

Monitoring of Mass Media in the Electoral Campaign for the Election of the Bashkan of TAU Gagauz Yeri

Report no. 3
2-10 November, 2006



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1. General data

1.1 Project goal: monitoring of and informing the public opinion about the behavior of mass media in the electoral period for the election of the Bashkan of TAU (Territorial Administrative Unit) Gagauz Yeri.

1.2 Monitoring period – 9 October 2006–17 December 2006 – covers the electoral campaign with two ballots.

1.3 Criteria of selection of media institutions subject to the monitoring:

- Type of ownership (public and private)
- Audience/ impact
- Language of coverage

1.4 Monitored mass media:

TV

Moldova 1, NIT, TV Gagauzia

Radio

Radio Moldova, Radio Gagauzia

Print media

“Nezavisimaya Moldova”, “Vesti Gagauzii” (Comrat), “Znamya” (Ciadir-Lunga), “Stolitsa Comrat” (Comrat), Panorama (Vulcanesti), “Nastoiascee Znamya” (Ciadir-Lunga).

1.5 Monitoring schedule

TV

Monday-Friday

06:30 – 09:00 and 17:00 – 22:30

Saturday-Sunday

06:30 – 22:30

Radio

Monday-Sunday

06:00 – 24:00

1.1 Methodological framework

The monitoring methodology was developed by Oxford Media Research for the projects monitored by the international organization Global Campaign for Free Expression (GCFE) “Article 19”. The characteristic features of this methodology are the following: 1) use of a broad spectrum of quantitative indicators, including the type, duration, topic, circumstances of coverage, subjects of news, frequency and duration of appearance of certain individuals in the newscasts, sources of news. 2) the qualitative component is more developed than in other methodologies, which allows to establish the partiality of the monitored station/newspaper in covering the events. This is done through quantitative methods, which include the evaluation of the context and factors influencing the behavior of mass media: each piece of news is subject to a content and context evaluation to

determine if it favors one or another party or political entity. A positive or negative content and/or context does not necessarily indicate the biasness or partisanship of the station broadcasting the news. It is possible that the news favors or disfavors one of the subjects and, nonetheless, be equidistant and correct from a professional viewpoint. Only when there is a tendency to favor or disfavor one of the subjects for a certain period of time, it is considered to be dealing with an imbalance.

1.7 Team

The project is carried out by the Association of Independent Press (API), in partnership with the Independent Journalism Center (IJC), within the project “Monitoring of mass media in the electoral campaign for the election of the bashkan of TAU Gagauz Yeri”.

2. Candidates registered by the Central Electoral Commission of TAU Gagauz Yeri for the election of the bashkan:

Gheorghii Tabunșic, independent
Alexandr Stoianoglo, independent
Nicolai Dudoglo, independent
Mihail Formuzal, independent

3. General conclusions

Radio și TV

During the period November 2-10, the tendencies to support the actual bashkan Gheorghii Tabunșic on radio and TV channels having national coverage have ceased (except for one case of indirect favoring on Radio Moldova), while the regional channels continued presenting him as frequent and positive as before, rigorously censoring the information that might disgrace and show him in a dark light. NIT avoided involving in bashkan elections.

On the whole, while reflecting the situation from the Gagauz Autonomy, the materials broadcast by central TV and radio channels comprised a rather coordinated approach till this moment, presenting mostly the same events in the same context, some small exceptions existing however. Radio and TV Gagauzia continue to show the same news sharing the same content and electoral effect.

As well, throughout the period November 2-10, the publishing policy of ignoring the counter-candidates of Mr. Tabunșic is being maintained. They are not the topic of any discussion, either good or bad.

TV Gagauzia started to diffuse electoral education materials, while Radio Gagauzia provided the voters with electoral publicity. Also in this period, electoral debates missed on all radio and TV channels subject to monitoring.

Written press

As in the previous period, the independent newspaper „Nastoiascee Znamea” (Ceadîr-Lunga), supporting the independent candidate Mihail Formuzal, the actual mayor of Ceadîr-Lunga town, was the single newspaper that criticized the activity of the actual bashkan. The public newspapers subject to monitoring have favored the actual bashkan, avoiding, however, the negative presentation of his counter-candidates.

On the whole, just as in the preceding monitoring periods, the public newspapers sidestep from reflecting critical materials to the address of the candidates. However, there can be noticed a slight tendency to publish electoral education articles.

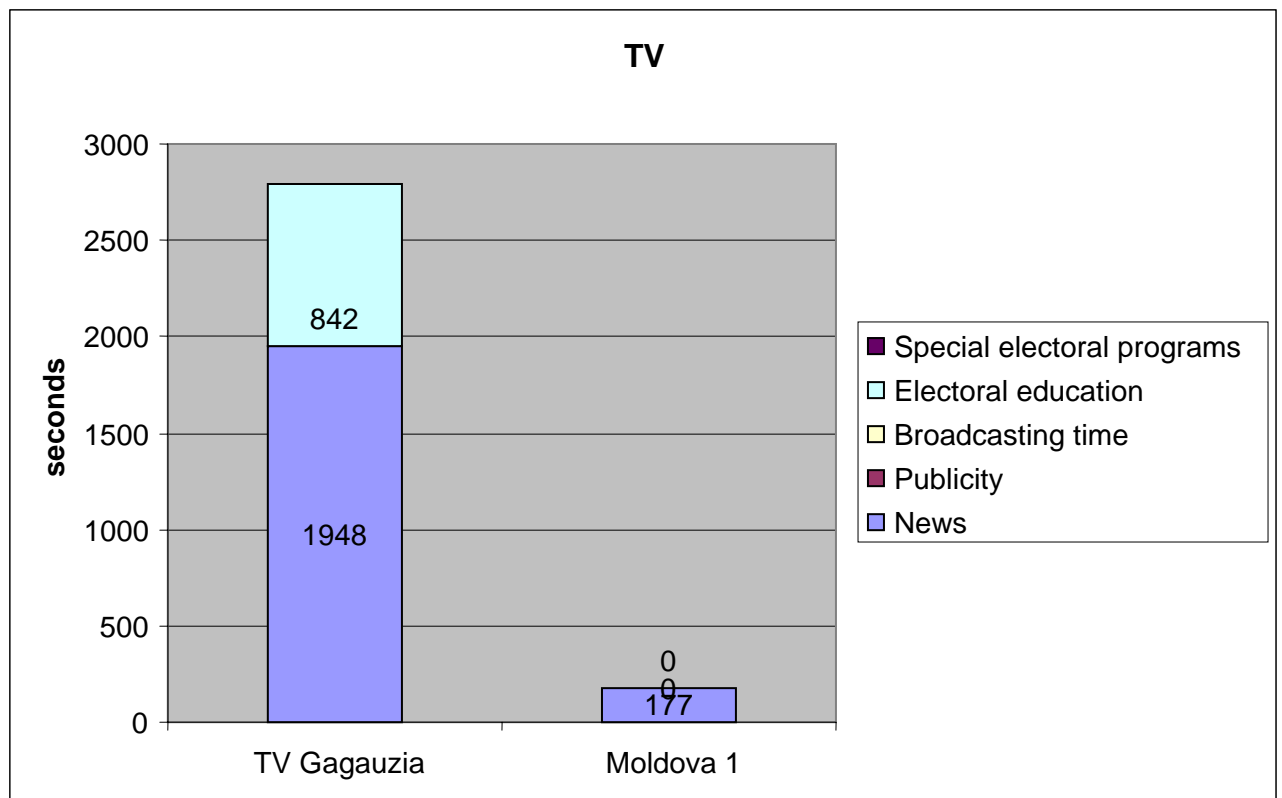
4. Data of monitoring (for the periods November 2-10 and October 9 – November 10, 2006)

4.1 Involvement in the electoral campaign

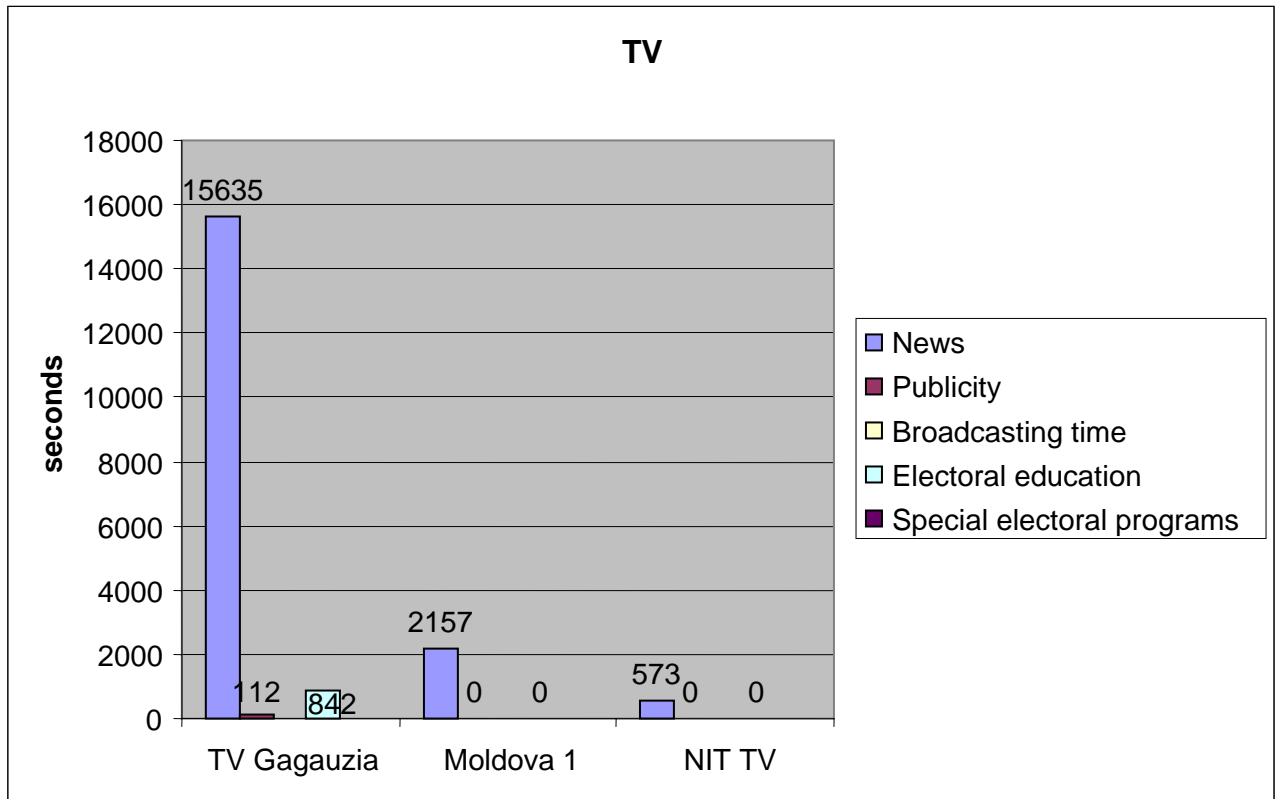
4.1.1 Radio and TV

During the period November 2-10, 2006, the national-coverage channels TV Moldova 1, Radio Moldova broadcast only one piece of electoral news, while NIT did not broadcast anything at all. TV Gagauzia began to diffuse electoral education materials, and Radio Gagauzia transmitted electoral publicity.

