



## Monitoring Report

### *Elements of Propaganda, Information Manipulation, and Violations of Journalism Ethics in the Local Media Space*

*(January 1 – March 28, 2018)*

*This monitoring report has been prepared by the Independent Journalism Center (IJC) as a partner in the project Media Enabling Democracy, Inclusion, and Accountability in Moldova (MEDIA-M) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Internews. The MEDIA-M project aims to promote the development of independent and professional media in Moldova, offering citizens access to a variety of perspectives and contributing to greater media resistance to political and financial pressures.*

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

From January 1 to March 28, 2018, the Independent Journalism Center (IJC) monitored 12 media outlets – news portals and TV channels – to identify whether the disseminated journalistic materials contained any breaches of deontological rules and elements of information manipulation. The monitoring team analyzed how the outlets covered events of public interest in politics, economy, foreign policy, and in other fields, whether they complied with professional and ethical standards such as verification of information through several sources, pluralism of opinions, balance in the news reports on conflicts, and so on. By using the Journalist’s Code of Conduct and specialized academic works, they identified information manipulation procedures and techniques.

The analysis was based on the assumption that news is the primary media product that people consume in search of information about daily reality. Therefore, irrespective of the media owners’ views on political or economic issues, news must contain exclusively facts and not journalists’ opinions, should be written in neutral and accessible language, and should reflect reality as accurately as possible, observing the balance of sources.

### **Purpose of monitoring:**

The monitoring was aimed at determining whether the media observed professional ethics or used manipulation techniques in their coverage of topics of public interest. In particular, the monitoring sought to identify the mistakes made by journalists (intentionally or unintentionally) while reporting facts, so that case studies and monitoring reports could play an educational role. Another objective was to contribute to increasing consumer awareness of the risks of getting information from unsafe sources. Thus, monitoring helps consumers understand how the media can manipulate and enables them to distinguish between a manipulative journalistic product and a product that presents reality impartially.

### **Criteria for selecting** media outlets for monitoring:

- Coverage – national;
- Language – Romanian and Russian;
- Impact – circulation and audience.

**Broadcasting:** Publika TV (news on Publika.md), Prime TV, Canal 2, Canal 3, Jurnal TV, Accent TV, NTV Moldova, RTR Moldova (newscasts produced in Moldova), Moldova 1.

**Online media:** Noi.md, Sputnik.md, Deschide.md.

## Methodology:

The report focused on political, economic, and social events of major public interest that took place during the monitoring period, and analyzed how these events were covered by the media. The language and images used by journalists, their choice of events to be covered, the correctness of source quoting, and the tone of presentation were analyzed by referring to the Journalist's Code of Conduct<sup>1</sup>, guidelines and recommendations in the sphere of responsible and high-quality media<sup>2</sup>, and the notions of **manipulation** and **propaganda**, as defined in the Dictionary of Sociology<sup>3</sup>.

**Manipulation** is defined as: *“Action taken to make a social actor (a person, a group, or a community) think and act in a way that is compatible with the interests of the initiator and not with their own interests, by using persuasion techniques that intentionally distort the truth, leaving an impression of freedom of thought and decision. Unlike influence by means of rational persuasion, **manipulation** aims not at a more accurate and deep understanding of the situation, but at suggesting a convenient idea by means of misleading through false arguments and by appealing to non-rational emotional levels.”*

**Propaganda:** *“Systematic activity of transmitting, promoting, or spreading doctrines, messages, or ideas from the position of a particular social group and ideology, in order to influence, change, or shape certain concepts, attitudes, opinions, beliefs, or behaviors. Propaganda is practiced in such a way as to achieve the goals and interests of the group it serves, so there is no neutral or objective propaganda.”*

**The main topics monitored** between January 1 and March 28, 2018:

- Appointment of new ministers in the Government of the Republic of Moldova (January 10, 2018);
- Adoption of the anti-propaganda law (January 10, 2018);
- Resignation of Dorin Chirtoaca from the position of Chisinau mayor (February 16, 2018);
- Conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on the Republic of Moldova (February 26, 2018);
- Record of a telephone conversation between Veaceslav Platon and Alexandru Tanase, which led to the latter's resignation from the position of minister of justice (March 10-11, 2018).

