

6.2. Reporting on the Europeanization of Republic of Macedonia

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6.2.1 Introduction

From independence until today, one of the strategic goals of the Republic of Macedonia, especially important for its sustainable development is to become a member-state of the Euro-Atlantic structures as the best alternative for the future of the country and for the future of the Balkans. Therefore, as an imperative that leads to a better quality of life, on the path to the realization of this set objective, according to the researches carried out by the major public opinion research agencies¹, the membership initiative has extensive support by a larger percentage of the Macedonian population², which is mostly due to the media outlets, who play an irreplaceable role, reporting and presenting events associated with Europe, on how they are reflected in the country and vice versa.

But at the same time, the Macedonian media outlets in recent years have faced and are still trying to overcome the profound professional and ethical crisis. This situation also negatively influenced the role that the media play in reporting on Europe, promoting its values and social construct, social, political, cultural ... reality, abusing their power and position to promote events from Europe for current and daily political purposes or to disguise or cover up certain domestic "big" events, aside from the focus of the watchful eye of the public.

6.2.2. Scope of the research

These are the main motives for initiating and conducting of such a research, with the aim to scan and analyze the current (non)interest of the media and journalists in the Republic of Macedonia in terms of reporting on Europe, in order to get a full and comprehensive image of

¹ IRI, SEP, IDSCS as well as Eurobarometar. In more details, look the analysis by Gorast Stojmenovski, "The support by the citizens to the process of accession of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union", March 2010. http://www.idscs.org.mk/images/stories/upload/scientific/Analyses/Analiza_Poddrskata_na_graganite_na_procesot_na_pristapuvanje_na_RM_vo_EU.pdf. Accessed on: 02/08/2013.

² This percentage is consistently high and ranges between 83% and 97% of the population.

these issues, as well as of the problems associated with the reporting on the Europeanization. Hence, the analysis represents an attempt to portray the situation and the conditions in which they create the news contents, as well as the influence they have on the general public, by evaluating the quality, the variety and the type of information being broadcasted i.e. the news content published in the media outlets, related to Europe and the process of Europeanization.

Due to the specificity of the media scene in the Republic of Macedonia, in order to obtain objectively based and impartial data, a selection has been made according to the media type (printed and electronic), the media profile (public, private) and the character of the media (focus on a specific target audience). The analysis included the following media outlets:

- Newspapers - daily newspapers *Dnevnik* and *Vest*, and weekly magazine *Kapital*;
- Radio stations - Macedonian Radio 1, Channel 77;
- Television stations - MTV 1, Telma, Terra;
- Online news media - a1on.com.mk.

The analysis used quantitative-qualitative methods, sampling and coding of texts, articles or packages associated with Europe and the European Union, published in the month of October 2012. The sample was cyclical to cover all days of the week and the following dates were randomly selected: Monday - 1st of October, Wednesday – 3rd of October, Tuesday – 9th of October, Thursday – 11th of October, Friday – 19th of October, Sunday – 21th of October and Saturday – 27th of October. The sample of print media consisted of editions released a day later.

In reference to the printed media, the whole issue i.e. all articles related to Europe and the European Union were analyzed, while in reference to the radio and television, the research analyzed the overall informative shows³ in the afternoon slot, i.e. for television, the research analyzed the evening prime time slots. For the online publications, the research analyzed journalistic texts and articles on Europe and the European Union published on the website in the *News* section, from 00-24h and all comments on these articles published by 00:00h i.e. for the texts that were published after 20:00h, the research analyzed the comments that were published until 12:00h the next day. In total, the research analyzed 171 articles, i.e. 170 reporting texts, out

³ Central News.

of which: 32 TV report stories, 86 articles in the printed media, 26 radio reports, 26 online articles and 1 comment.

During the analysis of the reporting on Europe, the research also used the discursive method of analysis⁴, where it should be emphasized that the purpose of this analysis was not to evaluate, label or condemn the editorial policy of the stated media outlets regarding the manner of reporting on the events related to Europe and the European Union, but to stimulate contemplation and debate among the journalistic community on the "function" that one journalistic text may impose in the broader social context, through its specific language and narrative structure, i.e. to contemplate and openly debate the subtle influences that the media texts may have in the Macedonian society.

