

## **10 The first time for everything: Political Advertising in a New Member State**

*Maja Šimunjak and Lana Milanović*

This chapter explores the 2014 European Parliament election campaign in Croatia as a new member state of the European Union. In 2014 Croatian political parties competed for the first time in the context of EU-wide elections to represent Croatia as a EU member state in the European parliament.<sup>i</sup> The campaign in 2014 lasted from 7 April until 24 May 2014, the longest ever campaign in Croatian history. Competing for 11 seats in the European Parliament were 25 lists consisting of single parties or coalitions. Seventeen out of those 25 lists did not produce any traditional promotional materials (posters and commercials). Furthermore, of the 11 candidates ultimately elected to the European Parliament, only one featured in a television spot. Therefore, the sample for analysis of political advertising in the 2014 elections in Croatia is quite modest although that is not to say that the findings are not of interest.

In this chapter we firstly outline the context in which the 2014 European Parliament elections took place in Croatia, and summarize the (limited) existing scholarship on the topic. We then report on the findings from the content analysis study and discuss these findings from Croatia by reference to data from other member states and also previous European elections to see what may be said about how the Croatian case fits into the European context. The analysis shows that many trends observed in previous campaigns for European Parliament elections - and in other member states in 2014 - were also evident in Croatia, although certain peculiarities to the Croatian campaign are worthy of mention in the discussion.

### **Background and context**

To understand the background to the 2014 elections and context in which political parties and candidates campaigned in Croatia, several factors need to be taken into account. With regards to the political context for the 2014 elections, mention must be made of the major political actors in Croatia, timing of elections, and experiences from the single country elections for the European parliament in 2013. Furthermore, several campaign-related factors need to be taken into account, particularly relatively new regulations concerning the financing of political campaigns, the electoral system and the duration of the campaign. Finally, a

situational factor which could be seen as having a significant impact on the 2014 campaign is referenced – floods in Eastern Croatia which affected the final week of the campaign.

### **Political context**

Since Croatia declared independence in 1990, two political parties dominated the national political scene – Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDP), a left-wing party of reformed communists, and the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), a right-wing party which developed out of a movement for Croatian independence. These two parties alternated in power since the country was formed, ruling either individually or in coalitions. While HDZ spent many more years in power in comparison to SDP, at the time of 2014 elections SDP was in its eighth year in power. HDZ ruled throughout the 1990s and again from 2003 to 2011. Since 2000, when a semi-presidential political system was replaced with a parliamentary system, neither of these two main parties has managed to secure a majority in parliament. As a consequence, broad coalitions have been necessary to form governments. Following 2011 parliamentary elections SDP came to power leading a left-wing coalition formed of Croatian People's Party, the Istrian Democratic Assembly, and the Croatian Party of Pensioners. At the time of the 2014 elections the President of Croatia was also a left-wing politician, SDP's Ivo Josipović.<sup>ii</sup>

The 2014 European Parliament elections were held in Croatia halfway through the left-wing coalition's term and several months before presidential elections. They also came two years after Croatian citizens voted 'yes' on a EU membership referendum, and only a year after the 2013 European Parliament elections during which Croatia was not yet a member of the EU. In these 2013 elections Croats elected 12 members of the European Parliament who represented them from country's accession to the EU in July 2013 until the EU-wider elections in 2014.

In retrospective, the 2013 contest was quite indicative of how the 2014 elections played out. In the first place, they revealed Croatian citizens' attitude towards European Parliament elections - only one fifth of voters came out to vote in what was the lowest ever turnout in any of Croatian election (20.8 percent). According to Bicchi et al. (2003), there are three main reasons for non-voting at EP elections; lack of interest, lack of knowledge and distrust of the European Union. In the case of Croatia, according to one post-election survey, non-

voters were primarily influenced by their disappointment in politicians (51.6 percent) and a lack of interest in the European parliament (37.1 percent) (Gong 2013).