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<sup>1</sup> Moldovan Journalist's Code of Conduct, [http://consiliuldepresa.md/fileadmin/fisiere/documente/cod\\_d\\_rom.pdf](http://consiliuldepresa.md/fileadmin/fisiere/documente/cod_d_rom.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Guide of Style with Ethical Standards for Journalists, API, [http://www.unicef.org/moldova/Ghid\\_Etica\\_Jurnalist\\_RO.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/moldova/Ghid_Etica_Jurnalist_RO.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Cătălin Zamfir, Lazăr Vlăsceanu, Dictionary of Sociology, Bucharest, 1998, p. 332., p. 457.

<http://vignette4.wikia.nocookie.net/nccmn/images/1/1c/Dictionar-de-Sociologie-Catalin-Zamfir-Lazar-Vlasceanu.pdf/revision/latest?cb=20150813042511&path-prefix=ro>

## I. GENERAL TRENDS

The monitoring showed that journalists from some monitored media outlets continue deviating from deontological standards when they write news. We identified elements characteristic to propaganda and manipulation, as well as breaches of the Journalist's Code of Conduct:

**Labeling** – Accent TV (Appointment of new ministers in the Government of the Republic of Moldova; Record of a telephone conversation between Veaceslav Platon and Alexandru Tanase, which led to the latter's resignation from the position of minister of justice); Prime TV, Deschide.md (Resignation of Dorin Chirtoaca from the position of Chisinau mayor); Jurnal TV (Appointment of new ministers in the Government of the Republic of Moldova; Record of a telephone conversation between Veaceslav Platon and Alexandru Tanase, which led to the latter's resignation from the position of minister of justice);

**Omission in newscasts** – Canal 3, NTV Moldova, Accent TV, Sputnik.md (Conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on the Republic of Moldova);

**Cherry-picking of facts, opinions, and statements** – Prime TV, Canal 2, Canal 3, Publika TV (Conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on the Republic of Moldova); NTV Moldova (Resignation of Dorin Chirtoaca from the position of Chisinau mayor);

**Lack of the right to reply** – Canal 3 (Conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on the Republic of Moldova); Noi.md (Record of a telephone conversation between Veaceslav Platon and Alexandru Tanase, which led to the latter's resignation from the position of minister of justice);

**Mix of facts and opinions** – Accent TV, Jurnal TV, Prime TV, Dechide.md (Appointment of new ministers in the Government of the Republic of Moldova);

**References to sources that cannot be checked** – Accent TV, Noi.md, RTR Moldova (Adoption of the anti-propaganda law);

**Spreading false information or statements** – Accent TV (Appointment of new ministers in the Government of the Republic of Moldova; Adoption of the anti-propaganda law); Canal 3 (Conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on the Republic of Moldova);

**Generalization** – NTV Moldova (Adoption of the anti-propaganda law); Canal 3 (Conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on the Republic of Moldova); Accent TV (Record of a telephone conversation between Veaceslav Platon and Alexandru Tanase, which led to the latter's resignation from the position of minister of justice);

**Suggestion** – Accent TV (Adoption of the anti-propaganda law); Canal 2 (Conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on the Republic of Moldova);

**(Internal and/or external) enemy technique** – Accent TV (Adoption of the anti-propaganda law); Prime TV, Canal 2, Canal 3 (Conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on the Republic of Moldova);

**Priority information technique** – Deschide.md (Resignation of Dorin Chirtoaca from the position of Chisinau mayor);

**Irony** – Sputnik.md, Deschide.md (Adoption of the anti-propaganda law).

## II. DATA ANALYSIS

### Topic 1. Appointment of new ministers in the Government of the Republic of Moldova

**Background:** On December 19, 2017, Democratic Party of Moldova President Vladimir Plahotniuc [announced at a press briefing](#) that seven members of the Government would be dismissed, and others would be appointed instead. The prime minister proposed the new candidates to the country's president twice, but the president rejected them every time. Thus, the Government addressed the Constitutional Court (CC), and on January 2, 2018, the CC found that the president can only refuse once the proposal to appoint a person to a vacant office of minister, with a proper reasoning, and decided to suspend President Igor Dodon from office in order to appoint new members of the Government. On January 10, 2018, the new ministers were appointed by a decree signed by Andrian Candu, who temporarily acted as interim president.

**Highlights:** The topic was covered by the majority of the monitored outlets, with the exception of **NTV Moldova** and **RTR Moldova**. The most news stories on this topic were produced by **Deschide.md** and **Publika TV**. The event was politicized, as many of the media outlets favored certain parties or institutions and disfavored others (the Democratic Party vs. the Party of Socialists, and the Government vs. the Presidency).