6.2.3. Topic and focus on the Europeanization

As indicated by the title of the analysis, the journalistic reporting on Europe and the European Union is a general topic, while the focus of the same is usually associated with the enlargement of the European Union. In this context, out of 170 articles and 1 comment, 51 contain information on this topic.

Considering the fact that Republic of Macedonia is a candidate country and is expecting a date to start the negotiations with the European Union, the information related to the integration of the country within the European family has great impact or influence on the general public. Namely, the expectations from the Progress Report, published by the European Commission for the Republic of Macedonia, along with its recommendations, raises a great deal of interest in the media outlets and the citizens. On October 10, 2012, the Commission published the latest report and the Macedonian media prior and after this period was actively reporting and disseminating information related to the expectations for the country's progress according to the assessment of the European Commission. On October 09, in an interview for the daily newspaper *Dnevnik*, which was also broadcasted by *MTV*, the EU Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle analyzes

⁴ represents a qualitative and interdisciplinary approach in the research of the media texts, which emphasizes the function and the significance of the media texts in the specific social and political context, avoiding the imposition of culture on substance or style "sanctioning" in the reporting.

the state of the integration of the Republic of Macedonia, while on October 12, the same newspaper reports on the positive reaction of the Macedonian opposition on the Report by the European Commission titled "The opposition welcomed the assessment of the European Commission".

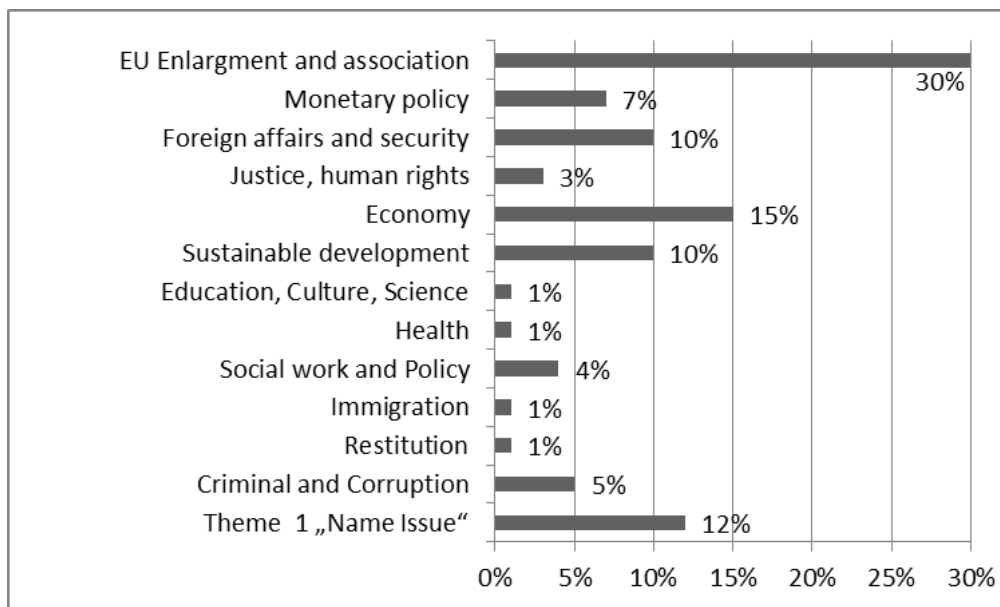


Chart 1: Europe and EU as media topics

As presented in Chart 1, foreign policy and security is an issue that arouses interest in the Macedonian media outlets. In 19 articles, the media outlets have reported on the diplomatic relations of the Republic of Macedonia with high representatives of the European Union, as well as about meetings with political figures from the countries of the European Union. The monetary policy of the European Union, due to the financial crisis and disagreements about it, is an issue that was addressed in 12 articles in the media⁵. Economy and commerce, as the key elements for the development and progress of the Republic of Macedonia, which strives through the European integration to improve the standard and to unify legislation with the countries of the European Union, is a topic that journalists have reported about in 25 articles. Only 1 text was devoted on the health sector, while crime and corruption was a topic addressed in 7 articles, but only in the printed media, while judiciary issues as well as human rights and freedoms were addressed in 5 articles.

