Codebook for Content Analysis of Serbian Media Reporting on the 2024 European Parliament Elections

1. Metadata: Structure of the codebook

Category	Codes / Description
News ID	Unique identifier (001, 002...)
Media outlet name	Full name of the outlet
URL	Link to the original article
Date of publication	Format: dd/mm/yyyy
The title of the article	Full title of the article

2. Media type: Structure of the codebook

Category	Codes / Description
Media format	1 = Online news portal, 2 = TV channel with website, 3 = Print outlet with website, 4 = News agency
Coverage scope	1 = Local, 2 = Regional, 3 = National, 4 = International
Ownership type	1 = Private, 2 = State-owned, 3 = Public service, 4 = Mixed

2a. Further explanation: category *Media format*

Code	Description	Definition / Criteria
1	Online news portal	Media outlets that operate primarily or exclusively online, without affiliation to a print or broadcast medium. These portals typically focus on real-time news updates, often with interactive or multimedia content.
2	TV channel with website	News content published on the website of a television broadcaster. While the outlet's primary format is TV, its news is also disseminated online.

3	Print outlet with website	Traditional print media (e.g., newspapers or magazines) that also maintain an online presence. The content may be adapted or replicated from the print edition.
4	News agency	Wire services or agencies that produce and distribute news content to other media outlets. These typically include brief, fact-based reports and may not publish for a general audience directly.

2b. Further explanation: category *Coverage scope*

Code	Description	Definition / Criteria
1	Local	Media outlets or articles focused primarily on local issues, events, or audiences—typically within a city.
2	Regional	Coverage that focuses on a specific geographic region within a country (e.g., Vojvodina, Central Serbia), or a transnational region such as the Balkans or Western Balkans.
3	National	Coverage addressing issues relevant to the entire country (e.g., Serbia). National-level institutions, politics, or events dominate the content.
4	International	Articles with a broader, cross-border focus—addressing international affairs, foreign policy, or supranational institutions such as the EU or UN. This includes content aimed at or produced for an international audience.

2c. Further explanation: category *Ownership type*

Code	Description	Definition / Criteria
1	Private	Media owned by private individuals or companies, with no direct state or public sector ownership or funding. This includes both corporate and individually-owned outlets operating as commercial enterprises.
2	State-owned	Media owned and operated by the national government or state institutions. Content and operations are directly managed or financed by the state.

3	Public service media	Media funded and/or managed by public institutions (e.g., through license fees or public funding), with a legal mandate to serve the public interest. Typically includes public broadcasters.
4	Mixed	Media with a combination of private and public/state ownership or financing. This may include partial state funding, partnerships, or hybrid governance structures.

3. Editorial Orientation[1]*(based on prior research and media profiling reports)*: Structure of the codebook

Category	Codes / Description
Ideological orientation	1 = Pro-Western, 2 = Pro-Russian, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Unclear
Editorial style	1 = Serious/Analytical, 2 = Tabloid/Populist, 3 = Mixed
Political stance	1 = Critical of government, 2 = Government-aligned, 3 = Neutral

3a. Further explanation: category *Ideological orientation*

Code	Description	Definition / Criteria
1	Pro Western	Media that explicitly or implicitly express favorable attitudes toward the European Union, the United States, NATO, or Western values and institutions. This may include positive framing of Western actors, alignment with Western policy positions, or criticism of opposing geopolitical blocs.
2	Pro-Russian	Media that express favorable attitudes toward Russia, including sympathetic framing of Russian foreign policy, political positions, or leadership. This may also include negative portrayals of Western actors or institutions.

---

[1] *Editorial Orientation* refers to the prevailing ideological and editorial stance of a media outlet, as inferred from its content and reporting style. The classification was based on a combination of methods: primary content analysis of published articles, secondary analyses conducted by relevant media-monitoring organizations, and the authors' own long-term experience in following the Serbian media landscape. Additional reference was made to existing monitoring reports and databases such as those provided by Raskrikavanje, BIRODI, and international organizations engaged in media research. This composite approach allowed for a more nuanced and informed assessment of each outlet's editorial profile, especially in cases where the orientation was not explicitly stated. The final categorization reflects dominant patterns observed in reporting, framing, and tone, rather than isolated examples.