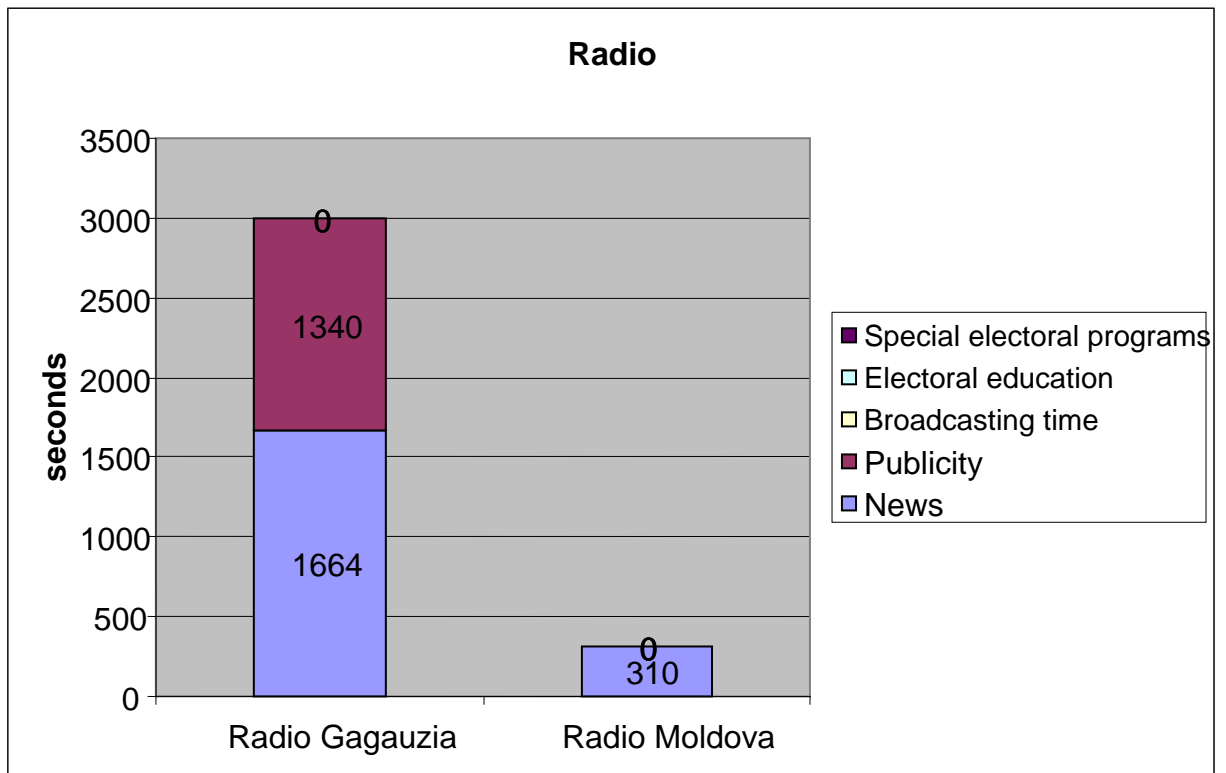
November 2-10, 2006



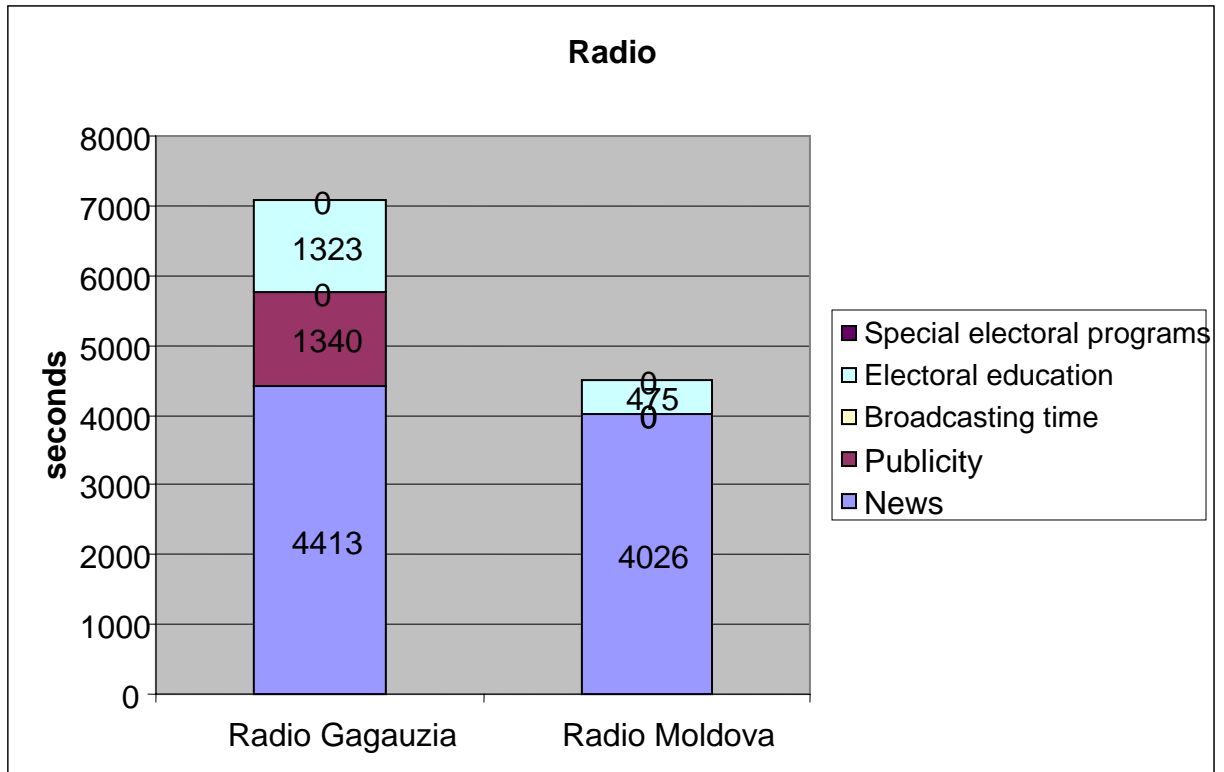
October 9 –November 10, 2006



November 2-10, 2006



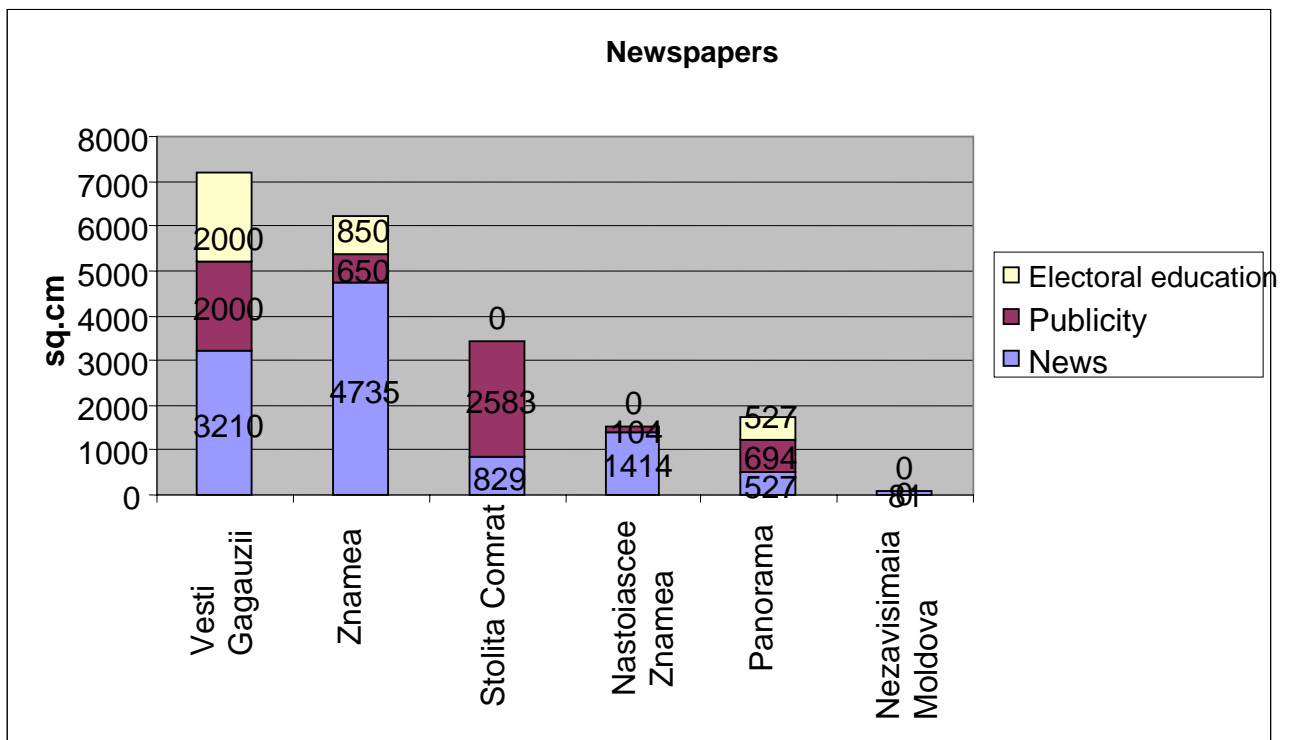
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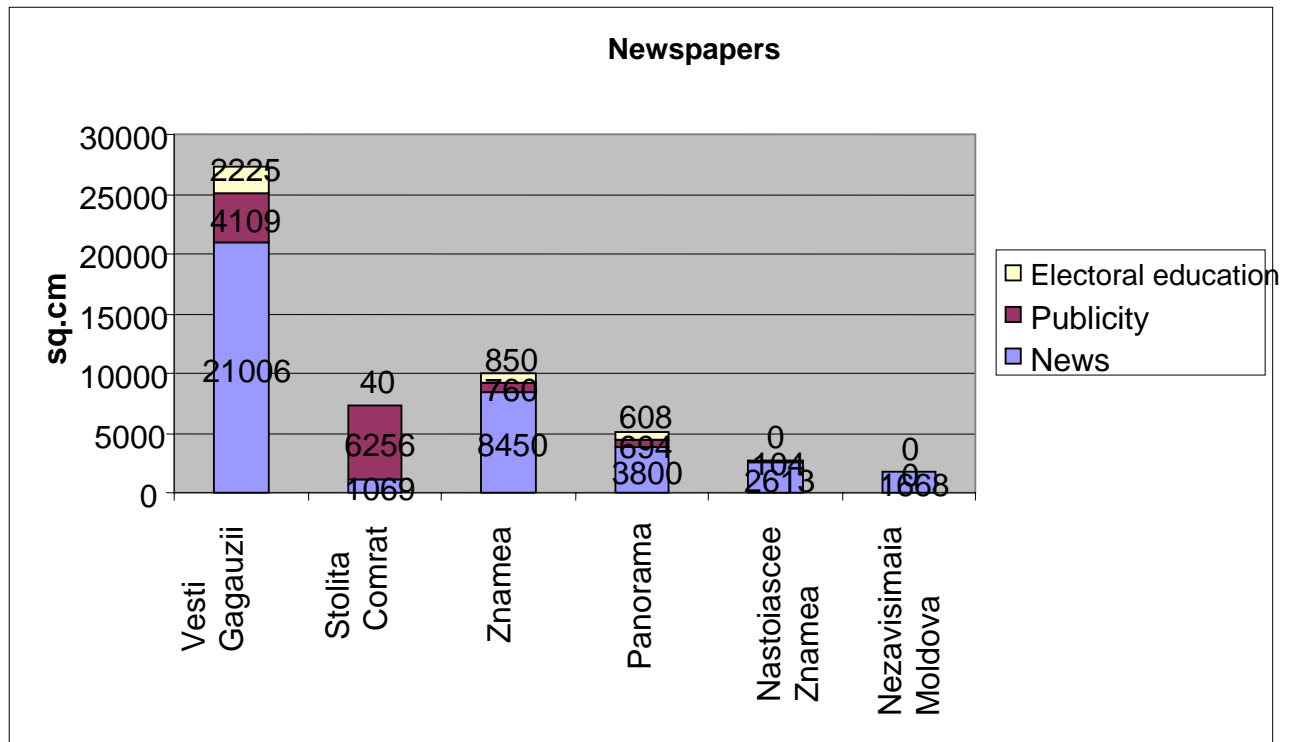
4.1.2 Newspapers

As in the anterior periods, the newspaper „Vesti Gagauzii” provided the utmost of newspaper space for the bashkan elections – 7210 sq.cm, including electoral education articles and electoral publicity for the counter-candidates of the actual bashkan - Nicolai Dudoglo and Alexandr Stoianoglo (overall 4000 sq.cm).

