



mass - media

June 2016



in Moldova

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Press Freedom Days – Overview of Main Events

Media organizations honored the World Press Freedom Day, marked every year on May 3. The general theme this year was focused on access to information, with an emphasis on freedom of information, protection of press freedom from censorship, and ensuring the safety of journalists. In Moldova, such events were held during the entire month. Below, we present a brief overview of the most important activities.

Launch of the Memorandum on Press Freedom in May 3, 2015 – May 3, 2016

The traditional Memorandum on Press Freedom found that between May 3, 2015 and May 3, 2016 the media in Moldova kept the status of partly free under the Freedom House Report, while in the ranking compiled by Reporters Without Borders our country lost four positions from the previous year, taking no. 76. Some reasons of this decline were mentioned by the leaders of the main media organizations at the conference launching the Memorandum. Nadine Gogu, Executive Director of the Independent Journalism Center (IJC), highlighted such issues as defects in the legal framework, the phenomenon of concentration, attempts to censor the Internet, unprotected information space, critical situation in broadcasting in the absence of a Broadcasting Code corresponding to European standards, increasingly frequent cases of verbal and physical aggression against journalists, etc. Petru Macovei, Director of the Association of Independent Press, found that in Moldova access to information becomes increasingly problematic. Very high fees for obtaining information and unjustified restrictions imposed by the Center for Protection of Personal Data on access to the data about the names of donors of certain companies affected journalists, especially investigative journalists. Ion Bunduchi, Executive Director of the Association of Electronic Press, drew attention to the fact that there has recently been an imitation of reforms by authorities. Another problem during the reporting period was related to the professional ethics of journalists: some of them choose to play the politicians' game, following their employers' orders, although their mission is to objectively inform citizens.



The signatories of the Memorandum – Independent Journalism Center, Association of Independent Press, Association of Electronic Press, Committee for Press Freedom, Union of Moldovan Journalists, Acces-Info Center, Association of Independent TV Journalists, Center of Journalistic Investigations, Center of Young Journalist of Moldova – urged state authorities to treat the media as a social institution able to contribute to the democratization of the country and to fulfill commitments under the Association Agreement between Moldova and the European Union and the Government's activity program for 2015-2018 regarding the media.

Action of Solidarity

The same day, in front of the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Chisinau, some representatives of non-governmental organizations gathered to ask for the release of Azerbaijani journalist Khadija Izmaylova, sentenced last year to 7 years in prison after an unfair trial. Protesters also expressed their solidarity with the team of the Moldova Center of Journalistic Investigations (CIJM), who were ordered in an abusive way by a representative of the Azerbaijani diplomatic mission to take off the balcony of the building the poster calling for freedom for Khadija. Flashmob participants chanted "Freedom to Khadija!", "Hands off the CIJM!", "Freedom to the Media!"

Premiere of the „Media Azi” Broadcast

Also on May 3, the Independent Journalism Center launched its first “Media Azi” broadcast about and for journalists. It aims to draw attention to the main problems currently faced by journalists in local media – division by political criteria, concentration in broadcasting, interference of politicians-owners with their media outlets’ editorial policies, and other issues affecting the work of the media in Moldova. In the first broadcast, Nadine Gogu, Executive Director of the IJC, spoke with her guests – Alina Radu, Director of the investigative journalistic publication “Ziarul de Garda,” and Stefan Grigorita, journalist, reporter for Agora.md – about how free the media in Moldova is after nearly a quarter of a century of independence.



The Board of Shame – „Enemies of the Press”

For the second consecutive year, the Independent Journalism Center placed in front of the parliament building the Board of Shame “Enemies of the Press.” The event took place on May 11. This time, the Board of Shame included the Liberal Party leader

and MP Mihai Ghimpu; Orhei town Mayor Ilan Shor; several representatives of the Democratic Party; Liberal Democratic Party leader Vlad Filat; Democratic Party leader Marian Lupu; a group of MPs from the Party of Socialists; Balti city Mayor Renato Usatii; the Ministry of Internal Affairs. All of those persons attempted at freedom of expression in the period between May 3, 2015 and May 3, 2016, either through improper statements and actions or legislative initiatives that resulted in restriction of the rights of journalists in Moldova.

Media Solidarity March

Over one hundred journalists from various national and local media outlets participated in the Media Solidarity March organized by the Independent Journalism Center. Journalists gathered in the morning in front of the Press House, where they were given ribbons and T-shirts with the image of a target and the message that the media should not be the target of politicians. Then, participants marched in front of the government building, along Stefan cel Mare Boulevard, to their final destination – the parliament building. Here, they chanted slogans, such as “Freedom to the press!”, “Down with censorship!”, “Down with manipulation!”, “Stop concentration!”, etc. IJC Executive Director Nadine Gogu told the media that the purpose of the action was to unite the representatives of the media community in order to request, in one voice, solution to the problems that had been found in recent years. “We appeal to MPs, of course, because they are the ones who can influence, change things for the better. If they want it, they can, including by improving the legal framework and by ensuring implementation of the laws that are adopted, do so that journalists no longer complain about problems related to access to information or concentration,” Nadine Gogu said.

Press Deoligarchisation in the Care of the Holy Fire

On the 3rd of May 2016, there were conducted worldwide the activities dedicated to the World Press Freedom Day. Thus, the countries were divided into two types: those ones, where the Governments openly spoke about significance of the fourth estate, met and carried on discussions with the reporters and media entities; and those ones, where the Governments pretended that the Press Freedom was beneath contempt.

Presidential Dinner with the Reporters

On the 2nd of May, while the Chisinau Government delegation led by the executive coordinator of the Council of Governing Coalition Vlad Plahotniuc was making their steps on the American lands, the US President Barack Obama was making a speech on press freedom in the front of hundreds of reporters at the Reporters' Dinner at the White House. This is a tradition for an American President to meet the journalists and to speak to them, to joke, to drop phrases and to draw conclusions.

I tried to imagine such a spree in Chisinau. I felt some kind of easiness and it is good that we do not have something like this. Since a dinner with the reporters, who were not given even an interview throughout the validity of the mandate, would be very choking. Nevertheless, I opened the web-page of the Chisinau Presidency. The last heading was 'The President Nicolae Timofti taking part in the ceremony of Descent of the Holy Fire meeting'. Probably, this indeed would be right for a President of a secular state to screen for several days behind the Holy Fire ceremony, and for the issues related to press freedom to be ignored in a captured state.

I have been opening the web-page of the Chisinau Government for 3 days, looking for appearance of a heading related to importance of the press freedom. The last communique of the secular Chisinau Government was dated the 1st of May 2016 and was similar to that one of the Presidency. The heading '[Pavel Filip taking part in the Resurrection Mess](#)' was followed by the resume 'The Prime-Minister Pavel Filip together with the President Nicolae Timofti and Parliament Chairman Andrian Candu taking part on the Saturday evening in the Descent of the Holy Fire'.

No press communique on the printed media situation was placed on the web-page of the Parliament on the 3rd of May too. This is despite the fact that, starting with this year, the legislative body has received several drafts of laws and, as well, issues not included in the laws but related to printed media access to the Parliament: Law on Postal Services, Television and Radio Code, access to informa-

tion, Internet regulation, drone issues, Russian propaganda etc.

I also visited the web-page of the executive coordinator of the Council of the Governing Coalition. The top position on this page is immovably held by the last article placed as early as in November 2014 and headed as '[Moldova as a Significant Point on Washington-Brussels-Moscow Axis](#)'. This is an article placed within the period of great banking frauds in Moldova and it does not relate to the printed media.

Maybe, this 'executive coordinator of the Council of the Governing Coalition' must not even dwell on press freedom, except for responding to the Reminder issued on the 3rd of May by the Centre for Independent Journalism within the framework of a public event. This Reminder recalls that one of the major problems of Moldavian press is its concentration in the political hanads. It seems that another problem, even more severe, results from this one: Russian propaganda seizing more and more greedily the Moldavian public space.

Why does an independent state allow the foreign printed media issued in Moldova to belong preponderantly to the sole country? Why do we have so many tens of non-stop TV channels from the Russian Federation, both on-air broadcasting and cablecasting ones? According to the Organisation 'Reporters without Borders' assessing the printed media situation worldwide for tens of years, the 2016 Russian Federation is a country with the most dangerous conditions for the journalists. Why do we allow the printed media of a country blamed by the whole world for mass propaganda to prevail in the TV, radio and printed media space in Moldova? Why does the Republic of Moldova allow to import so many media products from the Russian Federation and to intoxicate all the population with the propaganda? Evidently, the answer is simple: this is because the businessman affiliated to those ones, who have power, holds a licence for rebroadcasting of several Russian channels, including the greatest channel of the Moscow Government.

I believe that the Chisinau Government should assess the printed media standing for corruption combating and for elucidation of the cases of human rights violation. I believe that its name shall be known and shall be pronounced. Since a country governed by a 'pro-European' coalition does not mean the sole Government and the sole power merged with the political party's press through a 'genetic mutation'. The 'state' means both the institutions separated from the political powers and printed media institutions critically analysing the activities of all the Governments.

