



MEDIA MONITORING

In the Campaign for 2019 Parliamentary Elections

*Report no. 4
9–16 February 2019*

(general conclusions)



This report is produced by the Independent Journalism Center (IJC) and the Association of Independent Press (API), under a media monitoring project, implemented with the financial support of National Endowment for Democracy (USA), Swedish Government, and the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

The opinions expressed therein belong to the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the donors.

I. GENERAL DATA

1.1 Objective of the project: monitor and inform the public about media behavior in the pre-election period and during the campaign for the 2019 parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova.

1.2 Monitoring period: 9 January 2019 – 24 February 2019

1.3 Criteria for selecting the media outlets to be monitored:

The media outlets were selected based on the following criteria: a) form of ownership; b) geography; c) broadcasting language; d) fame/audience. Thus, we are monitoring public and private media outlets, with national, quasi-national and regional coverage, in Romanian and in Russian.

1.4 Media outlets monitored:

Broadcast media

Moldova 1, GRT, Prime TV, Canal 2, Canal 3, Publika TV, Jurnal TV, NTV Moldova, Pro TV Chişinău, TV8, Accent TV, TV Centrală

Online portals and print media

Agora.md, Aif.md, Deschide.md, Diez.md, Esp.md, Gagauzinfo.md, Jurnal de Chişinău (ziar), Kp.md, Moldova.org, Newsmaker.md, Noi.md, Realitatea.md, Sputnik.md, Timpul.md, Unimedia.info, Zdg.md

1.5 Subject-matter of monitoring

TV (18:00-22:00 interval)

- A. One newscast in Russian and one in Romanian;
- B. Programs (talk shows) with electoral character;
- C. Election debates.

Online portals and print media

The entire editorial content, without the publicity marked accordingly.

1.6. The team

The project is implemented within the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections by the Independent Journalism Center (TV monitoring) and the Association of Independent Press (online and print media monitoring).

1.7 Methodological framework

The data were collected and analyzed based on a monitoring methodology developed by Oxford Media Research Center for the monitoring projects of the international organization Article 19: Global Campaign for Free Expression. The methodology was updated at the end of 2018 and beginning of 2019 with the assistance of the experts of the Italian organization Osservatorio di Pavia.

This methodology's characteristics are as follows: use of indicators 1) *quantitative*, including type, duration, topic of coverage, news sources, frequency and duration of appearance of election candidates in news, and 2) *qualitative*, designed to evaluate the tone of coverage:

neutral, positive or negative, considering the attitude of the media outlet and/or journalist to each protagonist.

The monitoring focuses on two main components: assessment of *social pluralism* and of *political pluralism* in the media, which implies measuring the diversity of opinions and multitude of voices in the items with electoral content and all items with direct or indirect election content and all items in which representatives of parties or candidates appear, even though the items are not directly related to the elections. In addition, we are monitoring all items dealing with the work of the Government, Parliament and President's Office, as these protagonists play an important role in the public space.

Each item is subject to a content and context evaluation to determine the tonality of coverage. Tonality is assigned by assessing the presence 1) of the *explicit opinion*, expressed by the media to the protagonists, and 2) of the *framing*¹ of the events or subjects that may favor or disfavor the protagonists.

The item's positive content and/or context does not necessarily indicate the bias or partisanship of the media outlet broadcasting the news. Only if there is a trend of favoring or disfavoring certain subjects for a certain period can we speak about lack of balance.

II. DATA ANALYSIS

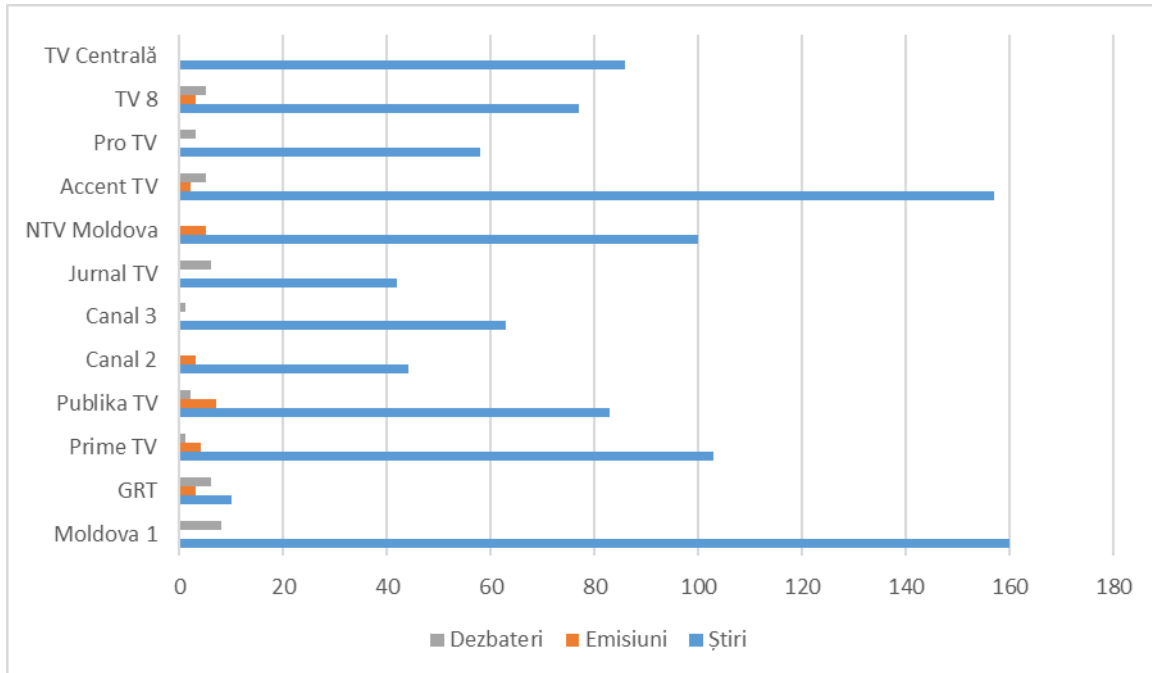
2.1 Broadcast media

Frequency of coverage. In the period from 9 to 16 February 2019, the 12 TV stations monitored overall broadcast 1,049 items with direct and indirect electoral content, of which 983 news stories, 33 programs, and 33 debates. The total amount of the items was of about 84 hours, nearly 36 hours of which accounted for news, 26 hours – for programs, and circa 22 hours – for debates.

Type of item	Appearances	Duration (sec)
News	983	131621
Debates	33	78006
Talk shows	33	94686
Total	1049	304313

¹ Framing – selecting and highlighting certain sides of an event or subject and connecting them in such a way as to show a certain interpretation or solution <http://www.revistadesociologie.ro/pdf-uri/nr3-4-2011/07-N%20Corbu.pdf>

Frequency of news stories, programs and debates, per TV station



Topical diversity. The subjects tackled by the majority of the media monitored most of the times concerned the political area – activities with the involvement of the election candidates in the national constituency and in the uninominal constituencies. In many cases, they dealt with campaign events organized by some parties and press conferences in which candidates launched various allegations, including of corruption, at their opponents. The second topic by frequency was the election process, including subjects about the work of the Central Election Commission (CEC), followed by subjects on social issues, the economic area, foreign relations, culture and entertainment. As a rule, they had indirect electoral content, dealing with activities of the President and President’s Office, of various ministries and governmental structures, etc.