In the 2014 elections, turnout was marginally higher (25.2 percent) but this level was still much lower than the EU average (42.6 percent). Lower turnouts than in Croatia were only registered in 2014 in Slovenia, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland. It is fair to conclude that Croatian citizens do not appear to have become significantly more interested in the European Parliament following the country's accession to membership. In addition, the winner of the 2013 elections was a right-wing coalition led by HDZ, which won 6 seats. The coalition led by ruling SDP won 5 seats, while another parliamentary party, Croatian Labourists, won one seat.<sup>iii</sup> The fact that the ruling coalition lost the elections seems to fit one of Reif and Schmitt's (1980) descriptors of EP elections – the party in power is usually punished where they occur at the mid-term point in a government's life. HDZ's coalition win in 2013 also indicated that the party, which has been criminally charged for abusing taxpayers' funds a year previously, had started to recover under its new leadership. The shift in the balance of power between two major parties that was evident in 2013 was also seen in subsequent contests – 2013 local elections, 2014 EP elections, and 2015 presidential elections – all of which were in HDZ's favour. One final trait was seen in 2013 - none of the political communication actors be they politicians, the media and the voters were particularly interested in the elections for European parliament. Voters showed this by the record low turnout, the media by ignoring the campaign (Grbeša and Tomičić 2014), and political parties and candidates by pursuing weak, and in some cases no, campaigns (Knežević 2013). These behaviour patterns were again repeated in the 2014 elections.

### **Campaign context**

Several factors can be identified as affecting how political actors in Croatia decided to campaign in the 2014 elections. In the first place, unlike the pre-2011 campaigns, there was a restriction on campaign spending. A new law governing the financing of political campaigns was passed in 2011, partly as a response to the lack of transparency about funding in previous campaigns. Under this new law, each list competing in the European Parliament elections in 2014 was allowed to spend up to 1.5m Kunas (€200,000) during the campaign.<sup>iv</sup> According to published post-election financial reports, only three of the 25 lists spent close to the proscribed maximum in 2014.

The two biggest coalitions, those led by HDZ and SDP, spent almost the maximum, while the Croatian Labourists party spent 1.3m Kunas (Hina 2014). It is interesting to note that 30 percent of lists competing in these elections spent no money whatsoever (ibid.). Given that this was the longest campaign in Croatian history (47 days) the prediction that big parties would benefit from a long campaign, given they have more resources, proved to be accurate (Gvardiol 2014; Grakalić 2014). However, this is not to say that those with most resources relied most on advertising to promote their messages and candidates. HDZ's coalition, which spent the maximum 1.5m Kunas, decided to avoid traditional poster and television-oriented advertising. Instead the HDZ coalition invested in advertising in local media and organising local events (Grakalić 2014; Ponoš 2014). This strategy partly explains why this coalition is not better represented in our sample of analysed posters and commercials. The ruling coalition also decided to avoid television advertising although it did focus heavily on posters, what was listed as one of its main expenditures in its post-election financial report (Ponoš 2014). The Croatian Labourists was the only party to invest heavily in television advertising (ibid.). The latter produced four out of the six television commercials broadcast during the campaign. Interestingly, the party did not win any seats in the 2014 elections.

Alongside these new rules regarding campaign financing, political candidates were still adjusting to the new proportional electoral system with preferential voting that had only been used once previously. On the first time using this new electoral system some five percent of votes have been spoilt. This level of spoilt votes has been partly ascribed to the poor voter knowledge of the new system (GONG 2013). Although preferential voting seemed to contribute to voters' confusion, the results also showed that a majority decided to use their right to vote for a particular candidate. Specifically, 68.5 percent voted for a candidate, using their preferential vote (ibid.). The apparent focus of voters on candidates instead of lists may well have influenced political communication strategies adopted for the 2014 contest. It is also worth noting that the percentage of spoilt votes reduced in the 2014 elections to three percent.<sup>v</sup>

A situational factor which needs to be taken into account in the context of the 2014 European Parliament elections in Croatia is the flood which hit country prior to the elections. Indeed, by the final week of the campaign the situation in eastern Croatia had become so serious that the government declared a state of emergency. In this context the two biggest coalitions decided to stop campaigning a week before polling day and to donate whatever money they

had left in their campaign budgets to the victims of the floods (M.G. 2014). The Croatian Labourists party said they could not make a donation as they had paid for their television advertising in advance (Vidov 2014). As a result of this pre-booking arrangement, the Croatian Labourists were the only party to advertise in the week before the elections. The media was quick to conclude that donating money to flood victims was a far better advertising strategy than investing in posters and commercials. The floods gained a lot of media, political and public interest, which partly explains lower interest in Croatia in the 2014 elections.