Alina RADU

Back to the Future or Everybody is Equal in Moldova, but Some Are More Equal Than Others

On February 26, the Parliament voted, in just a few minutes, in the first and second reading, the draft Law on amending and complementing the Audiovisual Code, which implies the reduction of the number of licenses that every media owner can hold from 5 to 2. The draft that had been developed by a group of MPs from the Socialist Party of the Republic of Moldova, had been registered just 9 days before that and the speed at which it was included in the agenda was unprecedented. Officially, the very quick adoption of this draft is the response to a recommendation of the EU Council to improve the domestic legislation of the Republic of Moldova with a view to limit the concentration of media ownership and to ensure the media pluralism. Neither the lack of the Government's endorsement nor the fact that the liberal-democratic MPs, who were ready to vote for the draft in the first reading and had a number of amendments for the second reading, stopped the MPs from the no-name majority alliance and the socialist ones to adopt it in a rush voting for it in both readings.

Amendments That Do Not Change Anything

In fact, by making this amendment they reinforced the legal provisions in force before 2009. At that time, an amendment to the Audiovisual Code increased the maximum number of licenses held by one person from 2 to 5. Therefore, through the positive vote for the socialists' draft, the governance recognizes that 7 years ago it purposefully and knowingly created prerequisites for the concentration of the media ownership and for the limitation of the media pluralism. It is praiseworthy that the MPs admitted their error and wanted to correct it. However, their good intentions and the rush with which the amendments were voted in two readings are just dust in the eyes. First of all, the new legal provisions will only be enforced after the end of the validity term of the current broadcasting licenses that have been awarded for 7 years – i.e. until 2021-2022. Second, the Parliament Committee for Culture, Education, Research, Youth, Sports and Media has been working on the new draft of the Audiovisual Code since December last year, which is being publicly consulted now. The amendments suggested by the socialists that will anyway start to have an effect only in 6-7 years, could have been introduced without the demonstrative rush, as provisions in the text of the new law. The statements of one of the draft authors, Adrian Lebedinschi, make him seem naïve or rather make us understand

that he considers us naïve. “The owner who holds more than 2 licenses will decide which of these to give up when the first license expires” – the MP said when he was asked to explain the mechanism of enforcing the passed amendments. Have there been many cases in the history of the Republic of Moldova when the license holders gave them up voluntarily? Even with the actual permissive law, we see how methods of avoiding the restrictions are used by registering the licenses that exceed the legal number on the name of close individuals. It is not difficult for us to foresee that this tradition will be continued after the entry into effect of the new provisions. The new provisions of the Audiovisual Code are not able to eliminate the monopoly in this field in the same way as the Law on the transparency of media ownership has not brought any visible change on the Moldovan electronic press market.

... The Moldovan citizens know very well the state of things, but don't have the tools to change anything in a captive state. However, the foreign partners are not as naïve as in the past and the “success story” is pretty much over. It is unlikely that the observers of the EU Council will consider that their recommendations have been taken into account with a simple comeback to a legal provision before 2009, which will only be applicable in 2021 and for which the methods of avoidance have already been demonstrated.

The system will never restructure voluntarily and on its own initiative. Both internal and external constraints and ongoing monitoring of the deviations from democratic rules, as well as sanctions for such deviations are required. However, we have to recognize again that in Moldova it's like in the old joke “everybody is equal, but some are more equal than others”.

Dorin SCOBIOALA

The Regulation of the Internet in the Republic of Moldova: Pros and Cons

The regulation of the Internet is a long time problem. Even if there are pros and cons regarding the regulation of the Internet, and the still debates continue, meanwhile, many countries, including European ones, regulated it somehow. Basically, Moldova is one of the few countries where the Internet is deemed unregulated.

Two drafts of law occurred in 2013 and rose out warm discussions and dissatisfaction. Due to the pressure of the civil society, these have been withdrawn from the agenda of the Government, but one of them reappeared in 2015, in the same form, within the agenda of public consultations of the Government. Probably, the deep crisis the Government was found in during all the period of 2015 left this project aside, but not for long: on March 30, 2016, the Government of the Republic of Moldova returned to this problem and approved the Decision on approval of the draft law regarding the alteration and completion of some legislative acts. This draft law was surnamed by the public the “Big Brother” Law and, the same as in the previous cases, rose out a negative reaction from the part of the civil society. The first who reacted, requiring the exclusion from the project of a set of articles, were a range of media institutions. Then a bigger group of NGOs followed, then signatories of a public appeal that contains a detailed analysis of the risks this project hides behind it. The Ombudsman also shares the concerns of the civil society regarding the risks that the adaptation in the current version of the draft law presents for the observance of the right to privacy and freedom of expression. The Ombudsman supports the intention of the president of the Parliament to launch public debates related to the above-mentioned draft law and the idea promoted by NGOs on rendering the draft law to the Venice Commission to verify the compliance with the European standards.¹ The head of the EU Delegation in Chisinau, Pirkka Tapiola, expressed the same concerns, talking within a conference dedicated to the freedoms of Internet users: „We understand the need of improving the investigation procedures of cybercrimes, but the new regulations must be carefully drafted so that it could not affect the fundamental rights to privacy and freedom of expression.”^[1]

The most important question that remains after launching this range of draft laws is do the government wants either **to implement European standards, or to introduce manipulation/censorship tools, using as pretence the fact that it adapts the legislation to European standards?**

[1] Pirkka Tapiola criticism of the „Big Brother” draft law: <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27704534.html>

Local Paradoxes

The process of initiation of Internet regulation has its own paradoxes in Moldova. For instance, the Law no. 30 of March 07, 2013 on child protection from the negative impact of information contains in Article 5 para (8) such a provision: „*The persons who provide access services to public computerised networks (Internet) shall ensure the implementation and smooth running of filtering means of the Internet information with negative impact on children, means approved by the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications. Upon the proposal of the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications, the Government approved the condition of use of compulsory means of filtering in places of access to public computerised networks (Internet).*”

A few months ago, I asked this Ministry by a request of access to information, if these means of filtering the Internet information with a negative impact on children have been approved by MITC and if they are not yet approved, is there any initiative in this regard to a draft level. I was given an answer by which the Ministry said, indirectly, that it does not even think to apply this provision and that, „...the draft law on its modification has been drafted. The draft law provides the exposure in a new version of the paragraph (8) from the Article 5 of the law mentioned above, in order to assign the service of filtering the digital content from the Internet with negative impact on children to providers of networks and /or electronic communications services under a contract, upon the request of users. The project was remitted to the Ministry of Culture by the letter of MITC no. 01/1317 of August 25, 2014, that follows to introduce it into the draft law for the alteration and completion of the Law no. 30 of March 07, 2013 on child protection from the negative impact of information”.

This answer shows that the persons who drafted and adopted this law did not think about its applicability level (not only related to the above-cited article), given the fact that above all harmful information that can occur on the Internet, the freedom of expression / the information is a value that must be defended, provided that this is maintained in a legal framework. In addition, the boundary between the allowed expression and the harmful one is not so easy to establish by means of filtering and MITC is not able to succeed in doing this.

Olivia PIRTAC

What Rules Do the Moldavian Public Officers Break when Refusing to Take Part in TV-Programmes?

The mass media's freedom of expression presupposes, as well, the freedom to search for, to obtain and to communicate the facts and ideas. Not only the printed media has the task to communicate the information of public interest, but the wide public is entitled to receive such information too (article 6 of the Law on Freedom of Expression). The freedom of reception of the information from the printed media allows the wide public to perceive an adequate image and to form a critical opinion on the society they live in and on the authorities they are governed by. But the journalist's freedom to receive official authentic information determines, to an essential extent, the mass-media's capacity to exercise its duty of the 'watchdog' of the democracy.

Real and quick access of the people and press to the information of public interest may also be realised by the information providers in an oral way, for instance, through participation in TV programmes, interactive talk-shows, round tables, etc. In other words, the public authorities in a democratic society govern the state affairs in the name of the people and the information held by such authorities belongs to the wide public.

In these latter days, we notice that boycott or permanent refusal to take part in certain TV programmes analysing the main events and problems of the Moldavian society has become a regularity for the public officers serving the people. 'Thank you for your invitation to take part in the programme 'X'. Regretfully, I will not be able to accept your invitation since I will be engaged in a range of actions that have already been scheduled for that day' – this is a classical answer thereto. Thus, a citizen being also a final consumer of the public services and affairs, and having the right to be truly and timely informed about the issues of increased interest loses the relations based on trust and respect towards the official persons-exponents of a politic or public interest.

The laws on the freedom of information shall be governed by the principle of maximum disclosure. When analysing the available regulatory framework, we do state the absence of mandatory provisions for the 'state representatives' to take part in the TV programmes, to give interviews in the newspapers and to participate in round tables and in other events of increased public interest. For instance, the deputies as members of permanent commissions, parliamentary fractions and, as the case may be, as independent deputies may carry on various activities aimed to mediatisation of their actions in the Parliament and arranged

with the help of the Media Relations Department of the Executive Office of the Parliament. The main means of communication with the media representatives are press conferences and press communiqués. The official communiqués on Parliament assemblies are made public only through the Media Relations Department (paragraph (2) of article 99 of the Parliament's Regulations).

