



MACEDONIA DEMOCRACY WATCH



ALFA

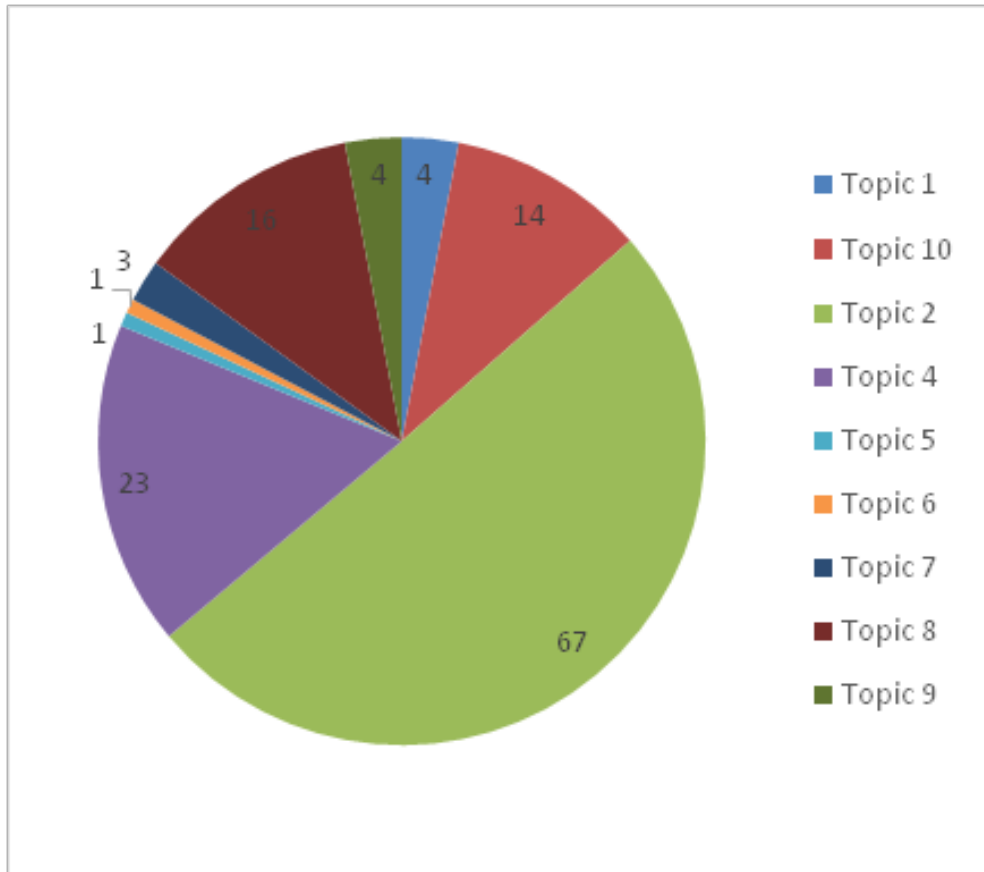
#### GENERAL CONCLUSION ABOUT THE REPORTING OF ALFA

- TV station Alfa aired a total of 133 reports during the monitored period, which referred to political actors, processes and situations in the country. Half of them (67) were focused on covering the pre-election campaign. Alfa dedicated a significant portion of their time to reports about regular activities of state officials (22). The TV station frequently published reports linked to 'federalization' or 'state bilingualism' of Macedonia as a special topic in this campaign.
- In terms of quantity, in all reports about domestic events, Alfa reflected the political views on current events and processes linked to the major political parties: 110 reports informed about VMRO-DPMNE, their coalition and Government officials, 124 reports informed about SDSM, their coalition and officials. Reports about other political parties were significantly fewer. Despite the fact that the opposition is mentioned in more reports, there was an expressive negative attitude towards them in 44 reports, and a positive attitude was evident towards the ruling party in 43 reports.
- Also, in covering the election campaign, the media outlet expressed a positive attitude towards VMRO-DPMNE, and in some cases a negative one towards SDSM, although there was a quantitative balance between them