A final observation in relation to political advertising strategies in 2014 - many newer and smaller parties by-passed traditional posters and commercials in favour of online campaigning, specifically free platforms (Vesnić-Alujević 2013). Overall, 17 out of 25 political parties/coalitions produced no political advertising materials (commercials or posters) although they did generally campaign on social media.

### **Previous research**

In relation to previous academic research of European Parliament elections in Croatia, there is obviously scarce material available since the 2014 elections were the first since Croatia joined the EU, and second in its history. Only one study has been published about the political communication practices in the 2013 EP elections and this analysis focused on the ways in which the national daily newspapers reported the elections (Grbeša and Tomičić 2014). This analysis revealed that the Croatian press reported the 2013 elections similarly as they have been reported in other EU countries in the past – with limited interest and primarily focusing on domestic, rather than European actors and topics (ibid.). The authors also concluded that, ‘Croatian newspapers have completely failed in informing the citizens about the new electoral system and more importantly, about the role and the work of the European Parliament’ (Grbeša and Tomičić 2014:19). This finding contributes in part to explaining the low voters turnout and large percentage of spoilt votes in the 2013 elections.

To our knowledge there was no academic analysis of political advertising or campaign strategies in the 2013 elections. However, the media offered some analysis of how and why the campaigns looked as they did. Media consensus was that the parties and candidates oversaw an ‘invisible campaign’ (Al Jazeera 2013; Knežević 2013). The civil society organisation that monitored the campaign, GONG, agreed with this evaluation. It reported

that the parties did not do enough either to promote their candidates or to motivate the public to go to the polling stations, and that consequently they [the parties] were to blame for why there was ‘no real election campaign’ (GONG 2013: 9). Several reasons may explain the low level of political activity. First, the campaign in 2013 took place only a month before local elections, which seemed to be more important for parties so they might have been saving their money and energy for the latter campaign. Second, the members of the European parliament elected in 2013 were to serve for less than a year. Consequently parties might not have been as willing to use their resources for what would have been, at best, short-term gains. Third, it was speculated that the two biggest coalitions, who were best resourced, did not invest in the campaign because they expected to benefit from low voter turnout. In elections with low turnouts the big parties tend to fare better because they have a stable body of voters who will get out and vote no matter what has, or has not, been said in the campaign (Al Jazeera 2013).

## **Findings and Discussion**

The campaign for the 2014 European Parliament elections in Croatia lasted from 7 April until 24 May 2014, the day before polling. As already mentioned, this was the longest ever campaign in Croatian history. For the purpose of analysis of political advertising in this chapter, all posters and commercials published from 1 May until the end of campaign were collected and analysed. Competing for 11 seats in the European Parliament were 25 lists, which included 275 candidates, 18 of which were single party lists, while seven were coalitions. Seventeen of the 25 parties/coalitions did not produce any traditional promotional materials (posters and commercials). Furthermore, of the 11 successful candidates, only one had featured in a television advert. The overall sample is modest, consisting of 19 posters and six commercials. The sample of TV spots is further limited as the same party (Croatian Labourists) produced four of the six commercials.<sup>vi</sup> As a result the analysis of commercials might better reveal this party’s advertising strategy, rather than wider trends in Croatian political advertising in the 2014 European Parliament elections. Nevertheless, the results are still interesting as they reveal that only one political actor considered television advertising to be an important or necessary promotional technique. It seems that the parties did not see the benefits of a TV advert as a ‘space to develop detailed argument compared with using posters’ (Adam and Maier 2011: 438).

Despite these limitations, the analysis of posters and commercials revealed three interesting findings. First, the campaign was very personalised since it was dominated by politicians as individual actors. Second, the campaign focused on national topics and actors, largely ignoring all topics, actors and elements related to the EU. And third, the advertising in Croatia was not particularly similar to that in any other EU country.

### **Personalised campaigns**

With regards to the personalisation of campaigns, the evidence shows that individual politicians were often the main focus of posters and commercials, and that their candidacies were most frequently the main topics of promotional materials. Although more posters promoted lists rather than individual candidates, what seems to be true for all EU countries, politicians are the focus of Croatian posters to a relatively high degree - some 42 percent of posters included an individual candidate. Similar emphasis on individual candidates in posters can also be found in Slovakia, Austria and Cyprus. The focus on candidates is even more pronounced in commercials. Some 67 percent of spots promote particular candidates, rather than lists. This finding is quite different to that from other EU countries since on the EU level the vast majority of commercials promoted lists (91 percent). The only other member state in which television advertising was more individual rather than list-centred was Austria. Furthermore, even though posters are dominantly list-centred, political leaders appear in the majority (63 percent), and they also appear in all broadcast commercials. This much emphasis on political leaders in television advertising is higher than the EU average (leaders appear in three out of four commercials), but Croatia is no exception since all commercials in Slovakia and Finland also featured political leaders.