As for the public officers, according to the duties vested on them and in conformity with the laws on access to information, they shall be bound to ensure active, true and timely informing of the citizens about the issues of public interest, as well as to ensure free access to information (paragraph (1) of article of the Code of Public Officer's Conduct). Hearing of the information that may be rendered orally is another way of access to official information (article 13 of the Law on Access to Information).

Nevertheless, in the majority of cases, the public officers redirect the invitations to participation in different programmes, to the Media Service as to an entity vested with the exclusive duties to communicate with the media. Participation of the public officers in TV programmes would diversify the options of access to information of public interest. In other words, the free information flow is the main principle of the democracy.

It is evident that (non)participation of a deputy in interactive TV talk-shows means, as a rule, (un)willingness of the people's nominee. Some TV presenters conclude that the reasons for (un)willingness to accept the invitations to TV debates would be 'awkward' questions put. Thus, the duty to accept the invitation to take part in TV, to give interviews to the newspapers or to take part in direct debates with the journalists is not foreseen by the available regulatory framework. As a consequence, we can rather speak about a moral and/or political duty of public officers, which they shall take into account, since, otherwise, denial thereof may encourage the bureaucratic behaviour, abuses and corruption at public institutions. Under such circumstances, the mass-media's task to notify the wide society about the information of public interest cannot be fulfilled in an efficient way and the journalists are 'forced' to gather and distribute the third-hand information.

Tatiana PUIU

How We Protect Ourselves in The Informational Space?

During a press conference, British researcher Anne Applebaum stated that Russia „is already inside Europe”, this being in great part thanks to the media network that it had managed to build in the past few years. According to some data, countries in the ex-soviet space are the most exposed to Russian propaganda. For instance, Pervii Kanal is the television with the widest audience in 9 of the 15 ex-soviet countries, the Republic of Moldova being among the nine countries.

What can we do in order to diminish the harmful effects of this propaganda? The „Bringing Plurality & Balance to Russian Language Media” report, written with support from the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) organization, proposes alternatives to the propagandistic actions of the Kremlin mass-media. The purpose was to present practical solutions for the support and consolidation of the independent Russian language media in Eastern Partnership countries. The paper mentions that the language (Russian in this case) should not be an element that would divide societies or people. Russian speakers must have an access to a quality and correct media content.

How Do We Diminish the Propaganda from the Russian Media?

On a short term, however, each country that is dependent on the Kremlin’s informational and media space must create its own protection mechanisms and instruments. In the case of the Republic of Moldova, these would be:

- **Creating qualitative media content in Russian.** First of all, the local media space needs an alternative to the media content which is retransmitted by Russian television and radio stations on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. There are currently too few quality Russian language media institutions that would offer objective, equidistant and correct content in Russian (Newsmaker.md; TV7; Ziarul de Garda;)
- **Functional factors/institutions/mechanisms for the regulation of media.** Second of all, the (in) existence of a media institution that would coordinate and, why not, filter the content which is rebroadcasted by media institutions in Moscow. The Coordinative Council of the Audiovisual remains, for the time being, an institution which is unable

to propose and develop a clear (correct and transparent) instrument for the regulation of the propagandistic content of the Kremlin mass-media;

- **The low media culture of society.** Third, (all!) media organizations must develop training programs as well as information and awareness raising campaigns regarding the eradication of the society’s media culture (an example in this case is the media campaign against false information, organized by the CIJ).

„Censorship” or Right to Information?

The propaganda of the Kremlin mass-media imposes a dilemma on ex-soviet countries. On the one hand, there is the right to information of the access to information, which is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution of the country. On the other hand we have what experts call the protection of the informational space. Here, we have two scenarios.

The first of them would impose an absolute permissiveness regarding the access and accessing of any type of media channel. This scenario may be applied only when the degree of a society’s media culture is very high and every individual can differentiate between correct and denatured information. Unfortunately, for the moment, in the Republic of Moldova we cannot claim to have such a situation. Our country cannot compare itself at this chapter with states like Great Britain, Norway, Finland, Sweden or Canada, where media education is a compulsory discipline in the school curriculum.

The second scenario would impose the protection of the informational space of the country through the monitoring and filtering of the control over information coming from the outside (yet at the same time without neglecting the one from the interior). This requires the functionality of a structure that would regulate the informational space of a society.

When it comes to choosing between a healthy censorship aiming at sanitizing and cleaning the informational space, and the right to free information, a young, transitional society must choose the former, at least until it builds a society that is healthy from a media standpoint.

Victor GOTISAN

Moldovan Press and the Culmination of Alienation

At the beginning of October, 2015, The New York Times published a historic manifesto – “Our Path Forward”. This document presents the digital strategy of this prestigious media, with 150 years of history, which after a century and a half of activity had the courage to face the new technology challenges and in just 5 years reached a record number of 2 million of subscribers and a monthly audience of about 140 million of readers of print and digital information.

The document contains valuable economic, analytical and managerial solutions, which may become a real development lesson for any media in the world, and the Republic of Moldova is not an exception in this respect. Provided that those who have analysed or will analyse it will pay attention to a sentence, which, hidden in the hearth of this text, in fact reflects both the essence of success recorded by The New York Times and the future achievements. *„More than anything, the best journalism will continue to separate The Times from the competition”.*

At the end of December 2015, in Chisinau, where none of the TV audiences can compete with the number of subscribers of The Times, a totally different event marks the local media phenomenon – halting between a diplomatic scandal and a slap given to the good professional sense.

It is about the false committed by Publika and HotNews.md, which placed a Facebook status posted by ES James Petit, US Ambassador in the Republic of Moldova in an arbitrary, tendentious and even dangerous context. So, the American Ambassador wonders in his posting “... if anyone is thinking about what the Moldovan people want? Democracy is about truly representing the will and desire of the people. Being a democracy means truly serving the people you represent. Leaders in a democracy should be servants to their country and their citizens – not the other way around. Let’s hope the goodwill of the holiday season prevails and leaders act for The Moldovan People”, noting the slow pace of Moldovan politicians in making important decisions for the existence of our country. Thus, the two media sources are rushing to assign the rhetoric posting of the Ambassador as a reaction to the initiative of the President Timofti to appoint Ion Sturza as candidate for the office of Prime Minister. Even if the initiative was made after the ambassador’s message was posted. Are these two events compatible? As importance - of course not. Instead, they contain two diametrically opposed aspects of the future that cannot be ignored. The manifesto of the New York publication is the starting point towards a sustainable future,

towards a journalism that aspires “to cultivate another generation of readers who can’t imagine a day without The New York Times”. The behaviour of Publika and HotNews.md is, certainly, a starting point towards self-destruction and education of a new generation of Moldovans who have no idea about what mass-media serves for and who, sick of manipulation, propaganda, non-professionalism, will ignore the press as phenomenon. “The Petit case” is just one of the many examples of media shamelessness we are witnessing and against which, fortunately, there has been a prompt and tough reaction from the primary source.

A Society of Alienated

I think that the most appropriate term for the current situation is “alienation”, as we witnessed the transfer of the entire human activity and its results (work, social institutions, spiritual values) into foreign and inimical forces, depersonalisation of humans, accompanied by distortion of personal relationships by the force of money, of social rankings, the distorted reproduction of the reality. However, both the philosophic meaning of the above-mentioned word and the legal one (transfer of the title to property) and even the medical one (alienation, nuttiness) seem to fully correspond to the moment.

On the one hand, we find an alienation of the press, which became the hostage of the political game, without noticing how it changed its role from coquette (courtesan?) to hostage. On the other hand – there is an alienation of the society, which, deprived of the fundamental right of being informed, swallows Mbps of manipulation and propaganda every day, thinking that it is being informed.

The sin is almost general! Neither the media that serves the power, nor the one pretending to be the opposition, managed to withstand the temptation. You should watch a news about the same protest at Jurnal TV and Publika TV! A participation of 5000 of people becomes 50.000 in a case and 500 in another. The figure is not just vociferated. The image will be appropriately tricked. And it no longer matters that we talk about events from 2015 if we show images from the Grand National Assembly – the real one, from 1989? Or does it matter that the other channel filmed the square in the morning, when the groups of people just started to come to protest? The goal dictated the means.

How is it possible that 3-4 experts talking at the same TV discussion lasting for 2 hours share the same opinion? Not even

members of the same family joined at a family dinner manage to reach a consensus when discussion about the Republic of Moldova. Even if the experts are right a hundred times, the good practices of the journalism provide for the need of a strong opponent, able to balance the discussion. Or, the sole goal of all these tricks is to ensure a hyper-engagement of the society into a continuous conflict, after which the citizen should feel continuously guilty: because he/she did not elect the right people, because he/she believed in promises, because he/she did not go to protest or because he/she did this, but not to the expected one. Or, by contrary, watching other broadcastings and other channels, the viewer should conform himself with the idea that the die has been already cast, decisions were made and nothing can be changed.

