



# **The topic of censorship on YouTube:**

## **narrative contexts and their amplification through user comments**

*The report is part of the project 'Advancing Media Literacy and Supporting the Media in the Republic of Moldova', supported by Sweden and implemented by Internews. The program aims to contribute to the growth of a diverse, independent and financially viable media sector, and to empower young people in Moldova to navigate safely in the complex information environment.*

In recent years, YouTube has become an increasingly relevant platform in the online information architecture of the Republic of Moldova, strengthening its role not only as a source of entertainment, but also as a space for shaping public opinion on major socio-political events.

According to certain researches conducted by the Independent Journalism Centre (IJC), the network ranks second in terms of recognition among the most popular social networks in the country. [\*The Media Audience Study in the Republic of Moldova\*](#), published by the IJC in June 2025, shows that YouTube is one of the main sources of information for the majority of the population: 85% of respondents say they use the platform constantly, with more than half (52%) accessing it daily. The YouTube audience is predominantly young (18–24 years old), professionally active, with a medium or higher level of education and income above the national average, concentrated in urban areas, especially in the southern and northern regions and Chisinau municipality.

Moreover, [monitoring](#) of 15 YouTube channels during the parliamentary election campaign of September 2025 (29 August – 28 September) showed that the platform is a source of dissemination of disinformation, particularly relevant in the electoral context by amplifying manipulative messages.

Consequently, continued monitoring of the platform outside electoral exercises becomes necessary to observe the extent to which YouTube functions as a space for the accumulation and normalization of manipulative narratives in the long term and whether it is able to shape perceptions and attitudes of the general public before they are amplified in periods of crisis or during the exercise of the voting right. In this context, the comment section is particularly relevant, since observations documented in the previous monitoring show that the messages shared by users on various video platforms are not just simple and spontaneous reactions, but rather active spaces for the production, reiteration and coordination of messages.

## **METHODOLOGY**

During the monitoring conducted throughout March, we analyzed the extent to which narratives about censorship were spread and how it is allegedly imposed by authorities in the Republic of Moldova, including in the context of the country's accession to the European Union. We also examined how these narratives are propagated and amplified in the comment sections of the YouTube platform. For this purpose, we used an AI-assisted technological solution that 'scanned' channels with publicly available content and mapped the narratives, analyzing both their volume and frequency, as well as their amplification in the comments. The platform also identified content that explicitly violates YouTube Community Guidelines and Standards. The cases identified with the help of AI were reviewed by the authors of the report.

The **object of the monitoring** is content in Romanian and Russian, distributed in videos and published by users in the comment section of the YouTube platform. The analysis focuses exclusively on public content insofar as it reflects political and social topics relevant to the information space. As regards the topic of censorship, six narratives were predefined:

- 1. European integration means censorship and total control over information in the Republic of Moldova;**
- 2. Closure of TV channels or websites in the Republic of Moldova is evidence of dictatorship;**
- 3. There is no longer a free press in the Republic of Moldova;**
- 4. Regulation of the online environment and social networks in Moldova is equivalent to censorship;**
- 5. The Government / authorities / state censors the population of Moldova;**
- 6. Any criticism targeting the Government is immediately banned or removed.**

In this context, we refer to **censorship** as *the unjustified distortion of journalistic material or unjustified prohibition of disseminating certain information by media management; any action by public authorities or persons holding public offices that interferes with the editorial activity of the media or their employees or that prevents printing or dissemination of information* ([Law on Freedom of Expression](#)). The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova guarantees the freedom of opinion and expression and expressly provides that ‘public media are not subject to censorship’, while the Law on Freedom of Expression prohibits censorship, interference with the editorial activity of the media (except in cases provided for by law), and creation of public authorities for the prior control of information to be disseminated by the media. According to the same document, ‘the obligation imposed by the court through a final decision to disseminate or not disseminate certain information, as well as the obligation imposed by law to disseminate certain information, does not constitute censorship’. Likewise, censorship entails criminal liability ([Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova](#)).

**Monitoring subject.** The YouTube channels were selected based on a set of cumulative criteria. The list includes popular channels, which are active on socio-political topics, selected based on publicly available, albeit partially incomplete, data provided by digital analytics platforms such as SocialBlade and VidIQ, which were used as a guide to estimate the visibility and activity of the channels. Only those channels that publish regularly updated content and maintain a constant presence on the platform were considered. The initial list was completed by inclusion of official channels of the most popular television stations and news websites, according to the [Media Audience Study](#) published in 2025 by the IJC, as well as channels that could publish problematic

content and channels popular in the information spaces of Gagauzia and the Transnistrian region.

