



Image of the EU and UK on Russian TV

HYBRID WARFARE ANALYTICAL GROUP



ESTONIAN CENTER
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PARTNERSHIP



UKRAINE CRISIS
media center



Agenda

1. Methodology
2. TV landscape in Russia
3. Key findings of the research
4. Description of 6 narratives
5. Particular narratives for France
6. Conclusions

Fake news example

On 14 November 2017 Russian Defense Ministry claimed it had “**irrefutable evidences**” the US is helping ISIS in the Middle East – and supported its claim by posting screenshots from a mobile video game.



Narrative example

The West tries to overtake
Russia, but fails

“Musk is breathing down our neck”
member of parliament Pavel Dorokhin

“Musk failed to outdo heavy rockets of USSR”
magazine Vzgliad.ru

“Musk’s fall has started: media calculated his loses”
state news agency RIA Novosti

“It was needed to improve business. It’s widely known that Tesla’s business is doing very bad. It’s a very good trick” Communication director of state agency ROSCOSMOS



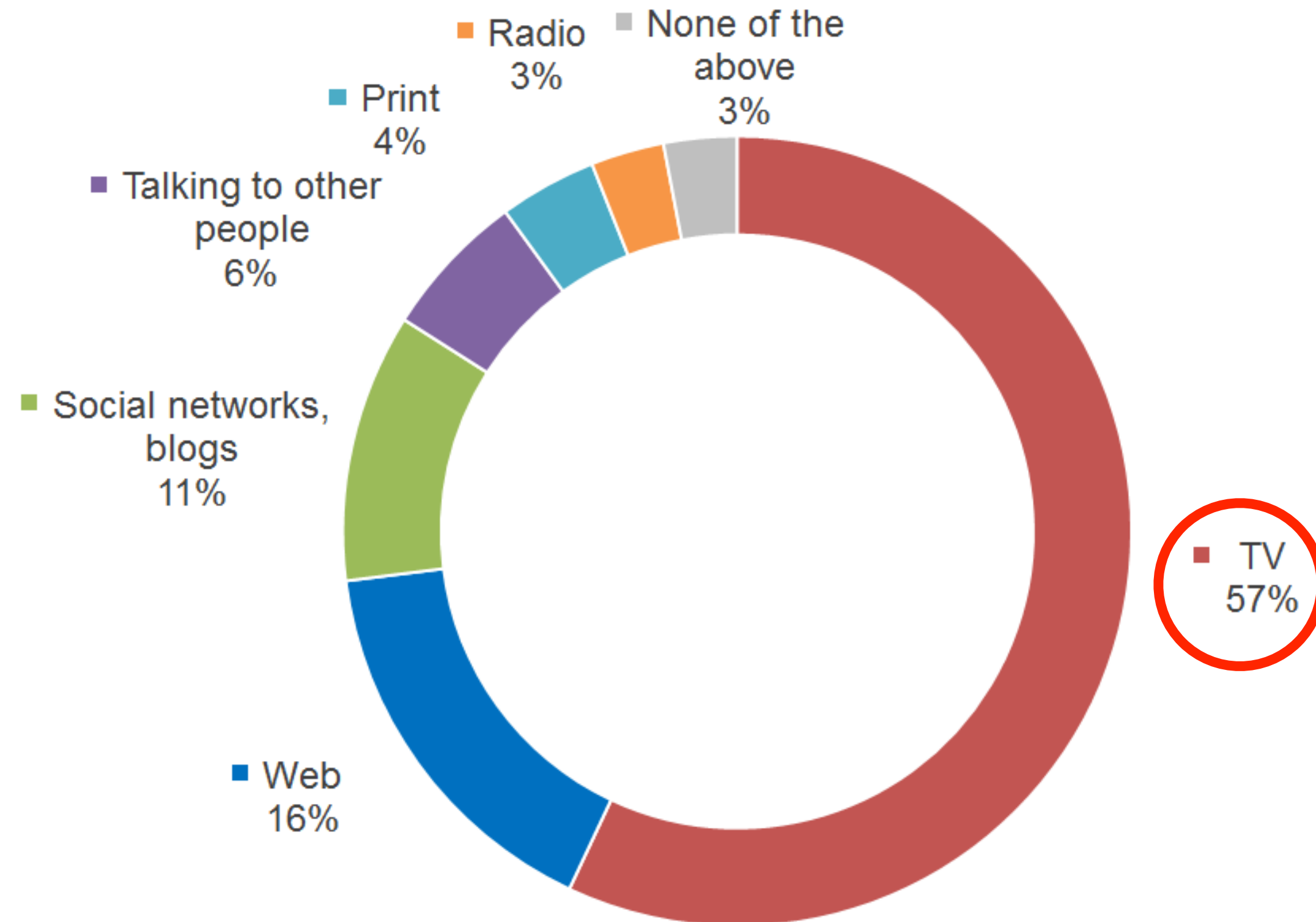
Preface

- Russia considers itself in a perpetual state of information warfare, while the West does not
- Russia's fake news and troll factories are already notoriously known however, our research suggests analyzing *narratives* as key elements of Russian propaganda
- Russian media fundamentally changed the whole paradigm of news: facts and events are used to support the pre-prepared narratives
- Once established narratives are supported by fake news in smaller part, but mainly by a deliberately manipulated interpretation of real events

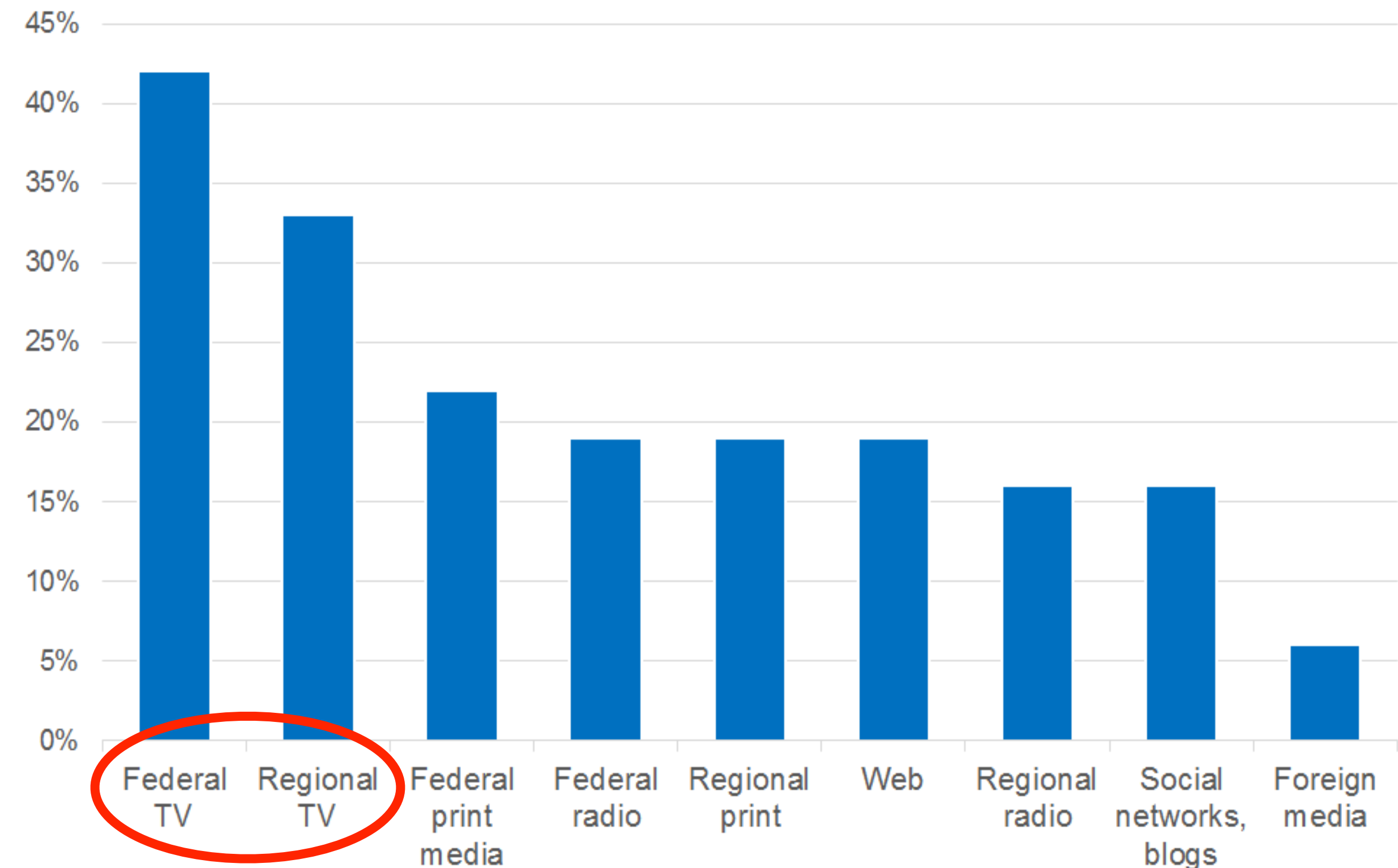
Methodology

- Period of the analysis: July 1, 2014 – December 31, 2017 – 3-5 years
- Media Channels analyzed: News Broadcasts & talk-shows of three Russian TV channels
 - **Channel One** – News (Новости), Sunday Time (Воскресное время), Time (Время)
 - **NTV** – Today (Сегодня), Majority (Большинство)
 - **Russia-1** – News (Вести), News of the week (Вести недели), News on Saturday (Вести в субботу), Evening with Vladimir Solovyov (Вечер с Владимиром Соловьевым)
- All news content was converted into text, which was then automatically filtered by mentions of keywords relating to the 38 countries researched
- The filtered data was categorized by an automated algorithm categorized as negative/neutral/positive
- Then all negative data, **22'711 mentions**, was verified by humans and coded in order to add attributes such as topic and sub-topic

