

**REPORT from the Monitoring of the Media Content through
the Rapid Response Media Mechanism of the Institute of
Communication Studies
(time-frame: 23rd of November – 18th of December 2015)**

I. ON THE POLITICAL PLURALISM IN THE MEDIA

Political pluralism is one of the most important dimensions of media pluralism as it enables free and equal circulation of different political ideas and opinions. This means that each media outlet individually should endeavor to ensure a so-called internal pluralism in the news, or to present all opposing positions on a given topic. This is fairly important for the overall democratic public sphere as citizens will be able to obtain a full picture and to form opinion on issues of public interest. On the other hand, avoiding reporting on certain topics or distorting the angle by highlighting only one view, in the long run, creates ideological manipulation of the public opinion.

The broadcasting media outlets, especially the television broadcasters, have a great significance in informing the citizens for the pluralism of views and opinions in the society. They have both legal (Article 61 of the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services) and ethical obligation (Article 14 of the Code of the Journalists of Macedonia) to provide unbiased and balanced reporting on various political entities and must not reflect political leanings by favouring or attacking certain positions.

Given the importance of political pluralism in the election period, particularly in the context of the political crisis, Przino Agreement and the current political negotiations, the Institute of Communication Studies (ICS) conducts monitoring and analysis of the way the national televisions report on various political views and ideas and the extent to which they provide political actors access to their programmes. The conclusions and observations presented in this report were obtained based on a qualitative analysis of various aspects of informing in the news and the informative programmes:

- What is the extent of presenting commentaries and opinions in the news that favour or attack certain political positions (unsoundly, or when journalists themselves take sides).
- What are the most evident instances of favouritism or demonisation of the political entities in the news?
- What are the most common instances of manipulation with the sources? Are the opinions of the sources quoted in the news opposing or do they basically represent the same position.
- Which political entities are commonly presented with direct address in the news? Are some political positions too prevalent and others disregarded?
- Is a manipulative audiovisual presentation used in the news? What are its most common forms?
- Do the news and the current affairs programmes contain explicit calls to violence, negative speech and stereotyping of certain groups?
- Are the different positions on the debate topics adequately presented in the current affairs programmes? Do presenters/journalists favour or demonise certain political entities?

II. METHODOLOGY

1) Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The method applied in this research is based on the theory of framing that explains how the media frame the topics of the social and political life on which they report. The frame of reporting (news frame) is the “central idea” or “story line” that organises the journalistic text and gives meaning to the outlined events. It is a central organising idea in the informative content that provides context and suggests the essence of the issue, through selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration.

The reporting frame contains four aspects: (1) *Topic* of the informative report – that is included in the frame; (2) *Presentation* – scope and position of the report; in addition, elements that are also assessed in terms of the presentation are photos, quotes, headlines and sub-headlines; (3) *Cognitive attributes* – details of the points included in the frame; (4) *Affective attributes* – the tone of reporting.

The data collection on the quantity of informing or the time devoted to different political parties does not give a complete picture of the pluralism presented by the media. The public image of the political parties, candidates and leaders is not only shaped by the time they are granted, but also by the way they are presented. The evaluation of the approach or the ‘tone’ of the report shows the attitude or the approach of the media outlet to the specific political entity. However, this is not sufficient to assess whether the media outlet reports objectively and accurately. Continuous false reporting is one of the most serious shortcomings in the coverage of political events, which can only be identified by a comprehensive qualitative analysis, which involves complex methodological procedures (for example, comparison of the reporting with the actual events or monitoring of the reporting of several media outlets on the same event).

2) Methodological Approach Applied in the Research

This research aims to determine whether media outlets comply with the professional standards in reporting on political actors defined in the Code of Journalists of Macedonia and the codes of conduct of international organizations. The analysis should answer the following research questions:

- What is the approach of the media and to what extent do the media respect the standards of unbiased and balanced reporting?
- How do the media present (frame) the political actors during election campaigns?
- Do the media respect the rule for comprehensive informing (use of resources)?
- Do the media use frames that encourage and reinforce stereotypes i.e. do they use discriminatory speech or hate speech towards groups and individuals?

The concepts of “unbiased” and “balanced” reporting which actually intertwine need to be defined in order to answer these questions. This segment of the analysis uses the definitions and methodological guidance provided in the *Guidelines on Media Analysis during Elections Observation Missions* prepared in 2005 by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Human Rights Directorate and the Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) of the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The quantitative aspect of the balance relates to the scale or time in the news allocated by the broadcaster for reporting on the activities of a candidate or organiser of an election campaign, whereas with qualitative aspect relates to the approach or ‘tone’ of the reporting.

The subject of this analysis is not the quantitative, but the qualitative aspect of the balance – the approach or the way in which the media “frame” political actors during election campaigns. In addition, the content in the news and in the current affairs programmes containing speech that incites and reinforces stereotypes, discriminatory speech or hate speech towards groups and individuals is also subject to the analysis.

The method used to answer the questions on the manner of framing of political parties is *content analysis* that is

defined as a comprehensive approach that focuses on the qualitative and quantitative aspects of media reports/texts. Additionally, the *critical discourse analysis method* is used to determine whether certain content contains hate speech or discriminatory speech of groups and individuals. It is a qualitative method that emphasises the analysis of the function and meaning of the media texts in the present social and political context.

The frame of the reporting of the media on certain political entity is determined after the presence of several elements is encoded in the analysed report: explicit expression of opinions of the journalist/news room on the stakeholders; manipulative use of films, images and sounds; presence and selection of direct address of the political entity; the number and position of the sources; and the main topic that dominates the report.

3) Sample and Implementation Time-frame

All central informative releases and informative programmes of the television broadcasters aired from the 23rd of November to the 18th of December 2015 were subject to analysis.

Samples from the following media outlet were included in the analysis: MTV 1, MTV 2, Sitel, Alsat M, Telma, Alfa, Kanal 5, 24 Vesti, and TV 21.

4) Research Team

The research team includes 15 analysts and 3 researchers from the Institute of Communication studies.

III. SUMMARY

In the period between the 23rd of November and 18th of December, 2015, the *Rapid Response Mechanism* covered 11 informative programmes (the news) of the Public Service Broadcaster (MTV 1 and MTV 2) and 7 private television broadcasters (Sitel, Kanal 5, Alfa, Telma, Alsat M, 23 Vesti and TV 21). All reports (2,782 reports in the reporting period) in the informative releases pertaining to political entities were subject to analysis. Apart from the news, the framing analysis covered the main releases of the political shows of these television broadcasters. This report covers only shows broadcasted between the 1st and 14th of December. Shows that were subject to deeper analysis were those perceived to contain hate speech, discriminatory and negative speech, and explicit and continuous infringement of Article 14 of the Code of the Journalists under which journalists have to maintain a professional distance from the political entities.

The findings from the framing analysis show that the monitored media can be grouped into two categories: (1) television broadcasters whose contents construct propaganda and populist discourse in favour of VMRO-DPMNE and the Government; and (2) television broadcasters whose contents are neutral or mildly critical of the Government.

(1)

(a) The analysis shows a great convergence in the framing constructed in the news of the Public Service Broadcaster and the commercial media – Sitel, Alfa and Kanal 5. There is a large convergence in the selection of topics and sources as well as in the examination of topics. A synchronised broadcasting of reports can be observed on the same topic with the same interlocutors whose positions favour the ruling VMRO-DPMNE. This finding leads to the conclusion that the programmes of these television broadcasters may have been coordinated by a single source.

(b) However, these television broadcasters differ in the ways in which they use propaganda tools and populist discourses. Sitel, Kanal 5 and Alfa have a lead in favouring the ruling VMRO-DPMNE, they however simultaneously use strong and distinctive strategies of demonisation of the Opposition – primarily of SDSM. SDSM is presented as a “manipulative party” which “illegally wants to come to power” by election fraud and whose leader “wants to establish totalitarian control over the media and does everything to postpone the April elections”. MTV 1 and MTV 2, on the other hand, strongly favour VMRO-DPMNE and DUI respectfully, but choose a strategy which does not have the sharpness and intensity of the demonising discourses characteristic of the three pro-government commercial television broadcasters. Thus, the production of Public Service Broadcaster turns the news into a party and government newsletter i.e. a platform where VMRO-DPMNE and DUI can advertise their activities.