In addition, not only did political leaders take prominence in promotional materials, their candidacies were most frequently the focus of both posters and commercials. Given that candidacies at EU level were in the focus of only seven percent of commercials, and 83 percent of Croatian commercials centred on them, it is clear that in this case the way in which Croatian political actors campaigned was significantly different from how political actors in other EU member states campaigned. On EU level most commonly mentioned topics in commercials were labour, European Union and development, and of these topics only labour was mentioned in Croatian commercials. Instead of raising awareness of issues and topics related to the EU, Croatian political actors were primarily concerned with presenting their candidacies and securing a seat in the European Parliament in a national context. Candidacies

were also prominent in the majority of posters (68 per cent), but this topic was also most commonly mentioned on the EU level, although not, as in the Croatian case, in the majority of posters.

The fact that Croatian political actors practiced such personalised campaigns seems to resonate with the findings of Hermans and Vergeer's (2013) study of politician's personalisation strategies used on candidate websites of 17 countries in European Parliament elections in 2009. They found that politicians from then new member states, all post-communist countries that entered the EU in 2004 and 2007, focused most on communicating information about themselves as individuals. Hermans and Vergeer (2013) offer two possible explanations as to why political actors from post-communist countries might be more willing than their colleagues from other EU member states to focus their campaign on individuals, by arguing that, 'countries without an EU tradition need new and individual ways to reach their potential voters due to lack of past performance of their country as a EU member state; also the former communist, authoritarian countries have a history of glorifying political leaders' (ibid., 11). Both explanations seem plausible in the Croatian context as well, particularly bearing in mind that personalised campaigns were previously observed in all types of Croatian elections – local, parliamentary and presidential ones (Brečić et al. 2012; Grbeša 2008; Matić 2014; Šimunjak 2012). Another finding worth noting is that EU-related topics (European Union, Euro funds, Euro institutions) were mentioned in less than a third of all posters (31 percent). This result ties to the second major finding in this chapter – that Croatian political actors focused on national actors and topics, while practically ignoring European ones.

### **Ignoring Europe**

Support for the claim that the EU and international topics and actors were almost invisible in the Croatian campaigns in 2014 emerges from the analysis of posters and their main focus. Specifically, European/international topics were not in the main focus of any of the posters, with only Malta alongside Croatia sharing the same outcome. However, national topics were not particularly more visible, they were the main focus of only 21 percent of posters. In line with the EU average, the majority of posters focused on neither national nor international topics. The extent to which international topics were the main focus of Croatian commercials is again low, and also similar to the EU average. International topics were the main focus of 16 percent of Croatian commercials, while they were in the focus of 12 percent of



commercials at the EU level. Europe was represented (in visual, graphic or verbally) in only two out of six commercials (33 percent), which is significantly lower than the EU average (76 percent).

The practice of ignoring Europe can further be illustrated by the data related to the visibility of political symbols. The symbol of political group membership was not visible in any of the commercials, while there was a visual representation of EU in only one commercial (16 percent). Not mentioning political group membership is not uncommon. In 14 other EU countries there were also no commercials with references to party group membership, and the EU average is also low – in only 10 percent of all commercials were party group membership symbols included. However, the EU was visually represented in 35 percent of all commercials across the other member states, twice more frequently than in the Croatian sample.

While EU symbols and representations were almost non-existent, national symbols were significantly more visible. In line with the EU average (88 percent) for commercials, some 83 percent of Croatian commercials contained a symbol of a political party. The focus on national elements is further reinforced by the fact that only national political leaders appeared in both posters and commercials. Similar findings were found across Europe. In the majority of posters and commercials in Croatia the leaders' expressions are neutral. This is similar to findings from Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Denmark. Leaders' neutrality is even more evident in commercials in which all leaders appear in a neutral manner, similar to the Netherlands. At EU level, however, leaders have most commonly been portrayed as serious.