Code	Description	Definition / Criteria
3	Neutral	Media that present information without clear ideological bias toward either Western or Russian positions. Reporting is balanced, factual, and avoids overtly partisan language or framing.
4	Unclear	Media outlets whose ideological orientation could not be reliably determined. This indeterminacy may stem from the use of ambiguous language, the absence of clear political framing, or the presence of conflicting indicators that hinder conclusive categorization.

3b. Further explanation: category *Editorial style*

Code	Description	Definition / Criteria
1	Serious / Analytical	Articles presented in a formal, fact-based, and analytical tone. These pieces are often well-structured, use professional journalistic standards, and avoid sensationalism. Focus is on in-depth reporting, evidence-based analysis, and expert interpretation.
2	Tabloid / Populist	Articles characterized by sensationalist tone, emotive or provocative language, simplified narratives, and/or exaggerated headlines. Often designed to attract attention, appeal to emotion, or stir public sentiment. May include clickbait, celebrity focus, or dramatic framing.
3	Mixed	Articles that combine elements of both serious and tabloid styles. For example, a report may include serious analysis but also use emotive or sensationalist language in parts of the text or headline.

3c. Further explanation: category *Political stance*

Code	Description	Definition / Criteria
1	Critical of government	Media that express a critical or oppositional stance toward the current national government (e.g., of Serbia). This includes highlighting government failures, misconduct, or controversial policies, as well as giving voice to opposition or dissenting perspectives.

2	Government aligned	Media that reflect a supportive or uncritical tone toward the government. This includes positive framing of government actions, promoting official narratives, or dismissing or minimizing opposing views.
3	Neutral	Media that do not express a clear political stance regarding the government. Reporting is balanced, avoids partisan framing, and presents multiple perspectives without favoring one side.

4. Topic and content focus: Structure of the codebook

Category	Codes / Description
Main topic	1 = Elections in the context of the EU, 2= National elections, 3= Elections in the context of Serbia, 4= Profile of EU politicians, 5= Elections in the context of Russia, 6= Elections in the context of enlargement, 7= Elections in the context of the region, 8= Elections in the context of migration, 9= Elections in the context of the economy, 10= Elections in the context of the USA, 11= Elections in the context of Ukraine, 12= Elections in the context of the European Football Championship.
Type of Coverage	1= Informative or 2= Analytical.

4a. Further explanation: category *Main topic*[2]

Code	Description	Definition / Criteria
1	Elections in the context of the EU	Articles focused on elections explicitly linked to the European Union or EU-wide electoral processes
2	National elections	Reports on national elections in EU countries or other countries, which may or may not be connected to EP elections.

---

[2] The **Main Topic** category was developed iteratively throughout the course of the research. Rather than relying on a fixed, predetermined set of themes, topics were added successively as new content was analyzed and as the scope of reporting contexts became clearer. This flexible approach proved advantageous, allowing for the identification and inclusion of emergent thematic frames that were not initially anticipated. Consequently, it enabled a more comprehensive capture of the diverse ways in which reporting on the European Parliament elections was framed across different media outlets. Such an adaptive methodology enhanced the validity of the content analysis by ensuring that novel and contextually relevant themes were systematically incorporated as they arose during the coding process.

3	Elections in the context of Serbia	Articles discussing how EP elections impact Serbia politically, socially, or economically
4	Profile of EU politicians	Articles focusing on the profiles, roles, or activities of EU politicians who were candidates for the European Parliament and who were the main focus of the article
5	Elections in the context of Russia	Articles linking EP elections to Russian influence, politics, or relations
6	Elections in the context of enlargement	Articles discussing elections within the frame of EU enlargement or candidate countries
7	Elections in the context of the region	Articles framing elections within the Balkan/Western Balkans or regional political context
8	Elections in the context of migration	Articles addressing EP elections with migration as a key theme or factor
9	Elections in the context of the economy	Articles linking EP elections to economic issues, policies, or consequences
10	Elections in the context of the USA	Articles relating EP elections to US politics, influence, or bilateral relations
11	Elections in the context of Ukraine	Articles discussing EP elections with a focus on Ukraine related issues or impact
12	Elections in the context of the European Football Championship	Articles connecting elections to the European Football Championship

