

## PRESS RELEASE

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A new Report on ***Hate Speech through the Vocabulary of Populist Propaganda in Bulgaria, and Its Spread in Bulgarian Online Media (1 June – 31 August 2018)*** has just been published – see <http://hssfoundation.org/>.

Which media outlets and politicians most often spread hate speech in Bulgaria in the summer of 2018? And which are the most frequently used offensive terms?

The HSSF team has identified fifteen most frequently used vilifying epithets from the vocabulary of populist propaganda in Bulgaria. They are the following:

- ✓ Sorosoid (*sorosoid*)
- ✓ puppet (*marionetachen*)
- ✓ grant-sponger (*grantadzhiya*)
- ✓ protester (*protestar*)
- ✓ liberast (*liberast*)
- ✓ tolerast (*tolerast*)
- ✓ Eurogay (*evrogey*)
- ✓ un-Bulgarian (*bezrodnik*)
- ✓ sell-out (*prodazhnik*)
- ✓ freeloader (*hrantutnik*)
- ✓ yes-man (*poslushko*)
- ✓ genders (*dzhendari*)
- ✓ de-Bulgarification (*obezbalgaryavane*)
- ✓ de-Bulgarization (*debalgarizatsiya*)
- ✓ Gypsization (*tsiganizatsiya*)

Bulgarian online space in the 1 June – 31 August 2018 period was researched simultaneously by two automated methods: first, with the SENSIKA system, which archives more than 3,500 Bulgarian-language websites and blogs, and second, by using Google’s advanced search operators. The two systems were instructed to search by keywords for articles and blog posts containing one or more of the fifteen epithets listed above. The results of the automated searches were augmented by an analysis of the content of the articles containing these epithets.

In order to limit the research field, social networks were excluded from the study, but it is representative of all other Bulgarian-language online sources in the summer of 2018.

The chosen period of research was the so-called “dead season” in which there are usually no significant socio-political events generating and motivating “spontaneous” outbursts of hate speech fomenting division, confrontation and exclusion. Thus, the media outlets and speakers that regularly resort to hate speech during the “dead season” stand out as unprompted yet systematic users of hate speech as a propaganda strategy.

**The results are the following:**

These ten online news media hold the record for the most widespread offensive epithets:

Online news media outlet	Number of publications containing the specified keywords
informiran.net	70
Dnes-bg.org	61
Bultimes.com	49
Epicenter.bg	37
classa.bg	37
trud.bg	35
blitz.bg	35
pik.bg	35
Pogled.info	33
svobodnoslovo.eu	26

If aggregators (robots) – wholly automated websites republishing content from other sources – are included in the measurement, then the absolute record in spreading hate speech is held by the aggregator novini247.com, with 192 publications containing the specified keywords. Novini247.com is a robot whose algorithm has obviously been designed to aggregate, with priority, propaganda publications containing hate speech.

The record for number of readers' comments containing hate speech is held by the otherwise liberal news website Dnevnik.bg.

The online discussion forums where hate speech is most often found are Bg-mamma.com, the discussion forum of Investor.bg, Teen-problem.net and forum.bg-nacionalisti.org.

The most frequently used offensive epithet is the newly coined “genders”, followed closely by the older “liberast” and “Sorosoid”.

The politicians who used hate speech and had most media coverage in the analyzed period are Krasimir Karakachanov, Angel Dzhambazki and, partly, Nikolay Barekov. Occasionally, hate speech was used by other incumbent or former politicians, such as Mihail Mirchev, Alexander Simov, Georgi Markov, Anton Todorov, Velislava Dareva and Borislav Tsekov.

The following events generated the most hate speech in the summer of 2018:

- The Constitutional Court's ruling that the Istanbul Convention is inconsistent with the Bulgarian Constitution.
- The Facebook post by Svetlana Doncheva, Deputy Prime Minister Tomislav Donchev's wife, about the Roma minority in Bulgaria.
- The euthanasia of sheep and goats in Sharkovo and several other nearby villages, carried out to prevent an ovine rinderpest epidemic.