TV is by far the most influential media in Russia

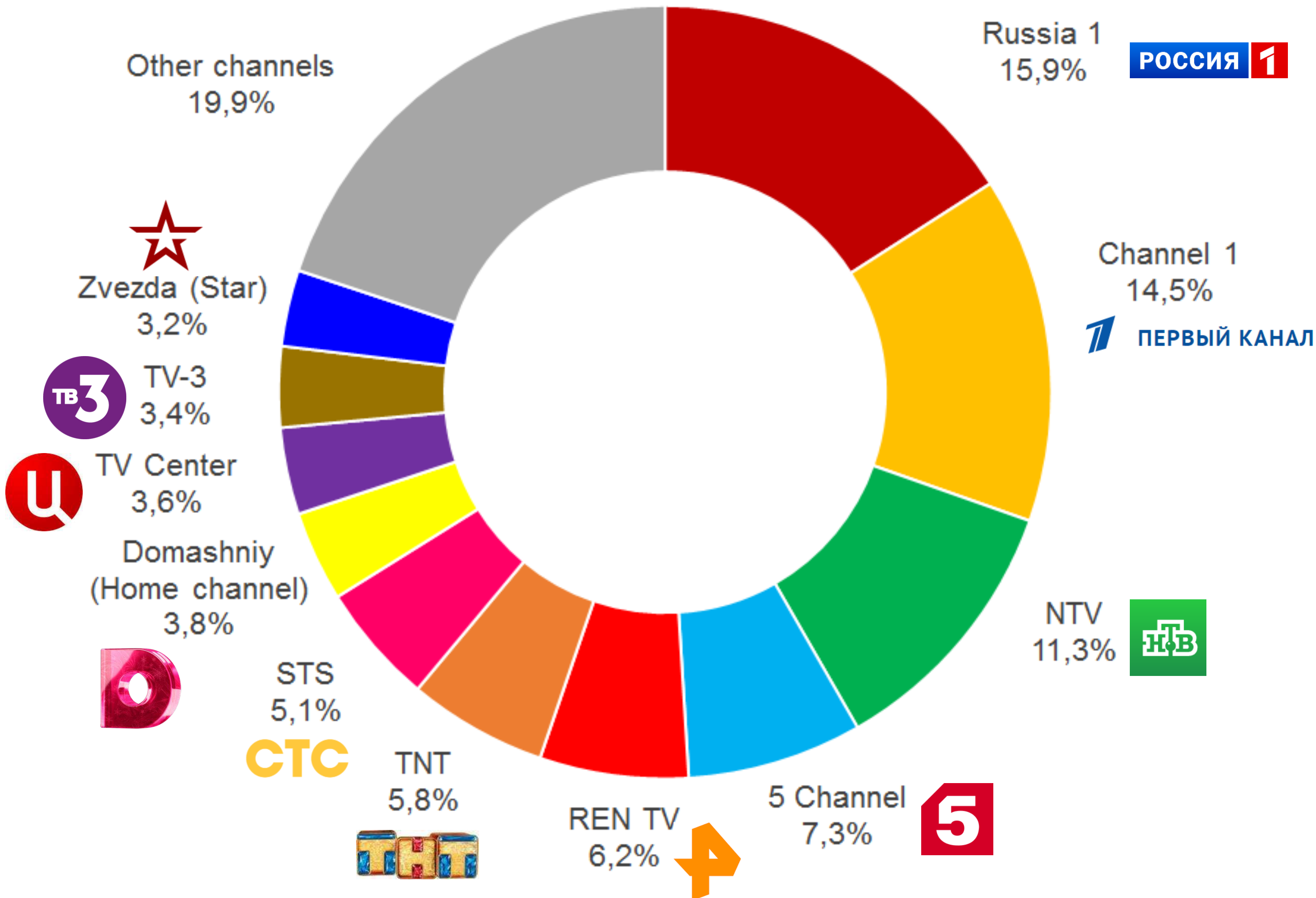


What form of media is your main news source?



Do you trust the following media (% of «Yes»)

Share of TV channels



- Russia 1, Channel One and NTV have up to 42% of total audience share in 2017
- Zvezda, the channel of Ministry of Defense, is 11th with share of more than 3%

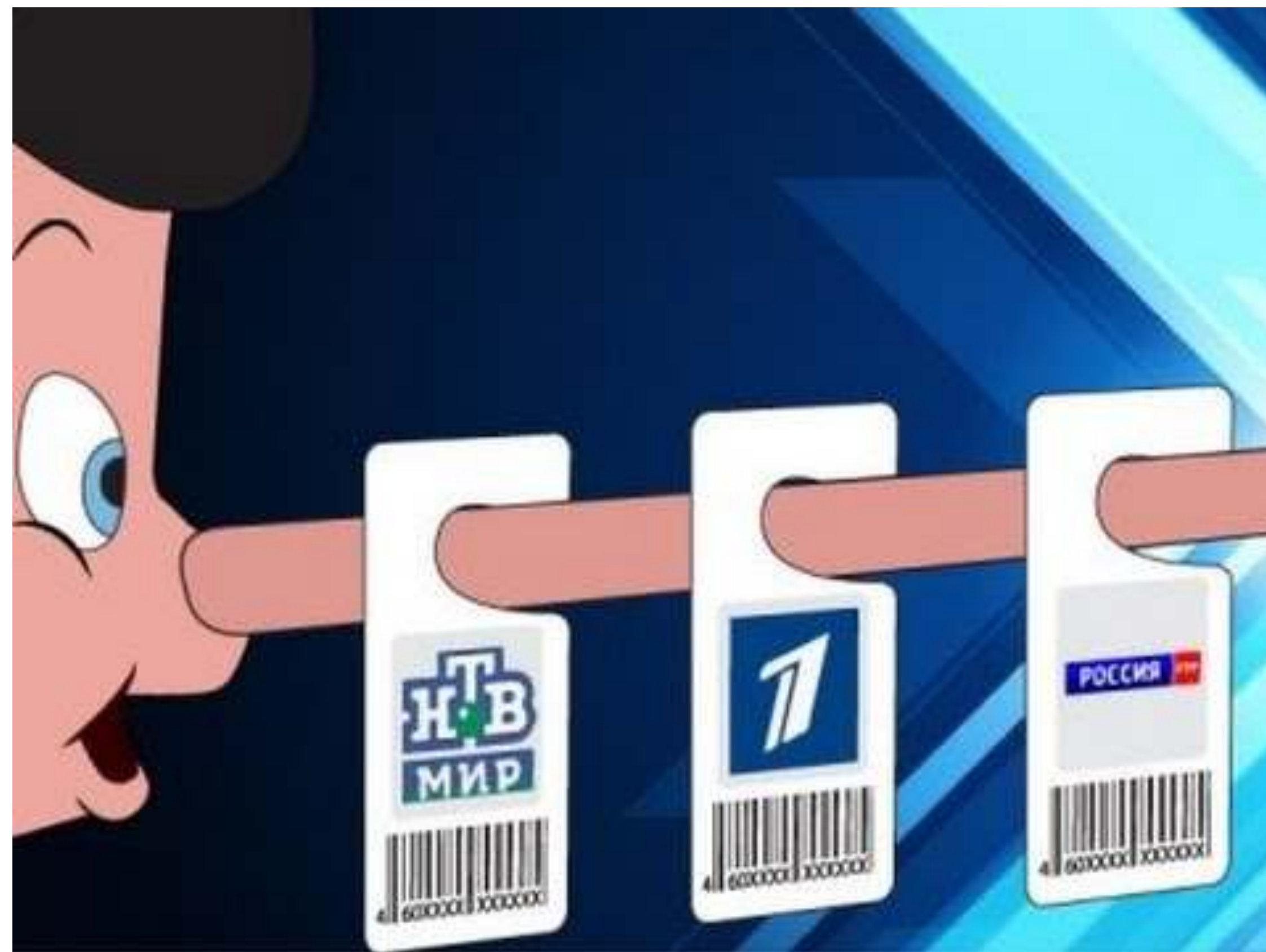
There are 3 main TV channels in Russia

90% of Russians watch news programs on TV

Majority get news on top three channels:

- Channel One Russia (72%)
- Russia-1 (46%)
- NTV (40%)

Average daily time of watching TV in Russia is 4.2 hours



Kremlin has full control of all three top channels



Russian Television and Radio
Broadcasting Company

100% Russian government



Federal Agency for State Property
Management
Subdivision of Russian Ministry of
Economic Development

National Media Group

Key owner – Yuriy Kovalchuk

ORT-KB, Ltd

Property of Roman Abramovich, one of
the richest Russian businessmen

JSC Gazprom-media

Key owners – state company Gazprom
and Yuriy Kovalchuk companies

Yuriy Kovalchuk, Russian
businessman and one of
the closest Putin's proxies;
under U.S. and EU
sanction since 2014

Information from outside Russia has a minimal chance of being heard

- 5% of Russians speak the English language (the most popular foreign language)
- 6% of Russians prefer to get information from foreign sources
- 7% of Russians travelled outside of the territory of former USSR in 2016



Fragment of the TV show "Evening with Vladimir Solovyov", Russia 1

TV influence over public agenda

- TOP TV channels are the main instrument of shaping public opinion
- By analyzing their news and key informational programs one can understand the agenda and values of Russian society
- The Researched TV channels are fairly mainstream and compared to other Russian media care considerably more about journalistic standards



Vladimir Solovyov, Russian TV and radio host



Vladimir Putin and Vladimir Solovyov

Objects of the research

- 28 EU member-countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK)
- 5 members of Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova). Ukraine is not included.
- 4 non-EU European countries: Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland
- EU is included in the capacity of a country unit for the purpose of this report



FACTS

18 DAILY negative

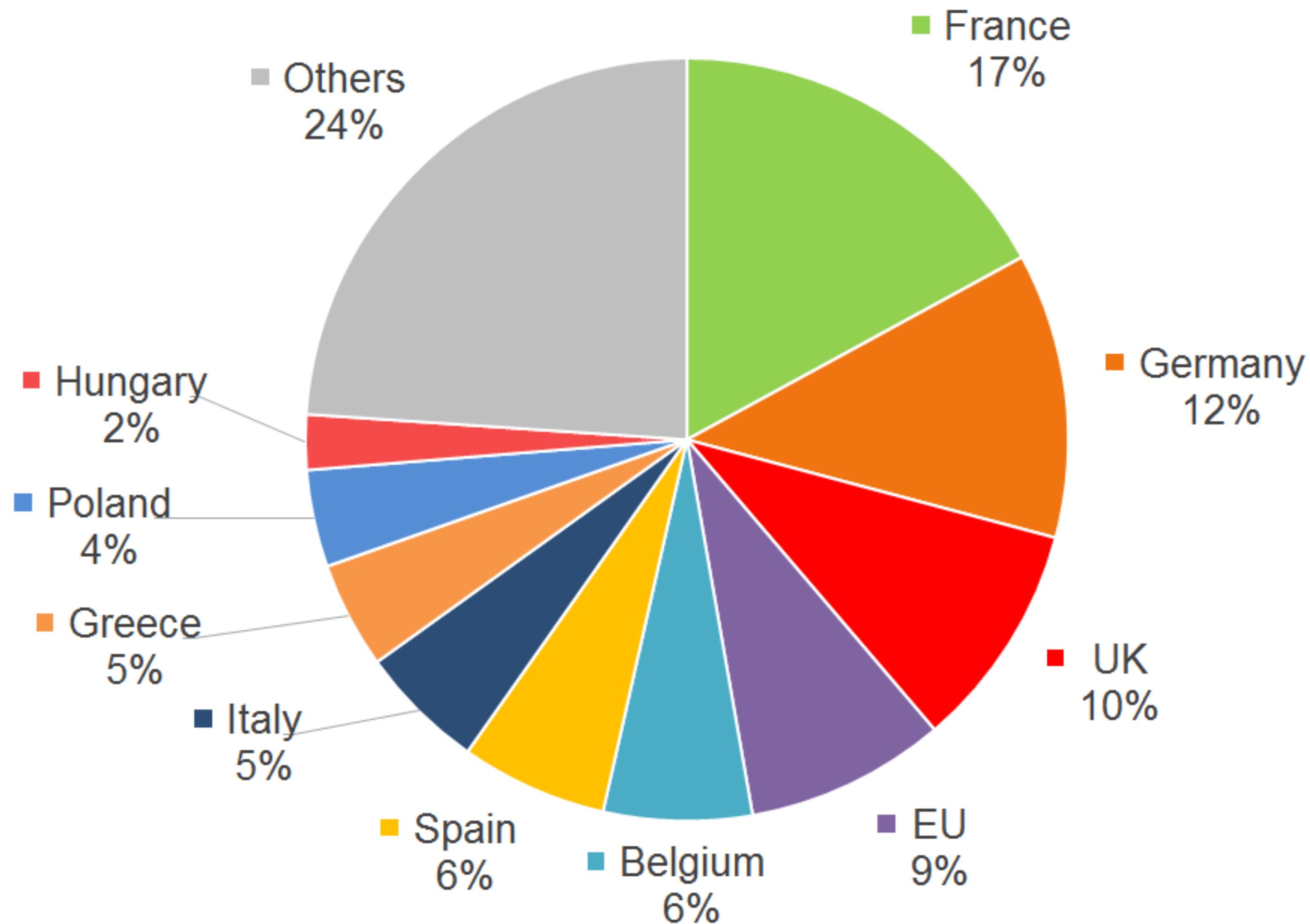
news about the explored countries during the last three years on the top three channels



