

Evaluating the content with propaganda elements broadcast in the Republic of Moldova from the Russian Federation

Monitoring covers the information-analytical, political and military content broadcasted by national audio-visual media service providers. These are the main news bulletins of the day and other political and military programs, broadcasted on February 21-25, 2022:

➤ **Primul în Moldova (First in Moldova)** - news bulletin “**Время**” (**Time**)

➤ **NTV Moldova** - news bulletin “**Сегодня**” (**Today**)

➤ **RTR Moldova** - news bulletin “**Вести**” (**News**)

The monitoring also includes Vladimir Putin's speech, on February 21, 2022, when the TV stations Primul în Moldova and NTV Moldova interrupted their program to broadcast live the speech of the President of the Russian Federation. It was aired during prime time. It should be noted that the RTR Moldova television station does not broadcast the original Russian news bulletin, but inserts the topics produced by Россия - PTP from Moscow in the local news bulletin.

Indicator	Score	Arguments and explanations
I.1. Topics repeatedly addressed during the monitored period	3	<p>In the monitored audio-visual programs, several topics were repeatedly addressed. The apogee was the speech of the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, and an aggressive one and in a negative tone towards Ukraine. Two of the monitored TV stations broadcast the intervention live, including on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. Subsequently, the echo of this speech was heard in the news bulletins of the following days.</p> <p>During the monitored period, the following topics were repeated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vladimir Putin’s speech on the evening of February 21;- meeting of the Security Council of the Russian Federation;- recognition of the "independence" of the separatist regions of eastern Ukraine, Donetsk and Luhansk;- friendship and mutual assistance agreements between the Russian Federation and the two separatist regions in eastern Ukraine;- military exercises of the Russian army;- "special military operation";- Minsk agreement;- the situation in Donbas.

		<p>Explanation: In the monitored programs, the topic of Vladimir Putin's speech on the evening of February 21 and the so-called "historic" decision he took in relation to the Donetsk and Luhansk regions was addressed to a very large extent. In the following days, the message that the situation in these regions had worsened, and that the Ukrainian side would be to blame, which did not comply with the provisions of the Minsk agreement, and the Russian Federation did everything possible to resolve this dispute peacefully has been resumed insistently. Finally, friendship and mutual aid agreements would be a step towards a better future, they tried to convince us of the news from the Russian Federation.</p>
<p>I.2. Frequency of use of positive / negative labels</p>	<p>3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Nationalist ambitions;</i> - <i>Terrorists and radicals;</i> - <i>Vain and populist discussions about democracy and a bright future;</i> - <i>Ukrainian society has faced the rise of extreme nationalism, which has rapidly taken shape of aggressive Russo phobia and neo-Nazism;</i> - <i>Participation of Ukrainian nationalists and neo-Nazis in terrorist gangs in the North Caucasus;</i> - <i>Bacillus of nationalist ambitions.</i> <p>Explanation: Negative labelling is used, in particular, in relation to Ukraine and the Kyiv governance. Most are superlative (<i>extreme nationalism; aggressive Russo phobia; radicals</i>), which makes the Russian media paint a negative image of Ukraine, equating it with a criminal and failed state fighting its own people.</p>
<p>I.3. Frequency of using positive / negative image transfer in monitored content</p>	<p>3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Modern Ukraine, in its entirety, was created by Russia, more precisely by Bolshevik, Communist Russia.</i> - <i>Ukraine is named after Vladimir Ilici Lenin. He is its author and architect.</i> - <i>External forces also played a role, which, with the help of NGOs and special services, increased their clientele in Ukraine and promoted it to representatives of the government.</i> - <i>If Ukraine joins NATO, the security threat to the Russian Federation increases.</i> <p>Explanation: Image transfer, with a negative connotation, is widely used in relation to Ukraine. It is distributed the idea, supported by Vladimir Putin, as the "architect" of Ukraine is Lenin, and that Ukraine was created in a "hard way" for Russia by breaking historical territories. In addition, now, according to the authors of the materials, Ukraine is completely controlled by the West, and</p>

