President Nishani** was covered by three newspapers (Mapo, Gazeta Shqiptare and Shqiptarja.com). An analysis of the titles of the articles indicates that Mapo emphasizes the President’s critics against the Law on Property; Shqiptarja.com cites the President’s words that the will of the parties is key in this phase of the process; while Gazeta Shqiptare has focused its title on the justice reform according to Venice recommendations.
- **Commissioner Hahn meeting with Chairman Xhafa**, was only covered by Gazeta Shqiptare and Mapo, respectively emphasizing consulting on the draft justice reform and the evaluation of the work of the Commission.

The reproduction of the press statements in the written media reaches the approximate amount of 33%. Meanwhile, Mapo fails to mention the authors in its 31 analysed articles. The name of the author is only mentioned in 8 cases in the other three newspapers, as follows:

- Three articles written by Esiona Konomi and one by Denis Minga (Shqiptarja.com);
- Two articles written by Darina Tanushi (Gazeta Shqiptare);
- Two articles written by Juxhin Mustafaraj and Aristir Lumezi (Panorama), respectively.

Although the analysed sample is limited, it indicates the existence of a direct correlation between articles that do mention the author and the argumentative framing, mostly dominated by neutral tones. These articles are characterized by a more detailed analysis of the context and reactions/positions of the actors in relation to Commissioner Hahn messages. The lack of the authorship raises a question mark on the significance that newspapers give to the coverage of the European integration news, as well as the specific qualification of the journalists in this sector.

3.4 Europe Day

Every May 9, the Europe Day is celebrated as a symbol of peace, union and European values. This historical day coincides with the day Robert Schuman announced his statement for a future in peace and harmony for the united Europe.

This year the celebration of the Europe Day takes a special nuance, due to the difficult political context and multiple crises the European Union is facing. On one side, populist and xenophobic movements have influenced in increasing disruption and fear among European citizens, which resulted with the Great Britain vote to exit the Union. On the other side, the refugee flows as well as the terrorist and extremist attacks in several symbolic capitals of the united Europe have additionally influenced in losing faith to the EU and a common solution for the crises.

Albania cannot stand apart and be indifferent in front of such challenges. Reactions from different political figures, but not only, have been reflected in 11 articles published in all four analysed newspapers. Mapo and Shqiptarja.com have published one article each, Panorama four and Gazeta Shqiptare five articles, during the period 7-10 May.

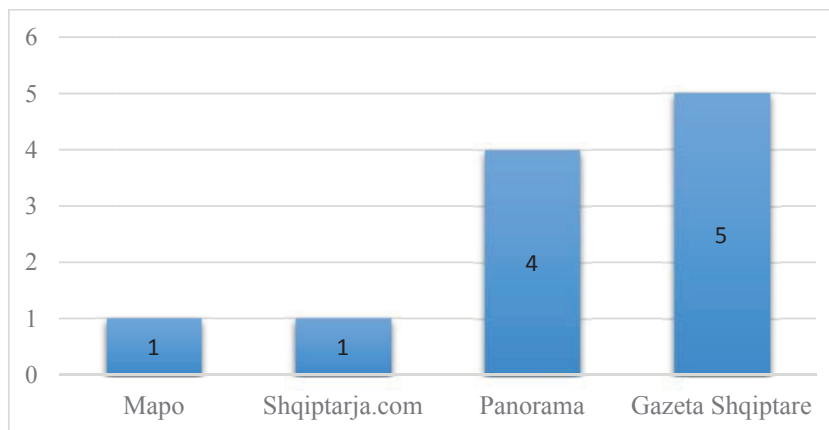


Figure10: Classification of the articles according to the newspapers

Taking in consideration the nature of the Europe Day and the abovementioned challenges, the articles have been classified based on the geographical context, where: one article refers to the European continent, one article has a regional character and nine others are dedicated to the Albanian context. As it is also valid for other case study analyses, the highest number of articles is noticed the day after the event. Thus, on May 9, the number of published articles was three, while the next day this figure reached to 7.