(c) These television broadcasters have a huge production of reports related to politics and political actors: Sitel (347), Alfa (318), Kanal 5 (263), MTV 1 (273) and MTV 2 (207). The fact that majority of these reports favour VMRO-DPMNE or demonise SDSM (or both), indicates a high level of aggressiveness in creating antagonism on the political scene. Abandoning the basic standards of reporting is in direct contravention of the self-regulatory principles prescribed in the Code of Journalists. Half of the articles of the Code are violated, most important whereof is Article 14 which refers to the imperative that “a journalist has to maintain a professional distance from the political entities”.

(d) The monitored political and talk shows (between the 1st and 14th of December 2015) of these television broadcasters are consistent with the editorial policy of their informative programme. The releases of the show *Jadi Burek* from the 1st and 3rd of December broadcasted on TV Sitel need to be pointed out due to unambiguously detected hate speech, explicit negative stereotyping and stigmatising speech. This finding was not sanctioned by the regulatory body.

(e) Explicit and unsupported framing favouring the ruling VMRO DPMNE and demonising SDSM was detected in three other TV shows broadcasted in the monitoring period. The purpose of entire December 11th release of the *Late Night Milenko Show* broadcasted on Kanal 5 was to promote government policies. The December 2nd release of the show *Akcent* broadcasted on MTV1 abounds in offensive and demonising speech towards SDSM and its Leader, framing the Opposition as an enemy of the democracy. The December 1st release of the show *Ja Sakam Makedonija* broadcasted on Sitel produces evidently negative and offensive discourse on SDSM – arguing that the party’s proposals for solving the problem with the occupied media are “totalitarian”.

(2)

(a) The analysis of the media outlets with neutral or mildly critical approach – Telma, Alsat M, 24 Vesti and TV21, showed that these television broadcasters resist the hegemonic discourses of the ruling parties and the pro-government media. In almost all reports, they respect the professional principle of introducing, relatively speaking, the “other side” in the stories. Meaning that these television broadcasters provide the so-called internal pluralism in the news by making an effort to present as many conflicting opinions and views on one topic.

(b) However, part of the reports of these television broadcasters demonstrate a tendency of violation of the professional standards regarding the spectrum of consulted sources. These television broadcasters as well have reports that have only one source. This practice in the selected period is not systematic and is not misused for favouring or demonising political entities. Building robust professional standards necessitates a change in this practice.

ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL TELEVISION BROADCASTERS

1. MTV 1

„Dnevnik“

In the reporting period from the 23rd of November to the 18th of December 2015, MTV1 broadcasted a total of 273 reports pertaining to political actors. During the one-month period, the television broadcaster devoted special attention to (1) The new government projects (102 reports), (2) The negotiations on the media (16 reports), (3) The inquiry commission on the interception of communications scandal (16 reports), (4) The veto on domestic borrowing (14 reports), (5) The scandal with fake ID cards (4 reports), (6) The completion of the composition of the State Election Commission (4 reports), and (7) The blockade of the Rector's Office against the felling of the trees at the campus of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius (4 reports). A favourable attitude towards VMRO DPMNE was identified in majority of the reports on these topics. The most explicit favouritism was in the reports that promote government activities, thereby making the news resemble a government or party newsletter. Unlike the other pro-government media outlets, the demonising attitude of MTV 1 towards SDSM is less pronounced which may be considered as a distinctive character in the reporting.

Commentaries and opinions in the news: during the analysis period, MTV 1 broadcasted (102) promotional and advertising news reports in favour of the Government, sometimes under one cue, for example: “Prilep: 76 families will get a roof over their heads”, “Prilep: Construction of 678 facilities in 13 municipalities”, “Prilep: Construction of a new school and sports hall” broadcasted on (02.12.2015), further “New foreign investments in Macedonia”, “Turkish company opened a rice factory”, “Employment fair: Over 80 companies looking for employees”, “Labour Market: 7,155 job vacancies in the third quarter”, “Apartments for 43 socially deprived families”, “Kocani: New sports hall” – all broadcasted on (03.12.2015). Due to this manner of reporting, the news of the Macedonian Public Service Broadcaster resembles a pre-election promotion of the ruling VMRO-DPMNE. The headlines include: “Pediatric Cardiac Surgery: Performed nearly 200 interventions”, “Two new factories by the end of the year”, “New drugs on the positive list” (05.12.2015); “More than 10,000 employments as a result of *Macedonia Employs*” (06.12.2015); “New foreign investment in TIDZ Bunardzik” (07.12.2015); “Two new projects: Free transport for full-time students” (08.12.2015); “Unemployment: A record low of 25 percent” (11.12.2015) etc. Although in smaller numbers, reports with negative attitude towards the Opposition were broadcasted as well: “Budget payments threatened by the veto” (29.11.2015); “Zaev threatens the banks and the media” (01.12.2015); “A column by Michael Meehan: an attack on the free media is an attack on everyone” (11.12.2015) – this example contained personal views of the journalist in the presentation.

Using sources: 129 reports in the news on MTV 1 use only one source. 83 reports use two or more sources that usually defend the same position. There is a marked trend towards using public institutions as sources of the reports (the President, the Prime Minister, government press office, civil servants, mayors) and occasionally experts. Further, manipulative tendencies by not naming the sources have been observed as well: “representatives of the journalists”, Eurostat report (without specifying its time of reference), “the position of the economists”, “many”, and suchlike. Manipulative use of sources is also observed when a journalist passes a conclusion without referring to the sources: “The Government responsibly manages the public finances and meets its liabilities” (06.12.2015); or using old statements in a new context: “Two new projects: Free transport for full-time students” (December 8th); using statements in favour of the position of the journalistic (December 9th – statements of two students with the same position), or using phrases such as “economists say” and quoting statements of government officials on the social networks as official statements (the December 11th statement of PM Gruevski on Facebook). In cases when the news contain two contrasting sources (VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM), more space is allocated to the elaboration of the views of the ruling party (“Case ID cards: Forgers and Fabricators should be prosecuted”, 29.11.2015). In the last seven days in the monitoring period, in up to 41 news products, the information was presented based on a statement of the Prime Minister, who along with government spokesperson, is often the only source.

Direct addresses: In the reporting period, 41 direct addresses of the leaders of the two major political parties were identified. According to the frequency of appearances and the framing of the direct addresses, an imbalance is evident in favour of the Leader of VMRO - DPMNE. In the first monitoring period, Gruevski had 37 broadcasted addresses, whereas Zaev had 4 broadcasted addresses in a negative context. Even rarer are the addresses of the representatives of the other political parties.

Audiovisual Presentation: The propaganda and promotional reports are accompanied by audiovisual manipulation through the very selection of promotional statements of government officials and visually displaying moments of ribbon-cutting ceremonies, cornerstone ceremonies and similar events: (December 2nd) statement of an anonymous citizen “We planted our future, as well as the future of our children and Macedonia”, “*Gentherm* is building a factory in Prilep” (laying foundation signifying “a fulfilled promise”); (November 29th and December 2nd) covering only the platforms of VMRO-DPMNE, although the platforms of SDSM take place simultaneously. Many reports have the Prime Minister and the ministers from the ruling party in the foreground while promoting new investments (December 6th: “New TINEX investment worth EUR 14 million”), using holidays to promote political projects (such as the Prime Minister’s announcement of benefits for the students at the celebration of the religious holiday of St. Clement on December 7th), or promoting messages “Following: Gruevski with a message to the people” (December 8th), illustrating a broadcasted interview of PM Gruevski for *Press 24* with a video footage from a rally of VMRO-DPMNE (December 10th), as well as highlighting the party symbols of the ruling party, as opposed to a small picture of the headquarters of the the opposition SDSM, in the report “Case ID cards” which presented the views of both parties (December 10th). In the news item “Inquiry Commission: Schedule of the witnesses in the case of the interception of communications (December 7th), rather than broadcasting the official statement of the SDSM official (Peter Shilegov) to illustrate the news, the journalist-anchorperson interprets the statement.

Shows

The shows broadcasted between the 1st and 14th of December were subject to analysis. The shows *Akcent* and *Nash Agol* were analysed during the monitoring period. No serious disruptions were identified in the latter, however, controversial elements were observed in one release of the show *Akcent*, which became subject to deeper analysis.

Akcent

Two releases were devoted to topics relating to the media, the political negotiations on the media, and the statement of the leader of SDSM, Zoran Zaev, characterising 4 television broadcasters as hostile. The release broadcasted on December 2nd was hosted by Goran Petreski, the editor of MTV, whereas the guests in the studio were the editors of the media outlets with pro-government policy: Lidia Bogatinova – Kanal 5, Kole Casule – TV Alfa, Dragan Pavlovic Latas – TV Sitel, and Dime Ratajkovski, the editor-in-chief of the first channel of MRT.