		NATO is imaged as a direct danger to the security of the Russian Federation, which requires Russia to take defence action. We notice a transfer of a negative image corroborated with Russia's justifications.
I.4. Frequency of calling citizens to support messages sent	2	Explanation: Sequences are being broadcast with citizens celebrating the Russian Federation's recognition of the so-called "independence" of the separatist regions of eastern Ukraine, Donetsk and Luhansk. While the reporter says that people have hope for tomorrow, images of people hugging, launching fireworks, singing and organizing a car march are posted.
I.5. Frequency of biased selection of arguments and facts in support of messages transmitted	3	<p>Explanation: Starting from the tense relationship between the Russian Federation and Ukraine and the recognition of the so-called "independence" of the separatist regions, some news topics talk about the US reaction to these events. <i>"A predictable reaction,"</i> says the reporter. <i>"The Kremlin has just signed the documents, and the White House has already announced the sanctions,"</i> she said. <i>"Some American TV stations started broadcasting our president's speech, but they quickly connected with their commentators,"</i> she continues.</p> <p><i>"The American media's obsession with launching Russia's military operation in Ukraine is growing, and the forecasts of American officials are lacking in common sense".</i></p> <p>In this context, the President of Ukraine, Vladimir Zelenski, is labelled a <i>"main deserter"</i>, referring to the proposals to leave the country for his safety, which were made to him.</p>
I.6. Frequency of using the image of the enemy in the monitored contents	3	<p>According to the monitored TV stations, the enemies of the Russian Federation are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ukraine's governance; - USA; - NATO; - European Union. <p>Explanation: Another propaganda technique, often used by Russian media institutions targeted in this monitoring, is that of the enemy. This technique is used insistently, so that the consumer of information, at some point, to believe these untruths. Each time, the tone is aggressive and harsh in relation to the government in Ukraine, the European Union, NATO, and the USA. All these subjects, if we were to believe the media in the Russian Federation targeted in monitoring,</p>

		are promoters of non-values and terror. Westerners, as the monitored news reports inform us, do not want to know what is really going on in Donbas.
I.7. Frequency of use of prejudices and stereotypes to support one point of view and discredit other opposites	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Ukraine is entirely run from the outside, appointments to important positions take place only after coordination with Washington;</i> - <i>Ukraine is a puppet colony;</i> - <i>Ukraine's governance promotes a policy that undermines state sovereignty;</i> - <i>Ukraine has territorial claims against the Russian Federation;</i> - <i>The de-russification process continues;</i> - <i>Russia wants peace;</i> - <i>NATO poses a threat to the security of the Russian Federation.</i> <p>Explanation: These are just a few examples of the use of prejudice and stereotypes. Thus, on the one hand we have Ukraine, the USA and the European states, which, according to the news authors, are a danger to the sovereignty of Ukraine, of the Russian-speaking citizens living on its territory. On the other hand, it is the Russian Federation that justifies any action by its desire to be at peace, to take care of its compatriots on the territory of the neighbouring state.</p>
I.8. Frequency to use hate speech in monitored content	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Ukrainian society has faced an increase in extreme nationalism;</i> - <i>Neo-Nazism, fascism; denazification;</i> - <i>Ukraine promotes a Russo phobic policy;</i> - <i>The genocide of the Donbas brothers;</i> - <i>People identifying themselves as Russians and would like to keep their identity, language, culture have been directly suggested that they are foreigners in Ukraine.</i> <p>Explanation: Hate speech has been used mainly in relation to the Ukrainian people. In the monitored programs, Ukraine is presented as a state, which uses terror and aggression against compatriots in the separatist regions, those who have chosen to be independent. The news also tells us that the Kyiv governance is intensely promoting Russo phobic policies.</p>
I.9. Frequency to use dramatization and intrigue (threat) to attract the public to a position	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Kyiv authorities have twice already organized punitive operations in these territories. The statement was made in connection with the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, alluding to a third blow;</i> - <i>A lot of weapons are brought to Ukraine from the West;</i>