⁵ Only the Macedonian Radio and Channel 77 do not have articles on this topic.

After the visa liberalization, for part of the countries from the Balkans, including the Republic of Macedonia, the issue of abuse of the visa liberalization was raised. The analysis included only one text accentuating this issue, although at the time of the research, the abolition of the non-visa regime was a very hot topic. The fulfillment of the political criteria as an important prerequisite for the accession of the Republic of Macedonia in the European Union also includes the development of the social affairs, policy and inclusion. In the European Commission Progress Report, Republic of Macedonia has been noted to have achieved progress, and this fact was reported by journalists in 7 articles. Education, culture, science and youth were topics addressed by the media in only two articles, as much as restitution.

In the comments, the columns and the reports, the lead of the text, although containing information on the political and economic development of the state, which is based on the views and opinions of the Macedonian politicians, experts and the business community, in the elaboration of the text, is often associated with the joining of Macedonia in the European Union, the application of the legislation and the progress of the country according to the Copenhagen criteria.

An extensive number of articles which were analyzed in the research tend to inform on events that are important for the member states of the European Union. The topic is most often economy and monetary policy, but opinions and views of politicians from member states of the European Union on the progress and euro-integration of Macedonia were also included. The latter means that the reports on the topic of "Europeanization" for the most part are in the secondary focus and usually complement another topic from the European Union or the implementation of the legislation. But the "Europeanization" is also mentioned when the focus of the journalistic reporting is aimed at other issues, which actively links information about the European Union, although at the sidelines of the text.

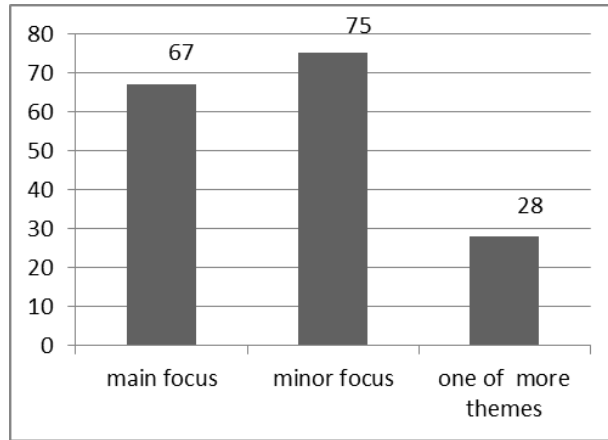


Chart 2: Focus on the topic of Europe, European Union and Europeanization

When the "Europeanization" is the focus of the reporting, the media tend to report mainly about the high-level meetings of the Macedonian political leadership with the EU representatives as well as about the messages sent by the institutions of the European Union on the progress of the state and on the monetary and economic stability of the countries in the European Union.

6.2.4 Subjects and Objects in the media texts/articles

Considering the fact mentioned above, it is more than clear that the Macedonian media disseminate a sufficient number of comments and opinions, where the accent in all analyzed media is placed on the foreign actors, and in which mainly two topics dominate i.e. the period before and the period after the Report of the European Commission on the progress of the Republic of Macedonia, but also on the topic of the "name issue", with 20 articles or 12%. An inescapable fact is that the Macedonian media, during the time of the research, actively reported on topics that were crucial to the European Union i.e. the resolution of the Greek crisis and the frequent protests in Greece, the level of frequency of meetings of European leaders for negotiating the austerity measures, on establishing a banking union, and the use of EU funds.

