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Centrul Independent de Jurnalism



Media Coverage of the 2009 Parliamentary Elections Campaign

Media Monitoring Report Number 2

19 February – 4 March 2009

Coalition 2009 is a voluntary union of non-government organizations (NGOs), aiming at contributing to the development of free, fair, transparent and democratic elections for Parliament in the Republic of Moldova and to the consolidation of civil society, at ensuring the conscious participation of citizens in the election process and at respecting candidates' rights and the principles of equality of competitors. Coalition 2009 continues the efforts of civil society to contribute to the conduct of free and fair elections started by Coalition 2005 and Coalition 2007. Currently Coalition 2009 consists of 66 NGOs.



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The project "Monitoring mass media during the campaign for parliamentary elections 2009" is funded by the Eurasia Foundation through the Swedish Agency for Development and International Cooperation (Sida/Asdi) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the donors.

Abbreviations used in this report

PD - Democratic Party of Moldova
PCRM- Communist Party of Moldova
AMN - Alianța «Moldova Noastră» (“Our Moldova” Alliance Party)
PPCD - Christian Democratic Popular Party
PL – [Liberal](#) Party
PSD – Social Democratic Party of Moldova
PSS- Socialist Party of Moldova (Patria-Rodina)
RAVN - Ravnopravie (social-political movement)
AV- Alianța Verde (Green Alliance)
UCM - [Centrist Union of Moldova](#)
PMU - Moldova Unită (the party of spiritual development)
PC- Conservative Party
MAE - Acțiunea Europeană (European Action) social political movement
SB – Sergiu Banari (an independent candidate)
PLDM - Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova
PNT – Party for the country and the people
VR – Victor Răilean, independent candidate
UȘ – Urătu Ștefan, independent candidate
PRES – President
PARL - Parliament
GOV – prime minister, government representatives, ministers, representatives of ministries.
AIS – other state institutions
CEC – Central Electoral Commission
CIS – community of independent states

1. General Data

Goal of the project: to monitor and to inform public opinion on mass media performance during the electoral campaign for 2009 parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova

Monitoring time frame: 5 February–5 April 2009

Selection criteria for media outlets to be monitored:

- ownership (public/private)
- audience/impact
- language

Media outlets monitored:

TV: Moldova 1, PRO TV, NIT, Euro TV Chişinău, TV 7

Radio: Radio Moldova, Antena C, Vocea Basarabiei

Print press: *Moldova Suverană, Nezaavisimaia Moldova, Săptămîna, Flux, Moldavskie Vedomosti, Jurnal de Chişinău, Timpul de Dimineaţă, Komsomolskaia Pravda v Moldove, SP (Bălţi), Vesti Gagauzii (Comrat), Realitatea (Soroca), Cuvîntul (Rezina)*

Press agencies and online publications: Moldpres, Infotag, www.omg.md, www.unimedia.md

Monitoring schedule:

TV: Monday-Friday between 6:00 and 9:00 and 18:00 and 23:00

Saturday and Sunday: from 8:00 to 22:00

Radio: from 6.00 to 13.00 and from 17.00 to 20.00, daily

Print press/Press agencies and online publications: daily

The team

The project is being implemented by the Independent Journalism Centre and the Independent Press Association in partnership with IMAS-INC Institute for Marketing and Survey, Chişinău.

2. Methodology

The monitoring methodology has been developed by Oxford Media Research for the monitoring projects of the international organization Global Campaign for Free Expression ARTICLE 19. The characteristics of the methodology are the following. 1) A broad spectrum of quantity indicators is used including type, duration, topic of coverage, news sources and frequency and duration of appearance of certain persons in newscasts. 2) The quality component is more developed than in other methodologies and can detect biased reporting during the coverage of events. Each news article or opinion is subject to a content and context assessment to determine if it favors or disfavors a party or a political entity. The negative or positive content and/or context of the news does not necessarily indicate the bias or partisanship of the station or

publication. It is possible that a news article that is favorable or unfavorable to a subject can nonetheless be balanced and professionally correct. If, however, there is a tendency to favor or disfavor one subject for a certain period of time can we say that we are dealing with an imbalance.

3. General Conclusions

3.1 Broadcast media

From 19 February to 4 March 2009, the number of electoral news items broadcast on the eight TV and radio media outlets monitored increased significantly from 2943 during the first monitoring period to 3902. Among the TV outlets, most of the news programs, talk shows (opinion programs) and electoral advertisements were broadcast on Moldova 1, and among the radio outlets most were on Antena C and Vocea Basarabiei.

The public media outlets with national coverage—Moldova 1 and Radio Moldova—continued to cover mainly one electoral candidate, the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM), broadcasting a large number of news items reporting on the initiatives and election activities of the governing party. Opposition parties and independent experts did not have a chance to express their opinions. During the monitoring period, almost all news programs started with news items favoring the ruling party. As in the first monitoring period, the news items regarding other candidates were given less importance and at times tended to discredit the opposition parties.

The public media outlets continued to favor PCRM by giving it priority when broadcasting political advertisements as PCRM spots were broadcast either at the beginning or at the end of political advertisements or both.

Private outlets NIT and Antena C behaved in a similar fashion presenting the ruling party in a positive light during many news programs while opposition parties were ignored or presented in a negative light.

Although rules approved by the Central Election Commission (CEC) forbid media outlets from broadcasting items showing candidates taking part in sports events, entertainment events and talk shows unless they are expressly about the election, Moldova 1 and NIT broadcast news items showing President Voronin participating in the opening of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) kick boxing championship (February 21), at a concert dedicated to Soviet Army Day in the National Palace Hall, (February 23) and at the Presidential Chess Cup (February 24).

EU TV tended to discredit opposition parties, especially on opinion programs, while the approach towards the ruling party was more balanced. The Christian Democratic Peoples' Party (PPCD) was slightly favored during news and opinion programs.

On the other hand, similarly to the previous monitoring period, PRO TV, TV7 and Vocea Basarabiei offered more access to opposition parties and maintained a pluralist, balanced reporting of events including reports on the ruling party that were both favorable and unfavorable, although the unfavorable ones prevailed. Vocea Basarabiei continued to criticize the ruling party on opinion programs. It is worth mentioning that the representatives of PCRM refuse to collaborate with this media outlet and with PRO TV.

As in the previous monitoring period no electoral debates were broadcast on the outlets monitored. This was detrimental especially to the opposition parties that unlike PCRM did not benefit from extensive access to public media outlets in the pre-electoral period.

3.2 Print press/press agencies/online publications

The print press also started to report more intensely on the electoral campaign as both the number and surface area of items increased. The volume of appropriately identified electoral advertisements increased as well.

The tendency to present the electoral campaign from different editorial perspectives, based on the likes and the dislikes of the editors, was maintained. Thus *Moldova Suverană*, *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, Moldpres and www.omg.md openly favored PCRM presenting it in only a positive context in news and opinion items. At the same time, *Moldova Suverana* and *Nezavisimaia Moldova* harshly criticized other electoral candidates presenting them unfavorably and in some cases using licentious language and personal insults.

In contrast, *Jurnal de Chisinau*, *Timpul de dimineata*, *Moldavskie Vedomost* and www.unimedia.md presented PCRM in only a negative context criticizing it sharply and accusing the party of bad governance over the past eight years and presented the other candidates, especially the liberal ones, in only positive contexts. *SP*, the regional weekly in Bălți and the weekly newspaper *Cuvîntul* in Rezina criticized PCRM without favoring any other electoral candidate while Infotag press agency tried to maintain balanced presentations on all electoral candidates.

There was a modest increase in the number of articles educating the public on voting procedures. Moreover, the print press published more articles in the category “special electoral programs” i.e. debates or interviews with candidates.

3.3. Working conditions

During this monitoring period, a case of harassment and intimidation at Albasat TV in Nisporeni was filed. On February 25, police officers entered the Albasat TV station without a warrant and brutally demanded bookkeeping documents and dismantled computer hard drives. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MAI) clarified that these measures were in response to a complaint from a citizen regarding the inaccurate bookkeeping of the media outlet. Subsequently, the police made a new accusation: the use of computer software without a license which was denied by the administration of the outlet. On Monday, March 9, MAI representatives filed another new accusation against Albasat TV requesting documentation for news items broadcast in 2006 and informing the station that a criminal case against it had been filed. Local and foreign media expressed their concerns about this case, legitimately assessing it as a case of harassment against journalists and hindering the right of freedom of expression.

4. Broadcast monitoring data

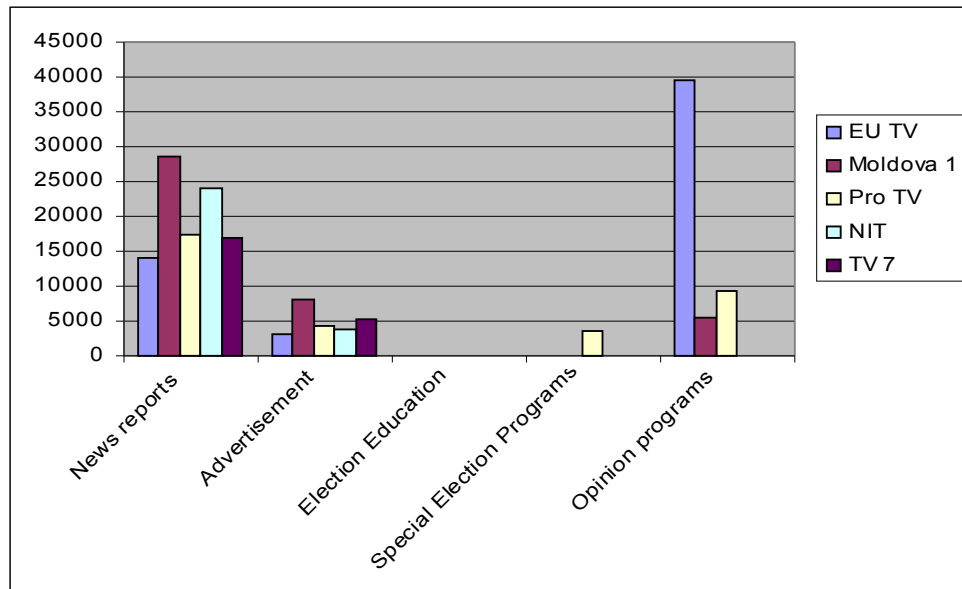
4.1 Involvement in the electoral campaign

4.1.1 TV

As in the previous monitoring period, the largest news volume with an electoral impact was broadcast by Moldova 1 and NIT. Also Moldova 1 broadcast the largest volume of electoral advertisements. It is worth mentioning is that in general, the length of electoral education and

special electoral programs (interviews and debates with candidates) and *vox pop* was insignificant, and the volume of electoral advertisements increased at all media outlets. EU TV broadcast the smallest volume of electoral advertisements and the largest volume of opinion programs (Diagram 1).

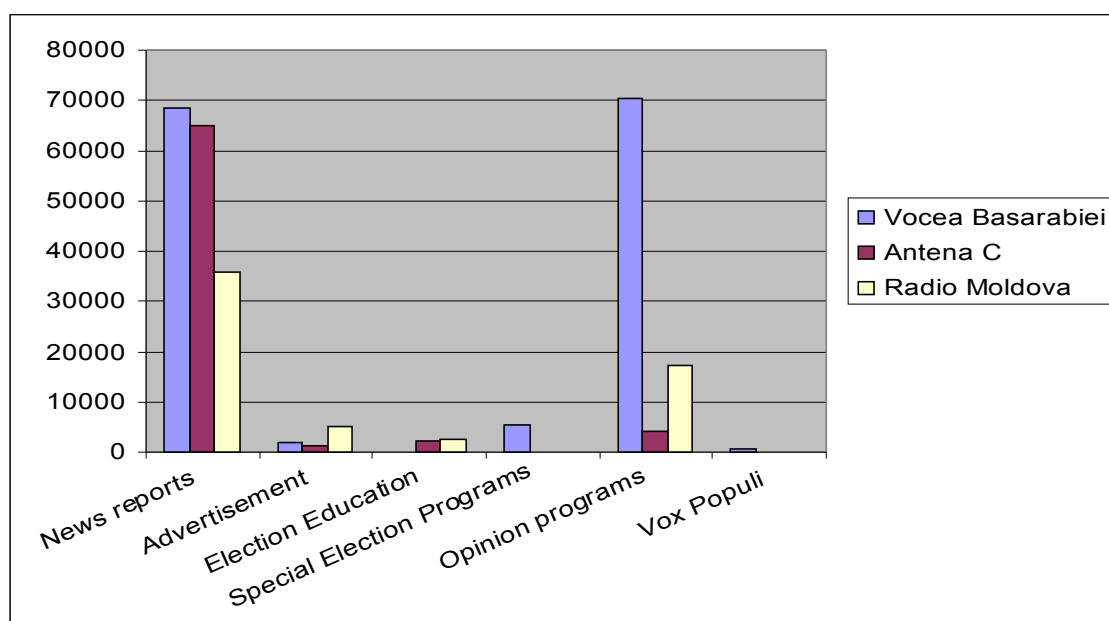
Diagram 1: The length of electoral items broadcast on TV from 19 February to 4 March 2009 in seconds



4.1.2 Radio

Vocea Basarabiei had the largest news volume with an electoral content (approximately 68,000 seconds) followed by Antena C (approx. 65,000 seconds). Vocea Basarabiei ranked first in opinion programs (approximately 70,000 seconds) and in special electoral programs. Radio Moldova ranked first in electoral advertisement and in electoral education programs (see Diagram 2).

Diagram 2: The volume of the electoral items broadcast on radio from 19 February to 4 March 2009 in seconds



4.2 Frequency of quoting candidates as sources, the length of TV appearances and the length of time party representatives spoke during election news broadcasts

During the monitoring period, Moldova 1 increased its lack of balance in quoting candidates as sources during election news broadcasts. Representatives of the government, the President of the Republic of Moldova, the President of Parliament and other representatives of PCRM were quoted 161 times and appeared on the screen for 2450 seconds. All the other parties and independent candidates were quoted 77 times and their representatives appeared on the screen 1968 seconds (Table 1).

