



coalitia 2009



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Monitoring Mass Media during the Campaign for Parliamentary Elections Anticipated on 29 July 2009

Report No.2
29 June – 5 July 2009

1. General data

1.1 Project goal: To monitor the performance of broadcast media during the electoral campaign and to inform the public about the results including the access of electoral candidates to media outlets and whether they guarantee pluralism of opinions. The aim is to analyze reporting trends that can affect media performance and compromise their ability to provide truthful, balanced and comprehensive information to the public.

1.2 Monitoring period: 22 June – 29 July 2009

1.3 Criteria for selection of media outlets to be monitored:

Audience-impact (national, quasi-national)

Justification: It is well-known that there is a direct connection between the size of the audience and the impact of media on public opinion: the more people who are exposed to a message, the stronger its impact on certain segments of society.

Ownership (public or private)

Justification: Public media are managed with public funds and are obliged to provide complete, accurate, impartial, balanced and fair information to the public about all political, social and economic developments in Moldova. Private media also have an ethical obligation to present multiple viewpoints and to cover major events on the public agenda.

Broadcast language (Romanian and Russian).

Justification: In addition to media broadcasts in Romanian, stations providing news in Russian were included in the study as this language is accessible not only to Russian minorities but also to other ethnic minorities like Bulgarians, Gagauz and Ukrainians.

1.4 Stations/newscasts analyzed

Moldova 1 (“Mesager” at 21:00): public TV station, national coverage, broadcasts in Russian and Romanian

Prime TV (“Evenimentul” at 20:35): private station, national coverage, broadcasts in Romanian

NIT (“Curier” at 21:30): private station, quasi-national coverage, broadcasts in Russian and Romanian (Chişinău, Cahul, Edineţ, Comrat, Varniţa, Ungheni, Cetireni, Nisporeni, Soroca, Cimişlia, Căuşeni, Trifeşti, Străşeni, Mândreştii Noi, Leova, Criuleni)

EU TV (“Monitor” at 21:00): private station, quasi-national coverage, broadcasts in Romanian (Străşeni, Ocniţa, Floreşti, Trifeşti, Cimişlia, Briceni, Cantemir, Drochia, Făleşti, Glodeni, Sângerei, Ştefan Vodă, Taraclia)

Radio Moldova ("Panorama zilei" at 19:00): public station, national coverage, broadcasts in Romanian and Russian

2. Methodological framework

One daily newscast on each station was monitored for news with either a direct or an indirect electoral character. Each news item was subject to an assessment of content and context to establish whether it was favorable or unfavorable to one party or another or to one political entity or another. The news was also analyzed according to the following objective criteria.

Impartiality/objectivity: According to the journalistic code of ethics, the news must be impartial and objective; it should not favor certain parties/groups/individuals to the detriment of others. Journalistic objectivity implies a clear distinction between opinions and facts both through the selection of the angle of approach and through the details provided. Discriminatory elements in reports and news items are a prime indication that the story is presented from a journalist's point of view. Screening the news and a minimal analysis of background and context also imply that the interests of certain persons and not those of the general public are being protected.¹

Fairness and balance of sources/diversity of opinions: To be correct and balanced, the news should cover all the parties involved in a dispute, particularly when the subject matter is controversial, and should treat all opponents equally.² Also, the media should ensure the access of the public to a variety of views to help people reach their own opinions about events. If certain views are given more attention than others, they become prominent and implicitly affect the public's perception about what is happening in society.

Language and videos: Responsible journalism means not only a truthful presentation of facts but also includes the use of correct, decent language. Deliberate exaggerations and licentious language such as pejorative labels for individuals or organizations and images manipulated to show certain parties in a negative light can raise serious questions about respect for ethical and professional standards. The ethical conduct of journalists is especially in question when videos show things that are not true and have been fabricated as well as when news items are illustrated with images that have no connection with the explanatory text.

¹ Simona Ștefănescu, *Riscurile comunicării mediatice în timpul conflictelor*

² Fico, Sofin, and Dragger, 2007. *Fairness and defamation in the reporting of local issues*

3. Monitoring data



Moldova 1

Involvement in the electoral campaign: From 29 June to 5 July 2009, Moldova 1 broadcast a total of 53 electoral news items, 28 of which were under the "Elections 2009" rubric and 5 others in the Sunday newscast under the "Weekly Retrospective" rubric. In one way or another, Moldova 1 referred to nearly all the electoral events organized by the candidates. Only some of them benefited from favorable news, while others were presented in a biased way with a view to discrediting them.

As in the previous monitoring period, all newscasts on Moldova 1 were conceived in such a way as to put the central public authorities and the ruling party in a positive light by portraying them as "mastering the situation" in essence, being concerned about the economic and social problems. In contrast, the opposition parties were put in a negative light, showing them as frivolous, disapproving, lying and destabilizing. A new element was the almost daily coverage of the work of Deputy Prime Minister Iurie Roșca, especially his meetings with the staff of ministries and departments that he is in charge of, i.e., the Ministry of the Interior, the Anti-corruption Center, the Customs Department and the Ministry of Justice. The intense coverage of Roșca, who is also the leader of the People's Christian Democratic Party (PPCD) but is not a candidate on the party list, thus provides publicity for PPCD electoral candidates.

Impartiality and objectivity: Most of the news broadcasts with electoral impact on Moldova 1 were not impartial or balanced as they presented the events in such way as to favor the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM) and to disfavor, or even to compromise, the opposition parties in some cases. The government and PCRM were mentioned directly or indirectly in 33 news items, 30 in a favorable context and only 3 in a neutral context. The opposition parties and the local public administration of Chișinău were mentioned in 23 news items, 17 in a negative context and 6 in a neutral context.

In most cases, Moldova 1 did not cover the press events of opposition parties in a balanced way and did not convey those parties' messages, either by purposely omitting aspects that would have disfavored PCRM or by stressing aspects that presented opposition parties in a negative light. In some news items about candidates other than those from PCRM, their messages were distorted or were taken out of context. A conclusive example is the press conference of the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM) on 1 July during which candidate Iurie Leancă said that, "PLDM will develop a state strategy to integrate national minorities into society and will implement concrete projects to implement that strategy with special attention to bilingual education." Moldova 1, however,

informed viewers in its report that the strategy on integrating national minorities developed by PLDM provides that, “minorities will enjoy full rights only if they speak Romanian very well” (see Case Study Number 1).

Another example is the news item about the press conference of Our Moldova Alliance (AMN) on 1 July. Moldova 1 omitted the statements of leader Serafim Urechean who said that Moldova is behind with regard to reforming the prosecutor’s office and law-enforcement bodies, and that Moldova had lost nearly 200 cases at the European Court for Human Rights (ECHR) while another 1,820 cases against Moldova were currently pending before that court.

