

Assessment of content with elements of propaganda retransmitted in Moldova from Russia

- **Monitored TV station 1: Primul în Moldova**, which retransmits (among other materials) the content of the Russian station **Channel One** [Pervyy kanal]. The monitoring targets the content of **Channel One**.
- **Number of content units monitored:** 16.
- **Type of content units:** 9 daily newscasts, 1 summary newscast of the week (**Time** [Vremya]), and 6 programs of a political, informative-analytical and/or military nature (**Time Will Tell** [Vremya Pokazhet]).
- **Total number of hours monitored:** 20.
- **The ratio of local product to retransmitted product during the monitored period:** about 32.25 hours or 13.43% of local product versus about 207.75 hours or 86.57% of retransmitted product from total airtime.

- **Monitored TV station 2: NTV Moldova**, which retransmits (among other materials) the content of the Russian station **NTV**. The monitoring targets the content of **NTV**.
- **Number of content units monitored:** 10.
- **Type of content units:** 8 newscasts (**Today** [Segodnya]), 1 summary newscast of the week (**Summary of the Week** [Itogi nedeli]), and 1 program of a political, informative-analytical and/or military nature (**Central Television** [Tsentral'noye televideniye]).
- **Total number of hours monitored:** 8.
- **The ratio of local product to retransmitted product during the monitored period:** about 63.5 hours or 26.46% of local product versus about 176.5 hours or 73.54% of retransmitted product from total airtime.

- **Monitored TV station 3: RTR Moldova**, which retransmits (among other materials) the content of the Russian station **Russia-RTR** [Rossiya-RTR]. The monitoring targets the content of **Russia-RTR**.
- **Number of content units monitored:** 11.
- **Type of content units:** 8 newscasts (**News** [Vesti]), 1 summary newscast of the week (**News of the Week** [Vesti nedeli]), and 2 programs of a political, informative-analytical and/or military nature (**Moscow. Kremlin. Putin** and **Sunday Evening with Vladimir Soloviev**).
- **Total number of hours monitored:** 8.5
- **The ratio of local product to retransmitted product during the monitored period:** about 28.75 hours or 11.98% of local product versus about 211.25 hours or 88.02% of retransmitted product from total airtime.

- **Monitored period:** November 1-10, 2021
- **Content analysis grid:**

Indicator	Score	Arguments and explanations
I. 1. Topics repeatedly addressed during the monitored period	3	At least 6 topics were covered in more than half of the monitored content: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The situation in the Donbas region.

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The process of arming in Russia, with all related achievements. 3. The USA uncontrollably support Ukraine in the conflict with Russia, militarily advance into the Black Sea, and dangerously and illegally approach Russian borders. 4. Today's USA are a land of hatred, revenge, chaos, and President Joe Biden is desperately trying to avoid civil war. 5. The Covid-19 situation in Russia versus Europe and the USA. 6. The Glasgow Climate Change Conference. <p>Explanation: In the monitored broadcasts, the situation in the Donbas region and the process of arming in Russia were presented as natural because Ukraine, supported by the USA and NATO, are dangerously advancing towards Russian borders. In addition, the political, social situation in the USA was “analyzed” only in the context of chaos, imbalance, degradation, etc., and was regularly debated, without any exception. In newscasts the same topics were presented in brief. Also, newscasts constantly covered the situation of Covid-19, difficult in Russia, but controlled by authorities in a very responsible and professional manner, and disastrous in Europe and the USA, where authorities fail to cope with the new wave of infections. The Glasgow conference was also widely covered, for several days, with particular criticism of “<i>the bunch of the rich who are teaching the poor how to save resources</i>” and praising Vladimir Putin’s decision to send only a video message, because he found it wrong to waste resources for travel.</p>
<p>I.2. Frequency of use of positive/negative labels</p>	<p>3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ukraine and Poland – <i>backyard of the USA and Great Britain.</i> - <i>It's hard to deal with a mentally ill man</i> (about Volodymyr Zelensky) or <i>the so-called Ukrainian president.</i> - <i>Cynical Ukrainian journalists.</i> - <i>Sleepy Joe</i> (about Joe Biden). - <i>American-style shame.</i> - <i>The cynical West.</i> - <i>Sons of bitches</i> (and other indecent expressions against Europeans, Americans, and/or Ukrainian authorities). - <i>Total failure</i> (about the Glasgow conference). - <i>Greta Thunberg – hypocrite, truant.</i> - <i>The USA – fanatical, hysterical country.</i> - <i>Russia – generous soul.</i> - <i>Russia – the savior of the planet</i> (in the context of the Glasgow conference). - <i>Russia – the world's ecological donor.</i> - <i>Russia – the savior of Moldova</i> (in the context of the energy crisis). - <i>Our caring and responsible authorities</i> (Russian). - <i>The best on the planet</i> (gymnasts, swimmers), etc. <p>Explanation: Negative labels were used mostly, but not exclusively, in programs, while positive labels – in the news. The former referred to the president of Ukraine, Ukraine as a country, the West, US President</p>