In reference to the problems that the Republic of Macedonia has in the European integration process, there are comments, but also and opinions by many foreign diplomats. For example, the opinion and comments of the Commissioner for enlargement of the European Union, Štefan Füle, are disseminated or reported in almost all Macedonian media outlets. He is

often quoted in reference to the political situation before and after the European Commission Progress Report for the Republic of Macedonia, as well as in reference to his meetings with the Greek Foreign Minister Dimitris Avramopoulos in efforts to resolve the crisis in Greece. The UK Ambassador in Republic of Macedonia, Christopher Yvon, with his opinions, analysis and commentary is also often present in almost all media. His statements and his position most often refer to highlighting the good-neighbor relations of the Republic of Macedonia. The Swedish diplomat Carl Bildt, the German EU parliament representative Bernd Posselt, the former U.S. Ambassador to Republic of Macedonia Philip Reeker, the PACE President Jean Claude Mignon, are all part of the foreign protagonists who have provided their opinions on the Progress Report or on the relations between Republic of Macedonia and the neighboring countries.

From the domestic political lineup, the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Gjorge Ivanov, the Deputy Prime Minister, Vladimir Peshevski and the Foreign Affairs Minister Nikola Poposki, are the ones whose statements are most frequently broadcasted, with comments and opinions about the European integration of the country, the name issue, the Progress Report by the European Commission, the issue of abolition of the visa liberalization for the Western Balkans, as well as about the relations with the neighboring countries. The research also noted the presence of the EU Parliament Representatives with their views on the Progress Report and the relationship between the Republic of Macedonia and Greece in reference to the name issue.

International Community	6	4%
Political Bodies of EU:	51	30%
o EU in general	11	7%
o European Commission	25	15%
o European Council	4	2%
o European Parliament	6	4%
o European Funds	4	2%
o EU Delegation in our countries	1	1%
State Bodies (Government, Ministries, Parliament)	29	17%
State Bodies of the EU countries	30	18%
State Bodies of the Western Balkan countries	4	2%
Province/Parish/Canton/Local self-government units	3	2%
State Institutions	4	2%
Political Parties	3	2%
Companies, Enterprises, Entrepreneurs	10	6%
Experts	11	7%
Non-Governmental Organizations and Citizens Associations	2	1%
Public Figures	6	4%
Citizens	4	2%
Media (editor's office, journalists)	1	1%
Others	4	2%

Table 1: Most present subjects in the media

It is surprising to acknowledge the absence of statements by the domestic politicians at the time of the Progress Report, on the name issue, the enlargement of the European Union and especially on the issues of the abolition of visa liberalization for the Western Balkans, including the Republic of Macedonia. The Prime Minister of Republic of Macedonia, Nikola Gruevski has almost no statements on these issues, while the leader of the biggest opposition party SDSM, Branko Crvenkovski does not have them at all. Is this contributed by the selective dissemination of information or is this a lack of engagement on their part? A number of domestic experts have only a small stake in the analyses and opinions, which means that the dominant factor in these topics are the foreign politicians, the European Commission and foreign countries diplomats. British EU Parliament representative Richard Howitt, who is also the EU Parliament Rapporteur for the Republic of Macedonia, during the month of October, is also absent from the reports by the Macedonian media.

Most often, the role of object is played by state bodies and institutions of the Republic of Macedonia. The active participation of all the above mentioned European politicians and diplomats, given the political situation in the month of October, speak about the overall progress, the progress report, the relations of the country with its neighbors, the use of European funds. Greece, the protests that took place in that country, the political crisis, and the economic crisis are all an unavoidable object in the Macedonian media reports. The media most often report on the meetings of the Commissioner for Enlargement of the European Union, Štefan Füle, and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel with the Prime Minister of Greece, Antonis Samaras, i.e. with the head of the Greek diplomacy Dimitris Avramopoulos. At the same time, the Western Balkans – the countries aspiring to become members of the European Union, the potential ban on the visa regime, the eurozone and the overcoming of the economic crisis, expressed through various meetings, are most often the objects referred to in the media reports.

