

Abstract

The dissertation focuses on the level and form of Europeanisation of Czech, Polish and Slovak media in the intense phases of three crises – the migration crisis, the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The theoretical starting points of the thesis are the theories of the public sphere. Its functional variant is considered in the context of the „European communication space“ as a means or a necessary condition for eliminating various deficits of the European Union, especially the democratic deficit. Of the various approaches to conceptualizing the European public sphere, the research in this thesis adopts a Europeanization approach, through the lens of which the European public sphere is seen as a network of national public spheres that are increasingly „Europeanized“, and which relies on individual national media in its empirical efforts to detect the European public sphere. A parallel quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the content published on Facebook by six Czech, Polish and Slovak mainstream media outlets in the early stages of each crisis identifies different levels of Europeanisation across crises, reflecting the different levels of competences that the EU possessed in each of them. At the same time, it shows that EU issues and actors have managed to gain a foothold within the Facebook agendas of individual news media, an environment characterised by a trend towards rather softer and lower quality content. The research also reveals similar patterns of Europeanization within each national discourse and differences between the countries studied. Thus, it appears that the specific national context, rather than the type of media, influences the level and form of Europeanization. In addition to presenting specific empirical findings, the thesis also critically evaluates the most commonly used concepts in the field and their operationalizations, proposes some modifications or extensions of these concepts, as well as formulates new ones, in particular the concept of tabloidization and softening or nationalization. The new and revised concepts, together with the original ones, are presented at the end of the thesis in the form of a scheme of Europeanization in the context of crises.