The biggest diversity in terms of topics was found on Moldova 1 (political, election process, law and Constitution, media, social, culture and entertainment etc.), Jurnal TV (political, election process, law and Constitution, media, social, culture and entertainment etc.), NTV Moldova and Accent TV (political, social, election process, foreign relations, economic, media, education, minorities).

Social pluralism. In addition to the political players and the candidates, the stations monitored used various social sources, with citizens ranking first, followed by representatives of CEC, local public administration (LPA), diplomats, foreign observers, civil society representatives, and local and foreign experts. The citizens most of the times were found in news with Vox Populi elements concerning social and political issues as well as in news about the campaign, expressing their opinions about certain candidates in uninominal constituencies.

The most diverse social sources were used by Pro TV (citizens, CEC, Police/Army, Government officials, LPA, media) and Accent TV (citizens, diplomats/foreign observers, EC, Government officials, LPA, experts).

Social sources and protagonists quoted or mentioned in news stories, programs and debates. 12 TV stations/Top 10

Sources and protagonists	Frequency
Citizens	998
Central Election Commission	129
Diplomats, foreign officials and observers	93
Experts (foreign and local)	67
Local Public Administration	58
Government officials	57
Police/Army	41
Civil society – NGOs	37
Business	32
Media	32
Judges, lawyers	24
Initiative groups	3
Trade Unions	1

Political pluralism. The items relevant to the monitoring mainly had party representatives as well as the independent candidates in uninominal constituencies as main protagonists. Of the state institutions, President Igor Dodon, next to Prime Minister Pavel Filip and other Government representatives made the subject-matter of many news stories as well as of programs on some of the stations monitored.

The Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM), the Socialists Party of Moldova (PSRM), the Electoral Bloc ACUM, the Șor Political Party, and the Liberal Party (PL) had the biggest visibility in terms of frequency and duration of appearances in images and of direct interventions in news items, programs and debates.

Frequency and duration of appearance in news items, programs and debates of political party representatives, candidates in the national constituency/12 TV stations/TOP 15

Sources and protagonists	Candidate	Frequency	Duration of appearance, sec.	Duration of direct speech, sec.
Democratic Party of Moldova	Yes	344	10231	7684
Socialists Party of Moldova	Yes	280	8629	5709
Electoral Bloc ACUM	Yes	209	8781	6936
Șor Political Party	Yes	107	3489	2506
Liberal Party	Yes	101	3014	2455
Our Party	Yes	55	3835	3572
Communists Party of Moldova	Yes	51	2386	2010
Moldovan Regions Party	Yes	33	4470	4274
Democracy at Home Party	Yes	29	3570	3395
Anti-Mafia People's Movement	Yes	26	1378	1075
People's Will Political Party	Yes	15	3313	3288

Professionals' Movement "Speranța – Nadezhda"	Yes	15	4002	3973
Green Ecologic Party	Yes	11	985	951
National Liberal Party	Yes	9	699	660
Political Party "Patria" (Motherland)	Yes	7	29	0

Of the candidates registered in the elections in uninominal constituencies, the most covered ones were Vladimir Plahotniuc (affiliated to PDM), Ilan Șor (Șor Political Party), Vlad Bătrâncea (PSRM), followed by Pavel Filip (PDM), Valeriu Munteanu (Bloc ACUM) and Călin Vieru (independent). The candidates who were quoted or mentioned at least ten times are presented in the table below.

Frequency and duration of appearance in news items and programs of candidates in uninominal constituencies /12 TV stations

Sources and protagonists	Political affiliation	Frequency	Amount of appearance, sec.	Duration of direct speech, sec.
Plahotniuc Vladimir	Democratic Party of Moldova	36	1421	919
Șor Ilan	Șor Political Party	17	283	68
Bătrâncea Vlad	Socialists Party of Moldova	16	671	508
Filip Pavel	Democratic Party of Moldova	14	380	218
Munteanu Valeriu	Electoral Bloc ACUM	14	495	221
Vieru Călin	Independent	14	562	537
Stratulat Mihail	Democratic Party of Moldova	11	263	250
Babuc Monica	Democratic Party of Moldova	11	262	230
Rusu Rodica	Șor Political Party	11	323	230
Țuțu Constantin	Democratic Party of Moldova	11	163	97
Năstase Andrei	Electoral Bloc ACUM	10	190	31
Grozav Gheorghi	Independent	10	250	219
Ghilețchi Valeriu	Independent	10	260	185

Frequency of appearance in debates of candidates in uninominal constituencies /12 TV stations/ Candidates with at least two appearances are included in the table

Sources and protagonists	Political affiliation	Frequency	Amount of appearance, sec.	Duration of direct speech, sec.
Gagauz Fiodor	Socialists Party of Moldova	3	2100	1800
Verbițchi Ruslan	Electoral Bloc ACUM	2	1320	1320
Guznac Valentin	Democratic Party of Moldova	2	425	420
Cuznețov Iurii	Șor Political Party	2	1320	1320

Lebedinschi Adrian	Socialists Party of Moldova	2	1320	1320
Crețu Ilie	Liberal Party	2	1320	1320
Novac Grigore	Socialists Party of Moldova	2	1320	1320
Cîrlig Mihail	Independent	2	1320	1320
Herța Veronica	Liberal Party	2	1320	1320
Valentin Dolganiuc	Independent	2	1320	1320
Leiciu Gheorghii	Independent	2	1400	1200
Burduja Petru	Socialists Party of Moldova	2	1320	1320
Grițco Igor	Communists Party of Moldova	2	1320	1320
Perciun Dan	Electoral Bloc ACUM	2	1320	1320
Nicolaescu-Onofrei Liliana	Electoral Bloc ACUM	2	1320	1320

Frequency of appearance in debates of candidates in the national constituency/12 TV stations