The host imposed the following topics for discussion: “The media and politics: the four most watched television broadcasters and the most influential daily newspaper are political enemies of SDSM” and “What kind of laws will most effectively protect us as journalists from any kind of political pressure and threats”. The guests and the host in the show negatively referred to the statement of the leader of SDSM and pointed out that the journalists in their news rooms find this statement as a form of media pressure. In one instance, the editor of Kanal 5, Lidia Bogatinova, used a derogatory speech against the entity, which was not opposed by the host.

The editor-in-chief of MRT, Dime Ratajkovski, defined the Public Service Broadcaster MRT as guardian of national interests, hence, its task is to inform on the activities of state and government officials and projects funded by the budget. According to him, everything else is a matter for the private media.

Quote:

“The second characteristic of the public service broadcaster is always to take care of the national and state interests of the Republic. To keep, protect and defend the constitutional order in the country... We cannot allow annihilation of the national fabric of Macedonia. We as a public service are the guardians of that”. – Dime Ratajkovski.

The host of the show failed to react to this definition of the role of the Public Service Broadcaster MRT.

2. MTV 2

„The News“

In the reporting period from the 23rd of November to 18th of December 2015, MTV2 broadcasted a total of 207 reports pertaining to political actors. During the one-month period, the television broadcaster devoted special attention to **(1)** The activities of DUI and the new government projects (50 reports promoting the activities of DUI and 8 reports of VMRO-DPMNE), **(2)** The inquiry commission on the interception of communications scandal (16 reports), **(3)** 10 reports were devoted to the pollution, **(4)** The negotiations on the media (9 reports), **(5)** The completion of the composition of the State Election Commission (8 reports), **(6)** The scandal with the fake ID cards (4 reports), **(7)** The veto on domestic borrowing (3 report), and **(8)** The scandal with the operation of the Ministry of Interior (2 reports). MTV2 completely ignored the blockade of the Rector’s Office against the felling of the trees at the campus of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius. A favourable attitude towards DUI was identified in majority of the reports (50 reports) on these topics and in 5 towards VMRO DPMNE. The most explicit favouritism was in the reports that promote government activities, thereby making the news resemble a government or party newsletter, similarly to MTV 1. In addition, MTV2 has a pronounced ethnic and particularistic approach to some of the topics.

Commentaries and opinions in the news: The news in Albanian on MTV 2 has been assessed as positive in favour of DUI (50 reports), and their projects are presented as realized. All the events of the party and DUI officials are covered, ranging from visits to municipalities, opening kindergartens, sports halls, sewage, to funding books, building a promenade in Debar, awards for business projects, an announcement to build a hospital in Kicevo, Albanian representation in the public healthcare sector, the Corridor 8, the highway Skopje – Blace which is to be realized and so on. Emphasis is placed on their role in improving the situation of the Albanians, or “promotion of Albanian projects on culture.” Large number of the reports is aimed at glorifying the party and lack critical attitude toward DUI. The party officials are predominant and all their activities are covered: the Minister of Economy, Bekim Neziri, the Minister of Environment, Nurhan Izairi, the Minister of Local Self-Government, Lirim Shabani, who promotes a guide for investors etc. The Director of the Health Insurance Fund, Orhan Ramadani, has coverage on the contributions for the dentists and Ruzhdi Lata from Debar on the construction work in the infrastructure. The projects of the Government, the Prime Minister and the ministers of VMRO-DPMNE (Nikola Todorov) are praised (especially the project “Buy a House” for young people). However, occasionally, in terms of VMRO-DPMNE, the television broadcaster has critical reports, such as on the non-appearance of the Prime Minister before the Inquiry Commission, or the composition of the SEC.

Using sources: 79 reports in the news on MTV 2 use only one source. Although the news in Albanian on MTV2 use sources that generally represent contrasting views, the favourable reports (to DUI) use sources that represent a single position (over 100 reports), and through the favourable assessment of the activities of DUI, they assume an apologetic function. DUI and its officials are the most common sources, yet the other parties appear as sources only when they are actors in an event or in a debate in the Assembly.

Direct addresses: In the reporting period, 120 direct addresses of representatives of political entities were broadcasted, 36 whereof belong to VMRO and 58 to DUI. Unlike the other individual reports, in the case of MTV2, not only the leaders, but all members of a certain political party have audio statements/addresses. The direct addresses of Ahmeti and the ministers and representatives of the central or local government from DUI are broadcasted more frequently. The direct statements of the Leader of DPA, Taci, are rarely broadcasted. Excerpt from addresses often favour DUI as creditable for the Albanians, such as the following address of Ali Ahmeti: “Times have changed in favour of the Albanians, we should be smart and use this for further promotion of Albanians ... for the equality of the two biggest communities in Macedonia, the Albanian and the Macedonian community. Addresses of the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski were also broadcasted, mainly related to the success in the job creation and implementation of other projects.

Audiovisual Presentation: Generally, manipulative audiovisual presentation is absent from the reports. It is observed only in the form of a “warm” relationship between DUI officials and citizens during their field activities (“Mexhiti cordially talks to citizens”). The absence of footage in the coverage of the meeting of the OSCE Secretary General with Taci, yet emphasising only the meeting with Ahmeti, can be considered a manipulative audiovisual presentation. The footage in the report zoom an empty chair instead of footage of the meeting with Taci. A manipulative audiovisual presentation has been observed in the footage showing Grievski with a shovel while opening the TINEX distribution center.

Shows

The shows broadcasted between the 1st and 14th of December were subject to analysis. In the monitoring period, the show *Argument* was analysed. No serious violations of the principles of political pluralism were identified therein.

3. TV Sitel

„The News“

In the reporting period from the 23rd of November to the 18th of December 2015, TV Sitel broadcasted a total of 347 reports pertaining to political actors. During the one-month period, the television broadcaster devoted special attention to (1) The new government projects (159 reports), (2) The negotiations on the media (41 reports), (3) The scandal with fake ID cards (11 reports), (4) The veto on domestic borrowing (10 reports), (5) The inquiry commission on the interception of communications scandal (9 reports), (6) The completion of the composition of the State Election Commission (8 reports), (7) The scandal with the operation of the Ministry of Interior (3 reports), and (8) The blockade of the Rector’s Office against the felling of the trees at the campus of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius (1 reports). A favourable attitude towards VMRO DPMNE was identified in majority of the reports on these topics (160 reports the least). The most explicit constructs of favoritism were made in the reports that rhetorically glorify the politics of the Government, such as the reports on the investments whose implementation lacks evidence, the employment rise which is frequently reported on, yet lacks evidence as well, the multitude of promotional events which only register that the Government achieves progress without questioning if that progress is real. The demonising attitude of this television broadcaster towards SDSM (93 reports) is the strongest in intensity and frequency, compared to the other television broadcasters.

Propaganda, commentaries and opinions in the news: Proliferation of unsupported reports, commentaries and opinions on political entities on behalf of the journalists and editors of this television broadcaster are apparent throughout the monitoring period. In the monitoring period, usually, the informative programme uses hybrid journalistic constructions such as, cue/commentary wherein the anchorperson of the release, in the cue of the report that follows, presents assessment of the situation based his/her personal view. Another type of hybridisation is the analysis-commentary and the report-commentary. At least 65 broadcasts of these hybrid genres were detected in the monitoring period and almost in all of these releases, explicit and distinctive line of favoritism towards the ruling VMRO-DPMNE can be observed. Favouritism can be observed in most of the other reports as well, as a simple transfer of information in a manner that benefits the Government.

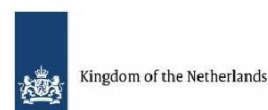
These releases can be classified according to their focus:

(1) Most noticeable are the reports with unfoundedly commentative tone that explicitly and favourably *construct a story in which the Government is the engine of the economic growth in Macedonia*, which enables a lot of foreign investments and creates new jobs. For example, the reports: “The textile company *Imperijal* from Tetovo is just one successful example that hired the needed staff with the help of the state measures”, “The excellent results that companies receive from the government project are growing” (27.11.2015), “Successful 2015 in terms of investments, 20 foreign companies commenced operation” (03.12.2015), “Unemployment at a historic low of 25.5 %” (11.12.2015). It is indicative that these types of reports often target young people – for instance, “Great interest for the government measure for exemption of social contributions for the companies which will employ young people until the age of 29” (01.12.2015). Speaking of a “historic rate” of “achieving successes” in these reports glorifies the Government actions, the rightness whereof is not only not challenged, but it is also propoganded in order to simplify the argument and to gain straightforward acceptance by the audience.