November 2-10, 2006



October 9 -November 10, 2006



4.2 The candidates addressed to, either directly or indirectly, in newscasts, the frequency and context of media appearance.

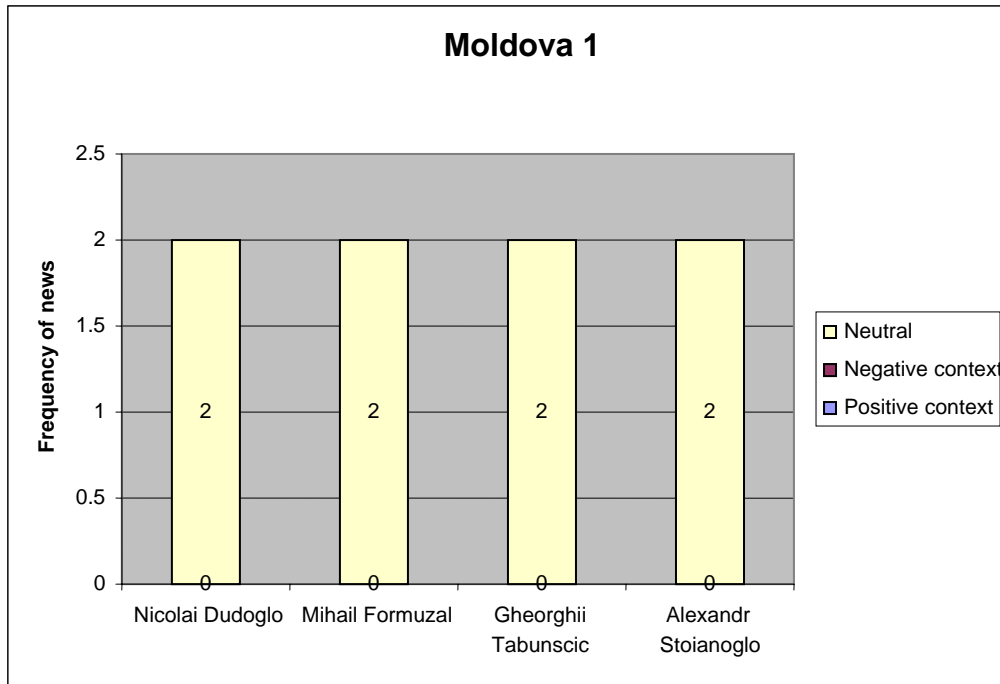
4.2.1 TV

Moldova 1 presented only the process of organizing the elections by the Electoral Circumscription Committee.

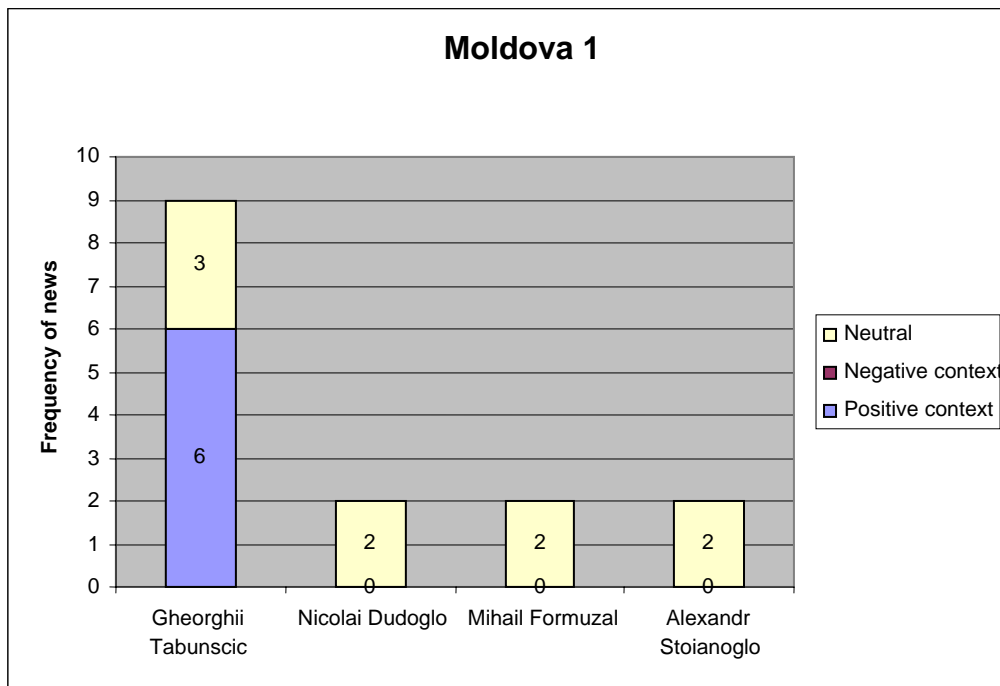
TV Gagauzia, as well as **Radio Gagauzia**, broadcast, on a frequent basis, the event associated to the organization of the Bashkan Chess and Checkers Cup (which is an “international festival”), favoring thus the actual governor. As well, both regional channels diffused the Project regarding the reconstruction of the Culture House from the village Copceac, co-financed by the Executive Body from Gagauz Autonomy, indirectly favoring Mr. Gh. Tabunșic.

The difference between the two local channels consists in the fact that Radio Gagauzia transmitted electoral publicity to the address of A.Stoianoglo and M. Formuzal.