**Accent TV** gave a rather negative connotation to the event, covering it in an unbalanced manner, with an emphasis on the comments and statements by President Igor Dodon on this issue. This station committed several deviations from the Journalist's Code of Conduct, including:

- **Labeling** (“...the office of minister of justice went to the former president of the Constitutional Court, **unionist Alexandru Tanase**”);
- **Delivery of false information and messages** (“Participants in the theft of the billion are returned to the government thanks to the democrats”);
- **Mix of facts and opinions** (“Thanks to the democrats, the money is to be returned by citizens”).

**Jurnal TV** emphasized the idea that these changes in the Government are nothing but the scenario and whim of one person – Democratic Party leader Vladimir Plahotniuc. The event was presented in a negative context, and reporters each time tried to make the connection between the newly-appointed ministers and the Democratic Party leader. **Jurnal TV** made use of **labels** (“the decrees were signed by **Plahotniuc's wedding godson**, speaker of Parliament **Andrian Candu**”) and **mixed facts and opinions** (“...**Gaburici** was **warmly greeted** by employees”).

Public television **Moldova 1** dedicated to the topic of appointment one third of the newscast on January 10, airing two large reports about this event. **Moldova 1** covered the news according to a scenario similar to the one used by stations **Prime TV**, **Canal 2**, and **Canal 3**. This

television quoted irrelevant sources in one of the news stories about the appointment. Thus, the story about the reaction of the Party of Socialists mentioned that this party would file a motion of censure against the Government, so it would have been natural for reporters to seek the opinion of Government representatives, and not the opinion of the Democratic Party representative Vitalie Gamurari, as they did.

[Prime TV](#), [Publika TV](#), [Canal 2](#) and [Canal 3](#) covered the topic similarly. Their materials followed the same scenario, sharing the same phrases and images (with small differences). The information was mostly presented in a neutral manner, with some exceptions, when journalists **mixed facts with opinions** (“*The Minister of Justice Alexandru Tanase, Minister of Economy and Infrastructure Chiril Gaburici, and Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration Iurie Leanca probably had a déjà vu, as each of them had already given this oath at least once before*” – **Prime TV**).

Out of all the monitored outlets, **Deschide.md** dedicated to this topic the most news stories (nine). In some of them, reporters **mixed facts with opinions**: “*...ending the message, [Dodon made a threatening address to the government](#)”; “[The Party of Socialists fumes, calling people to ‘general mobilization’ and announcing a motion of censure against the new ministers.](#)”*

## **Topic 2. Adoption of the Anti-Propaganda Law as an occasion for journalistic polarization**

**Background:** The adoption of the anti-propaganda law on December 7, 2017 caused amendments in the Broadcasting Code aiming to protect Moldovan citizens from disinformation and external manipulation. The violation of these provisions by broadcasters will result in fines up to 70,000 MDL. President Igor Dodon refused to promulgate the law, and on January 5, 2018, the Constitutional Court of Moldova (CC) found that the president’s refusal is a violation of the Constitution, so the CC ordered the decree for promulgation of the anti-propaganda law to be signed by the Speaker of the Parliament or by the Prime Minister. On January 10, 2018, the promulgation decree was signed by Speaker Andrian Candu.

**Highlights:** The issue of the anti-propaganda law put the monitored media outlets to test, and in many of them it revealed polarization: while some outlets highlighted only the gaps – either real or imaginary – of this law (**Accent TV**, **NTV Moldova**), others presented it from an exclusively positive perspective (**Prime TV**, **Publika TV**, **Canal 2**, **Canal 3**). The third group of media outlets delivered the information neutrally and without bias (**RTR Moldova**, **Noi.md**). For some outlets (**Jurnal TV**) the event served as an opportunity to throw accusations at a political party (the Democratic Party of Moldova).

**Accent TV** used **suggestion**, trying to induce the idea that this law was recommended (meaning “imposed”) to Moldova by the United States and the EU, while our country was presented as a tool in their fight against Russia. Thus, **Accent TV** used the method of the **external enemy**, where the EU and the US were presented as an external enemy that engages directly in the country’s domestic affairs. At the same time, **Accent TV** delivered information **from the perspective of only one of the parties involved** in this process, and **referred to sources that cannot be checked** (“*This position was supported by representatives of local authorities from different corners of the country*”).