Everybody With His Deaths

Unfortunately, our politic class had not learned how to build and govern a country, falling a prey to some bad practice of illusory governance by means of mass-media, when the media presence is confused with the politic influence. You should analyse the most influential Moldovan politicians from the last 5 years and

make a comparison with their presence in the media. And then you will easily notice that those who disappear”from the view” also disappear from the top. This confusion between influence and presence, that the political technologists strongly try to put upon us, is distorting the citizens thought and perception, cultivating false values. In 1977 Roger-Jerard Shwartzenberg was warning in his work ”*L’État spectacle. Essai sur et contre le star system en politique*” (The state-show. An essay about and against star system in politics) on the fact that media phenomenon replaced the project with the profile, and the message with the image”.

Moreover, even politicians prefer to be lied by the press and hear what they want to hear, refusing to accept the autonomy of the press. None of the leaders has had the courage so far to look at the press as to an exact diagnostic device that could reveal the problems and influence their agenda. Both the press and the politicians accepted the agenda to be dictated by the first, and the result is terrible.

Ludmila ANDRONIC

A Race of Trust in a Space Conducive to Manipulation

In online media both the reader and the journalist are engaged in a permanent race of trust. The reader tries to find sources of information he can trust, and the reporter wants to believe that if he fails in something, the reader will inform him immediately about it. And the one who gets to know all these habits can easily influence what information will be consumed...

Things amplify due to, or because of, social networks, with which online media have a kind of undeclared but very tight collaboration. Thus, if traditional media were the products of a small number of authors who generated information and verified data, today anyone can produce content. And whatever becomes popular in social networks – it doesn't have to be true, just popular – can easily get into one of the online media outlets.

To exemplify, I will mention some situations that our editorial team dealt with. But because this text can be manipulation, too, I strongly advise you to verify every example I will provide and every statistics I will use.

A recent example of manipulation was the case of terrorist attacks on March 22, 2016 in Brussels, where shortly after the explosion at the Zaventem Airport a video appeared with images of the blast. The video was posted by lots of online media, including in Moldova, including by #diez. However, Independent.co.uk later notified that the video was a fake and that it actually showed the explosion from Domodedovo Airport in Moscow several years ago.

The same happened with the case of EuroMaidan in Ukraine, when several photos, including those with violence and beatings, were initially told to have been from Ukraine. In fact, they proved to have been from other countries and other protests.

The problem is not in the fact that a reporter cannot distinguish truth from untruth, but especially in the speed of online media – a race against time, and journalists get in this trap because details and information are not researched carefully, but through some filters. Here are some of the filters frequently used for attacks in Brussels: #filmuleț (#video), #explozieîntr-unaeroport (#explosioninanairport), #încărcatrecent (#recentlyuploaded), #parecevainternațional (#seemssomethinginternational). If the information that is being searched corresponds to filters used by an online journalist, then it passes as truth. Once identified, filters used by reporters and readers can easily introduce a lie that looks like truth and that few would waste their time to ver-

ify. In addition, a reporter cannot remember all the explosions and protests. Only readers know it, due to their experience or memories.

The above phenomena are valid for Moldova, too, especially if the X website posts untrue information – most often an idea made out of thin air – with the purpose to raise a feeling: panic, doubt, hate, fear, envy. Any feeling, as long as it's a feeling, because readers' and reporters' filters are rather worn out when it comes to feelings... It is emotional manipulation, because emotions are the basis of shares on social networks, and if there are many shares, lots of people believe that the information is true.

Then, other websites, W, Y, Z, enter the scene, taking over the information, some of them releasing it as an opinion or an assumption, while others present it as truth. Online, however, information easily multiplies, until you can't find where it started.

Another example of manipulation is an article that appeared in 2013. This material – which referred to the fact that in Germany children were made to pass some sexual texts – was highly shared on social networks.

The material contained images, names of the parents who shared their opinions, and highly emotional viewpoints about the fact that it was strange that such tests happened. It also had a source in English that said that. So, there were all the details that made you believe this information. The team of #diez, however, found this case suspicious; we checked and found out that the information was released by Nick Werner and that it was part of a series of publications aimed to discredit EU values in East European countries. **Here you can find the research where images came from.** Another example is the case of a TV channel from Moldova, whose reporters went to interview the residents of a village regarding a certain issue, but it later turned out that the interviewees didn't even live in that village, but they made it seem that the issue exists, especially that there were videos, too.

Obviously, this flexibility of online media, which, including due to its readers, can permanently transform, update, supplement, or contradict false information, opens the door to people with unorthodox interests. Thus, media doubles appear, created to gain consumers' trust. This thing can be best seen on April 1, when the Internet abounds in false news. Beyond this day, however, things are not so funny.

In addition, it is very easy to buy a domain similar to one that has already gained popularity and credibility – for example, Bloomberg.nd – and post there information for others to take over and multiply. A proof of that was the creation in 2016 of a false Wall Street Journal page, which announced that Tesla will be launched in Moldova, too. Many believed this information, and similar situations can happen with political or social topics (<http://diez.md/2016/04/01/wall-street-journal-tesla-va-ajunge-curand-oficial-republica-moldova/>).

Now let's return to the issue of trust. It has never before been easier and at the same time more difficult to verify information. But when a media outlet has a dialog with its readership and they work together to create trustworthy news, there is a bigger chance to avoid manipulation – either intentional or accidental. So, for a media portal today it is no longer enough to have the

best journalists who would verify information – it is often simply impossible to verify. But it is important to build around your information platform a community that would fill your gaps. Besides, the biggest problem is not that you are sometimes wrong, but the fear to recognize your mistakes so as not to ruin your brand. It is a stage that needs to be overcome, especially in Moldova, because only thus we will be able to convince our readers to share the information they have with us, so as to have the complete picture of the world we live in.

One more thing, to end the material. According to a recent study, 88% of the people born in 1980-2000 (so-called millennials) read news on Facebook. Given this, I can tell you one thing: be careful with what you read and carefully filter information!

Alexandru LEBEDEV

Aneta Grosu, Editor-in-chief of Ziarul de Garda Newspaper: „The Independent Journalism Is Mostly Represented by Women”

- Mrs. Aneta Grosu, how would you explain the fact that most leading positions in Moldova are held by men and what is the situation, from this perspective, in the field of the mass-media?

- I think this situation was inherited from the Soviet period, when gender equality was expressed by the participation of a successful milkmaid in congresses of the USSR Communist Party or by awarding Soviet medals and orders to a female tractor driver. After over 20 years of Independence, we have not succeeded yet to get rid of many vices inherited from the past. On the one hand, we get involved in activities and projects that are meant to show that women are given a place of honour in the society, and, on the other hand, we have only 3-4 female ministers in cabinets governed by men or not more than 10-15 female deputies in overly masculine parliaments. Perhaps, this situation would not be so troublesome, if there was no discrimination against women in terms of labour remuneration in Moldova. Even the United Nations revealed that women in Moldova are salaried 10% less than men for the same amount of work, for the same quality of labour (or even higher).

During the recruitment procedures, the heads of institutions or company managers prefer to select male subordinates. As for women, if they however recruit them, they use to “choose” mainly young employees, “free” from family worries. But what shall the others do?

What about the mass-media? We need first to realise the extent and the quality of mass-media in the Republic of Moldova. If the media “concerns” from our country may be classified as mass-media, then the statistics could look one way, and if we exclude such “concerns”, we would probably get other data. The independent journalism is mostly represented by women. In other institutions - men are the ones who dictate the editorial policy. Lately, there has been a massive mass-media feminization - on



TV screens, at press conferences and other events, female journalists have a 90% presence; female students make up the largest share of journalism students ... How do you explain this phenomenon?

- In the Republic of Moldova, there is a distorted concept of the profession of journalist. Many people still believe that journalism means presenting news or entertainment programmes on TV. Fewer are interested in writing. If an anonymous survey was conducted among the journalism students (who are actually female students), it will certainly appear that most of them wish to appear on TV. But few of the respondents would however ask themselves if they personally have something to say to people. What would be the identikit picture of a female journalist in Moldova?

- The few female journalists in Moldova I know are tenacious, purposeful, well informed, they read a lot and are independent. They are attached to their job and may even be considered as opinion leaders.

- Many of our colleagues consider Ziarul de Garda newspaper as not just weeklies, but also a very good school for investigative journalists. How did you succeed to build this team? What skills should have those who want to practise the investigative journalism, if any ...

- It is true, throughout 12 years since the launch of the publication, a lot of young people who further became good journalists have worked for Ziarul de Garda. Victor Moşneag (Ziarul de Garda), Anastasia Nani (anticoruptie.md), Diana Răilean (Radio Free Europe), Iurie Sanduță (RISE Moldova), and other came to Ziarul de Garda after the first year of studies, for their first professional internship. They remained in the team, being employed since they were students. It was a good experience for them, but particularly for us. Working with a young team is really something very special.

- The journalist's job implies courage and risks. Please, speak in this context about some risky situations faced by you personally or together with your colleagues, as a journalist or an editor-in-chief ...