Channel	Source	No. of followers
TCB Tiraspol	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@tsvtiraspol">https://www.youtube.com/@tsvtiraspol</a>	727000
TV8	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@TV8Moldova">https://www.youtube.com/@TV8Moldova</a>	174000
Первый Приднестровский	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@PervyPridnestrovsky">https://www.youtube.com/@PervyPridnestrovsky</a>	165000
ProTV Chişinău	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@protvchisinau5284">https://www.youtube.com/@protvchisinau5284</a>	158000
Jurnal TV	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@jurnaltv">https://www.youtube.com/@jurnaltv</a>	145000
Europa Liberă Moldova	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@europa-libera-moldova">https://www.youtube.com/@europa-libera-moldova</a>	134000
Ziarul de Gardă	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@Ziarul_de_Garda">https://www.youtube.com/@Ziarul_de_Garda</a>	90300
TRM	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@TRMMDChannel">https://www.youtube.com/@TRMMDChannel</a>	76700
Morari Live	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@morarilive">https://www.youtube.com/@morarilive</a>	76000
TV6	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@tv6md">https://www.youtube.com/@tv6md</a>	75500
NewTVmd	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOvSvdpakTDLTsT5E2si-Nw">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOvSvdpakTDLTsT5E2si-Nw</a>	73700
Canal 5	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@Canal5md">https://www.youtube.com/@Canal5md</a>	72300
Nicolae Chicu	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@nicolaechicu">https://www.youtube.com/@nicolaechicu</a>	71500
Newsmaker	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@NewsMakerOriginal">https://www.youtube.com/@NewsMakerOriginal</a>	50800
Nokta	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@noktamd">https://www.youtube.com/@noktamd</a>	44500
Primul în Moldova	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@PrimulInMoldovaTvTranslation">https://www.youtube.com/@PrimulInMoldovaTvTranslation</a>	44300
AVA TV	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@AndreiAndrievski">https://www.youtube.com/@AndreiAndrievski</a>	43300
Internetu' Grăieşte	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/c/InternetuGr%C4%83ie%C8%99te">https://www.youtube.com/c/InternetuGr%C4%83ie%C8%99te</a>	36300
Puterea a 4a	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@puterea_a_patra">https://www.youtube.com/@puterea_a_patra</a>	35800
TVR Moldova	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@tvrmoldova4729">https://www.youtube.com/@tvrmoldova4729</a>	33400
TVC21	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@tvc21channel/featured">https://www.youtube.com/@tvc21channel/featured</a>	29400
Nordnews	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@Nord-News">https://www.youtube.com/@Nord-News</a>	26700

GRT	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@grt_md">https://www.youtube.com/@grt_md</a>	24500
Newsmaker Știri	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@NewsMakerȘtiri">https://www.youtube.com/@NewsMakerȘtiri</a>	23300
Gabriel Calin	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@calinlive">https://www.youtube.com/@calinlive</a>	22000
Gonța media	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@GheorgheGonta001">https://www.youtube.com/@GheorgheGonta001</a>	21500
Realitatea Moldova	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@RealitateaMoldova">https://www.youtube.com/@RealitateaMoldova</a>	20100
<u>Moldova.org</u>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@moldovaorg">https://www.youtube.com/@moldovaorg</a>	18500
Exclusiv TV	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@Exclusiv_tv">https://www.youtube.com/@Exclusiv_tv</a>	15800
Vocea Basarabiei	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@vocea.basarabiei">https://www.youtube.com/@vocea.basarabiei</a>	15300
Agora Moldova	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@AgoraMoldova">https://www.youtube.com/@AgoraMoldova</a>	15400
One TV	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@OneTV_md">https://www.youtube.com/@OneTV_md</a>	14900
RISE Moldova	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@risemoldova9279">https://www.youtube.com/@risemoldova9279</a>	13600
TV Bălți	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@TVBalti">https://www.youtube.com/@TVBalti</a>	13600
Moldova Online	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@moldovaonline1991">https://www.youtube.com/@moldovaonline1991</a>	13300
Tv Nord	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@TVNordMoldova">https://www.youtube.com/@TVNordMoldova</a>	13100
IPN	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@agentiadepresaipn">https://www.youtube.com/@agentiadepresaipn</a>	11800
Бендерское Телевидение	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQu1jJ1cnt9bS2WMs5HUSdw">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQu1jJ1cnt9bS2WMs5HUSdw</a>	10700
Radar Politic	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@RadarPolitic/featured">https://www.youtube.com/@RadarPolitic/featured</a>	10200
Cinema 1	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@CINEMA-e12zb">https://www.youtube.com/@CINEMA-e12zb</a>	10100
TEMA	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@esti_tema">https://www.youtube.com/@esti_tema</a>	9330
N4	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@n4moldova">https://www.youtube.com/@n4moldova</a>	7140
СП   Новости	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@GazetaSP">https://www.youtube.com/@GazetaSP</a>	6700
Unimedia	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@UnimediaVIDEO">https://www.youtube.com/@UnimediaVIDEO</a>	5540
Late Buimistru	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@LATE_BUIMISTRU">https://www.youtube.com/@LATE_BUIMISTRU</a>	4890
Союз Россия-Молдова	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@soyzmдру/featured">https://www.youtube.com/@soyzmдру/featured</a>	4540

