

Monitoring mass-media during the election campaign for 2014 Parliamentary elections *(General conclusions)*

Report no. 1
1 – 17 October 2014

The monitoring occurs under a project financed by National Endowment for Democracy (SUA), the US Embassy to the Republic of Moldova and East-European Foundation (from the financial resources provided by the Swedish Government via the Swedish International Cooperation and Development Agency (Sida) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark /DANIDA).

The opinions herein belong to the authors and do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the financers..

I. General information

1.1 Objective of the project: monitoring and informing the public opinion on the editorial conduct of mass-media institutions during the election campaign for Parliamentary elections in Republic of Moldova.

1.2 Monitoring period: 1 October 2014 – 30 November 2014.

1.3 Criteria for selecting mass-media institutions subject to monitoring:

Mass-media institutions were selected basing on the following objective criteria: a) form of ownership; b) geography; c) language of broadcasting. Thus, public and private mass-media institutions, with national, quasi-national and regional coverage, in Romanian and Russian languages, shall be subject to monitoring.

1.4 Monitored mass-media¹:

TV

Accent TV, Canal 2, Canal 3, Canal Regional, GRT, Jurnal TV, Moldova 1, N4, Prime TV, ProTV Chişinău, TV7, Publika TV

Radio

Radio Moldova, Radio Noroc, Radio Plai, Russkoie Radio, Vocea Basarabiei

Print press

Jurnal de Chişinău, Komsomolskaia pravda v Moldove, Moldova Suverană, Nezavisimaia Moldova, Panorama, Timpul, Vesti Gagauzii, Ziarul Naţional

Online portals

Deschide.md, [Jurnal.md](#), Moldova24.info, Moldova.org, Newsmaker.md, [Noi.md](#), [Omg.md](#), [Politik.md](#), Realitatea.md, Unimedia.info

1.5 Object of monitoring

TV

- A. Electoral news items from the main informative edition of the day;
- B. Electoral shows (one from each TV channel);
- C. Paid electoral advertising;
- D. Electoral debates.

Radio

All news programs, debate shows and advertising during prime-time. The monitoring interval: from 6.00 a.m. till 1.00 p.m. and from 5.00 p.m. till 8.00 p.m., on a daily basis.

Print press

The entire publishing content of monitored periodicals, including advertising.

Online portals

The entire editorial content of websites, including advertising. As for video materials posted on the website, these will only be mentioned, without monitoring their content.

¹ În ordine alfabetică

1.6. Team

The project is implemented within the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections, by the Association of Electronic Press (TV monitoring), Association of Independent Press (print and online media monitoring), and Independent Journalism Centre (radio and online media monitoring).

1.7 Methodological framework

The content analysis of media institutions was performed basing on several indicators allowing for the quantification and qualification of electoral news/ shows, frequency of protagonists of various categories, journalists' compliance with professional norms.

Categories of protagonists:

- Public officials;
- Politicians;
- Experts;
- Ordinary citizens;
- Others.

Categories of institutions:

- Presidency;
- Parliament;
- Government;
- Local public administration;
- Political parties.

Quantitative analysis:

- Frequency of occurrence of political stakeholders: a) direct interventions; b) mentioning/appearance;
- Duration of occurrence of political stakeholders: a) direct interventions; b) mentioning/appearance;
- Number of electoral news/shows;
- Number of conflict-type electoral news items;
- Number of protagonists in electoral news/shows;
- Parity of genders among protagonists.

Qualitative analysis:

- Context of presenting political stakeholders in news: a) positive; b) negative; c) neutral.
- Journalist's attitude towards the political stakeholders in the show: a) favoring b) disfavoring, b) impartial;
- Number of sources in conflict-type news items: a) a single source; b) two or more sources;
- Compliance with the principle of impartiality in news: a) biasness; b) unbiasedness.

3. General conclusions 1-17 October 2014

- During the week 1-17 October 2014, the 12 monitored television channels broadcast between 27 and 83 news items associated to election process in their main news programs. From the total number of electoral news, 27.3% had a conflict-type nature. Five TV channels (Accent TV, N4, Canal2, Jurnal TV, Canal3) allowed for visible deviations, including two (Accent TV and N4) – serious violations of the professional norm to cover conflict-type news basing on multiple sources.
- Two television channels (Moldova 1, GRT) entirely complied with the principle of impartiality in news; three (Canal Regional, TV7, Publika TV) – allowed for minor infringements (between 1%