[NTV Moldova](#) did not present the issue based on facts either, but instead interpreted the news (and implicitly the law). In particular, its reporters tried to induce the idea that Russia and the United States are in fact the main actors of this story, while Moldova was reduced to the status of battlefield for world powers. **NTV Moldova** committed the same violations as **Accent TV**, along with **generalization** (“*In their turn, citizens are against the government’s decision, which they find incorrect and meaningless*”) and **selective presentation of opinions from vox populi** (all 4 opinions selected from the vox populi were negative and criticized this law directly).

[Jurnal TV](#) presented the information about the anti-propaganda law by casting a negative light on the Democratic Party and on its leader Vladimir Plahotniuc. At the same time, **Jurnal TV** did not request the opinion of a source targeted directly in the news and **did not offer the right to reply** to this source (Vladimir Plahotniuc). Also, the journalists of this station **mixed fact with opinions in news**: “*Incidentally or not, the examination and voting of the initiative were proposed on the day when Russian media wrote about the fact that Plahotniuc is under criminal investigation in Russia for murder and attempted murder.*”

The public television [Moldova 1](#) broadcast two news reports on this topic. In one of them, **Moldova 1** presented details about the provisions of the law in a neutral and unbiased manner. In the other one, however, the national broadcaster tried to make the connection between the newly adopted law and the decision of a Moscow court, which kept the arrest warrant for Vladimir Plahotniuc in force. **Moldova 1** reporters requested an official statement from the Democratic Party through its representative Vitalie Gamurari, where he said that the arrest warrant for the Democratic Party leader in Russia was extended in connection with the adoption of this law. **Moldova 1** tried to suggest to media consumers that this is a very good law, and that the Democratic Party, presented in a positive light, fights foreign propaganda. The same scenario of the news – except for a few nuances – could be seen on [Canal 2](#).

**Sputnik.md** published eight news stories in the monitored period. In some of them, **Sputnik.md** presented the information in an **ironic manner and mixed facts with opinions** (“*Moldova is no longer threatened by propaganda and disinformation from the outside after the Speaker of Parliament Andrian Candu promulgated the so-called anti-propaganda law today instead of President Igor Dodon,*”; “[Dodon promises to wreak havoc after parliamentary elections](#)”).

**Deschide.md** published the most news stories (11) on the topic of the anti-propaganda law, presenting information generally in a neutral and unbiased manner. However, President Igor Dodon was slightly disfavored. In the headline to [one of its stories](#), **Deschide.md** **ironized** about the country’s president, and its journalists **mixed facts with opinions** (“*Dodon got on the reserve bench for the third time. The Constitutional Court suspended him again*”).

### **Topic 3. Resignation of Dorin Chirtoaca from the position of Chisinau mayor**

**Background:** On February 16, 2018, Dorin Chirtoaca announced his resignation from the position of general mayor of Chisinau Municipality in protest against the current government and asked for early elections. In May 2017, Dorin Chirtoaca was detained and placed in house arrest for five months, but in November the house arrest was replaced with placement under judicial control. Meanwhile, in July 2017, Dorin Chirtoaca was suspended from the position of mayor of Chisinau Municipality. The former mayor appears as a defendant in two corruption cases, in which he is accused of influence peddling and passive corruption.

**Highlights:** The issue of Dorin Chirtoaca's resignation was on the agenda of all monitored media outlets. In some cases, the essential information was presented neutrally and without bias (**Moldova 1, RTR Moldova, Noi.md**), while other media outlets insisted on the details of Dorin Chirtoaca's personal life (**Deschide.md**) or used the news as a pretext to show the Liberal Party in a bad light. (**Sputnik.md**). The majority of the media outlets highlighted the legal issues and the corruption cases in which Dorin Chirtoaca appears (**Prime TV, Canal 2, Canal 3, Publika TV, Accent TV, NTV Moldova**) rather than the resignation.

**Accent TV** presented the information in a neutral and unbiased way, although a slight favoring for the Party of Socialists and its members could be felt. At the same time, Dorin Chirtoaca and the Liberal Party of Moldova were shown in a negative context. **NTV Moldova** [presented the information](#) from the same angle as **Accent TV**. However, it **mixed facts with opinions** ("*Dorin Chirtoaca resigned from the position of the capital's general mayor. **But he didn't have the courage** to cross the threshold of the city hall...*") and **made a biased selection** from the vox populi, choosing only the opinions of those who approved Chirtoaca's resignation, presenting him in an exclusively negative light.

