



# (Future) EU membership or not?

Current reciprocal perceptions  
between Western Balkan countries  
and the EU

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## EU Enlargement - *Yes or No?*

Eurobarometer Standard Survey  
74 Fall 2010:

*Please tell me, whether you are for or against further enlargement of the EU to include other countries in future years?*

**51%** Western Balkan countries

**"...against"**

Gallup Balkan Monitor Survey  
2010:

*Generally speaking, do you think that [your country's] membership of the EU would be a good thing?*

**62%**

**"...a good thing"**

*Do you think that the people in the EU want [your country] to join the EU?*

**25%**

**"...mostly not"**



## Theoretical Assumptions

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- ❖ Collective identity concepts based on in-group/out-group-dimension (Abrams & Hogg 2004)
- ❖ EU enlargement as (re-)definition of EU borders, membership, and (EU) identity concepts (Risse-Kappen 2010)
- ❖ Ingroup-outgroup dualism & conception of EU collectivity as one crucial parameters for current reciprocal perceptions and question of EU enlargement
- ❖ (EU) collective identity beyond political level (Wedel 2006) may result in other parameters for perception, too
- ❖ Both aspects form knowledge background for attitudes on EU enlargement
- ❖ Collective identity concepts are social constructions; reconsidered, renegotiated, and recomposed relative to other groups (Anderson 2005, Rivenburg 1997)
- ❖ Mass media are essential communication arena; form knowledge base for social constructions of and attitudes towards (EU) community (Gerhards 2008, McCombs 2004, Risse-Kappen 2010)

## Project Design

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### ❖ Analyzed quality newspapers:

Austria: *Die Presse, Der Standard*  
 Germany: *Sueddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*  
 UK: *The Times, The Guardian*  
 BiH: *Dnevni Avaz, Dnevni list, Nezavisne novine*  
 Serbia: *Danas, Politika*

### ❖ Analyzed sample:

01 Jan – 31 Dec 2009  
 12 days; for each month one day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> week, Mon-Sat  
 Whole newspaper edition

### ❖ Selection criteria:

- A, Reference to EU countries, the EU as an entity, actors, and/or specific EU institutions in the newspapers of BiH and Serbia
- B, Reference to Western Balkan countries, the region as an entity, actors, and/or institutions from the region in the newspapers of Austria, Germany and UK

❖ **Data Sample:**

Austria:	n = 66	BiH:	n = 318
Germany:	n = 73	Serbia:	n = 317
UK:	n = 69		

# Project Design

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## ❖ Analytical Steps:

**Step 1:** Identification of the geographical focus and topics of the different articles – to trace the thematic spectrum of the news coverage

**Step 2:** Qualitative content analysis of the views communicated in the context of the topics; identification and analysis of positions given in those contexts (most frequent thematic areas)