		Joe Biden, former Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili. Positive labels were aimed exclusively at the Russian authorities, in particular Vladimir Putin, Russia, Russian athletes, etc.
I.3. Frequency of use of positive/negative image transfer in monitored content	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sexual assaults, scandals, the “X” gender, associated with the American society in general and with personalities like Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and others. - Joe Biden, associated with chaos, degradation, and the greatest anti-rating in the post-war history of the USA, with Volodymyr Zelensky being mentioned immediately after. - Ukrainian fighters in Donbas are repeatedly and constantly called “fascists”. - The greatest achievements of the Russian state are associated with Vladimir Putin, from military policy to the successes of gymnasts. <p>Explanation: Image transfer was done both from one person to another, and between countries, value systems, social organization, etc. In each of the 10 monitored days, the three stations painted the image of the West as one of moral, political, social degradation, through negative examples of rather unpleasant events/phenomena (such as the Covid-19 situation, protests in different cities, mandatory vaccination), overlapping this image with that of Russia, where the president is strong, the authorities keep the pandemic under control, and the victims of the “Ukrainian aggression” in Lugansk are commemorated in a Christian manner, for example.</p> <p>NB. The RTR Moldova station integrated into the domestic newscast products from Russia, without interfering in their content. Thus, the head of the Kremlin often appeared as “<i>President</i>”, without specifying the country, or “<i>the president of our country</i>”, etc. The same goes for other senior officials from Russia.</p>
I.4. Frequency of appeal to citizens to support the messages conveyed	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “<i>Serioga, don’t shoot your father!</i>”, says a resident of Donetsk, whose son lives in Ukraine. - “<i>We are dying of cold in our own homes,</i>” say people in Kiev, who have no heat in apartments. - “<i>The authorities [Ukrainian] are killing us,</i>” say other people in Kiev. - “<i>We are getting vaccinated, necessarily, to escape the pandemic</i>” – people from Russia. - “<i>Our viewers are worried about your mental health.</i>” (host to a guest). Such generalizations are used very often, without “viewers” appearing. <p>Explanation: This technique was not used very often, and no person told in the monitored newscasts and programs what he/she thinks about the arming of Russia, the conflict with Ukraine or Joe Biden. It was used especially in the case of social topics, such as the pandemic, vaccination, and others. Also, in programs, people were usually Ukrainians critical of the authorities of their state and, very rarely or not at all, of Russians. The latter appeared as experts.</p>
I.5. Frequency of biased selection of arguments and facts in support of the messages conveyed	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programs massively debated the problem that Russia has with Ukraine and everything that emerges from it (energy crisis, relations with the USA, arming). - Guests usually had the same opinion, with sometimes different arguments, and those who claimed to be in opposition were constantly humiliated and discredited. The arguments were only in favor of Russian policy and the correct decisions of the authorities. - Newscasts covered other topics, too, positive for Russia (successes, victories, fruitful meetings of leaders, orders of the president, care for the people, responsible struggle with the pandemic, etc.),