In comparison the **Coca Cola** brand had

6 ADS DAILY
on the same top three channels

Top 10 countries* by negative news

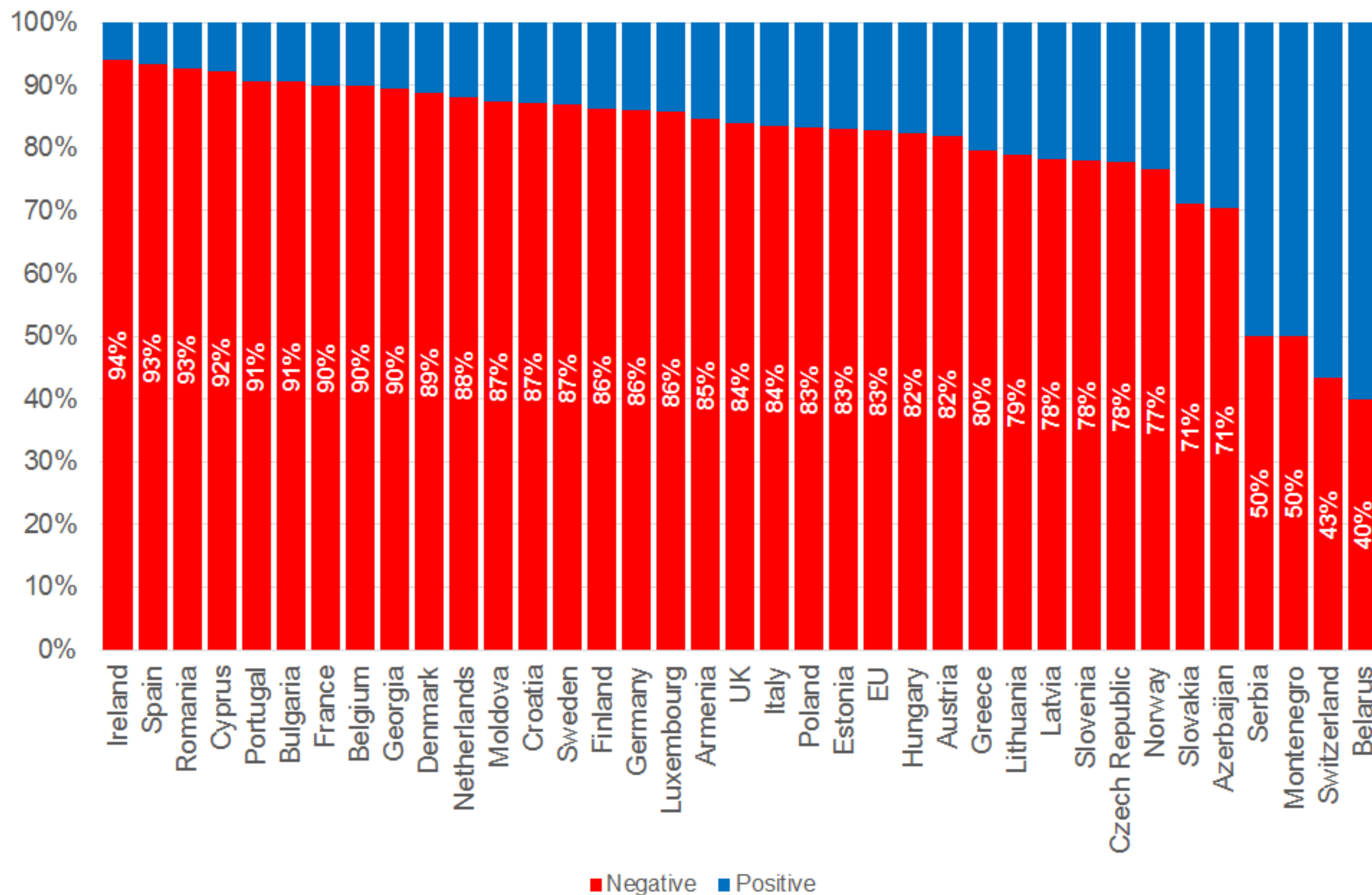


Total of 22'711 negative mentions

The top three largest countries by population get the biggest share of negative news

- - EU - although not a country, is included in this report in the capacity of a country unit

Positive to negative news ratio

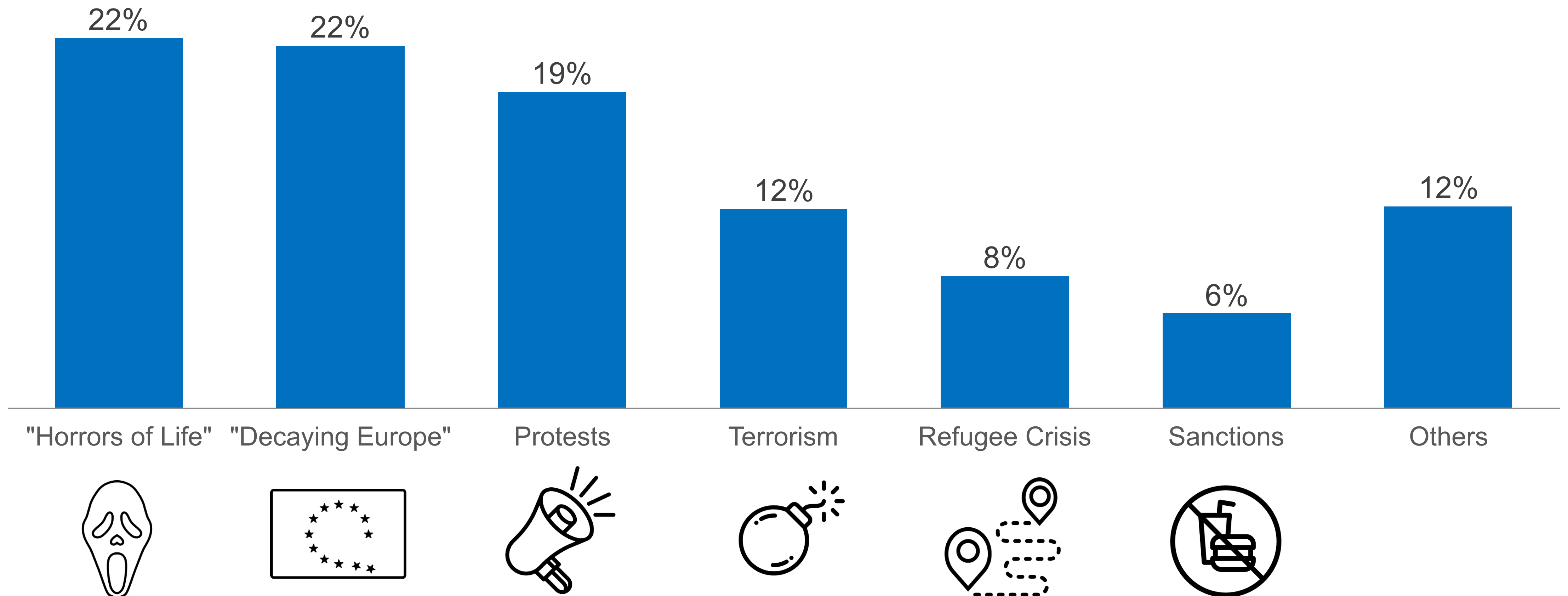


The average ratio of negative to positive news is 85%/15%

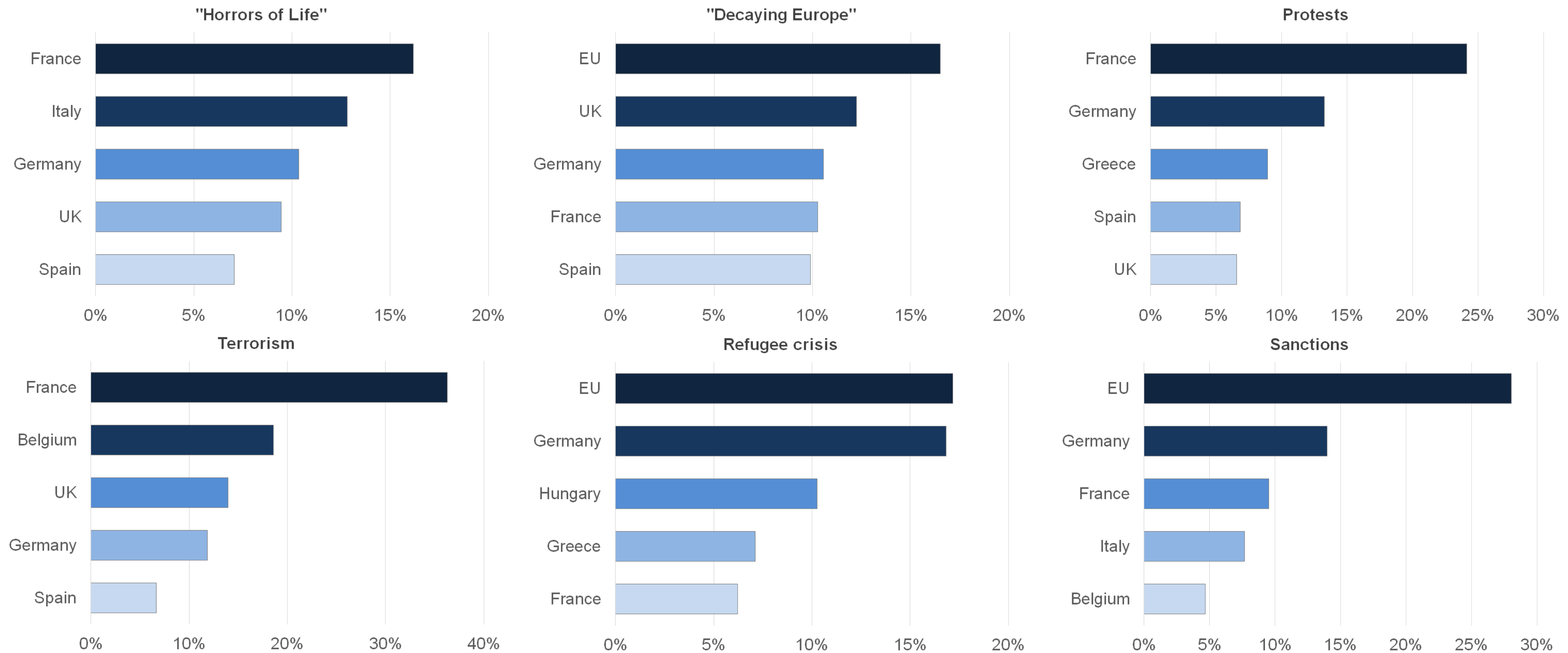
However there are two countries that Russian TV covers positively: Belarus and Switzerland