Moldova 1 also presented many news items that did not comply with professional standards in which it tried to prove that opposition statements about electoral fraud were not grounded. A clear example in this sense is the news item of 3 July, “The dead are rising: two men from Ciuciuleni Village in Hâncești District are alive and well although the opposition says that when they voted on 5 April they were dead.” Although the material was presented as an investigation, the reporter relied on what the mayor, who sympathized with PCRM, had said, did not ask for proof of those allegations and did not try to find out from the opposition whether they had indeed launched such allegations and whether there were dead people with the same names as the men mentioned in the news (see Case Study Number 2).

The station’s biased broadcasting is further demonstrated by its ignorance on certain subjects that were unfavorable to PCRM and by its refusal to update news it had previously broadcast. Thus on 1 July, Moldova 1 did not include in its newscast the news about four Communists from the village of Sângera who had left PCRM and joined the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM). On 29 June, Moldova 1 announced that, “The elections of 5 April were transparent, democratic and complied with all international standards. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) at its Vilnius meeting received official acknowledgement of the report submitted by the head of the observers’ group, Petros Efthymiou. He thanked the Moldovan authorities for their cooperation with the observers.” OSCE denied this later in a press release and declared that the statement broadcast by Moldpres on 29 June that quoted Petros Efthymiou, Head of the Second Commission of the Parliamentary Assembly of OSCE, was not correct (source: interlic.md), but Moldova 1 ignored that declaration.

Fairness and balance of sources/diversity of opinions: From 29 June to 5 July, Moldova 1 broadcast a total of 18 controversial news items, 13 of which presented a single viewpoint about the events described, although the opinions of other sources—those of the opponents—should have been included. Moldova 1 asked the opinions of PCRM representatives every time the party was mentioned in the statements of opposition parties, but it did not do the same when PCRM accused the other candidates. Thus, in the press conference of 29 June, PCRM candidate

Vadim Mișin blamed the liberal parties for launching unionist slogans and scaring national minorities: “We hear that Chișinău does not need a Parliament or a President’s Office because all these are in Bucharest...Ethnic minorities are alarmed by the official position of the liberals...The liberals’ lists do not include national minority representatives.” Moldova 1 did not, however, ask the opinions of the parties accused. On 1 July, PL and PLDM organized press conferences at which they also made certain allegations against PCRM, including in response to Mișin’s previous statements. This time, each statement was commented on either by the Communists or by representatives of ethnic minority. Note that PLDM candidate Dmitri Ciubașenco also attended that press conference; his presence was meant to be an answer to Mișin’s statement that no representatives of ethnic minorities were on the liberal parties’ lists. However, Moldova 1 censored all videos showing Ciubașenco. On the same date at the end of the “Elections 2009” coverage, Moldova 1 broadcast a report on the press conference of the leaders of Socialist Party “Patria-Rodina” who stated that, “The liberal opposition wants fear and chaos to prevail in Moldovan society, and their coming to power would mean condemning the Moldovan people to a life without a prosperous future,” and that Patria-Rodina would support the Communist Party in the elections. The liberals’ opinion was again missing in this case and also in the press conference of 3 July of Communist candidate Irina Vlah who said that, “The liberal parties are generating Gagauz extremism through their statements and actions.”

Separation of facts from opinions: Sometimes Moldova 1 reporters took the liberty of using bantering, ironic commentary or even of making groundless allegations against the opposition. For example, when quoting PL leader Mihai Ghimpu who uttered the general sentence, “The elections of 29 July are very important to us, to all society; they are important because we must make a radical decision at these elections, a decision to change things in Moldova,” the reporter commented, “This address was the most important one but not the only one at the press conference of the Liberal Party...they again made allegations of fraud and again failed to bring evidence” (1 July).



Radio Moldova

Involvement in the electoral campaign: During this period, Radio Moldova covered most of the electoral activities of candidates registered with the Central Election Committee (CEC) except on Saturday and Sunday when its newscasts lacked the “Elections 2009” rubric. In total, this public station broadcast 34 electoral news items, 27 of which were under the specialized rubric.

Impartiality and objectivity: Monitoring showed that Radio Moldova did not observe the principle of journalistic objectivity, balance and impartiality in most of the news related to the candidates. Hence, Radio Moldova presented PCRM candidates in only a favorable context in all news items related directly or

indirectly to the election. The following also appeared in a positive context in “Panorama zilei”: PPCD 3 times, PDM 2 times and PLDM and AMN 1 time each. In contrast, the news department of this public station presented PL candidates exclusively in a negative context (9 times). The “opposition” in general (or “the liberal parties”) and AMN and PLDM appeared in an unfavorable context 6 times and 4 times each, respectively. As on Moldova 1, Radio Moldova also failed to cover the news about the four Communists from the village of Sângera leaving PCRM and joining PDM in its main daily newscast (1 July).

PCRM representatives further enjoyed more air time compared with the other candidates. In addition to the fact that reports on events organized by PCRM were usually longer in duration than reports on other candidates’ events, every time the opposition parties criticized or made statements about PCRM or the government, this public station offered the right to respond to a PCRM candidate (the response was sometimes longer in duration than the allegation itself). However, when PCRM launched allegations against other electoral candidates, especially against the liberal parties, Radio Moldova “forgot” to offer them the right to respond. A clear example of this was the program “Panorama zilei” on Thursday 2 July when PCRM representatives were given the right to respond each time the opposition parties directly or indirectly accused the government or PCRM. The opposition ever enjoyed this right, even though it was entitled to it at least 3 times (see Case Study Number 3).

The press events of the opposition were covered in a clearly biased way, either by stressing secondary or negative aspects, by making ironic or negative comments about them, or by presenting them in such a way that the listeners could not understand what they were about. Thus, the news about the press conference of the chairman of the Small Business Association, Mihai Roşcovan, on the topic of potential protests by patent holders (on 29 June) was presented as a political statement under the rubric “Elections 2009.” Roşcovan was presented as an “AMN member” and the PCRM representative S. Sârbu, who was given the right to respond, said that the allegations had an electoral character and were aberrant and that public associations had no legal right to get involved in the electoral campaign. The report on the press conference of AMN that was aired in the same program presented in a selective and distorted way the message conveyed by that electoral candidate. Although AMN launched the film *Defending Moldova* at the conference in response to the film *Attacking Moldova* that presents the PCRM view on the events of 7 April, Radio Moldova limited its broadcast to AMN’s statements about electoral fraud. The reporter also scoffed at AMN’s ability to calculate the number of proven cases of fraud.