		<p>and negative for the USA and/or Europe (protests, grievances, degradation, non-values). In Russia there is no crime, violence, or protests.</p> <p>Explanation: Foreign sources, for example, were cited exclusively to support the idea stated in media products. Thus, they contained sequences from American shows that criticize Joe Biden or support Donald Trump. Covering the Glasgow conference, they showed the American president’s suite of cars, noting that he came to the environmental conference while massively polluting the environment, and the topic of Ukraine was approached from the perspective of Kiev’s hostile actions. In a material about the energy crisis in Moldova, for example, reporters went to Gagauzia and unilaterally argued the idea that the Moldovans do not support Maia Sandu, who allegedly thanked the USA for helping to solve the gas crisis. In the material, the authorities were accused of hypocrisy, and the only ones who expressed their opinion were the residents of the Gagauz autonomy, who <i>“remember our common history [with Russians] very well.”</i></p>
<p>I.6. Frequency of use of enemy image in monitored content</p>	<p>3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All monitored programs, without any exception, used the image of the enemy in their content, which was sometimes presented very aggressively. In newscasts, presentations were more veiled. The fiercest enemies of Russia, according to the three TV stations, are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The USA as the homeland of chaos and degradation, as well as a decisive part of NATO. ✓ The authorities from Kiev, who, among other things, humiliate Russian speakers, and the “fascist” army that constantly attacks the Donbas. ✓ Europe as a general, common entity, as a set of values, rules, and behaviors. - <i>“Ukraine decided to destroy Donbas”; “The West is attacking us”; “Russia has all the possibilities to attack, but it does not do it because it is human”; “Fascists have besieged Donbas”; “Why are you [Ukraine] drawing us [Russians] into a total war?”; “America is destroying everything in its path”; “What President Putin says is right, we must calm them down” [Americans, Ukrainians]; “The ideology of our country is to make friends with everyone, while they provoke us to war and division”; “Nazi, fascist state” [about Ukraine]; “Russia must protect its citizens from fascists”; “NATO attacks, NATO advances”; and so on – these are key expressions, messages constantly repeated during the monitored period.</i> <p>Explanation: The image of the enemy was contrasted, of course, to the Russian state, Russian society, its value system: <i>“their states, societies, values are corrupt, ours are not”</i>; to Christianity and decency, which do not allow society to degrade, as it happens in the West, where they approved the “X gender”, among other things, and where people are threatened with dismissal if they refuse to get vaccinated; the humanitarian crisis sparked on the border of Belarus and Poland <i>“is in contradiction with the humanistic values that the EU is talking about.”</i> Russia, after all, is <i>“focused on integration processes, while they [the West] – on sanctions.”</i></p>
<p>I.7. The frequency of using prejudices and stereotypes to support one point of view and discredit opposing ones</p>	<p>3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ukraine today is a fascist state, and we remember what fascism means. - Russians must be protected wherever they live in the world. - There’s so much debauchery in the USA that it’s dangerous to be a man there today. - Migrants do unskilled work in Russia, which Russians do not want to do, and spoil the labor market. - The West is cultivating Russophobia.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Democracy and liberalism (especially in the USA) are equaled to chaos. - Russia has been, for 300 years, a great power of the world (empire), and everyone must take into account its opinion. - Unconditional friendship between ex-Soviet peoples exists (gas given to Moldova). - NATO is equivalent to war. - Lenin laid the foundation for the best social system, in which millions of people lived happily. <p>Explanation: Stereotypes and/or prejudices were used and cultivated in the monitored content. Thus, on the one hand, they resorted to Christian values, morals, the “great Russian soul”, the Soviet past in order to raise awareness and strengthen arguments, and on the other hand – to constant repetition of stereotyped ideas and/or prejudices. Thus, an eloquent example of the former is that of the contract concluded by the Moldovan gas company Moldovagaz and the Russian company Gazprom, which was presented as a lifeline thrown by Russians to the friendly people, brother people until recently, Moldovans being very satisfied with this generous gesture. In the latter case, an example is NATO, which the average Russians know only from what they hear on television, and which is presented almost daily as the equivalent of war, crimes, and destruction, being led in particular by the USA.</p>
<p>I.8. Frequency of use of hate speech in monitored content</p>	<p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fascism, Nazism, nationalism (in Ukraine). - Volodymyr Zelensky – schizophrenic, mentally ill, hates his people. - The West is Russophobic; it rejoices when Russians shoot at Russians. - The “X gender” – the peak of the degradation of Western society. - Joe Biden is a senile old man, asleep, falls from the stairs, etc. This man orders NATO to advance into the Black Sea and move closer and closer to Russia. - The madness of liberal fascism in the USA is reaching maximum levels. - “We will destroy you all in the blink of an eye!” says the host (that is, Russia everyone else). <p>Explanation: Programs abounded in speeches that incite hatred and intolerance towards different categories of people, countries, ethnicities, etc. The most often targeted were Ukrainians (those from the category of nationalists, fascists and Russophobes), the Ukrainian president as a person, Joe Biden, but also the “West” as a general, abstract notion, where all intolerable evil happens. Russia feels constantly threatened and does not respond simply because it is a deeply humanist, rational, Christian, and fair country.</p>
<p>I.9. The frequency of resorting to dramatization and intrigue to attract the audience to one position</p>	<p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>NATO is attacking us.</i> - <i>Ukraine is close to a civil war.</i> - <i>Ukraine and/or Europe will freeze (if they fail to agree with Russia on gas).</i> - <i>While we were watching advertising, Ukraine declared war on us.</i> - <i>Kiev is ready to fight.</i> - <i>The USA is preparing a preemptive atomic attack on Russia.</i> - <i>Europe shows complete lack of humanism in relation to migrants on the Polish-Belarusian border, while Belarus helps them and sends them food and water.</i>