Table 1: Frequency of quoting sources and length of appearances of candidates on Moldova 1

Party/ affiliation	Length of TV appearances in seconds	Length of speaking time in seconds	Number of quotations
GOV	1479	1204	95
PRES	516	200	48
AMN	487	408	18
PCRM	255	251	14
MAE	268	147	11
PD	172	172	7
PSD	210	164	6
PLDM	86	62	6
PMU	263	241	8
AIS	200	56	4
AV	135	111	4
SB	116	94	4
US	99	71	4
PPCD	0	188	4
PL	105	52	3
PNT	0	0	1
VR	0	0	1
UCM	27	27	2

Note: GOV=Government, PRES=President, AMN=Alianța Moldova Noastră, PCRM=Communist Party of Moldova, MAE=European Action Movement, PD=Democratic Party, PSD=Social Democratic Party, PLDM=Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, PMU=Moldova Unita, AIS=other state institutions, AV=Alianța Verde, SB=Sergiu Banari (an independent candidate), US=Urâtul Ștefan, independent candidate, PPCD=Christian Democratic Peoples' Party, PL=Liberal Party, PNT=Party for the country and the people, VR= Victor Răilean, independent candidate, UCM=Centrist Union of Moldova,

On NIT, the lack of balance in quoting candidates as sources during election news was also maintained. The government, the President, the President of Parliament and other PCRM representatives were quoted 134 times and all other parties were quoted 36 times. The length of appearances on the screen was 2640 seconds and 456 seconds, respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: Frequency of quoting sources and length of appearances of candidates on NIT

Party/ affiliation	Length of TV appearances in seconds	Length of speaking time in seconds	Number of quotations
PRES	1504	337	60

GOV	802	556	53
PCRM	254	123	19
AMN	199	192	16
PSD	75	51	7
PL	46	72	5
PARL	80	72	2
PLDM	56	18	2
UCM	53	26	4
PD	36	36	2

Note: PRES=President, GOV=Government, PCRM=Communist Party of Moldova, AMN=Alianța Moldova Noastră, PSD=Social Democratic Party, PL=Liberal Party, PARL=Parliament, PLDM=Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, UCM=Centrist Union of Moldova, PD=Democratic Party

PRO TV continued to provide equal treatment for all electoral candidates, including the governing party. The government, the President, the President of Parliament and other representatives of PCRM were quoted 60 times, Our Moldova Alliance (AMN) was quoted 35 times, the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM) was quoted 25 times, the Social Democratic Party (PSD) 16 times, Centrist Union of Moldova (UCM) 14 times, the Democratic Party (PD) 14 times, and the Liberal Party (PL) 11 times. In terms of the length of appearances on the screen PLDM ranked first at 202 seconds followed by UCM at 201, AMN at 193, PSD at 185, PL at 114, PD at 53, and government representatives at 189 seconds (Table 3).

Table 3 Frequency of quoting sources and length of appearances of candidates on PRO TV

Party/ affiliation	Length of TV appearances in seconds	Length of speaking time in seconds	Number of quotations
AMN	193	238	35
GOV	75	72	25
PCRM	92	127	21
PLDM	202	187	25
PSD	185	153	16
UCM	201	196	14
PD	53	64	14
PL	114	155	11
PMU	60	18	8
PRES	15	0	7
SB	92	135	6
MAE	111	96	5
AV	86	69	4
PC	60	60	4
UM	81	51	3
RAVN	49	56	3
PNT	45	30	3
US	27	51	3
PPCD	30	30	2
PARL	7	0	2
PR	0	0	2
AIS	0	0	1

Note: AMN=Alianța Moldova Noastră, GOV=Government, PCRM=Communist Party of Moldova, PLDM=Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, PSD=Social Democratic Party, UCM=Centrist Union of Moldova, PD=Democratic Party, PL=Liberal Party, PMU=Moldova Unita, PRES=President, SB=Sergiu Banari (an independent candidate), MAE=European Action Movement, AV=Alianța Verde, PC=Conservative Party, UM=Labor Union "Patria Rodina", RAVN=Ravnopravie (social-political

movement), PNT=Party for the country and the people, US=Urātu Ștefan, PPCD=Christian Democratic Peoples' Party, PARL=Parliament, PR=Republican Party, AIS=other state institutions, independent candidate,

In electoral news on EU TV, the Government, the President of the Republic of Moldova, the President of Parliament and other representatives of PCRM were quoted 28 times, AMN was quoted 16 times, PPCD 12 times and PSD 8 times. Representatives of the government, the President, the President of Parliament and other representatives of PCRM appeared on the screen for 393 seconds, PPCD was on for 201 seconds, AMN for 168, PSD for 118 and UCM for 108 seconds (Table 4).

Table 4: Frequency of quoting sources and length of appearances of candidates on EU TV

Party/ affiliation	Length of TV appearances in seconds	Length of speaking time in seconds	Number of quotations
GOV	45	45	18
AMN	168	134	16
PPCD	201	252	12
PSD	118	118	8
PCRM	115	95	6
UCM	108	129	4
PRES	44	24	4
RAVN	20	20	4
PLDM	13	8	3
PMU	10	0	1
MAE	10	0	1
PC	0	0	1

Note: GOV=Government, AMN=Alianța Moldova Noastră, PPCD=Christian Democratic Peoples' Party, PSD=Social Democratic Party, PCRM=Communist Party of Moldova, UCM=Centrist Union of Moldova, PRES=President, RAVN=Ravnopravie (social-political movement), PLDM=Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, PMU=Moldova Unită, MAE=European Action Movement, PC=Conservative Party

On TV 7, the government, the President of the Republic of Moldova, the President of Parliament and other representatives of PCRM were quoted in electoral news 17 times, PD was quoted 33 times, European Action Movement (MAE) was quoted 33 times, AMN 23 times, PLDM 23 times, PSD 20 times, PL 12 times, and PMU 12 times. In terms of the length of appearances, PD ranked first at 1009 seconds followed by AMN at 635, PSD at 600, MAE at 464, PL at 352 and PMU at 318. Government representatives, President Voronin, the President of Parliament and other representatives of PCRM appeared for 382 seconds (Table 5).

Table 5: Frequency of quoting sources and length of appearances of candidates on TV7

Party/ affiliation	Length of TV appearances in seconds	Length of speaking time in seconds	Number of quotations
PD	1009	688	33
MAE	464	384	33
AMN	635	523	23
PLDM	539	459	23
PSD	600	512	20

PL	352	260	12
PMU	318	216	12
GOV	64	64	9
PCRM	203	203	8
UCM	361	233	7
SB	286	222	6
RAVN	143	138	3
US	10	0	1

Note: PD=Democratic Party, MAE=European Action Movement, PLDM=Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, PSD=Social Democratic Party, PL=Liberal Party, PMU=Moldova Unita, GOV=Government, PCRM=Communist Party of Moldova, UCM=Centrist Union of Moldova, SB=Sergiu Banari (an independent candidate), RAVN=Ravnopravie (social-political movement), US=Urâtu Ștefan, independent candidate

In the electoral news broadcast on Radio Moldova, representatives of the government and other state institutions, President Voronin, the President of Parliament and other PCRM representatives continued to dominate quotes with 314 and a length of speaking time 4432 seconds. All the other candidates were quoted 41 times as election news sources (7.7 times less frequently) with a speaking time of 951 seconds (4.7 times less) (Table 6).

Table 6: Frequency of quoting sources and the length of speaking time for candidates at Radio Moldova

Party/ affiliation	Length of speaking time in seconds	Number of quotations
GOV	3171	125
PRES	135	60
PCRM	216	16
AMN	130	11
AIS	910	12
MAE	175	5
PMU	100	4
SB	126	3
PD	119	3
UCM	80	3
RAVN	94	2
UM	61	2
PPCD	30	2
PL	22	2
PSD	12	2
PLDM	0	2
PARL	0	1

Note: GOV=Government, PRES=President, PCRM=Communist Party of Moldova, AMN=Alianța Moldova Noastră, AIS=other state institutions, MAE=European Action Movement, PMU=Moldova Unita, SB=Sergiu Banari (an independent candidate), PD=Democratic Party, UCM=Centrist Union of Moldova, RAVN=Ravnopravie (social-political movement), UM= Labor Union “Patria Rodina”, PPCD=Christian Democratic Peoples’ Party, PL=Liberal Party, PSD=Social Democratic Party, PLDM=Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, PARL=Parliament

The electoral news broadcast on Antena C quoted the government, the President, the President of Parliament and other PCRM representatives as news sources 369 times, and they spoke for 3143 seconds. All the other candidates were quoted as sources 108 times (3.4 times less frequently) and spoke for 1183 seconds (2.7 times less) (Table 7).

Table 7: Frequency of quoting sources and the length of speaking time for candidates at Antena C

Party/ affiliation	Length of speaking time in seconds	Number of quotations
GOV	2737	209
PRES	195	109
AMN	114	51
PCRM	211	42
UCM	254	16
PSD	369	15
PL	183	8
MAE	129	7
PD	70	6
PPR	39	6
AIS	0	6
PARL	0	3
SB	0	3
RAVN	25	2
US	0	2
AV	0	2

Note: GOV=Government, PRES=President, AMN=Alianța Moldova Noastră, PCRM=Communist Party of Moldova, UCM=Centrist Union of Moldova, PSD=Social Democratic Party, PL=Liberal Party, MAE=European Action Movement, PD=Democratic Party, PPR=Popular Republican Party, AIS=other state institutions, independent candidate, PARL=Parliament, SB=Sergiu Banari (an independent candidate), RAVN=Ravnopravie (social-political movement), US=Urâtu Ștefan, independent candidate, AV=Alianța Verde

At Vocea Basarabiei, the government, the President, the President of Parliament and other PCRM representatives were quoted 127 times as election news sources, PLDM was quoted 67 times, AMN 48 times, PL 35 times, MAE 20 times, PSD 19 times, PD 15 times, PPCD 12 times and UCM 11 times. In terms of the length of speaking time, AMN ranked first at 1871 seconds followed by PLDM at 1459 and PL at 1347. The government, the President of the Republic of Moldova, the President of Parliament and other PCRM representatives had a total speaking time of 309 seconds (Table 8). It should be mentioned that government representatives refuse to participate on Vocea Basarabiei radio programs.

Table 8: Frequency of quoting sources and the length of speaking time for candidates at Vocea Basarabiei

Party/ affiliation	Length of speaking time in seconds	Number of quotations
PCRM	236	71
PLDM	1459	67
AMN	1871	48
GOV	309	42

PL	1347	35
MAE	286	20
PSD	387	19
PD	356	15
PPCD	109	12
UCM	144	11
PRES	0	10
SB	379	8
US	376	8
AV	192	6
RAVN	0	4
UM	0	4
AIS	0	3
PMU	51	2
PPR	0	2
PNT	0	2
VR	0	2
PARL	0	1

Note: PCRM=Communist Party of Moldova, PLDM=Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, AMN=Alianța Moldova Noastră, GOV=Government, PL=Liberal Party, MAE=European Action Movement, PSD=Social Democratic Party, PD=Democratic Party, PPCD=Christian Democratic Peoples' Party, UCM=Centrist Union of Moldova, PRES=President, SB=Sergiu Banari (an independent candidate), US=Urâtu Ștefan (an independent candidate), RAVN=Ravnopravie (social-political movement), AV=Alianța Verde, PC=Conservative Party, UM=Labor Union "Patria Rodina", AIS=other state institutions, PMU=Moldova Unita, PPR=Popular Republican Party, PNT=Party for the country and the people, VR=Victor Răilean independent candidate, PARL=Parliament.

4.3 Frequency of news broadcasts directly or indirectly favoring or disfavoring candidates

4.3.1 TV

Moldova 1, NIT, Radio Moldova and Antrena C continued to broadcast a large number of news items favoring the governing party in the elections. The voters learned that teachers and public servants will have bigger salaries; the state will purchase 40,000 tons of fodder from local producers; President Voronin participated in the launching of a Farmaco automated production line; the state pays attention to the health of the population and Voronin participated in a meeting on the issue; health insurance allocations increased 10 times; the government supported the successful transport of gas to Boldurești; following a government plan, health centers were equipped with modern equipment donated by the European Commission; Metropolitan Vladimir thanked the leadership of Moldova for "being open" in the process of opening churches; "many churches were inaugurated"; "stability is more important than change"; the government allocated 2 million lei for displaced persons and 0.5 million lei for people with special needs and for veterans of the Transnistrian war; the Moldovan leu (MDL) is the most stable European currency; 40 million lei will be allocated for indexing bank deposits; social allocations increased; accumulation plan goals were surpassed; Voronin requested that urgent measures be taken for consumer protection and was raising allocations for veterans of World War II; starting in 2003, the Republic of Moldova honored all its obligations to UN; people with physical handicaps enjoy prosthetic appliances free of charge; in Ungheni the meat enterprise reopened and Voronin participated in the inauguration; although the Finance Minister transferred the money, teachers and other civil servants did not receive their salaries due to faults at the local level.....

An example of a news item that could have avoided electoral bias is the one about offering free prosthetic appliances to invalids. After talking about the appliances, the comment was added that

in the past eight years, public budget allocations for prosthesis had increased 30 times (news program on March 3 at 21:00).

On February 27 during the “Mesager” news program (at 21:00), Moldova 1 broadcast a news item from Molpres agency that “UCM will fight to leave CIS” although UCM leaders had not declared that they would do so. The items was also broadcast on Radio Moldova and on NIT on the same day and on the next day on Antena C which confirms collusion among the stations on their editorial policies for reporting on the electoral campaign (see diagrams 3-6).

These same outlets did not miss an opportunity to discredit the rivals of PCRM. On February 19, Moldova 1 broadcast information about the responsibility that tenants’ associations under City Hall bore for higher heating bills in Chişinău. Sometimes the rivals of PCRM were attacked indirectly. In a long report negatively describing the situation in Cimişlia, it was mentioned briefly that the mayor of the city is an AMN member (February 22 at 21:00). When reporting on a case of hidden weapons in the village of Sipotenii, NIT mentioned that the culprit was an AMN member (February 21 21:30).

Opposition party press conferences were reported only when they disfavored another opposition party or favored PCRM. An example is the PD press conference when the leadership stated that the insistence of some parties to open voting polls outside of embassies was strange but ignored the fact that PD assessed the visit of Lavrov as an electoral activity (February 26 21:00).