GagauzMedia	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@Gagauz_Media">https://www.youtube.com/@Gagauz_Media</a>	4220
Star TV	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@STARTVMOLDOVA">https://www.youtube.com/@STARTVMOLDOVA</a>	3170
1TV Moldova	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@1tvmoldova">https://www.youtube.com/@1tvmoldova</a>	2570
Costa Tatiana	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@COSTA_moldovanca">https://www.youtube.com/@COSTA_moldovanca</a>	2210
24Moldova	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@24moldova">https://www.youtube.com/@24moldova</a>	2090
Global 24	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@Global24MD">https://www.youtube.com/@Global24MD</a>	1980
Главное. Молдова	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@glavmoldova">https://www.youtube.com/@glavmoldova</a>	1800
Moldova Pulse	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@MoldovaPulse">https://www.youtube.com/@MoldovaPulse</a>	1690
Premiera TV Moldova	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@PREMIERATVMOLDOVA">https://www.youtube.com/@PREMIERATVMOLDOVA</a>	708
Telegraph Moldova	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@telegraphmd/videos">https://www.youtube.com/@telegraphmd/videos</a>	646
Kristian Grăiește	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/@Kristiangr%C4%83ie%C8%99te.official/featured">https://www.youtube.com/@Kristiangr%C4%83ie%C8%99te.official/featured</a>	502

The analysis is **exploratory and descriptive in nature** and is aimed at identifying recurring narrative patterns rather than assessing the intentionality of the actors analyzed. This exercise is based exclusively on publicly available data and does not allow for the assessment of the actual intentions of the content creators or the way the audience internalizes the messages. The findings should therefore be interpreted as indications of the informational risks, rather than as definitive attributions of responsibility or intent. The identification of certain narratives within this analysis should not be interpreted as a finding of the commission of disinformation within the meaning of the Code of Audiovisual Media Services, a competence that falls exclusively to the Audiovisual Council.

#### **Monitoring objectives:**

- Identification and assessment of the main narratives disseminated on YouTube on censorship;
- Assessment of the role of comments in reinforcing, diversifying and amplifying narratives;
- Identification of the volume of messages that explicitly violate YouTube Community Guidelines and Standards.