		<p>Explanation: Dramatizations, intrigue, and panic were used especially in headlines, in programs, but also in the speeches of people in the studio. Less, but constantly, this technique was used in the news. Primul în Moldova also used apocalyptic images in the background, in which the White House appeared, for example, in gloomy colors, collapsing, like in science fiction films. Last but not least, the hosts played an important role in dramatization and intrigue, one of them being an actress by profession and very deftly resorting to theatrical tricks to put the emphasis on a certain aspect of the subject.</p>
<p>I.10. Frequency of using a positive model (person and/or country) as a single source of truth, possessing special qualities/characteristics</p>	<p>3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>We are thankful to President Vladimir Putin!</i> - President Putin says things right and well. - Thanks to Vladimir Putin... - <i>President Putin acted in civilized, rational, and logical manner when he did not go to Glasgow.</i> - Putin proposed solutions that improve the way of life, decorated doctors, thanked workers, supported athletes, etc. - <i>After President Putin's call for people to get vaccinated, the number of people willing to do so doubled.</i> - Presidential aid funds help children with disabilities, the elderly, young researchers, etc. - <i>What President Putin proposes is very good, he defends our interests inside and outside the country.</i> <p>Explanation: Vladimir Putin's positive model was promoted intensively, massively, and it was evident in almost all monitored products. There was no newscast or program in which the Kremlin leader did not appear in the most positive way, as having exceptional qualities of organization, control, planning, civic and patriotic attitude, care for citizens, etc. The prime minister, foreign minister, and other high-ranking officials necessarily mentioned the orders and initiative of the president for their area of priority. Putin appeared in the best images, from the best angles, in a Christian Russia with values and humanism. On the other hand, in the same programs people saw Joe Biden, for example, falling asleep at conferences, stumbling or farting, in an increasingly decrepit America.</p>
<p>I.11. The nature of the attitude (positive/neutral/negative) of the transmitters in relation to the covered events/facts</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Explanation: An insignificant number of monitored media products were presented in a neutral manner (such as stock market figures, exchange rates, or the eruption of the volcano in Palma). Most events/facts clearly conveyed a positive or negative attitude of the transmitters in relation to the issues reported/debated/discussed. The positive attitude was expressed every time in relation to the decisions, actions, opinions, achievements of the Russian leadership, but also of Russia (leader regions in harvesting; Day of National Unity celebrated throughout the country; undisputed victories at the world championships of gymnastics, swimming, and so on). The negative attitude, in turn, was shown in relation to the events in the USA and/or Europe, or to the decisions and political/economic/geopolitical actions of the leadership of the USA or of some European states targeting or not targeting Russia. Particular negative attitude was shown towards events/facts concerning Ukraine, in the context of the conflict in Donbas and of Crimea, as well as of the overall political situation in Ukraine.</p>
<p>I.12. Diversity of ideas, opinions in relation to the events/themes addressed in the monitored content</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Explanation: In most of the monitored products, pluralism of ideas and opinions was ensured in an insignificant manner. More often than not, a single idea, position, opinion was presented, but it could be branched, multiplied by means of several sources that supported it. That is, there could be numerical pluralism, but not diversity of opposing ideas. Some programs mimicked the presence of guests who</p>

		think/say something other than most, but they were immediately spotted, intimidated, and counterattacked, so that this possible alternative idea was presented to the audience as negative, reprehensible, and not to be taken into account.
I.13. The degree of risk for manipulating the public opinion in Moldova and influencing people's behavior and attitudes in the direction desired by the transmitters	3	Explanation: The messages in the monitored content, which propagate ideas and opinions addressed to the Russian people, citizens of the Russian Federation, and/or Russian speakers outside Russia, but who more or less identify themselves as part of the Russian world, convey propaganda in favor of the Russian Federation. Regularly transmitted, reinforced, and repeated, these messages can certainly manipulate public opinion in Moldova and can influence public behavior and attitudes, including in elections or in the perception of the country's leadership, in a direction favorable to the Russian Federation, and not to Moldova. When, evening after evening, the news (apparently foreign) say that President Vladimir Putin does so much for the welfare of the people, has so much authority and care for the people, the authority of the Moldovan leadership being questioned by so many problems that our country has, while in Russia they do not exist, it is clear that the media consumer will say they trust Vladimir Putin more than Maia Sandu.
Total score	34	Score interpretation: The propaganda elements in the content retransmitted from the Russian Federation pose major risks for manipulation of public opinion in Moldova and/or for influencing opinions and behaviors. Most of the analyzed messages are biased, insignificantly comply with the standards of fair journalism, and do not contribute to the formation of correct opinions in relation to the events/facts addressed. By consuming these products, Moldovan citizens can be significantly influenced to think, express opinions, or act in disfavor of the state of the Republic of Moldova. Therefore, these contents encroach on the information security of the Republic of Moldova and constitute a real risk for it.