- I shall not talk about me ... Currently, the largest risks faced by the investigative journalists are the court trials in which we are brought, often wrongly, but which mean loss of time, of nerves and even of financial resources in certain situations. A case brought in the court by a former deputy lasted for years. He sued our editorial team in the courts of Chisinau and Straseni. He did not win the case, but he did harass us, as for us, despite the fact that we succeeded to prove the truth of what was written, we did not bring any action against the former deputy for the prejudice caused to our team throughout the five years of trials. Working for Ziarul de Garda, we have also experienced threats to the team of editors or to the authors who sign certain investigations. At the same time, this is also a reason for a kind of hidden pride, as whenever we have attempted to suggest to the journalists to protect their identity in case of risky articles, they however signed their names.

- You have been practising this profession for a long time. In what period did the State authorities seem to be more responsive to issues raised by the mass-media?

- I do not recall such a period. I even often think that we are just naïve believing that the change of those in power would change the attitude of the government towards the problems raised by the media or towards the situation of the media in the Republic of Moldova. Year after year, I witnessed a lot of different problems: limited access of the mass-media to public information; journalists kept at the doors of courts when cases with resonance

were being examined; reporters "locked up" in the Parliament building; journalists threatened or even aggressed; mass-media institutions sued by corrupt officials or mobster judges; leaders of political parties damning the press; persons in charge of press distribution keeping the newspapers hidden from the eyes of readers, etc. All this happened throughout the more than two decades of independence, during which representatives of left-wing, right-wing, pro-Russian, pro-European parties, centrists or "alliances" succeeded each other at the governance. In fact, within the team of Ziarul de Garda, we feel a kind of comfort coming from the fact that none government has favoured us. In such circumstances, it is easier to be independent, and it is also more valuable.

- You have worked for many years at the national television channel. How were those years; why did you leave the television and how do you see today the public TV channel?

- I have worked for exactly 15 years at Teleradio Moldova. They were different, but an event that I cannot forget was the launch of "Mesager" newscast. In fact, I did not leave the TV station, but I was dismissed by the agrarian-communist regime. It was a tough test for me, but I have learnt much from it. As for what we see today on TV screens, it is a separate topic. Personally, I miss professionals and professionalism.

- What advice would you give to the young journalists joining this profession?

- I would rather say what I would do at their age, if I could go back in time. I would read a lot of press, I would learn languages, I would travel more, especially in our villages, I would keep a journal about the people I meet due to this profession. Despite the tension faced in this job, I would spend more time closer to my family, my parents, my husband and my children.

- What does journalism in Moldova still need to become the fourth power, worthy of consideration?

- Tenacity, consistency, power of persuasion, as well as a ground for fulfilment. When I say a ground for fulfilment, I mean the few independent media in Moldova that can express a diversity of views, bringing arguments.

- Have you ever had the feeling that journalism can change the world, the people, our daily life?

- I have always had such a feeling, otherwise I would not be here.

From Ordinary Conversation to Media Discourse

Today, when the famous phrase *Two monologues do not make a dialogue* (Jeff Daly) is, perhaps, more relevant than ever, this study, coordinated by journalist Philippe Cabin and founder of *Sciences Humaines* journal Jean-Francoias Dortier, supplements the list of researches on human communication.

Released under the title “*Comunicarea. Perspective actuale*” [Communication. Current Perspectives] (Iasi, Polirom, 2010), the book aims to answer a number of questions so as to contribute to solving a classical problem formulated in the question: *What is the effect of mass media on the public?*

With a varied content presented by journalists, philosophers, professors teaching social psychology, sociology and psychopedagogy, the work logically inserts key subjects needed to characterize communication as a social phenomenon.

The study aims, according to authors, to go through *ordinary conversations to media discourse, discussions with friends to job-related discussions, mobile telephone to the Internet*, because communication is omnipresent and essential in today’s society.

Structured according to classic principles – from particular to general, – the work also contains new information revealed by means of subtle language that transforms a known phenomenon into a fact discovered by the reader.

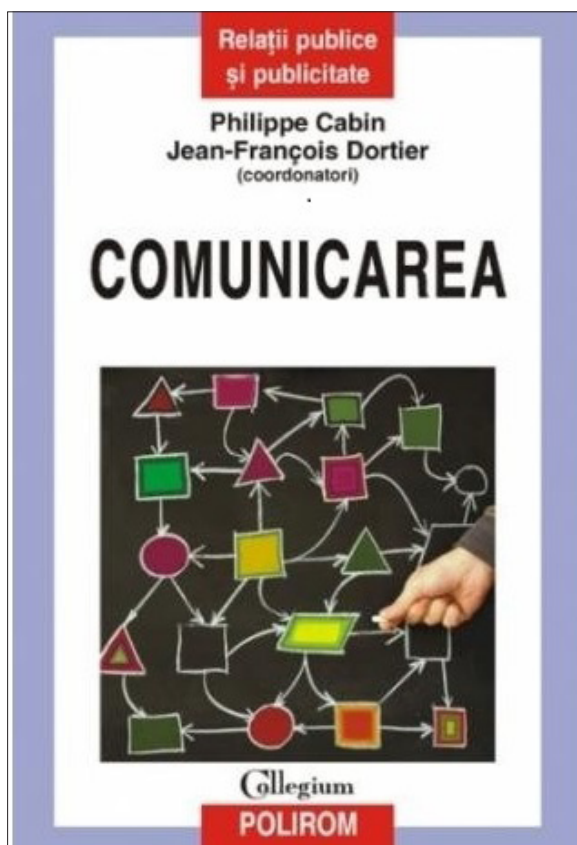
According to authors, *the book and the press are important vectors of social change*, a consideration that justifies approach to communication topics from the perspective of mass media.

The paper consists of five sections, and it begins with the section of *Communication: objectives and models*, which discusses the fundamental aspects of communication, from objectives of human communication to *Information and communication sciences*. The main objectives of human communication are, in the

opinion of Edgar Morin, to inform and self-inform, know and self-know, in order to understand and self-understand, etc. This idea is supplemented by the information from professor Edmond Marc, who describes the three levels of communication psychology: the level of subject, their motivations, and their cognitive and emotional activities. A pleasant presence in this collection is the articles by researcher Alex Mucchielli, who describes various models of communication, in chronological order of their appearance, in order to show the variability of definitions for the term *communication*. Readers will rightfully appreciate the results of researchers’ attempts to explain what is *communication*, beginning in 1940s, through positivist models, systemic models, constructivist models, showing, at the same time, the context or situations in which these models are used.

Special attention of the people interested in communication and mass media deserves the information in the last sections of the study: part four, *Mass media. Information. Communication*, and part five, *New technology of the information society*. Here are some questions that authors formulated and then answered: *How is information produced? Who makes use of mediologies? New technologies, new uses? How did the Internet change our way of thinking?* etc.

Also, media professionals might find of interest the opinions about journalists’ dependence and autonomy inside their professional environment and the description of the two functions of mass media: *to inform and to entertain*. Another aspect in the research of the media is, according to authors, selection and presentation of information. Authors examine the criteria used for selection of information, including *newspaper layout, areas of interest for journalists and editors-in-chief, technical constraints*, etc. They also discuss topics of diversity of media channels and of the public, as well as the influence



of mass media over the audience. Empiric studies realized by professionals in the field proved that media influence depends on preexisting opinions and on the receiver's interpersonal relations. On the other hand, supporters of the functional approach to this topic find that mass media responds to the needs of information, entertainment, and culture, but at the same time they refuse to see mass media attempts to manipulate consumers.

Authors, sociology professionals suggest the reader to think about this question: *How are media messages perceived by those who receive them?* Xavier Molenat, in the article *Reception, a sociological enigma* (p. 212-217), presents the results of a number of researches in which the consumer is initially treated as a passive receiver, and only later, by applying a sociological questionnaire, it is proved that the reception of media messages is a social process dependent on networks of interpersonal relations (after Paul F. Lazarsfeld).

A logical addition to the above information is the study of Daniel Bounoux, in which the author pleads for a new current – *mediology*. The main objective of a mediologist's research is, according to the author, the research of the media used to deliver information (speech, writing, print, screen) in order to understand the efficiency of certain ideas and the power of the word.

A number of articles in the study discuss the advertising image: *Advertising, between manipulation and creation* by Vinsent Troger, *Public space and opinion. From print press to the Internet* by Marc Lits, and *The significance of televised ceremonies* in an interview with Daniel Dayan. Since the advertising image is divided between two radically opposite interpretations, authors propose to see advertising images for what they really are – a message that uses the language of shapes, colors, and movement. Despite being criticized for its commercial role, the advertising image

still appeals to artistic means. The relation of advertising with the artistic environment has become today even more complex in cinematography, claims Vinsent Troger, because new methods led to disappearance of posters and appearance of photomontage. However, in an interview in the book, Daniel Bourgnoux convinces us that *we shouldn't fear images*, because we live in an era of image, and that image is, in fact, a characteristic feature of contemporary culture.