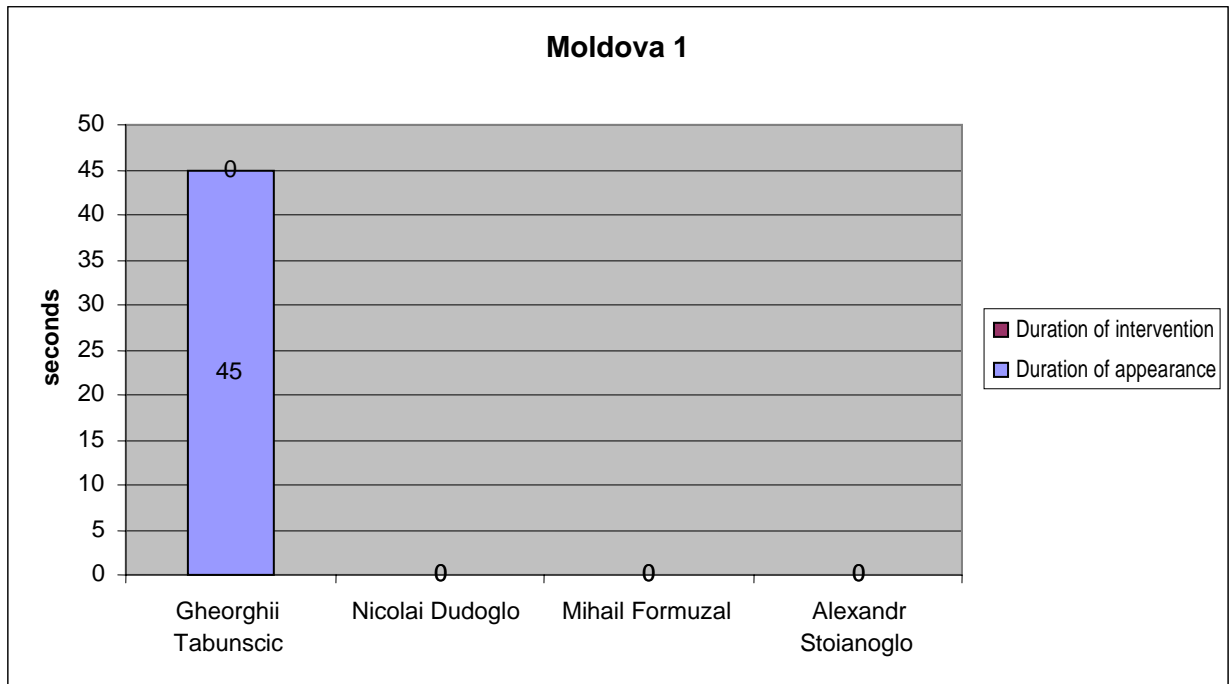
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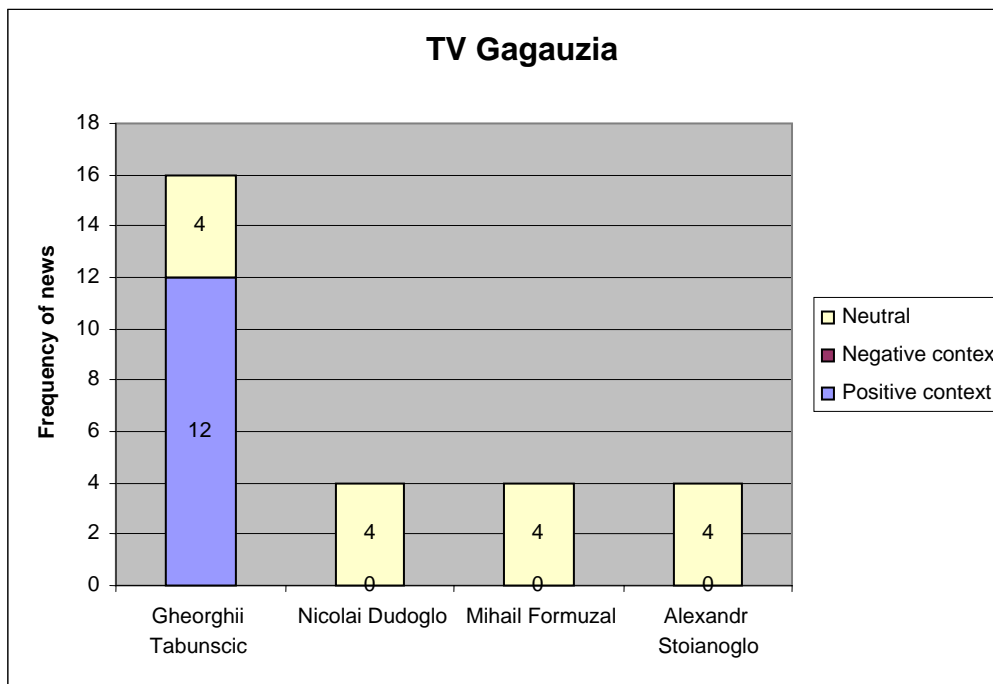
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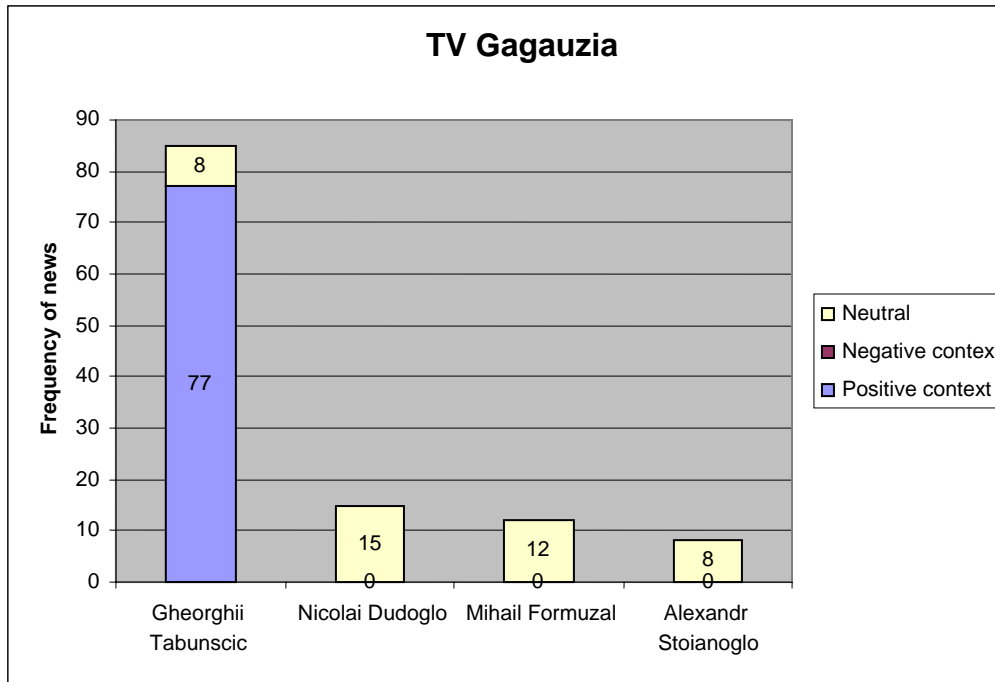
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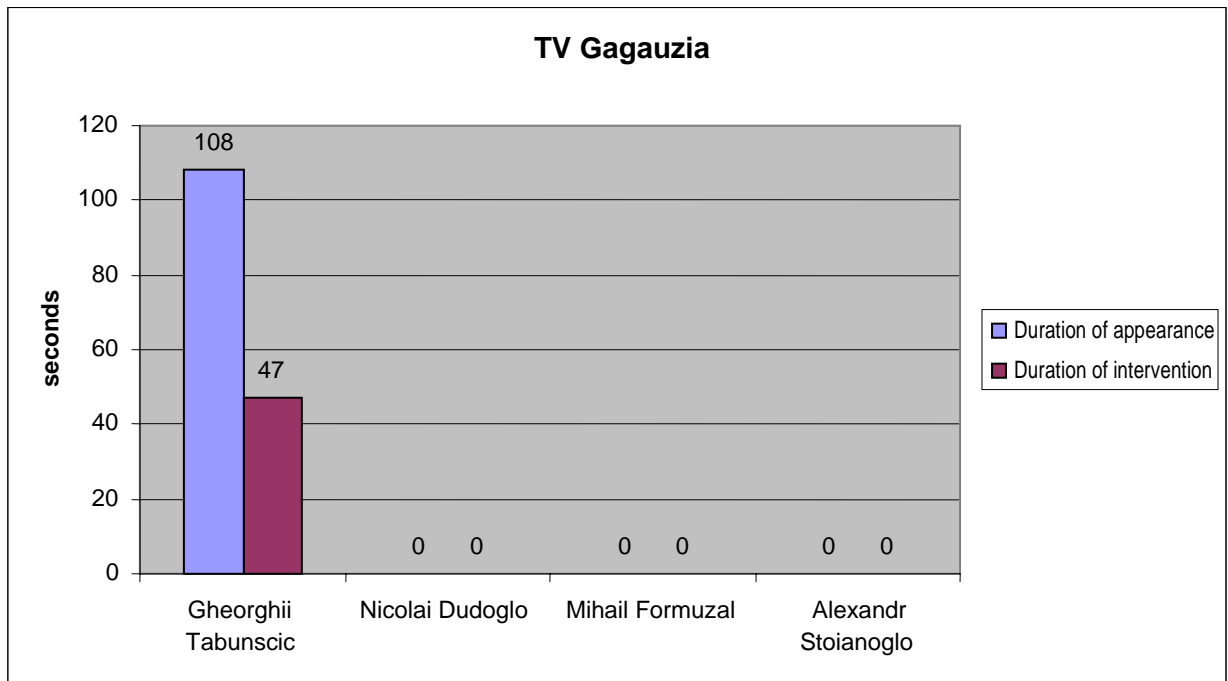
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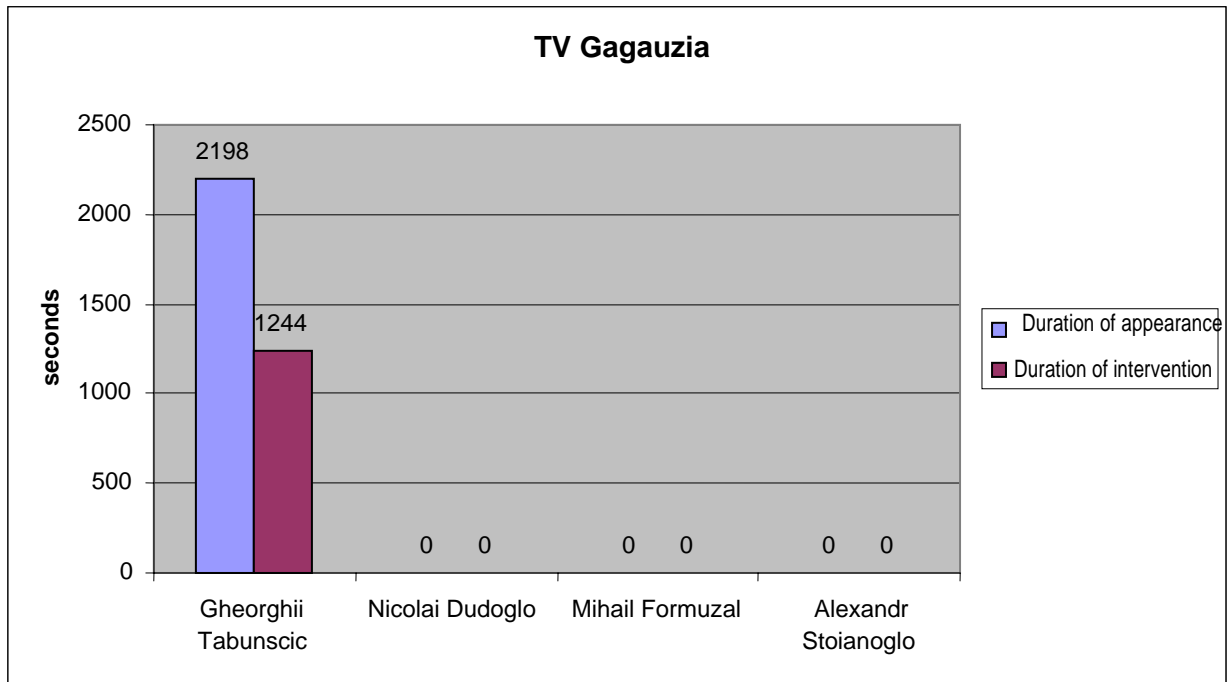
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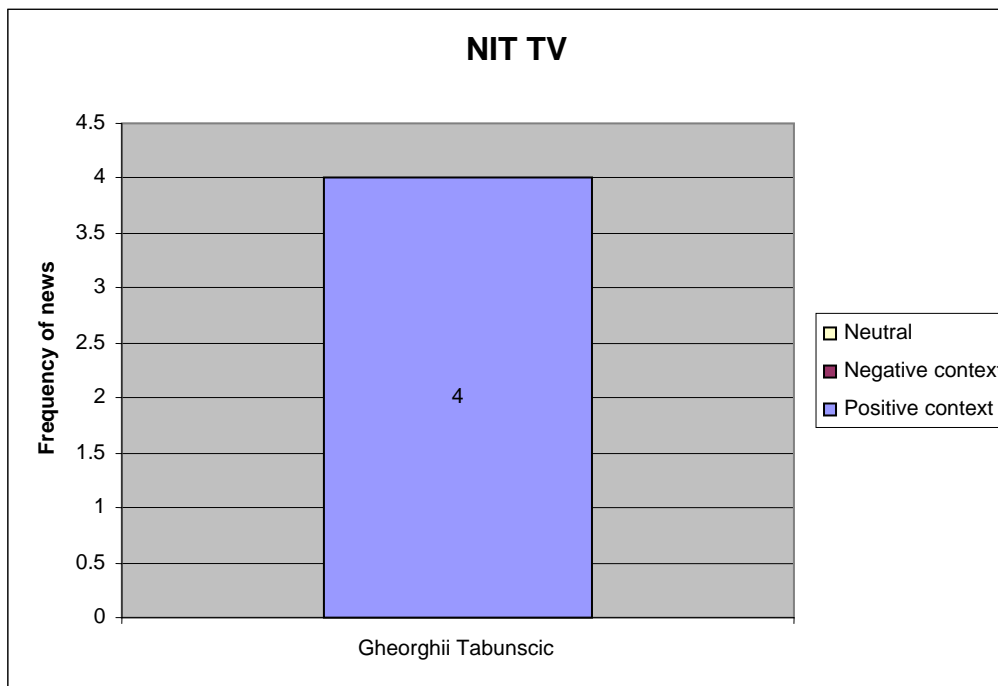
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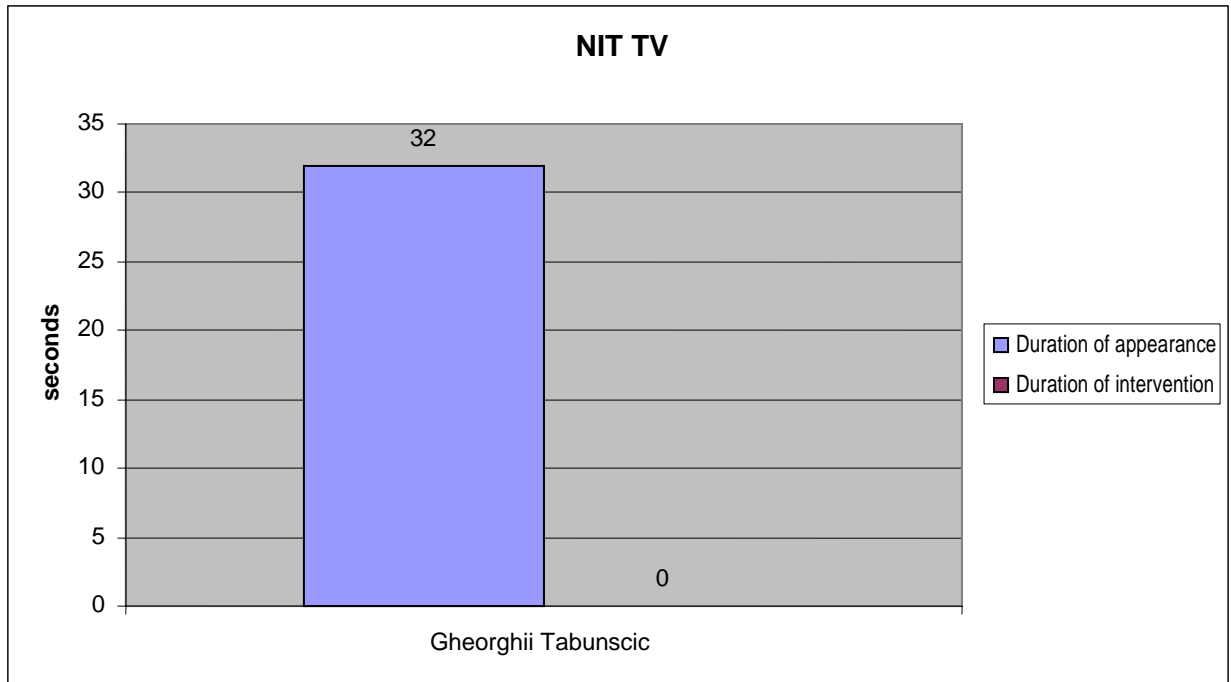
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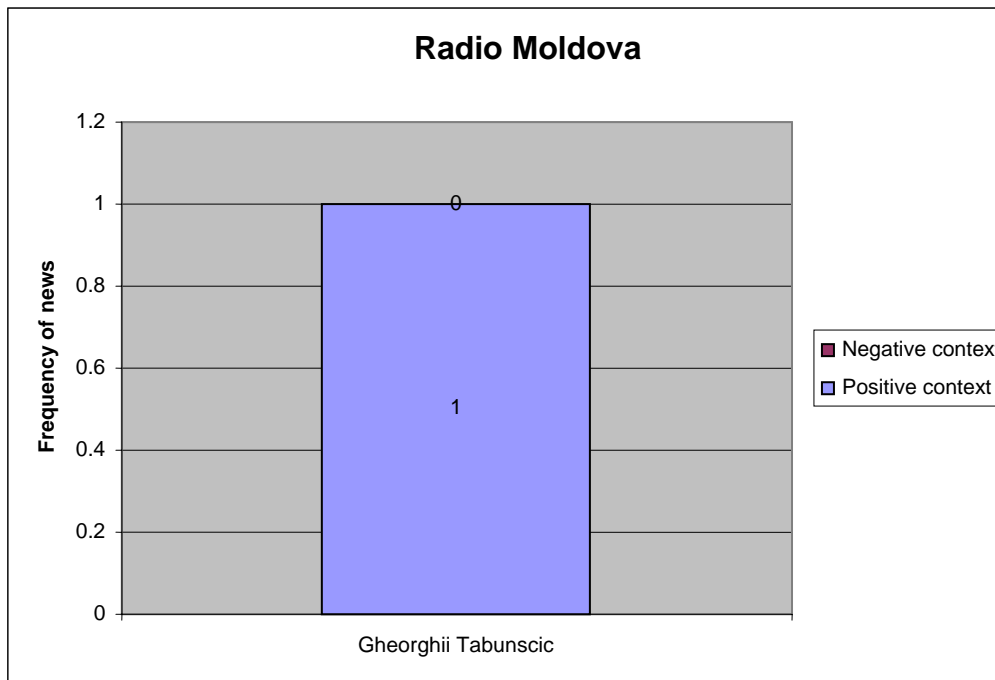