International Community	2	1%
Political Bodies of EU:	39	23%
o EU in general	17	10%
o European Commission	13	8%
o European Council	2	1%
o European Parliament	1	1%

○ European Funds	5	3%
○ EU Delegation in our countries	1	1%
State Bodies (Government, Ministries, Parliament)	44	26%
State Bodies of the EU countries	34	20%
State Bodies of the Western Balkan countries	17	10%
Province/Parish/Canton/Local self-government unit	1	1%
State Institutions	2	1%
Workers and Unions	4	2%
Companies, Enterprises, Entrepreneurs	7	4%
Non-Governmental Organizations and Citizens Associations	1	1%
Public Figures	2	1%
Citizens	4	2%
Media (editor's office, journalists)	1	1%
Others	12	7%

Table 2: Most present objects in the media

The other media reports are of various kinds, with small presence, such as individual cases of corruption in the foreign countries i.e. names of representatives of these countries, the use of EU funds for reconstruction, and the European Union, in a general sense.

6.2.5. Value relation of the subject towards the Europeanization

Although arguments and facts are an undisputable element to the value of the information, still the same is not always being disseminated in the public to provide a realistic portrayal of a given event or occurrence. Accordingly, a journalist at the same time can feel responsible towards the norm of impartial and neutral standard of reporting, as well as towards socially engaged journalism that clearly defines the role of journalists in a society. Hence, the media can very skillfully choose the way to publish information, thus contributing to the distortion of the real picture of an event.

In accordance with the previous, the subjects in the journalistic reports can provide a positive, negative or a neutral position or stance for a certain event, situation or occurrence. In the analysis, 42 articles contain subjects that have a positive attitude or value relation towards the "Europeanization", 13 have a negative attitude, and in the remaining 12 articles, the subjects post a neutral standpoint.

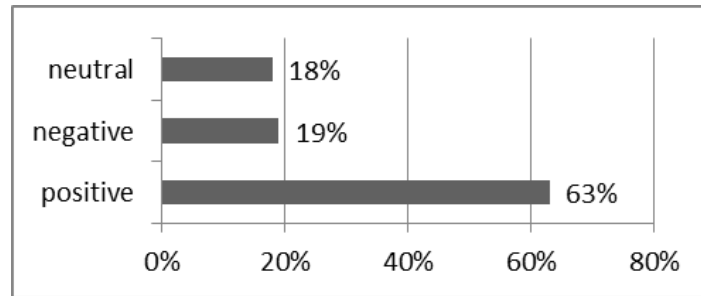


Chart 3: The value relation of the subject towards the Europeanization

At the same time, what is symptomatic is the fact that when multiple media outlets are reporting on the same event, the subject in one media is an institution or a person, while in the other media the same may be an object or it may not be involved at all in the journalistic text. Namely, on October 03, the national television MTV and the local TV station Tera-Bitola were reporting an event that had the same focus - "Reconstruction of the infrastructure in the Pelagonia region with the assistance of the EU IPARD funds", where the national television as a subject in the text uses the Minister of Transport and Communications, while the local television station Tera, was reporting on the Minister as an object. The subjects in this report were the Mayors of Prilep and Bitola given that this TV station is broadcasted locally. In both reports, the subject does not have a value relation towards the "Europeanization".

6.2.6. The role of the journalist in the reporting on the Europeanization

Despite the fact that the Euro-Atlantic integrations were and are high on the agenda of any past and present government establishment in the Republic of Macedonia, it is more than evident that there is lack of authorship of the information (news) that are related to the European Union, because there is a very small number of media outlets that have their own permanent correspondents, above all from Brussels. Not having a correspondent or avoiding to have a correspondent due to cost-effectiveness, as well as copying of texts from news agencies is an ever-growing occurrence, and this refers to both radio and television news programs as well as to printed media, and especially to online journalism. This especially refers to texts relating to events and developments in the EU member states.

