



ИЗВЕШТАЈ ОД СЛЕДЕЊЕТО НА МЕДИУМСКИТЕ СОДРЖИНИ

16 април - 7 мај 2016



Detailed Analysis
based on the monitoring of media content through the Rapid Response Media Mechanism
of the Institute of Communication Studies
(time-frame: 16th April – 7th May 2016)

7. Alsat M (Albanian)

(1) First week (16 – 22 April 2016)

The television *Alsat-M*, in the news in Albanian, aired 91 news segments related to the political players and situation. Most coverage was allotted to the protests in the streets (26 segments), as well as other events and reactions arising from President Ivanov's blanket pardon (18 segments). It also aired 10 segments on the elections, 8 segments on the Special Prosecutor's Office and 3 segments on the media. There were 7 news segments aired on topics of interest to the Albanians. In most of the reporting on these issues, the broadcaster maintained a neutral attitude to the subjects.

Commentary and Opinions in the News: In four segments was noted a critical view of DUI and in one of the Government. The news were completely pervaded by the protests against the blanket pardon (16 April, 'The protests against Ivanov's decision continue,' 'If Ivanov forgave you, Talevski, Bitola will not'). The political situation was covered comprehensively, the messages from Brussels were conveyed (16 April, 'Hahn says: Without free elections, we will not recognise the new Government'), and expert opinions were featured as well (16 April, 'Ivanov's decision threatens integration').

It continued the following day, when experts warned of 'political and economic consequences.' On 18 April, when a meeting of the leaders in Vienna was announced, there was coverage of the call of the civil sector for the protests to continue ('In Kumanovo protests against the government, in Tetovo the president's office demolished'). The intense coverage of this topic continued (19 April, 'The citizens do not stop, there are protests every day.' 'Against dictatorship and theft'). The broadcaster reported on the ambassadors' meeting with the president (19 April, 'The ambassadors to Ivanov: You buried the rule of law'). Consulting analysts on current issues continued (19 April, 'The postponement of the elections becomes necessary since the situation is escalating').

As the situation developed, the coverage of the events continued accordingly (20 April, 'SDSM conditioned the meeting in Vienna with a postponement of the elections and rescinding the pardon'), as well as of the reactions (20 April, 'VMRO-DPMNE: Zaev wants worsening of the crisis'), and the international messages (20 April, 'The EC demands implementation of the Pržino agreement'). There was parallel coverage of the different citizens' rallies (21 April, 'Protests and counter-protests in Skopje,' 'Government supporters played patriotic songs,' 'In Gostivar, in protest to the blanket pardon decision, candles lit symbolically'). The situation was same on 22 April, when there were reports not only that the protests against the blanket pardon continued, but also on the protest of the Albanians who demanded equality in the constitution and redefinition of the country.



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The activities of the Special Prosecutor's Office were also covered (19 April, 'Transporter, detention for one suspect,' 21 April, 'The demolition of Kosmos illegal. The pre-emptive pardon saved Gruevski'). The statement of the prosecutor Fatime Fetaj was also aired (21 April, 'Justice is Macedonia's supreme interest, not impunity').

Criticism towards the Government were related to the debt (18 April, 'Tomorrow a new EUR 3.2 million borrowing,' 16 April, 'In 10 years, EUR 5.9 billion were taken out of the country').

There was also coverage of the report on the media of the Reporters Without Borders organisation (20 April, 'Media freedom is in dire straits, Macedonia is ranked 118th out of 180 countries').

Using Sources: There were 31 news segments using a single source aired, and 19 segments using two or more sources, but sharing the same position. Thirty-four segments featured sources with differing or opposing views.

Direct Addresses: There was one direct address aired by the leaders of SDSM Zoran Zaev and of DUI Ali Ahmeti, as well as statements by leader of smaller Albanian parties.

Audiovisual Presentation: No manipulative audio-visual presentation was noted.

(2) Second week (23 – 28 April 2016)

In the news in Albanian, the television broadcaster aired a total of 74 news segments related to political subjects and events. There were 11 segments on the blanket pardon, 11 on the protests against the blanket pardon, 11 segments on the economic consequences of the crisis and the announced sanctions, and another 11 segments on the elections. There were 6 news segments aired on the SPO, 4 segments on the media, 3 segments critical of the Government, and 7 segments on topics of interest to the Albanian community.