(2) The reports related to the investments in the healthcare and childcare sector are distinctive as they create a narrative in which VMRO-DPMNE is taking care of the public good. For instance: “The investments in healthcare sector continue – a new computer tomography scanner in the clinic Jane Sandanski” (30.11.2015), “222 volunteers and persons on temporary employment in the kindergartens will received permanent employment”, “11 volunteers employed in the Veles hospital” (01.12.2015), “The Government has shown readiness to respond to the modern medical challenges and use of a new generation of drugs” (06.12.2015), “Kozle Children’s Hospital and PET Center completed by New Year” (05.12.2015). The focus on the healthcare sector suggests a need for a complete positive framing of the Ministry of Health, i.e. the Minister of Health, retouching the developments that suggest otherwise. Showing the sense for the public good and social justice of the ruling party, Sitel broadcasts propoganda reports that suggest that the Government cares for the socially deprived: for instance, the report “A residential building with 76 apartments for the socially deprived families is put into operation” or “The Government is solving the problem of 43 socially deprived families in Kochani” (both broadcasted on 03.12.2015), or the report “150,000 job openings for a better life of 150,000 families” (12.12.2015).

(3) Finally, the propoganda reports that promote the infrastructure projects of the Government are typical as well: “Commencing the extension of the third part of Boris Trajkovski boulevard”, “New roof for the primary school in Miseshevo” (both broadcasted on 12.12.2015), “The water supply network in Negotino will be reconstructed” (05.12.2015).

The TV Sitel News is the informative programme that, apart from the strongest propoganda favouritism of VMRO-DPMNE, has also the strongest practice (in comparison to the other television broadcaster) of demonising SDSM and everything that may be considered “enemy” of VMRO-DPMNE. This is unequivocally discernible in the monitoring period through examples such as: “The media control laws demanded by SDSM are worse than those during the communist era and no European country has such legal measures” (28.11.2015), which constructs a chain of equivalence between SDSM and the “old regime” which has already been stigmatized as “evil” by the neo-liberal discourse. Demonisation was detected in the reports such as “The amendments of the Law on Media proposed by SDSM will not lead to journalism free of political pressures” (10.12.2015), or “Prime Minister Gruevski announces a political knockout of Zoran Zaev on April 24th, thereby completely defeating the destructive politics of the Opposition that is trying to create a serious institutional destabilisation” (29.11.2015), “VMRO-DPMNE: SDSM wants censorship as the one in North Korea” (29.11.2015). The opposition is presented as a public enemy in these types of reports.



Using sources: In the period between November 23rd and December 18th, the Sitel News generally use one source (158 reports) – most often these reports cover government activities, but often the news reports/commentaries are based on only one source. When a report contains three or more sources, they often represent a single view (37 reports). The announcements of the political party (VMRO-DPMNE) and the Government as well as the statements of the ministers and mayors are also used as sources. The manipulation with the sources is constituted in the usage of formulations such as “prosecutors”, “experts”, “...sources close to...” without outlining the specific names of the sources. Political party announcements and statements of ministers are also used as sources.

Direct addresses: In most of the cases, the political entities actually come down to the leaders of both major political parties. The number of appearances (78 reports) is balanced, but the addresses of the ruling party leader are in a positive context, while the ones of the leader of the Opposition are in a negative.

Audio-visual presentation: This television broadcaster manifests bias through non-verbal methods as well – up to 45 reports or 15% are accompanied by a manipulative audiovisual presentation through photos with euphoric support for the favoured party and compromising presentation of the demonised opposition.

TV Shows

The shows broadcasted between the 1st and 14th of December were subject to analysis. The shows *Jadi Burek* and *Ja Sakam Makedonija* were analysed during the monitoring period. Subject to deeper analysis were only the releases that contained serious violation of the professional standards.

Show “Jadi Burek”

In the period from 01.12.2015 to 14.12.2015, nine releases of the show *Jadi Burek* hosted by Janko Ilkovski were broadcasted, two thereof are indicative, the December 1st and December 3rd releases, as they contained blatant violation of professional standards including hate speech. In the December 1st edition, the main topic imposed by the host was the danger of SDSM, the Opposition, coming to power. In addition, Ilkovski put himself, the journalists Cvetin Chilimanov and Dragan Pavlovic-Latas and others in a group of opponents to, as he said “censorship and dictatorship”, naming himself a defender of the freedom of expression and the freedom of the media. According to his statements, the journalists are appalled by the proposals of SDSM for “regulation of the media sphere”. Ilkovski during the show, which includes calls from viewers, *passes explicitly negative opinion and terms* for SDSM like “followers of Goebbels” and “Goebbels”, with personal attacks against and disqualifications of people from SDSM. Regarding the calls, *the host fails to distance himself from the opinion of the viewers calling the show, yet he encourages those who support the thesis that the Opposition threatens the security of the state and wants to come to power at any cost.*

Quote: “They just can, by swearing at dead parents, with vulgarity and with violence one can become a minister. Congratulations, they succeeded. By swearing, by making a selfie where our soldiers died, by humiliating, by cursing, by insulting and there you go. Well, some succeed in this way, whereas others succeed in a quite different way, a civilized way. I understand you, your vote, what you have voted for is not applicable. Why? Because certain vulgar ones can do whatever they want. There is no democracy. Why? Because he can. Because he would crush what he does not like, he would burn it. Psychopaths, madmen, murderers, people capable of slathering you alive”.

The host of the show *uses negative stereotyping and speech against ethnic group* – the Albanians are depicted as separatists who want to divide the country, thereby explaining his opposition to the proposal of the Leader of SDSM for Macedonian children to be able to learn Albanian language.

In the December 3rd release of *Jadi Burek*, the host together with the guest Mirka Velinovska address current political issues and global events. Moreover, the host and the guest depict VMRO-DPMNE and the Prime Minister as constructive and tolerant, as well as elected by the people and still enjoying dominant popular support. At the expense of this, they refer to SDSM and the mediator in the negotiations, Peter Vanhoutte, with explicitly negative opinion, and use negative and stereotyping speech against the nationality of the mediator. Velinovska qualifies Belgians as people, as she phrased it, “with mentality of slaughterers” and “a nation of assassins”, which constitutes a hate speech. The host does not disclaim the suchlike opinions. The host and the guest insinuated a “conspiracy” of the “foreigners” and that the elections will a fraud.

Quote: “You are saying that the people will vote for VMRO-DPMNE, they will vote for themselves, I feel it in many of the calls from the viewers, and the manner and attitude of the foreigners who have literally lost track of how they appear before the people created a strong resistance even among the opposers of VMRO-DPMNE. Do you think that we will witness the Turkish scenario, when the Turkish people felt such a strong pressure that voted in favour of Erdogan, not because they wanted, but just to challenge the foreign factor?”

Show “Ja Sakam Makedonija”

The topic of the show broadcasted on 01.12.2015 was the political party proposals for the media as part of political negotiations in the Parliamentary Club. Hence, negative and offensive attitude and speech by the host have been observed in some cases towards SDSM, defining their proposal as “totalitarian”.

Quote: “SDSM confirmed that they stay with their proposals that will introduce full partisanship and totalitarianism in the media”

It is evident that the morning show broadcasts cues for the morning news block that contains qualifications of the political entities. Such negative and offensive qualification in the cue for the news block aimed at the mediator of the negotiations, Peter Vanhoutte, was observed in the show broadcasted on December 3rd.

Quote: “His law proposal that will politicise the media regulatory body is entirely unacceptable for the ruling party, the media, and experts. Upon this statement, he was asked why Macedonia should not conduct some of the European legislative solutions, once the legislation has to be amended, and he replied that those solutions do not correspond to the Macedonian mentality. Thus, many believe that he directly insulted Macedonians saying that Macedonians are not Europeans.”

However, it has been noted that the host of the show, in the contact part, reacts to some calls of the viewers to maintain the level of the discussion and points to the legal provisions. This applies to the call in which a viewer sends stereotypical messages through a comment that “the countries that are destroying the Balkans (the Western countries) by causing a refugee crisis (refugee and migrant crisis), one day, will suffer and will be destroyed themselves.

4. TV Telma

'News'

In the reporting period from November 23rd to December 18th, 2015, TV Telma published a total of 169 stories that refer to the political actors. The television paid most of its attention this month to (1) Full staffing of the State Elections Commission (19 stories), (2) the Inquiry Committee on the wiretapping affair (1 stories), (3) the media negotiations (15 stories), (4) the veto on the increase of the national debt (11 stories), (5) the falsified IDs affair (8 stories), (6) the new projects of the Government of RM (7 stories), (7) the affair about the work of the Ministry of Interior (4 stories), (8) the blockade of the rectorate due to the cutting down of trees of the UKIM campus (4 stories). No favourizing discourses were noted towards any political party. Also, no demonizing discourses were noted. The topics of the stories had an inclusive approach and were supported with arguments and they were very slightly critically inclined towards the government.