There are the 6 main narratives

- 88% of all negative coverage may be divided into six main narratives

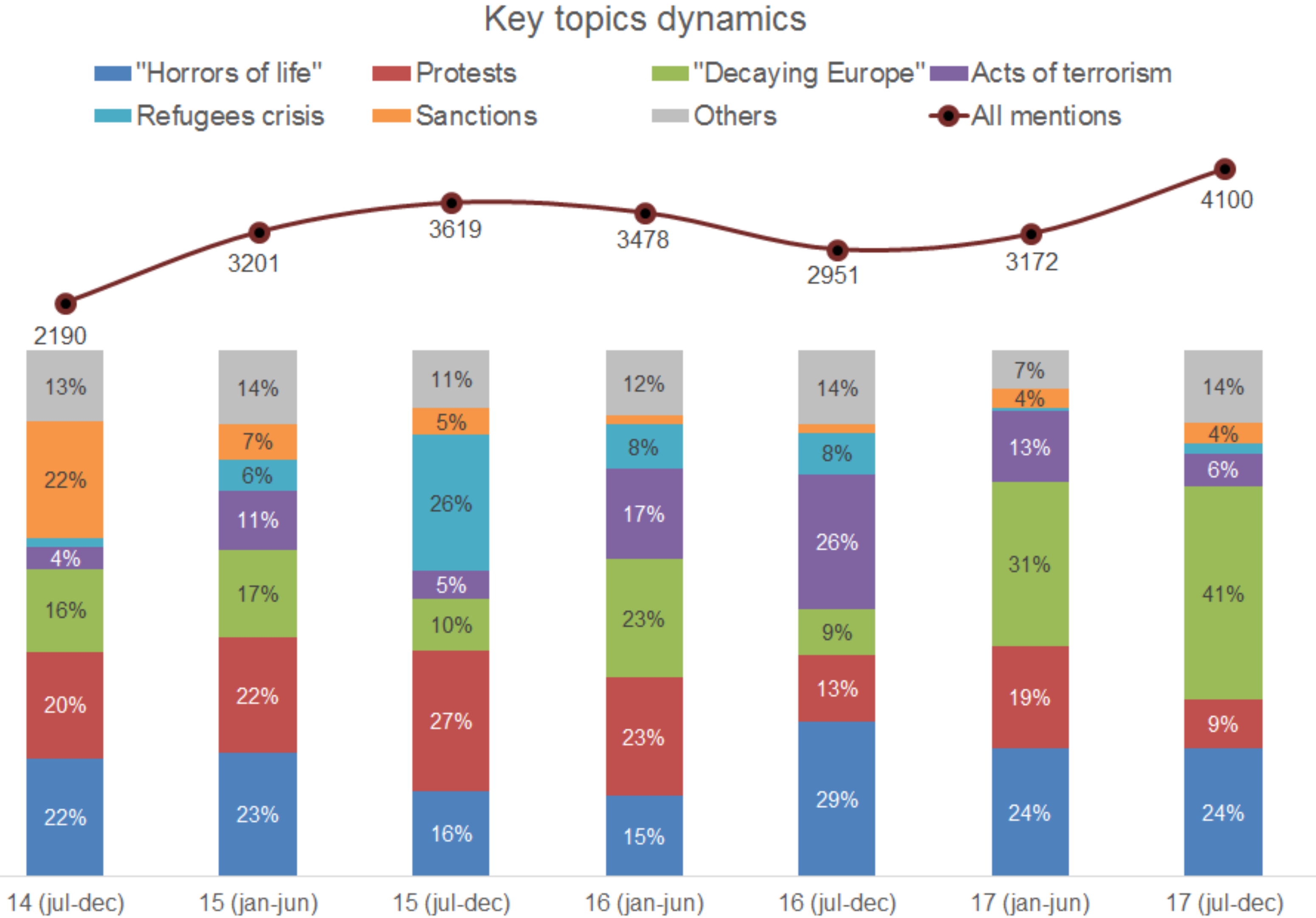


Top five countries by narrative



- France is depicted as incapable to deal with terrorism, protests and as generally dangerous to live in
- Germany and the EU are associated with the "Refugee crisis" and "Sanctions"

Key narratives' dynamics by half-year periods



Quantity of negative news has increased by 87% from July'14 to December'17

"Decaying Europe" was the most growing narrative in 2HY 2017

A big share of the "Horrors of Life" narrative in order to support a perception of a "dangerous" life in Europe

Total amount of negative news, share

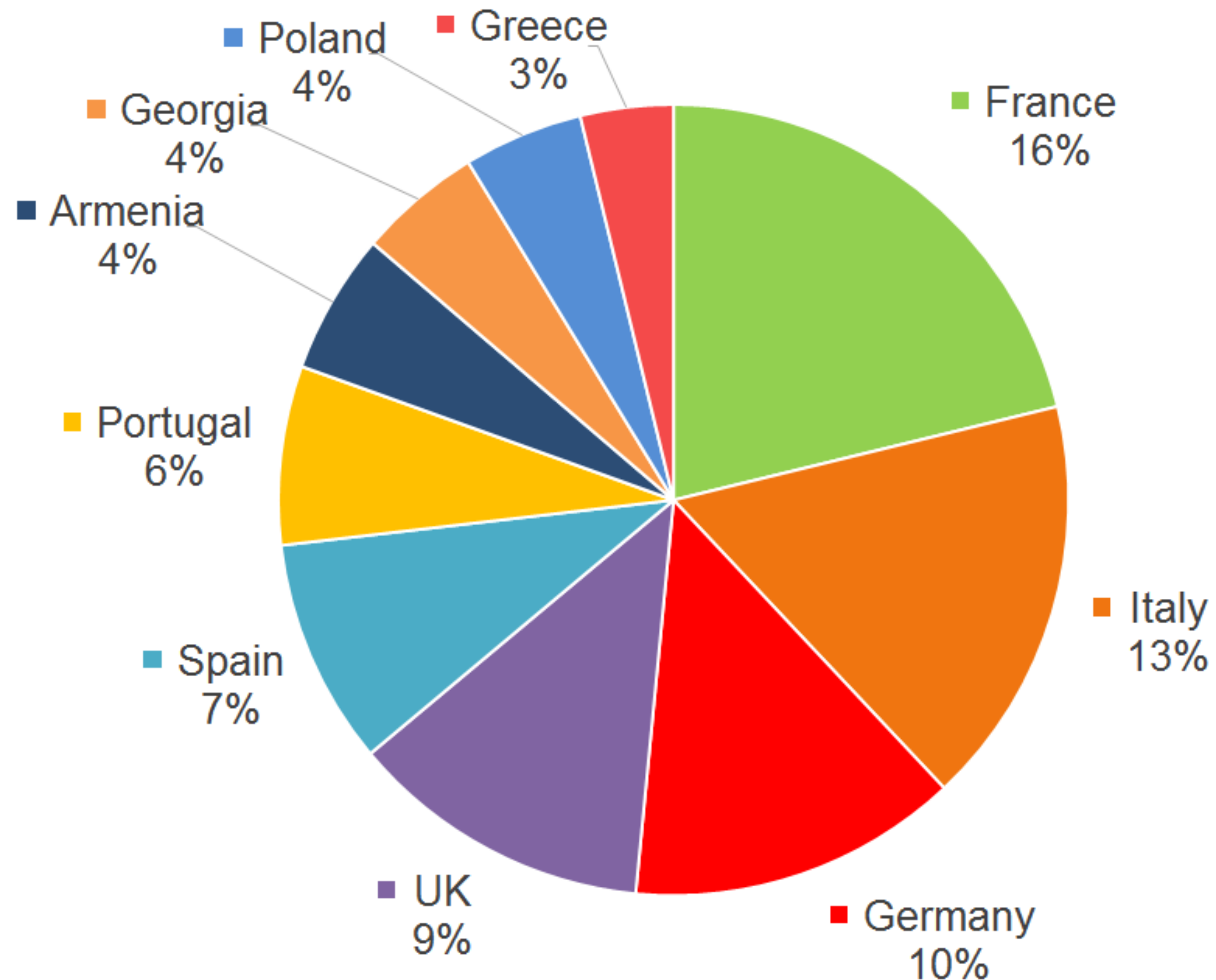
Narrative #1 – "Horrors of Life" in Europe

- Daily life in Europe is shown as very insecure, danger comes unexpectedly but constantly from different causes. Most popular are natural disasters, technogenic disasters and accidents or crimes
- Authorities are often depicted as incapable of managing challenges or the ones who use double-standards in favor of the rich & powerful
- Most of this narrative is based on tiny scale events, which might be worth covering only by local media, if any
- In the end, that creates a story of a hard, unstable and dangerous life in Europe on a daily basis, because Europe deserves it. Even reports of “endless” natural disasters in Europe prompt the Russian viewers to assume that Mother Nature doesn't like Europe



Title in photo: The European Flood

“Horrors of Life” by countries



- Top 5 countries are the Top 5 EU countries by population
- This narrative is constantly promoted
- According to Levada-Center survey 70% of Russians didn't want to travel abroad in 2015 due to alleged insecurity outside Russia

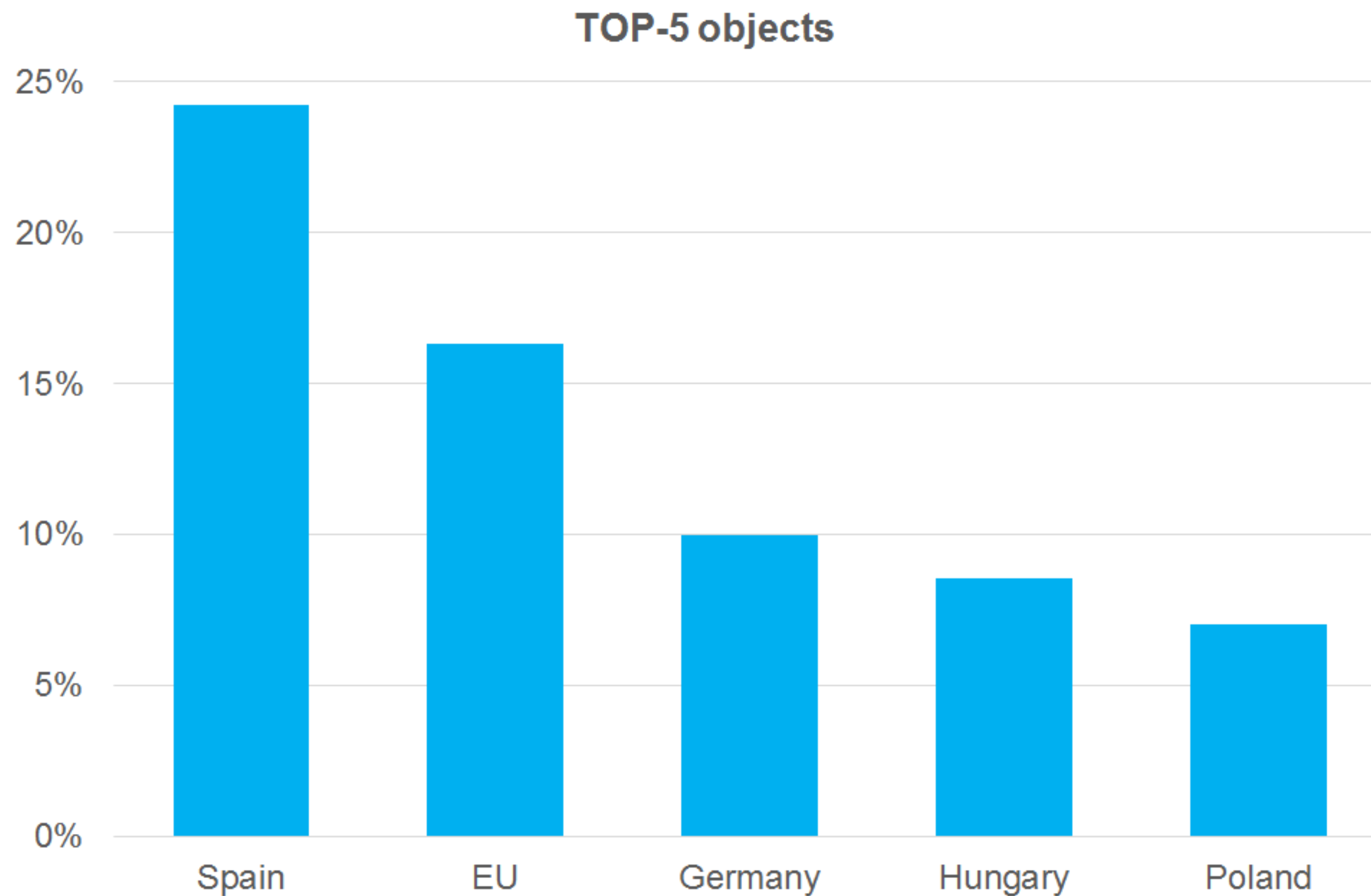
“Horrors of Life” in quotation

“The mourning in Naples, Italy. A simple quarrel over a clothes line led to tragedy. A 48-year-old man, who is a medic, arguing with his brother's wife as to where the washed clothes should dry, took his gun. He killed her first, then opened fire from the balcony and shot his brother and neighbour and a policeman who tried to intervene.” - *Channel One, 16 May 2015 and same story on NTV channel*