Commentary and Opinions in the News: The broadcaster covered neutrally and critically the events and the situation caused by the blanket pardon, and it also paid attention to the economic consequences of the crisis: 'Announcement of sanctions: The US calls upon Ivanov to rescind the blanket pardon,' was the general announcement for the news segment 'The sanctions against the authorities are a necessary step' (23 April), 'The effects of the sanctions,' 'The crisis decreases the credit financing of the companies' (23 April).

The protests were summaries in the segment 'The Colourful Revolution against the sandwich counter-revolution,' while 'one side with patriotic songs call for a biblical Macedonia, the other with "Fatime" for a democratic Macedonia,' 'Saveski from *Levica* detained' (25 April), 'The courts release criminals, and detain the individuals protesting against such decisions, the ombudsman states' (28 April).

On the impact of the crisis on the economic situation, the broadcaster reports in the news segments 'The EU does not deny sanctions against the authorities, the potential sanctions endanger export,' and 'An economic crisis at Macedonia's doorstep' (26 April), as well as in the response from the NBRM, 'Bogov: We will not allow a devaluation of the denar' (26 April).

It also covered the dustups regarding the election date: 'SDSM: The voter registry is not consolidated' (27 April), 'DUI will not take part in the elections unless everyone participates' (27 April), as well as the position of IFES that there was no time to consolidate the registry and verify 40,000 citizens by 5 June (26 April), and of the non-governmental organisations MOST and *Civil*.

The broadcaster also covered the work of the SPO and the bickering between the parties: 'VMRO attacks the SPO' (23 April), 'SDSM: Gruevski is bothered by independent institutions' (23 April).

On the situation with the media, it reported on the 'Freedom House Report: The media are not free' (27 April), and it also aired the positions of experts according to whom 'The freedom of the media is pathetic' (28 April).

In the 26 April segment ‘The Government’s health food campaign unsuccessful,’ government policies were criticised, whereby the narrative is accompanied by video footage of Gruevski eating *burek*.

Using Sourced: In 17 news segments a single source was used, whereas 22 segments featured two or multiple sources, but sharing a single position.

Direct Addresses: There were two direct addresses aired, both by the leader of DUI Ali Ahmeti.

Audiovisual Presentation: In general, there was no use of manipulative audiovisual presentation.

(3) Third week (2 – 7 May 2016)

During the reporting period, the television broadcaster aired 62 news segments related to political subjects, processes or situations in the news in Albanian. The predominant topic were the protests (14 segments), followed by the negotiations to resolve the crisis (9 segments), President Ivanov’s blanket pardon (7 segments), the early elections (7 segments), the economic consequences of the crisis (5 segments), the Special Prosecutor’s Office (5 segments), the media (2 segments), and other subject matters.

In most of the reporting on these topics the television broadcaster maintained a neutrally critical position to the situation.

Commentary and Opinions in the News: The protests against the blanket pardon and the attempts to resolve the crisis, reported on in a neutrally critical manner, were the main topics on the television broadcaster (3 May: ‘The Colourful Revolution is back in the streets, with demands for postponing the elections, rescinding the blanket pardon of 50 criminals and against the criminal government’). The events were covered on a daily basis (4 May: ‘With Fouéré against dictatorial elections on 5 June’), and the various types of protests were covered too (5 May: ‘Guerrilla activists congratulated Talevski on the pre-emptive pardon’). It continued all the way to the last day (7 May: ‘The protests of the Colourful Revolution continue, with demands for new pure politicians and for the criminals to end up in Idrizovo’).

Alongside the protests, the broadcaster also reported on the attempts to resolve the crisis (5 May: ‘The Netherlands demands rescindment of the blanket pardon and says there are no conditions for elections on 5 June’). On the topic, the focus is on the international activities (4 May: ‘Berlin sends a special envoy’), as well as national ones (6 May: ‘The parties meeting to arrange postponing the elections and rescinding the blanket pardon, ambassadors state that it is high time to reach an agreement’). The broadcaster also air the views of the parties (6 May: ‘SDSM representative claim that VMRO-DPMNE asks for Ivanov’s pardon to be valid until the elections’), from both political and ethnic blocs (6 May: ‘DUI announces the return of the old government with VMRO-DPMNE, should the deal fall through’).