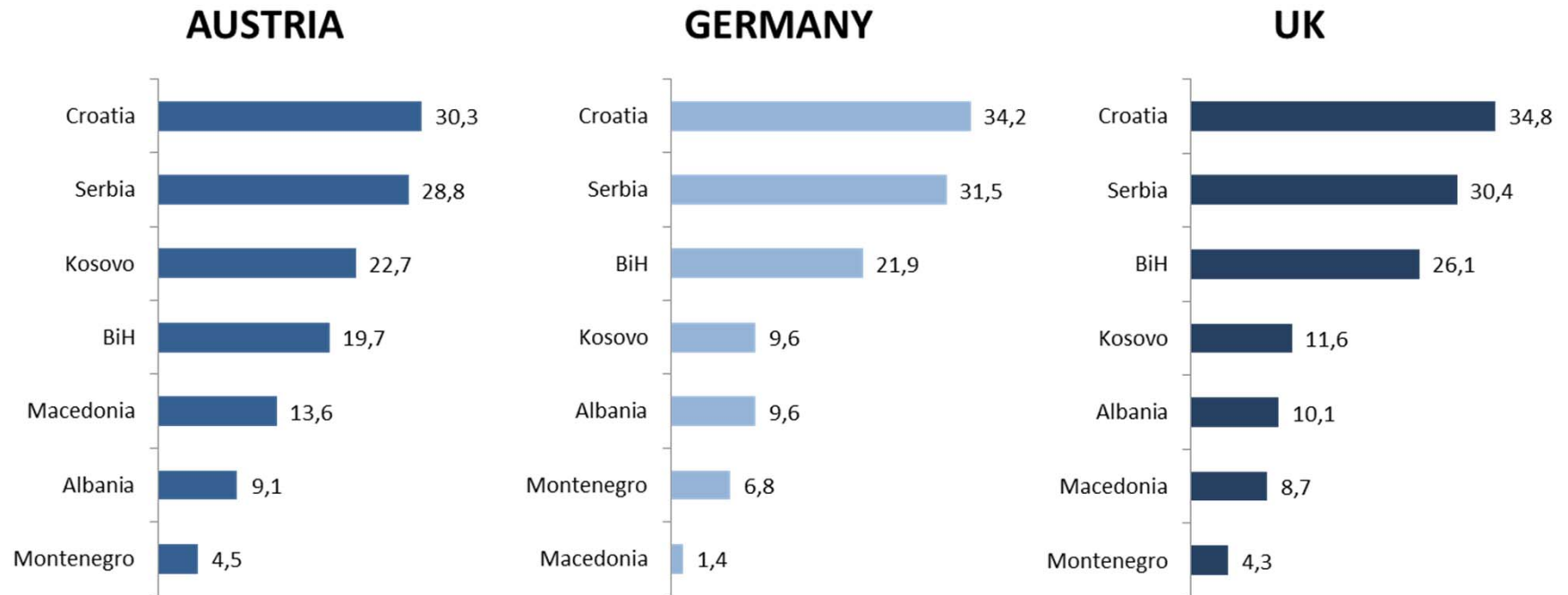
Positions = statements on a topic that can be connected to speakers (actors), explicitly (direct/indirect quote) or implicitly (newspaper)

Dimensions of relations (interactions, boundaries, external/internal focus, external relations)

**Step 3:** Analysis of statements related to EU-politics  
Analysis of statements related to other topics  
Comparative analysis of country results  
Derivation of similarities and conflicting views

# Geographical Spectrum of News Coverage

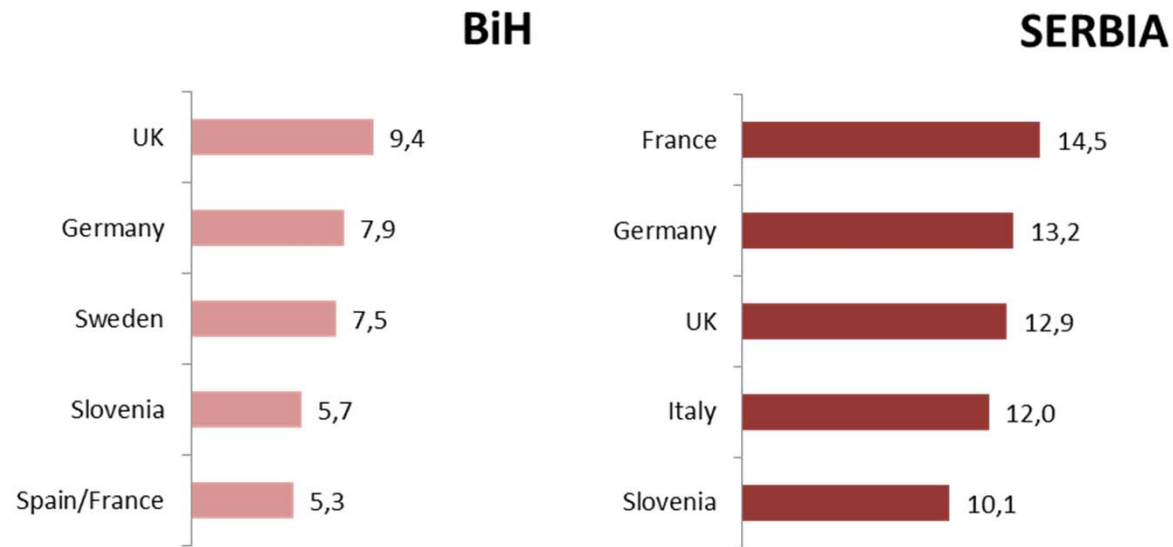
## Western Balkan countries referred to in