4.2.2 Radio

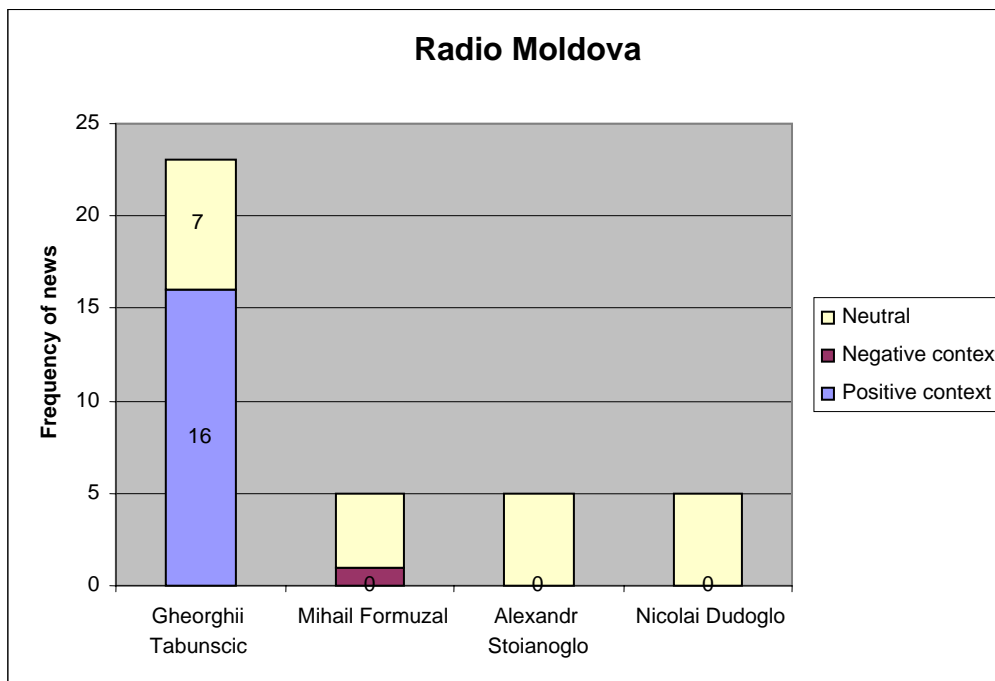
On **Radio Moldova**, one can see the preference for Gh. Tabunșic, presenting him at the commissioning of a block of flats built through the mortgage method in the town Ciadâr-Lunga. The material is very similar to those materials diffused a day before by Moldova 1 and NIT, fact that gives the impression of a coordination between the three audio-visual channels regarding the presentation of news from the Gagauz Autonomy.

Except for one single piece of news connected to the electoral process, Radio Gagauzia reflected, both directly and indirectly, the activity of the actual bashkan in the electoral news.

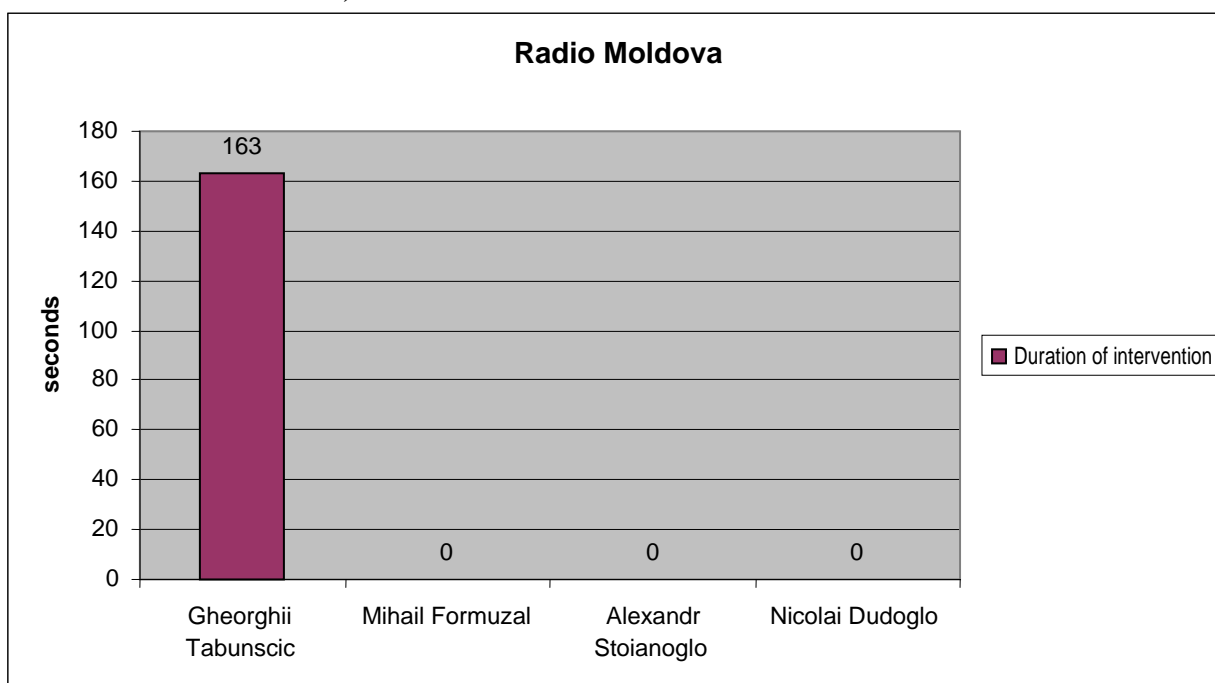
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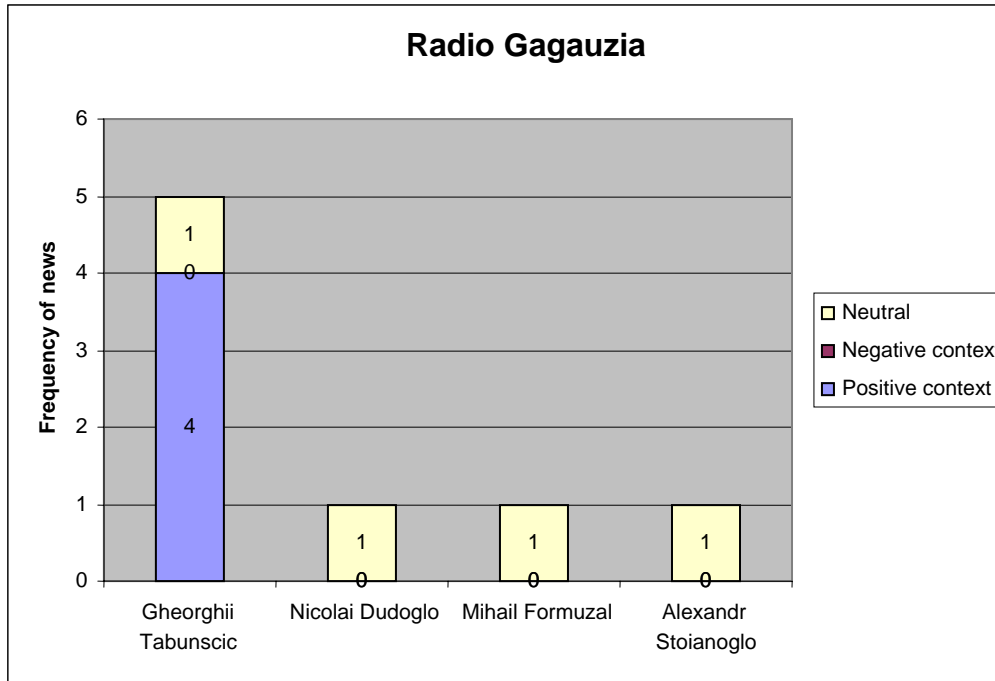


