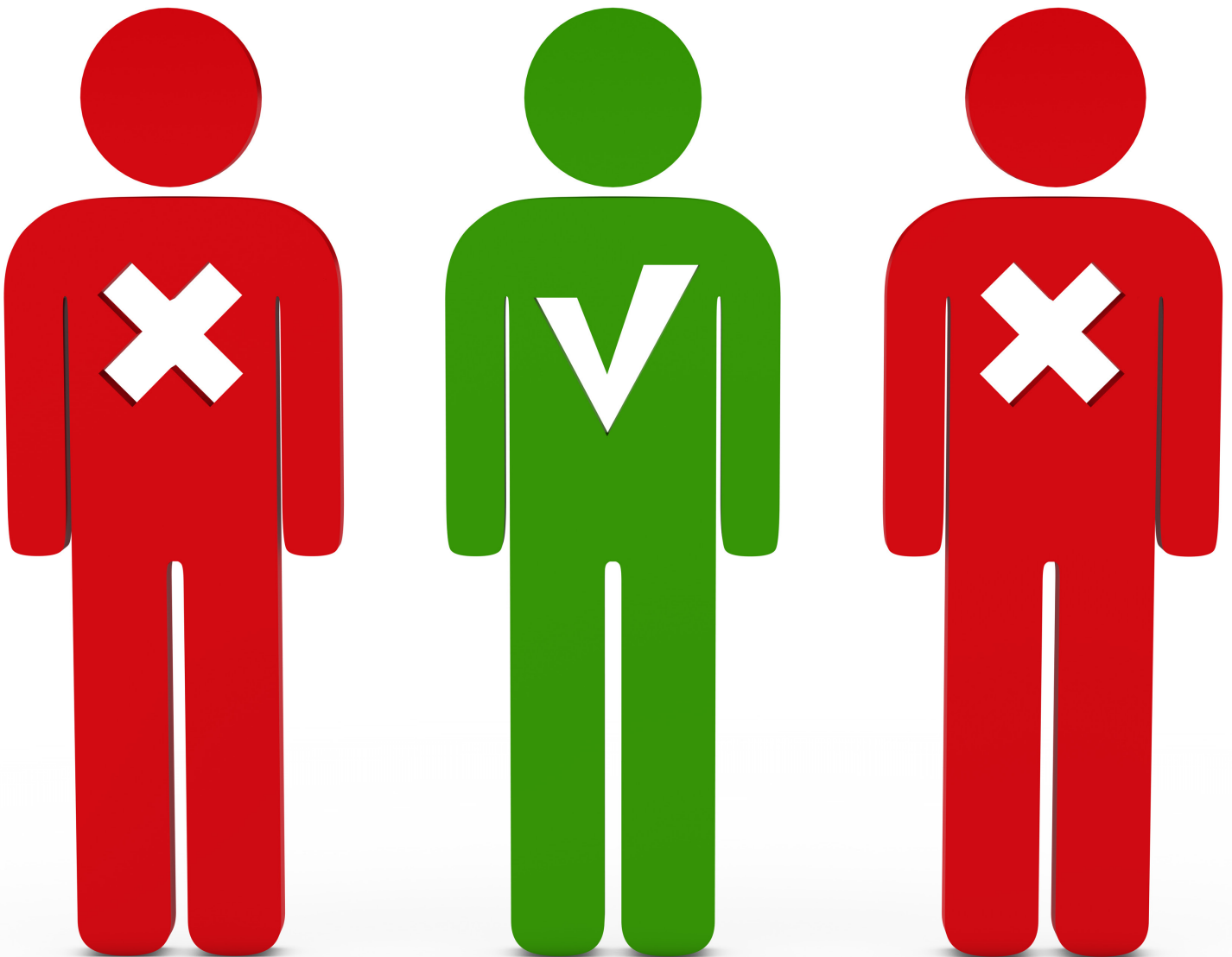


# REPORT

**BASED ON THE MONITORING OF ELECTION  
CAMPAIGN COVERAGE IN TV NEWS**

**INSTITUTE OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES**



**TIME FRAME: 30<sup>TH</sup> – DECEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2016**



# GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

- During the monitoring period, from November 30 to December 9, most of the TV stations covered the pre-election activities of the parties' with increased: MTV1 125, MTV2 - 80, Sitel 75, Telma 56, 24 Vesti 67, Alsat M in Macedonian - 16 and in Albanian - 72, TV 21 in Macedonian - 91 and in Albanian - 85, Kanal 5 - 96, Alfa - 69, and TV Nova - 62 reports.
- Both channels of the public service covered the campaign of the most entities. Regarding the organization of the elections, reports were shown that presented financial reports of the parties; conveyed the official standpoints of the institutions and of the international representatives, and there were fewer reports about potential irregularities. TV stations Sitel, Kanal