*% of all newspaper articles per country sample*

# Geographical Spectrum of News Coverage

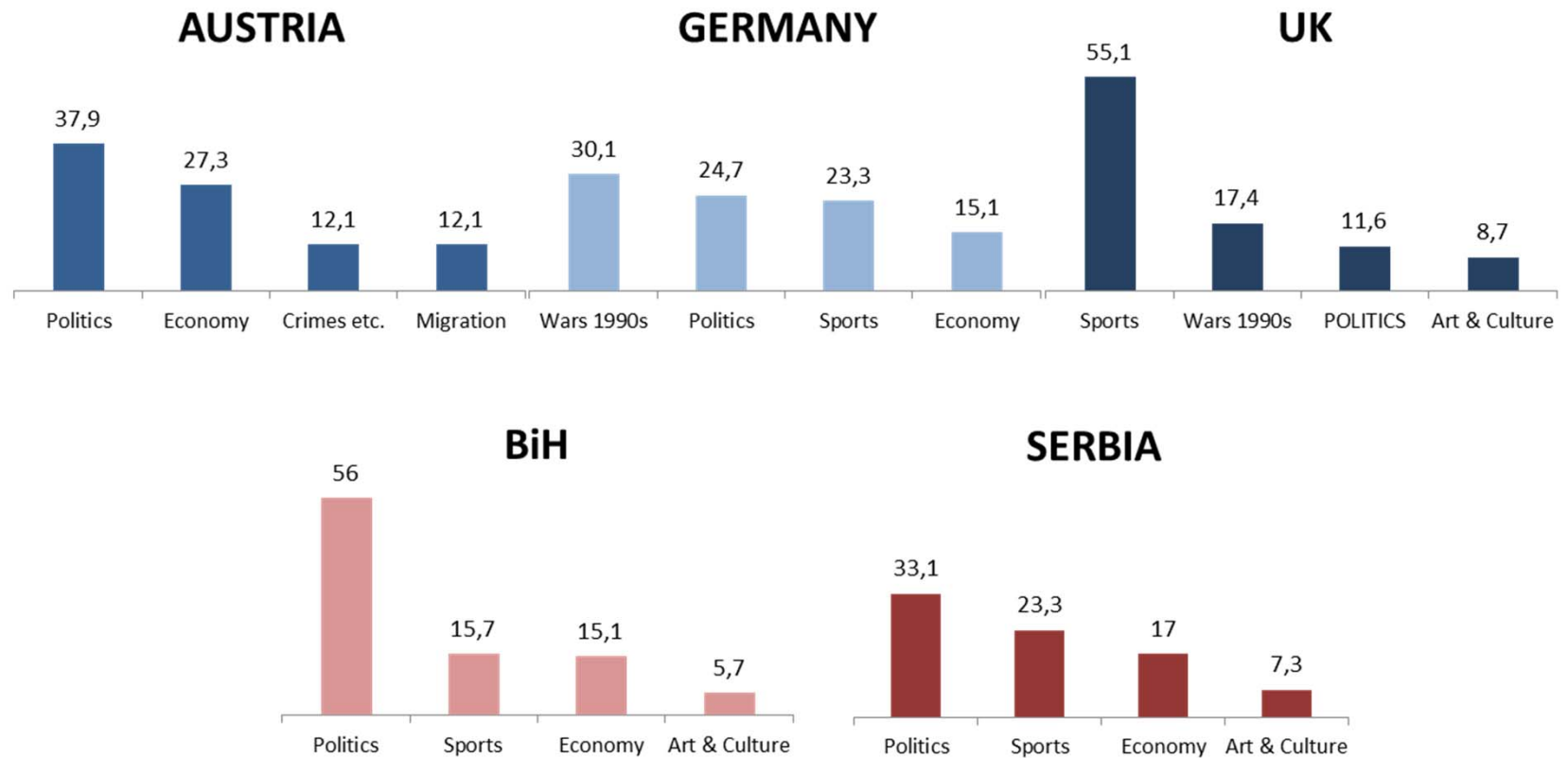
## EU member states most frequently referred to in