Narrative #2 – «Decaying Europe»

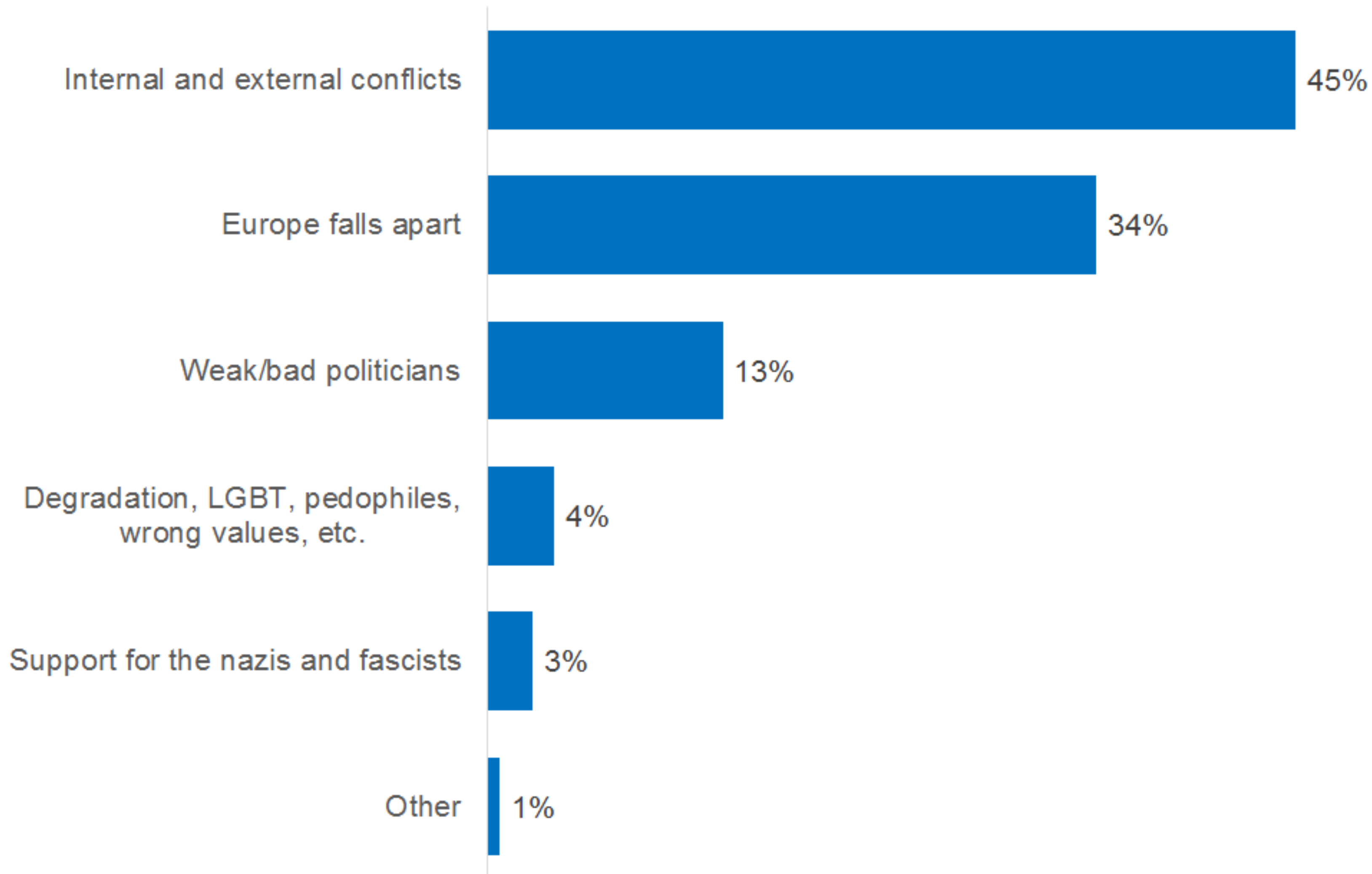
- More than 70% of this narrative is built around message that Europe falls apart and is full of internal conflicts in all spheres: policy, economy, justice, moral values.
- The idea of a united Europe based on shared values is depicted as unrealistic (Catalonia and Brexit are used as proof). In Russian media there are strong and important European countries that infringe upon other weak countries.
- The societies within countries themselves are divided about European values. Europeans are depicted as people with weak and declining morale. Hypocrisy, unjust, biased media, puppet politicians, pedophilism, neo-nazism – all have been showcased as commonplace in the EU. Homosexuality continues to be a part of it.
- This narrative forms the opinion that Russia has to be aggressive not to let Europe impose its values on Russia.

“Decaying Europe” narrative during 2nd half of 2017



- “Decaying Europe” was the most growing narrative during Jul-Dec 2017
- Spain was the leader by mentions because of the Catalonia crisis
- The Government crisis in Germany was interpreted as one of the main signs of “Decaying Europe”
- Hungary is in the Top-5 due to claims it apposes new educational laws in Ukraine

“Decaying Europe”



Main focus of this narrative is on the growing and inevitable disintegration of Europe

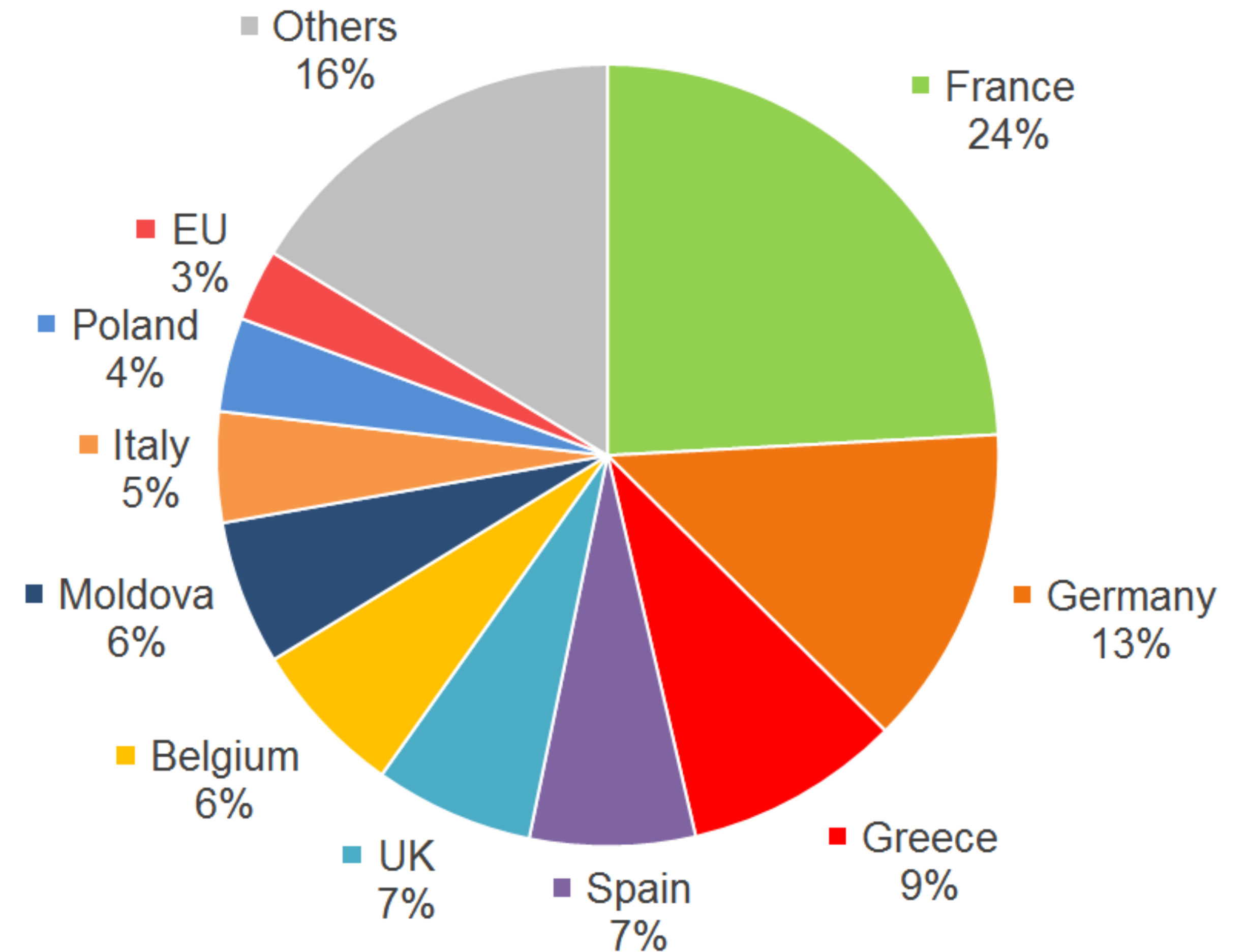
“Decaying Europe” in quotes

"All the talks about Europe in different gears will immediately turn out to be what they really are - a vain attempt to hide the total inability of the United Europe to self-preserve" *Channel One, 19 March 2017*

"Why the voices of Germany and France sound louder than others in the eurozone? Because they remain at the head of all the unions, whether it is currency, visa, or policy ones. They are the [proverbial] wallets of Europe. It was them who benefited the most when the European space expanded" *Russia 1, 7 July 2015*

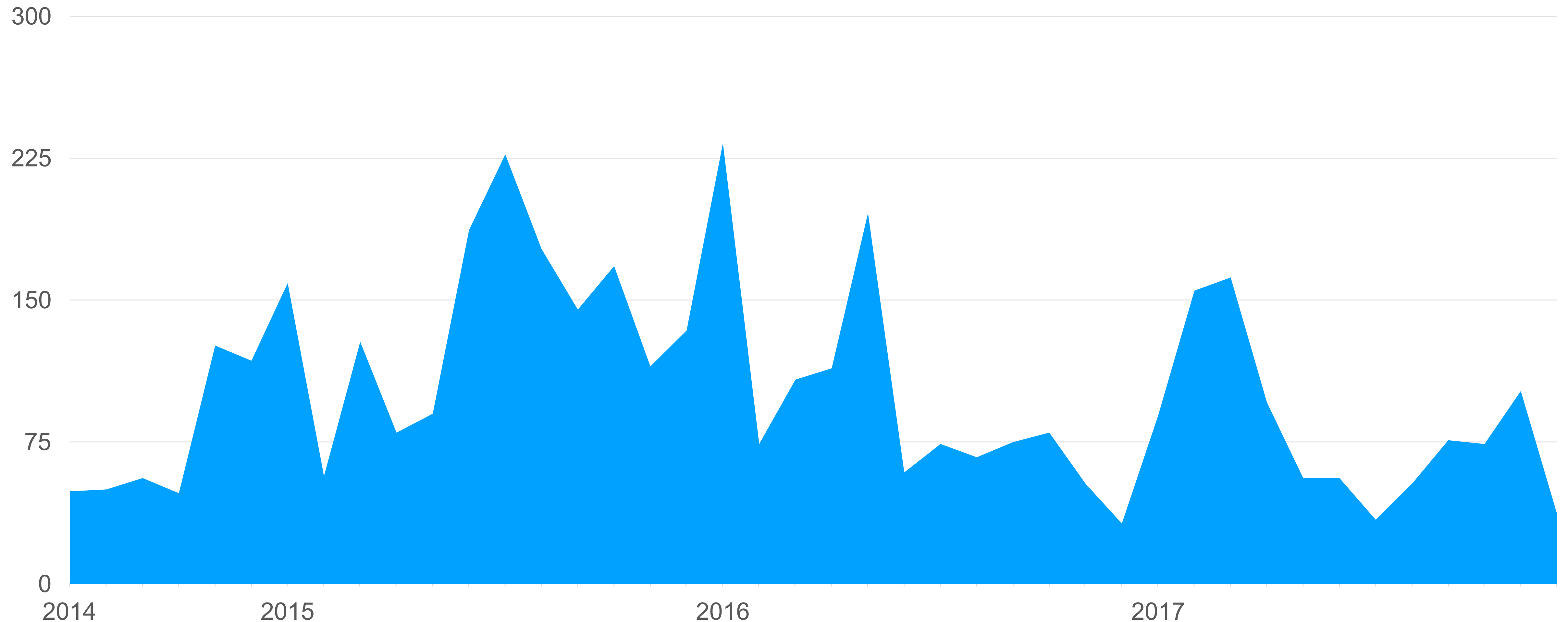
Narrative #3 – "Protests in Europe"