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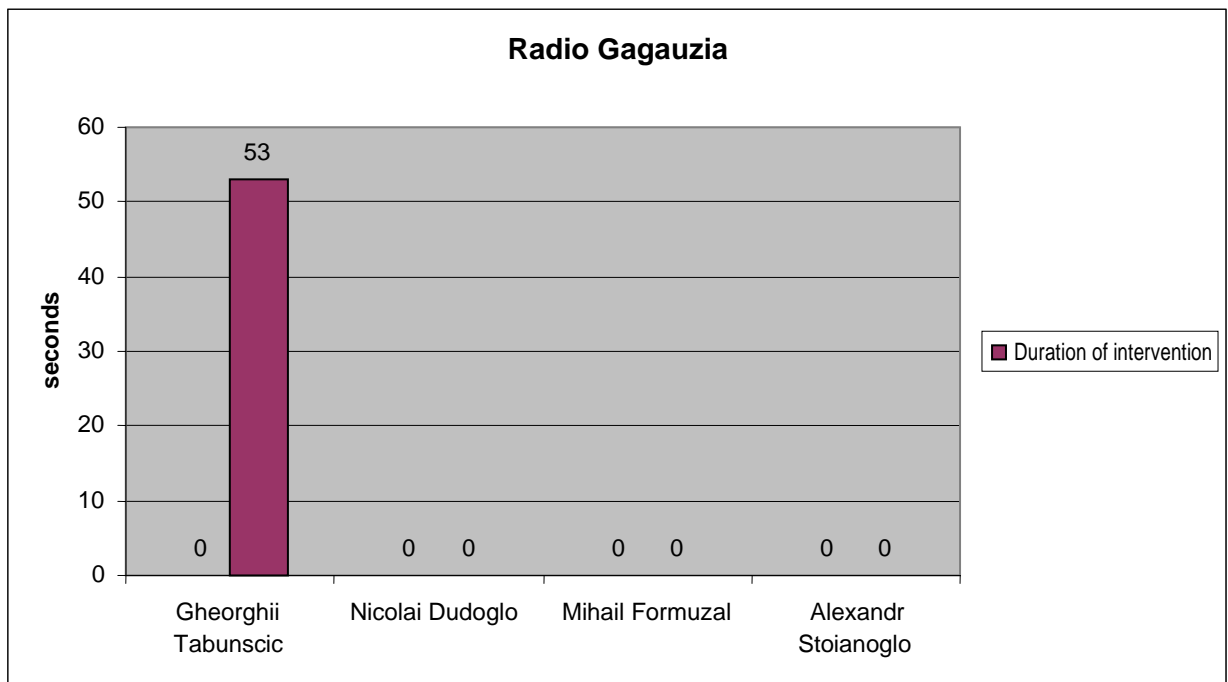


Radio Gagauzia carried on the publishing policy of favoring the actual bashkan, who was provided with 53 seconds of direct interventions.

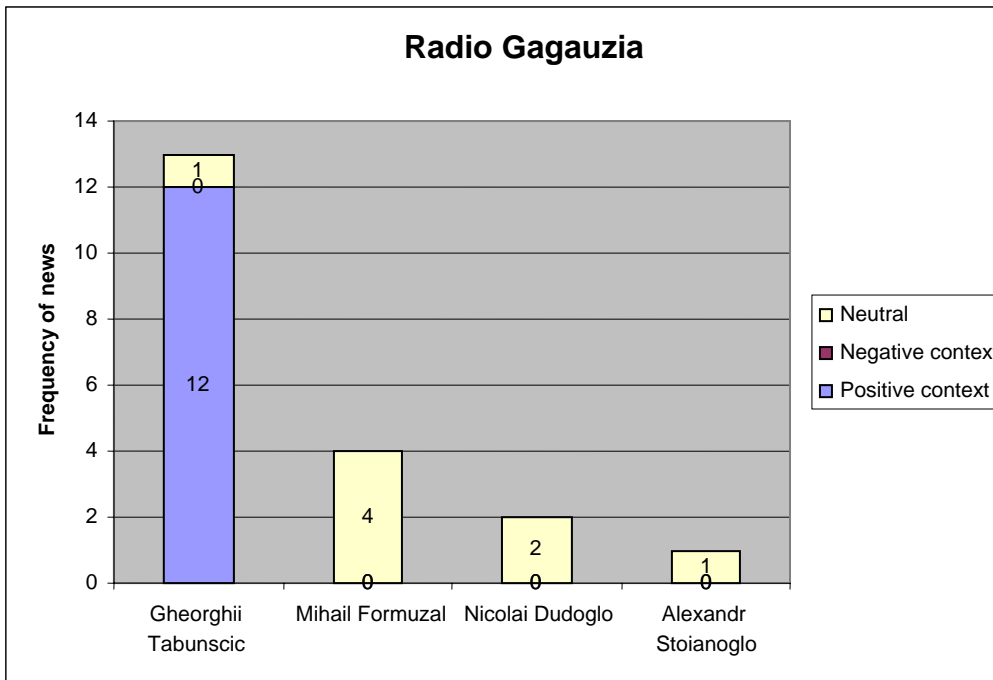
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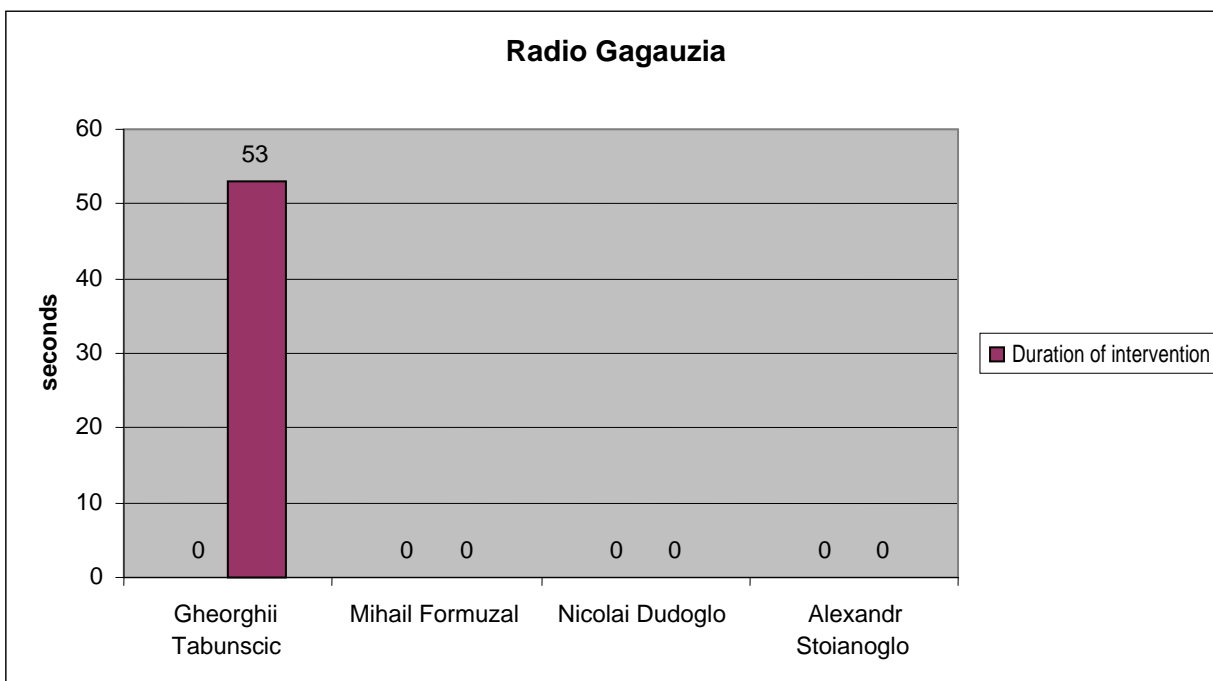
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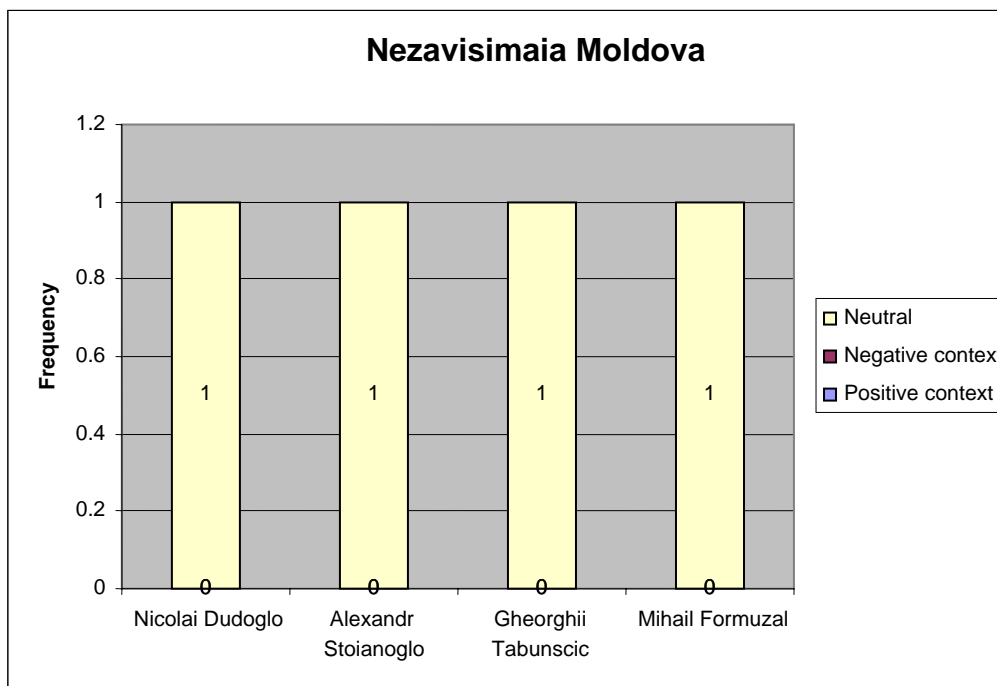


4.2.3 Written press

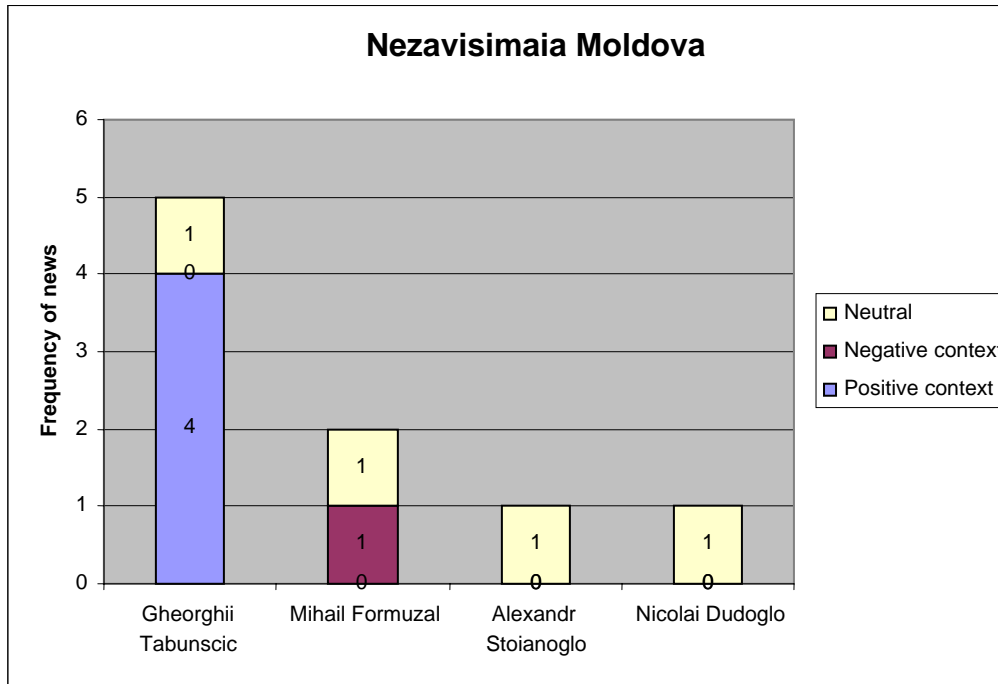
The actual bashkan of Gagauz Yeri, Gheorghii Tabunșic, is still the most monitored electoral competitor in local public newspapers „Vesti Gagauzii” (Comrat), „Panorama” (Vulcănești) and „Znamea” (Ciadîr-Lunga). On the other side, the independent newspaper „Nastoiasca Znamea” (Ciadîr-Lunga) indirectly favored the independent candidate Mihail Formuzal, the actual mayor of the town Ciadîr-Lunga. The newspapers „Nezavisimaia Moldova” and „Stolița Comrat” have not shown any preference for any of the competitors. „Stolița Comrat” published only the electoral publicity of the independent candidate Nicolai Dudoglo, making an invitation to all other candidates to publish their electoral platforms on the pages of the newspaper.