*% of all newspaper articles per country sample*

# Thematic Spectrum of News Coverage

Thematic areas most frequently referred to in



*% of all newspaper articles per country sample*





## Boundaries of EU

### EU SIDE

#### AUSTRIA and GERMANY:

- ❖ Mainly in political contexts
- ❖ Focus on the accession negotiation process, accession criteria, or current obstacles
- ❖ E.g., cooperation with The Hague (Serbia), Kosovo independence (Serbia), Croatian-Slovenian border dispute, political structure (BiH)
- ❖ Schengen visa liberalization
- ❖ AUSTRIA also noting of crime influx
- ❖ But only for BiH, Croatia, (Macedonia) and Serbia?

#### UK:

- ❖ no coverage of boundary-related topics



### WESTERN BALKAN SIDE

#### BiH and SERBIA:

- ❖ Mainly in political contexts
- ❖ In SERBIA focus on the accession criteria Kosovo independence and the cooperation with The Hague
- ❖ Also frequent discussion of national interests
- ❖ In BiH focus on own under-performance and the handicaps caused by the political (Dayton) structure
- ❖ And focus on political conflicts between the entities over EU accession procedures, but also the Serbian EU membership



## Interrelations

### EU SIDE

#### UK:

- ❖ In sports-related contexts, and mainly bi-national focus
- ❖ Comparison on level of physical competition
- ❖ Both sides seen as equal and performance as balanced
- ❖ 'Europe' not 'EU' as transnational setting

#### AUSTRIA:

- ❖ In economy-related contexts, and mainly bi-national focus
- ❖ Austrian economic interests and activities in and with the region
- ❖ Emphasizing the economic potential of the region

### WESTERN BALKAN SIDE

#### BIH and SERBIA:

- ❖ In sports-related contexts, mainly bi-national focus
- ❖ Comparison on level of physical competition
- ❖ Both sides seen as equal and performance as balanced
- ❖ European level of success and sports infrastructures as goal
- ❖ 'Europe' not 'EU' as a transnational setting
- ❖ In political contexts, mainly bi-national focus
- ❖ Negative relations: Croatian-Slovenian border dispute
- ❖ Positive: Serbian-Spanish relations





## Inside the EU boundaries

### EU SIDE

#### UK and GERMANY:

- ❖ In war-related contexts
- ❖ Western Balkans as historical reference in focus on national news coverage (military/foreign policy)

#### UK:

- ❖ In sports-related contexts
- ❖ Analysis of own sports teams, or performance of Western Balkan actors in UK (football)

#### AUSTRIA:

- ❖ In economy-related contexts
- ❖ Economic situation in Austria, as main focus of articles also relating to Western Balkan region and trade relations

### WESTERN BALKAN SIDE

#### BiH and SERBIA:

- ❖ In sports-related contexts, mainly using 'Europe' not 'EU' as a transnational setting
- ❖ Focus on sports leagues & results (especially German football)

- ❖ In political contexts no significant focus on events or situations within EU boundaries

- ❖ On EU level focus on structural/legislative decisions (e.g. Lisbon treaty)



## Inside the Western Balkans

### EU SIDE

#### AUSTRIA/GERMANY/UK:

- ❖ In political and war-related contexts
- ❖ Focus on conflicts among countries of the region (past and present)
- ❖ Focus on reconciliation efforts (war trials etc.)
- ❖ EU as an observer
- ❖ Focus on (conflict-laden) political systems and political instabilities and deficits
- ❖ EU accession as a chance for development and stabilization

#### AUSTRIA:

- ❖ In economy-related contexts
- ❖ Economic situation in Croatia and BiH, internal problems such as corruption