The news reporters in other cases also made ironic and bantering commentary on the statements of opposition parties. For example, when presenting the press conference of AMN leader Serafim Urechean (on 1 July) on the launching the electoral campaign, the reporter said: “...although it was announced as a campaign

launching conference, the party presented only its slogan...The leader could not say if the party had a program for ethnic minorities.” In the same newscast, the PLDM proposal to develop a strategy for integrating ethnic minorities was presented in a distorted and ironic way (“Ethnic minorities will enjoy all rights only if they speak the state language...Iurie Leancă began testing how well journalists know the language”). In the report on the PLDM press conference of 3 July, the journalist presented the goal of launching the fund “April 2009” in a biased way thus distorting reality (“...with a view to helping the youth **brought on 7 April into the Great National Assembly Square by the liberal parties** who had to suffer as a result of the destruction of those two state buildings”). [Note: our boldface]

Fairness and balance of sources/diversity of sources: The sources used in the news on Radio Moldova were rarely diverse and usually presented “reality” from a single viewpoint. Of the 20 news items with a controversial character, only 7 gave the opponents the right to respond. Almost every time the opposition blamed the government or PCRM (even if the allegations were indirect), Radio Moldova presented the PCRM response (6 out of 7 cases) while the reporters did not ask the opinions of the parties mentioned in news items containing allegations against the liberal parties. Thus, on 29 June, Radio Moldova aired a news item about the PLDM press conference during which allegations were made that PL had copied its anti-crisis program. Radio Moldova included the PL position in the news and came back to that subject only on 3 July when it referred to the statement made by PL leader Mihai Ghimpu to reject the allegations while at the same time repeating the allegations launched by PLDM. When referring to the PLDM press conference in the same newscast, the reporter said that Alexandru Tănase had launched allegations that Minister of Interior Gheorghe Papuc had made electoral propaganda in favor of PCRM. Papuc’s response was not included in the report, but the journalist mentioned that the Ministry of the Interior would hold a press conference on the following day to express its position regarding the PLDM allegations. (The announced conference did not take place).

On 30 June in the report on the PCRM press conference, Vladimir Țurcan blamed the liberal parties for bringing false evidence of electoral fraud and presented a concrete case that in his opinion justified that statement. Again, the positions of those mentioned in the report were missing.



Prime TV

Involvement in the electoral campaign: Prime TV is the second TV station with national coverage and relays many programs from the Russian channel Pervii Kanal. Although the station had announced that it would not get involved in the electoral campaign, from 29 June to 5 July its newscasts included items that directly

or indirectly favored an electoral candidate. In all, Prime TV broadcast four such news items; most of them referred to the activities of Acting President Vladimir Voronin, the PCRM leader who is a candidate on this party's list.

Impartiality and objectivity: Although Prime said that it would not get involved in the campaign, this station promoted a positive image of the current government and implicitly of PCRM by selecting news to broadcast. Its daily newscasts contained 5 or 6 items, and usually the first one referred to the activities of the government and its representatives. All 4 news items that were favorable to PCRM were partisan both through the angle of approach and through the selection of sources.

Thus, on 30 June, Prime TV started its newscast with news about the adoption of a government decision that would exempt farmers from land tax. Prime Minister Zinaida Greceanii was quoted; she appeared in the picture and stated that there were difficulties at present due to the crisis and to the political instability affecting the country. This news was electoral in character first of all because it referred to possible incentives from the current government for a certain category of voters. Also, the appearance of the Prime Minister referring to political instability and the country's image indirectly affected the image of the three opposition parties.

Another news item with electoral connotations was the one about the meetings of the Acting President Vladimir Voronin with the Ukrainian and Russian ambassadors. With the Russian ambassador, the Acting President discussed the possibility of obtaining a 500 million dollar loan and the need to sign an agreement that would facilitate employing Moldovan migrants in Russia. The electoral elements in this news consist of reminding the audience about the loan granted by Russia to help overcome the economic crisis and the Moldovan migrants are promised possible solutions and working conditions in Russia.

Another purely electoral news item that made propaganda in favor of PCRM was about the ceremony distributing cards to PCRM candidates for Parliament in which PCRM leader Vladimir Voronin (presented by the station as acting president) harshly attacked the opposition. He said that the Moldovan state and its stability would be maintained only with a continuation of the policies promoted in the past eight years when the country was ruled by PCRM.

If this station has truly decided not to get involved in covering the campaign, it should be very careful not to favor one electoral candidate to the detriment of the others in its newscasts. During this reference period, Prime gave priority to the activities of the government and of the acting president either in news of an electoral character (land taxes and an agreement to facilitate the employment of Moldovan migrants in Russia), or in protocol news (laying flowers at the monument of Ștefan cel Mare), or in news about PCRM events (distribution of

cards) all of which enhanced the image of PCRM whose lists include both the acting president and the prime minister.

It must be noted that Prime TV broadcasts were not timely, as it frequently broadcast news after a delay, such as the news items about Vladimir Voronin's meeting with foreign ambassadors and about the ceremony for distributing cards which were broadcast on the day after the events; the dates of the events were not mentioned.

Fairness and balance of news/diversity of opinions: None of news items monitored quoted a variety of sources that would have presented varied opinions. They mainly relied on press releases even if the presenter did not mention that fact. Prime TV did not use alternative sources to present more than one viewpoint on the events and the subjects it tackled to its audience, although the news about the land tax and that about the loan required expert opinions. The news making allegations against the opposition obliged the station to quote the party mentioned. Thus, this TV station with national coverage deprived the public of information that would help citizens make informed decisions on election day.



NIT

Involvement in the electoral campaign: From 29 June to 5 July 2009 this station with quasi-national coverage broadcast 80 news items including 50 with electoral character. Only 18 of them appeared under the "Elections 2009" rubric. Most of the news covered the activities of Acting President Vladimir Voronin and of the government, the press conferences of the candidates, meetings of citizens and meetings chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Iurie Roşca.

Impartiality and objectivity: NIT openly favored PCRM not only in air space offered but also through the selection and presentation of news items. Events organized by the opposition either were not taken into consideration by this station's reporters, or they were covered with exaggerated criticism or were distorted by misrepresenting their messages. NIT favored PCRM and the government in 38 subjects aired on "Curier." Opposition parties PL, AMN and PLDM were the subject of 14 news items, all of which disfavored them.

Most "Curier" programs that were broadcast this week (5 out of 7) started with news about the current activities of the head of the state: laying flowers, inaugurating bridges, meetings with ambassadors and graduates, visits to monasteries and government meetings. Contrary to Article 16 of the Regulation on Coverage of Electoral Campaign in the Anticipated Parliamentary Elections by Moldovan Media, approved by CEC, Mr. Voronin appeared more than once in the videos. Prime Minister Zinaida Greceanii was another presence in this station's newscasts which violates the same regulation that establishes that persons holding

responsible positions in public administration and who are involved in the electoral campaign should not appear in videos, should not grant interviews and should not make statements communicating information about their activities. She appeared in four newscasts in government meetings and in other working meetings. Three news items were inspired by the visits of Deputy Prime Minister Iurie Roșca to various agencies for which he is responsible: the Anti-corruption Center, the Customs Service and the Ministry of Justice. The reporter's bias is evident in the first sentences on those subjects: "Deputy Prime Minister Iurie Roșca applauds the officers of the Anti-corruption Center for their professionalism, transparency and open cooperation with the media" (on 30 June) and, "The conditions in those 10 prisons have improved lately due to international assistance and also to government assistance, Deputy Prime Minister Iurie Roșca said today in a review meeting at the Ministry of Justice" (2 July).