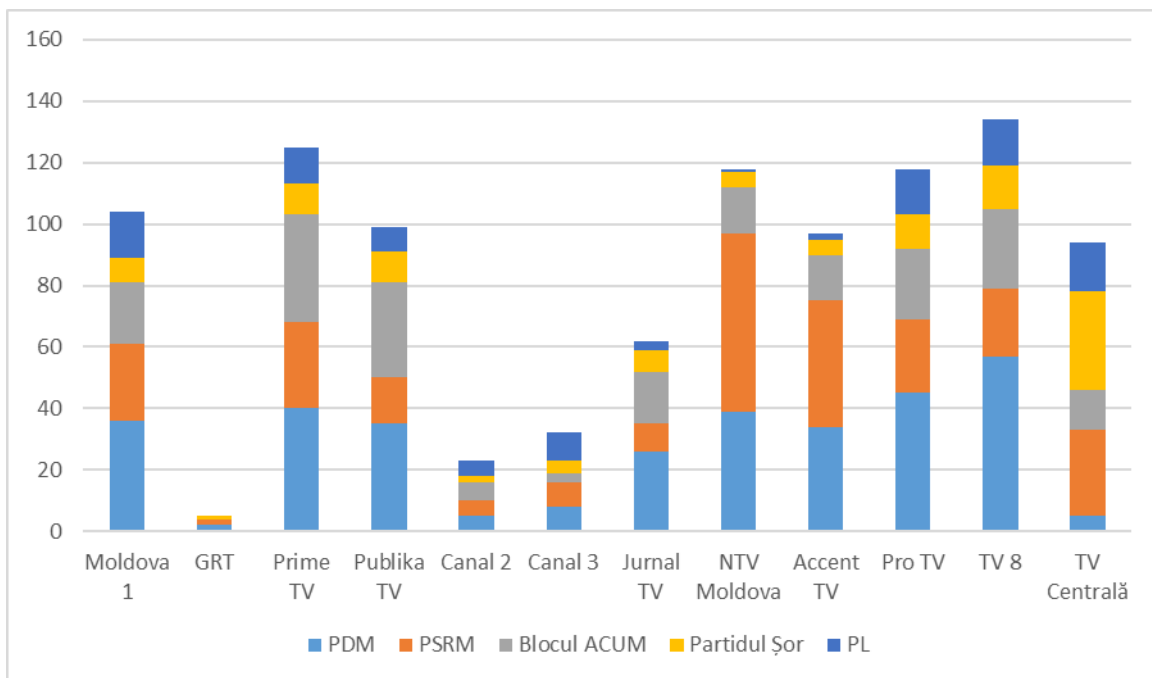
Sources and protagonists	Candidate	Frequency	Amount of appearance, sec.	Duration of direct speech, sec.
Democratic Party of Moldova	Yes	9	4181	4085
Professionals Movement "Speranța - Nadezhda"	Yes	8	3943	3938
People's Will Political Party	Yes	8	3236	3235
Democracy at Home Party	Yes	7	2994	2988
Communists Party of Moldova	Yes	6	1195	1080
Șor Political Party	Yes	4	1805	1800
Liberal Party	Yes	3	1505	1500
Socialists Party of Moldova	Yes	3	1505	1500
Anti-Mafia People's Movement	Yes	2	600	600
Regions Party of Moldova	Yes	2	900	900
Green Ecological Party	Yes	2	900	900
Our Party	Yes	1	600	600
National Liberal Party	Yes	1	600	600
Electoral Bloc ACUM	Yes	1	600	600

Of the state institutions, President Igor Dodon and the representatives of the President's Office ranked first in terms of both frequency of appearance and duration of direct interventions.

Frequency and duration of appearance in news and programs of the representatives of the President's Office, Parliament and Government /12 TV stations

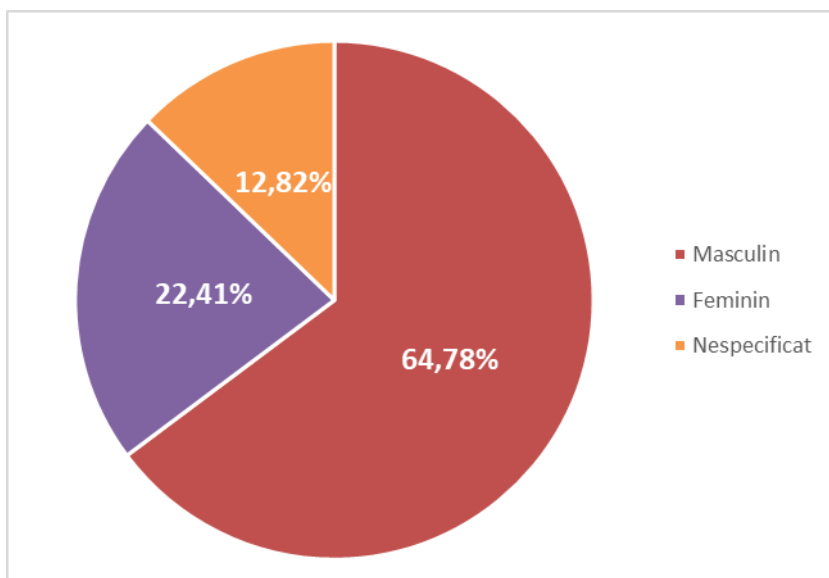
Sources and protagonists	Candidate	Frequency	Amount of appearance, sec.	Duration of direct speech, sec.
President, President's Office	No	372	24201	13984
Ministries	No	169	1965	1060
Parliament	No	61	842	543

Frequency of coverage of political parties per TV station/National Constituency/TOP 5



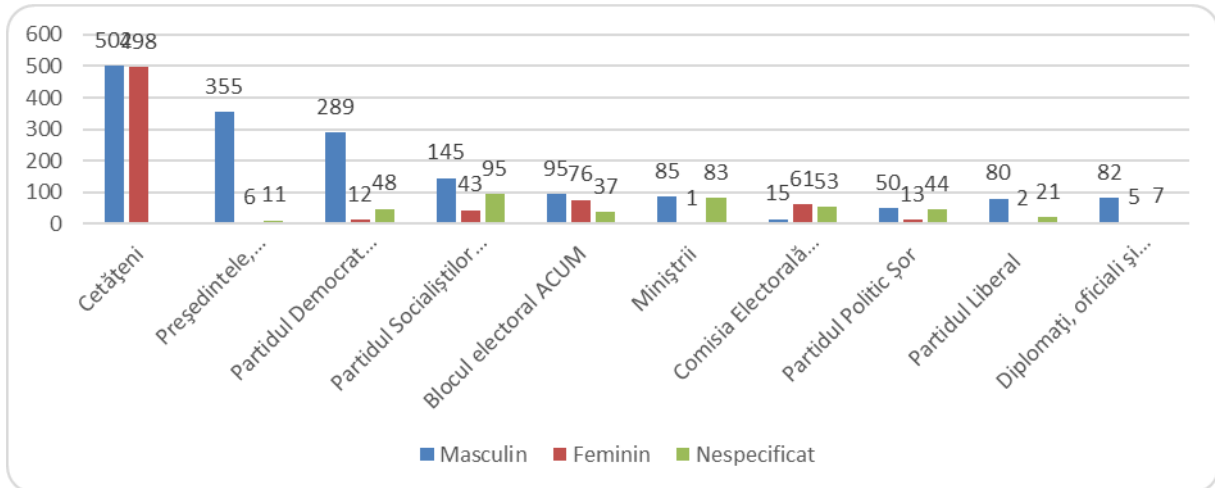
Gender balance. Most items reviewed further lacked balance in terms of gender ratio, with a large number of the sources and protagonists quoted or mentioned by the 12 TV stations being males (64.7%) and female sources accounting for 22.4%. The only categories of sources/protagonists for which gender balance was secured were ‘citizens’ and ‘CEC’, with more women than men quoted in the items with their presence. A relatively high number of female protagonists/sources was also found within the Electoral Bloc ACUM, followed by the Socialists Party of Moldova. To note that the rate of female sources from the ‘citizens’ category accounted for 54% of the total number of female sources.