Diagram 3: Frequency of news broadcasts favoring or disfavoring candidates on Moldova 1 by party

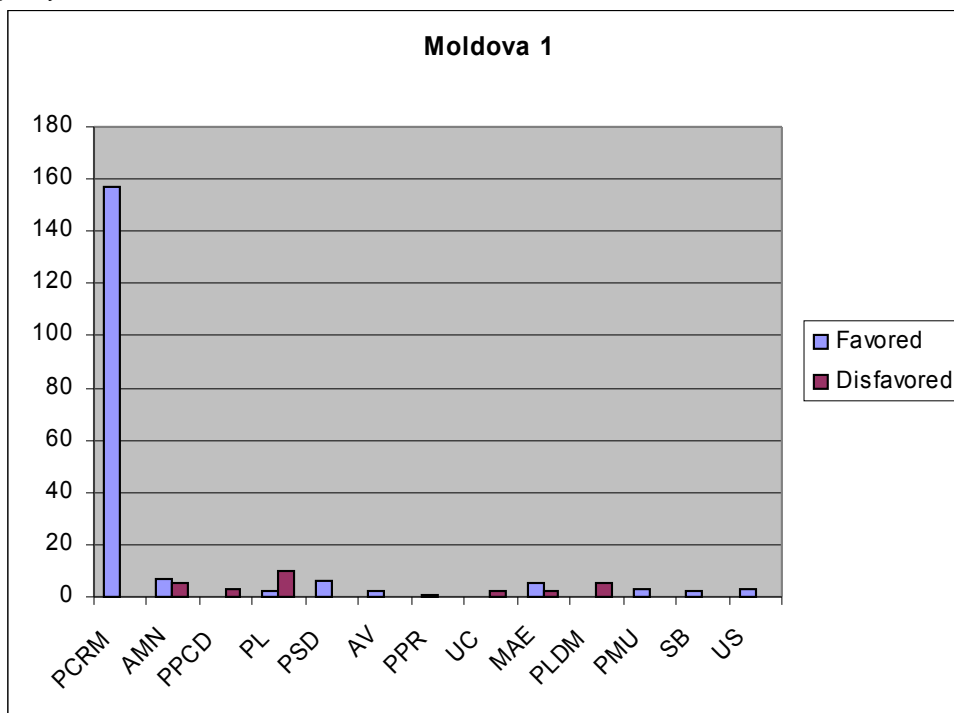


Diagram 4: Frequency of news broadcasts favoring or disfavoring candidates on NIT by party

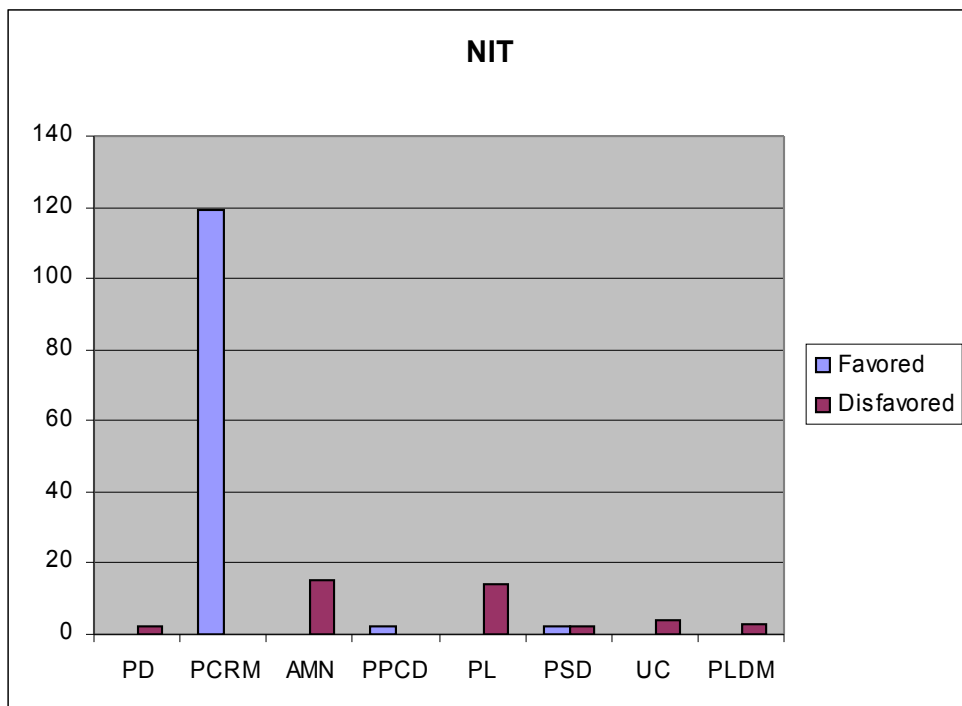


Diagram 5: Frequency of news broadcasts favoring or disfavoring candidates on Radio Moldova by party

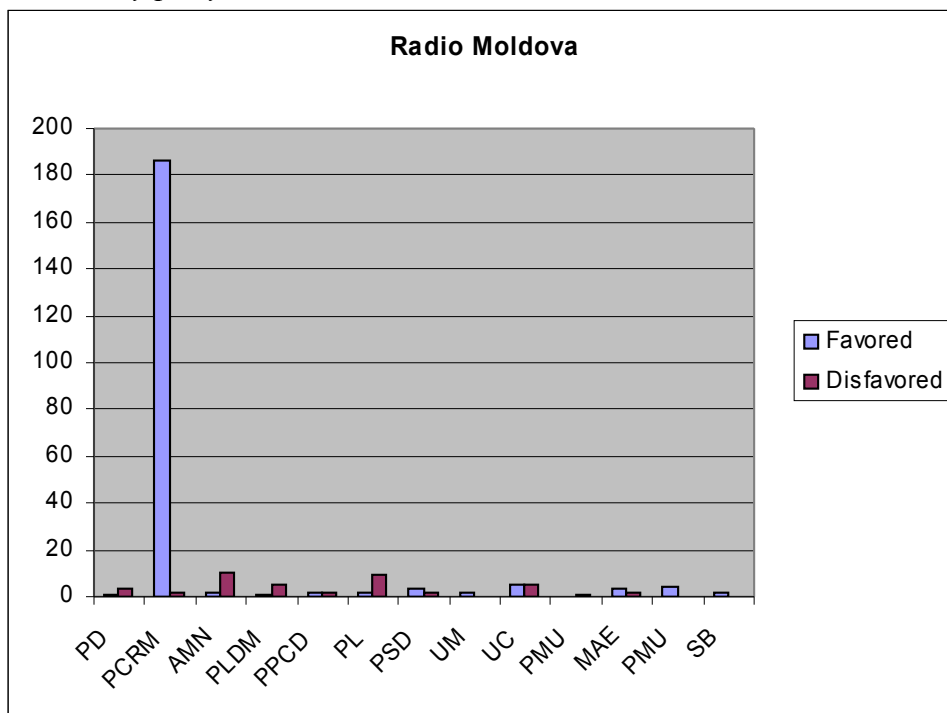
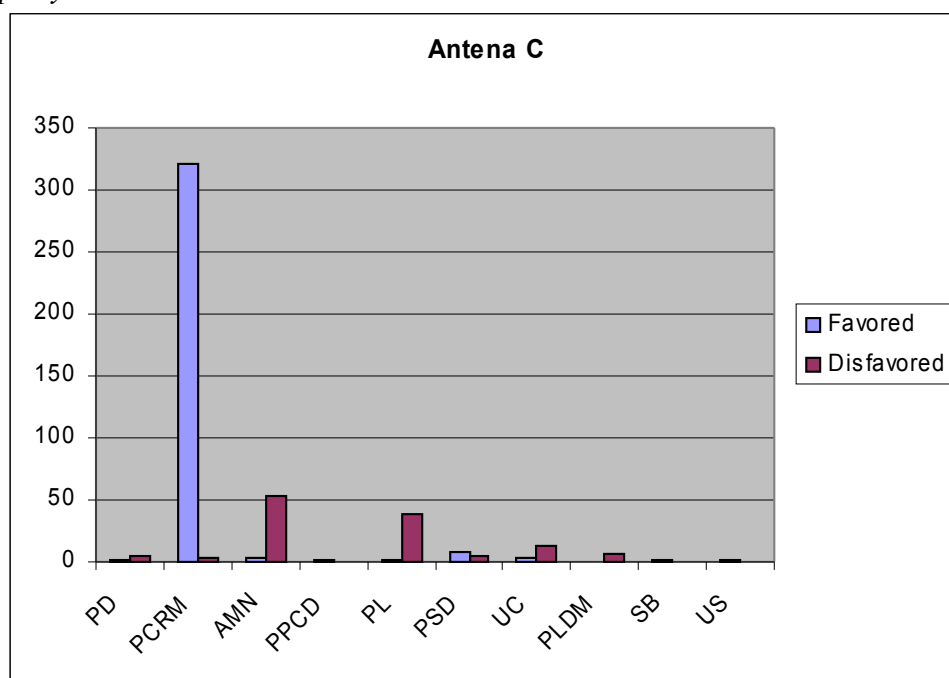
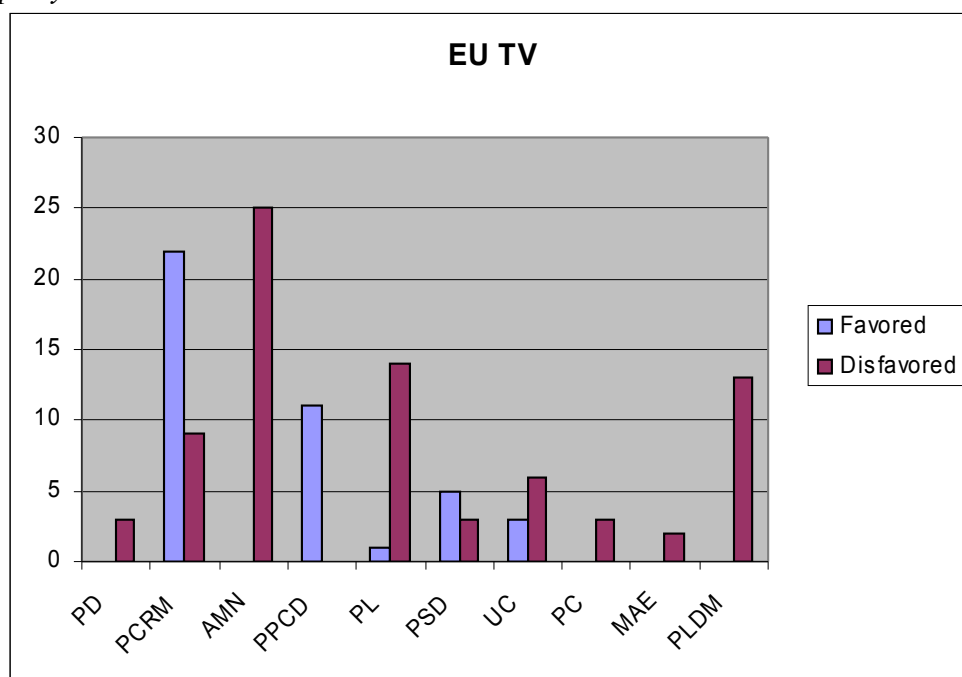


Diagram 6: Frequency of news broadcasts favoring or disfavoring candidates on Antena C by party



EU TV broadcasts were even more unfavorable to opposition parties AMN, PL and PLDM and continued to favor PPCD, PSD and PCRM, e.g. the news items regarding the allocation of 2 million lei for purchasing tenements for displaced people and offering allocations to the victims of the military conflict in 1992 (see Diagram 7).

Diagram 7: Frequency of news broadcasts favoring or disfavoring candidates on EU TV by party



On PRO TV, TV 7 and at Vocea Basarabiei, the number of news items favorable to PCRM was smaller than the overall number of favorable news items. Opposition parties enjoyed greater access and fairer reporting on these stations compared with other outlets (see diagrams 8-10). One example is the PLDM protest on February 22 supporting the opening of more voting polls

abroad. It was reported in a balanced way only by the above mentioned outlets, while Moldova 1, NIT, Antena C, Radio Moldova and EU TV were interested more in the organization of the protest.

Diagram 8: Frequency of news broadcasts favoring or disfavoring candidates on PRO TV by party

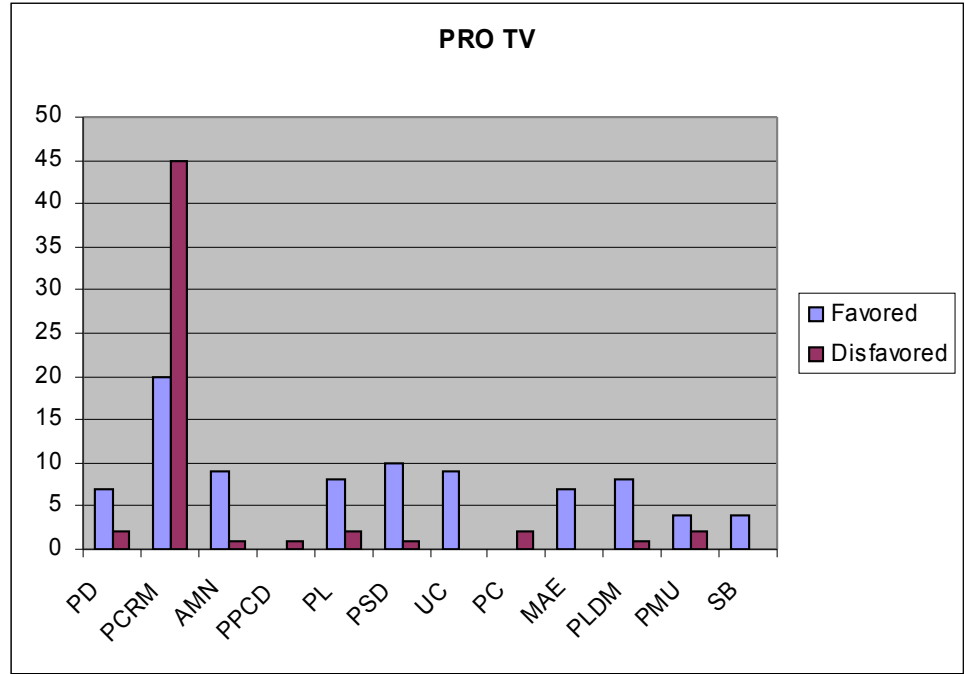


Diagram 9: Frequency of news broadcasts favoring or disfavoring candidates on TV7 by party