# 1. COVERED TOPICS

The campaign was mainly followed by simply conveying the statements, messages and promises from rallies and meetings with the people of the two major political entities, VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, with a small number of reports about other participants in the elections. Special attention was paid only for the topic of state bilingualism (in which reports the framing pushed the thesis that it is an introduction to federalization) and the accusations that SDSM's campaign

is, as they put it, a 'plagiarism'. In respect to other topics, reports were more frequent only when it came to the regular activities of state and other officials (President Ivanov's visit to Sofia, the dispute between Minister Remenski and the trade union, the presence of officials and public forums and debates, the meeting in the MoE between Nikola Poposki and Sebastian Kurz, etc.) Reports were very few on topics such as the work of the SPPO, organization of the elections etc.



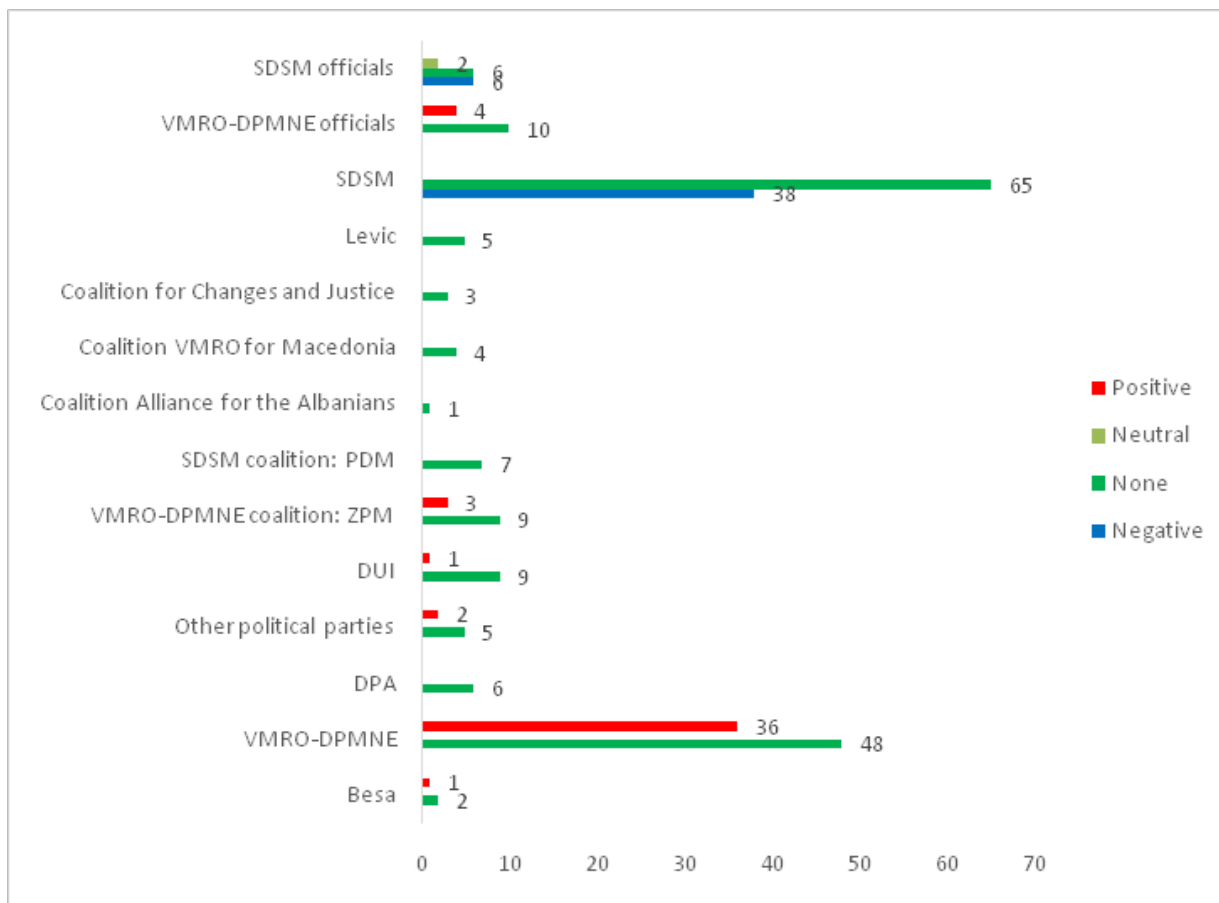
Number of reports on Alfa, in relation to the different topics (November 21 - 29)