The lack of discussion about the EU in the Croatian campaigns led to a lack of informative campaigns on the subject, which could have contributed to a more extensive debate on EU issues in the Croatian media and perhaps resulted in a higher turnout. If we take Hix's (2005: 179) interpretation of political competition as 'an essential vehicle for fostering political debate, which in turn promotes the formation of public opinion on different policy options', then Croatian political actors have failed in their role to engage in relevant debates and to help voters make informed decisions. In fact, it appears that Croatian politicians did not consider themselves as an important actor in conveying EU policies to citizens and informing them about the importance of the EU elections. As Hix (ibid.: 180) concludes, 'parties provide vital links between the national and EU arenas and between the EU institutions

themselves', which is the role that parties in Croatia as a new member state did not seem to have considered relevant.

This type of campaigning does not appear to be particularly novel as most previous research on European Parliament elections has shown that they lack European content. For example, Ferrara and Weishaupt (2004: 289), who analysed European election campaigns from 1989 to 1999, suggest that when these elections are not important for national political competition, 'political parties are unlikely to invest more than symbolic organizational resources in differentiating themselves from their competitors on issues that have any European significance'. By campaigning weakly on European issues, parties ignore their role as important actors on European integration discussion and, as a result, contribute to second-order patterns and decreasing turnout in European Parliament elections (Norris 1997). Croatian parties seem to fall into this latter category. This is further confirmed by a report prepared by the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) on 2014 election campaign. The report concludes that, 'a general lack of interest in or knowledge of the EU was reported as the cause for a campaign focused on national issues in Croatia and several other member states' (van den Berge 2014: 3).

### **Croatian peculiarities**

Highly personalised campaigns, particularly those on television, which focus on the promotion of political leaders who do not show any emotion, seem to be one of the peculiarities of the 2014 Croatian campaign for the European Parliament. Connected to this hiding of the 'communication of emotions', it does not come as a surprise that unlike in most EU countries, Croatian commercials largely communicated rational, rather than emotional messages. This is not to say that the Croatian case is completely exceptional, since there were more commercials relying on rationality rather than emotions in France, Denmark, Portugal and Romania. On the EU level the majority of the commercials' messages were emotional (59 percent), but in the Croatian case only 17 per cent (one commercial) communicated emotional messages. What is more interesting, however, is that competence was most frequently communicated which leads back to the conclusion that the campaign was again about the candidates themselves.

It is also interesting to note that in rare cases when the EU was mentioned, this was always in a neutral context, which makes Croatia the only EU country whose commercials portrayed

the EU exclusively in a neutral context. There are several possible explanations for this approach. In the first place, the 2014 elections were held just two years after the referendum on joining the Union, during which all major Croatian parties backed voters saying 'yes' to membership.<sup>vii</sup> Hence, it is logical that there were no strong anti-EU campaigns, since most political parties recently campaigned in favour. The fact that less than 50 percent turned out to vote in the referendum, and of these only 66.3 percent voted 'yes', suggests that there is not a genuinely significant majority of EU supporters among Croatian citizens. In the latter regard, overtly promoting the EU in the 2014 campaign might have been seen as a risky political strategy. Consequently the neutral stance towards the EU might be part of a strategy to minimise the risk of threatening current position of the respective parties in the national arena. Moreover, Boros and Vasali's (2013) explanation for the rise of Euroscepticism might also have some explanatory power in this Croatian context. These authors claim that, 'neutrality can also mean that in the affected countries the EU does not threaten distinctive national features or alternatives separate from the development of integration which are highly important to respondents' (Boros and Vasali 2013: 4). Hence, Croatian political actors might also have avoided expressing strong opinions about the EU because they did not find this to be particularly important for their voters.

### **Testing the 'second-order elections' thesis**

In concluding this discussion of the findings of political advertising in the Croatian campaign in 2014 we examine how the case fits with the 'second-order' hypothesis. European Parliament elections can be classified as second-order contests, according to Reif and Schmitt (1980) on account of lower participation levels than in national elections, brighter prospects for small and new parties, higher percentage of spoilt votes and defeat for government parties. With regards to the lower turnout, only Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland and Czech Republic had few voters cast their ballot than in Croatia.<sup>viii</sup> The higher percentage of spoilt votes also seems to be relevant to the Croatian case, as already mentioned although it should be noted that in the 2014 elections the percentage was lower than in 2013.

