



THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

The results of mini media monitoring analysis of references to CEAS between the publication of the "West Side Story" report in June 2018 to mid-February 2020, in the following media: Danas, N1, Radio Free Europe, Deutsche Welle, and Voice of America

The media scene in Serbia has become a topic of frequent analysis and evaluations by local and international stakeholders. The turmoil in Montenegro has further placed it in the spotlight of Western political actors.

We wish to point out that CEAS does not give statements to Serbian tabloids Informer, Alo and Srpski Telegraf, or invite them to attend our events, ever since the media satanization campaign led by our Montenegrin colleague Vanja Čalović, who we neither met personally, nor have worked with the organization she headed. We believe that the Russian Sputnik and its Serbian outlet are not media, nor a public service or a government media in the sense of BBC, DW, RFE or VOA, but rather a propaganda machinery, as we keep insisting since they first opened in Serbia, so we also do not give them statements, nor invite them to follow our events. We also consider it very perfidious that Sputnik's Serbian outlet declares itself a Serbian media, which is certainly not the case.

Monitoring the reports on the influence of media on developments in Montenegro, we observed that in order to disseminate as much information as possible and to prevent organized disinformation campaigns from achieving their desired effects, a clearer distinction should be made between the Serbian media by emphasizing the difference between those who are in some kind of ownership relations with the state, or use national frequencies, and private media on the one hand, and media operating in Serbia as outlets of public services of foreign governments and propaganda machineries, on the other.

CEAS has previously suggested to its Western interlocutors participating in the negotiations on electoral conditions in Serbia to consider the manner in which the aforementioned services of the Western foreign governments or their media public services in Serbia have been reporting in the

last couple of years, when conducting their analysis of the Serbian media scene. The same is true of the West-sponsored semi-commercial and commercial media.

Despite the large number of Western-backed projects addressing disinformation and counting lies and truths, fulfilled and unfulfilled promises, pro-US, pro-Russian or pro-EU titles and content, the functioning of REM, public officials' campaigns, political representation (without weighting their current public support articulated in elections, whose legitimacy was not contested by any relevant international organization) and others, very few of them publicly and systematically opposed one of the largest organized disinformation campaigns about the non-existent cancer epidemic in Serbia, allegedly caused by the use of depleted uranium during the NATO bombing. Much more attention was paid to the accuracy of the statements made by the officials as to whether GDP increased by 0.001% or 0.08%, just to illustrate the point.

Bearing in mind that we ourselves have been both a subject and an object of the Serbian media scene for quite some time, we have noticed several trends regarding the aforementioned local editorial offices of the Western government media or public services, as well as portals like Balkan Insight, whose projects are West-funded, which we believe deserve a closer scrutiny and more detailed analysis in order to get as realistic a picture of the Serbian media landscape as possible.

Our impression is that it would be very interesting to classify their content into the one reporting on positive developments in Serbia, versus the one that speaks about the negative trends, based on the same criterion - whether it brings Serbia *de facto* closer or drives it further away from the political West. It would be interesting to find out how much of the said content is the news and how much of it is analysis, personal views and other formats that "do not necessarily represent editorial policy". It would also be interesting to analyze whether the aforementioned media have themselves embarked on a kind of historical revisionism and dissemination of disinformation, in order to continue presenting Serbia of the 2020 through the prism of the 1990s, for reasons only known to them.

It is our estimate is that the DW in Serbian and the RFE Serbian service act as the local opposition media, and not as public service outlets and the government media.

Based on our database - [CEAS in the media](#)¹ – CEAS analyzed our mentions in the following media: Danas, N1, Radio Free Europe, Deutsche Welle (DW) and Voice of America (VOA) (Serbian language service) from June 2018, when we first published the “West Side Story” report, until mid-February 2020. We compared the number of mentions in the said media with the one covering the same period of time (20 months) before the publication of this report.