- Similarly to Narrative #1, "Protests in Europe" are constantly pushed by the Russian media as a regular phenomena
- Europe is not united, hardly ever was, and has a clear trend to fall apart
- There are plenty of chronic flaws in economy, policy and security, which leave common Europeans no choice but to protest
- Russian top TV channels use all opportunities during prime time broadcasting to cover any types of protests in European countries like protests of janitors, air pilots, environmentalists, nurses, sailors, gas station employees, etc



“Protests in Europe” by months

The narrative of “Protests in Europe” never disappear from top Russian TV channels



“Protests in Europe” quotes

“Paris is turning into a big dump. While juniors who announced the strike are storming the offices of the officials.” *Channel One, 10 September 2015*

“In Amsterdam, thousands of people gathered in the center of the city. The main streets were flooded with tractors. There was a mass strike of Dutch farmers against the trade agreement between the European Union and Canada.” – *Channel One, 23 October 2016*

“Brussels downtown was covered with white smoke. European farmers covered one city block with dry milk. This way they expressed their dissatisfaction with the agrarian policy carried out by the European Commission.” *Channel One, 24 January 2017*

How tragic fire at Kemerovo was covered in Ru media
Translation: “Lavrov played football to celebrate his birthday”

BBC Breaking News @B... · 24
A shopping centre blaze in the Russian city of Kemerovo kills at least 37, with dozens missing, including children



Russia shopping mall blaze kills dozens
bbc.co.uk

The Associated Press · 14
The death toll in a shopping center fire in a Siberian city has risen to 37 people and 69 others are missing.



37 dead, 69 missing in Russian shopping center fire
apnews.com

NBC News @NBCNews · 14
Massive fire kills 37 at Siberian mall; dozens more still missing
nbcnews.to/2GqFQg4



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Вести.Ru @vesti_news · 14
Лавров в честь дня своего рождения сыграл в футбол



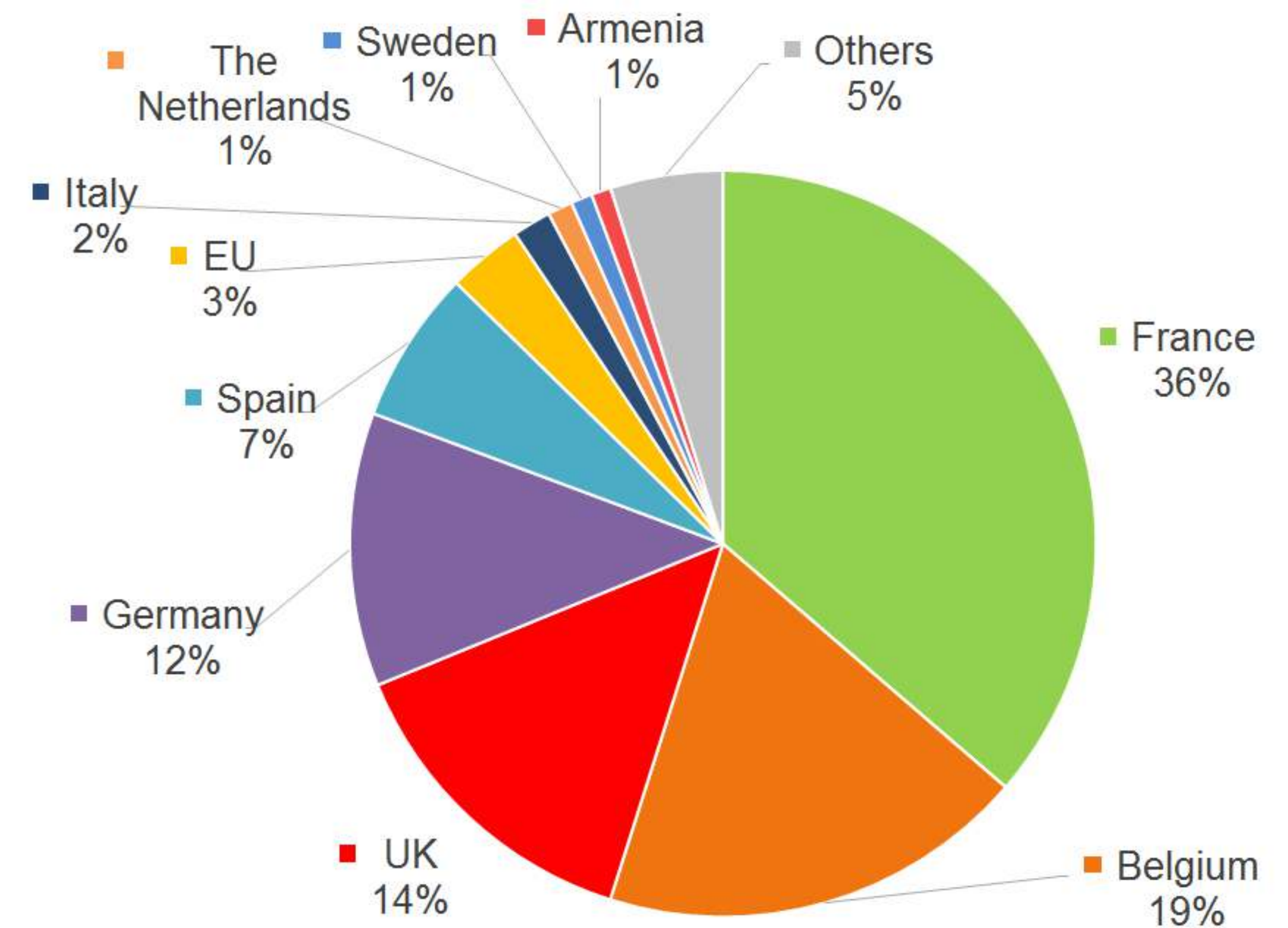
Лавров в честь дня своего рождения...
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Вести.Ru @vesti_news · 14
Россия призвала ОЗХО проинспектировать закрытый британский исследовательский центр
vesti.ru/t?2999288

Narrative #4 – "Terrorism"

- Though there were several terrorist attacks in Europe during the researched period, Russian media creates a narrative that Europe is under a never-ending terrorist attack
- For this purpose Russian media cover each and every terrorist act, sometimes interpreting criminal activity as terrorism
- Security and special forces of the EU are depicted as weak and incapable of anticipating threat and protecting their citizens
- Another part of this narrative is that there could be less terrorism in the EU, if only it were to cooperate with Russia on its terms



“Terrorism” in quotation

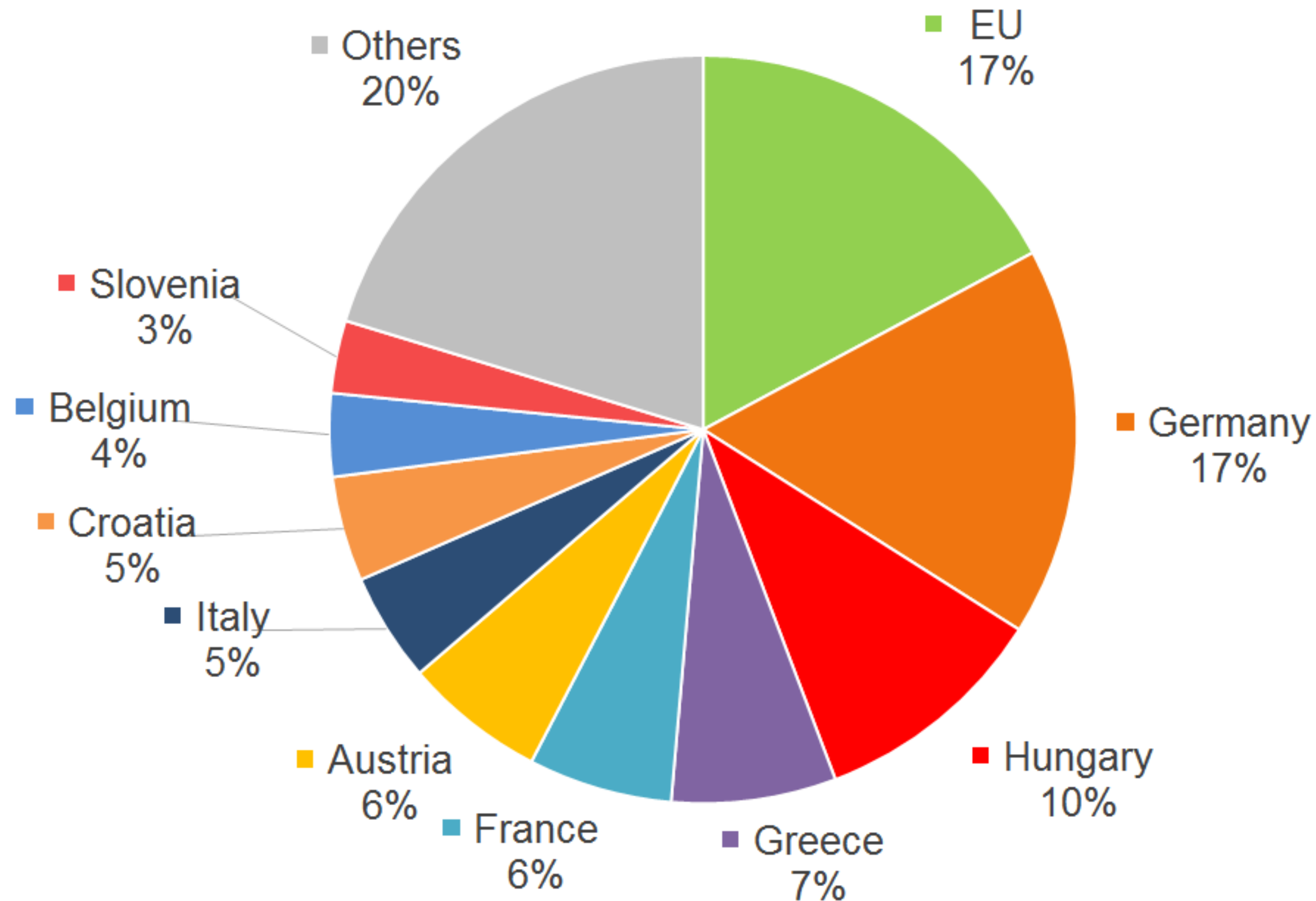
"The chaotic movement of the police, who did not quite know where to run, can hardly be considered as high professionalism. As well as storming of the printing house, the hiding place of the Kouachi brothers who shot the editorial office of the journal Charlie Hebdo"