It also covered the topics of the various economic, security and other consequences of the political crisis (6 May: ‘Macedonia is on the verge of economic isolation,’ ‘The economic downturn to throw Gruevski on his knees’). Here too it uses the prognoses of international organisations (3 May: ‘The ICG places the country alongside Syria and Iraq’).

Of the topics of interest to the Albanian community, particular emphasis is given to those related to the NLA (2 May: ‘We mark 15 years since the 2001 conflict, but the status of the former NLA fighters is still unresolved’).

There were critical news segments against the government borrowing.

Using Sources: The broadcaster aired 18 news segments using a single source, and another 22

segments using two or multiple sources, but with a shared position. The remaining 15 segments were with two or multiple sources with opposing positions.

Direct Addresses: Over the whole reporting period only two direct addresses were aired, both by the leader of SDSM Zoran Zaev.

Audiovisual Presentation: No manipulative audiovisual presentation was used.

8. Alsat M (Macedonian)

(1) First week (16 – 22 April 2016)

In the monitored period between 16 and 22 April, in the news in Macedonian, the *Alsat-M* television broadcaster aired a total of 84 news segments related to political players, processes or situations. The most featured subject matters were: the protests of various subjects in the streets (21 segments), President Ivanov's blanket pardon, which provoked the street rallies (10 segments), the failed negotiations for resolving the political crisis (9 segments), the preparations for the elections (8 segments), the cases of the Special Prosecutor's Office (8 segments), and other subject matters. In most of the reporting on these issues there was no attitude to the political subjects noted.

Commentary and Opinions in the News: The broadcaster generally did not take a favourable or a demonising view of any political subject, nor did it use commentary in the news. The most featured topics in its informative content corresponded to the main political issues in society, which are in the public interest.

(1) It aired primarily critical views of the political crisis, which were sometimes not directed to any political subject (17 April, 'The European Union sent a message that it may temporarily suspend Macedonian aspirations, and with that the European funding for the country. That is how the academician Abdylmenaf Bexheti interprets the statement of the EU Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn'), whereas at other times it criticised specific political moves, above all Ivanov's blanket pardon (17 April, 'The rule of law is the fundamental principle of European societies, that is why it is normal for the decision for blanket pre-emptive pardon of persons involved under serious criminal investigation to cause fierce reactions by the international representatives, according to Professor Denko Maleski'). It also aired views offering solutions, such as that of Professor Osman Kadriu (19 April, 'Kadriu: An emergency session of the Assembly should be convened'), who stated that the country was in a state of emergency, which is sufficient grounds for the parliament to be in session.

(2) The protests were reported on impartially, but extensively and comprehensively. The protestors' demands were aired, participants were polled and there was coverage of the throwing of paint at the façades, which was not referred to as 'vandalism,' but as a 'colourful revolution.' There was coverage of the informal movement *Protestiram* both in Skopje and in other cities. There was also comprehensive and objective coverage, without speculation, of the rally of GDOM on 21 April. There was neutral to favourable reporting on the protest of the Albanian associations, which was not characterised as nationalist (22 April, 'Albanian citizens flooded the streets of the capital to express their revolt against the governing policies. They also demand justice and equal treatment from the institutions').

(3) Although less extensively, on account of the other current affairs, the broadcaster continued with the practice to report on subject matters that are of special interest to Albanians, from the dilapidation of the oldest Albanian-language school, still attended by approximately 200 children studying in poor conditions (17 April), through the story on the modernisation of the Old Bazaar (19 April, 'Many promises, no action. The project still at square one'), to the presentation of Health Insurance Fund report in Albanian (20 April, 'The information presented in Albanian was very

limited. The Fund director Orhan Ramadani gives a superficial presentation of the annual report in Albanian, after his speech in Macedonian, which lasted 20 minutes. He presented it in Albanian in two minutes’).

Using Sources: In 35 news segments a single source was used, 22 segments featured two or more sources whose positions were matching or neutral, and 19 segments featured two or more sources with opposing views. Ten news segments featured opinions of analysts and experts, in 5 of which they were either the only source or the only analyst, and the other 5 featured two or more experts with similar positions. Although the presented views were supported by arguments, there were no news segments noted featuring opposing analytical views.

Direct Addresses: The broadcaster aired a relatively small number of addresses by the leaders of political subjects, two by the leader of the Movement for the Reform of DPA Ziadin Sela, and one each by the presidents of SDSM Zoran Zaev, of NDP Vesel Memeti, and of PEI Fijati Canoski, who spoke as the harmed party of the demolition of the Kosmos building complex.