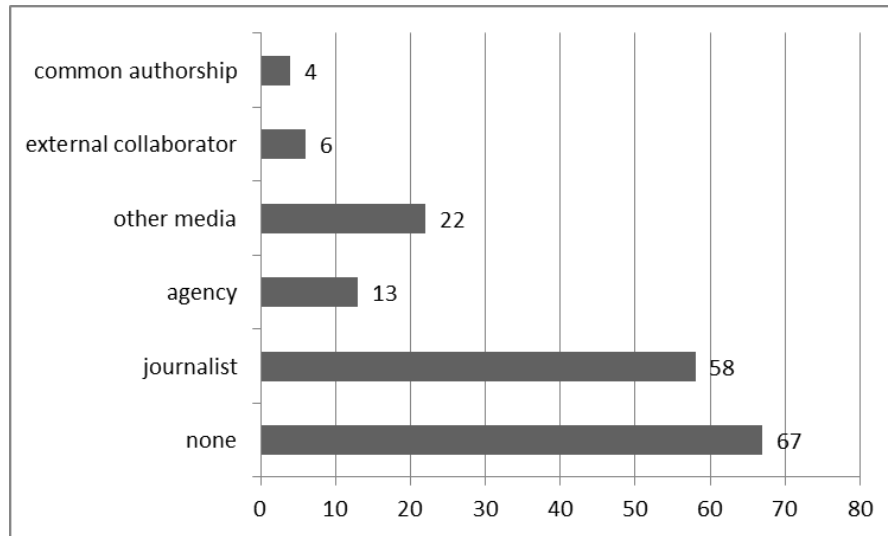


Chart 4: Authorship of the texts/articles

The absence of a media initiative is quite evident in all analyzed media outlets, and that very small percentage is most emphasized in the printed media with 26%, as well as in the electronic media, especially the television stations, with 25%. In this context, the media initiative is more dominant in the interviews of the weekly magazine *Kapital* and in the interviews of the national MTV. This is primarily because the biggest number of the analyzed news are the ones that are related to a certain current event dedicated to Macedonia's EU integration or to the developments in any of the EU countries. This can be best seen in the radio coverage, where we have high 92% dedicated to the current events, similarly with online media where the percentage is 88%.

This high percentage of reporting on current events shows the small interest of the media to self-initiate and report on topics and issues of the European Union, placing bigger attention to domestic issues and topics. Actually, the journalists in Republic of Macedonia mostly report from press conferences of EU representatives in Macedonia or from joint press conferences with the Macedonian subjects. This furthermore confirms that the media initiative dedicated to topics on the European Union is weak, with the exception of the period when the European Commission Progress Reports for the Republic of Macedonia was published.

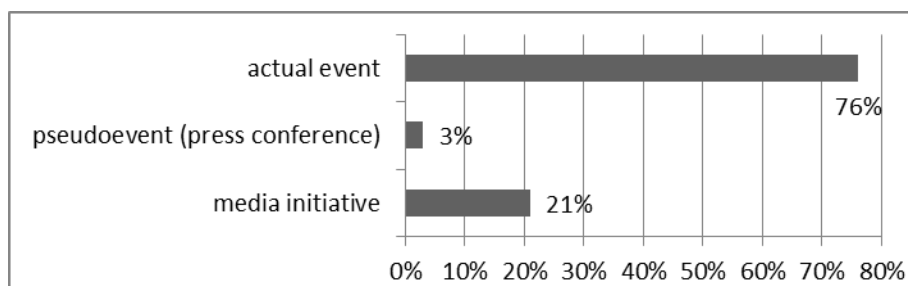


Chart 5: Reason for media reporting

In terms of genres, the Macedonian journalists most often wrote reports and news about the European Union and the Europeanization. High 69% of the contents in terms of the analyzed radio stations, including the online portal a1on.mk are reports. It should be emphasized that the printed media which most often published columns and articles by experts or people from the public and political life who wrote on the topic of European Union, had 27%. In reference to the other genres, the printed media and television outlets conducted several interviews, while mixing genres was only present in the television news with 3% and the printed media with 5%.