Studies presented in the last section, *New technologies of the information society*, focus on issues related to implementation and development of information technologies in society, which contributed to essential changes in communication. Authors describe the links that appear between the introduction of IT and labor management, networking, *informationalization* of production and distribution, etc. Also of interest are the changes that happened in long-distance communication, and Alain Rallet discussed the phenomenon of deterritorialization that started back in the second half of the 19th century, along with the transport revolution. The influence of the current form of communication, the Internet, is presented in the book not so much theoretically, but with the purpose of answering the question whether the Internet, having offered a new way of organization of knowledge, is a cognitive revolution.

We decided to discuss this book because it definitely is of real interest for professionals in communication and mass media, as well as for the reader who is looking for a select and profound text. The book supplements, by means of several studies and articles, multiple researches in this field and includes a considerable list of bibliographic sources, which proves a profound research of the subject.

Liuba PETRENCO

Memorandum on Press Freedom in Moldova

(May 3, 2015 – May 3, 2016)

In the period of May 3, 2015 to May 3, 2016, the press in Moldova remained partially free according to the Freedom House report, while according to the Reporters Without Borders ranking our country lost four positions since last year, taking the 76th position in the list of the 180 analyzed countries. Like in previous years, the media community was divided, while old problems worsened. Political control over media outlets remained in place; excessive concentration of the media in the hands of owners-politicians was confirmed, and competition on the media market was unfair. Journalists, especially investigative journalists, faced problems in obtaining information from public institutions. Cases of verbal aggression and intimidation of media representatives multiplied. In October 2015, participants of the first Media Forum in Moldova sent a Roadmap to authorities, where they listed these and other problems in the sector and urged authorities to actively engage into solving them.

Deficiencies of the Legal Framework

Although the government's activity program for 2015-2018 stipulated adoption of a new broadcasting code, it did not happen in the reporting period. Instead of examining the draft of the new code, the parliament introduced modifications and supplements into the current code, which failed to bring expected results. The entry into force of Law no. 28 on November 1, 2015, under which media owners had to make statements on their own responsibility regarding their properties, revealed concentration in the media, but it did not provide mechanisms to fight concentration. Hasty adoption of draft law no. 39, developed by a group of Party of Socialists MPs in order to reduce the number of licenses allowed to a media owner from 5 to 2, did not take into account transition to digital television and other realities. The civil society found this draft law inconsistent and asked President Nicolae Timofti not to promulgate the law, but it was promulgated anyway. There were also other unsuccessful attempts to modify and supplement the current Broadcasting Code, such as the two draft laws on ensuring information space security, which have not yet been examined by the parliament.

The civil society keeps pleading for adoption of a new code that would solve these and other problems.

Another problem concerns access to information. Investigative journalists notified about problems such as too big fees for ob-

taining information from certain institutions, formal replies that are not always to the point, too long terms of reply to requests for information. The Independent Journalism Center proposed several amendments to the law, which were registered as legislative initiative by a group of independent MPs. So far, the law has not been introduced into the parliament's agenda.

The Phenomenon of Concentration

The fact that media owners were forced by law to declare on their own responsibility the properties they have confirmed the phenomenon of concentration, but did not make it disappear. According to broadcasters' statements on their own responsibility published by the Broadcasting Coordinating Council (BCC), businessman and politician of the Democratic Party Vlad Plahotniuc owns 4 televisions with national coverage out of the 5 total (Publika TV, Prime, Canal 2, and Canal 3) and 3 radio stations (Publika FM, Muz FM, and Maestro FM). Overall, they cover, according to estimates that appeared in the media, about 60-70% of the broadcasting market. Liberal-democrat MP Chiril Lucinschi is the owner of two TV channels – TV7 and TNT Bravo. Businessman Victor Topa, who took refuge in Germany after he was convicted of blackmail in Moldova, is the owner of Jurnal TV. In 2015, the BCC granted a broadcasting license to NTV Moldova channel, founded by Party of Socialists MP Corneliu Furculita. The BCC only collected owners' declarations on their own responsibility, motivating that it has no other powers, not even to verify the truthfulness of those declarations. Concentration in the media allows politicians to interfere in editorial policies, which leads to limitation of the freedom of expression, manipulation, and disinformation of the public. This phenomenon diminishes the professionalism of journalists and is in contradiction with European standards concerning the media, which Moldova undertook to comply with under the Moldova-EU Association Agreement.

Attempts to Censor the Internet

In the reporting period, authorities returned to earlier attempts to limit freedom of expression in the Internet. In the absence of a law regulating the online space, the Ministry of Internal Affairs returned to an older draft law on modifying and supplementing some legislative acts. Some experts find that this draft law, ap-

proved by the government on March 30, 2016, might introduce censorship in the Internet. The civil society warned, at the time when the draft was being developed, that some of its provisions were ambiguous, but the authors ignored the warnings. Although this draft law apparently aimed to fight and prevent child pornography and information crimes, some of its provisions directly concerned Internet freedom, because they might block politically inconvenient websites or allow reading of emails and other text messages. Recently, a group of 28 non-governmental organizations sent a public appeal to authorities, asking the “Big Brother” draft law to be subjected to international expertise. The initiative is currently in the parliament, at the stage of public hearings.

The Media in Election Campaign

The behavior of the media during local general elections in 2015 proved that the majority of the monitored media outlets were politically partisan. The media covered the election campaign with significant deviations from legal and deontological standards. Media outlets had political preferences that depended on their owners, so they practically associated themselves with political actors. Politicians-owners of the media massively interfered with the outlets’ editorial policies, encouraging self-censorship, and the media delivered to their consumers biased, incomplete, and often manipulating information.

Pollution of the Information Space

Foreign propaganda continued affecting the country’s information space. The BCC was previously notified about it by some election competitors from Gagauzia, too, who complained of Russian media supporting the so-called “Moscow’s candidate” in the elections of the head of the region. The need to protect the information space was also discussed at the first Media Forum in Moldova in October 2015, where participants pleaded for adoption of special provisions in order to diminish the influence of foreign propaganda in Moldova. No special law, however, was adopted, and in the absence of a relevant legal framework, several broadcasters that retransmit channels from the Russian Federation aired on the territory of Moldova programs that the BCC penalized on the grounds of serious violations of the national legislation. In May 2015, the BCC ordered suspension of retransmission of Rossia 24 television channel in Moldova. Other broadcasters – Prime TV, Ren Moldova, RTR Moldova, and TV7 – were fined for airing programs with propagandistic content, retransmitted from Russia. Nevertheless, fines did not impede broadcasters to commit such violations again. On March 29, 2016, Ren Moldova television was fined again, this time with suspension of the right to air advertisements for 72 hours, as a result of monitoring of the “Military Secret” (“Военная тайна”) show at the end of this January, in which the political situation in

Moldova was interpreted in a propagandistic manner.

Situation in Public Broadcasting

The public broadcasting company Teleradio-Moldova was in the process of reforms. Some reorganization has already taken place, but consumers still expect major qualitative changes. Because of old technologies, inefficient expenses, and debts of millions of lei, collected by the company, the institution could not be modernized. Today, Teleradio-Moldova cannot compete with private outlets. Olga Bordeianu, who was elected as president of the company after a scandal, is still in trial with one of the members of the Supervisory Board and has not yet demonstrated that she has sufficient management skills to solve the company’s big issues.

It should be mentioned that public TV channel Moldova 1 covered topics related to last year’s election campaign in a relatively balanced and unbiased way – this fact has been noted by the organizations that monitored the behavior of the media in elections.

Public broadcasting company Teleradio-Gagauzia had some difficult moments, too. Internal conflicts in its administration resulted with the resignation of the former president of the company, Anna Harlamenco. The situation worsened after the People’s Assembly of Gagauzia adopted the Law on Television and Radio, which was promulgated by Irina Vlah, the head of the region, in March 2016.

Situation in Print Media

In this period, too, the editors of print media outlets notified about problems in dealing with the distributors of periodicals, especially with the “Posta Moldovei” state enterprise, which was accused of inefficiency and of imposing unfair contract terms. The authors of the draft new law on post (subsequently renamed into Law on Postal Communications), excluded the distribution of periodicals from the list of universal postal services, contrary to the Directive of the European Parliament on common rules for the development of the internal market of Community postal services and the improvement of quality of service. Due to pressure from the Association of Independent Press and from editors, the draft was amended in final reading and brought into compliance with the European directive.

Press Freedom in the Transnistrian Region

Transnistrian authorities intensified control over the media in the reporting period, especially because 2015 was a year of elections. These trends intensified over time, and in April 2016 on

the left bank of the Nistru cameramen and photographers were prohibited to enter the meeting room of the region's supreme council. Transnistrian MPs made this decision after examining and analyzing materials about the work of the supreme council that appeared in the media between January and April, which they disapproved of. Another reason invoked by authorities was the lack of space in the meeting room. Currently, only the press service of the supreme council has the right to film and photograph inside the institution's building. To have access to video and photo materials, journalists have to submit special requests. Media experts qualified this act as a sign of censorship and restriction of freedom of expression.