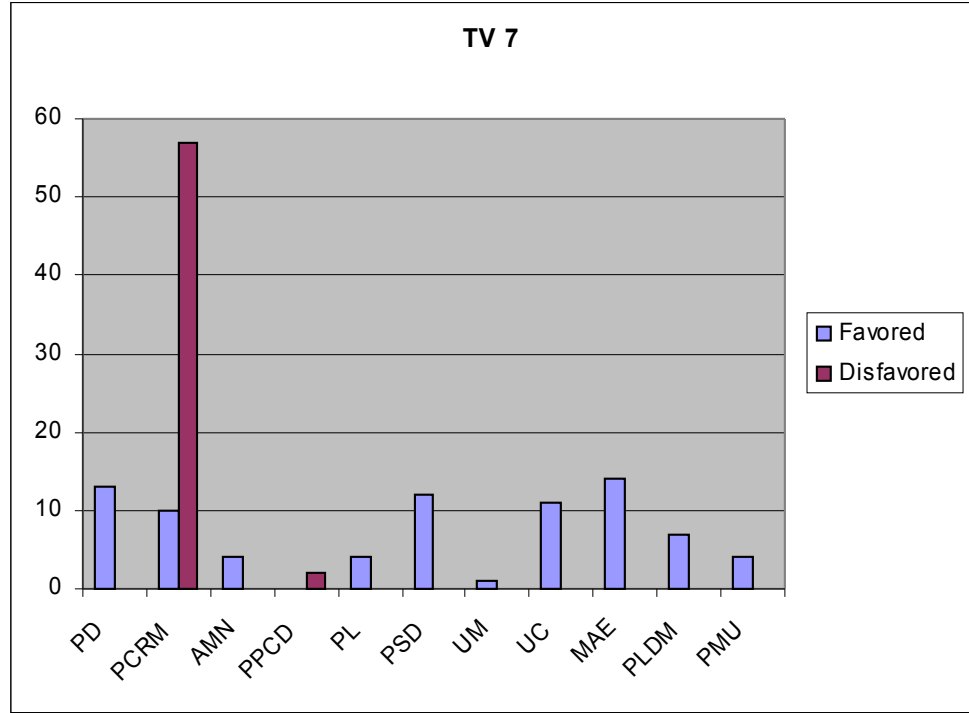
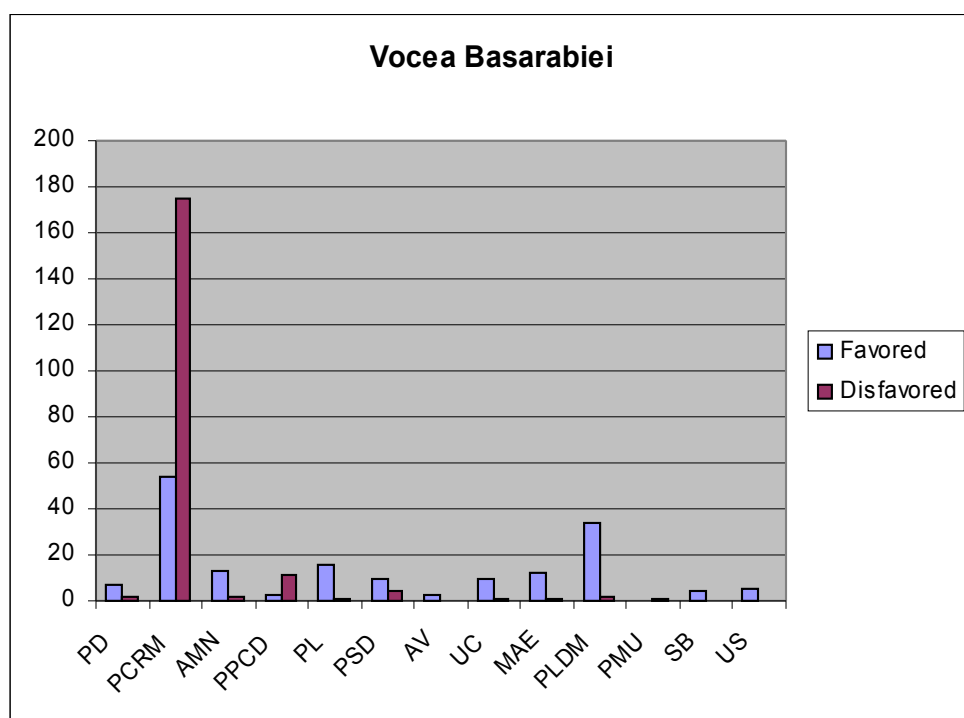


Diagram 10: Frequency of news broadcasts favoring or disfavoring candidates on Vocea Basarabiei news programs by party



4.4 Frequency of talk shows (opinion programs) directly or indirectly favoring or disfavoring candidates

On its talk shows, EU TV continued to disfavor opposition parties especially AMN and PLDM and to campaign for PPCD and sometimes for PCRM (Diagram 12). As in the previous monitoring period, the talk shows on Vocea Basarabiei frequently criticized the ruling party and sometimes favored PLDM and AMN (Diagram 13).

Diagram 12; Frequency of talk shows favoring or disfavoring candidates on EU TV by party

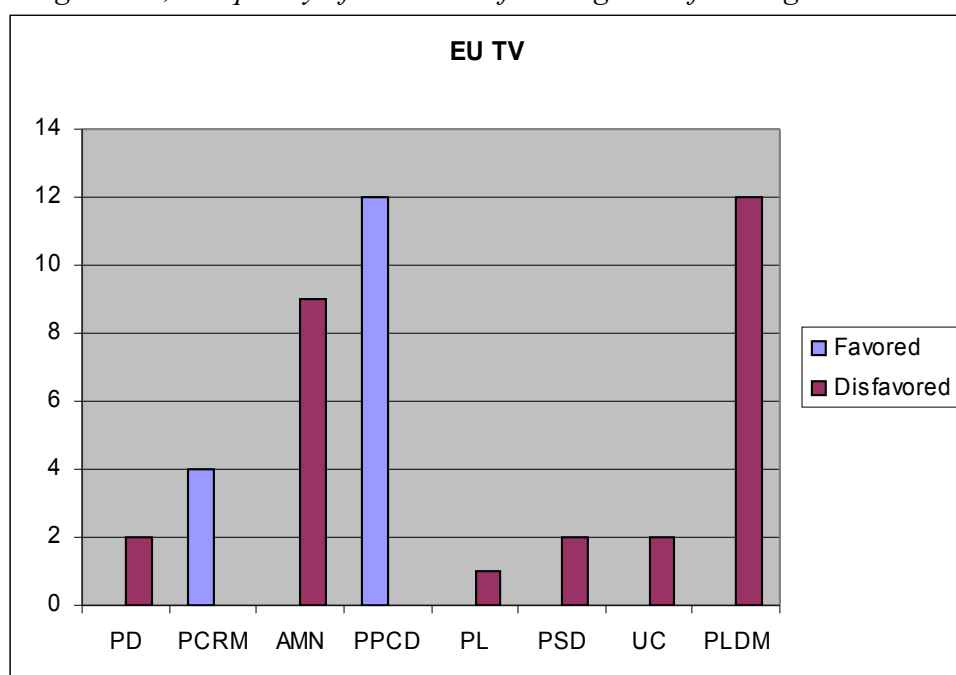
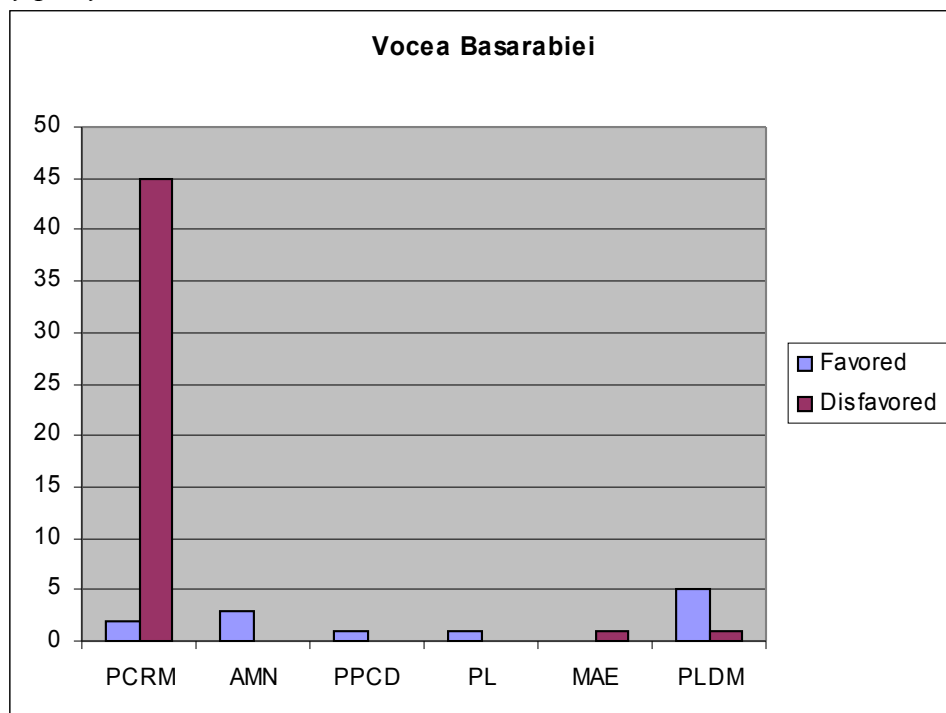


Diagram 13: Frequency of talk shows favoring or disfavoring candidates on Vocea Basarabiei by party



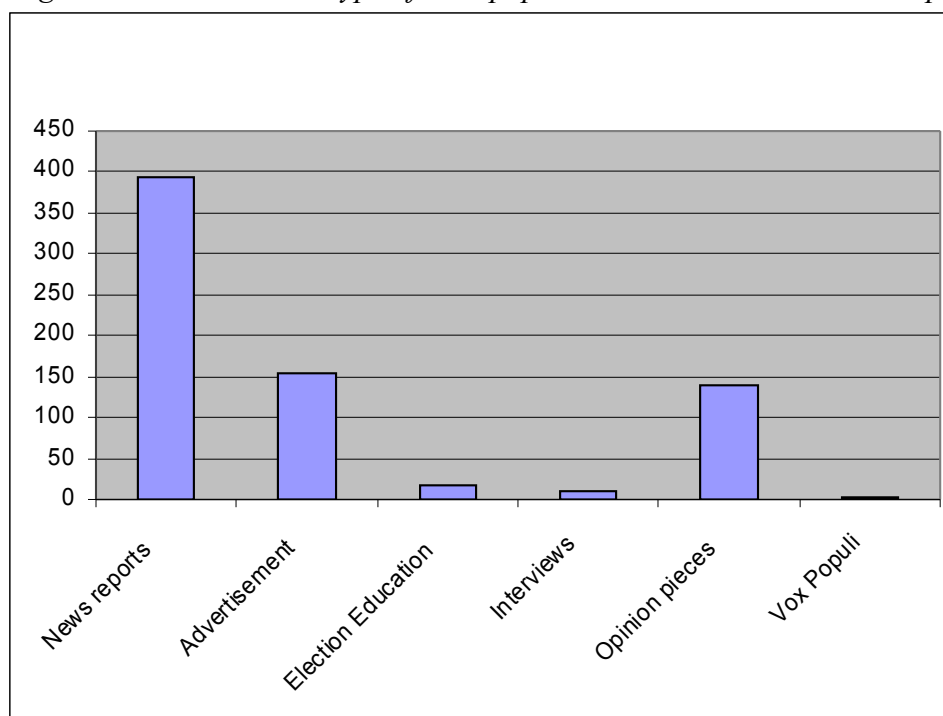
5. Data on print press, press agencies and online publications

5.1 Involvement in the electoral campaign

5.1.1 Newspapers

From 19 February to 4 March 2009, the newspapers monitored reported on the electoral campaign more actively than they had done during the first two-week period. Thus, the 12 newspapers published 715 articles that referred either directly or indirectly to the electoral campaign, which was a 20% increase over the first monitoring period. These articles covered approximately 297,000 square centimeters. The majority were news articles (394), followed by properly identified election advertisements (153) and opinion articles (140). Political advertisements covered in total (in the 12 newspapers) more than 86,000 square centimeters. The number of articles seeking to educate the electorate increased to 17. The least frequent genre was *vox pop* (Diagram 14).

Diagram 14: Number and type of newspaper articles on the election campaign



Moldova Suverană continued to rank first in terms of square centimeters allotted to all electoral topics (60,380 sq cm) followed by *Nezavisimaia Moldova* (approx. 50,280 sq cm), *Flux* (44,930 sq cm), *Jurnal de Chişinău* (44,480 sq cm) and *Timpul de dimineaţă* (40,400 sq cm). *Moldavskie Vedomosti*, *SP* (Bălţi), *Cuvântul* (Rezina), *Săptămîna*, *Komsomolskaia Pravda v Moldove*, *Realitatea* (Soroca) and *Vesti Gagauzii* (Comrat) followed at a lower end. (Diagram 15).

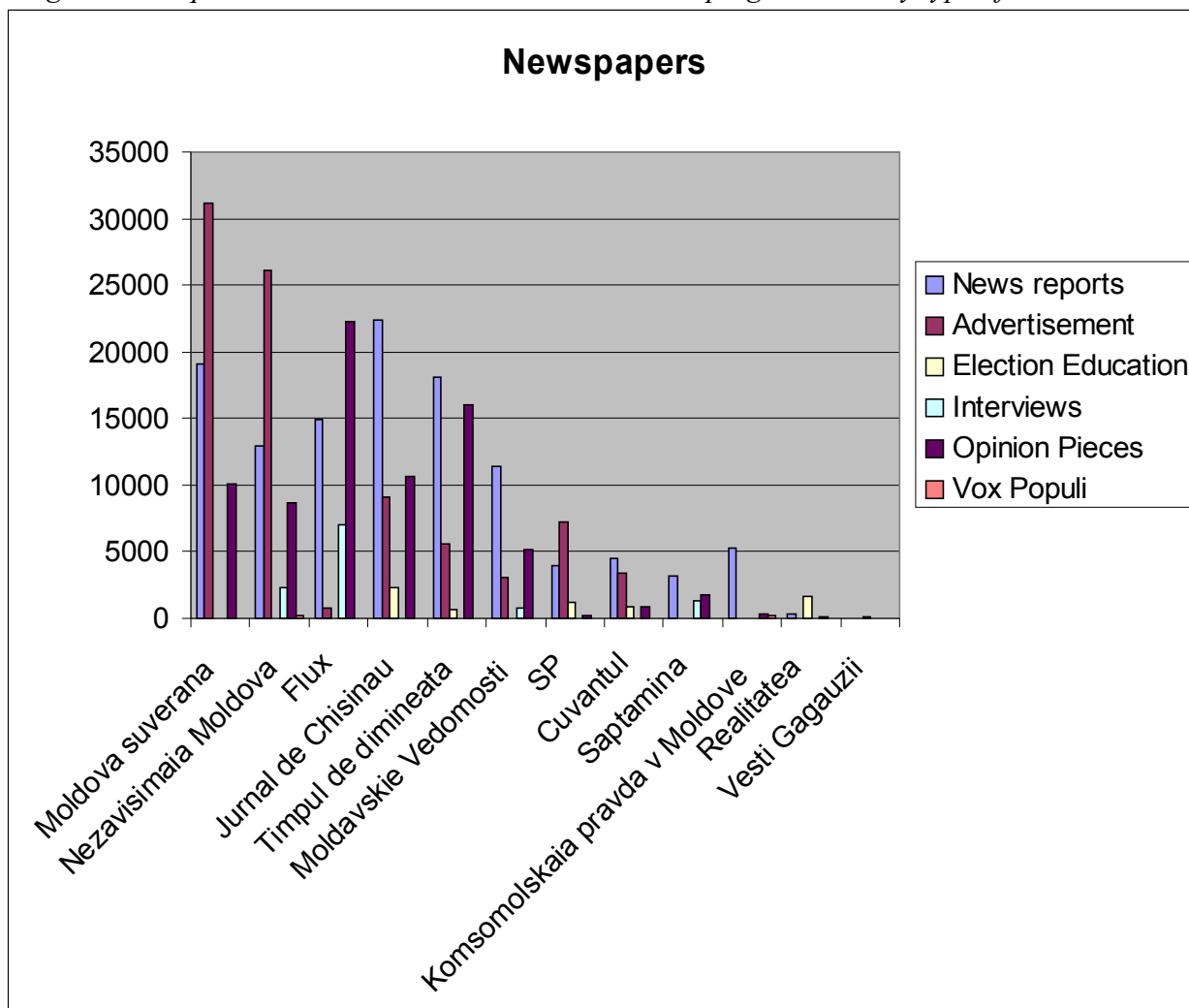
In terms of length allotted for news articles on the electoral campaign, *Jurnal de Chişinău* ranked first at 22,400 sq cm or more than half of the total space allotted by the newspaper to this topic. *Moldova Suverană* and *Timpul de dimineaţă* published news articles covering 19,075 sq cm and 18,060 sq cm, respectively. In *Flux*, news articles covered 14,890 sq cm and in *Nezavisimaia Moldova* they covered 12,980 sq cm. The regional newspaper *Vesti Gagauzii* was the least interested in the 2009 parliamentary elections as it published only one relevant article.