By the term "mentions in the media" we mean: interviews and statements by members of the CEAS team, coverage of our events, interviews with participants of our events when CEAS is referred to as the organizer, and mentions in other contexts that we have in our records.

¹ CEAS website. CEAS in the media page. Available at: <https://www.ceas-serbia.org/en/ceas-in-the-media>

We would like to remind that in the “West Side Story”² report CEAS proposed a correction of the administrative line between Serbia proper and Kosovo as a possible element of a comprehensive multidimensional agreement on the normalization of Belgrade-Pristina relations, and raised the issue of the pace of punishment for war crimes in Kosovo and compared it with Serbia's track record of cooperation with the competent international courts.

We also compared the number of mentions in the analyzed period with the number of mentions in the same media since the publication of the report "Eyes Wide Shut: Strengthening of the Russian soft power in Serbia - goals, instruments and effects" in May 2016, up until January 2018 (20 months) to get an insight into how many times were we mentioned in those media during the time when CEAS findings were more in line with their editorial policies.

**Note* - Timeline of CEAS reports publications that represent references for findings in the tables and charts:

- “West Side Story” - published on 13 June 2018
- "Eyes Wide Shut: Strengthening of the Russian soft power in Serbia - goals, instruments and effects" - published on 9 May 2016

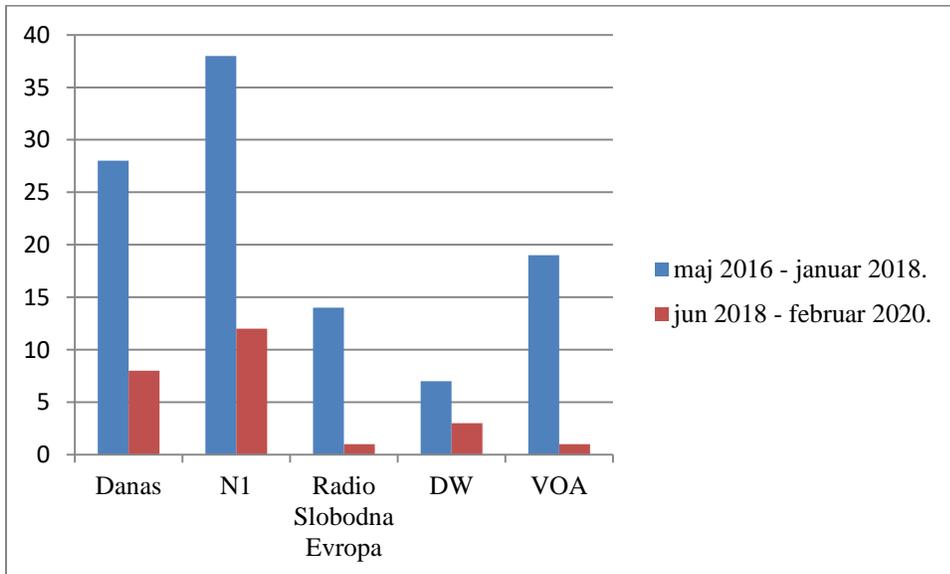
	Danas	N1	Radio Free Europe	DW	VOA
May 2016- January 2018	28	38	14	7	19

**Table 1* - Mentions of CEAS in the said media in the period from the publication of the "Eyes Wide Shut" report in May 2016, until January 2018 (approximately 20 months)

	Danas	N1	Radio Free Europe	DW	VOA
June 2018- February 2020	9	15	4	3	12

² CEAS report: „West Side Story“. CEAS website. Published in June 2018. Available at: https://www.ceas-serbia.org/images/2018/CEAS_Study_-_West_Side_Story.pdf

*Table 2 - Mentions of CEAS in the said media in the period from the publication of the "West Side Story" report in June 2018, until mid-February 2020 (approximately 20 months)