**Monitoring period:** 1 – 3 March 2026

**Monitoring object:** the content from the videos and comment section of 57 YouTube channels

**Monitoring subject:** narratives on censorship

## GENERAL DATA

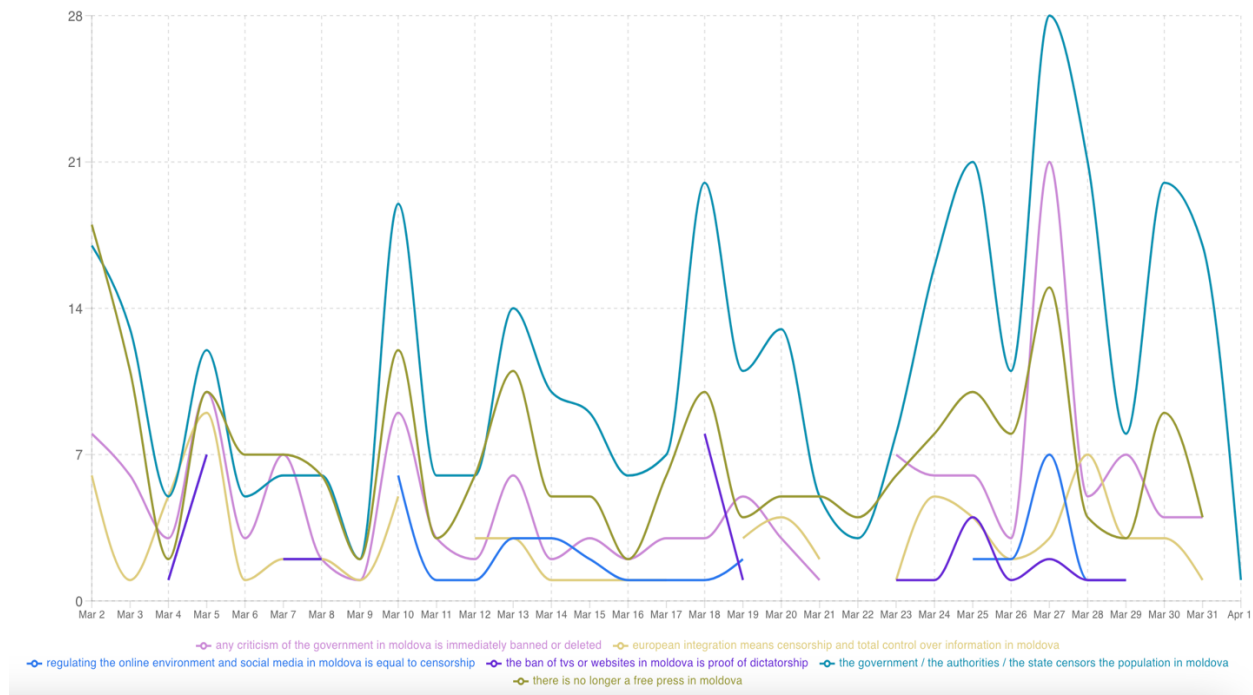
During March, **4,739 videos** with **10,838 comments** were broadcast on the 57 monitored channels, revealing a total of **875 cases** promoting messages relevant to the topic of this report. According to the data, their distribution was as follows:

- *The Government / authorities / state censors the population of Moldova (40%);*
- *there is no longer a free press in the Republic of Moldova (24%);*
- *any criticism targeting the Government is immediately banned or removed (17%);*
- *European integration means censorship and total control over information in the Republic of Moldova (9%);*
- *regulation of the online environment and social networks in Moldova is equivalent to censorship (6%);*
- *closure of TV channels or websites in the Republic of Moldova is evidence of dictatorship (5%).*



- the government / the authorities / the state censors the population in moldova — 346 (40%)
- there is no longer a free press in moldova — 208 (24%)
- any criticism of the government in moldova is immediately banned or deleted — 145 (17%)
- european integration means censorship and total control over information in moldova — 80 (9%)
- regulating the online environment and social media in moldova is equal to censorship — 53 (6%)

The dynamics of message dissemination during the four weeks of the monitoring were uneven. The political figure mentioned most frequently in this context was, as also shown by the data from previous reports, President Maia Sandu.



## IDENTIFIED NARRATIVE CONTEXTS

During March, the phenomenon of censorship was mentioned or discussed on some YouTube channels in different contexts: closure of certain television stations and websites, alleged pressure on journalists and critics of the Government, relations between the central authorities and Gagauzia, policies regarding the Russian language, regulations promoted by public authorities, as well as the process of accession to the European Union. In some cases, the sources described certain actions of the Party of Action and Solidarity and Maia Sandu as censorship, claiming they aim to ‘destroy, to suppress the opposition’ or portrayed censorship as part of a broader process of limiting critical voices, not only in the media. Similarly, exaggerated characterizations were revealed, in which the Republic of Moldova is described as a ‘police state’, a ‘dictatorship’ or a country in which citizens are even restricted even in their right to think differently.

**Censorship in relation to the media and critical voices.** In an interview broadcast by TV6 and Canal 5 channels, lawyer Iurie Margineanu, vice-president of the Party of Development and Consolidation of Moldova, claimed that the authorities use administrative, legal and financial levers to limit the activity of media outlets that are not favourable to those in power. The video is titled ‘How Moldova became a police state’, which sets the interpretative framework of the discussion from the outset. Margineanu states that the authorities allegedly need only controlled media outlets: ‘They only need controlled media. Those that remained and do not fall within the scope of state control are marginalized by all possible means and with all their effort; they are not given funding, they are obstructed in every possible way’. He also added that the criticism

from media institutions covers the general population: ‘They filter even any simple messages on Facebook considering them violations of the law and moral and ethical norms by citizens’; ‘For the media outlets that are out of their control and criticize the Government – they create legislation as if they were turning into a porcupine, into a tank against their own citizens’. He concludes that this would amount to ‘pure tyranny over its own people’. Such statements or similar opinions shared by Margineanu were repeatedly broadcast in both full news bulletins and separate news segments on YouTube, thereby contributing to the amplification of the message.