Rate of sources and protagonists from gender perspective



Most stations monitored used male sources when requesting opinions from social source categories. The share of women quoted/mentioned was low among the parties/candidates, with small exceptions.

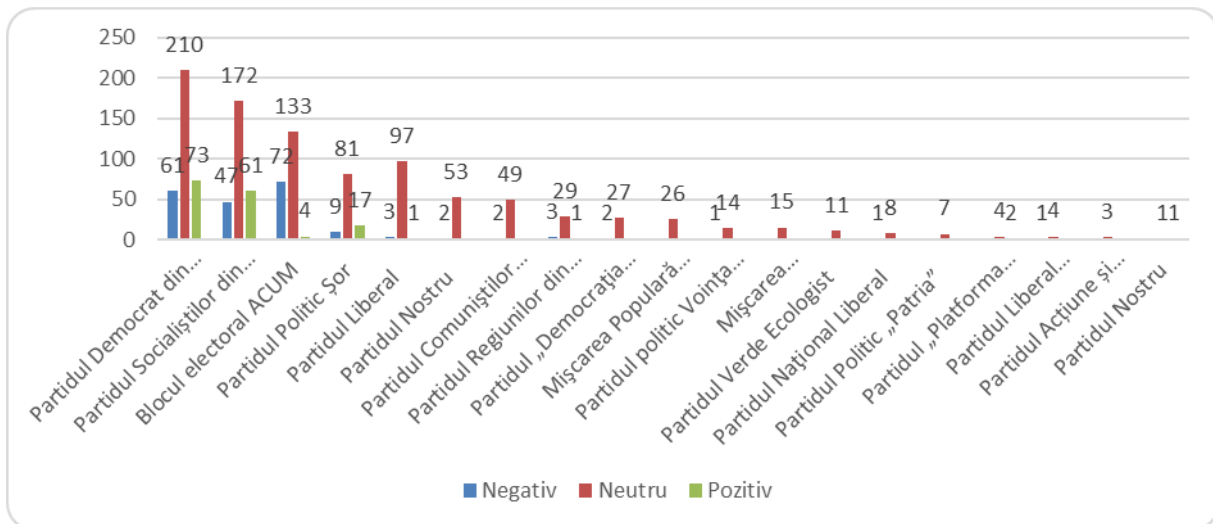
The best indicator for gender balance was found on Jurnal TV – 37%, Canal 2 – 29%, NTV Moldova – 25%, and Canal 3 – 24%.



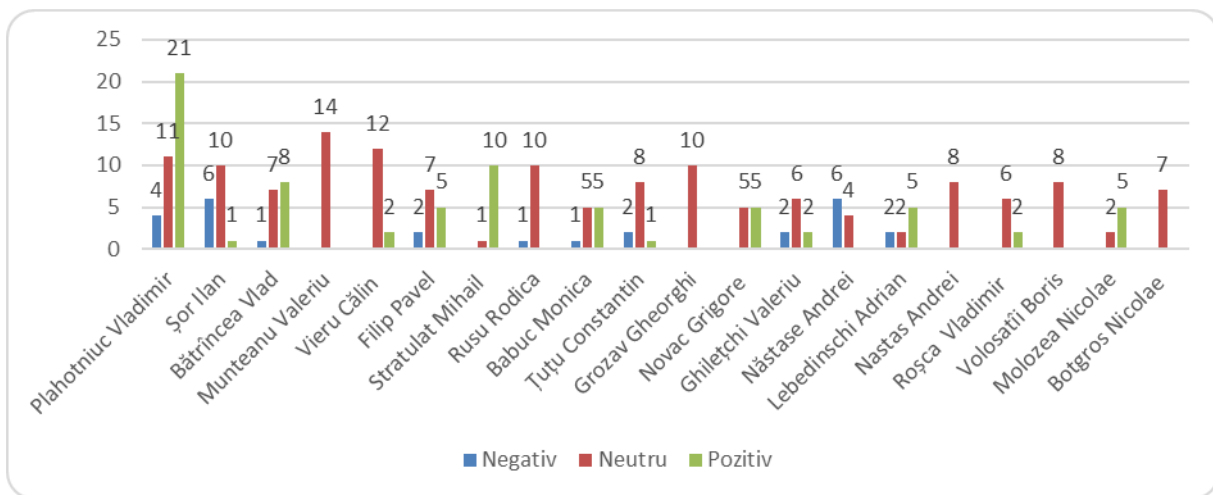
Tonality of coverage of candidates/General data, 12 TV stations. The PDM candidates in the national constituency were the ones to enjoy positive tonality most of the times, followed by PSRM and Șor Political Party. The Bloc ACUM appeared in most items on negative tonality, followed by PDM, PSRM and Șor Party. Of the candidates in uninominal constituencies, Vladimir Plahotniuc (affiliated to PDM), Mihail Stratulat (PDM), Vlad Bătrâncea (PSRM), Pavel Filip (PDM), Monica Babuc (PDM), Grigore Novac (PSRM), and Adrian Lebedinschi (PDM) had the most appearances in items on positive tonality. The tonality was mainly negative to Andrei Năstase and mainly neutral as well as negative to Ilan Șor.

The representatives of state institutions, especially of the President's Office, were concerned in items on neutral as well as positive and negative tonality, and those of the Parliament and Government – on rather neutral and positive tonality.

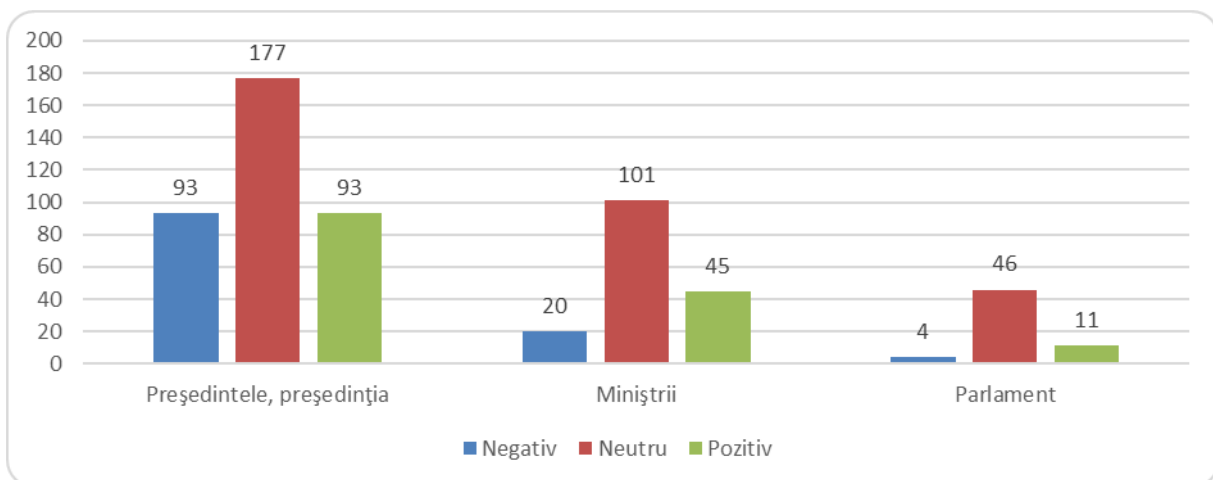
Tonality of coverage of candidates in news items, programs, debates/National Constituency, 12 TV stations