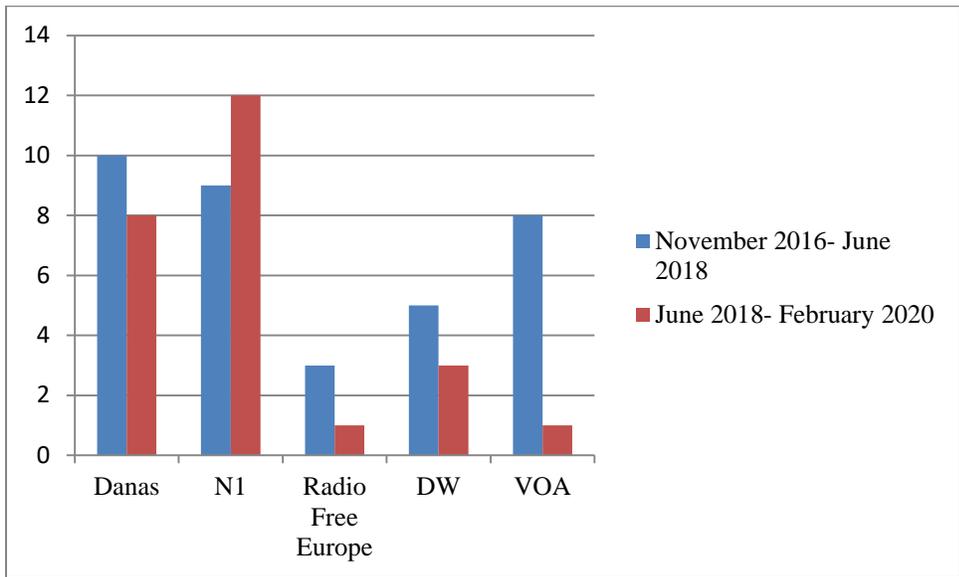
* Chart 1

Blue indicates the period between the publication of the "Eyes Wide Shut" report in May 2016, until January 2018 (20 months period)

Red indicates the period from the publication of the "West Side Story" report in June 2018, until February 2020 (20 months period)

	Danas	N1	Radio Free Europe	DW	VOA
November 2016- June 2018	18	26	12	5	10

* Table 3 - Mentions of CEAS in the said media in the period **before** the publication of the "West Side Story" report in June 2018, back to November 2016 (approximately 20 months period)