„Vesti Gagauzii” continued presenting the independent candidate Gheorghii Tabunșic in „bright colors”, while handing in the keys from the newly-built flats to the inhabitants of the town Ceadâr-Lunga or while congratulating the participants to the Bashkan Chess and Checkers Cup. At the same time, the newspaper did not publish any critical articles or comments to the address of the other electoral candidates, mentioning the activity of the Electoral Committee and all competing candidates in a single article.

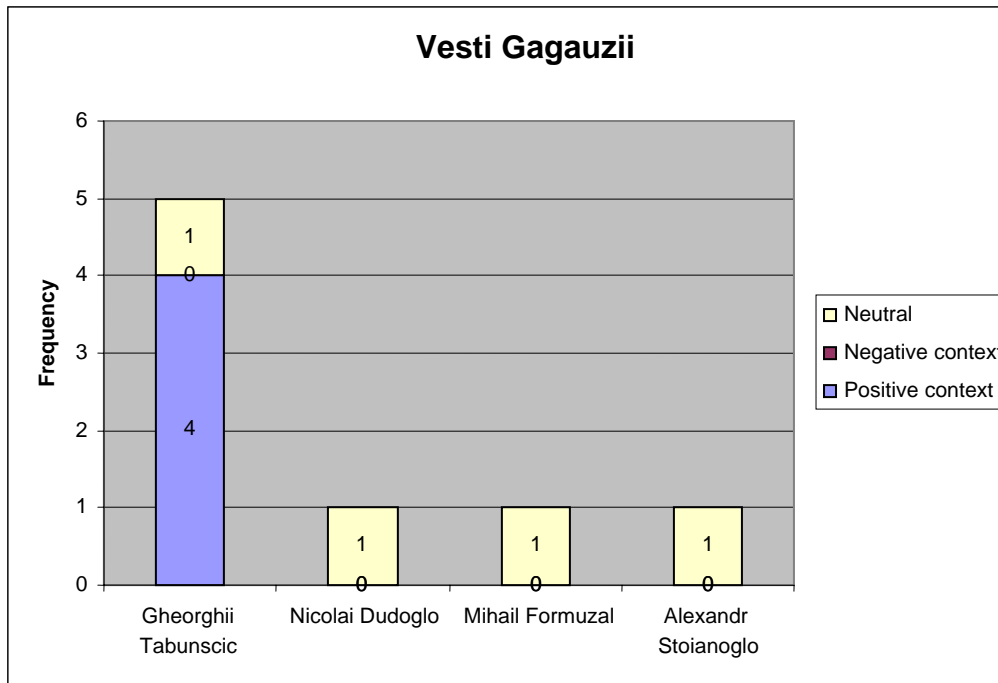
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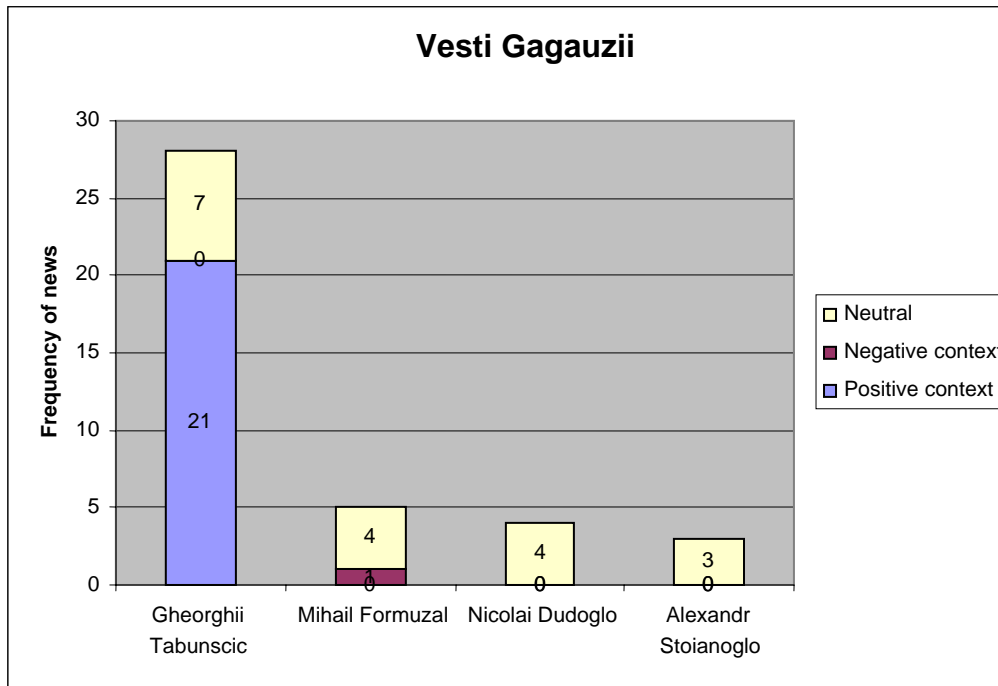
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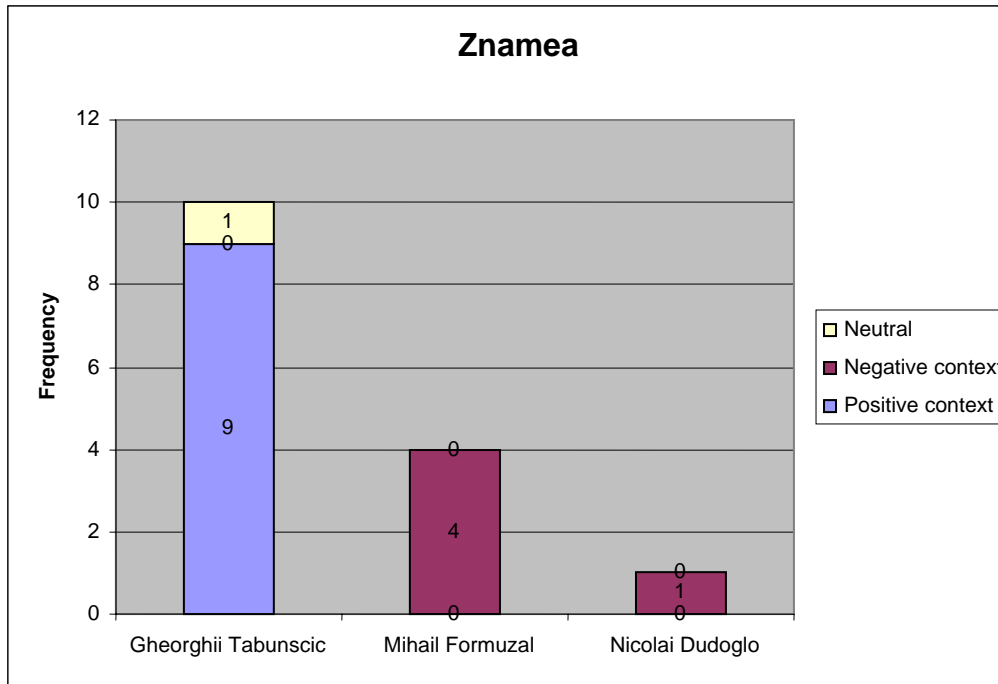


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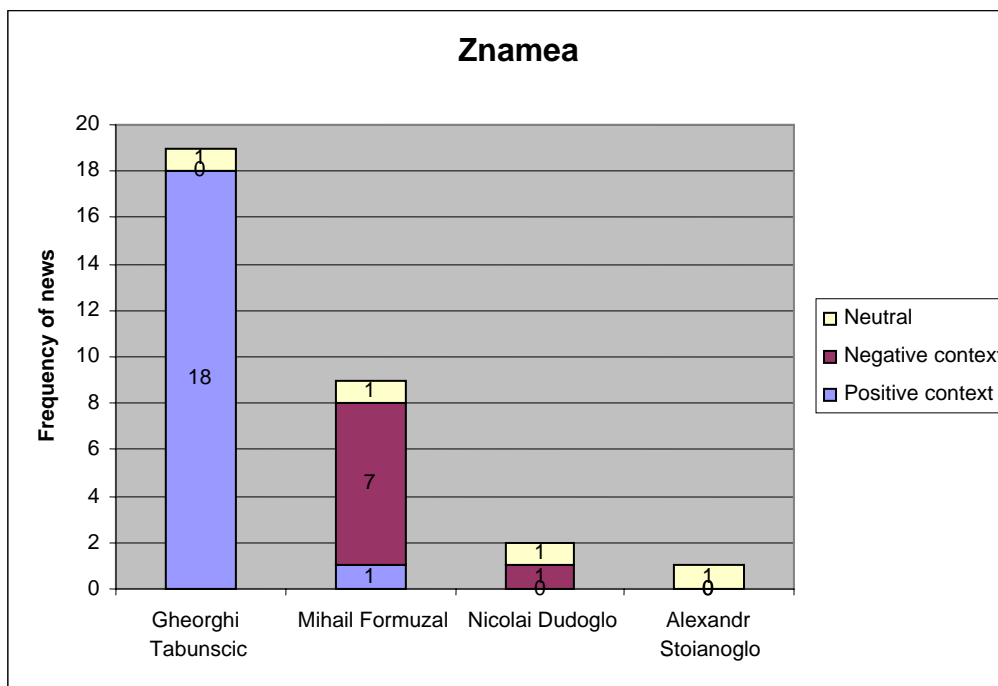


„Znamea”, being issued on 8-10 pages during the period of monitoring, presented the actual bashkan most frequently and in bright colors (9 pieces of news). For example, the edition from November 3 this year contains the declaration of a group of citizens who „decided to support Gheorghii Tabunșic at the elections from December 3”, while on November 10, another piece of news relates about the meeting organized by the Party of Communists on the occasion of the Socialist revolution from October 1917 and the intention of the Communist Party from Republic of Moldova to support Tabunșic for the post of bashkan. On the other side, the newspaper criticizes vehemently the actual mayor of Ciadâr-Lunga, recalling about the „penal files that the latter has on his conscience”. The newspaper provided space to electoral education articles, publishing the addresses of the voting sections from the district Ceadâr-Lunga.