Verbal and Physical Aggression Against Journalists

Abuses at protest rallies

In **July**, the crews of Jurnal TV and of Omega news portal were impeded by protesters to film a protest in front of the house of Vladimir Plahotniuc, the prime vice-chairman of the Democratic Party. In **October**, a filming crew of Publika TV was assaulted by a group of protesters from the "Dignity Camp" in front of the government building. In **November**, during protests at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, a cameraman of Today.md online television was hit with a fist in the head and accosted by a protester. At the same event, Publika TV journalists were insulted by a group of citizens who did not agree with this channel's editorial policy. In **January 2016**, according to Today.md, its cameraman was deprived of the camera and of the live broadcasting equipment during protests at the parliament. In **February**, a Publika TV crew was verbally aggressed during protests at the Rascani district court in Chisinau.

Limitation of access to information

In **July**, a crew of Jurnal TV was not allowed to enter the Town Hall of Orhei. A person, who refused to introduce themselves, attacked the cameraman, hit the video camera, and gave indications to the institution's guard to force journalists out of the building. In **December**, a Radio Orhei correspondent was not allowed to attend the public meeting of the town council of Orhei because he was not "registered at the secretary in advance." In **January**, an employee of play.md was not allowed to film Gheorghe Cavcaliuc, interim head of the General Police Inspectorate, and complained that his camera had been destroyed. Also in **January**, the journalists who had come to the office of the Democratic Party for information about the meeting of the party's political bureau and announcement of its candidate for the office of prime minister of Moldova, found themselves closed in the office, while Democratic Party leaders left the building, thus avoiding eventual questions from the media. In **March**, the guards of Balti City Hall did not allow a Publika TV crew to enter for a

meeting with Lilia Sava, Deputy Mayor, after Balti Mayor Renato Usatii told Publika TV that he would not allow this channel's journalists to attend the meetings of the municipality council.

During the entire reporting period, cameramen had no access to the parliament's plenary meetings. The problem was solved only on April 13, 2016, when the parliament's permanent bureau modified the rules of accreditation of journalists, allowing cameramen to film in the meeting room. Access was allowed after the media and the civil society exercised pressure through various actions within the "We want access to the parliament!" campaign initiated by the IJC in 2014, such as flash mobs, collection of signatures for petitions, and installation of the "press corral" in front of the parliament building on the days of plenary parliament meetings.

Prohibitions for foreign journalists

In **September**, Ilya Azar, the special correspondent of Meduza.io with headquarters in Riga, who was going to Moscow, was stopped by the passport service at Chisinau airport and asked to tell who he met with in Chisinau and what information he had on his computer. In **October**, two crews of the Russian NTV television were prohibited to enter Moldova. Also in **October**, cameraman Ilya Naliotov and sound engineer Andrei Urchiuk of Rossia 24 television were not allowed to enter Moldova "for security reasons."

Cybernetic and technical attacks

In **December**, RISE.md underwent a massive DDoS cyber attack after publishing a series of documents, including an alleged letter of prosecutor Ivan Diacov to oligarch Vladimir Plahotniuc and some transcripts that revealed criminal links attributed to Democratic Party MP Constantint Tutu. In **January**, national telecommunications operator Moldtelecom stopped broadcasting some TV channels that aired images from the protest in front of the parliament building. Moldtelecom blocked several TV channels that covered events from in front of the parliament – TV7, Moldova 1, Canal 2, Canal 3, ProTV Chişinău, Publika TV, and Prime. In **April**, satellite broadcasting of TV7 was interrupted, because TDB-service, the company managing satellite transmission of TV signals, stopped fulfilling its contractual obligations. As a result, viewers in the majority of localities in the country had no access to TV7 programs.

Recommendations

Moldovan authorities should treat the media as a social institution able to contribute significantly to the country's democratization. For that, we recommend that the government:

- Undertake effective measures to strengthen media independence and the professionalism of journalists in accordance with the requirements of the Association Agreement between Moldova and the European Union;
- Implement without delays the provisions on the media included in the government's activity program for the period of 2015-2018;
- Give up bad practices of using the media for narrow interests (party or personal) or interfering with the editorial policies of the media outlets that they finance as owners;
- Examine with greater responsibility the main problems of the media sector, stipulated in the Roadmap developed at the first Media Forum in Moldova, and really engage into solving them;
- Undertake all measures to urgently adopt a new Broadcasting Code, which would bring a modern vision into broadcasting, in line with international standards on the media;
- Make sure that the BCC, as a structure regulating the situation in broadcasting and as guarantor of public interest, does not allow pollution of the information space, neither by foreign, nor by domestic broadcasters;
- Make sure that the state institutions guarantee to journalists free access to information – a sine qua non for building a democratic state.

Elements of Propaganda, Manipulation of Information and Violation of the Rules of Journalistic Deontology in the Domestic Media

Monitoring Report *February 1st – April 30th, 2016*

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

During the period from February 1st – April 30th, 2016, the Independent Journalism Center monitored 12 media institutions – news portals and TV channels, to identify whether the broadcast journalistic materials contained violations of deontological rules and elements of informational manipulation. It was analyzed how these media reflected the events of public interest in politics, economy, and foreign policy, if there were respected the journalistic rules on verification of information from several sources, diversity of opinions, in order to ensure the balance of the conflict news, etc. Invoking the Journalist's Ethical Code and the scientific reference works allowed to detect methods and techniques used by Moldovan media to influence the wide public by spreading manipulating messages.

The Purpose of Monitoring

To establish whether the media, in addressing issues of public interest, respected the professional ethics or used procedures of manipulation, and to identify those processes. The monitoring was aimed, as well, to expose the mistakes of journalists, deliberate ones or not, in fact stating, so as that case studies and reports would have an instructive role. Another purpose of the monitoring was to help to increase vigilance of the media consumers when it came to risks of unsafe information sources. Thus, the monitoring helps consumers to understand how the media can manipulate, to be able to distinguish between a manipulator journalistic product and a product that reflects equidistant reality, and to encourage them to consult several sources of information when they have doubts in credibility of information.

Criteria for Selecting the Monitored Press Institutions:

- **Coverage area** – national and regional
- **Language** – Romanian and Russian
- **Impact** – circulation and audience

Print press: Ziarul National, Panorama (online versions of these publications);

Audiovisual: Publika TV (website Publika.md), Prime TV, Jurnal TV, Accent TV, RTR Vesti, Ren TV;

Online press: Gagauzinfo.md, Novostipmr.com, Sputnik.md, Deschide.md;

Methodology

There were selected political, economic and social events of major public interests, which occurred during the monitoring period, and based on the rules of Journalist Code of Ethics and the techniques for information manipulation, there was studied the way to reflect those events in the media. Also, there was analyzed a number of topical subject, such as court examination of the corruption case opened against the former Prime Minister Vlad Filat. There was analyzed the language and images used by journalists, the mode of selecting events for reflection, accuracy of source quoting, tone of exposure etc., in terms of the [Journalist's Ethical Code](#)^[1], of the guidelines and recommendations in the field of quality and responsible media^[2] and notions of **manipulation** and **propaganda** in the sense offered by the Dictionary of Sociology^[3].

[1] http://consiliuldepresa.md/fileadmin/fisiere/documente/cod_d_rom.pdf

[2] Style Guidelines Containing the Ethical Rules for Journalists, API http://www.unicef.org/moldova/Ghid_Etica_Jurnalist_RO.pdf

[3] Catalin Zamfir, Lazar Vlasceanu, Dictionary of Sociology, Bucharest, 1998, p.332, p.457. <http://vignette4.wikia.nocookie.net/nccmn/images/1/1c/Dictionar-de-Sociologie-Catalin-Zamfir-Lazar-Vlasceanu.pdf/revision/latest?cb=20150813042511&path-prefix=ro>

Manipulation is defined as ‘the act of making a social actor (person, group, community) think and act in a manner compatible with the interests of the initiator and not with his/her interests, by using persuasion techniques that intentionally distort the truth giving the impression of freedom of thought and decision. Unlike the influence of the rational persuasion type, **manipulation** is aimed not to a more accurate and deeper understanding of the situation but to imprinting in the mind of a convenient understanding, falling back both on the misleading by using forged arguments and on the emotional non-rational levels.’

Propaganda is defined as ‘the systematic activity of transmission, promotion or dissemination of doctrines, theses or ideas from the standpoint of a particular social group and ideologies, in order to influence, change, form concepts, attitudes, opinions, beliefs and behaviors. The propaganda is performed in such way as to lead to the realization of the goals and interests of the group it serves, and there is no value-neutral or objective propaganda’.