Additionally, the message about the censorship of the critical press is promoted simultaneously with opinions regarding the funding of media institutions perceived as being close to the Government. For example, Margineanu states that ‘the financing of the pocket media, supposedly free and independent, has been excessive’. He also claims that this involves ‘millions per year for channels that reflect only the position of the Parliament and the Government, transmitting all the narratives of the ruling party’. Similar ideas appear in a dialogue with Igor Caldare, presented as a political scientist and deputy editor of the Academy of Geopolitical Problems. He described the representatives of power as ‘lackeys’ of external ‘masters’: ‘Lackeys must say what their masters order them to say.’ On TVC21, socialist Igor Dodon also spoke about European funding for civil society, NGOs and the media, portraying them as mechanisms for influence over public opinion: ‘Brussels gives 100–200 million Euros to support civil society, that is, to ‘whitewash’ our and your brains.’

In several interventions, attempts are made to promote the idea that citizens are afraid to speak publicly because of possible sanctions, fines or pressure. On TV6 and Canal 5, Tatiana Costache, presented as an activist of the Moldova Mare party, said: ‘We believe that censorship and pressure on citizens have already reached such a level that soon not only will we not be allowed to express our thoughts and opinions, but we will not even be allowed to think.’ She added that ‘any opinion is qualified as false from the very beginning’ and that ‘the population is instilled with the fear of sharing their opinions.’

This phrasing also appears in the interventions by Natalia Morari and Gheorghe Gonta on the Mlive channel. In one program, Gheorghe Gonta started from examples of acquaintances who, according to him, had allegedly been fined for posting ‘something negative’ on the Facebook page of ‘a female or male MP’ (without specifying what was written and to whom). From this, he concluded that ‘they want to shut up as many people as possible.’ Even if it were an individual case, it is linked to a broader conclusion about the restriction of the freedom of expression in society. Natalia Morari, in a discussion with H. D. Hartmann, presented as a political scientist from Romania, claims that ‘we have reached a situation where you are no longer allowed to think as you want; you simply cannot, because either there is the option dictated by the party, or there are no other options’. ‘This is Soviet and Nazi dictatorship’, Hartmann replied.

In a TVC21 program, MP Gaik Vartanean, from the Alternativa faction, and MP Constantin Cuiumju, from the Our Party faction, placed the issue of freedom of expression in a broader context, related to Western support for the current Government. They stated that ‘we live in a country where, unfortunately, under the protection of certain Western partners and with their strategic silence, freedom of expression is significantly decreasing year by year’. The intention of the authorities to limit the opposition's ability to express criticism in the public space was also invoked as an argument.

**Closure of TV channels and websites.** On N4, Igor Dodon, leader of the Party of Socialists, claimed that the war in Ukraine had been used by Maia Sandu and the Government as a justification for restructuring the information space: ‘The war has become a lifeline for Maia Sandu. (...) Because of the war, they cleaned up the information field. They changed the laws. Because of the war, they began to shut down the opposition, saying that this was a Russian threat’. On her channel, Natalia Morari stated about Maia Sandu that ‘she closed down television stations, websites, silenced critical voices, people began to be afraid to openly share their views’ and that ‘it became dangerous to speak openly’. Morari placed these accusations in a broader framework, claiming that ‘in this [European] value space, in 2024-2025, television stations are being closed, inconvenient journalists are being silenced, ‘ministries of truth’ are being introduced in every country’.

The narrative also appears in the context of the relations between Gagauzia and the central authorities in Chisinau. In a news bulletin of TV6/Canal 5, during a vox populi segment, a citizen said: ‘We have long ceased to be a democracy, but a dictatorship, and the actions of the authorities only confirm this every day. There is no television, no channels – everything is closed, there is absolutely nothing’.

**Censorship in the context of regulations.** A distinct context appears in Natalia Morari’s statements regarding journalists’ access to state institutions. She claimed that, in the Republic of Moldova, ‘a new regulation on accreditation in public institutions has been introduced and is strictly monitored,’ according to her, ‘by the Press Council and the Independent Press Association.’ Morari argued that only those who are signatories to the Code of Ethics would be granted accreditation. On the other hand, Igor Dodon described possible amendments to a regulation of the Parliament as ‘total censorship’, claiming that they would limit the rights of the opposition though ‘stricter conditions, so that the opposition would have absolutely no possibility to express itself.’