### WESTERN BALKAN SIDE

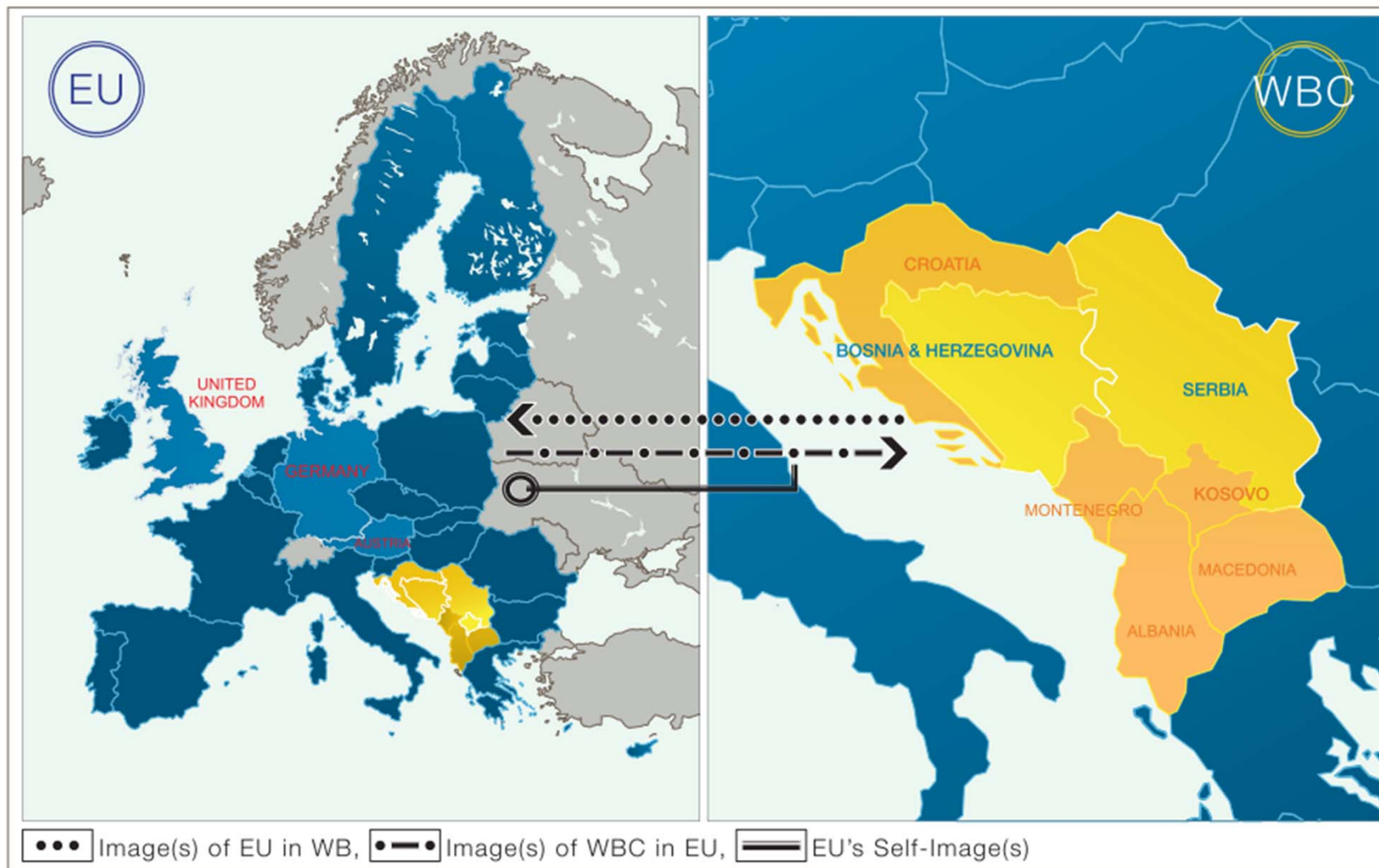
#### BiH and SERBIA:

- ❖ In political contexts
- ❖ EU mainly a reference point
- ❖ Main focus of those articles was national politics
- ❖ In BiH, mainly coverage of internal political conflicts, emphasis of own under-performance
- ❖ EU as external actor that could help solve internal political problems
- ❖ In SERBIA, coverage of internal politics, or Serbian-Kosovo relations
- ❖ EU as argument for pro/contra positions of Serbian politicians





# Implications for future EU membership





# Implications for EU concepts

*EB 72: QA12 What does the EU mean to you personally?*

Freedom of travel, study and work  
anywhere in the EU

Economic prosperity

Stronger say in the world

Peace

Democracy

Euro

Social protection

Loss of own cultural identity

Cultural diversity

Not enough control at  
external borders

Bureaucracy

More crime

Waste of money