**Prime TV** [broadcast one news story about Dorin Chirtoaca' resignation](#). The television presented the information neutrally, but used unnecessarily many images that showed Dorin Chirtoaca in a negative context. In most videos he was presented either during arrest or when he was interviewed by journalists in front of the National Anticorruption Center. The reporter also insisted a lot on the details of the trial against Dorin Chirtoaca, and not on his resignation, which was the main story. This scenario and approach were repeated by **Canal 3, Canal 2** and **Publika TV**. The **label** preferred by these four televisions was the word "*suspended.*" **Publika TV** repeated it 5 times in one news story, **Canal 3** – 4 times, **Prime TV** and **Canal 3** – 3 times each.

**Moldova 1** covered the monitored issue in a neutral and unbiased way. All the parties involved or targeted in news were asked for opinions, which were inserted in the news, including the opinion of a political analyst, who interpreted the event and gave some explanations. **Jurnal TV** was the only media outlet that did not seek or broadcast **directly** the opinion of the Democratic Party and the Party of Socialists, which were accused and targeted in the news.

**Sputnik.md** insisted in its three news stories on presenting Chirtoaca firstly as the vice-president of the Liberal Party, and only later as the mayor of Chisinau Municipality ("*The vice president of the Liberal Party Dorin Chirtoaca, who is targeted in the investigation of two corruption cases, announced at a press conference that he officially resigns from the post of mayor of Chisinau*"), insisting more on his arrest than on the resignation itself.

**Deschide.md** presented both Dorin Chirtoaca and the Liberal Party in a negative context. [In one of the news stories](#), **Deschide.md** used **labeling** ("*The Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova appreciates the resignation of Mayor Dorin Chirtoaca and of the fugitive Mayor of Balti Renato Usatii...*"). [In another news story](#), **Deschide.md** massively **mixed facts with opinions**, clearly highlighting the details of private life.

**Topic 4. Conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council on the Republic of Moldova, covered depending on the editorial interests of the media outlet**

**Background:** The Foreign Affairs Council, made of ministers for foreign affairs of the EU Member States, gathered on February 26, 2018 to discuss the progress of reforms in Moldova. The meeting ended with the adoption of 27 conclusions, in which the Council made a description of the Moldovan government's successes and failures in implementation of reforms stipulated in the Moldova-EU Association Agreement for different areas

**Highlights:** The conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council have been widely publicized by most of the monitored media outlets, but some of them ignored this topic (**NTV Moldova**, **Accent TV**, and **Sputnik.md**). Journalists placed accents depending on the editorial interests of their media outlets. Thus, **Publika TV**, **Prime TV**, **Canal 2**, and **Canal 3** overlooked criticism from Brussels, underlining the need for further reforms, while **Jurnal TV** highlighted the problems and criticisms mentioned in the report. **RTR Moldova** and **Moldova 1** made a neutral and informative presentation of the conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council, while **Noi.md** mostly published articles taken from other sources, and only one own news story.

[Prime TV](#), [Publika TV](#), [Canal 2](#), and [Canal 3](#) presented only the positive aspects of the document, while criticisms were overlooked or mentioned only formally (reforms in mass media, change of the electoral system, etc.). These televisions used:

- **Suggestion.** *“In the end, the ministers adopted a report stating that the European Union appreciates the steps taken by our country and recommends continuing the reforms started in 2016.”* The reporter thus suggested that the implementation of reforms began when the Democratic Party got to lead the government (**Canal 2**);
- **Mixture of facts with opinions.** *“EU: Moldova is on the right track”* (**Canal 2**); *“The ministers of the EU Foreign Affairs Council who met in Brussels... highly appreciated the reforms initiated by Moldova in 2016...”* (**Canal 3**);
- **Omission:** *“The EU’s ministers for foreign affairs underlined the importance of complying with the recommendations made by the European Commission, the Venice Commission, and the OSCE...,”* but the reporter did not mention that these recommendations refer expressly to the change of the electoral system (**Canal 3**);
- **False information and mixture of facts with opinions:** *“Maia Sandu, leader of the ‘Action and Solidarity’ Party, criticized the EU for praise and support of the Moldovan authorities, mentioning that citizens do not feel the effect of European integration”* (**Canal 3**);
- **Internal enemy technique,** when the Democratic Party and the government were shown in a positive light, while the “Action and Solidarity” Party and Maia Sandu – in a negative context (**Prime TV**).