**Censorship and the European Union.** In a TV6/Canal 5 news bulletin, an external news item about the European Commission’s strategy on preventing terrorism was interpreted as a potential risk for critical or traditional opinions. More specifically, the topic refers to the EU's

development of a new counterterrorism strategy, motivated by the fact that, in recent years, the nature of these threats (terrorism and violent extremism) has been constantly changing, namely a comprehensive set of measures was developed to protect EU countries from terrorist threats, extremism, cyber attacks and attacks against critical infrastructure. The material explains that the document expands the list of drivers of extremism and could equate critical or traditional opinions with radicalization. The moderator used an insinuating question: 'Will Eurosceptics and those who oppose LGBT be labelled as terrorists?' The material continued with the interpretation that 'under the cover of fighting extremism, the European Commission also intends to fight beliefs and criticism.' The link to the Republic of Moldova was presented explicitly: 'For the Republic of Moldova, with its current leadership ready to accept and implement any rules from Brussels, this document brings additional risks', the authorities could, 'covering themselves with the new provisions of the EU and the firm policy of accession to the EU, enshrined in the Constitution', label as extremists or terrorists those who oppose European integration or certain values considered foreign to the 'Moldovan mentality'. It was further claimed that authorities 'could also enhance the fight against the Orthodox Church of Moldova, up to the point of banning its activity, as happened in neighbouring Ukraine'.

In another TV6/Channel 5 material titled 'After 4 years: Moldova's far from good life after applying for EU accession', the European integration process was presented together with accusations of media closures and pressure on the opposition. The article states that 'under the slogan of saving Moldovan democracy from the Russian threat, 16 television stations and almost 50 websites were closed in the country'. It also claims that 'opposition parties are under pressure', using generalization as a method of manipulation: 'according to many experts, Moldova has turned into a true dictatorship. This is even confirmed by some international rankings on freedom of expression and freedom of the press'.

This association also appears on the Kristian Graieste channel, where the celebration of four years since obtaining the EU candidate status is presented in a negative light: 'Just a few days ago, it was exactly four years since Moldova managed to become a candidate country for integration into the Greater European Community. Four years of lies, manipulation, propaganda, censorship, repression against the elderly, but what is the use?..'

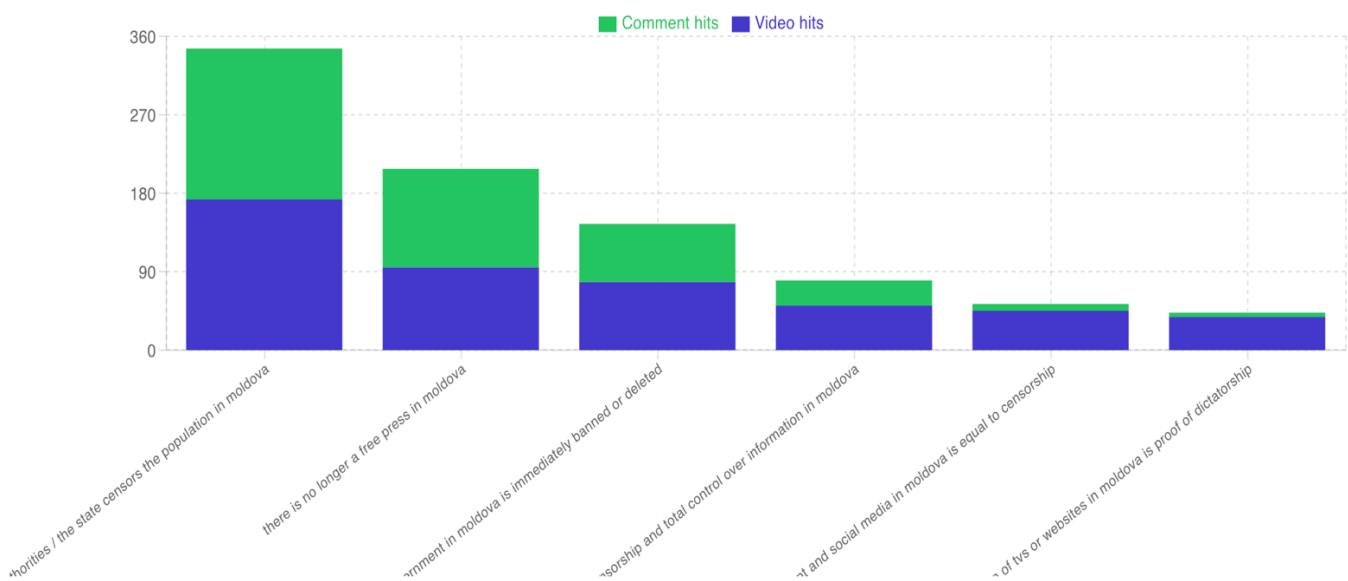
Natalia Morari also commented on the creation in February of the European Centre for Democratic Resilience, intended to combat disinformation and countering foreign information interference: 'In fact, this will be a censorship centre. It will be a censorship centre that will decide what is fake and what is not, what is disinformation and what is not.'