Topic 1	Organization of early parliamentary elections (voters' registry, issues with the number of voters, following up on potential irregularities, etc).
Topic 2	Pre-election campaigns of political parties (all activities including rallies, announcements for rallies, meetings with the people, promises, press releases, reactions, etc.).
Topic 3	Promotion of Government projects and measures
Topic 4	Other activities of Government officials (protocol meetings, statements and other regular activities)
Topic 5	The work of the Special Public Prosecutor's Office
Topic 6	The work of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAMS) and the Ad Hoc body
Topic 7	Regular operations of state institutions, courts, local self-government (reports in which the media do not report about political parties, rather they report of various public interest problems and issues)
Topic 8	State bilingualism and federalization
Topic 9	Public opinion polls
Topic 10	Other topics (celebrating Albanian Flag Day)

## 2. POLITICAL PLURALISM IN THE OVERALL REPORTING ON DOMESTIC EVENTS

According to the number of reports about political entities in the overall number of reports referring to domestic events, it can be said that, in their news programme, the TV station reported mostly about VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, with a quantitative emphasis on the second party. There was little representation of the opinions and views of other political parties. Despite the fact that the opposition, their coalition and officials were mentioned in a higher number of reports as compared to the ruling party (124 as opposed to 110 reports), the attitude towards them is completely opposite (in 44 instances SDSM were placed in a negative context, and VMRO-DPMNE in a positive one).

The positive representation of VMRO-DPMNE was mainly linked to their activities in the pre-election campaign, and non-critical reporting was provided in that context even when there were cases of party interference in state matters (November 23: 'Gruevski on FG: Wig are opening a factory in Prilep'). Besides the topics of state bilingualism, negative reports about SDSM, were also present in the reports of the alleged plagiarism of the campaign of the oppositional part (November 28: 'Nogo for 'Dnevnik': We will see if we can press charges about the campaign that SDSM have copied') and the revision of the voters' registry (November 29: 'In the last two years, SDSM leader Zoran Zaev has falsely presented the number of phantoms which was completely rebutted by the State Election Commission').



Број на информативна политичките субјекти (емитувани во вкупниот број прилози)  
и начин на нивно вградување (21-29 ноември)

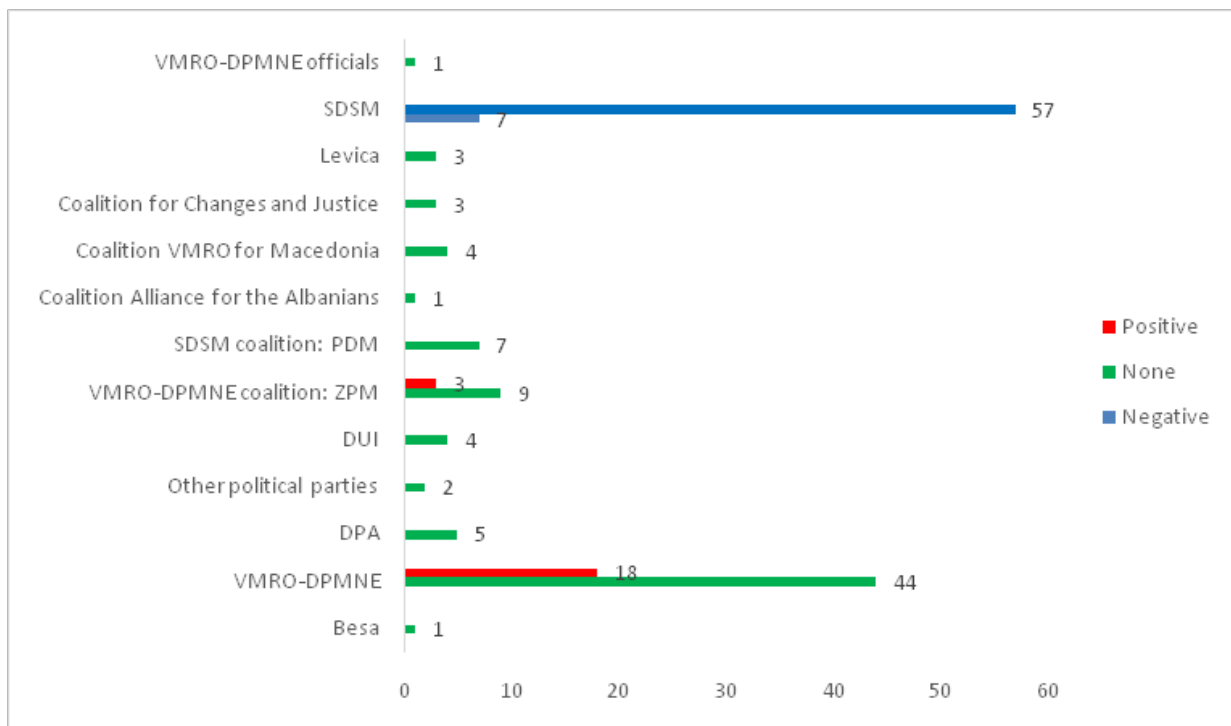
### 3. BALANCE IN REPORTING ON THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN OF POLITICAL ENTITIES