Tonality of coverage of candidates in news items, programs, debates/Uninominal Constituencies, 12 TV stations



Tonality of coverage in news items, programs and debates of representatives of the President’s Office, Parliament and Government / 12 TV stations



Tonality of coverage of candidates per TV station

Between 9 and 16 February, the national public TV station **Moldova 1** had a balanced behavior, offering airspace to the candidates of both the national constituency and uninominal constituencies. The tonality of coverage was totally neutral for them (for more details, see Annex 1).

The regional public station **GRT** broadcast few items relevant to this monitoring in the Russian language newscast, without displaying any obvious tendency of favoring or disfavoring certain political players. The tendency to favor the independent candidate Nicolae Dudoglo was noticed in the programs aired by this regional public broadcaster.

The private stations with national coverage **Prime TV** and **Publika TV** covered the election campaign in a similar manner. PDM representatives and the candidates in uninominal constituencies affiliated to this party had access to these stations most of the times, the tonality of their coverage being mainly positive. In addition, Prime TV broadcast a large number of items with the presence of Government representatives, including of Prime Minister Pavel Filip, the tonality being mainly positive, and of President Igor Dodon, the tonality being mainly negative.

The national private broadcasters **Canal 2** and **Canal 3** covered the campaign in a summary manner, offering relatively equal space to many candidates in the national constituency. Of the candidates in uninominal constituencies, those affiliated to PDM had most appearances, this party being also favored by the presence of Government members in news items and in programs.

The attitude to the representatives of the Electoral Bloc ACUM and to the candidates in uninominal constituencies affiliated to this bloc on **Prime TV**, **Publika TV**, **Canal 2** and **Canal 3** was negative in the majority of cases. The tonality to PSRM and President Igor Dodon was both negative and neutral.

The private stations **NTV Moldova** and **Accent TV** mainly covered the activities of PSRM representatives and of the candidates in uninominal constituencies affiliated to this party as well as of President Igor Dodon. Tonality of coverage most of the times was positive. PSRM was favored by the massive presence of President Igor Dodon in news and programs (in terms of frequency and duration). PDM and the Șor Party were covered rather on negative but also on neutral tonality.

The private stations **Pro TV** and **TV8** offered access to its news and programs/debates to many political players – parties and candidates in the national constituency and in uninominal constituencies. In most cases, the tonality of coverage of protagonists on these stations was neutral.

Jurnal TV mainly covered the candidates who organized electoral events, the tonality of coverage of political protagonists in news being mostly neutral. The tonality for the representatives of PDM and Șor Party was neutral and negative in the programs aired by Jurnal TV.

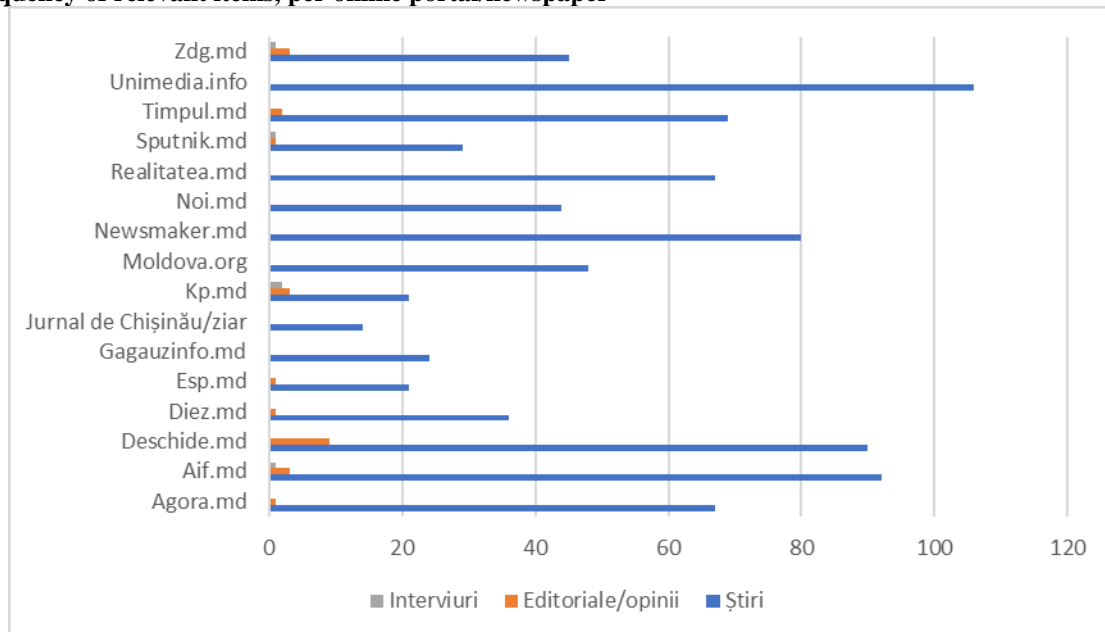
Televiziunea Centrală granted more space to Șor Political Party and the candidates affiliated to this party in uninominal constituencies for whom the tonality of coverage was rather

positive and neutral. The tonality towards the representatives of PSRM and of the Electoral Bloc ACUM was rather negative but also neutral.

2.2 ONLINE PORTALS AND PRINT MEDIA

Frequency of coverage. In the period from 9 to 16 February 2019, the 16 online portals and newspapers monitored published in total 882 items with direct and indirect electoral content, including 850 news items, 27 editorials or other opinions, and 5 interviews that directly or indirectly concerned the campaign for the 2019 parliamentary elections. Some news items were accompanied by video tracks. The total amount of items constituted 2,067,678 characters and 295.431 seconds of video recordings (circa 82 hours). As in the previous monitoring period, most journalistic items relevant to this monitoring were published by the portals **Unimedia.info** (106), **Deschide.md** (99) and **Aif.md** (96). The most modest coverage of the campaign this time was on the regional portals **Esp.md** (22), **Gagauzinfo.md** (24) but also on **Kp.md** (26 items). The newspaper *Jurnal de Chişinău* published 14 stories concerning the election campaign in the report period.