Audiovisual Presentation: No manipulative audio-visual presentation was noted.

(2) Second week (23 – 28 April 2016)

During the monitored period between 23 and 28 April, in the news in Macedonian, the *Alsat-M* television broadcaster aired a total of 76 news segments related to political actors, processes or situation. The most featured were subject matters pertaining to the early elections (14 segments), the protests (14 segments), President Ivanov’s blanket pardon (7 segments), the announcement of possible sanctions because of the political crisis (4 segments), the Special Prosecutor’s Office (4 segments, and 3 additional segments on the death of Kosta Krpač), and other subject matters. In a number of segments two or more related topics overlapped (the elections, the blanket pardon, the protests, the sanctions, etc.). In most of the reports on these subject matters no express position towards the political subjects was noted. A moderately favourable position was noted towards the protests of the informal initiative *Protestiram*.

Commentary and Opinions in the News: In general, the broadcaster did not express a favourable or demonising view towards any political subject, nor did it use commentarial content in the news.

(1) The exception in the monitored period was the reporting on the protests and counter-protests. The protests of the informal initiative *Protestiram* were covered extensively, with several news segments a day on where there were rallies and what happened. The reporting was mainly neutral, but occasionally in a favourable tone (‘No justice, no peace. Resign. It is the twelfth day that these slogans echo in the Skopje streets’). On the other hand, there were no reports on the rally of the association GDOM. The broadcaster explicitly expressed its position on the protests and the counter-protests in a commentary aired in the news, entitled: ‘A colourful and a sandwich revolution’ (‘The protesters throw paint on the monuments, demand a European Macedonia, whereas the counter-protesters sing patriotic songs and talk about a biblical Macedonia. Which direction is Macedonia taking?’ (23 April)).

(2) On the thesis of possible international sanctions against the country unless the political crisis is resolved, it reported as if they were a real danger and not mere unofficial announcements (‘An economic crisis on our doorstep. If the Union introduces sanction, 77 percent of Macedonian exporting will be in danger’ (26 April)). Nevertheless, the broadcaster admitted that it did not base this type of reporting on solid facts (‘Although it does not reveal it, it does not mean that Brussels dismisses the possibility of introducing restrictive measures against the country following the newly-arisen situation’ (26 April)). It also informed on the speculations regarding the stability of the denar and the safety of the savings because of the political crisis, but no placating messages

were conveyed ('The banks claim that the citizens' money is safe' (27 April)).

(3) The television broadcaster regularly and appropriately informed on the preparations for the early parliamentary elections, indicating that their taking place was problematic ('Although it is still unknown whether the Ministry of the Interior has verified all suspicious names on the registry, the SEC is expected to reveal the number of citizens that have the right to vote' (25 April)). It primarily aired claims that the conditions had not been met ('The voter registry cannot be consolidated in time for credible elections on 5 June. This is stated in the report of the IFES expert John Aaron' (26 April)).

(4) Beyond the main political events, the Albanian ethnic focus was maintained. The remaining room in the news was mostly used for topics of particular interest to the Albanian community, such as the use of the language ('The websites of various ministries ignore the Albanian language' (23 April)), on signposts ('To Macedonia, Albania is still a "people's republic." The signposts to the border are still from Communist time' (24 April)). It reported that there was a standstill in projects deemed to be 'of interest to the Albanians.' But this is not attributed merely to projects that have an inherently ethnic character, such as the construction of the Albanian theatre, but to some that are of general interest, such as the reconstruction of the Old Bazaar in Skopje. Nevertheless, these were not the only topics to which time was allocated. The broadcaster maintained its critical view of government policies, instead of merely conveying information from governmental institutions ('The Government wasted EUR 456 thousand for a health food and healthy living campaign. In mere two years after the money was spent, the results show that the citizens are overweight and contract diet-related illnesses. These results were not published by the opposition, but the government institutions, which cross-referenced the results of the general practitioners' examinations' (26 April)).

Using Sourced: In 29 news segments a single source was used, 22 feature two or more sources with opposing views, and additional 20—two or multiples sources with matching or neutral positions. Expert or analytical opinions were used in three news segments and the principle to include different opinions was adhered to.