When it comes to reporting about party activities in the election campaign, Alfa paid almost equal attention to VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM in terms of quantity. The same cannot be said about the number of reports about other parties. 75 of the reports informed about VMRO-DPMNE and their coalition, 71 about SDSM and their coalition. Opposite to this, only 23 reports informed about other participants at the elections.

More of the reports were classic campaign reporting, by conveying key messages sent by the candidates, in separate news reports. Regular practice during the news was to first report about VMRO-DPMNE's activities, and then about SDSM's activities. Major differences were also visible in the production quality of

these reports. Reportage packages were shown about the activities of VMRO-DPMNE leader Nikola Gruevski from his meetings with the people (November 23: Gruevski: '600 million euro for agricultural subsidies and rural development zones'), and only statements in front of cameras were shown of the leader of SDSM (November 26: 'Zaev from Strumica: Farmers are complaining, we are announcing changes').

In several cases there were also more direct expressions of a positive attitude towards VMRO-DPMNE (November 21: 'This is only a part of Realistically, the largest, most detailed and most comprehensive programme so far of VMRO-DPMNE'), and negative towards SDSM (November 25: 'SDSM's leader declared himself as Prime Minister speaking in Tetovo').



Број на информатива политичките субјекти (емитувани во прилозите за предизборната кампања) и начин на нивно врамување (21-29 ноември)



## 4. APPROACH TO REPORTING ON SPECIFIC TOPICS

The main topic on which the media outlet based their demonizing stand towards SDSM was the issue of state bilingualism in Macedonia and the interpretation of it as Zaev's attempt to introduce federalization in the country. This was the third most common topic on the TV station during the monitored period, with 16 reports. In these reports, there were 21 instances of expressing a negative attitude towards SDSM (November 22: 'The idea of state bilingualism and creating a bi-national state that SDSM's leader Zoran Zaev is using for months to promise more rights for the Albanians in the country, is also the main topic of the first rallies of the political opponents', November 25: 'In this cacophony, while Zaev claimed in Tetovo that the Constitution will not be revised at any cost, in Kumanovo, Spasovski was talking about revising it, however not because of bilingualism', November 27: 'The rhetoric of re-defining,

changing the Constitution, bilingualism is not used by Zaev only at election rallies, SDSM has continuously played the card of bargaining national interests', November 28: 'SDSM leader has opened Pandora's box', in Tirana a Great Albania was formed inconspicuously, a model very similar to Zaev's ideas'). There were eight cases of showing a positive stand towards VMRO-DPMNE (November 21: SDSM is pushing the bilingualism project on full throttle. VMRO-DPMNE is engaging the hand brake'). The media outlet did not convey the different opinions on this issue equally, especially when it came to the concerned parties, rather what prevailed was the federalization narrative, which is in line with VMRO-DPMNE's opinions expressed during the campaign.

Not a single other topic raised by the political entities during the election campaign was analysed by the media outlet.