Frequency of relevant items, per online portal/newspaper



Topical diversity. As a whole, in the report period, most articles concerned the political activity and the unfolding of the election process. Foreign relations or social issues were tackled more rarely. The situation in the country's economy or the fight against corruption were tackled very rarely. Most of the portals and newspapers monitored actively covered the unfolding of the election campaign, reporting on the events organized by the candidates, their declarations/appeals/protests and the decisions made by the Central Election Commission, broadly presented the results of polls on the electorate's voting options, the exchange of reactions among candidates during TV debates or during their public appearances etc. Several portals published analyses, their own investigative reports and the detailed profiles of the candidates for MPs, or took them over from other sources. Several subjects were in the attention of most media outlets, including the case of Moldovan pilots, released from imprisonment in Afghanistan and located now in Moscow, the opening of voting sections in USA in the territory of some Baptist communities and the possible involvement of the independent candidate Valeriu Ghilețchi in this decision. Some portals further tackled the

campaign creatively, holding election debates, publishing podcasts and electoral tests. At the same time, there were portals that avoided to cover the campaign, preferring to report on the election events in a selective and summary manner. Few media sources monitored made sure to provide complex information to the voters, while election education items were few in number.

Social pluralism. Social pluralism in the online and print media was relative and ‘the voice’ of citizens was heard quite rarely and selectively in the items. In the report period, the online portals and newspapers monitored, in addition to the political players and candidates in the elections, used 1,114 sources and protagonists from other categories when documenting their items. Most often, this involved other media outlets, citizens, CEC representatives, foreign officials and observers, officials of various governmental agencies and civil society representatives (*see the table*).

Social sources and protagonists quoted or mentioned in the items /16 media

Sources and protagonists	Frequency, no.
Media	292
Citizens	212
Central Election Commission	159
Diplomats, foreign officials and observers	121
Government officials	90
Civil society – NGOs	65
Experts (foreign and local)	45
Judges, lawyers	41
Business	30
Local Public Administration	26
Police/Army	17
Initiative groups	14
Church	2

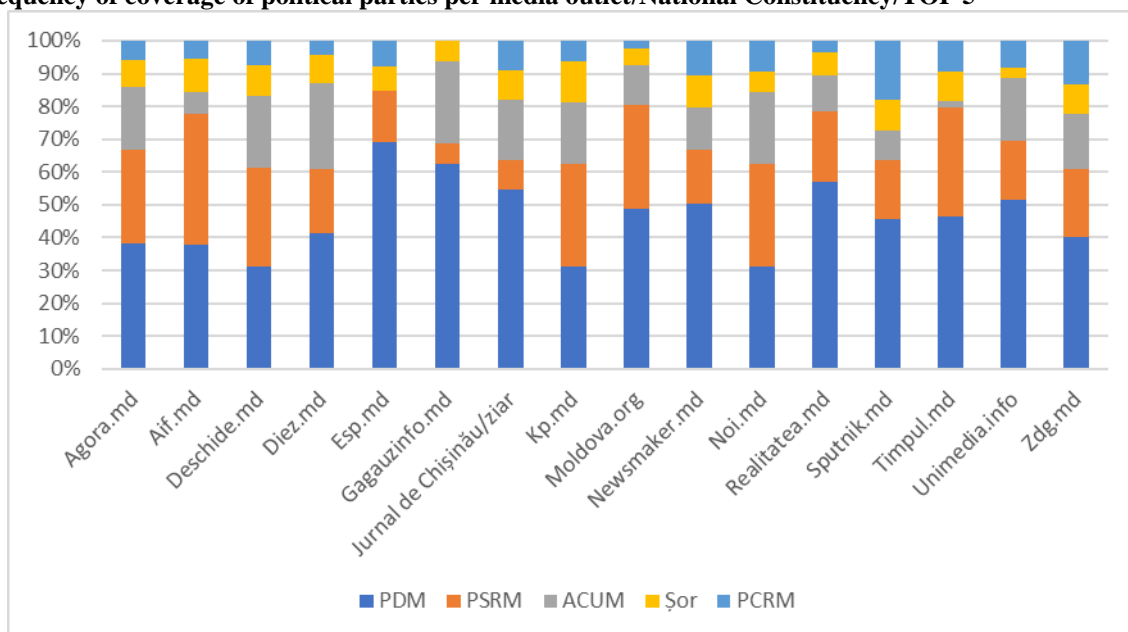
Political pluralism. The online portals and newspapers monitored overall had 2,530 sources and protagonists from the political area, including parties running in the national election constituency, candidates in the uninominal constituencies or top representatives of the President’s Office, Parliament and Government.

By frequency and duration of appearances (quotes/direct speech), the most visible candidates in the national constituency were PDM, at a distance followed by PSRM, the Electoral Bloc ACUM, the Communists Party, the Şor Party, PL, and Our Party. The number of appearances of the Electoral Bloc ACUM was nearly three times lower than of the PDM and the duration of its appearance and direct speech was half as big. The PDM was the most visible one, by the number of appearances, on 13 of the 16 media outlets monitored, the PSRM in 1, and the PDM and PSRM had an equal number of appearances in other 2 media sources.

Frequency and duration of appearance of political party representatives, candidates in the national constituency/16 media/TOP 10

Sources and protagonists	Frequency, no.	Duration of appearance, characters	Duration of direct speech, characters
Democratic Party of Moldova	369	223157	27117
Socialists Party of Moldova	230	155129	26537
Electoral Bloc ACUM	136	111549	13848
Communists Party of Moldova	72	31366	6822
Şor Political Party	76	29072	344
Liberal Party	64	27264	3578
Our Party	58	34311	11919
Regions Party of Moldova	14	5420	2186
Democracy at Home Party	14	2900	370
National Liberal Party	12	4248	1634

Frequency of coverage of political parties per media outlet/National Constituency/TOP 5



The items published on the portals and in the newspapers monitored overall referred to 281 of the candidates registered for the elections in uninominal constituencies (932 times). Some of them were sources or protagonists more often while others were only mentioned. By the frequency of their appearances, the total area and space offered for quotes/direct speech, the most covered ones were Vladimir Plahotniuc/PDM, Maia Sandu/ACUM, Ilan Șor/Șor Party and Andrei Năstase/ACUM (see table that includes the candidates mentioned at least five times).