The length of political advertisements in the print press increased almost 2.5 times, from 35,500 sq cm in the first two weeks of the campaign to 86,447 sq cm from February 19 to March 4. Most of the appropriately identified political advertisements were published in *Moldova Suverană* and *Nezavisimaia Moldova* (31,160 sq cm and 26,100 sq cm, respectively). Both newspapers published full-page political advertisements favoring PCRM. *Jurnal de Chişinău* (9135 sq cm), *SP* (7250 sq cm) and *Timpul de dimineaţă* (5600 sq cm) published political advertisements commissioned by other candidates. All the other newspapers have either allotted less space or did not publish political advertisements at all.

Opinion articles referring to the electoral campaign occupied 25% of the total surface. Most of the space for opinion articles and editorials was offered by *Flux* (approx. 22,300 sq cm representing almost half of the space allotted to the electoral campaign in the newspaper). *Timpul de Dimineaţă* published opinion articles covering 16,000 sq cm, *Jurnal de Chişinău* and *Moldova Suverană* covered 10,000 sq cm, *Nezavisimaia Moldova* 8700 sq cm and *Moldavskie Vedomosti* covered 5000 sq cm.

Compared with the previous monitoring period, the number and the space of the articles seeking to educate the electorate increased. Articles were published in *Jurnal de Chişinău*, *SP*, *Realitatea*, *Cuvântul*, *Timpul de dimineaţă* and *Vesti Gagauzii*. Only *Nezavisimaia Moldova* and *Komsomolskaia Pravda v Moldove* published *vox pop* articles referring directly or indirectly to the electoral campaign (Diagram 15).

Diagram 15: Square centimeters allotted to election campaign articles by type of article

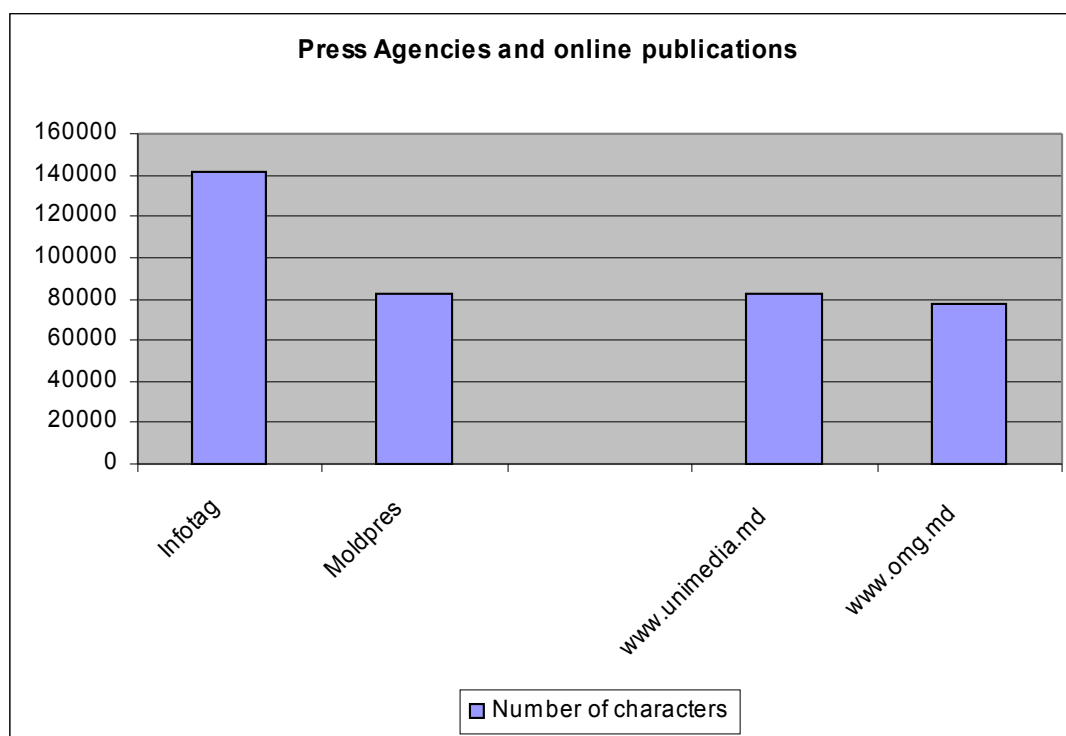


5.1.4 Press agencies and online publications

The two agencies monitored, Moldpres and Infotag published a total of 149 relevant news articles during this monitoring period for a total of approximately 225,000 characters (without spaces). Compared with the previous monitoring period, this was an almost two-fold increase. In all, approximately 63% of the total was published by Infotag. This agency published interviews with the candidates and articles in the “special electoral programs” category. The first interviews featured PSD president Dumitru Braghiș and PL president Mihai Ghimpu.

Inernet users had access to 116 news items produced or reproduced by the online publications www.unimedia.md and www.omg.md for a total of 160,000 characters. The tendency registered during the previous monitoring period continued: www.omg.md published more news items, but they were shorter, and www.unimedia.md published fewer news items but they were longer (more characters) (Diagram 16).

Diagram 16: Space (number of characters) allotted to news items referring to the electoral campaign by press agencies and online publications



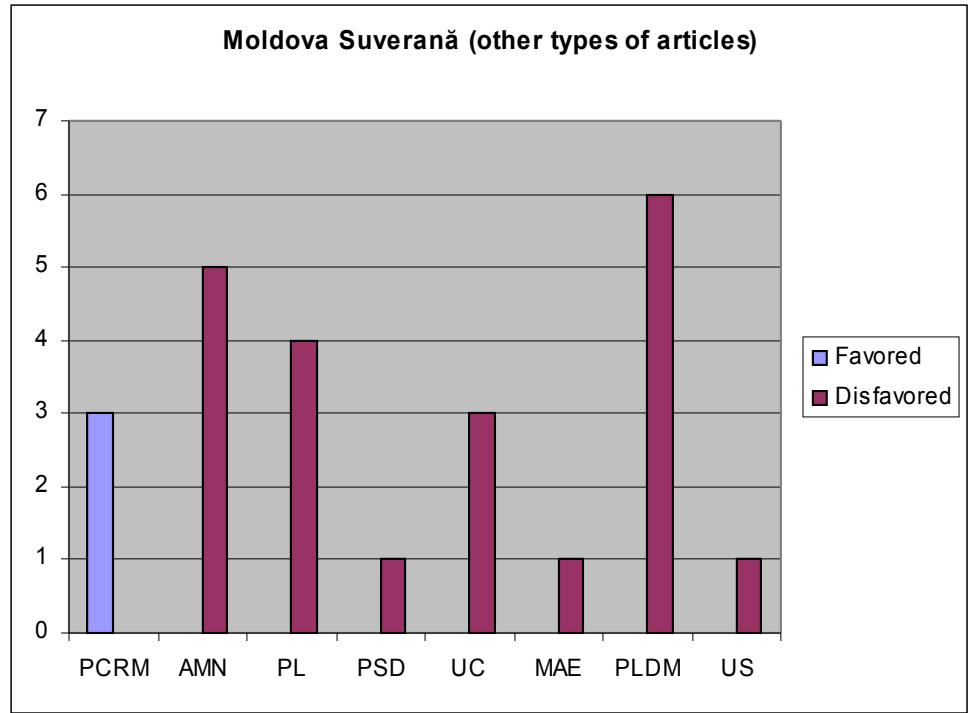
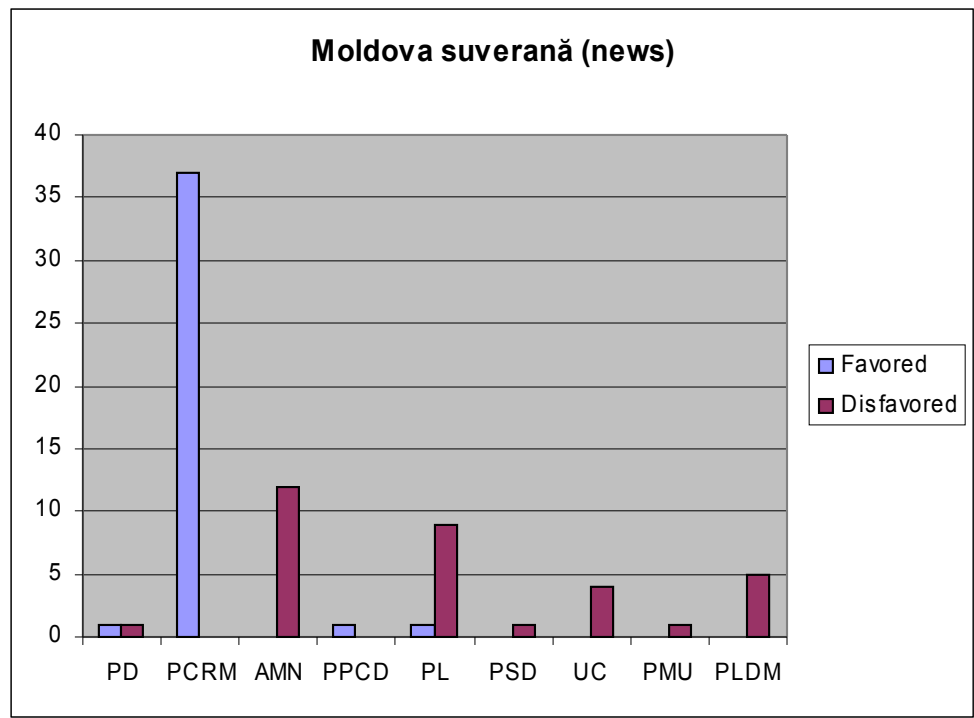
5.2 Frequency of news items or editorials that directly or indirectly favored or disfavored candidates

5.2.3. Newspapers

From February 19 to March 4 2009, *Moldova Suverană* continued to favor only one electoral candidate: the ruling party. The editorial staff expressed its sympathy not only by publishing almost exclusively electoral advertisements commissioned by PCRM, but also by publishing opinion articles and news items directly or indirectly favoring that party. In all of the 37 news articles it published in this period, *Moldova Suverană* praised PCRM. Some achievements of the governing party were especially praised, most of the time by comparing them with the situation eight years ago, i.e. before PCRM came to power. At the same time, the newspaper continued to obviously disfavor the opposition parties, especially the liberal ones. Most of the time,

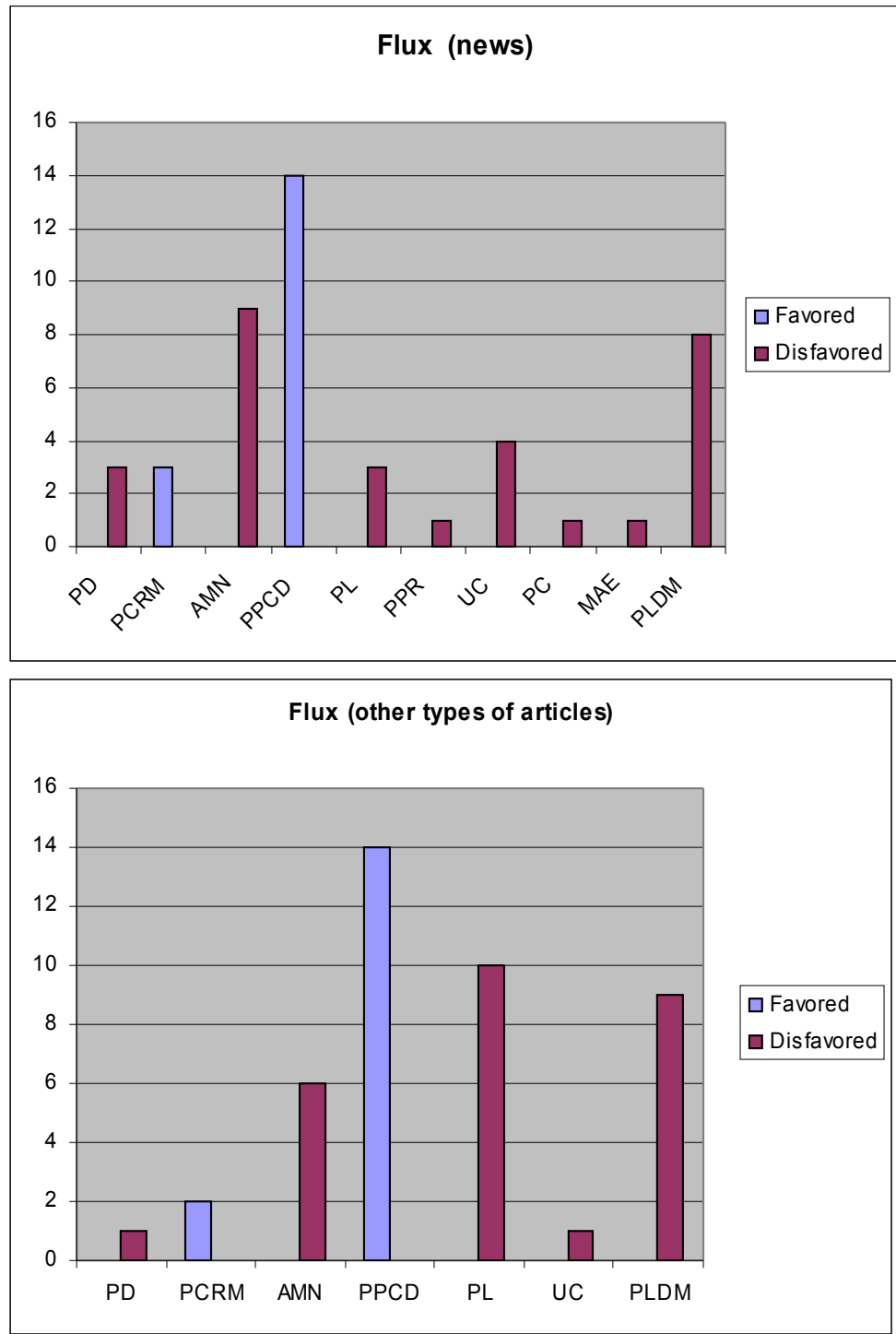
representatives of the following parties were negatively presented in the news articles: AMN (12 times), PL (9 times), PLDM (5 times) and UCM (4 times). All the other articles, especially opinion articles and editorials, continued to criticize the liberal opposition parties (diagrams 17 and 18).