Direct Addresses: Only two direct addresses were aired, one each by the leader of *Dignity* Stojanče Angelov and of PEI Fijat Canoski. No addresses by the leaders of the major political parties were broadcast, with the exception of Ali Ahmeti, whose old statement regarding the date of the election was re-aired twice.

Audiovisual Presentation: There was no manipulative audiovisual presentation noted.

(3) Third week (2 – 7 May 2016)

During the reporting period between 2 and 7 May, in the news in Macedonian, the *Alsat-M* television broadcaster aired a total of 61 news segments related to political actors, processes or situations. The most featured were topics pertaining to the street protests (12 segments), the early parliamentary elections (9 segments), the attempts and the speculations on the inter-party negotiations (8 segments), the situation with the economy (5 segments), the blanket pardon, with a focus on the protests at the Idrizovo prison (4 segments), the Special Prosecutor's Office, with the case of Kosta Krpač in the centre of attention (5 segments), and other subject matters.

In most of the reporting on these issues, no express position towards the political subjects was noted.

Commentary and Opinions in the News: The television broadcaster generally did not express a favourable or demonising view to any political subject, neither did it use commentarial content in



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the news. A rare example of one-sided reporting was noted, when it aired the accusation by the additional deputy minister of agriculture Ljupčo Nikolovski from SDSM regarding the use of Japanese donations (7 May: 'Japanese aid, allegations of misuses'), but not the response by the deputy minister Vančo Kostadinovski from VMRO-DPMNE, which was featured on most other media outlets.

(1) The reporting on the political crisis was neutral, comprehensive and analytical. Generally speaking, the broadcaster aired the progress of the attempts to restore inter-party negotiations and the positions of the different sides (5 May: 'The international community has a strong position to resolve the Macedonian crisis, according to analysts'). The broadcaster regularly aired all key information on this topic, such as the appointment of the special envoy for Macedonia by Germany, the letter from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs determining there are no conditions to hold elections on 5 June, etc. It took a similar approach to the topics that deal in greater detail with the issue of the early parliamentary elections, such as the lapsed deadline for submitting proposals for electoral board members.

(2) In the coverage of the protests a mildly favourable view of the Colourful Revolution was noted, mostly expressed by the wording of the reports (3 May: 'Resignation! Prison! No justice, no peace! These cries, after a few-day break, as of this evening can once be again heard in Skopje'), as well as by airing positive views of these phenomena (2 May: 'The sociologist Tatjana Stojanovska believes that the protests are a product of civil society, and according to the media expert Žaneta Trajkoska the presumption of innocence of the detained protesters should be respected'). The protests of GDOM were reported on considerably less, and the participants in the Colourful Revolution were surveyed.

(3) The Albanian ethnic focus was noted in the coverage of the topic on the unresolved status of the NLA fighters (2 May: 'Despised, abused, killed, imprisoned. This is the image of the former members of the NLA, 15 years after the end of the 2001 conflict, according to Valdim Ibrahimi, former member of the NLA'). There were, however, cases when current affairs, such as the elections, were seen through an ethnic lens. For instance, special emphasis were placed on the problems the Albanians running for MPs in the diaspora face, even though they are not much different from the general problems in the process (3 May: 'Former candidates for MPs from the diaspora demand that all irregularities documented in earlier elections be removed. If not, they claim, it would be difficult for emigrated Albanians to participate in such elections').

Using Sources: Thirty-one news segments featured two or multiple sources with matching or neutral positions, 17 segments feature a single source, and only 5 segments feature two or more sources with opposing views. Eight segments use analysts' or expert opinions, in four of which they were either the single source or the single analyst, in three there were two or more with similar positions, and in one with opposing positions.

Direct Addresses: A small number of direct addresses were aired: two by the leader of SDSM Zoran Zaev and one each by the leaders of NDP Vesel Memedi and of Dignity Stojanče Angelov.

Audiovisual Presentation: The television broadcaster generally does not use manipulative audiovisual presentation. Nevertheless, during the monitored period, two incidental cases were noted.

In a segment on the rights of the NLA veterans (2 May), the broadcaster aired a shot of a soldier coming out of a trench and pointing a weapon, but it was not clear when and how it had been filmed.

The segment on the secret negotiations among the parties (6 May), was primarily covered by footage of the Colourful Revolution protests, even though it was not directly related to them.