Frequency and duration of appearance of candidates in the elections in uninominal constituencies /16 media

Sources and protagonists	Frequency, no.	Duration of appearance, characters	Duration of direct speech, characters
Plahotniuc Vladimir	47	44215	5673
Sandu Maia	39	30254	8822
Șor Ilan	32	20042	2298
Năstase Andrei	28	32338	8489
Savva Viorel	13	25887	12707
Chirtoacă Dorin	13	10121	2269
Gaburici Chiril	12	9569	336
Țuțu Constantin	11	22929	8723
Ghilețchi Valeriu	11	15416	3464
Bătrîncea Vlad	11	7556	3225
Munteanu Valeriu	11	6285	1019
Filip Pavel	11	7242	310
Patron Alexandrin	6	20106	2776
Cebotarescu Dumitru	9	5072	999
Botgros Nicolae	8	14068	9335

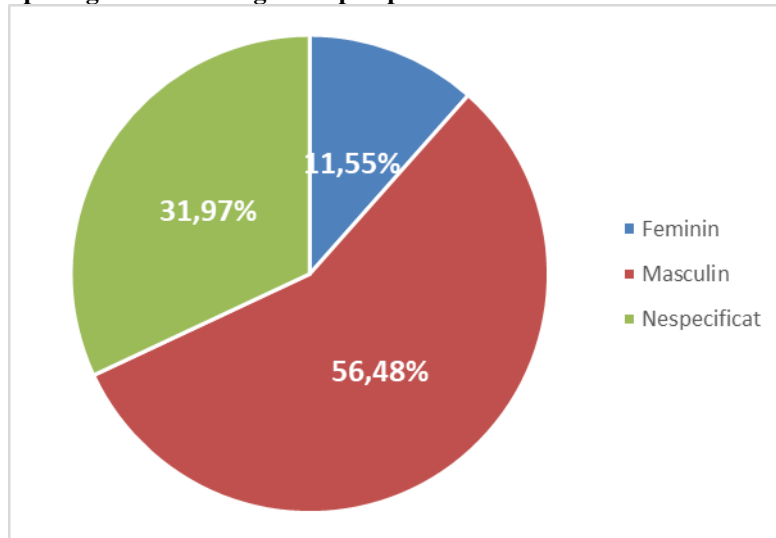
Cerba Valeriu	4	13643	11743
Dudoglo Nicolai	8	3998	149
Vieru Călin	8	7423	2384
Lebedinschi Adrian	7	9065	1871
Rusu Rodica	7	8227	1876
Repeșciuc Grigorie	7	8829	70
Terguță Ion	7	5064	1321
Greceanii Zinaida	7	5613	760
Grosu Igor	7	4025	378
Manole Domnica	7	2456	0
Stratulat Mihail	5	8533	188
Spătaru Arina	6	3019	2105
Botnari Alexandru	6	4942	0
Grițco Elena	5	3460	2815
Volosatii Boris	5	3114	2077
Novac Grigore	6	3940	593
Perciun Dan	6	4333	355
Odințov Alexandru	5	2758	762
Babuc Monica	5	3861	230
Moțpan Chiril	5	3176	100
Său Victor	5	3264	5
Bolboceanu Zinaida	5	2087	130
Nigai Veaceslav	6	1649	0
Balan Gheorghe	5	2508	100
Brînză Alexandru	5	2455	0
Vartanean Gaik	5	1217	990
Rubțov Serghei	5	1069	271
Cuciuc Oleg	5	1861	0
Nicolaescu-Onofrei Liliana	5	1727	0
Zaremba Anatolie	5	1630	0
Boeștean Constantin	5	1231	0
Amaev Said-Muhmat	5	1063	0
Alaiba Dumitru	6	842	0
Croitor Artur	5	1002	0

Of the first rank sources and protagonists of public structures, the Moldovan President Igor Dodon whom public perception associated with the Socialists Party and who often conveyed messages that directly or indirectly favored this candidate, was the most quoted dignitary (354 times), also enjoying big space of presentation and quoting/direct speech.

Gender balance. The lack of gender balance in sources and protagonists remained significant. In total, 56.48% of sources and protagonists were males and only 11.55% were females on the 16 online portals and newspapers monitored. Nearly one third of the items relevant to this monitoring did not specify the sex of the sources (*see graph*). The best ratio of men sources to women sources in this period was found on the portals **Esp.md**, **Agora.md** and **Zdg.md** (on average, 3.5 male sources accounted for one female source). The lowest

men–women source ratio was found on the portal **Sputnik.md** (one female source to 12.5 male sources).

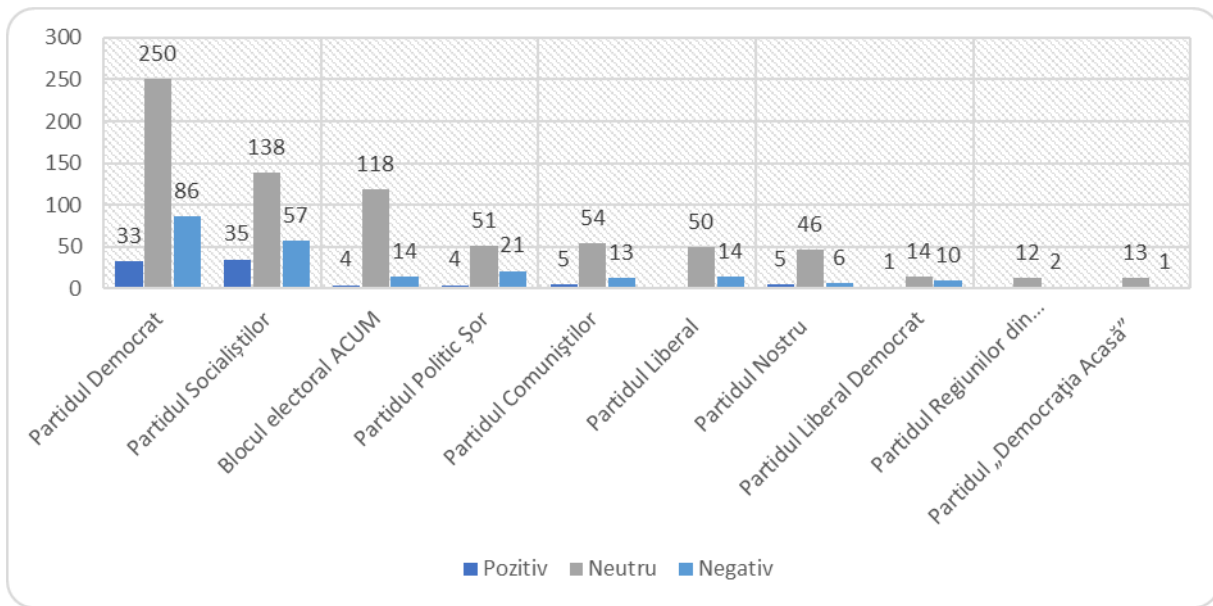
Rate of sources and protagonists from a gender perspective /16 media