The coverage of this topic by [Jurnal TV](#) followed a model opposite to that on **Prime TV**, **Canal 2**, **Canal 3**, and **Publika TV**. Jurnal TV insisted solely on the negative aspects of the EU report (change of the electoral system, corruption, lack of independence in the judiciary, and challenges in the media sector).

**Noi.md** published five relevant news stories. Four of them were taken from other outlets (**IPN**, **Publika TV**, **Anticoruptie.md**), and only one was [written by its own journalists](#), featuring only the opinion of Prime Minister Pavel Filip about the conclusions of the EU report. In this respect, although it cannot be said that the portal used methods of manipulation, the public was not fully informed, because the portal's own news story was built on a single source, presenting the official position of authorities.

In the news stories published by **Deschide.md** one could feel a slight favoring of the Democratic Party and of the country's authorities (Andrian Candu, Pavel Filip), supplemented by ironic, slightly unfavorable accents referring to the "Action and Solidarity" Party and its leader Maia Sandu. [In one of these stories](#), **Deschide.md** reporters **mixed facts with opinions** ("*Maia Sandu's opinion was **immediately censured** by the Vice Prime Minister for European Integration Iurie Leanca. At the press conference held today, Leanca recommended Maia Sandu to carefully read the conclusions of the EU Council's report*").

Televisions **NTV Moldova** and **Accent TV** and the online portal **Sputnik.md** did not produce news reports on this topic, which leads to the conclusion that these three media outlets used the **omission technique**, as they failed to inform media consumers about an important topic of public interest.

### **Topic 5. Recording of a telephone conversation between Veaceslav Platon and Alexandru Tanase, which led to the latter's resignation from the position of minister of justice**

**Background:** On March 10, at the "60 minutes" TV show, Jurnal TV [broadcast the recording of a discussion](#) between the Minister of Justice Alexandru Tanase and the businessman Veaceslav Platon, convicted in the case of "the theft of the billion." According to several sources, the discussion took place in 2015, when Tanase was the president of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova, while Veaceslav Platon was placed on the wanted list by the Moldovan law enforcement, being accused of fraud and large-scale money laundering. On the day following the broadcast of this recording, Alexandru Tanase announced his resignation from the post of minister via a social network.

**Highlights:** The topic was covered by all the 12 monitored media. Some outlets concentrated only on Tanase's resignation, omitting the main subject (the audio recording): **Prime TV**, **Canal 2**, **Canal 3**, and **Publika TV**. For **Jurnal TV**, the topic served as an opportunity to attack certain politicians and/or political parties (the Democratic Party, and Vladimir Plahotniuc in particular). Other media outlets tried to geopoliticize the issue (**Accent TV**). Only two outlets adhered to the rules of conduct and presented the information in a neutral and unbiased way (**RTR Moldova**, **NTV Moldova**); however, they reserved the least airtime for the monitored topic.

**Jurnal TV** broadcast four news stories on the monitored topic, with a total duration of 17 minutes 8 seconds, which is equivalent to about 1/3 of the entire newscast. The attitude shown in the newscast and the duration of the material denote a subjective approach, which attempts to increase the importance of the issue. In its news, **Jurnal TV** made use of:

- **Generalization and false information.** In one of the 4 news stories, Jurnal TV mentioned: "*Brussels: The resignation is welcome*" (the caption said the same). **Jurnal TV** interviewed Katarina Mathernova, Deputy Director General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, who does not say that Tanase's resignation is welcome, but that "the minister's resignation is a positive step, because this shows maturity...." Also, Katarina Mathernova's opinion does not necessarily represent the opinion of the European Commission.
- **Lack of opinion of the sources targeted/accused in the news.** In one of **Jurnal TV** news stories ("Nastase: A delayed resignation"), Alexandru Tanase was accused of complicity in the theft of the billion, but **Jurnal TV** reporters only mentioned that

“Alexandru Tanase did not comment on the statements of the two political leaders [Maia Sandu and Andrei Nastase].”