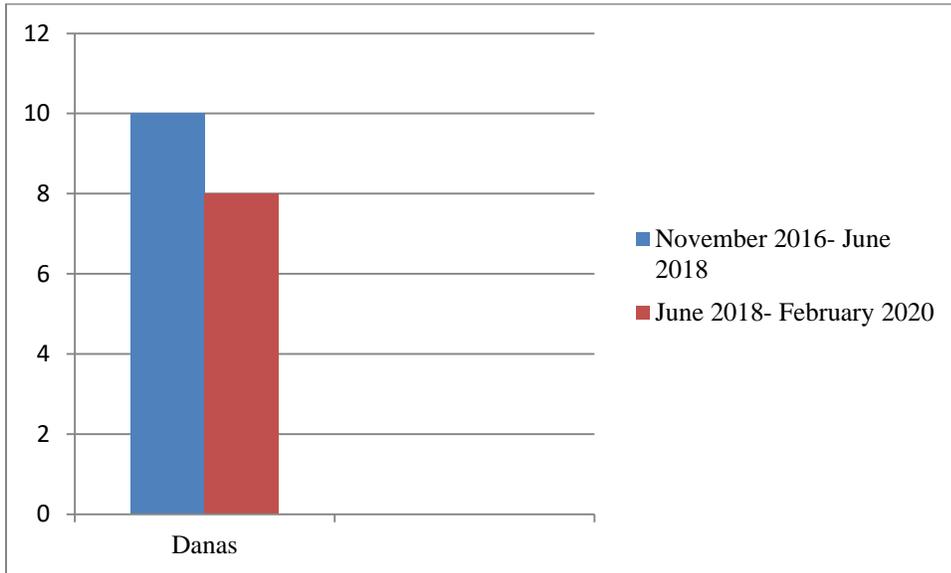


* Chart 2

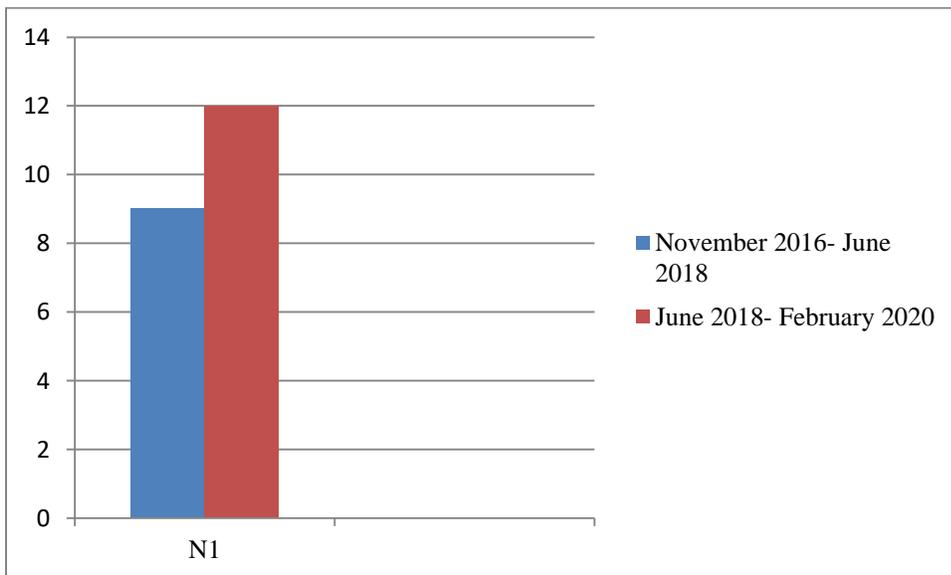
Blue indicates the period before the publication of the “West Side Story” report in June 2018, going back to November 2016 (20 months period)

Red indicates the period after the publication of the study “West Side Story” in June 2018, until February 2020 (20 months period)

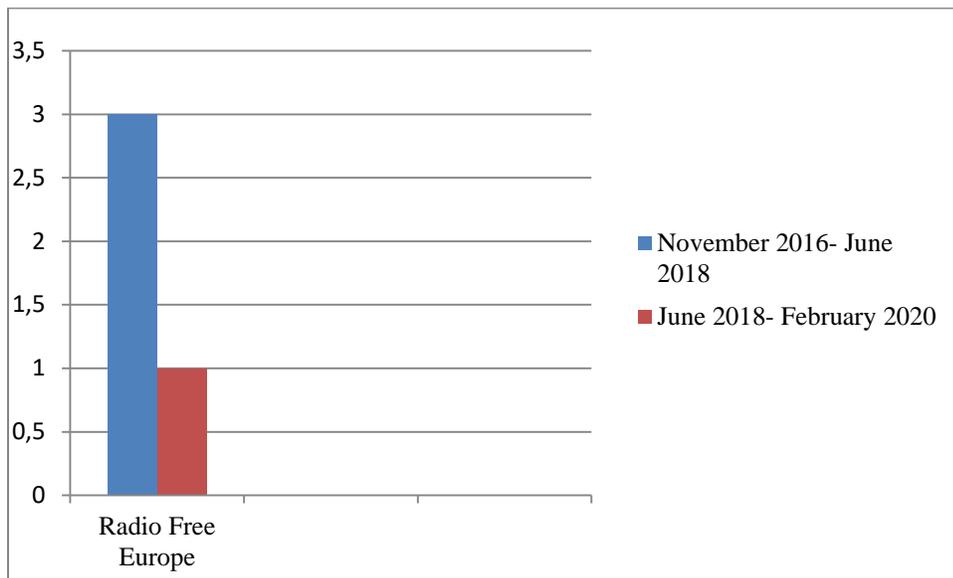
* *Note:* Charts 3 through 7 are an individual representation of CEAS mentions in Danas, N1, RFE, DW, VOA. Blue indicates the period between the publication of the “West Side Story” report in June 2018 and 20 months back to November 2016. Red indicates the period from the publication of the “West Side Story” in June 2018, until February 2020 (20 months period).