Commentary and opinions in the news: During the analyzed period, Telma Television mainly published reports, without a single analysis or commentary in the cues. What was predominant was neutral and argument supported criticism without instances of favourizing or demonizing opinions towards a political entity. Only one analysis was published and one cue in which the presenter (who is also the news editor), stated their own commentary on the topic, however unsupported criticism was not noticed (December 5th 'The Prime Minister did not comment on the work of the SPP' and December 9th 'The Public Prosecution Office in Skopje is investigating the case with falsified IDs...').

Using sources: In the informative program what was obvious was a systemic use of two, three or more sources (77 stories), and they were mostly opposed. Predominant were the sources of named experts and in the rest of the cases they were representatives of political entities, with balanced out representation. The approach of this television was continuously balanced out – emphasis was mostly placed on expert opinions as opposed to the opinions of various political actors. Telma continuously abided by the principle that stipulates that the journalist should consult at least two sources with an opposed or argumentative standpoint. Paradigmatic was the story aired on November 30th 'A new amusement park will be built' in which the consulted sources were Slobodanska Aleksovska, coming from VMRO-DPMNE and Dragi Davcevski who is a council representative from SDSM in the Council of the City of Skopje. Nonetheless, in the stories one can often come across three or more sources and a wider spectre of views is presented regarding the issues that are addressed (for instance the story aired on December 1st 'In response to the veto The Government took on a new debt of EUR 73 million' – the sources that were used were Zoran Zaev, the leader of SDSM, the Governor of the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia Dimitar Bogov, sources from the Ministry of Finance and experts such as Abdulmenaf Bexheti. Then, another paradigmatic story is the one aired on December 3rd 'VMRO-DPMNE has returned to the negotiations regarding the media', in which the sources were Ilija Dimovski from VMRO-DPMNE, Robert Popovski from SDSM, Artan Grubi from DUI, Pavle Trajanov from Demokratski Sojuz.

Direct addresses: In 135 stories on Telma there were direct addresses from political entities 110 of which were from the leaders of political parties. More present in the direct addresses are the leaders of the two largest political parties, with a balanced approach. Ministers were also present from the two largest parties and from the ruling coalition partner DUI. Leaders of the largest parties from the Albanian block, Ahmeti and Taci, were also present. Statements were presented from the smaller political entities as well, such as GROM, DOM and Levica, the youth branches of the political parties (UMS and SDMM) and from civil organizations such as Students Plenum, ZNM (AJM).

Audiovisual presentation: The headlines and the cues did not contain any malicious manipulation of the visual effects in order to demonize or favour any political option.

TV Shows

In this report, seven editions of the show 'Top Tema', aired from the 1st to the 14th of December. None of the observed editions of Top tema in the given period showed favourizing or attacking i.e. positive or negative framing of political

entities, non-ethical behaviour, inappropriate speech and hate speech from the hosts of the show episodes and their guests.

5 & 6. TV 21 (in Albanian and in Macedonian)

'Lajme' and 'News'

In the reporting period from November 23rd to December 18th 2015 the News in Albanian and in Macedonian were almost identical, i.e. were translated in the two languages. They have the same number of announcements, 209 stories referring to political actors each. The television paid most of the attention this month to (1) the Inquiry Committee on the wiretapping affair (20 stories), (2) the court cases concerning the events in Kumanovo and the Smilkovci Lake killings (13 stories), (3) the negotiations about the media (10 stories), (4) pollution in Tetovo and in Skopje (10 stories), (5) the new projects of the Government of RM (8 stories), (6) the complete membership of the State Elections Commission (7 stories), (7) the falsified IDs affair (6 stories), (8) the veto on increasing the national debt (3 stories). No favouriting discourse towards any political party was observed. Also, no demonizing discourse was observed.

Commentary and opinions in the news: This television has not adopted the practice of broadcasting explicit commentary or unsupported opinions in the news. There was also no notice of the so called hybrid genres such as the analysis/commentary or the commentary in the cues. The political events were covered with reports and news. Pursuant to this, in TV21 there was no notice of an explicit positive favourizing line, nor an explicitly demonizing one. What is typical for the television, however, is the obvious absence of investigative and critical journalism. Despite the fact that the list of covered topics includes civil topics such as the air pollution or for example sociological themes such as 'Arsovski: society is obsessed with politics' (December 5th), there is still a lack of in-depth journalist treatment of the topics. Very often one could come across stories in which the journalist only presents different views without providing any serious context of what was said and this is precisely the reason why in the informative programme during the reporting period 16 stories were identified that can be seen as favourizing for a subject. This is not a systemic, but rather a sporadic problem with this television.

The headlines, the cues and the journalistic reports themselves did not contain any explicit opinions from the journalists, with the goal of demonizing or favouring any particular subject. The analysis showed supported criticism, through using several sources: (December 5th) 'Is Macedonia in a pre-elections campaign. Arsovski: society is obsessed with politics', (December 5th) 'Zaev is better informed than Gruevski. The information on the Kumanovo events are 'classified'.

Using sources: In general they called upon several sources and they made sure to represent opposed standpoints: from the political parties there was an almost equal presence from all larger parties: DUI, VMRO, SDSM and DPA. The television mainly abided by the use of sources from the stakeholders, although stories could also be observed that were made solely based on the claims of one concerned party. The reports, the news and other stories call upon information that were for the most part obtained from the official authorities, and the bases for reporting were statements, press-conferences and party press releases. The difference in terms of the sources was visible in the selection of guest speakers that are ethnic Albanians and high officials (the Ministers of Economy and Environment, the Ombudsman) and politicians from the Albanian block (DUI and Besa).

Direct addresses: Broadcasting direct addresses depended on the specific topics that were the focus of the reporting. Despite everything the television mainly tended to broadcast the statements of all relevant political entities and their leaders. 82 stories included a direct address of representatives of VMRO-DPMNE, 76 of SDSM and 61 of DUI. And judging by the frequency and the manner of framing the direct addresses in the news during the reporting period on TV 21 in Macedonian and in Albanian, they were balanced out.

Audio-visual presentation: During the analyzed period, TV 21 did not run stories in which the visual presentation in used in a manipulative way.

TV Shows

This report comprises only the shows aired in the first half of December: December 1st to 14th. During the reporting period, the show 'Klik' was analyzed. There were no editions of the show in the given period that showed partiality or accusations i.e. positive or negative framing of political entities, unethical behaviour, inappropriate speech and hate speech from the hosts of the shows and their guests.

7. ALSAT M (in Albanian)

'Lajme – news'

During the reporting period from November 23rd to December 18th, TV Alsat M in Albanian aired a total of (240 stories) that refer to political actors. The television paid most of its attention to (1) the negotiations about the media (21 stories), (2) the Inquiry Committee on the wiretapping affair (17 stories), (3) the veto of increasing the national debt (12 stories), (4) the falsified IDs (10 stories), (5) the full staffing of the State Elections Commission (10 stories), (6) the court cases about the Smilkovci Lake killings and the 'events in Kumanovo' there were 8 stories, (7) there were 8 stories about the air pollution in Tetovo and in Skopje, (8) the new projects of the Government of RM (6 stories). There were no instances of favourable discourse towards any political party including the ones in the Albanian political block. No demonizing discourse was noted as well. The themes in the stories are treated inclusively, however with an obvious ethnically specific focus.