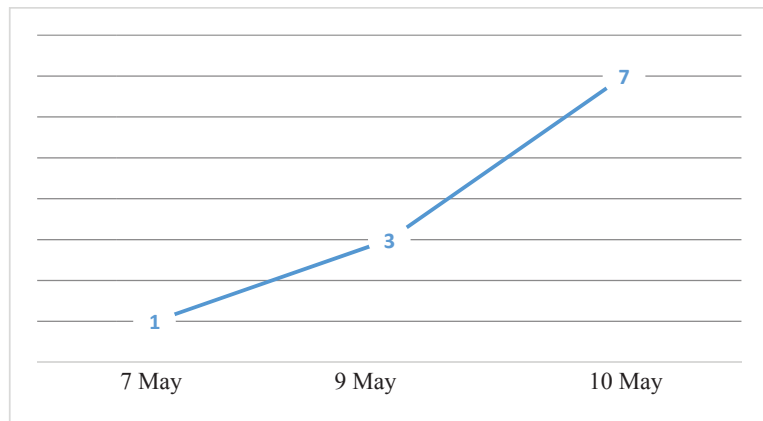


Figure 11: Classification of the articles according to the date

All analyzed articles are included under the “politics” rubric and variations are noticed among the newspapers as concerns the coverage of the Europe Day. Mapo and Shqiptarja.com have preferred to keep a low profile, compared to the other two newspapers. Specifically, Mapo has chosen to publish an opinion on whether the group of words ‘European values’ should or should not be included in the preamble of the Constitution, while Shqiptarja.com has covered the Prime Minister’s speech during the celebrations organized on May 9 in Shkodra. Meanwhile, Panorama and Gazeta Shqiptare offer a larger coverage of this important day for the promotion of the European values. They have both reported the activities attended by Prime Minister Rama and Minister Gjoshë, publishing an article each on the European values. Concerning articles on the European values, Panorama has published an article written by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati (“*9 May and the Europe we want*”), while Gazeta Shqiptare has published an article with the authorship of the Movement for Self-Determination (“*9 May – Europe Day*”). Both articles have appeared as secondary titles in the front pages of the newspapers.

	≤ 300	301 ≥ 600	≥ 601	Total
Mapo			1	1
Shqiptarja.com		1		1
Panorama	2	2		4
Gazeta Shqiptare	2	3		5
Totali	4	6	1	11

Table 24: Classification of the articles according to their length

The majority of the analysed articles are of medium length. In particular, three of the articles are dedicated to the Prime Minister’s speech during the celebrations in Shkodër. The number of short articles is four and they refer in particular to statements and messages issued by Minister Gjoshë in several public activities. The articles have a significant similarity, which indicates that they may be replications of the press statements drafted by the respective institutions. However, this hypothesis is not verifiable in this case, due to the low number of analysed samples.

However, from the content point of view, the articles have been divided into three categories: (i) articles focused on the challenges faced by Europe in this remarkable day, under the authorship of Federica Mogherini and Ditmir Bushati; (ii) opinions on the European values in the national context, under the

authorship of Florjan Kalaja and the Movement for Self-Determination; and (iii) articles covering the activities of the Prime Minister and Minister of Integration during various festive activities.

In general, there are two main topics that prevail in all 11 analysed articles:

- Current challenges and survival of the European values;
- Sharing political messages on the progress of Albania's EU integration process during the celebrations for the Europe Day.

Finally, the authorship is mentioned only in four articles, and only one of the journalists is an associated/employee of one of the analysed newspapers (the case of Darina Tanushi for Gazeta Shqiptare). In the framework of the purposes of this study, articles with the authorship of Florjan Kalaja, Ditmir Bushati and the Movement for Self-Determination have been considered as sporadic contributions.

Conclusions

The conclusion derived from the quantitative analysis of the 4 daily newspapers indicates that although there has been a periodic numeric coverage of the European integration issues, there is a lack of deep and specialized coverage of the articles in the respective newspapers.

The analysis indicates that the majority of the identified articles have a political context, approximately 70%, while their relevance varies - 31.5% of the articles are of high relevance, while the rest has low or no relevance.

A general examination of the titles of the four newspapers indicates that the overwhelming majority of the articles have a domestic context and are directly related to current European integration issues, failing to cover issues of a larger European or international character.

Further on, it is evidenced that approximately 1 in 3 articles on the EU integration “has managed” to appear in the front page of the respective newspaper; although few of them have managed to be “worthy as apertures”. Even when they did, their overwhelming majority have been positioned as second hand titles (27.5%), and less than 6% of all the integration articles have been headlines. In this context, only 25 articles of high relevance have been in the headlines of the front pages of the newspapers during the 6 months of this study, a very low number considering a total of 2012 identified cases.

The majority of the articles (approximately 50.7%) are short, unable to go into real analyses to address various aspects of the integration. Only 18.6% of the articles are ‘extended’. The majority of the ‘extended’ articles have a ‘domestic’ context, covering mainly topics that address or directly relate to domestic political events. This is also reflected in the lack of the authorship of the articles with European integration context. Approximately 64% of the articles in total have no authors, representing mostly a simple coverage of specific events or issues.

An analysis of the photos used by the newspapers indicates that 41.5% of the articles in total are characterized by small photos, considering that most of them occupy small spaces in the newspaper.