Channel One, 18 January 2015

Narrative #5 – "Refugee crisis"

- In this narrative Russian media blame Europe for the refugee crisis, since it supported the U.S. when it initiated the war in Syria
- Also Russian media blame Europe, that it inspired Syrian people to immigrate, but later realized that refugees were a burden
- The way refugees have been handled in the EU had created an unprecedented crisis. Refugees are kept in horrible inhumane conditions in the EU countries.
- Russian media creates the picture that hundreds of thousands and millions of dangerous hungry people are already overwhelming the EU and are pushing locals away

“Refugee Crisis” by countries



This narrative is mainly associated with Germany and the EU

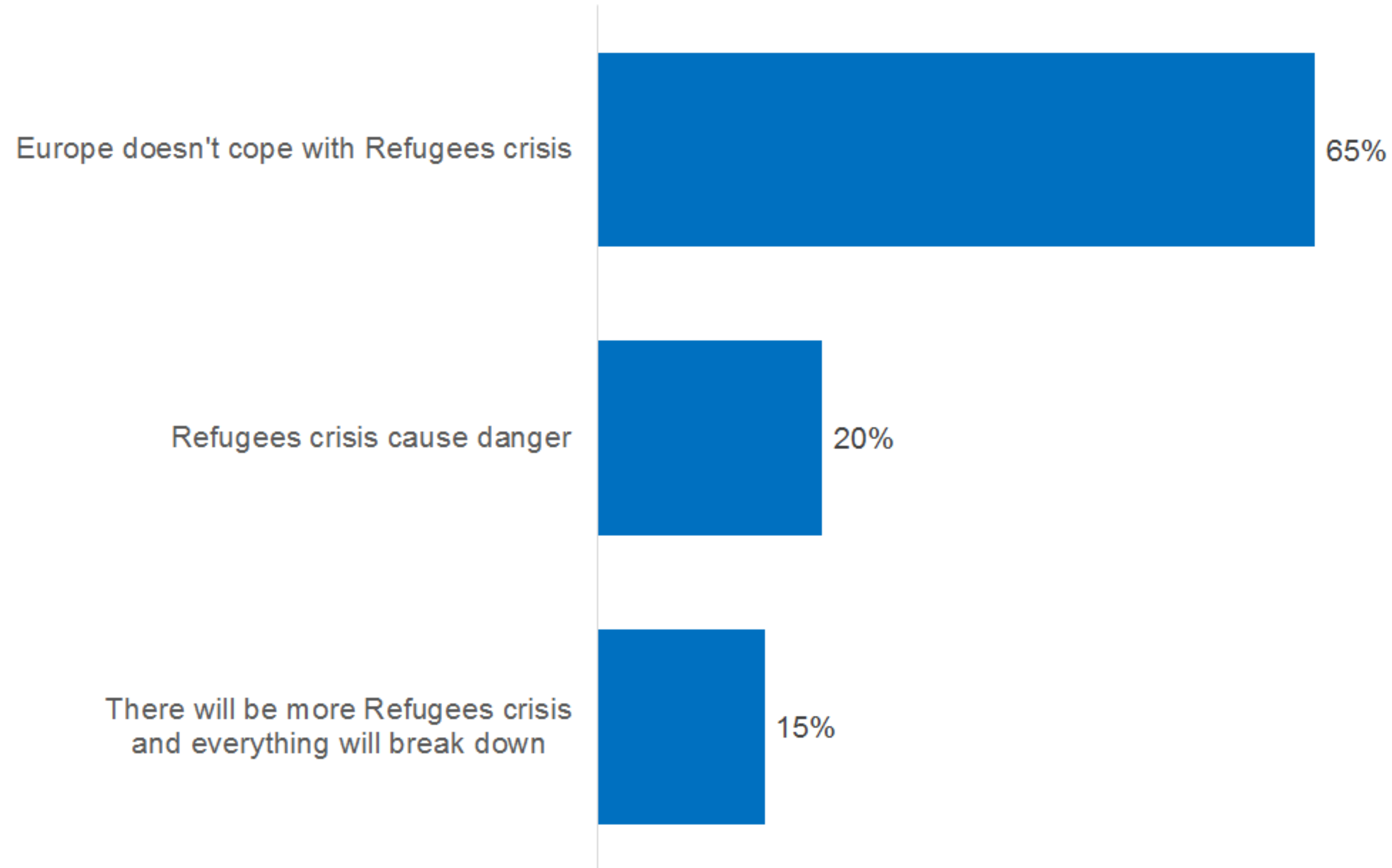
Total share of this narrative has significantly decreased in comparison to 2015

“Refugee Crisis” in quotation

"The number of migrants in Europe, especially in Austria and Germany, has grown so much that it became clear that someone is stimulating and supporting this flow. Apparently, these are the same forces that supported the Arab Spring or the Ukrainian Revolution"

Channel One, 9 June 2015

“Refugee crisis”



Key message of this narrative is that Europe has failed the refugees

Narrative #6 – "Sanctions"

- The key message of this narrative is that sanctions imposed against Russia together with the Russian counter-sanctions which hurt the EU so much, that more and more countries wish to remove them to give themselves a chance to survive. However the U.S. doesn't let them
- This narrative is also used to highlight the strength of Russia. Often it is supported by very disputable examples from history, all depicting Europe as a cruel power that for centuries tried to seize Russia, but always failed
- Russians are also described as people who do not need all that European welfare, because they have a higher moral compass
- World War Two is often used as an example of Russia's strength despite technological advancement of Europe. For instance, the narrative is supported by saying "We can do it again" meaning that Russia is able to save (seize) Europe again as in WW2

“Sanctions” in quotation

"Even Angela Merkel recently confessed that it was hard for Germany to prolong the sanctions. The EU is facing a serious conflict of interest. But opponents were convinced to vote in solidarity with partners from the United States"

Russia 1, 21 July 2015



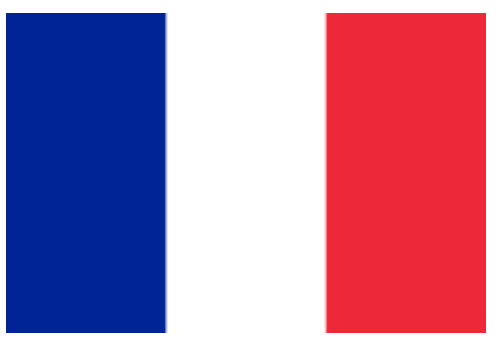
Joint narratives for the EU countries

- The whole of Europe suffers from sanctions against Russia. Sanctions against Russia were imposed by the United States and are beneficial only to them
- European politicians are afraid to argue with the U.S.
- There is an erosion of moral values: same sex marriages, incest, pedophilia
- Deliberate destruction of history
- Europe is a place of constant protests, strikes and terrorism
- Even the weather punishes Europe for the wrong way of life

Particular narratives: France

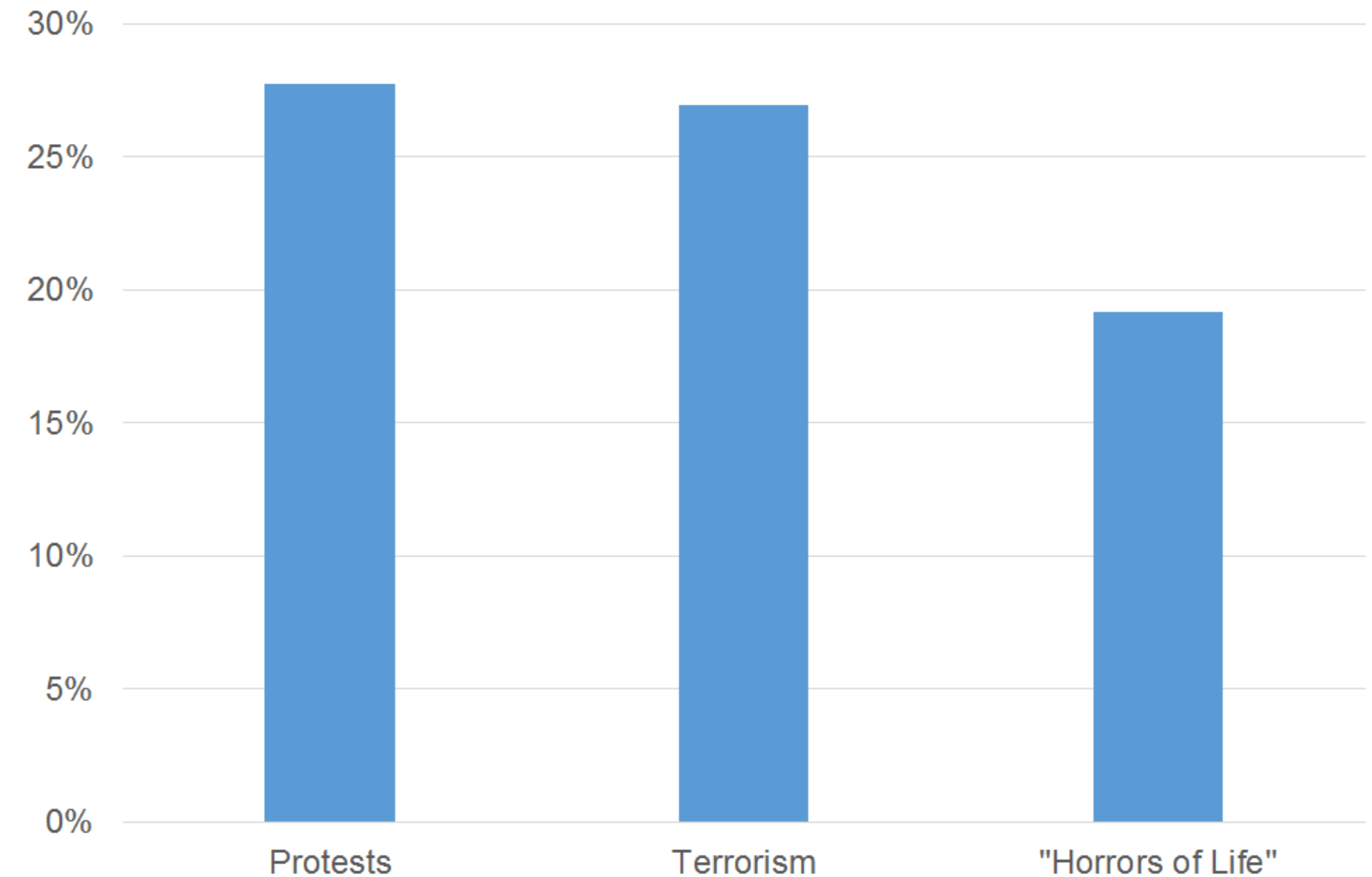
- French people became poor and socially unprotected
- Protests are sign of weak state
- Farmers are against anti-Russian sanctions
- French authorities including law enforcement agencies are picture as incapable
- Very weak politicians: Oland – spineless, Macron – pervert

France



"With all the sympathy for the victims of the terrorist attacks in Paris the true extent of the tragedy that happened in France is not yet evident for us, remembering our even recent history. That's why, when seeing millions of people on the streets of the French capital, we tend to measure what is happening there by our standards and our problems. As a result, many are faced with a false and partly imposed choice between "I am Charlie" or "I am not Charlie" with all the epithets and mutual accusations coming from it. However there is no such choice. The killing of unarmed people is a terrible sin and a serious criminal case that has no justification. The magazine Charlie Hebdo is not legally possible in Russia, where are legally forbidden to offend the feelings of believers and it does not matter whom: Christians, Muslims or Jews. Such is the law. Speculating on the non-existent choice under the guise of a terrible tragedy in Paris - this is either a direct provocation or infantile stupidity, comparable to that of the French now returning from the squares".