Diagrams 17 and 18: Frequency of news articles favoring or disfavoring electoral candidates in Moldova Suverană by party



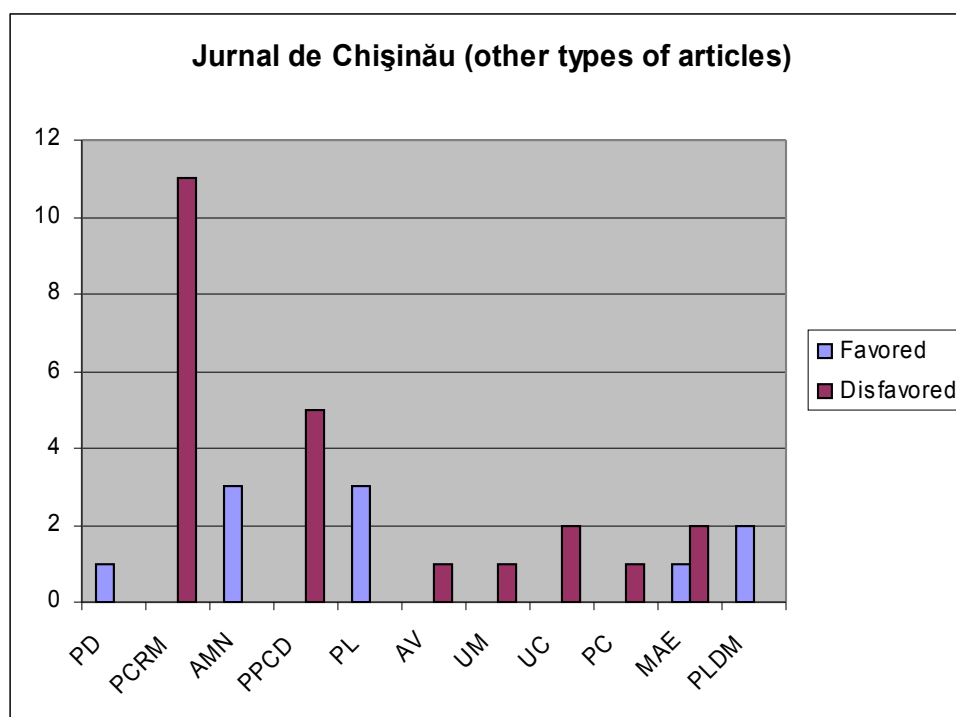
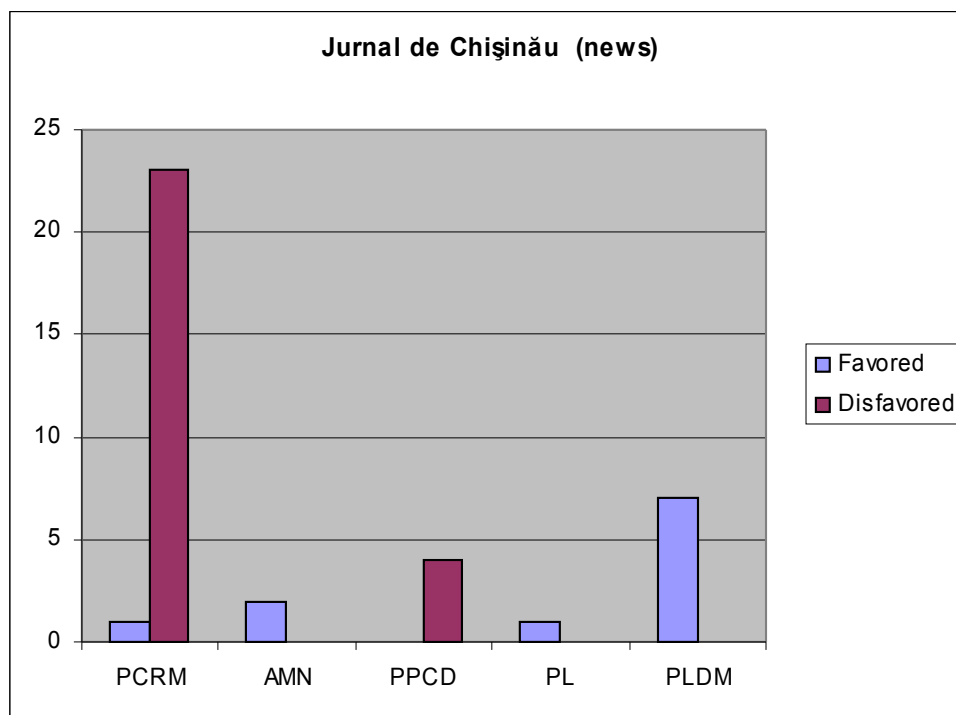
Flux presented only PPCD and sometimes PCRM in a favorable context. All other candidates were either neglected or mocked. Opinion articles were very critical of PL, AMN and PLD and many times aggressive and harsh language was used. Other candidates, including those from UCM and PD, were presented in an exclusively negative context (diagrams 19 and 20).

Diagrams 19 and 20: Frequency of news articles favoring or disfavoring electoral candidates in Flux by party



Jurnal de Chişinău disfavored the ruling party and presented it in a negative context in 23 of the 24 times a reference was made to the party. PPCD (4 times) was also portrayed only in a negative context. In contrast, PLDM was presented in 7 favorable news articles that criticized PCRM and PPCD and their representatives (diagrams 21 and 22).

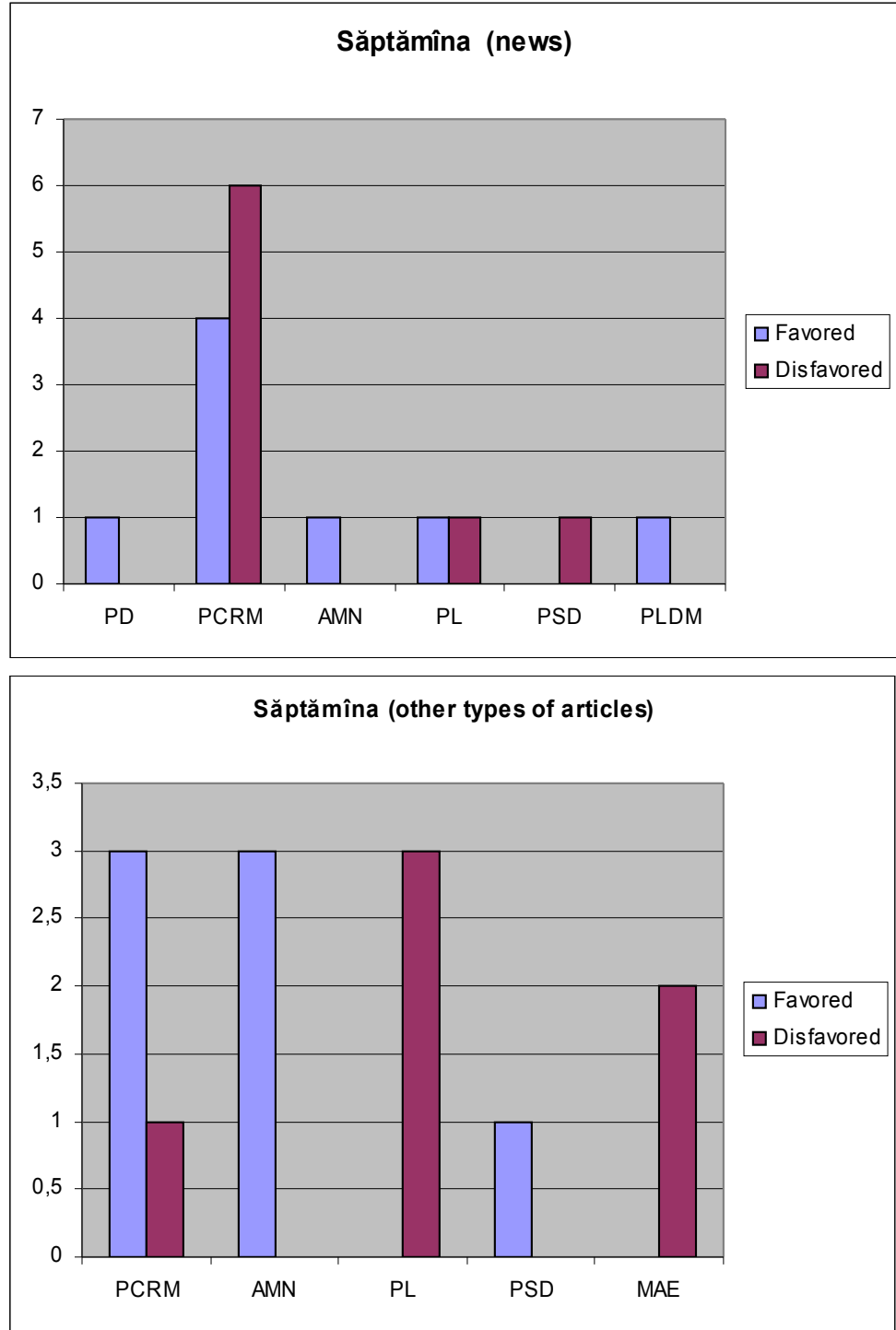
Diagrams 21 and 22: Frequency of news articles favoring or disfavoring electoral candidates in Jurnal de Chişinău by party



Săptămîna often favored AMN in news articles. With reference to the ruling party, the newspaper maintained a neutral position by providing coverage that was both favorable and

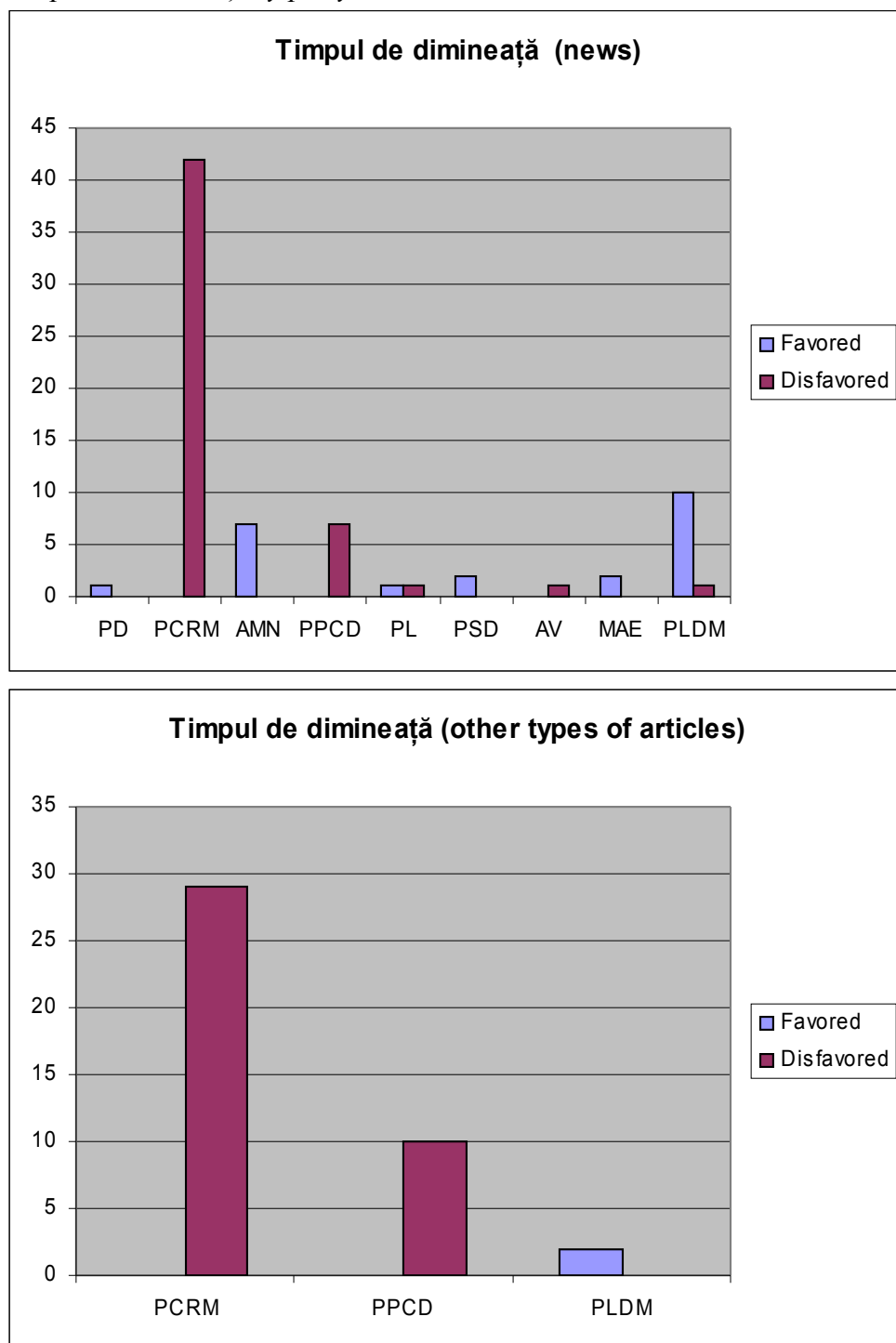
unfavorable. Opinion articles campaigned for AMN and PCRM and rejected PL and MAE (diagrams 23 and 24).