The "Elections 2009" rubric was dominated by news items favorable to PCRM (11 out of 18). All the conferences of this party were broadly covered and took nearly two thirds of the coverage granted to such news items (28.5 minutes out of a total of 46). The subjects of the events organized by PCRM were covered in such a way as to provide more information about the electoral platform of this party and its positions in connection with various problems in society. Here is a sample of several opening sentences in those reports: "The statements of the political leaders of PL, AMN and PLDM about the rigging of the elections of 5 April are nothing but an attempt to camouflage their own actions after the elections" (Vadim Mișin on 29 June); "The evidence brought by the opposition parties to prove that the elections of 5 April were fraudulent is false" (First Deputy Speaker of Parliament Vladimir Țurcan on 30 June); "PCRM will create optimal conditions so that all citizens, regardless of where they are, in the country or abroad, will be able to express their right to vote" (on 2 July); "The electorate of Gagauz Yeri will support the ruling party" (on 3 July).

Chișinău authorities in general, especially Mayor Dorin Chirtoacă, remained the element most covered outside the electoral rubric. In this case, reporter Sergiu Strungaru made many editorial comments so that balance and objectivity were lost and bias and interpretation were very often present. Most of the time facts were not separated from opinions. Here are several examples: "The city Mayor's Office has recently decided, **finally**, to take control of the rotten trees, but **again** it **has stumbled**... Some say that the municipal authorities **have again stumbled over their own inefficiency**, and subsequently they accuse all around of putting up obstacles for the Mayor's Office...Today, when the capital is facing **the most serious social problems in the past ten years**, the mayor has resigned from office to participate in the elections." [Note: our boldface]

Fairness and balance of sources/diversity of opinions: In this reporting period, NIT registered a number of deficiencies as most of the time it presented information from a single source only. Of the 21 controversial news items that contained

allegations against various electoral candidates, only 4 quoted the positions of all parties mentioned.

News items about the latest achievements of the government featured only people who seemed very satisfied, and the reporters concentrated on registering the emotions of as great a number of them present at the event as possible. The principle of balance and diversity of sources was thus not observed in the coverage about the opening of a new department at the Family Doctors' Center in Nisporeni (on 2 July), how the government solved bankruptcy problems for banks (on 2 July), the launching of public healthcare projects in Nisporeni (on 3 July) and the opening of a boiler unit at a kindergarten in Svetlîi Village (on 4 July). These examples as well as others offered viewers a false diversity of sources as it did not include a diversity of opinions.

Pluralism of opinions in NIT news items was also affected by the extensive use of anonymous sources. In some instances, especially those related to the municipal authorities and opposition parties, many "experts" were quoted whose identities were known only to the reporter. For example, the report on the Chişinău Municipal Council on 29 June said: "**Some** say that the municipal authorities have again stumbled over their own inefficiency and then accuse all around of putting obstacles in front of the Mayor's Office... In this context, **some analysts** think that dozens of initiatives that have not been implemented can be included in the list of dead projects..." Another report on the Municipal Council on 30 June said: "**Most municipal councilors** say that Dorin Chirtoacă illegally employed his party colleague Mihai Moldovanu as Head of the Healthcare Department. **In the opinion of local elected officials**, the liberals are pursuing an illegal interest in these sources. " A report on the PLDM press conference on 1 July said: "The former deputy minister of foreign affairs has said that the ruling party's policy was a destabilizing factor. His statements stirred reactions in society. **The representatives of several communities** in which **several ethnic groups** live say that the allegations [of PLDM] had no logic and were just manipulative tools in the electoral campaign and that there were no problems among the ethnic groups." [Note: our boldface]

Most of the news items with an electoral character in which PCRM launched allegations against other electoral candidates were not accompanied by the latter's reactions, but the conferences of the opposition parties were always commented on by "experts." This "balance" of sources was characteristic not only of electoral news but also of other news that did not refer to the current government.

Language and videos: The lack of objectivity on NIT was also evident in its malicious coverage of opposition events and by its labeling of the political leaders of those parties. Thus, in the report on the press conference of PLDM on 29 June, the reporter made the following editorial remarks: "PLDM shoots itself in the foot again...After physical attacks on and verbal humiliation of journalists who do not want to play the liberals' game, those who claim to be protecting democratic

principles are the first to defy them...Tănase became very angry at Russian television station NTV." In the report on the PL press conference on 1 July the reporter said, "The Liberal Party does not condemn the actions of the Romanian Army of 60 years ago when a war was started against the current country of Moldova on the order of Marshal Antonescu...Thus, Mihai Ghimpu either is lying that he does not know history or he does not want to condemn Antonescu's actions who is known by the people as a war criminal...Dorin Chirtoacă has often been suspected of sympathizing with Nazi elements. He even has proved in public that he likes to use the fascist gesture."

In its newscasts, this station most often used videos of the destruction of the Parliament and President's Office buildings on 7 April. Although many times they were accompanied by the notation "archives," they were not always used in a reasonable way. They were used as background many times when remarks about the opposition parties and their leaders were made and during reports that had no connection with the protests of 7 April. This misled the audience and created erroneous connections or false interpretations about the actions of the opposition (newscasts on 29 June and 1 and 5 July).

Another NIT manipulation was using archive videos from the Second World War (see Case Study 4). The image of Marshal Antonescu was often superposed on the images of opposition leaders, especially on that of Dorin Chirtoacă, Deputy Chairman of PL. On 1 July, an NIT broadcast using many war-time shots lasted for 3.55 minutes. At the end, an association was made between a greeting by Dorin Chirtoacă and the fascist greeting used by Hitler. Shocking images from the Second World War (people shot in the temple, rows of people hanged) also appeared in the background while a witness recounted the actions of Marshal Antonescu. Again, the events of World War II were related to the opposition on 3 July. The voice in the background announced that, "Moldova's territory has been washed with the blood of hundreds of people who were executed only because they were not Romanians or because they did not accept the fascist ideology." In this and in other cases, the reporters used words and phrases that denoted their attitude toward certain speakers. For instance, in the report on the PCRM press conference of 29 June the journalist said, "Moreover, another statement lacking absolutely any logic is that about the fraudulent elections shouted out by Urechean who alleges that the elections were rigged to the tune of 30 percent." The term "to shout out" is not the most appropriate one for a journalist to convey his/her objective and impartial attitude toward a politician. The same reporter made value judgments about the statements made by PL candidate Ștefan Urâtu. Assessing one of the candidate's statements, the reporter said, "The logic of his statements is totally absurd, and Urâtu's actions are qualified by analysts as political partisanship." In another report, NIT editors agreed to broadcast a street survey and allowed a respondent to say things that more closely resembled insults and personal attacks than simple opinions: "They are his followers [of Antonescu], Chirtoacă, Ghimpu and Urechean are barbarians, thieves, ruffians, killers, betrayers."



EU TV

Involvement in the electoral campaign: From 29 June to 5 July, EU TV broadcast 7 newscasts containing 46 items that had a direct or indirect relation to the electoral campaign. Of those, 19 were included under the “Elections 2009” rubric.