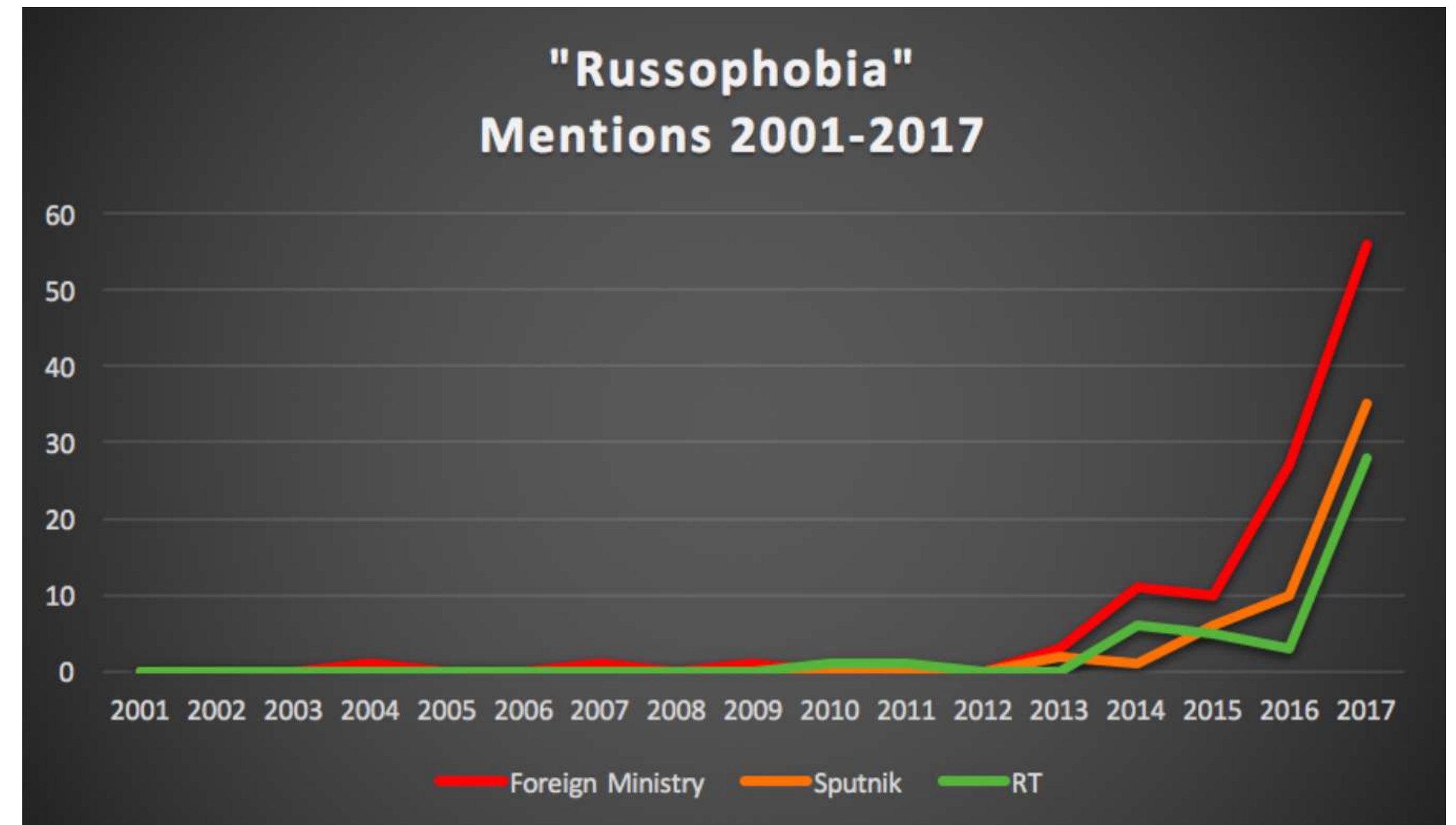
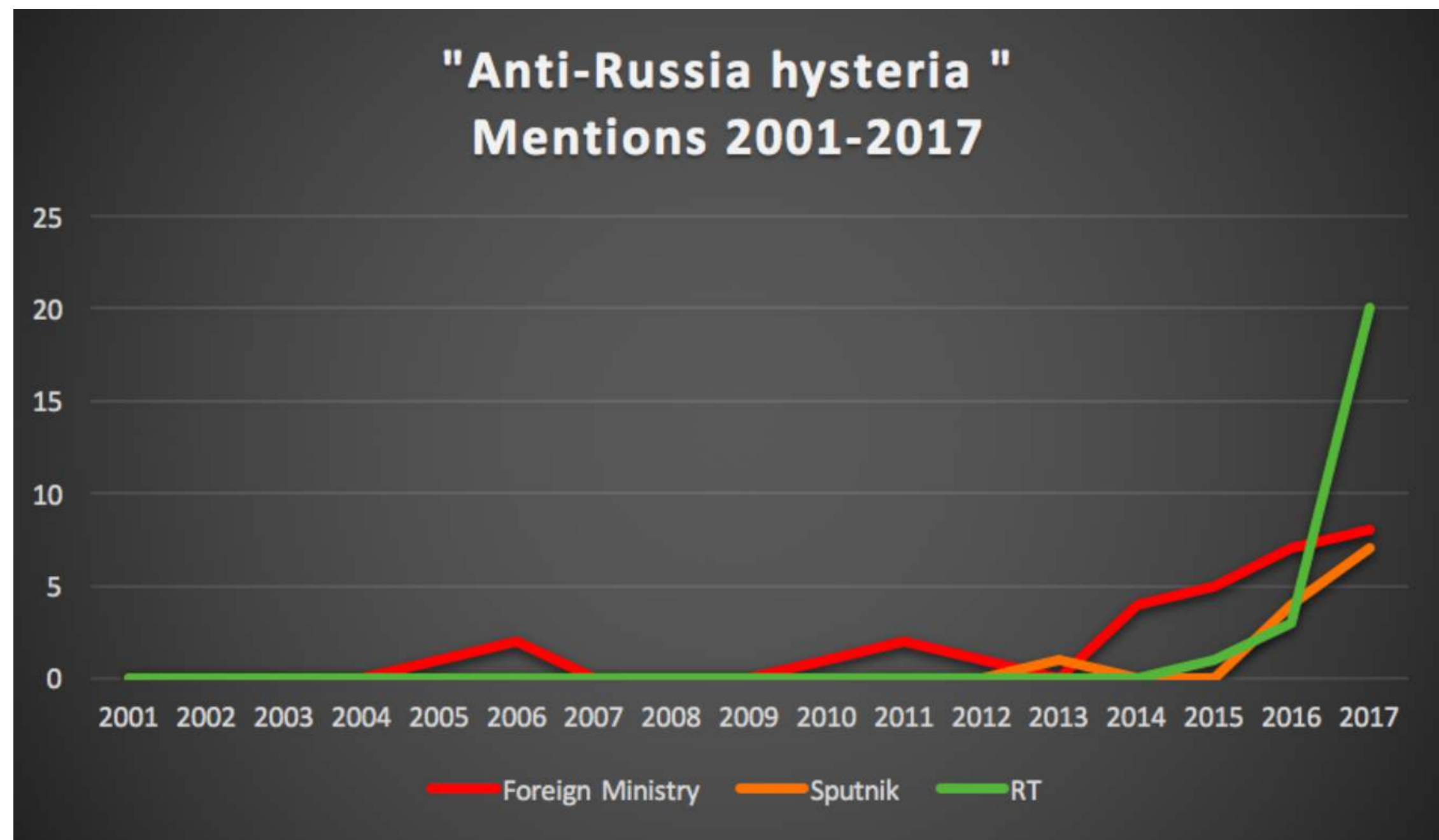
Channel One, 18 January 2015



- Ratio negative to positive news: 90% / 10%

What is Kremlin's reply?

Admit nothing. Deny everything. Make counter accusations



"The prospects for our relations with the European Union remain hostage to the Russophobic policy pursued by a narrow group of countries within the EU, which, in effect, is acting in the interests of the United States, not Europe."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, December 2017

Threats

Russian media put tremendous resources within these narratives to:

1. Convince the Russian population never to accept European liberal values, neither today nor tomorrow
2. Prepare the Russian population ready for potential conflicts with the West and feel right and motivate their citizens to take over the weak and divided Europe
3. Increase the awareness that if Russia isn't resistant, Europe will impose their "toxic" values



*On screen: "If we don't, then they will... us"
Dmitry Kiselyov, "Vesti Nedeli" program, Russia 1*

Conclusions

- Emphasis in Russian news programs is intended to dehumanize an average European. He/She is depicted as strange, depraved, unfair. Therefore the European way of life comes as a threat, and public opinion is being prepared for the fact that Russia has the right to bring order in Europe
- A distinct feature of Russian news is that a viewer virtually never gets a pure fact about an event, but always an interpretation, an already formed opinion. Head of Russian news agency Mr. Kiselyov openly declares that “Time for neutral journalism has gone”



Dmitry Kiselyov, “Vesti Nedeli” program

Conclusions

- The opposing point of view on Russian talk shows is usually imitated or presented nominally. This function is performed by the same people who are regularly humiliated, ridiculed, and sometimes even beaten in the studio. The task of these people is to showcase the other side as stupid, unfair, ridiculous. With such background the Russian mainstream narratives look more convincing, consistent and meaningful.



Yakub Korejba, Michael Bohm, Vyacheslav Kovtun - regular contributors as oppositionists in Russian talk shows

Conclusions

- International events in the Russian news programs have an abnormally large share. Events in Europe, the U.S. and Ukraine may occupy up to 90% of the entire program in some TV releases. This draws public attention from internal issues and unites population against the West, as an enemy
- Formally independent channels, which are supposed to compete for the content, have the same news agenda. They regularly present news on different minor events in similar wording. Therefore, there is little doubt in the supervision from the top
- General emphasis on top national channels has a consistently expressed emotional tone color – aggressiveness, contempt, preaching to Europeans

Recommendations

- Raise the awareness of policy makers, national governments and international institutions to the objects and goals of disinformation in Russian domestic media, in particular:
 - Identify who is depicted as the potential enemy / the ally (though there are few)
 - Study trends for particular countries; analyze differences; learn lessons from the Balkans, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Baltic states
 - Pay attention to dehumanization of Western (liberal) values, including democracy, freedom of speech and rule of law. Adjust bilateral policy accordingly
- Compare and assess differences in internal Kremlin's rhetoric toward the West vs. official diplomatic messages. Consider the implications of double-standards for international affairs and the sustainable future of democracy and security in the regions, around the world
- Develop national and EU policies that would explicitly name Russia's manipulations as a threat to bilateral long-term potential understanding with Western democracies, and make any improvement conditional on Russia bringing its internal communications in accordance with the image of a civilized nation it is trying to project in international relations

Recommendations

- Formulate / update the definition of disinformation (propaganda) and hostile language. Make it adequate to the challenge of the ever more creative Kremlin's efforts.
- European countries need more effective mechanisms to counter Russian information influence, not less. Formats such as EAS East STRATCOM Task Force exposing disinformation must be strengthened, not dismantled*
- Do not let the Russian Media enjoy preferences of free media, since they are not:
 - Liable to Prove it legally
 - Scrutinize budgeting sources
 - Inform / educate the population about of their manipulations
 - Ban them
- Every European country should adopt its own version of the Magnitsky Act. Profits from deals with Russia today cost lives already today. Need to finally come to the adequate cause-effect conclusions – expelling Russian spies is not enough*

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Thank you for Listening!

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