November 2-10, 2006

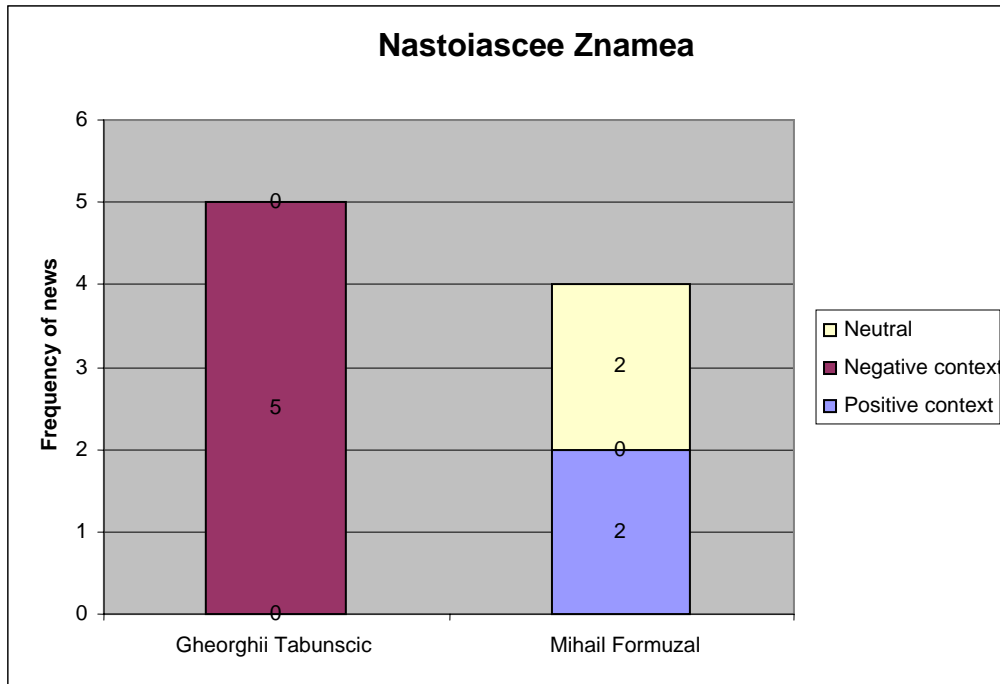


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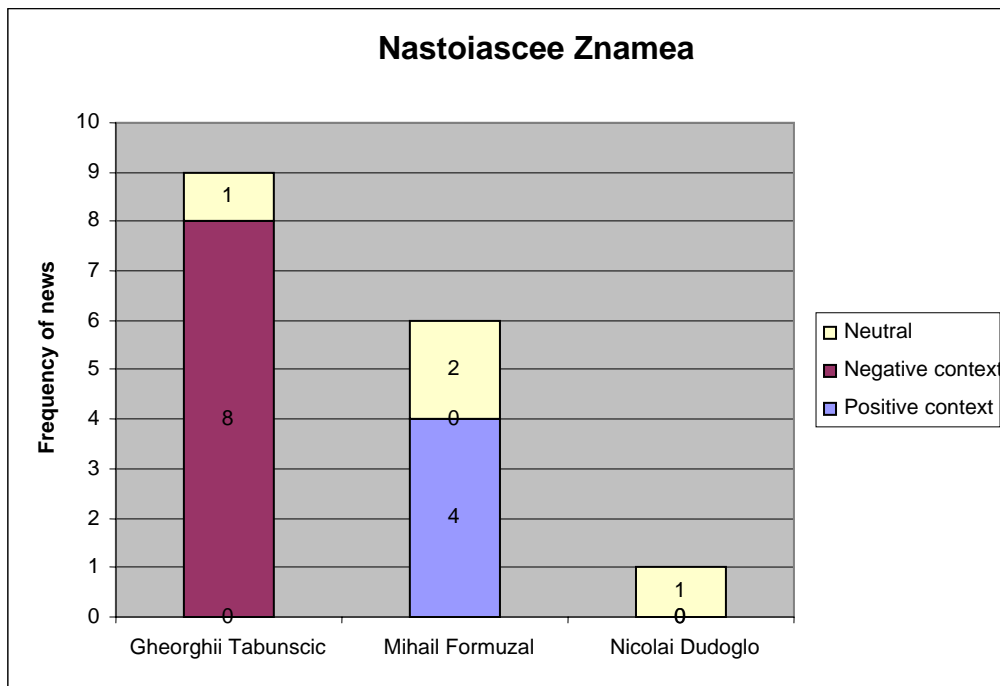


The newspaper „Nastoiascee Znamea” continued criticizing the Party of Communists on the whole and the actual bashkan in particular. Although there can be noticed a slight preference for the independent candidate Mihail Formuzal, the publication does not promote him directly.

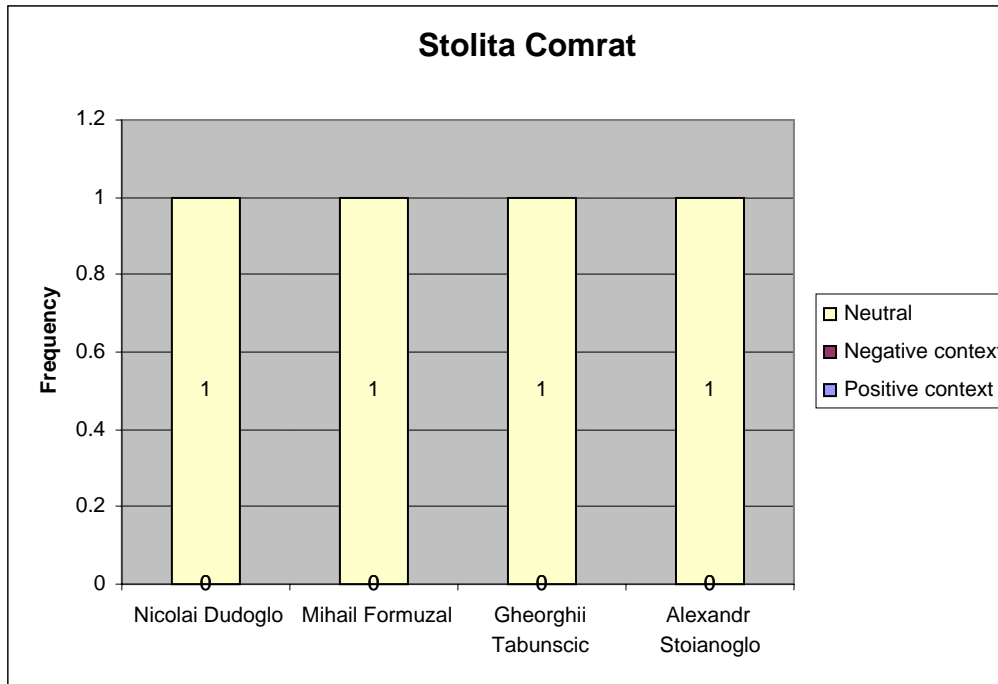
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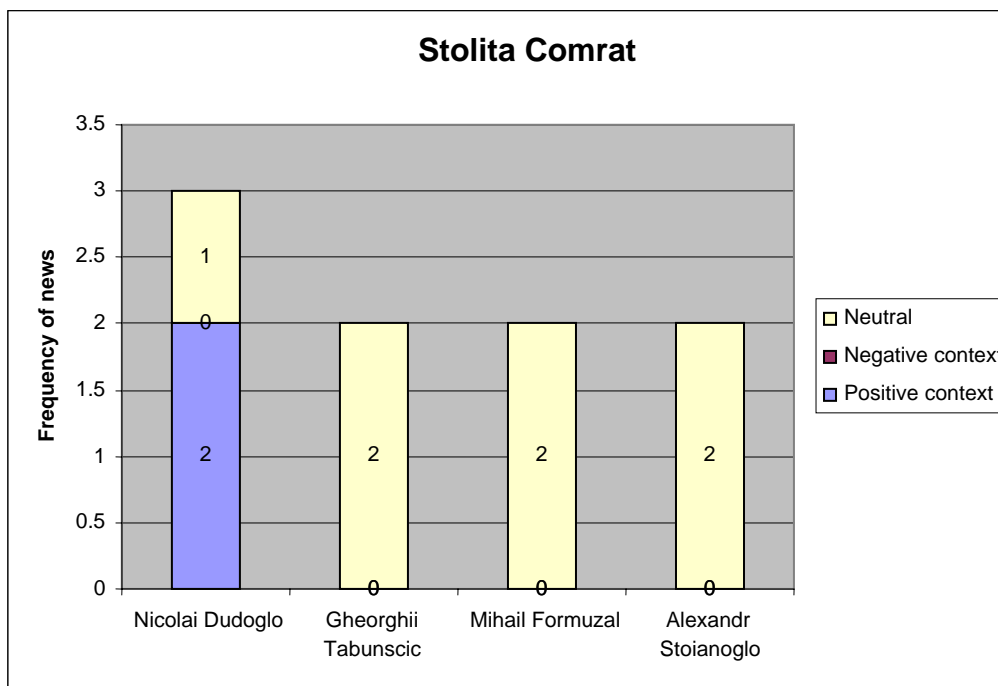
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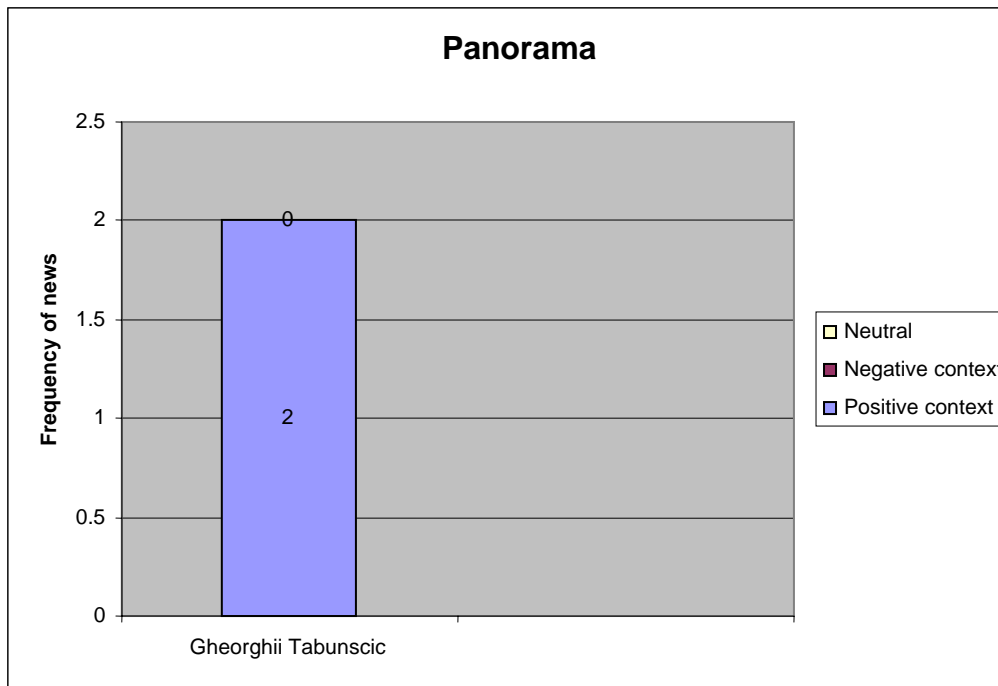


October 9 -November 10, 2006



„Panorama” from Vulcănești (edition from November 7 this year) published on the front page the Appeal of the regional council of veterans from Republic of Moldova to all inhabitants of TAU Gagauzia, urging them to vote for Gheorghe Tabunșic. The newspaper also presents some electoral education, publishing the list of voting sections from Vulcănești.

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