The station kept an eye on all meetings and visits of Deputy Prime Minister Iurie Roșca who is the PPCD Chairman and who is involved in the electoral campaign but who does not appear on this party’s list in the elections. Events with Roșca’s participation were described in 6 news items, with an emphasis on the need to fight corruption in the judiciary, on the excellent situation in customs and on policemen not admitting abuses in their work.

The station paid increased attention to municipal problems and dedicated six news items to this topic, all of which were unfavorable to the administration and to Chișinău’s mayor. In most of them, either a direct or indirect connection was made between the inefficient resolution of problems by the local administration and Mayor Chirtoacă who is a candidate on the PL lists.

Impartiality and objectivity: Of the total number of news items, 36 referred directly or indirectly to the activities of the candidates. The station’s biased attitude was noticeable in 16 broadcasts as it did not manage to cover the subjects mentioned in a balanced way.

PPCD was favored directly or indirectly in 7 news items that referred either to that party’s electoral activities or to the activities of Deputy Prime Minister Iurie Roșca. Some news items about Mr. Rosca followed the electoral rubric with PPCD candidates and the party’s symbols in the background. Thus, the image of the PPCD leader was transferred to PPCD candidates and vice versa (see for instance items 2 and 3 in the newscast on 2 July).

The current government and PCRM mainly appeared in a positive context; they were favored in five news items and disfavored in two. An example of news favoring the Communist Party was the item on the press conference of Vladimir Voronin who was presented as Speaker of Parliament and who referred to the loan granted by Russia saying that the money would be used to reconstruct roads and to provide drinking water to five districts (3 July). Another news item that did not appear under the rubric “Elections 2009” but that made electoral propaganda was the one on the ceremony distributing cards to PCRM candidates for Parliament during which Vladimir Voronin, who this time was presented as Acting President, launched negative allegations against the opposition and made propaganda in favor of PCRM: “The Moldovan state and its stability will be maintained only if the policies promoted in the past eight years are continued,” and, “...there is no other

political force in the country that can represent the interests of all of society” (3 July). On 4 July, EU TV broadcast another news item on a Voronin conference in which the opposition was again attacked by alleging that it is backed up by criminal groups. These examples show flagrant violations of Article 16 of the Regulation on Coverage of Electoral Campaign in the Anticipated Parliamentary Elections of 29 July 2009 by Moldovan Media approved by CEC.

The other electoral candidates were mentioned directly or indirectly in 18 news items, 14 of which had a negative connotation. PL was the one to appear most often in an unfavorable context, especially in news referring to problems in the Chişinău Mayor’s Office. In some cases the bias was obvious through the angle of approach, the sources included in the news and the failure to separate facts from opinions. Thus, the tenth news item in the newscast on 1 July started with, “After being accused of provoking inter-ethnic tensions, the representatives of the radical opposition respond in the same way.” This sentence thus labeled the representatives of PL, PLDM and AMN as representatives of the radical opposition. Another news item on 1 July started with, “Topsy-turvy solutions: stray dogs are exterminated with the tacit approval of Mayor Dorin Chirtoacă.” The news was presented as an accomplished fact although the text itself did not make direct reference to Dorin Chirtoacă (see Case Study 5). In another item, the reporter’s attitude toward the conference of PLDM chairman Vlad Filat became clear in the statement “... Filat, however, did not specify if the wounded policemen would also receive money” and from the tone with which that statement was made (item number nine in the newscast on 3 July). Item number three in the newscast on 4 July began, “The municipal administration continues to ignore the stray dog problem,” but the reporter did not refer to any source and presented this opinion as an accomplished fact.

Fairness and balance of sources/diversity of opinions: EU TV had further problems ensuring a diversity of sources in its news. Thus, of the 36 news items that referred to the electoral candidates, only 8 presented various points of view. Although 12 items were controversial and contained allegations, in only 4 of them were all the parties involved in the conflict quoted. An example, the news about the Mayor’s Office ignoring the stray dog problem did not make reference to a second source, although direct allegations were launched. Another example is the news about the poor conditions in Vadul-lui-Vodă camp in which reference was made to Dorin Chirtoacă without asking his opinion (on 1, 2 and 4 July). Another news item referred to the harsh allegations made by Vladimir Voronin against the leaders of PL, PLDM and AMN (on 3 July), but the accused parties were not asked to comment so the public was offered only the position of Acting President Voronin.

Controversial news that was broadcast under the “Elections 2009” rubric did not always offer the floor to all parties mentioned such as the news item about regional branches leaving PSD for other electoral candidates (on 30 June). Also on 30 June, an item about a meeting of the Chişinău Municipal Council in which a conflict

occurred between two chiefs of the same department—one appointed by the general mayor and the other by the municipal council—appeared under that rubric. It is not clear why this station decided to broadcast this news under “Elections 2009” because it did not have a direct connection to the electoral activities of the candidates.

Thus, EU TV frequently violated the regulations approved by CEC (Article 19) and implicitly of the Broadcast Code (Article 7) which provide that information must be truthful and must not be distorted through headings and editorial commentary, while news on conflicts should be based on multiple sources.

4. Conclusions

Based on these monitoring results, the conclusion is that from 29 June to 5 July, the stations monitored continued to severely deviate from ethical and professional principles and in some cases violated the provisions of the Broadcast Code and of the Regulation on Coverage of Electoral Campaign in the Anticipated Parliamentary Elections of 29 July 2009 by Moldovan Media approved by CEC. As a result, these stations did not cover the electoral campaign in a fair and balanced manner.

- The public stations Moldova 1 and Radio Moldova selectively applied the principles of fair, balanced and impartial coverage of the parliamentary elections. Most of the news about the electoral campaign presented only the viewpoint of the government and of PCRM. Some of the news broadcast under the “Elections 2009” rubric referring to the opposition parties was biased and presented information in a distorted way with a view to discrediting those electoral candidates. The principle of presenting a diversity of opinion was observed only for PCRM and was totally ignored for the opposition parties.
- Prime TV, a station with national coverage that decided not to get involved in covering the electoral campaign, did not broadcast any news about the elections and the activities of the electoral candidates but at the same time promoted the image of PCRM, including news that made direct electoral propaganda. Thus, Prime TV deprived the public of information about all electoral candidates and limited citizens’ access to comprehensive information.
- NIT, a station with quasi-national coverage, continued to be an electoral rostrum for PCRM not only through the space offered to news about this party’s electoral candidates but also through the selection and presentation of news items. The absolute majority of the news articles broadcast by NIT in the reference period was biased, and the news referring to the opposition

parties often denigrated their images and leaders. The station promoted hatred and used aggressive journalistic language, historic events and archive videos in an attempt to discredit the liberal parties.

- EU TV, also with quasi-national coverage, favored PPCD and PCRM both through news coverage of electoral events and through news items accompanied by videos showing Vladimir Voronin and Iurie Roșca. The station was deficient regarding the impartiality and balance of sources, especially in news referring to the Chișinău Mayor's Office and implicitly to Mayor Chirtoacă who is Deputy Chairman of PL.