		<p>- For 8 years, Ukraine has not complied with any point [...] of the Minsk Agreement. And it is obvious that this desire does not exist either, and when, for the third time, a real fight breaks out and the genocide of our brothers in Donbas is prolonged, Russia, in the person of the president, did what it had to do and what a lot our brothers from Donbas were waiting;</p> <p>- Sequence of Vladimir Jirinovski's speech from December 2021: [...] 4:00 a.m., February 22. I wish 2022 was a year of peace, but I love the truth, I have been telling the truth for 75 years. This will not be a year of peace, it will be a year in which Russia will finally become a great country again and everyone must shut up and respect our country, otherwise they will shut us up.;</p> <p>- Do you want de-communisation? Well, that suits us perfectly. However, you do not have to stop halfway, as they say. We are ready to show you what true de-communisation means for Ukraine.</p> <p>- It is one of the threatening messages from the President of the Russian Federation.</p> <p>Explanation: Elements of dramatization and intrigue are identified, in particular, in the speeches of the official representatives of the Russian Federation, who spoke about the recognition of the so-called "independence" of the two separatist regions of Ukraine. Surprisingly or not, but they all had a position that seems to be drawn to indigo.</p>
<p>I.10. Frequency of using a positive model (person and / or country) as the only source of truth, possessing special qualities / characteristics</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>- The Russian Federation supports the sovereignty of its neighbours, is one of Vladimir Putin's statements since meeting with the head of Azerbaijan;</p> <p>- The Russian Federation receives refugees from Eastern Ukraine. They are helped by volunteers, and the aid collection points work until late at night;</p> <p>- It is important that the Russian Federation will defend brave people who, in order to remain part of the great Russian world, in order to raise and teach children in their mother tongue, the Russian language, in recent years, have simply given their lives;</p> <p>- With the recognition of "independence", the first step towards peace and resolute resistance was taken against those adventurers [...] who want to arrange challenges and struggles (with reference to Ukraine);</p> <p>- For 8 years, Russia has been calling for compliance with the provisions of the Minsk agreement, trying to draw attention to the situation in Donbas, which has remained under siege. But, all the opportunities were consumed;</p> <p>- The decision of the President of the Russian Federation is the only correct one; he did everything to save the people. With this decision he stopped the war;</p> <p>- Moscow is open to dialogue.</p>

		Explanation: The positive model of the Russian Federation and, in particular that of Vladimir Putin is strongly promoted. Excerpts from the speeches of the State Duma deputies are being broadcast, following the ratification of the Friendship and Mutual Aid Agreements with the separatist regions. Vladimir Putin is praised, saying he "took this decision to defend the people of the separatist regions, and Russia has taken a step towards peace."
I.11. Nature of the attitude (positive / neutral / negative) broadcasters in relation to the mediated events / facts	3	<p>In the monitored programs we also identify topics that reflect other topics, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the Russian Federation the number of Covid-19 cases decreases considerably; - The Russian teen vaccine "Sputnik M" has been approved by Kazakhstan; - The heroes of the Beijing Olympics were greeted pompous in Moscow. <p>Explanation: In other topics concerning the Russian Federation, reflected in the news bulletins, we certify a positive, even triumphant tone, for example in the case of athletes returning from the Winter Olympics.</p>
I.12 Diversity of ideas, opinions in relation to events / themes addressed in monitored contents	3	Explanation: During the monitored period, we do not ascertain a diversity of views on the issues addressed, especially those related to the recognition of the so-called independence of the two eastern regions of Ukraine - Donetsk and Luhansk. We have images, with speeches, from the meeting of the Security Council and the meeting of the State Duma, but we do not even hear a different opinion from the one promoted by the President of the Russian Federation. In all matters relating to the subject of Ukraine, the intervention of Russia is justified, which, as the Russians call it, is a "special military operation", but not a war.
I.13. Degree of risk for the manipulation of public opinion in the Republic of Moldova and influencing behaviour and attitudes of people in the direction desired by the broadcasters	3	Explanation: This monitoring period shows us that the Russian Federation is promoting specific narratives, especially in relation to Ukraine, which is presented as a state with "Russo-phobic and criminal policies". Moscow is emphasizing this, in order to justify its invasion and war crimes, which its army commits on the territory of the neighbouring state, and the image of a "peacemaker" of Russia seems to be a signal to other states, including the Republic of Moldova. Russia positions itself as a "caring and peace-promoting state" that wants nothing more than to save its own citizens. Through the broadcast, the media consumer in our country is manipulated and misinformed about the events in the region.
Total score	38	Score interpretation: Propaganda elements in the content retransmitted from the Russian Federation involve major risks for manipulating public opinion in the Republic of Moldova and /or for influencing opinions and behaviours. Most of the messages analysed are biased,

		<p>insignificantly follow the rules of equidistant journalism and do not contribute to the formation of correct opinions in relation to the events / facts addressed. Following the constant consumption of these products, the citizen of the Republic of Moldova can be significantly influenced, to think, express opinions or act to the detriment of the state of the Republic of Moldova. Therefore, these contents threaten the information security of the Republic of Moldova and constitute a real risk for it.</p>
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