Commentary and opinions in the news: During the reporting period, Alsat M in Albanian generally abided by the professional imperative not to overburden the informative programme with commentary and opinions. There was even less notice of examples of unsupported commentary or an unsupported attack on political entities. Inclination could be observed towards topics that concern the Albanian ethnic community in Macedonia, however even then there was no tendency to choose favourites and opposed standpoints were also presented. For example, in the topic concerning the celebration of the Day of the Albanian Alphabet it was said that DUI is shining a political light on the event – however they made this accusation by calling upon the only institution through which this politicization could be made: 'The politicization, of course, with or without real accountability, carries the mark of the Secretariat for Implementing the Framework Agreement'. In 'Alsat-M' in the news in Albanian what was dominant was the analysis of the framework agreement and the recommendations coming from it. 'What is required is a civil, not an ethnic constitution', and at the same time 'what is required is proportionate representation of Albanians in the public sphere and in all larger companies', 'the Albanian language should be a national language and the budget should be enacted with the Badinter majority principle.' (06, 07 and 08.12.2015). The television continuously monitored the court proceedings of, as it was said 'Albanians' on the case 'Monster' as well as the events in Kumanovo.: 'Jashari is asking for international experts opinions for 'Monster', the attorneys ask that the case be taken by Janeva.' This is followed by the request of the family Neshkovski, for the killing of Martin to be cleared up by the Special Prosecutor. Conversations were also aired from the 'bombs'. Nikola Gruevski (in one of the 'bomb' conversations): 'tell him that he (the one that killed Neshkovski) is not part of the Prime Minister's security detail, but that he is part of the Tigers', the story 'The killing of Neshkovski, the family is asking for the case to be taken over by the special prosecutor. Accountability is demanded from Gruevski and associates' (from 12.12.2015). Alsat M, throughout the entire period of negotiations for finding a way out of the political crisis were critical towards the behavior of the representatives of the government, especially towards VMRO-DPMNE. The announcements of the Prime Minister for free transportation for the students were interpreted as part of the pre-elections period. The usual 'Albanian' prism of viewing the events was present, this time in the field of energy supply. The cue for the construction of an electrical power line towards Albania was promoted by Bekim Neziri as an accomplishment of DUI, and in another story about the hydro power plants 'Lukovo Pole' and 'Boshkov Most' it was said that they cannot be built without prior approval from Albania (as if it is governed by the interests of Albania, and not by the justification of the projects within the state, since the construction of the hydro power plants was initially presented as a problem in Albania)

Using sources: The television made sure to include sources from concerned parties and to represent different and

opposed opinions on certain topics or issues. However, there were many stories (50) with only one source. This points to one practice in the journalist culture in Macedonia where information is provided without feeling the need to go into further analysis of the event or occurrence. With Alsat M in Albanian, in cases when the stories called upon several sources, they were usually opposed, i.e. they argued opinions that are different from one another or are polemic. Thus, the topic of the Government increasing the national debt, although the television presented a stand that is against the increase of debt, they still called upon sources that claim the opposite. All four larger parties had an almost equal presence.

Direct addresses: There were direct addresses from all leaders of the larger political parties. Out of a total of 111 stories with direct addresses (in some stories there were several addresses), there were 42 stories with addresses from representatives of DUI, 43 addresses from VMRO DPMNE and 45 addresses from representatives of SDSM. The leader of SDSM Zoran Zaev had 9 addresses, Gruevski had 11 addresses, Taci had 3 and Ali Ahmeti had 2 direct addresses. Having in mind that there was no malicious framing of the addresses, it can be said that Alsat M in Albanian is balanced in terms of the access of the political actors to their platform.

Audiovisual presentation: No manipulative audiovisual presentation was noted.

TV Shows

This report comprises only the shows aired in the first half of December: December 1-14. During the reporting period the shows 'Patot Kon (The Road Towards)' and '200' were analyzed. The subject of in-depth analysis was only one edition of 'Rruga Drejt' – 'The Road Towards' since it was indicative due to the inadequate behaviour of the guests from which the host distanced herself.

Show 'Rruga Drejt' – 'The Road Towards'

In the period from the 1st to the 14th of December, only one edition was analyzed in more detail of the show the Road Towards, aired on December 3rd. The guests in the show were Artan Grubi from DUI, Naser Selmani from AJM and Dejan Georgievski, Director of the Media Development Center. The topic for discussion that the host introduced in the show was 'Is the Przino Agreement is under the risk of failing.'

Throughout the show there were several instances of the terms 'Macedonians' and 'Albanians' by the MP Artan Grubi in the context of division of his understanding of society and the media as two ethnic spheres, the Macedonian one and the Albanian one, and the MP stated that he is only interested in the Albanian sphere. The journalist Selmani represented the principles of journalism as a profession, and Grubi pointed out to him in a negative context that he has, as Grubi put it, a 'Macedonian mentality' and 'he speaks Albanian, however he thinks Macedonian and that this (Macedonia) is a country of two nations – the Macedonians and the Albanians.

Quote from Grubi: 'If Gruevski has media, Ali Ahmeti has none, the situation of the Albanian media is opposite to the one of the Macedonian media. ----- This is because the Albanians have decided so, not the Macedonians'. 'The Albanian members in the Agency for Media defend the interests of the Albanians and they are advocates of the Albanian issues' – Artan Grubi.

The host of the show distanced herself from the duel between Grubi and Selmani.

8. ALSAT M (in Macedonian)

'News'

During the reporting period from November 23rd to December 18th 2015, TV Alsat M in Macedonian aired a total of 240 stories that refer to political actors. Most of the television's attention this month was directed towards (1) the negotiations on the media (15 stories), (2) the Inquiry Committee on the wiretapping affair (15 stories), (3) the veto on

increasing the national debt (12 stories), (4) completing the list of members of the State Elections Commission (10 stories), (5) the affair with the falsified IDs (8 stories), (6) on the court proceedings related to the Smilkovci Lake killings and the 'Kumanovo events' there were 8 stories, (7) there were also 8 stories regarding the air pollution in Tetovo and in Skopje (8) the affair about the operations of the Ministry of Interior (4 stories). No favourable discourse was noted towards any political party. Also, no demonizing discourse was noted. The themes of the stories were treated inclusively; however they had an obvious ethnically specific focus.

Commentary and opinions in the news: During the monitored period, the television informing was mainly fair and appropriate, through reports on the events and from time to time with analytical stories. There was no explicit commentary and opinions in the content, however there were stories that might be considered as a neutral and supported criticism. With Alsat M in Macedonian, just as with the programme in Albanian, what was more present was content from the life and the political events of Albanians in Macedonia. In rare cases these topics had an ethnic focus in the opinion of the journalist. For instance, the story opening with 'The coalition between DPA and DUI would benefit their amnesty, however have they been faking hostility all these years and have they been lying to the Albanians?' (25.11.2015). This story is supported criticism of the renowned Albanian parties, yet having in mind that in the Albanian political block new political entities emerged, it would be interesting to observe this standpoint towards the renowned ones as opposed to the new ones and to the Macedonian parties. This is enhanced by the fact that the supported criticism throughout the entire period was mainly directed towards the renowned parties of Albanians (DUI and DPA), even the other parties (BESA, Reformi) and they are called to comment on their work, especially in this case with the announced possibility for a coalition, as well as with the story from 07.12.2015, 'Representation of Albanians, in Ohrid only two Albanians were hired, DUI and DPA have no comments on the low level of representation'. Alsat M had a critical stand towards VMRO-DPMNE during the reporting period.

Using sources: The television used only one source on several occasions (in 51 stories) and this happened when they provided information on an activity of a political entity or they simply communicated statements non-critically. The self-regulation bench marks of the professional standards stipulate that this practice should be avoided. However, with Alsat M in Macedonian this is not so much a systemic problem, as much as it is a sporadic practice. In most cases the television did use two or more sources and the defended different opinions (94 stories).

Direct addresses: A total of (25) direct addresses of political actors were aired and they were balanced in terms of frequency per entity and in terms of content.

Audiovisual presentation: There was no notice of examples of manipulation with the audiovisual presentation.

Shows

In the period covered by this analysis concerning the shows (December 01-14) a total of 6 editions of the show '360 stepeni (360 degrees)' were analyzed, and in terms of content there were no examples that point towards a favourizing or a demonizing behaviour towards any political entity. In this program there was no hate speech or a negative and stereotypical speech directed towards any group.

9. TV 24 Vesti

'News'

During the reporting period from November 23rd to December 18th 2015, TV 24 published a total of (305 stories) that refer to political actors. The television paid the most comprehensive attention to (1) the Inquiry Committee on the wiretapping affair (16 stories), (2) the negotiations on the media (13 stories), (3) the veto on increasing the national debt (11 stories), (4) the affair with the falsified IDs (10 stories), (5) the affair about the operations of the Ministry of Interior (5 stories), (6) the blockade of the Rectorate due to the cutting down trees on the UKIM campus (4 stories), (7) the new projects of the Government of RM (4 stories), (8) deciding on the full membership of the State Elections Commission (1 story). No serious favourable discourse was noted towards any political party; however an enhanced

critical stance towards the activities of the Government could be noted.