**Censorship in relation to the Russian language.** On the TV channel TCB from the Transnistrian region, a case was identified in which a teacher is quoted as saying: 'In Moldova,

Russians are being pushed out of the public space and Russian-language media are being closed.’ This suggests, in a biased manner, an alleged marginalization of an identity group.

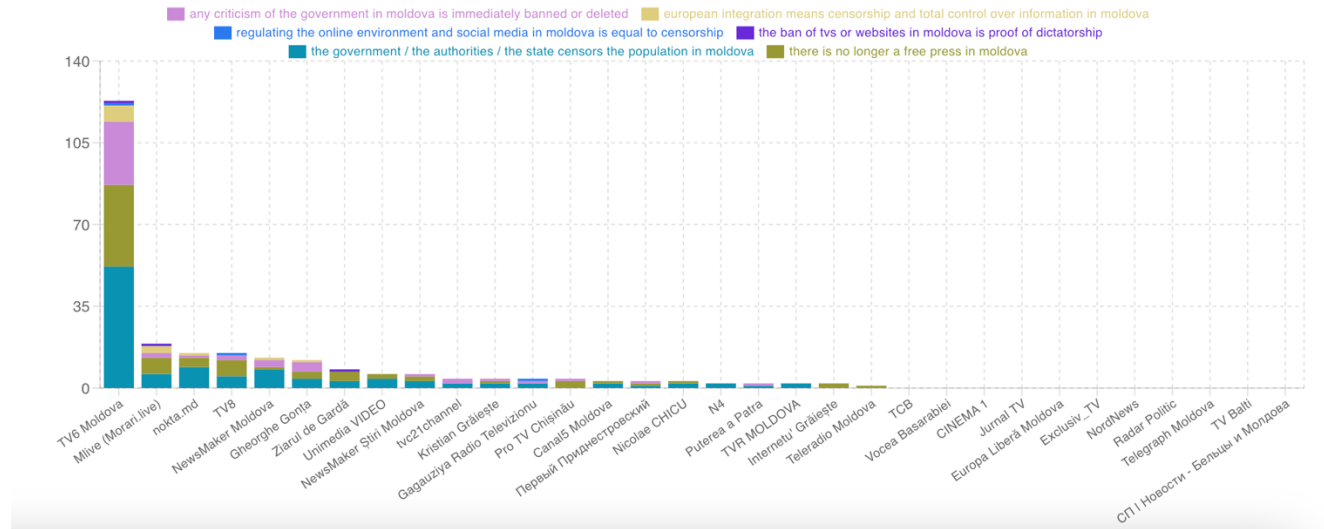
## DOMINANT NARRATIVES IN THE COMMENTS

**272 of the comments** shared during the monitoring period propagated at least one of the predefined narratives within this monitoring, representing 3% of the total number of comments posted during the month. The data show that the trend observed in previous monitoring periods is maintained: on YouTube, comments play an important role in amplifying and reinforcing certain views or opinions. **117 of the total comments analyzed included content that violates the platform's policies** (mainly harassment and intimidation or offensive and abusive content) being reportable according to YouTube standards and subject to reporting/moderation.



### *Video-comment ratio in the dissemination of narratives*

Most problematic messages were identified in comments left by users on materials published on the **TV6** channel (123 cases). Significantly smaller number of similar messages were also distributed under the videos of other channels.



Distribution of narratives identified in the comment sections of the analyzed channels

In the analyzed comments, the Government is described in radicalized terms as ‘dictatorship’, ‘banditry’ or ‘power controlled from abroad’, while the press and non-governmental organizations are portrayed as being bought, politically subordinated, and used for pro-government propaganda. Here too, the idea is implied that inconvenient voices in society would be silenced through fines, criminal cases or imprisonment, and that the Republic of Moldova is a state where pluralism of opinions is no longer tolerated. The comments also included accusations regarding external control of the country, corruption of European institutions, alleged intense promotion of Russophobia, and discrimination against opinions considered pro-Russian. All of these may contribute to shaping an image in which, in the Republic of Moldova, censorship is presented as a practice of governance.