Diagrams 23 and 24: Frequency of news articles favoring or disfavoring electoral candidates in Săptămîna, by party



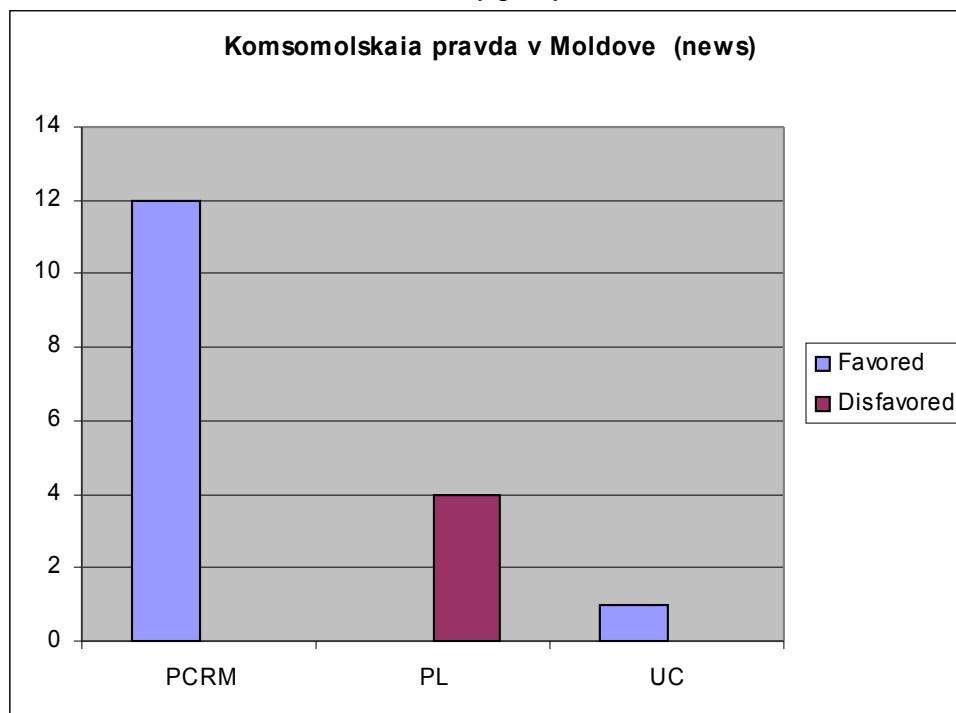
Timpul de Dimineață portrayed PCRM and PPCD in an exclusively negative context. This was true for both news and opinion articles and for any other type of article. On the other hand, PLDM and AMN were favored in news articles, most of the time directly. A large part of the surface area of *Timpul de Dimineață* was allotted to debates with the opponents from the newspaper *Flux*.

Diagrams 25 and 26: Frequency of news articles favoring or disfavoring electoral candidates in Timpul de dimineață by party



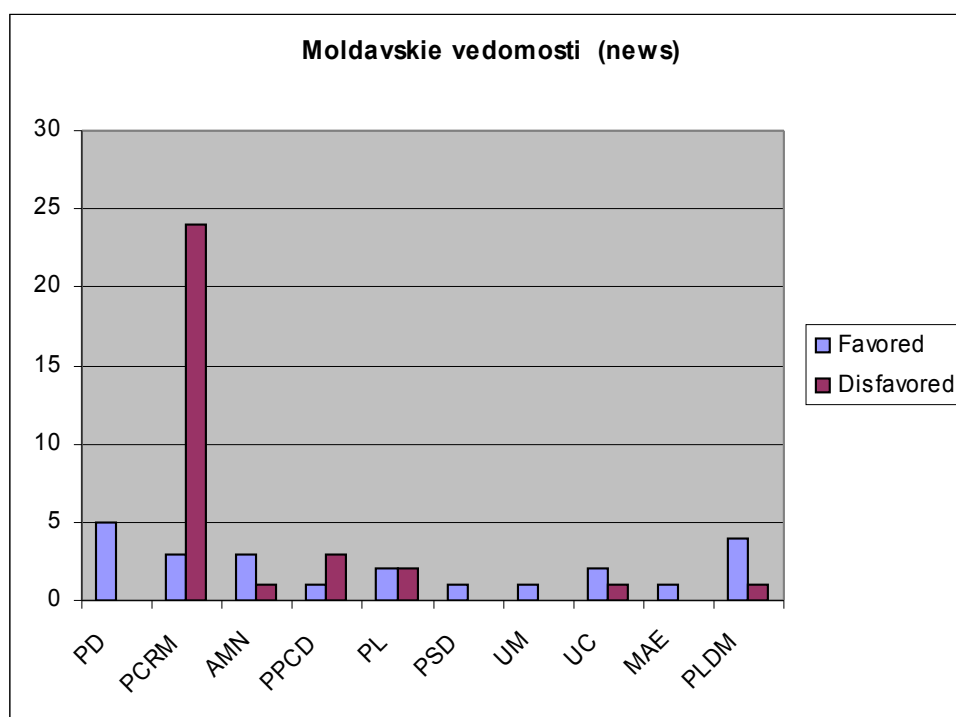
Komsomolskaia Pravda v Moldove presented PCRM in a positive context and PL in an unfavorable one (Diagram 27).

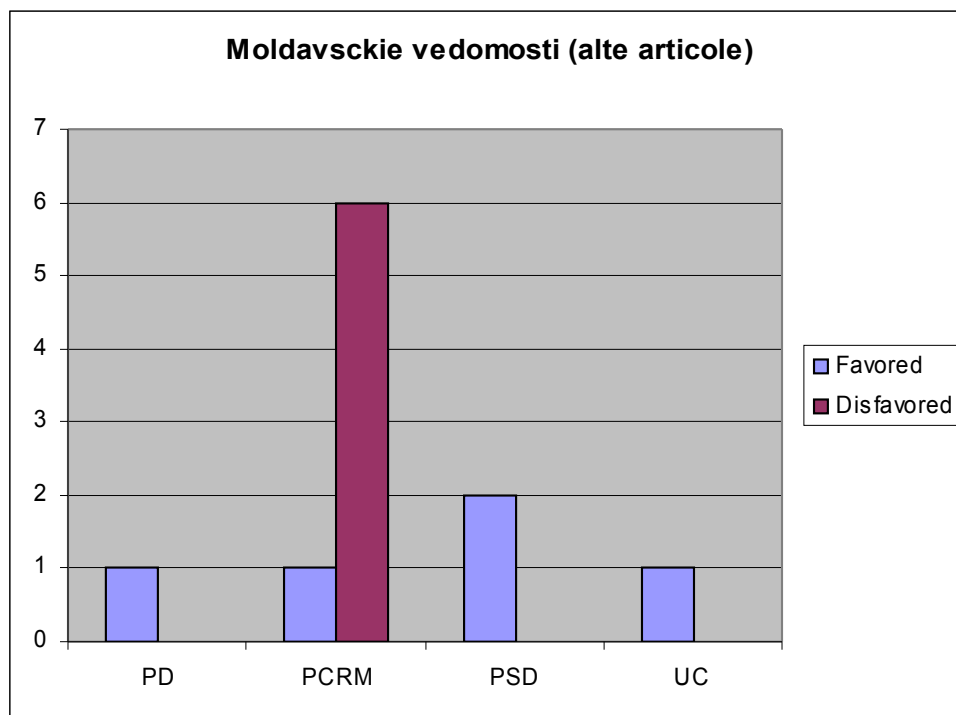
Diagram 27: Frequency of news articles favoring or disfavoring electoral candidates in Komsomolskaia Pravda v Moldove, by party



Moldavskie vedomosti continued to strongly criticize the governing party and its leader, presenting Vladimir Voronin usually in a negative context in news and opinion articles and in editorials. As for the opposition, the newspaper portrayed some parties including PD, PSD and PLDM in a positive context (diagrams 28 and 29).

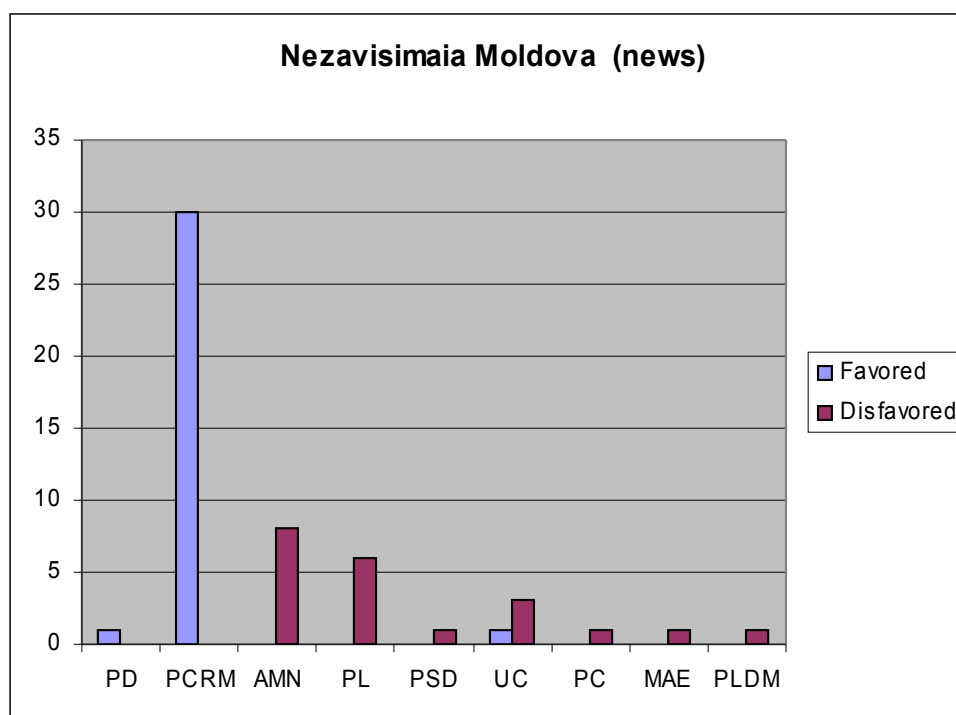
Diagrams 28 and 29: Frequency of news articles favoring or disfavoring electoral candidates in Moldavskie Vedomosti by party

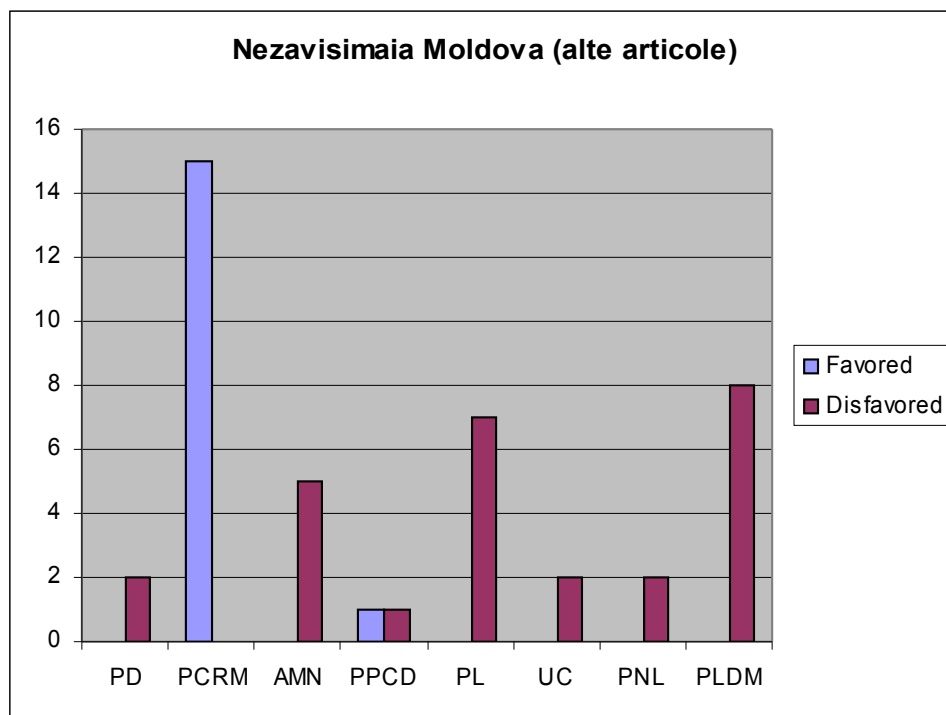




Nezavisimaia Moldova continued to exclusively favor PCRM in news and other types of articles. All the other parties were usually presented as obscure groups and were mocked (diagrams 30 and 31).

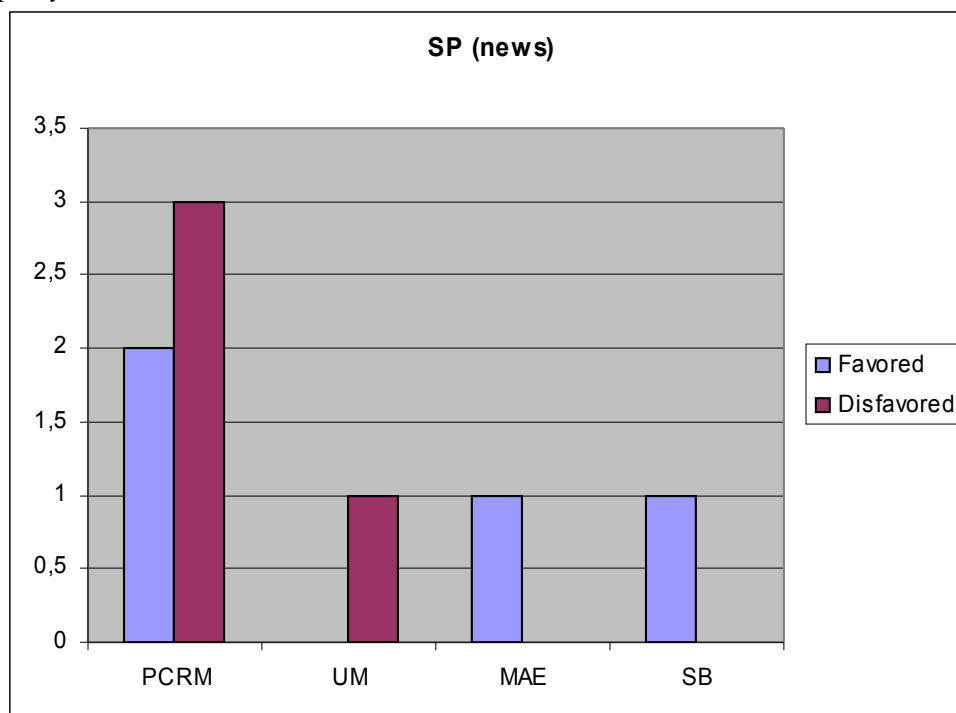
Diagrams 30 and 31: Frequency of news articles favoring or disfavoring electoral candidates in Nezavisimaia Moldova by party