- and 7%); three (N4, Prime TV, Pro TV) – mildly serious infringements (between 13% and 21%); four (Canal 3, Canal 2, Accent TV, Jurnal TV) – serious derogations (between 30% and 44%).
- Women were under-represented in the electoral news on all types of monitored media.
 - The electoral news on television channels reported about 24 parties and political formations, the Democratic Party being most frequently mirrored, followed remotely by the Liberal Democratic Party and Party of Communists.
 - If to distinguish the politicians publicized by the monitored TV channels, the top 10 from 141 would be led by the leader of the Democratic Party, M. Lupu, and the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, V. Filat.
 - During the 53 TV electoral shows, 33 persons benefited from direct interventions, being invited in the studio. In case of Publika TV, 9 out of 10 guests invited for the show Fabrika were part of Democratic Party team;
 - To a great extent, the presenters of shows displayed an impartial attitude towards the protagonists. Still, we signal 8 cases of favoring and 18 cases of disfavoring the protagonists;
 - During the period 1-17 October, the five monitored radio stations broadcast altogether 315 materials of direct or indirect electoral type. The great majority were news – 274, including 9 conflict-type news items, as well as 41 electoral education materials. The most active radio stations in covering election-related issues were: Radio Moldova, Russkoe Radio and Vocea Basarabiei. The least number of electoral news was emitted by the national-coverage radio station Noroc;
 - The pluralism of opinion and diversity of sources were ensured in most news from Radio Moldova and Vocea Basarabiei, and the materials from Vocea Basarabiei highlighted themselves through the presence of citizens and experts as majority of sources. Radio Noroc, Radio Plai and Russkoe Radio registered gaps at this chapter, resorting mainly to politicians and state officials as sources;
 - As regards the most publicized protagonists from the 5 radio stations, there may be counted representatives of the Democratic Party and Liberal Democratic Party, who enjoyed the greatest number of interventions and references in positive and neutral context. Judging from the frequency and context of their appearances in news, we may conclude a slight tendency to show preference for the Democratic Party and Liberal Democratic Party at Radio Moldova, and massive preference for the Liberal Democratic Party at Vocea Basarabiei. The radio station Plai favored the Democratic Party through the great number of references, mainly in a positive light;
 - The great majority of monitored radio stations encountered problems at the chapter of balance of controversial news.
 - During the period 1-17 October 2014, the eight monitored newspapers published altogether 203 articles of various journalistic genres. The greatest number of journalistic materials on this topic was published by *Nezavisimaia Moldova*, followed by *Timpul*, *Panorama* and *Komsomolskaia pravda v Moldove*;
 - The newspapers which addressed conflict-type issues of electoral nature in various types of articles did not manage to ensure the coverage of all relevant parties for the publicised conflict or the opinion of the accused party, especially whether being leading articles or other opinion articles. *Nezavisimaia Moldova* is the newspaper which did not reflect the opinion of the accused party in any of the conflict-type journalistic materials;
 - None of the monitored newspapers ensured at least a seeming parity of genders for the sources of information, and publications *Moldova Suverană* and *Jurnal de Chişinău* had only men as sources of information in the texts which cover directly or indirectly the election campaign;
 - The newspapers publicize the campaign in a selective manner, introducing the electoral competitors from the perspective of their political sympathies/dislikes. Thus, *Nezavisimaia Moldova* favors the Party of Communists directly or prefers to present it in a positive context, *Panorama* and *Vesti Gagauzii* – “Partia” Political Party, *Moldova Suverană* and *Ziarul Național* – Liberal Democratic Party, *Timpul* – Democratic Party, *Komsomolskaia pravda v Moldove* –

Democratic Party, „Partia” Political Party and Party of Socialists, *Jurnal de Chişinău* – Liberal Reformativ Party.

- The portal Newsmaker.md is the only one which covered all electoral issues correctly, without favoring any of the electoral competitors.
- The portal Moldova24.info remarked itself through an obvious partisanship in favor of „Patria” Political Party and Renato Usatîi. This electoral competitor was greatly publicized in written and video materials, mainly in a positive context.
- The majority of portals made mistakes as regards the compliance with professional principles for ensuring pluralism of opinion and equilibrium of sources, as well as principles for impartiality and objectivity. The greatest number of such problems was detected at Moldova24.info.
- The portal Jurnal.md disfavours the Democratic Party, this political stakeholder being represented almost in all cases in negative context. The Party of Communists and the Liberal Democratic Party were presented predominantly in a negative context, similar to „Patria” Political Party and Renato Usatîi.
- The portal Omg.md shows obvious dislikes for the Democratic Party and Liberal Democratic Party. Party of Communists was presented mainly in a neutral context, whereas the „Patria” Party and Renato Usatîi were mirrored most frequently in a positive and/or neutral context.

Note:

The monitoring reports will be translated and posted on the following websites: www.alegeliber.md, www.api.md, www.media-azi.md, www.apel.md