According to Hix and Marsh (2007: 506), the biggest losers in European Parliament elections are large government parties especially 'once the initial honeymoon is over', which is exactly what happened in Croatia. The 2014 elections were held half-way through the incumbent coalition's term, and the public opinion research at the time showed that the government parties and their leaders had lost popularity. Indeed, that was the first time in six years that

the opposition had ranked higher than the ruling coalition, according to public opinion research (Puljić Šego 2014). This is in line with previous research that showed that the government popularity tends to reach its lower point around the mid-term and that the losses are usually greatest around this point (Marsh 1998; Weber 2007). In the 2014 contest in Croatia voters seemed to have ‘direct[ed] their dissatisfaction with domestic politics against the ruling party’ (Staab 2013: 72). Indeed, all the stated outputs of the second-order election thesis were evident in the Croatian case except for better success for small and new political parties. Despite the modest campaigning efforts of the two biggest Croatian parties (HDZ and SDP), they were the greatest winners. In the 2014 elections, together these two parties won ten out of 11 available seats. Smaller parties that produced more promotional material or those which were particularly active on social media did not see their campaign efforts transfer into seats in the European parliament. Big parties seem to have decided to rely on their base of supporters and not voters informed by campaigns on Europe to secure victory.

## **Conclusion**

At the 2014 European Parliament elections the Republic of Croatia was the EU’s newest member state. Political parties have campaigned extensively for this membership. It might, therefore, have been expected that those same parties would give significant importance to the elections in the European Parliament. This was proven to be incorrect in 2013, and then again in 2014. Besides the fact that only eight out of 25 parties/coalitions that competed for the seats produced promotional materials, the research shows low quality of content and disinterest in the EU. Regarding campaign content, an informed discussion based on arguments was absent, as was discussion about the EU itself. European issues were neglected, with an emphasis on national issues and individual actors.

Three distinctive findings emerge from the analysis of posters and commercials in Croatia in 2014. First, campaigning was personalized and dominated by politicians as individual actors. The evidence shows that individual politicians were often the focus of posters and commercials, and that their candidacies were most frequently the main topics of promotional materials. Second, the campaign focused on national topics and actors, largely ignoring the EU. Indeed, EU-related topics were mentioned in less than one-third of all posters suggesting that Croatian political actors decided to focus on national actors and topics. Third, political advertising in Croatia was not particularly similar to that in any other EU country although only in certain aspects did it significantly deviate from patterns in other member states.

Political advertising in Croatia was based on rationality over emotion, and the EU was treated in a neutral manner (although the sample size is small).

These country-specific findings suggest that national circumstances and the context of the national political campaigns are still important factors in examining the European Parliament elections. Specifically, they point to the fact that the ‘national’ remains important in the ‘European’, meaning that we cannot fully understand ‘Europe’ without taking into account national contexts and practices. However, the Croatian case also reveals political advertising strategies in the newest member state were in very many respects similar to those elsewhere in the EU. As there is no previous academic work about political advertising in European Parliament elections in Croatia, this chapter can be seen as an interesting starting point for future research, whether this is on political advertising in the European Parliament campaigns in Croatia, or political advertising in future new member states of the EU.

## REFERENCES

---

<sup>i</sup> The first campaign for European parliament took place in Croatia in April 2013 in a single country-context, and the successful candidates represented Croatia in the parliament from its accession in July 2013 until the 2014 elections.

<sup>ii</sup> Although Croatia is a parliamentary democracy since 2000, it kept the institution of a President.

<sup>iii</sup> Results of European Parliament elections in Croatia, [http://www.izbori.hr/2014EUParlament/rezult/pdf/EUP2014\\_konacni\\_rezultati.pdf](http://www.izbori.hr/2014EUParlament/rezult/pdf/EUP2014_konacni_rezultati.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> New Law on Financing Political Activities and Election Campaigns was passed in February 2014 (Zakon o financiranju političkih aktivnosti i izborne promidžbe; <http://www.zakon.hr/z/443/zakon-o-financiranju-politi%C4%8Dkih-aktivnosti-i-izborne-promid%C5%BEbe>)

<sup>v</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>vi</sup> Croatian Labourists produced four very similar commercials, each one highlighting the other candidate from their list.

<sup>vii</sup> Croatia EU referendum: Voters back membership, available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-16670298>.

<sup>viii</sup> Turnout of the 2014 European Parliament elections, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/turnout.html>