5. Actions taken to improve the situation

From 22 June to 5 July, several flagrant violations of ethical and professional principles were analyzed in case studies (2 news items on Moldova 1, 2 news items on NIT and one news item on EU TV) that were posted on the information portal Moldova azi (www.azi.md).

On 25 June, the Independent Journalism Center sent letters to CEC, to the Broadcast Coordinating Council and to NIT in which it pointed out that NIT had frequently violated the Regulation on Coverage of Electoral Campaign in the Anticipated Parliamentary Elections of 29 July 2009 by Moldovan Media. The violations related to coverage of electoral events in a biased manner, and as a result, NIT had failed to ensure a pluralism of ideas and opinions.

Another letter accompanied by the first monitoring report that includes specific violations of legislation was sent to CEC and to the Broadcast Coordinating Council with a request to examine those cases and to take necessary measures to ensure impartiality, balance and the free formation of opinions by presenting opposing viewpoints.

So far, CEC and the Broadcast Coordinating Council have not reacted, and no improvements have been noticed in the quality of the electoral campaign coverage.

6. Recommendations:

- The media monitored should use these monitoring reports as self-regulatory tools and should eliminate all weaknesses so that subsequently they will:
 - inform voters fairly, impartially and in a balanced way;
 - abandon editorial remarks or comments on the electoral events of the political parties or of their representatives when presenting news;
 - eliminate discrimination in applying the principle of pluralism and diversity of opinions and in offering the right to respond;

- take into account the political beliefs of various categories of the population thus ensuring balance and diversity of opinions as well as the freedom of expression;
 - cover events truthfully without distorting reality with irrelevant, inappropriate videos and without making biased comments and by observing the principle of providing information from multiple sources.
- The Observers' Board of the public broadcaster Teleradio-Moldova should urgently review this monitoring report and take measures to ensure a balanced presentation of electoral events on Moldova 1 and Radio Moldova that would be in the public interest.
- The Broadcast Coordinating Council should take action and impose sanctions in accordance with the Broadcast Code on those broadcasters that violate the right of Moldovan people to the free expression of opinions and of the right to free communication of information through radio and television.

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CASE STUDIES

Case Study Number 1 (<http://www.azi.md/ro/story/4165>)

Moldova 1, 1 July 2009 at 21:00. Material by Marina Cojocaru Presenter: Angela Gavriluc-Balan

In the newscast “Mesager” on 1 July 2009 at 21:00 under the rubric “Elections 2009,” Moldova 1 presented an item about the press conference of PLDM in which it not only misrepresented the message of PLDM candidate Iurie Leancă but also attempted to incite national minorities against PLDM.

Presenter: “PLDM intends to develop a state strategy on the integration of national minorities into society. PLDM member, Iurie Leancă, who announced this, has mentioned today that ethnic minorities living in Moldova will enjoy full rights only if they speak Romanian very well.”

Insert 1

Iurie Leancă: “... a person who graduates from school but is a representative of a national minority and speaks well his/her mother tongue, if he/she is Bulgarian the Bulgarian language, but who also speaks Romanian well, the language of the state where he/she lives, such a person will be a citizen with absolutely all rights and responsibilities that belong to a Moldovan citizen. Such a concept is to be detailed and implemented.”

Comparing what the presenter says to what Iurie Leancă says, we notice several differences:

- The presenter speaks about ethnic minorities in general whereas Iurie Leancă refers to school graduates who are representatives of national minorities.
- The presenter uses the phrase “only if” but we do not find this phrase in Leancă’s text.
- The presenter does not say that conditions will be created for the representatives of national minorities who are school graduates to speak “well” both their mother tongue and Romanian.

Presenter: “The national minorities disagree with the position of the liberal democrats.”

Insert 2

Iuri Statkevici, chairman of the council of the Belarus community: “People who are more than 50 cannot speak the language fluently. This will turn into oppression (a constraint;) . Such a law and position is incorrect in my view. “

Insert 3

Serghei Osipean, deputy chairman of the Armenian community in Moldova: "I am obliged to speak it. I was born in Baku, I speak Armenian and Azerbaijani; if I had been born here I would speak the language. My children speak Moldovan, Romanian [you name it as you want, it does not matter]. Yes, [in this case] I am obliged to speak the language and I think all national minorities are obliged to speak it. But the problem should not be raised in such a way that if you do not speak the language then you are inferior."

We can deduce from the reactions of the representatives of the Belarus and Armenian communities that they are commenting not on the statements of Iurie Leancă but on the presenter's words about what Leancă said. Because if they had been asked whether they agreed that the graduates of Moldovan schools spoke their mother tongue and Romanian equally well, their answers would definitely have been different.

Such an approach misleads the minorities and the viewers in general; it aims to stir discontent with PLDM and with the opposition in general.

Iurie Leancă's statement could have been understood by the audience, including by national minorities only if it had been included in the context in which the author said it: "The manner in which the current legislation is implemented does not contribute to the integration of the minorities but leads to their continuous denationalization. For this purpose, PLDM will develop a state strategy on the integration of the national minorities into society and will implement concrete projects in view of achieving it, with special attention to be provided to bilingual education." However, the idea of "bilingual education" was omitted by the author in order to distort the politician's message and to obtain the manipulative effect desired.

Note that another PLDM candidate, Dmitri Ciubașenco, also attended that conference but Moldova 1 censored all videos showing his presence. His attendance was meant to be, as was the conference in its entirety, an answer to the previous statement made by the PCRM candidate Vadim Mișin that no representatives of the national minorities were on the lists of the liberal parties.

In conclusion, this material can be considered a sample of bias, of manipulation with an intent to incite, of denigration of the opposition and of irresponsibility. Through this report, Moldova 1 flagrantly ignored both ethical and professional standards and the Regulation on Coverage of Electoral Campaign in the Anticipated Parliamentary Elections of 29 July 2009 by Moldovan Media.

Case study no. 2 (<http://www.azi.md/ro/story/4184>)

Moldova 1, on 3 July at 21.00.

Material by Sergiu Moraru. Presenter: Vadim Stângaciu

Presenter: "The dead are rising. Two men from Ciuciuleni Village in Hancești District who the opposition claimed voted on 5 April although they were dead are alive and well. The village mayor, Maria Bezer, who was also accused of having voted twice, said that this was fabricated because she supported the Communist Party."

Reporter: "Maria Bezer says that after the parliamentary elections on 5 April, several local representatives of the opposition parties accused her of electoral fraud."

Insert 1

Maria Bezer, mayor of the village of Ciuciuleni: "It was charged that someone named Buza Vasile from Bureau 25 had voted on the electoral lists, but he was dead. In fact, this citizen is alive and he participated in the elections. Another Buza Vasile from Sector 28 is also alive and participated in the parliamentary elections."