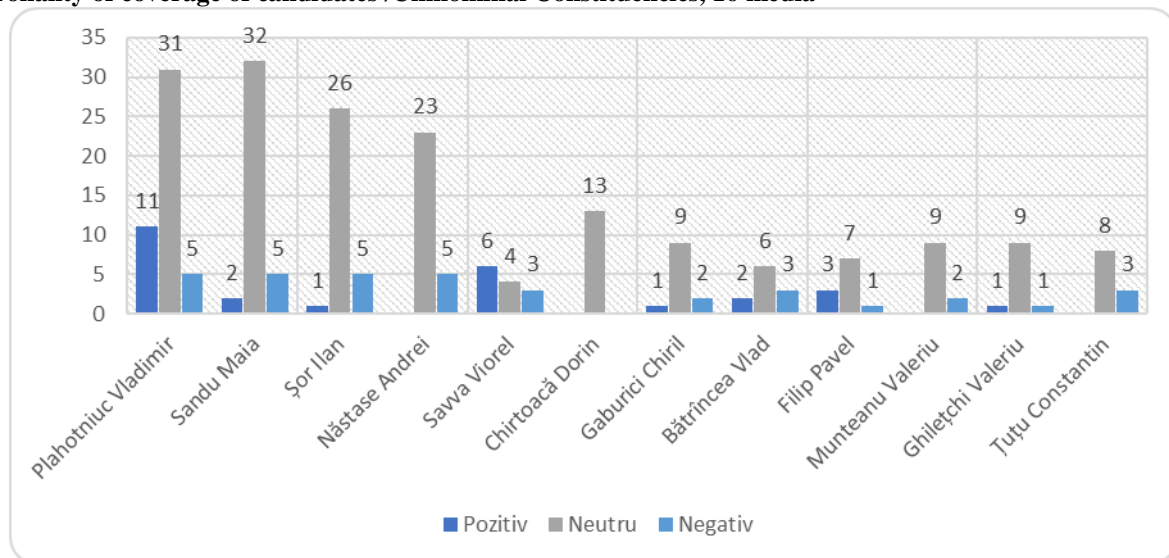
In the report period, PDM, PSRM and the Electoral Bloc ACUM remained the most covered candidates in the national constituency, with a neutral coverage tonality in most cases overall on the 16 online portals and newspapers monitored. They were followed by the Șor Party, Communists Party, Liberal Party and Our Party, with a comparable number of appearances, mainly neutral. The PDM and PSRM were most often presented in negative contexts; however, the same candidates also had the most appearances on positive tonality.

Among the candidates in uninominal constituencies, Vladimir Plahotniuc/PDM, Maia Sandu/ACUM, Ilan Șor/Șor Party and Andrei Năstase/ACUM were most covered, in different contexts and on different editorial tonality, mainly a neutral one. Overall, by all the 16 media outlets monitored, Vladimir Plahotniuc had the largest number of appearances on positive tonality, followed at a distance by the independent candidate Viorel Savva. Vladimir Plahotniuc, Maia Sandu, Ilan Șor and Andrei Năstase collected the largest number of appearances on negative tonality (5 each).

Tonality of coverage of candidates/National Constituency, 16 media



Tonality of coverage of candidates /Uninominal Constituencies, 16 media



Tonality of coverage of candidates in the elections per media outlet

The following general trends panned out in the last but one week of the election campaign. Some portals tried to present the election events and the candidates in the national and in the uninominal constituencies in a balanced manner and on neutral tonality, without selective and partisan approaches, on the one hand. Several portals were generally balanced and yet showed certain editorial liking of certain candidates, trying to promote them in a veiled way. There were portals that did not hide their political preferences and promoted them very actively, at the same time discrediting the political opponents of their favorite candidates, on the other hand. As a whole, online media contained many items presented from one source or without granting the right of reply to the ones accused.

In the report period, the portal **Agora.md** maintained its generally neutral tonality of presentation of all candidates in the elections in the national and uninominal constituencies.

The portal **Aif.md** clearly favored PSRM through the large number of neutral and positive news items about Igor Dodon, PSRM and some candidates of this party. At the same time, the portal disfavored PDM and its candidates by presenting them on negative tonality nearly each time, in critical items and without granting them the right of reply. The same thing, but in a lesser amount, can be said about the Șor Party.

The portal **Deschide.md** presented Igor Dodon and PSRM mainly on negative tonality, editorially disfavoring them. At the same time, the independent candidate in constituency no.51 USA–Canada, Viorel Savva, was presented on positive tonality and was granted large promotion space, including direct quotes.

The portal **Diez.md** kept its mainly neutral editorial approach to most candidates but less so to PDM that was presented on negative rather than neutral tonality in the report period.

The Bălți-based portal **Esp.md** covered the campaign from regional perspective, presenting the candidates on neutral tonality each time.

The Comrat-based portal **Gagauzinfo.md** also monitored the election campaign mainly from regional perspective, and the tonality of its news most of the times was neutral. The independent candidate Nicolai Dudoglo who was previously stated to be affiliated to PDM was further the most covered candidate, being slightly disfavored through the tonality of presentation.

The newspaper *Jurnal de Chișinău* presented the candidates of the Electoral Bloc ACUM on generally positive or neutral tonality, while PDM was presented both negatively and neutrally, being slightly disfavored.

The portal **Kp.md** continued to favor editorially PSRM and President Igor Dodon who were presented on large space and usually on positive tonality. In contrast, PL was presented only on negative tonality, being disfavored. The candidates of the Bloc ACUM and especially Maia Sandu were also disfavored in texts containing personal attacks and labeling, and without granting the right of reply. The PDM was presented equally negatively and neutrally.

The portal **Moldova.org** kept a generally neutral tonality in most items published on the elections or the candidates. At the same time, the portal failed to cover the scandal that broke after the authorities had decided to open voting sections in Baptist churches in the USA and the possible involvement of the independent candidate Valeriu Ghilețchi in making this decision.

The portal **Newsmaker.md** kept a generally neutral tonality in most news concerning the campaign and the candidates.

The portal **Noi.md** published a large number of news items on the activities of President Igor Dodon, on generally neutral tonality. Its texts showed light favoring of the PSRM. A part of its election news items, published in the report period, had been taken over from other websites, being generally neutral.

The portal **Realitatea.md** reported generally neutrally the campaign-related events, slightly favoring the PDM by the number of news items presented on positive tonality.

The portal **Sputnik.md** further allocated large space to covering the events attended by Igor Dodon who was mainly presented on positive tonality and the PSRM being indirectly favored. At the same time, the portal avoided covering some important election subjects, especially those that would put PDM in bad light.

The portal **Timpul.md** continued to favor massively the PDM and its candidates Vladimir Plahotniuc and Pavel Filip. In contrast, Igor Dodon, PSRM, and the leaders of the Bloc ACUM Andrei Năstase and Maia Sandu were disfavored by being nearly each time presented on negative, sometimes mocking, tonality.

The absolute majority of election news, published on the portal **Unimedia.info** in the report period presented the candidates on generally neutral tonality.

The portal **Zdg.md** maintained editorial neutrality in its news; however, the authors of opinions and editorials tackled the politicians on generally negative tonality, slightly disfavoring them.

Full versions of the monitoring reports in Romanian will be posted on the websites: www.alegeliber.md, www.api.md, www.media-azi.md