5, Alfa and TV Nova continued with the numerous reports on the topic of ‘state bilingualism’, and with some of them this topic was the dominant topic of the news (Sitel – on December 5, published as many as five reports on this topic). All of these TV stations framed the topic in a similar way, as an introduction to the play-out of some sort of scenario for federalization of the country, led by the opposition.

- Regarding other topics, during this period, there were more frequent reports about the measures and accomplishments of the Government, especially on the following four TV stations Sitel (20), Kanal 5 (16), Alfa (25) and TV Nova (3). In this process, VMRO-DPMNE and their leader were mostly favoured, especially in the reports on foreign investment, the source of which was the Facebook profile of VMRO-DPMNE leader Nikola Gruevski.
- When it came to media such as TV 24, Alsat M, Telma and TV 21, there was much more intense coverage of topics related to the organization and preparation of the elections: abuse of official position and of state resources, irregularities, financing of campaigns (24 Vesti, Alsat M), the activities of the civil sector, the events surrounding trade union organizations and the judiciary system, the work of SPPO (Telma), as well as the regular work of the institutions, mostly the courts (TV 21).
- In this part of the pre-election campaign too, the public broadcasting service was the only media outlet that covered the activities of all political parties that participated in the elections, simply by reporting about the activities and the messages of candidates and no specific topics were raised. MTV 2 in its news in Albanian provided relative balance in representing the political messages of the parties from the Albanian and from the Macedonian political block, for the parties that are in Government and the oppositional political parties, by focusing on issues that are of interest for the Albanian ethnic community.
- Sitel, Kanal 5, Alfa and TV Nova provided a balance in quantity, however in view of the approach they provided non-critical reporting: positive for VMRO-DPMNE, the coalition and the officials and a negative stand towards SDSM.
- Telma and TV 24 Vesti attempted to provide a balanced reflection of the realistic political diversity, which was evident in terms of the quantity and the quality of the reporting, through an analytical approach. When reporting about party programmes, TV 21 (in Macedonian and in Albanian) allocated most of their air time to the three parties (VMRO-DPMNE, DUI and SDSM), their coalitions and their officials, reporters from the rallies, and analytical approaches were provided not as often. Alsat M provided the least reports about the daily activities of the candidates (rallies and meetings with the people), towards the end of the news, and in the time they allotted for the campaign, the media outlet analyzed specific aspects of it.
- State bilingualism and federalization were once again the most common topic for negative framing of the party SDSM. Most of these reports were published by Sitel (19), most of which were editorial comment (every day from December 2 to December 5), then there were claims from experts, citizens and foreign representatives (December 9, three comments), ‘Statements such as this one are the reason why many analysts in the last few days have warned that Macedonia is threatened by federalization and redefining of the state’. Alfa and TV Nova reported with a negative rhetoric towards SDSM and their leader Zaev (Alfa, December 4: ‘Experts warn that by insisting on this concept, SDSM leader Zaev, on the topic of state bilingualism and cantonization, can cause new disturbances and conflicts in the country’, TV Nova, December 6, ‘Vast majority of Macedonians are against state bilingualism’).
- Kanal 5, besides negatively framing SDSM, this time also published reports that were positive for VMRO-DPMNE, i.e. they were construed in a way in which they led to a conclusion that federalization can be avoided by following the call of leader Gruevski for his party to get 63 MP positions (December 2: ‘Experts fear that the announcements for potential wide coalitions after the elections bring about the danger of redefining the country and changes of the Constitution, which may be prevented only if the party currently in power wins 63 MP positions’).
- TV 24 Vesti touched upon this topic indirectly, although in a different context (December 6: ‘Civil Macedonia placed before an ethnic test’). TV 21 (in Macedonian and in Albanian) showed only one report from a pre-election appearance of a political party, however without giving a journalistic opinion. Alsat M and Telma paid no notice to the topic.