<p>НПО кормятся из грантов (якобы помощь Молдове) , из них же дают взятки еврочиновникам , тусовка Санду жирует на всю катушку , "свободную" прессу оплачивают , чтобы повторяли с утра до ночи русофобский бред и нагло ввали про супер "достижения" королевы Молдовы. Такой вот театр аб</p>	<p>Вот народ кого вы выбрали тварях которые не дают права открывать рот и только знают судиться с народом. Такого в мире не существует только Санду и её власть избрели как обработать народ 😂</p>
<p>Долгое время в Молдове промывали мозги народу точно так, как делал и делает наркоман Зеленский и до чего доскакались? Дружить надо с Россией!!!!</p>	<p>сейчас диктатура ПАСюков , что хотят то и творят , не было такого беззакония раньше никогда ! вертят законами как хотят , а кто против того в тюрьму или штраф не подъемный и пофиг им на всех . любой ихний бред для всех первичен</p>
<p>Vrei sa spui ca in Moldova nui agresiune, daca au ajuns sa amendeze cetatenii pentru ca spun parerea lor. Si nu au dreptul de a critica guvernarea. Carei democratia Europeana sau democratia este paradele LGBT si atit.</p>	<p>А в Молдове тоже самое происходит. Даже хуже. Несогласных в тюрьмы. Как башкана Е.Гуцул. Значит быть пророссийскими в Молдове нельзя, а прорумынскими, пробрюссельскими - можно? В одном случае тюрьма, в другом - ничего.</p>
<p>Вы действительно бандитский канал который вещает клевету и неправду. Про кремлёвские агенты в Молдове пятая колонна. Выйди действительно инвалида потому что не понимаете что делаете и на кого работаете</p>	<p>Значит посылки запретят. Конечно же телеграмм это только начало. Никакой связи с зарубежьем в ближайшем будущем не будет. Демократия теперь только с дубинкой и никакого плюрализма мнений, иначе лишение свободы повсеместно.</p>

Selection of comments preserved in their original form

According to its [community rules](#), YouTube prohibits promotion of pornography, incitement to violence, harassment or hate speech, etc. on its platform. Comments that violate these provisions are to be reported through a combination of automated detection and manual reporting. At the same time, the [Code of Ethics of Journalists of Moldova](#) stipulates that ‘media institutions, in administering websites, as well as pages/accounts on social networks, do not allow and do not accept from the public, in reactions (comments), derogations from legal and ethical norms. To this end, media institutions properly moderate reactions/comments to media products’.

## CONCLUSIONS

The monitoring carried out during March shows that, on some YouTube channels, the topic of censorship is discussed not in the narrow sense of the term, but as a broad framework of interpretation – sometimes manipulative – for several political and social issues. The most visible narrative identified is that the Government, authorities or the state are extensively censoring the population of the Republic of Moldova, followed by the idea that there is no longer a free press in the country. In some cases, exaggerated formulations are used in which the Republic of Moldova is described as a ‘police state’, a ‘dictatorship’ or a country in which citizens would even have the right to think differently limited.

Another trend is the association of censorship with the European path of the Republic of Moldova, which risks fuelling the population’s distrust of European institutions.

On the other hand, user comments confirm that the section below videos does not function only as a space for reaction, but also as a mechanism for amplifying certain views and opinions. Although the comments propagating messages regarding censorship represent a relatively small proportion of the total, they can be considered as a factor of radicalization: the Government is described as a ‘dictatorship’, the media and NGOs are portrayed as being bought, and any critical voice would, according to these messages, be sanctioned with fines, criminal cases or imprisonment. All of this can contribute to shaping an image in which, in the Republic of Moldova, censorship has become a practice of the Government.

The presence of comments that violate YouTube policies also suggests a moderation problem: messages about censorship are sometimes accompanied by abusive language, harassment or intimidation, which risks undermining a healthy public debate of opinions.

*The monitoring was made possible with the support of the Society 22 organization's [disint.ai](#) platform, by accessing publicly available YouTube data: channels, videos, and comments. The processing, analysis and interpretation of these data were carried out entirely by [disint.ai](#) and the Independent Journalism Centre and do not reflect the position of YouTube.*