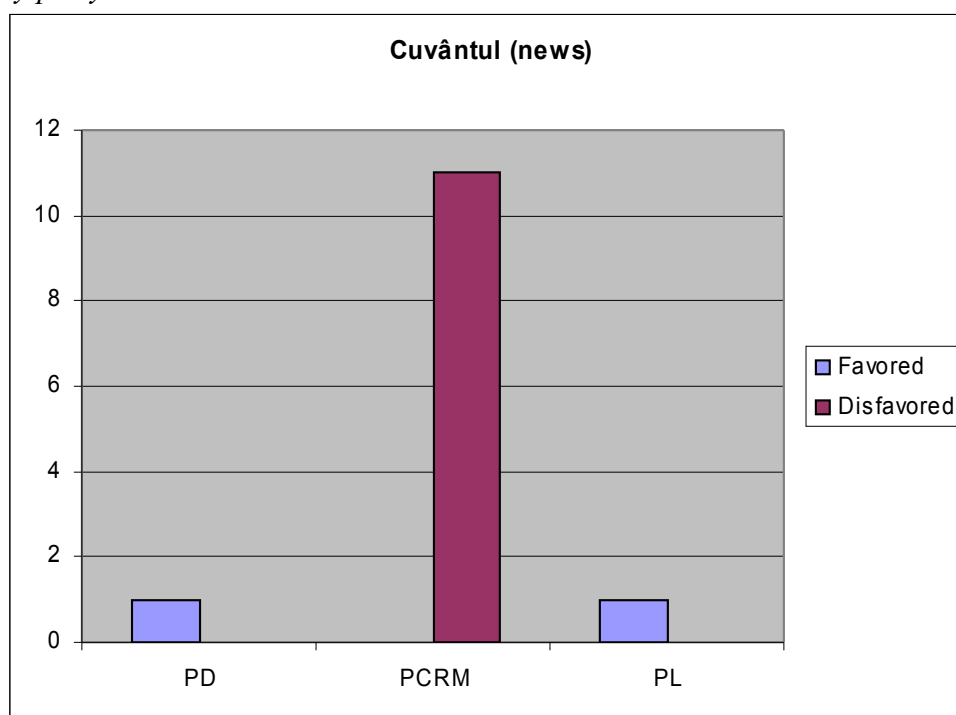
The regional newspaper *SP* (Bălți) cast PCRM both in critical and positive lights. Other candidates were not reported on as frequently, so the paper did not show a clear campaign preference (Diagram 32).

Diagram 32: Frequency of news articles favoring or disfavoring electoral candidates in SP by party



The weekly *Cuvântul* disfavored PCRM in news and opinion articles without showing clear support for any of the other candidates (Diagram 33).

Diagram 33: Frequency of news articles favoring or disfavoring electoral candidates in Cuvântul by party

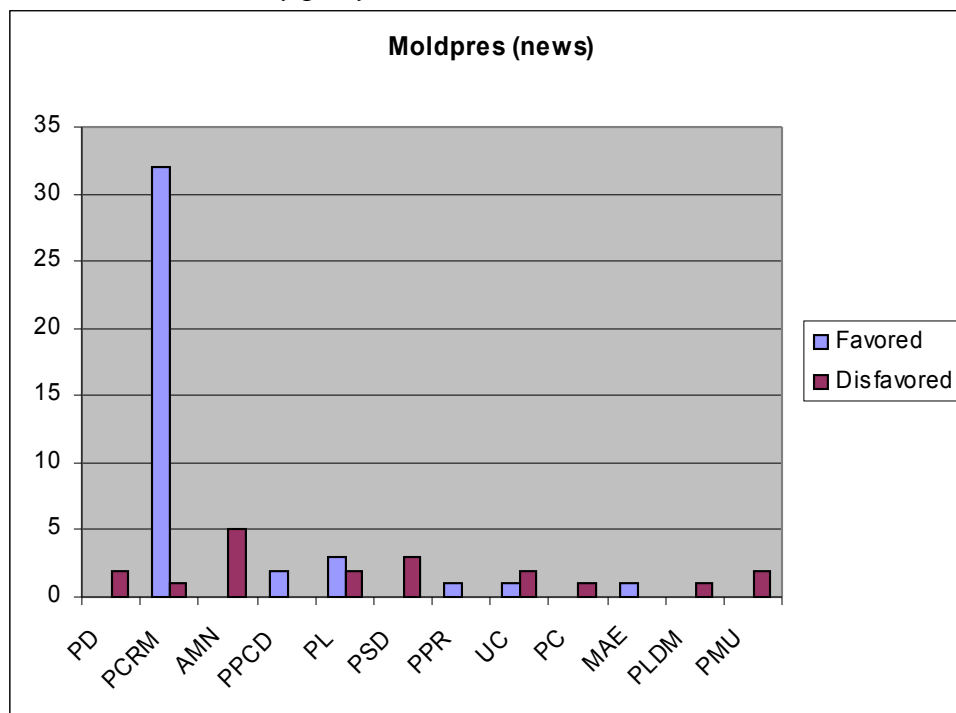


From February 19 to March 4, *Realitatea* (Soroca) and *Vesti Gagauzii* (Comrat) published only articles referring to the electoral process, including the decisions of local councils regarding the polling stations.

5.2.4. Press agencies and online publications

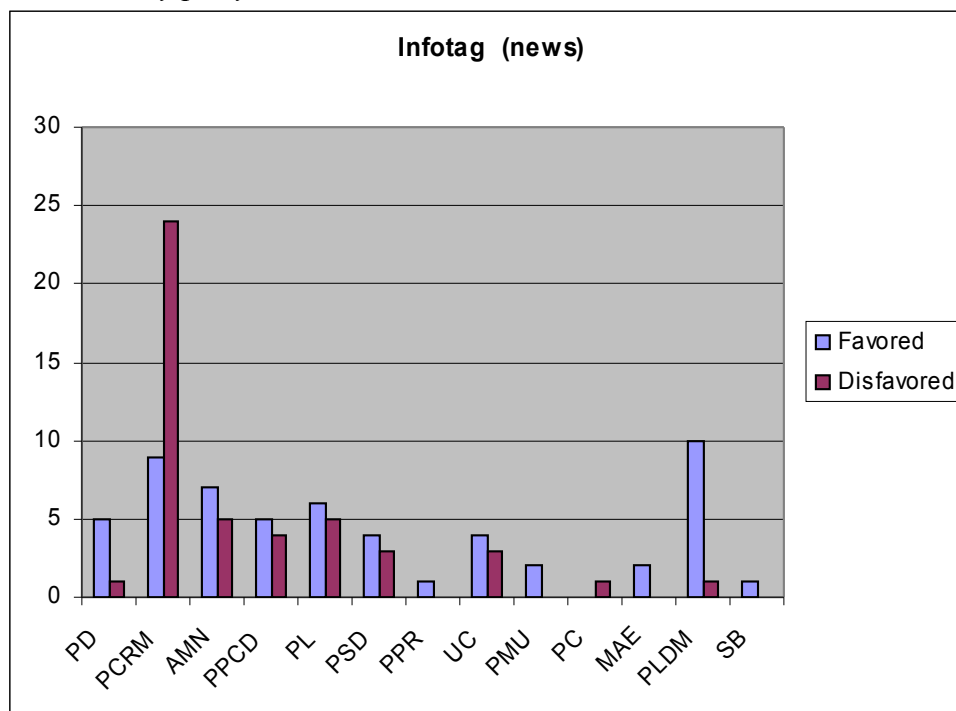
The press agency *Moldpres* continued to favor the ruling party presenting in detail events attended by PCRM representatives who topped the electoral list of the party including Vladimir Voronin, Marian Lupu and Zinaida Greceanîi. All stages of the President's Cup International Chess Tournament were presented in detail; on February 23 the agency published a news article about the call for support for PCRM by an evangelic pastor from one of the churches in the capital; on February 26 the agency published the call of PCRM to abandon TV electoral debates in favor of the championship league football matches giving football supporters the chance to follow the event. Important events organized by opposition candidates during the same period were ignored by *Moldpres* which printed only accusations against the opposition (Diagram 34).

Diagram 34: Frequency of news articles published by Moldpres favoring or disfavoring electoral candidates by party



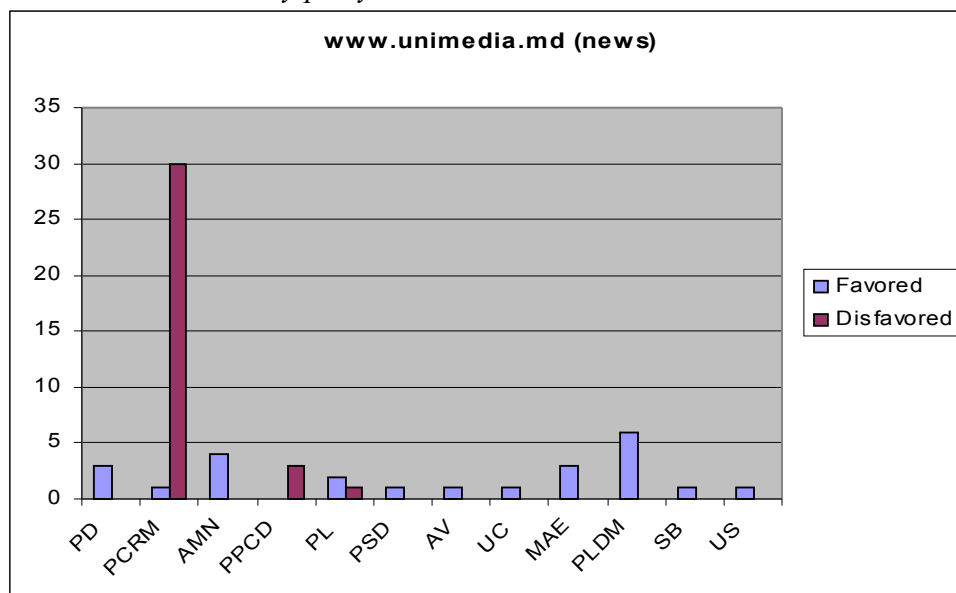
Infotag press agency's reporting on the electoral campaign was more or less balanced in presenting events organized or attended by the candidates. The agency inaugurated the rubrique "Electoral Interviews" during which the leaders of the parties contesting the election were asked the same questions. Two similar interviews were published during this monitoring period featuring Dumitru Braghiș (PSD) and Mihai Ghimpu (PL). An analysis of the news posted by Infotag during the monitoring period is in Diagram 35.

Diagram 35: Frequency of news articles published by Infotag favoring or disfavoring electoral candidates by party



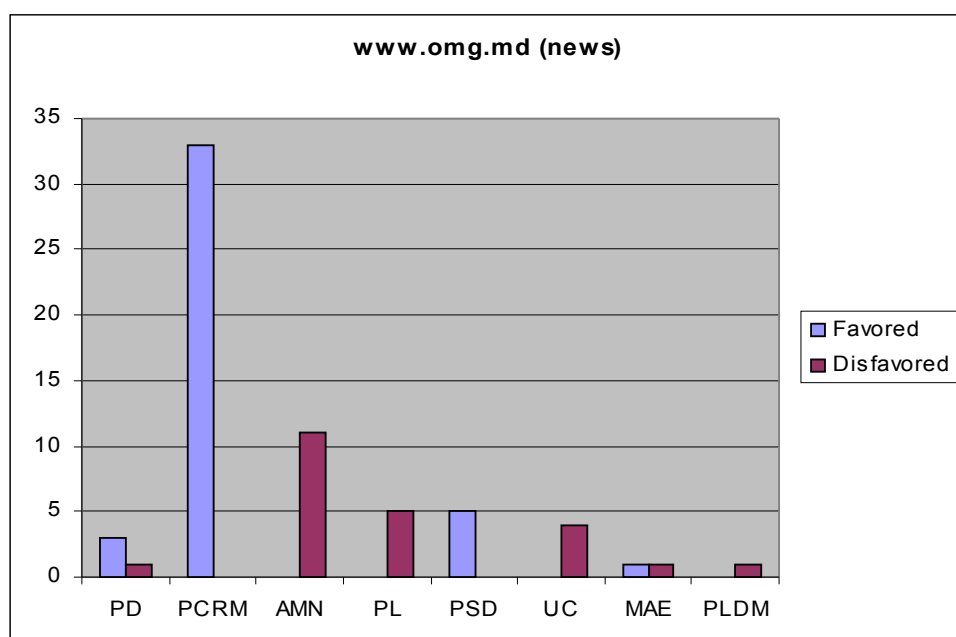
The news articles posted on www.unimedia.md most of time disfavored PCRM, especially when they reported on events organized by opposition parties who strongly criticized the ruling party. Out of the 31 news articles posted, 30 placed PCRM in a negative context, especially news articles referring to protests submitted by PCRM to the CEC unjustifiably accusing www.unimedia.md of posting unidentified political advertisements. Other candidates were presented in a neutral or positive context though that was less true for PPCD (Diagram 36).

Diagram 36: Frequency of news articles published on unimedia.md favoring or disfavoring electoral candidates by party



The news articles posted on www.omg.md during the monitoring period presented PCRM in only a favorable context in all 33 references made. PSD was also portrayed in a positive context; however, AMN was presented only in news items that disfavored the party (11 times) as were PL (5) and UCM (4 times) (Diagram 37).

Diagram 37: Frequency of news articles published on omg.md favoring or disfavoring electoral candidates, by party



6. General Conclusions

- The large number of news items directly or indirectly addressing electoral topics (total 4882) broadcast/published by the 24 media outlets monitored shows the growing interest of the media in the electoral campaign on one hand, and in the activities of the candidates, of the CEC and of civil society on the other.
- Most of the media outlets reported on the electoral campaign without taking into account the need for the public to learn relevant information about the candidates and their platforms. There were only a few instances when the media outlets presented all the candidates and reported on all the events organized by opposition candidates without interpreting their statements or taking them out of context, which proves that the media is biased towards certain candidates.
- The candidates don't have equal access to the media outlets monitored; some of them are out of favor, and the right (opportunity) to express their positions is limited.
- With some exceptions, media outlets financed partially or totally with public money favor the ruling party. These media outlets infringe the right of the voters to get information on the positions of all electoral candidates so they can make an informed and free choice. Thus, a large number of the voters from rural areas who have access only to public media outlets such as Moldova 1 and Radio Moldova receive only one-sided, tendentious information.
- Certain cases of intimidation of media outlets that don't favor the ruling party have been registered. The decision to investigate Albasat TV station during the electoral campaign can be interpreted as an attempt to harass media outlets with anticommunist editorial policies.

The 2009 Coalition is a voluntary union of Moldovan NGOs aiming to secure free, fair, transparent and democratic 2009 parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova, and continues to promote activities for free and fair elections started by the 2005 and 2007 Coalitions. The current 2009 Coalition comprises more than 60 NGOs.