The mayor does not specify either the name of the person or persons who brought allegations against her or the form of such allegations: written (declaration or another document) or verbal (personal accusations from villagers). Although the reporter claims that he presents an investigation to the audience, he presents what the mayor says as being the truth, does not ask for any proof of the accusations and does not think it is necessary to find out from the opposition whether they indeed made such allegations and whether Vasile Buza was the only name they mentioned. He goes on to make sure that the person whom the mayor considers to be alive is alive.

Reporter: "We wanted to see for ourselves whether those two men from Ciuciuleni are alive indeed and voted on 5 April. The first man named Vasile Buza is 76. We found him very busy in his home garden. He was very surprised when we asked him if he had voted."

Insert 2

Buza Vasile: "Yes, I went and voted on 5 April. How can a dead person arise from the tomb and go to vote? Are you crazy? If I knew the one who said that I am dead and voted I would denounce him at the prosecutor's office to try him. They should not make false politics; if they want to be chiefs and the head of the country, they should speak correctly and should not tell lies to the people."

Note that Buza Vasile does not know who had declared that he was dead. When saying, "They should not make false politics...if they want to be the head of the country," he seems to refer to the opposition in general and not to specific people

in his village. He may have found out also from the reporter that someone considered him dead.

Reporter: "We did not find the second man with the same name Vasile Buza at home, but we spoke with a member of the electoral bureau of Ciuciuleni, a representative of AMN, who launched allegations about fraud at the parliamentary elections. Ecaterina Poparcea, who participated in the preparation of the electoral lists, reluctantly agreed to speak. She finally recognized that no major irregularities were registered on election day in Ciuciuleni."

Although he was not found at home, the reporter does not doubt that the second Vasile Buza is alive and does not tell us if there are also dead people with the name of Vasile Buza in this village with a population of 5000. The reporter's interest in the topic of the "dead who rose" is exhausted. It is not clear if the remark, "the representative of Our Moldova Alliance who launched allegations about fraud in the parliamentary elections," refers also to Ecaterina Poparcea or only to AMN in general.

Insert 3

Ecaterina Poparcea: "For as long as I went around, and I went with the ballot box around the village, I did not notice any irregularities, and I had the list from the polling stations telling me to which people to go.

Reporter: Any fraud?

Ecaterina Poparcea: "No, I did not notice any. Well, maybe in the lists, for instance, there were people whose names were written correctly but the years of their births were different."

Reporter: "The mayor of Ciuciuleni, Maria Bezer, says that she herself was accused of having voted twice."

Insert 4

Maria Bezer: "Another accusation was that I personally voted twice, at two different polling stations, which is not true. I voted in Bureau 28 of the sector from which I come, and my conscience does not allow me to do such dirty things. In fact, the mayor is an example for the entire locality.

Again, the reporter did not present the position of the opposition parties to the viewers and ended his report with an electoral plea in favor of PCRM made by the mayor who sympathizes with the Communists:

Reporter: "Maria Bezer says that all these groundless accusations come from the desire of the local opposition to come to power."

Insert 5

Maria Bezer: "The striving for power can be noticed. For the two years that I have been mayor I haven't noticed representatives of other parties here except for Members of Parliament from the Communist Party; for two years I have been supported by this party; they ask how life is in the village, if people come to council meetings, if they are supported and assisted. We see the others only in the electoral campaign when they promise certain things ..."

Conclusions: this material is marked by professional and ethical deficiencies, is biased and partisan and aims to present the opposition in a negative light. The objectives of the opposition in Ciuciuleni remain unknown. The reporter tries to prove not what the opposition says but what the mayor says that the opposition says, which undermines the report's credibility. In using this material, Moldova 1 flagrantly violates the Regulation on Coverage of Electoral Campaign in the Anticipated Parliamentary Elections of 29 July 2009 by Moldovan Media.

Case study no. 3

Radio Moldova, "Panorama zilei" on 2 July 2009 at 19.08.

Presenter: Viorica Rusu

The structuring of "Panorama zilei" on 2 July and the approach to subjects clearly demonstrated the editorial commitment of this public radio station to promoting PCRM and to disfavoring electoral candidates from the opposition. Thus, the following reports were broadcast under the "Elections 2009" rubric.

1. Press conference of the Party "For the Nation and the Country:" Declaration to support AMN in the electoral campaign. Duration of the report was less than one minute. (Reporter Cristina Zavulan).
2. Although AMN did not hold a press conference on this topic on that day, Radio Moldova repeated the previous declaration of AMN in which it asked CEC to allow students to vote in their home towns although they had temporary residence visas in Chişinău, and at the same time claimed the inefficiency of youth policies promoted by PCRM. The reason for repeating this subject became clear when in the same news item the right to respond was offered to the deputy chairperson of CEC Renata Lapti and to PCRM candidate Grigore Petrenco who denied the AMN allegations. The responses put AMN in a negative context (Grigore Petrenco: "I have big doubts that AMN in general has a youth organization...these are irresponsible and populist declarations"). In total, this article had a duration of about four minutes, including two minutes that were offered for responses that disfavored AMN. (Reporter Cristina Zavulan).
3. Declaration of PPCD candidate Ghenadie Vaculovschi about the need for promptly holding electoral debates. Also, PPCD criticized the PLDM strategy of integrating national minorities ("Nobody is entitled to deprive people of any rights

if they do not speak the state language”). The PLDM response is missing. (Reporter Rodica Răilean).

4. Press conference of the New Force Movement announcing support for the Democratic Party in the elections and a possible coalition with PDM. The statement of V. Pleșca that the liberals would collect fewer mandates in the repeat elections (nothing about PCRM). The response of PL is missing. (Reporter Rodica Răilean).

5. Press conference of PLDM. Declaration of the PLDM candidate Mihai Godea (23 seconds) demanding compensation for property and goods seized from deported people. The response of the PCRM candidate follows (33 seconds) who again puts the responsibility on the local administration (“The same Chirtoacă does not want to execute ECHR judgments and that is why the accounts have been frozen”). Chirtoacă’s response is missing. At the same conference, M. Godea answered questions related to the publication of the list of supposed cases of fraud in the elections of 5 April 2009. V. Țurcan’s response follows immediately: he rejects the accusations (“PLDM manipulates the opinion of the electorate”). The duration of this report on the press conference of PLDM was three minutes; half of this time was reserved by this public radio station for the responses that presented PLDM in a negative context. (Reporter Rodica Răilean).

6. As usual, the last presentation was the report on the press conference of PCRM. PCRM candidates V. Țurcan and Gr. Petrenco made declarations about voting possibilities for Moldovans abroad, praised the PCRM’s efforts to open polling stations abroad in the past eight years and stated that the number of the people who vote abroad has been increasing. The duration of this report was 3 minutes and 15 seconds. (Reporter Cristina Zavulan).

In total, “Panorama zilei” on 2 July offered air time to the PCRM electoral candidates as follows: 3 minutes and 15 seconds in the report on the PCRM press conference + 1 minute and 15 seconds in the report on the AMN “event” (response by Gr. Petrenco) + two responses by V. Țurcan with a total duration of over 1 minute in the report on the PLDM press conference.

