
HIGH FAKE NEWS RISK IN BULGARIA, MACEDONIA, SERBIA, BOSNIA, AND MONTENEGRO

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In 2018's edition of the OSI institute's media literacy index, they have considered many countries of the Balkans to be at the highest risk out of all countries in Europe with regards to fake news.

Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro are in the moderate-high risk grouping, with Macedonia and Turkey being the sole occupants of the highest risk group. Turkey is in the group because it scores a 0 on the media freedom index, a fact echoed by a Bulgarian organization giving press passes to imprisoned journalists in a move targeted towards getting them freed. Macedonia meanwhile achieved their ranking due to a low score in terms of education. Bulgaria's score is 30th out of the 35 countries included in the index.

In the Balkans, some of the biggest issues with regards to media freedoms are economic, with it being increasingly difficult to fund independent journalism. For example, a system of subsidies for the media has been criticized as being given in a manner that is too opaque, leading to criticism that it may be given on a political basis. This is opposed to the reason of Turkey having such a poor score, which is due to arresting large numbers of journalists for reasons that are not particularly justified.

Considering that the Balkans have had at best a difficult recent history, it is particularly concerning as many historic issues have not truly been buried yet. Media freedom is one of the areas in which countries need to improve in order to join the EU, which the ex-Yugoslav countries are attempting to do.

The OSI considers education to be the best way to protect against fake news, which makes sense considering that it is very difficult to regulate what happens on the internet - and even harder to do so when it's potentially being done by state actors outside of your jurisdiction.

<https://www.euscoop.com/en/2018/4/3/high-fake-news-risk-in-bulgaria-macedonia-serbia-montenegro-bosnia>

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