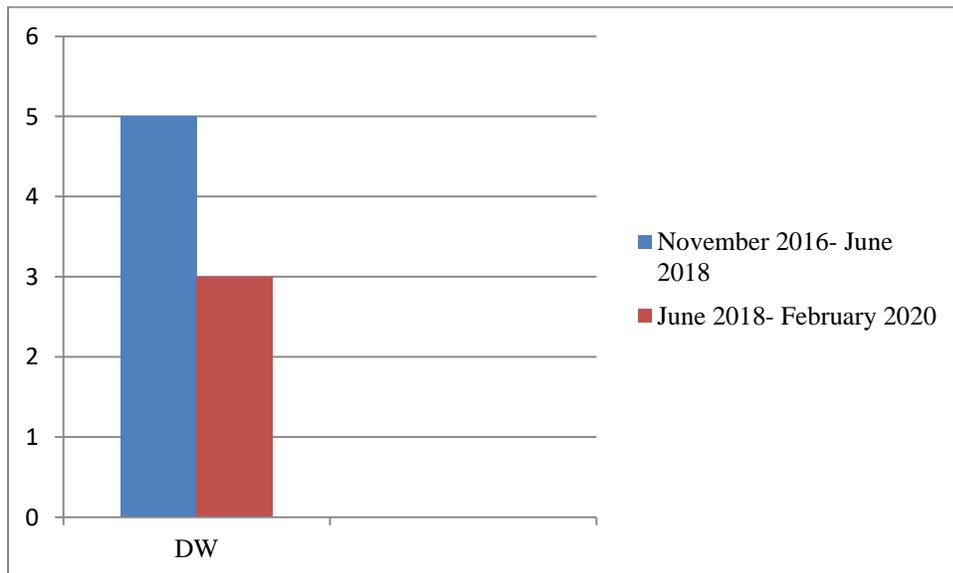
* Chart 3: CEAS mentions in Danas



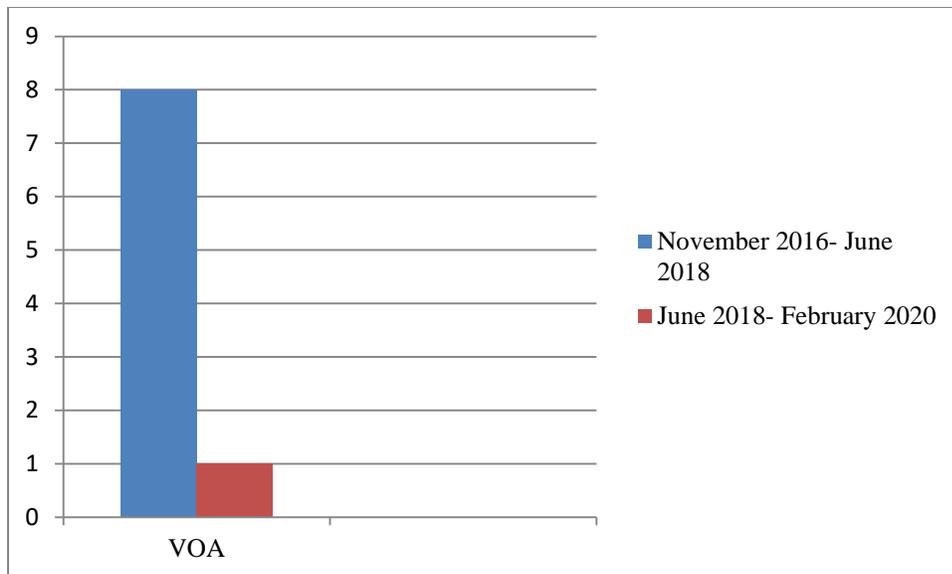
* Chart 4: CEAS mentions on N1



* Chart 5: CEAS mentions on RFE



* Chart 6: CEAS mentions on DW



* Chart 7: CEAS mentions on VOA

A comparative analysis of the representation of CEAS in the above media in the given periods shows the following trend:

CEAS's mentions in the media Danas, N1, Radio Free Europe, Deutsche Welle, and to certain extent Voice of America, have declined considerably since the publication of the “West Side Story” report, as seen in Table 2 and Chart 1.