Commentary and opinions in the news: Throughout the monitored period, the television generally reported fairly, appropriately and impartially about the ongoing events and the current state of the country. In most of the stories there were no commentary elements noted, nor any elements of unsupported opinions about the political entities. In rare cases the practice of this informative programme was to give supported criticism of the actions of the Government. Such practice was observed in 13 stories, such as the story 'VMRO-DPMNE proposed a bill on the Law on media, SDSM found it acceptable, or the report from 28.11.2015 'Miloshoski hasn't got a specific answer to what the reasons are for the drastically changed position of his party in terms of the falsified documents'. In these stories, TV 24 Vesti demonstrated a strong critical stance towards the ruling VMRO-DPMNE, however they do that using a logical series of evidence, pointing to the fact that in situations of a political crisis and of closed-off institutions, it is possible to construct some sort of critical stance of the media towards the government. The television hardly reported on the majority of promotional activities of the government that were abundantly present in pro-government media, however they did not promote the opposition or a third entity either, except in rare cases when minor inclination can be seen. It is interesting, however that in isolated cases there was a practice of unprovoked communicating of the activities of the government – however these were not strategic moves, rather sporadic reporting – a practice that must be removed in Macedonian journalism in order to avoid turning the news into newsletters. There were no commentaries or explicit opinions observed in the informative contents.

Using sources: Two thirds of the published informative contents of 24 Vesti used two or more sources. When communicating viewpoints of the political actors, all concerned parties were included. The balanced approach could also be observed in the use of opinions from experts and analysts in the stories. In rare cases only one source or two sources defending the same position were used in the stories. For the most part, in the stories with only one source, the source was from the opposition – which is the grounds for the conclusion that 24 Vesti are mildly inclined towards the opposition without offending the principles of professional journalism and political pluralism.

Direct addresses: In the reporting period there were a total of 44 direct addresses. In thirteen of them, during the monitoring period, the leaders of the political parties were represented with direct addresses, more specifically Nikola Gruevski was presented 19 times, Zoran Zaev 10 times, the leader of DUI once. In 24 Vesti a spot was also provided for the leader of Dostoinstvo Stojance Angelov (3 times), the leaders of PCER Samka Imbraimovski and of the Demokratski Sojuz Pavle Trajanov (twice each), and one address each from the leaders of FRODEM Jove Kekenovski, of Levica Zdravsko Saveski, of TItovi Levi Sili Slobodan Ugrinovski, of the Democratic Party of Turks Kenan Hasipi, of LDP Goran Milevski, of NSDP Tito Petkovski and of NDM Janko Bacev.

Audiovisual manipulation: No explicit malicious manipulative audiovisual presentation was observed and the contents were covered with adequate image and tone.

Shows

In the period referring to talk shows, the shows included in this analysis were five editions of the show '24 Analiza (24 Analysis)' and two editions of 'Win Win'. There was no notice of behaviour that could be seen as favourizing or as an unsupported attack towards political entities, there was no positive or negative framing of political entities, nor were there any elements of hate speech.

10. TV Alfa

'News'

During the reporting period from November 23rd to December 18th 2015, TV Alfa published a total of 318 stories that refer to political entities. The television paid most of its attention this month to (1) the new projects of the Government of RM (37 stories) and local projects of mayors of VMRO-DPMNE in which governmental representatives were often

present (15 stories), (2) the negotiations about the media (17 stories), (3) the veto on increasing the national debt (9 stories), (4) the falsified IDs affair (7 stories), (5) the Inquiry Committee on the wiretapping affair (5 stories), (6) the full staffing of the State Elections Commission (2 stories), (7) the affair about the operations of the Ministry of Interior (2 stories), (8) the blockade of the Rectorate due to the cutting down of trees on the UKIM campus (2 stories).

Most of the reports (53 stories) on these topics included a favourable stance towards VMRO-DPMNE. Many of the characteristics of this informative programme were similar to the ones of TV Sitel: on one hand there were explicit constructs of favourable positions made in the stories that rhetorically glorify the policies of the government and a distinctly intense and frequent demonizing stand towards SDSM (45 stories). In many of the stories both elements were present. According to this analysis of framing the political actors, Alfa TV is a medium whose informative programme is metastasizing a populist discourse and it resembles a PR newsletter of the government.

Propagandistic stance, commentary and opinions in the news: During the reporting period, on TV Alfa there was a metastasis of reports that are an unsupported attack of the opposition (143 stories) or a favourable stand towards the ruling VMRO-DPMNE (76 stories). More than half of the announcements contained commentary and opinions (44 stories) about the political entities made by the journalists and the editors of this television. What was characteristic was that the commentary approach could often be seen in the cues, yet not in the stories that followed them. This is an indicator that might point out to the fact that TV Alfa has a practice in which their positive or negative framing of the political entities is often made by the editorial staff, and less often by the journalists on field. The television uses a similar reporting strategy to the one of Sitel. There is still a noticeable, and compared to Sitel an even more intense (rhetorically speaking), strategy to demonize the political opposition. Thus, the type of stories made and published by Alfa TV, on one hand, resemble a party or government newsletter favourizing the government, and on the other hand it constructs extensive discourses to demonize the opposition.

The journalistic constructs can be systemized in several points:

(1) Most suited for analysis are the stories that demonize the oppositions, foremost SDSM. This is visible in the rhetoric constructs: the selection of lexical elements and the tone with which the presenters make out SDSM as structurally unfit for Macedonia, include a whole range of strategies. In part of the stories *SDSM was constructed as a traitorous and authoritative political entity*: On 01.12.2015 while the focus was placed on Zaev's statement about pro-governmental media – Alfa stated in a headline: 'One scandal after another. Zaev started his confrontations with the media', 'In a time of negotiations about media regulation and while he speaks as if he's fighting for independent media, he publically identified as his biggest political enemies the televisions with the highest ratings and the newspaper Dnevnik' (01.12.2015), 'Thanks to the leader of SDSM, Macedonia became a world known example for attacking and pressuring the media. Zaev's comments reflect a dark spot in the recent Macedonian humorous history, said the influential American communications, national and international media expert Michael Meehan who published a column in the well renowned magazine 'The Hill'. (11.12.2015).

Another strategy for negative framing and demonization is the *reproduction of the narrative of the inaptness of the opposition and logically their inability to run the country*. For example, 'VMRO-DPMNE with a bill on the Law on Media, and SDSM found it acceptable. Is the party withdrawing from their absurd war with the media that the leader Zaev started in his own typical fashion?' (03.12.2015) – in this story, the dominant effect that was produced was that SDSM are not a reliable partner since they 'are volatile in their opinions'. Then, 'Minister Spasovski seemed and sounded a bit *confused*, first he said that the people are safe, and then he said that the killing in Grcech was a blow to the stability' (03.12.2015). *SDSM are manufactured in a clientelistic machine and they are opposed to the meaningful employment policies of VMRO* 'In parallel to the project 'Macedonia is hiring' that has a major effect in reducing the percentage of unemployment in the country, there is an ongoing process that became known in the social networks as 'Spasovski is hiring', the technical minister hired one more advisor directly from the lines of SDSM'. (11.12.2015). *One more strategy is the clear reproduction of SDSM as a manipulative structure*, for instance 'The additional deputy minister came to a harsh reception from the farmers in Veles. They were angry today, asking why SDSM did not vote for the government's decision to pay out subsidies and why they tried to block the budget.' (16.12.2015). 'Instead of

using a programme, SDSM will try to use manipulative tactics to gain some extra votes' (December 12th, analysis/opinion). 'And in these conditions, it comes as no surprise the results from the surveys like for example the last one from Brima Gallup in which the majority of Macedonians believed that the opposition is running a destructive policy' (December 15th, cue/commentary).

- What was also obvious were the stories with unsupported commentary tones that explicitly cheered on and constructed a story in which the Government is the engine that provides numerous foreign investments and creates new jobs, however they also care about social justice. For example the stories: 'The Prime Minister Gruevski met with the Chinese Prime Minister and handed over six specific and well developed projects' (26.11.2015), in which Gruevski was made out to be 'the idea man', who gave powerful China government development projects, or 'The list of tangible results from the Government projects. The debts of 15 thousand families were written off, in the amount of over 30 million euro. The average pension has increased by 70%, and the lowest pension has increased by over 80%. A new 5% increase of the pensions is foreseen for next year too. The social and continuous monetary aid have increased on average by 60%, a new 5% increase is to follow' (10.12.2015). There were also stories that could fit this point, which made a contrast narrative in order to increase the power of VMRO-DPMNE as opposed to SDSM. 'It is interesting that in just 4 months from the last survey of this Institute, the position of Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski is literally cemented in the survey, unlike the one of his rival Zoran Zaev who lost almost a third of his already low support percentage' (cue, 23.11.2015).