Note that this program outside the “Elections 2009” rubric broadcast a report on the stalemate in the Chișinău Municipal Council that made it clear that the liberals were to blame for that state of things.

Case Study Number 4

NIT, Curier on 1 July 2009 at 21:30

Material by Sergiu Strungaru, Vitalie Drăgălin, Victor Ustianschi. Presenters: Victoria Filip and Octavian Volcov

On 1 July 2009 at 21:30 in its newscast “Curier,” NIT presented under the “Elections 2009” rubric an item condemning the actions of the Romanian Army 60 years ago which flagrantly violated ethical and professional principles, instigated hatred and

denigrated certain electoral candidates. The first part of the broadcast highlighted the actions of the Romanian Army 60 years ago when it started a war on the current territory of Moldova on the order of Marshal Antonescu. The opinion of the opposition leaders is sought. Starting with the indirect refusal of the PL leader to comment on this subject, the reporter moves on to the subject of the municipal newspaper *Capitala* that is accused of being used by the liberal leaders in party interests.

Images from the newspaper with a background of music from the Second World War. Voice in the background: "In fact, Mihai Ghimpu knows enough about Antonescu. A story was published on 22 June in the newspaper *Capitala*, a publication funded from the municipal budget, which presents Antonescu as an historical hero (Soldiers, I order you: pass the Prut River). The former editor of this publication, Petru Maleş, said in an interview with Antena C radio that everything that was written today in this newspaper was controlled by Chirtoacă and Ghimpu. *(The latter appear in the picture)*

After including audio recordings from two sources in support of the allegation that there is censorship at *Capitala*, the reporter returns to the subject that started the news item: Marshal Antonescu and the actions of the Romanian Army.

Street survey

Voice I: "There was such a fight that human blood was flowing in that river on both sides instead of water. I don't think there has been a bigger enemy than that one...probably not even the Germans were that much of an enemy."

Voice II: "This man is one of those leaders who should not lead the country."

Voice III: "He put all the Jews on a boat and sent them away... Antonescu ordered that all Jews be sent to the Caucasus."

Images from the Second World War. Voice in the background: "According to historical data, in the first three months after Romania joined the war, Romanian troops massacred, on Antonescu's order, 19,000 Jews, 400 of whom were hanged on the streets or in the markets of Odessa. Mihai Ghimpu, however, pretends not to know this."

The last part of the article attacks the liberal opposition and especially the deputy chairman of PL, Dorin Chirtoacă, making a parallel between him and Adolf Hitler.

Videos with Dorin Chirtoacă and a group of young people, then with the other leaders of the opposition. Voice in the background. Street survey: "They are his followers [of Antonescu], Chirtoacă, Ghimpu and Urechean are barbarians, thieves, ruffians, killers, betrayers."

Videos from an event with Dorin Chirtoacă on the stage shouting: "Long live Moldova, Transylvania and Wallachia." *Voice in the background:* "Dorin Chirtoacă has often been suspected of sympathizing with Nazi elements. Even in public he has proved that he likes using the fascist gesture." *Dorin Chirtoacă shouting:*

“Long live the Romanian language!” and raising his left arm to greet the public. Videos with Adolf Hitler greeting the people and raising his right arm.

Combining the images of the political leaders with the virulent message of one street interviewee denotes a lack of balance and impartiality on behalf of the article’s authors. Authors are obliged to not allow interviewees to use insulting language or to instigate violence against other people; however, they nonetheless allowed certain insulting words and personal attacks to be broadcast. Violating these principles lead to discrimination and biased treatment of certain electoral candidates which should not be found in newscasts, especially under the electoral rubric, but rather in political pamphlets and propaganda. The angle of approach, the selection of quotes included and the fact that this material was broadcast during the electoral campaign, without having a current or other connection to the subject on which the news was based all speak about the authors’ intention to denigrate the opposition parties, especially PL.

At the same time, the parallel use of images of liberal leaders and videos from the Second World War with the repetition of the message “Soldiers, I order you, pass the Prut River! Destroy the enemy from the east and that from the west!” aims to influence the perception of a certain part of the population for which such subjects are very sensitive. The use of such labels as *killers, barbarians, betrayers*, even if they do not come from reporters, may affect the feelings of some categories of the population that support the parties mentioned and may instigate hatred. In the same way, the use of language that may be offensive to certain ethnic minorities (“Antonescu ordered that all *Jews* be sent to the Caucasus”) points to serious ethical and professional deficiencies of NIT reporters.

Case study Number 5 (<http://www.azi.md/ro/story/4137>)

EU TV, Monitor on 1 July 2009 at 21.05

Reporter: Lucia Gnatiuc

On 1 July, EU TV broadcast a news item that launched allegations against Chişinău Mayor Dorin Chirtoacă, a candidate on the lists of the Liberal Party, for approving the extermination of stray dogs in the city. The news was based on the statements of two representatives of non-government organizations, and the angle of approach, the selection of sources, the quotations included and the structure of the news all speak about the reporter’s bias toward the subject.

The reporter’s attitude is obvious right from the teaser included in the “Summary”: “Topsy-turvy solutions: stray dogs are exterminated with the tacit approval of Mayor Dorin Chirtoacă,” that was broadcast twice: once at the beginning of the newscast (21:02) and once at its end (21:23).

Although the subject announced relates to a specific issue—the extermination of stray dogs—in fact, the angle of approach chosen tries to inculcate the idea that the

Mayor's Office is unable to manage the city's problems. This becomes obvious from the use of terms with a negative connotation in most sentences in the text. Thus, the lead contains three sentences, all with negative elements, that convey the following message.

1. The Mayor's Office CANNOT control even the stray dog problem.
2. The Mayor's Office is NOT able to manage such projects.
3. The Mayor's Office does NOT offer civilized solutions.

Manipulation is achieved also through the sources selected: on the one hand, two sources representing non-government organizations say that they want to solve the problem of the Mayor's Office but that the latter ignores them, and on the other hand, the persons accused are not asked to respond, which is absolutely required in any news on conflicts. The inserts included strengthen the negative image of the Mayor's Office, especially the third one.

Insert 3

"I have attended several meetings at the Mayor's Office. I am sick of sitting there. I don't know how this Mayor's Office works. In short, a political faction there has its views, another faction, other views and so on. They don't solve any problems. They will not solve this problem either..."

The teaser makes direct references to Chirtoacă; however, the sources used in the news are not mentioned by name; instead, they mention the Mayor's Office in general. In reality, at the press conference the same source (Valentina Dudnic) also said that Chirtoacă had tried to stop the extermination of the dogs and that now all blame was falling back on him. She also said that in order to solve the problem, it is necessary to have not only the help of the Mayor's Office but also that of society and of the government. The reporter omitted this statement.

In conclusion, the manner in which the news item is structured, i.e., the Mayor's Office cannot control at the beginning of the broadcast and it cannot work at the end, attempts to establish the idea of an inefficient administration of his duties by Dorin Chirtoacă.