The study evidences a lack of constant information on the European integration media discourse. In general, the coverage of integration issues is ‘cyclic’, closely related to periodical events, culminating generally (1 day) after the events, followed by a significant decline. Covering European integration news mostly after the occurrence of the event, may be a result of the lack of specialized journalists on European issues, or otherwise an indicator of the lack of primary interest on European issues, therefore basing the news only on reports, which are often full or partial reproduction of press statements issued by European institutions and personalities. In addition, the lack of the authorship of the articles in most cases raises the same question marks on the relevance that the newspapers give to the coverage of the European integration news, as well as the specific qualification of journalists in this area. These assumptions are also based on interviews with chief editors, which confirm the lack of specialized journalists on European integration issues, as well as their perception of European issues as non-attractive to the readers, despite being significant issues *per se*.

Furthermore, the coverage of the events which derive or result from the European integration process are ‘less European’ as concerns handling their sources and are mostly ‘used’ for national political consumption/debate. The frequency of coverage of the European integration news directly relates to the

political agenda in the country and is not a priority *per se*. In particular, statements by key personalities from EU institutions are reflected by all the analysed newspapers and transformed from the local political class into primary material for their national political agenda. A very tepid coverage of statements and positions of the Ministry of Integration, which is directly linked to the process, is evidenced even among the national political actors.

The majority of the reports on European integration issues indicate a lack of analytical or argumentative articles from the editorial staff. The uniformity in the way news is covered from the analysed newspapers and differences among them in elements mostly related to the length of the article and full or partial coverage of the official statements, does not address in essence Albania's EU integration issues, or at least fails to produce an alternative constructive debate for the public, remaining simply a "dry" report.

As a consequence of the 'alleviation/nationalization' (using Europe for national consumption/agenda) of the media discourse, there is less Europe and much more domestic debate in the media discourse. For example, in different political areas, readers (citizens) are not informed whether specific issues are a result of the European integration process and if yes, to what extent (what is the impact of the European integration process and the influence of national representatives in the finalization/adoption of the EU recommendations).

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Annex 1: Peak days of European integration articles in the media

Peak days of the presence of the EU integration issues during the period January-June 2016, as follows:

9 February 2016

On February 8 and 9, MEPs Kukan and Fleckenstien had an official visit to Tirana. The analysed newspapers have considerably covered this visit with a total of 26 articles, with Shqiptarja.com and Mapo dedicating to the visit one page each, and Panorama half page.

4 March 2016

The EU High Representative Federica Mogherini visited Tirana. The coverage from the analysed newspapers is satisfactory, with articles included not only inside the newspapers, but also in the front pages. In this specific day, all four newspapers had a total of 20 articles containing the analysed indicators.

19 March 2016

The EU Commissioner on Migration Dimitris Avramopoulos visited Tirana for the issue of the refugees and asylum seekers from the Middle East. Coverage from the analysed newspapers was of informative character inside the newspaper, but not in their front pages.

31 March 2016

Commissioner Johannes Hahn visit to Tirana and meeting with the National Council for European Integration was covered by all four newspapers. Gazeta Shqiptare, Shqiptarja.com and Panorama dedicated 1 page each. Meanwhile, Mapo dedicated almost two pages to the event.

5-6 May 2016

These dates mark the activation of the Ambassadors for the justice reform, as well as meetings between groups of political parties. The same day the draft justice reform was also announced. These events were covered in different forms from the analysed written media. Panorama and Shqiptarja.com covered the activation of the foreign Ambassadors with news and opinions by their respective editorialists. Three out of four newspapers covered the events in their front pages, as apertures or secondary titles. Only Shqiptarja.com did not display the news in the front page during these days. In addition, on May 5, the European Commission gave its recommendation for the visa liberalization for Kosovo and Federica Mogherini had an official visit to Pristina, which was reflected by all the monitored media.

3 June 2016

Commissioner Johannes Hahn statement from Brussels on the approval of the justice reform is covered by three newspapers, except for Shqiptarja.com.

15 June 2016

The German Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank Walter Steinmeier officially visited Tirana, conveying an important message on the approval of the justice reform. In the same day, the US Embassy and the EU Delegation Office to Albania issued a supporting statement on the justice reform.

28 June 2016

Effects of the Great Britain referendum to exit the Union and the statement of the EU Ambassador to Tirana were covered by the written media.