Television news broadcasted 3% news without an image, while 31% are news illustrated with live news image. For 28% of the analyzed television news, the journalists reported from the actual sites, while for 19% they only broadcasted related statements. The small number of interviews in the television news which is 9%, as well as in the printed media, once again confirms the lack of engagement by the Macedonian journalists to learn about, and thus to inform the public of any additional content dedicated to Europeanization.

At the same time, the Macedonian journalists most frequently reported news coming from the official political bodies of the European Union committed to the European integration process of the country. In most of such news, the journalistic approach is often informative and connected with current events, because at that time Macedonia was expecting the European Commission Progress Report for the Republic of Macedonia's EU integration. The balance in the reporting is also due to the large number of news copied from agencies or disseminated from other media outlets. Hence, this is the reason for the low percentage of positive i.e. negative attitude towards the topic. Lacking correspondents on the scene of the event affects how the journalist will disseminate the information and what will be the attitude of the journalist towards the information. This is quite evident from the articles in the daily newspaper *Dnevnik*,

considering that the newspaper has a permanent correspondent in Strasbourg, where this newspaper has a permanent correspondent. In terms of local media, the journalists are reporting on topics related to local level, most often about information related to the available EU funds and the cross-border cooperation. The "Name issue", the "Europeanization" and the specific events related to the European Union, are considered not interesting to the local media.

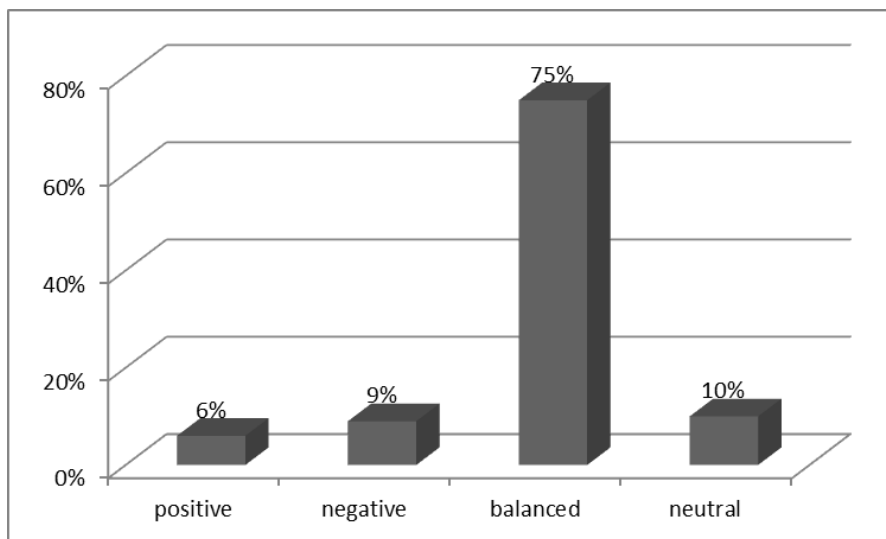


Chart 6: Value relation of the journalist towards the topic

In any case, the Macedonian public deserves a more serious and engaged approach by the journalists and reporters on the topic that clearly needs to be a part of the everyday life, not just in a declarative and voyeuristic sense, but essential and with actions!

6.2.7. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the European Union and all of its "manifesting forms" are in the focus of the public attention in the Republic of Macedonia. One doesn't even need a discursive analysis method to observe this phenomenon, but the same becomes rather obvious with the application of a simple quantitative analysis or statistics. However, what the discursive analysis method shows is the manner in which the overall political and institutional structures in the Republic of Macedonia gravitate around the concept or the term - European Union.

Actually, the European Union in the case of Republic of Macedonia is an imperative reality, a presence, and any attempt to isolate the differences during the interpretation of the Union in Republic of Macedonia can be illustrated by Foucault's attempt to analyze the waves, and not the sea. And the archaeology of knowledge (the sea) for a certain phenomenon is always more crucial than the doxology (waves). Thus, conditionally according to Foucault, Republic of Macedonia is deeply affected with and by the European Union and vice versa, the European Union is essentially present in the Republic of Macedonia despite the fact that the Republic of Macedonia "does not have a sea".