4b. Further explanation: category *Type of Coverage*

Code	Description	Definition / Criteria

1	Informative	Articles primarily presenting facts, events, or news updates without extensive interpretation or opinion. The focus is on reporting what happened, who was involved, when and where.
2	Analytical	Articles that go beyond straightforward reporting by providing interpretation, context, evaluation, or critical commentary on the events or topics discussed. These pieces often include opinions, explanations of causes or consequences, or comparison of different perspectives.

5. Authors and Sources: Structure of the codebook

Category	Codes / Description
Author	1= Agency, 2= Named, 3= Unnamed, 4= Other media, 5= Initials, 6= PR text.
Primary source type	1= No source, 2= EU politicians, 3=Experts, 3a= Party pundits, 4= Media, 5= National politicians (from Serbia), 6= Politicians outside the EU, 7= Citizens, 8= NGOs, 9= Author's text, 10= EU institutions, 11= Social media, 12= PR, 13= National institutions.

5a. Further explanation: category *Author*

Code	Description	Definition / Criteria
1	Agency	Article is credited to a news agency (e.g., Tanjug, Beta, AP)
2	Named author	Full name of the author/journalist is given
3	Unnamed author	No specific author name given, but indicated as written by staff, correspondent, or anonymous
4	Other media	Article originally published by another media outlet (e.g., repost)
5	Initials	Author identified only by initials instead of full name
6	PR text	Text clearly identified as a press release or promotional material without journalistic authorship

5b. Further explanation: category *Source*

Code	Description	Definition / Criteria
1	No source	Article contains no identifiable source or direct quotations
2	EU politicians	Statements or quotes from politicians representing EU member states or EU-level politicians
3	Experts	This category includes individuals cited for their professional or academic expertise, such as researchers, analysts, or scholars.
3a	Party pundits	This category includes political commentators, analysts, or spokespersons who are explicitly affiliated with or closely aligned to a political party. Their commentary typically reflects partisan viewpoints and serves to promote or defend their party's positions.
4	Media	References to other media outlets or journalists (different from the analyzed outlet)
5	National politicians (from Serbia)	Quotes or statements from Serbian political figures
6	Politicians outside the EU	Politicians from countries other than Serbia and EU member states
7	Citizens	Quotes or opinions from ordinary citizens, voters, or grassroots participants
8	NGOs	Representatives or statements from non-governmental organizations
9	Author's text	The journalist's own analysis, commentary, or opinion expressed explicitly by the article's author
10	EU institutions	Quotes or references to official EU bodies or institutions (e.g., European Commission, European Parliament)

11	Social media	Information, quotes, or posts directly taken from social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, Facebook)
12	PR	Official press releases or public relations materials cited or reproduced
13	National institutions	Quotes or references to Serbian governmental or state institutions (ministries, agencies, etc.)

6. Tone of Reporting on EU-related Topics: Structure of the codebook

Category	Codes / Description
Tone toward the EU	1 = Positive, 2 = Neutral, 3 = Negative.

6a. Further explanation: category *Tone of reporting*

Category	Code	Definition	Example Indicators
Positive tone	1	Reporting emphasizes benefits of EU integration, praises EU actors, or presents the EU in a favorable light.	Terms like *support, improvement, cooperation, assistance*, positive portrayal of EU policies.
Neutral tone	2	Factual or balanced reporting without evident bias or evaluative language regarding the EU.	Descriptive language, quotes from multiple sources, absence of judgmental or emotionally charged words.
Negative tone	3	Reporting focuses on EU failures, criticism of its policies, or portrays the EU as a threat, burden, or negative influence.	Language indicating *imposition, failure, hypocrisy*, focus on conditionality, or elite criticism.