NTV Moldova presented the monitored topic only at the [end of the newscast on March 12](#), in the “News in Brief” section (“Tanase announced that he resigns”). The attitude in the newscast and the duration of the material denote a superficial approach, which attempts to reduce the importance of the issue. On the other hand, **Accent TV** addressed this topic in the [newscasts on March 12](#) and on [March 13](#). **Accent TV** insisted on the parts of the recording that somehow denigrate the EU as an institution. Also, this media outlet made use of:

- **Flagrant mixture of facts and opinions.** (“...*The interesting thing is that during the dialogue, Tanase, who positions himself as a person with pro-European views, speaks of the EU and Brussels employees in phrases that aren’t pro-European at all*”);
- **Generalization and reference to sources that cannot be checked**, amplified by another **mix of facts and opinions.** (“*However, Filip seems to have forgotten that during the time Vlad Filat was the head of the Government, Tanase was the author of a justice sector reform that our foreign partners were not at all delighted with*”);
- **Biased coverage** of information, showing only the opinion of one party (represented by Igor Dodon) and **not seeking the opinion of the other source** (Alexandru Tanase), who was targeted directly;
- **False information** (“*One person who wants the liquidation of the Republic of Moldova in the government less!*”);
- **Labeling** (“*One unionist in the government less*”).

**Deschide.md** published two news stories about the audio recording of the discussion between Veaceslav Platon and Alexandru Tanase and the latter’s resignation. In [both stories](#), **Deschide.md mixed facts with opinions.**

**Publika TV, Canal 2, Canal 3, and Publika TV** broadcast two news stories about the resignation of Alexandru Tanase each, and all of them followed an identical scenario, with the same images, text, and presentation. In both stories, all these 4 televisions failed to mention the real cause that led to this resignation – the audio recording of the discussion between Veaceslav Platon and Alexandru Tanase – which can be considered an example of **the omission technique.**

## CONCLUSIONS

Several of the monitored media outlets continue ignoring the rules of news writing and of media coverage of reality, providing incomplete, tendentious, and/or unilaterally presented information. The authors of this report identified violations of the Journalist's Code of Conduct and certain manipulation techniques.

The majority of topics were covered in the light of the media outlets' political preferences. Thus, while televisions **Publika TV**, **Prime TV**, and **Canal 2**, which delivered mostly the same content in newscasts, favored the Democratic Party of Moldova and its representatives, then **Accent TV** and **NTV Moldova** favored in their newscasts the Party of Socialists and its members and representatives. The main source of news on the monitored topics on **Accent TV** and **NTV Moldova** was President Igor Dodon.

**Publika TV**, **Prime TV**, **Canal 2**, and **Canal 3** used manipulation techniques and committed violations of the Journalist's Code of Conduct: labeling; cherry-picking of facts, opinions, and statements; lack of the right to reply; enemy technique; and suggestion technique.

**Accent TV** and **NTV Moldova** covered the monitored topics in a unilateral and biased manner, directly favoring the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova. In many cases, these media outlets presented the information and statements selectively, committed omissions in newscasts, referred to sources that cannot be checked, delivered false information, made excessive use of generalization, and in several instances appealed to the enemy technique.

**Jurnal TV** had cases of labeling, lack of the right to reply, and mix of facts and opinions.

Public television **Moldova 1** built some of its news reports according to the scenarios and mode of presentation used by **Prime TV**, **Canal 2**, and **Canal 3** (see the story about the appointment of new ministers in the Government of Moldova). However, in most cases public television presented information in a relatively neutral and unbiased manner.

**Deschide.md** used irony to present some information and resorted to the priority information technique, while **Noi.md** in one of its news stories referred to sources that cannot be checked.

The *common problem* identified on many of the monitored outlets was the fact that journalists:

- A. Did not offer the right to reply to the persons referred to in news in negative contexts;
- B. Used labels, which were much more frequent in this period of monitoring;
- C. Mixed facts with opinions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Broadcasting Coordinating Council (BCC), based on Article 4 of the Broadcasting Code, should take note of the above information and start monitoring the televisions that, according to notifications, deliver manipulatory information, in order to find violations of legislation and to apply relevant sanctions.

Television editors are recommended to control the editorial content, so as to make it fulfil the mission of the press, i.e. to inform the public and to present the reality correctly, and not to be guided by the political forces that wish to promote their interests and destroy rivals.

Reporters are recommended to report on all relevant facts in an unbiased manner and after checking information, and not selectively or unilaterally.

Media consumers are recommended to seek information from several media sources, in order to avoid the risk of receiving wrong and manipulative information.