We would like to point out that since its establishment in 2017, the BBC's online service in Serbian has published only one news item on CEAS, although since then to the present day we have organized a number of major international events, such as international conferences in the framework of our project [Belgrade NATO Week](#)³(#BelgradeNATOWeek), where the speakers included senior NATO officials, as well as published a series of reports on topics that few other civil society organizations in Serbia cover.

CEAS estimates that the drop in mentions on the said media, and in particular on the RFE, would have been even greater had it not been for the #BelgradeNATOWeek international conferences and the high profile speakers participating in them, as well as the importance of the topics discussed there. The fact that CEAS was the organizer of these events is hardly even referred to in the media coverage.

We would like to remind that, over the analyzed period of the last twenty months, CEAS has published, among others, two major reports on topics that no other civil society organization has tackled in such a way: “Kosovo First - Analysis of the context of the adoption process and analysis of the draft National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia”, published on 14

³ Conference Belgrade NATO Week website. Available at: <https://natowee.rs/en/>

September 2018, and "What a Difference a Year Makes", a comparative analysis of the draft versions of the new National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Defense Strategy (NDS), which the government of the Republic of Serbia approved on 8 August 2019 and passed on to the National Assembly for consideration, in versions that had undergone public discussion in the spring of 2018, which was published on 17 September 2019.

In the same period, on 4 April 2019, CEAS published its new report on Russian influence in Serbia as well, this time also about the one that goes against the interests of official Belgrade, entitled "From Moscow Without Love". All three were cited in reports by some of the world's leading think-tank organizations and by other political actors in the Western Balkans. We emphasize that we use the same methodology and adhere to the same principles when drafting all our reports.

Monitoring the mentions in the local media, we noticed that certain Belgrade weeklies in their published interviews failed to acknowledge that the interviewees came to Belgrade as guests of CEAS and #BelgradeNATOweek, but introduced them as guests of some other organizations instead, as in the case of Ed Joseph's interview for NIN.⁴

Over the last twenty months, meaning the period after the publication of the "West Side Story", CEAS has been exposed to media satanization, threats, defamation and misogyny. However, that has not attracted the attention of the abovementioned media, although, in our estimation, less serious cases were reported in detail during this period.⁵

We remind that the convicted war criminal Vojislav Šešelj promoted his book "Jelena Milić NATO's Crabs" (in April 2019) on television stations with national frequency, and that Ms. Milić was very tendentiously defamed and intimidated by Jugoslav Petrušić, a Serbian-French agent, counterintelligence officer and a member of the French DRM Military Intelligence Service, against whom a criminal proceedings was initiated in 2016 for espionage in favor of France, the murder of two Kosovo Albanians and other crimes in Kosovo and Metohija during the 1999 NATO air campaign. CEAS is currently pursuing four lawsuits⁶ over defamation, intimidation, and more, and several criminal charges that we filed were dismissed.