- Also distinctive were the stories that refer to investments in the health sector and in infrastructure. For instance: 'The investments in the health sector and the improvement of the conditions for the patients are not stopping. Significant activities are also planned for the upcoming period.' (cue, 4.12), 'Ever since the citizens of Shishevo complained to Prime Minister Gruevski about the road being in a very bad state, the municipality and the Mayor of the City of Skopje immediately found a solution and the laying down of asphalt is under way' (cue, 1.12).

Using sources: During the reporting period, Alfa published 124 stories with only one source. Most commonly used sources are the representatives and high officials of VMRO-DPMNE (147 stories), often as single sources (79 stories). Expert sources are used extremely rarely, one at a time, and they were opposed to the positions of the opposition.

Direct addresses: With Alfa, a total of 54 direct addresses were registered, 43 were from the leader of VMRO, and 8 from the leader of SDSM. Having in mind that with most of the stories that included an address from the leaders – the framing was positive for VMRO and negative for SDSM, this clearly shows that there is a violation of the principles of impartiality.

Audiovisual manipulation: The standard audiovisual manipulation was broadcasting promotional contents as regular news stories. In the news of Alfa, 7 stories were recorded with malicious audio visual manipulation and this was most often done by the medium placing in a certain context the statements from members of the opposition, in order to enhance the accusatory stance taken towards them. The most explicit example were two stories on the same topic (17.12.2015 and 18.12.2015), comparing statements from Petre Shilegov (concerning the MP Vladanka Avirovic in the Inquiry Committee on the wiretapping) and from Branko Crvenkovski from four years ago, accusing SDSM for taking a generally negative stand towards women (the caption on 17.12.2015 read 'Shilegov taking lead from Crvenkovski: are offenses to women treated as a virtue in SDSM?').

TV Shows

During the reporting period, no political shows of Alfa television were analysed.

11. KANAL 5

'News'

During the reporting period from November 23rd to December 18th 2015, TV Kanal 5 aired a total of 263 stories that refer to the political actors. The television paid most of its attention this month to (1) the new projects of the Government of RM (26 stories and 5 more stories about local projects, at which Government representative were guests), (2) the negotiations about the media (13 stories), (3) the veto on increasing the national debt (7 stories), (4) the Inquiry Committee on the wiretapping affair (6 stories), (5) the full staffing of the State Elections Commission (4 stories), (6) the fake IDs affair (4 stories), (7) the blockade of the Rectorate due to the trees that were cut down on UKIM campus (3 stories), (8) the affair about the operations of the Ministry of Interior (2 stories).

Most of the reports (57 stories) on these topics included a favourizing position towards VMRO-DPMNE and a distinctly and frequently demonizing position towards SDSM (34 stories). According to this analysis of the framing of political actors, TV Kanal 5 is a medium whose informative programme reproduces a populist discourse, resembling a PR newsletter of the Government.

Commentary and opinions in the news: During the reporting period, TV Kanal 5 published a number of reports that present an unsupported attack on the opposition (47 stories) or favourizing of the ruling VMRO-DPMNE (113 stories). This practice violates the professional principle of impartiality and fairness towards the actors in the political arena. More than half of the announcements contained commentary and opinions (99 stories) on the political entities made by the journalists or the editors of this television. The ratio between the contents that were positive and favourizing for the government as opposed the ones that are negative and demonizing for the opposition is two to one. Kanal 5 also doesn't differ significantly from the reporting strategy of TV Sitel and TV Alfa, an extremely distinctive propagandist stand towards the contents that promote the Government and VMRO-DPMNE and an openly demonizing stand towards the opposition, in contrast to the professional standards. The expressiveness in the demonizing messages related to the opposition is one shade lighter than what could be seen of TV Alfa, nevertheless this line of reporting in TV Kanal 5, both according to the frequency and the rhetoric is extremely strong. The type of stories that TV Kanal 5 produces and publishes are on one hand similar to a party of governmental newsletter favourizing the government, and on the other hand it constructs extensive discourse aiming to demonize the opposition.

The journalistic constructs may be systematically organized in several points:

(1) The most obvious element were the stories with unsupported commentary overtones that explicitly and in the spirit of cheering on, constructed a narrative that the Government is the motor behind the growth of Macedonian economy, enabling numerous foreign investments and creating new jobs. For instance, the stories: 'For this year, 2015, just in the first 11 months the growth of over 26 percent is more than positive and it shows that the mentioned number will be surpassed by far' (06.12.2015), 'Every investment in the country would mean a better standard for the people, increased export and better results for Macedonian economy...' (07.12.2015), 'Chinese investors are attracted by the favourable business climate and the low business costs in Macedonia' (26.11.2015).

(2) Also distinctive were the stories referring to the health sector and the care of young people, which produced the narrative where VMRO-DPMNE cares about the general well-being. For instance '76 families from Prilep will be living in modern homes. Soon there will be welfare apartments in Makedonski Brod and in Kochani' (02.12.2015), 'The poly-clinic 'Jane Sandanski' received a tomograph that is worth 19 million denars, procured by the Government'. (29.11.2015). 'The Government also had a surprise for secondary school students... The measures aim to increase the mobility of young people, elevate entertainment levels and assist the development of the cultural segment... Both the younger and older population welcomed these measures' (08.12.2015).

(3) Finally, what was characteristic were the stories that demonize the opposition: 'Zaev declared war on the most influential media. The people could also see through his intentions.' (02.12.2015), 'the veto announced by the Deputy Minister from the lines of SDSM, Kire Naumov, conceals a danger of causing instability in the economy'

(30.11.2015), 'Popovski indirectly confirmed the information published in the media these past days referring to the proposals from SDSM that were assessed as scandalous by the public' (30.11.2015) 'For Popovski, the destructive activities of the opposition, in their attempts to get to power by any means, underestimating and insulting their own people, is revolting' (05.12.2015), 'Although their party head does not recognize the courts and their orders, the spokesperson of SDSM Shilegov presented an accusation regarding today's absence of Gruevski in Parliament' (cue, December 9th), 'Miloshoski: SDSM would trade national interests just to get to power' (cue, 26.11.2015).

Using sources: Only one source was used with approximately one quarter of the contents (75 stories), when announcing a new project of the Government or when a speech is aired of a high official of the government. Most often the stories were with two or more sources with similar or one-sided standpoints and these cases are foremost instances of two or more officials from VMRO-DPMNE announcing a project or commenting on their economic results (28 stories). For example, Zoran Stavreski and Nikola Gruevski 'the reduction of unemployment is the result of the Government's policies' (December 12th), Nikola Gruevski and Koce Trajanovski 'extension of the Partizanski Odredi Boulevard' (December 16th). The stories in which the sources had a different or opposite standpoint mainly referred to the political negotiations or the work of the Inquiry Committee on the wiretapping affair, where the opinions of members of both parties were communicated. Kanal 5 too has a tendency to use unnamed sources in their stories (6 stories).

Direct addresses: During the reporting period, on Kanal 5 a total of 71 audio statements were aired from the leaders of the parties – 57 addresses of Gruevski and 9 of Zaev. President Gjorge Ivanov was represented with 3 addresses and one address each for the leaders of GROM – Stevco Jakimovski and of Titovi Levi Sili – Slobodan Urganovski. There were hardly any direct addresses of representatives of the Albanian political parties. This points to serious deviations from the principle of balance, and this is exacerbated with the fact that the framing of the direct addresses of VMRO-DPMNE was positive and of SDSM negative.

Audio-visual presentation: The main type of audiovisual manipulation was airing contents that were of a promotional nature for the government and the ruling party, as stories in the news ('the Deputy Minister Vanco Kostadinovski from Sveti Nikole announced extensive benefits for farmers', December 17th) or the inclusion of the highest political officials of the government when announcing technical information (the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski personally announced that the deadline for legalizing illegal buildings will be extended, December 12th). There was also a manipulative interpretation of the survey of 'Brima Gallup' in several stories, in which it was underlined that over 70 percent of Macedonians believe that VMRO-DPMNE have greater support among the people. This was presented as a difference between the level of popularity of Gruevski and Zaev, although the question that the respondents had answered was what they believed was the situation, and not what their personal opinion was.

TV Shows

During the observed period from the 1st to the 14th of December 2015 two editions of the show 'Milenko Late Night Show' were aired, with the host Milenko Nedelkovski. Both editions did not include any hate speech or explicit negative speech towards a certain group. In the second observed show of Milenko Late Night Show aired on December 11th, the guest was the current Minister of Transport and Communications Vlado Misajlovski, and the show was recorded on locations outside the studio. The topics of conversation were the 'rush of new construction' and the economy projects of the Government of Nikola Gruevski, so the show contained a very clear positive and favouring campaign for Gruevski.