	Newspaper				Total
	Gazeta Mapo	Gazeta Shqiptare	Panorama	Shqiptarja.com	
09-FEB-2016	7	5	5	9	26
04-MAR-2016	5	3	7	5	20
19-MAR-2016	8	5	6	8	27
31-MAR-2016	8	11	6	7	32
05-MAY-2016	5	8	10	3	26
06-MAY-2016	3	8	7	8	26
03-JUN-2016	6	5	7	7	25
15-JUN-2016	6	6	3	11	26
28-JUN-2016	6	5	7	6	24

Annex 2: Codebook

SourceNameJournal	Title of the newspaper 1 = Mapo 2 = Gazeta Shqiptare 3 = Panorama 4 = Shqiptarja.com
SourceDate	Date of the newspaper Date / month / Year
Title	Title of the article
SourcePage	Number of the page where the article appears
Rubric-info	Category/Section where the article is written (rubrics) 1 = Current 2 = Politics 3 = Economy 4 = Social 5 = Culture 6 = International 7 = Chronicle- Chronicle 8 = Dossier 9 = Miscellaneous 10 = Advertisement 11 = Sports
AuthorName	Name of the author of the article
Authorship	If the article contains the authorship, based on Author Name data 0 = Authorship is not evidenced/identified 1 = Authorship is clearly expressed
ArticleSizeCM2	Length of the article expressed in centimetre squares (cm2)

ArticleSizeCM2groups	<p>Length of the article expressed in centimetre squares(cm2), groups. A newspaper page has approximately 1291 cm2 (one fourth, approximately ≈ 322 cm2)</p> <p>1 = Short, article less than 322 cm2 (1/4 of the newspaper's page)</p> <p>2 = Medium, article between 322 and 644 cm2</p> <p>3 = Extended, article bigger than 644 cm2</p>
ArticleWordCount	<p>Length of the article expressed as number of used words</p>
ArticleWordCountGroup	<p>Length of the article expressed in group, based in the number of used words. A newspaper page contains approximately 2000 words without photos.</p> <p>1 = Short (0-500 words)</p> <p>2 = Medium (500 – 1000 words)</p> <p>3 = Extended (more than 1000 words)</p>
TitleWordCount	<p>Length of the title of the article expressed as number of words</p>
PhotoSize	<p>Photo size</p> <p>0 = No photo</p> <p>1 = small (less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the article)</p> <p>2 = medium ($\frac{1}{4}$ up to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the article)</p> <p>3 = large (larger than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the article)</p> <p>4 = Two or more photos</p>
PhotoRelevance	<p>Relevance/importance of used photo</p> <p>1 = Illustrative (No direct link to the news/event)</p> <p>2 = Relevant (Direct link to the news/event)</p> <p>3 = Undefined (relevant to the news/event, but not directly)</p>
FrontPage	<p>Presence of the article in the Front Page</p> <p>0 = Does not appear</p> <p>1 = Yes, Appears in the Front Page</p>
PositionFrontPage	<p>Position of the article in the Front Page</p> <p>1 = Headline</p> <p>2 = Secondary–All except the headline</p>

Context	<p>Context of the article</p> <p>1 = Only domestic issues</p> <p>2 = Regional (excluding Albania / or Albania is not directly included, not extensively mentioned)</p> <p>3 = International (excluding Albania / or Albania is not directly included, not extensively mentioned)</p> <p>4 = Undefined –when the article covers a vast range of local and European issues</p>
Relevance	<p>Relation of the article to the European integration issues</p> <p>0 = no relation–The article does not cover issues related to the European integration, but has been identified due to some keywords</p> <p>1 = low relation/relevance – the article includes indirectly, but not essentially European integration issues</p> <p>2 = high relation/relevance –the article covers directly and mainly European integration issues</p>
NrKeywords	<p>Number of (related) keywords in the text</p> <p>1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, more than 8</p>
NrKeywordsGroup	<p>Groups related to the number of the keywords in the text</p> <p>0 = no keywords</p> <p>1 = 1 keyword</p> <p>2 = 2 keywords</p> <p>3 = 3 keywords</p> <p>4 = 4 keywords</p> <p>5 = 5 keywords</p> <p>6 = 6 keywords</p> <p>7 = more than 7 keywords</p>

Annex 3: Interview with the chief editors

1. What influences the most the coverage of European issues compared to domestic issues in your newspaper and why:
 - a. Ownership of the media
 - b. Editorial policies
 - c. Knowledge/skills of the journalists
 - d. Readers demand
 - e. Other (if it can be specified)
2. Are the European integration issues attractive for the newspapers? If yes, are these articles to justify/support a concrete domestic issue or are they significant per se?
3. Are there specialized journalists in European issues in your newspaper?
4. Does the newspaper have EU correspondents covering European issues?
5. Can you asses (from 1 to 10) the performance of your journalists/newspaper as concerns the integration issues, compared to the national/domestic issues?