Considering that CEAS has not changed its method of work or its core beliefs and principles of action before and after the publication of the "West Side Story" report, it remains for us to conclude that, despite our increased activities in this period, it is this very report that is causing the observed downward trend in CEAS mentions in the said media, due to its comparative

⁴ Twitter account of Jelena Milić, CEAS Director. Available at: <https://twitter.com/Jelennah169/status/1195428773438644224>

⁵ CEAS website. Publication: "Vilify and Amplify- From Serbian and Russian trolls factories to pro Serbian and Russian government's mainstream media *** Defamation and intimidation campaign against CEAS and its director Jelena Milić". Available at: https://www.ceas-serbia.org/images/2016/vilify-and-amplify/CEAS_Vilify_and_Amplify.pdf

⁶ CEAS announcement: Unequal treatment of CEAS by judicial bodies and public institutions – the case of the Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies and its Director Jelena Milić. May 2019. Available at: <https://www.ceas-serbia.org/en/news/announcements/8112-ceas-announcement-inequal-treatment-of-ceas-by-judicial-bodies-and-public-institutions-the-case-of-the-center-for-euro-atlantic-studies-and-its-director-jelena-milic>

analysis of the attitudes towards the crimes of 1990s in Belgrade and Pristina, its analysis of the current geopolitical setting that is quite different from the one at the end of the conflicts or at the time of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence, which must be taken into account when searching for a sustainable compromise, as well as due to suggestion that a correction of the administrative line may be an element of the agreement.

CEAS continues to believe that a compromise nonpartisan approach to formalizing relations between Belgrade and Pristina, which would take into consideration all the circumstances of the 1998/99 conflict and the attitudes towards the war criminal history in both Belgrade and Pristina on the one hand, and the current geopolitical conditions on the other, as well as ensure that both sides are strongly anchored in the political West - is the only proper way to reach a sustainable solution for this special case, that cannot and should not represent a precedent for any other open issue in the world. A compromise solution to Belgrade-Pristina relations that would allow the re-establishment of an alliance between Serbia and the United States (US), regardless of which administration holds power in Washington, is beneficial not only to Serbia, but also to Kosovo, the Western Balkans, Southeast Europe, EU, NATO and the US and their partners.

CEAS hopes that this mini-analysis will contribute to a more objective debate on the media scene in Serbia. We apologize in advance if any of the data on our representation in the aforementioned media does not match the facts. Any evidence to the contrary will be published immediately.

Please note that we are aware that these are small numbers, but we believe, based on years of experience, that the observed trend of lower representation in the said media is an objective fact.

CEAS invites you to check out our latest announcements, analyzes and reports:

- CEAS announcement – “Finally a State List of Fatal Casualties During the NATO Aggression”, published on 14 February 202 <https://www.ceas-serbia.org/en/news/announcements/8742-ceas-announcement-finally-a-state-list-of-fatal-casualties-during-the-nato-aggression>
- CEAS analysis – “Regarding the Growing Tensions in Serbia-Montenegro Relations”, published on 6 January 2020 <https://www.ceas-serbia.org/en/ceas-publications/8630-regarding-the-growing-tensions-in-serbia-montenegro-relations>
- CEAS report – “Don’t Break the Principles”, published on 25 December 2019 <https://www.ceas-serbia.org/en/ceas-publications/8602-don-t-break-the-principles>
- CEAS analysis – “What a Difference a Year Makes” - A comparative analysis of the draft versions of the new National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Defense

Strategy (NDS), which the government of the Republic of Serbia approved on 8th August 2019 and passed on to the National Assembly for consideration, in versions that had undergone public debate in the spring of 2018. Published on 17 September 2017

<https://www.ceas-serbia.org/en/ceas-publications/what-a-difference-a-year-makes>

- CEAS analysis – “From Moscow Without Love”, published on 4 April 2019
https://www.ceas-serbia.org/images/publikacije/CEAS_From_Moscow_Without_Love_EN_A4_WEB.pdf
- CEAS analysis – “Kosovo First - Analysis of the context of the adoption process and analysis of the draft National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia”, published on 14 September 2018 https://www.ceas-serbia.org/images/publikacije/Kosovo_First_WEB.pdf
- CEAS analysis – “Kosovo First - Analysis of the Draft of the Defense Strategy of the Republic of Serbia”, published on 5 December 2018 <https://www.ceas-serbia.org/en/ceas-publications/kosovo-first-2>

Belgrade, 21 February 2020