The main subjects monitored during the period from February 1st to April 30th, 2016 are:

- Voting the Law on Prosecution (February 23rd and February 25th)
- Peace Conference in Munich (February 13th)
- Release of ‘Petrenco group’ (February 22nd)
- General Assembly of Judges (March 11th)
- Manifestations Organized on March 2nd to Commemorate the 24th Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Dniester War (March 2nd)
- Protests of Drivers and Owners of the Vehicles Registered Abroad (March 29th and March 30th)
- Protest Organized by the Party ‘Platform of Dignity and Truth’ on April 24th
- Court Examination of the Corruption Case against the Former Prime Minister Vlad Filat (Month of April)

II. GENERAL TENDENCIES

Monitoring data shows that some journalistic materials were made with deviation from the deontological rules and with presence of characteristic elements of propaganda and informational manipulation practices, among which we should highlight:

Selective presentation of the facts – Deviation observed in particular in the news about protests in Chisinau on April 24th on [Publika.md](#), [Sputinik.md](#), [Newspmr.ru](#).

Unilateral presentation of the facts – News from a single source were posted on the website of [Publika.md](#), [Deschide.md](#) and aimed mainly to the hearings involving the LDPM leader Vlad Filat.

Using anonymous sources without verification of information

from independent sources – Deviation recorded at the publication of news about defense witnesses in the case of Vlad Filat on [Deschide.md](#), [Publika.md](#), [Accenttv.md](#), [Rtr.md](#).

Exacerbation of the facts – unjustified emphasis, artificial intensification of facts and exaggeration of the scale of feelings, in order to promote certain messages or discredit individuals or groups. Such methods were used by Jurnal TV in the news edition on April 24th, when they talked about the manifestation organized by the party “Platform of Dignity and Truth” against the leadership.

Elimination of conflict subjects from the agenda of the media^[1] – The method was applied to discussions and adoption in Parliament of the final version of the draft Law on Prosecution on [Publika TV](#) and [Publika.md](#).

Interpretation/commenting of the facts – Violation of the Journalist’s Ethical Code, by which the journalist imposes its own opinion in informative materials on [RTR](#), [Sputnik.md](#), [REN TV](#).

Elements of propaganda – Deviation observed in the topics about the Munich Security Conference on [RTR](#) and some subjects about the criminal case, in which the defendant is Vlad Filat, on [Publika.md](#).

Inaccurate quoting and interpretation of source messages – Technique, by which the messages of the sources are selectively quoted and nuanced by journalist’s formulations, so as that the overall transmitted message would meet the interests of the transmitter on; method used by [Publika.md](#) in news about the protest in the center of Chisinau, on April 24th.

Quoting the anonymous experts and repeating a false idea to confer it credibility. These processes are identified in most news about the protest in the center of Chisinau, on April 24th, placed on [Publika.md](#).

Labeling – applying pejorative nicknames or marks or those ones of other nature, in order to weaken the authority of a person or to discredit such a person. The labeling was applied by [Jurnal TV](#) at the address of the politician Vlad Plahotniuc; by [Publika TV](#) when talking about businessmen Viorel and Victor Topa and by [Ziarul National](#) with regard to the businessman Ilan Sor.

[1] Techniques for Manipulation of the Electorate through Marketing Research, PhD Thesis, Transilvania University <http://www.unitbv.ro/Portals/31/Sustineri%20de%20doctorat/Rezumat/Vierasu.pdf>

Headings/images, video and audio effects – some media institutions selected photos and videos to put a negative spin on such subjects or groups, or used images that were only tangentially related to the topic of the article, but helped to emphasize the idea promoted in the text and, hence, to amplify the negative message they wanted to transmit to the public ([Publika.md](#), [Sputnik.md](#), [ZiarulNațional.md](#)).

Emotional manipulation using music and lyrics in the news-casts on April 24th, placed on [Jurnal TV](#).

III. DATA ANALYSIS

Subject 1. Voting the Law on Prosecution (February 23rd and February 25th, 2016)^[1]

On February 23rd, 2016, at the meeting of the Parliamentary Commission for Legal Issues, Appointments and Immunities, there was discussed the draft Law on Prosecution and the package of laws to reform the system of declaration of incomes and interests of public officials. The two documents had a major relevance, involving reforms in the judiciary system and in the prevention of corruption, and their adoption was one of the conditions set by foreign partners of Moldova to continue borrowing to our country.

Publika TV completely ignored the subject of contradictory discussions within the Commission, where the democrat deputy Sergiu Sirbu and the Prosecutor General of that time Corneliu Gurin proposed some amendments criticized by the authors of the project. The channel reported in two news and in the show *Newsroom* on the same day of February 23rd about another fact of the meeting of the Parliamentary Commission, namely, that the Ministry of Justice headed by the Minister from the Democratic Party submitted to the Parliament a draft Law, which provided for deprivation of mandates of those deputies, who did not declare properly their wealth and interests: **‘REVOLUTIONARY PROJECT: DEPUTIES RISKING LOSING THEIR JOB IF NOT DOING THIS’**. In this case, they used the manipulation technique called *‘elimination of conflict topics from the agenda of the media’*^[2], in order to pass off the existing issues and the really relevant topics, substituting them with other positive and less stringent ones. Specifically, a relevant topic of public interest was replaced by one, wherein the representatives of a party, DP, appeared against an exclusively positive background. On February 25th, 2016, when the Law on Prosecution was voted in final edition in the Parliament, without the amendments proposed by Sergiu Sirbu, since he withdrew them, *Publika TV* treated the subject briefly reserving 1.20 minutes for this news in the

edition of *Newsroom*, which also included a video of Andrian Candu’s statement. However, there were reserved 2.31 minutes for another subject of the Parliament session – adoption of a declaration of intentions of the Legislative Body ‘on stability and modernization of the country’, which included a report from the Parliament, four videos of the deputies’ statements and a studio discussion with a *Publika TV* reporter. There was outlined the intention of *blurring* and *replacing the relevant issues of public interest with others of less actuality*.

Ziarul National treated multilaterally the subject, however, presentation of the facts was affected by *tendentiousness* manifested mainly by the heading and images, in one of the cases. That referred to the news headed *‘Babbling in the Parliament. Sirbu’s Way to Justify Why He ‘REJECTS’ the Troublesome Amendments to the Law on Prosecution’*, which exposed the explanations of the PD deputy, related the fact that he quitted a few amendments to the draft Law on Prosecution he had proposed the day before. It became clear even from the heading that the news was not a neutral one and the reporter used ironic ‘rejects’ instead of neutral verb ‘give up’. In the text, there were used such expressions as ‘

Sirbu tried to redeem a faux pas’, ‘Sirbu was quick to explain’, ‘Sirbu tried to justify’, which had a pejorative connotation and should not be used in a neutral text. Similarly, the photo used to illustrate the text showed Sergiu Sirbu appearing with such a position of his lips that would suggest that he was in a state of confusion, in order to reinforce the message transmitted by the heading. Thus, the reporters nuanced the things they exposed by words and phrases, to demonstrate their attitude toward some subjects of the news.

The news broadcasted on *Jurnal TV* on February 23rd, 2016 and related to the discussions of the Parliamentary Commission for Legal Issues on the draft Law on Prosecution at that meeting, fell within the standards of equilibrium. The material lasted more than four minutes and contained video inserts of the statements of Tudor Deliu, Raisa Apolschi, Corneliu Gurin and Vlad Gribincea. Also, it was found a failure of separating facts from opinion by the statement ‘in defense of amendment PD deputy jumped general prosecutor’.

However, both the news ‘Scandal Related the Reform of the Prosecution’ and the news headed ‘Law on Prosecution Voted’ broadcasted on February 25th lacked the background or contextual information. The consumers were not informed why a new Law on Prosecution was necessary, why the deputies voted it exactly then, how long adoption thereof had been delayed, etc.

[1] Case study, <http://www.media-azi.md/ro/node/316974>

[2] <http://www.unitbv.ro/Portals/31/Sustineri%20de%20doctorat/Rezumat/Vierasu.pdf>

Subject 2. Munich Security Conference (February 13th)^[1]

The news program ‘Saturday News’ broadcasted by RTR Russia on February 13th, 2016, at 08:00 p.m., contained a topic related to the Munich Security Conference, traditionally held every year and attended by the heads of state and Governments of different countries. The material broadcasted by Russian journalists was drafted in the style of an editorial and contained comments, appreciations and value judgments but did not comply with the requirements to the news, which should be based solely on the facts. Here is a fragment from the presenter’s text: ‘However, the incumbent president of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko was obviously extremely nervous and sweaty, sitting at the panel of discussions in Munich, more due to some other reasons. Which? Our version is, possibly unexpected, that Poroshenko was influenced by the teachings of George Soros’. The reportage included numerous fragments of speeches of the Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov but the only video inserts less favorable for Moscow were those ones of the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and President of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė. The subject lasting about 13 minutes or so comprised the author’s opinions, which took the time almost equal to that one of the facts. The balance of sources was not respected, as well. Despite the fact that Petro Poroshenko attended the event, the reporters failed to insert into the topic any fragments of his speech or statements. This was despite the fact that, as we found out from [other media](#), Poroshenko made an appeal to the Russian President at Munich: ‘Mr. Putin, there is no civil war in Ukraine, it is your aggression. There is no civil war in Crimea, there are your soldiers, who occupied my country. There is no civil war in Syria, there you bomb the civilian population!’

As a conclusion, the Munich event was used by RTR to propagate the official policy of the Russian Federation to impose the point of view of its authorities, to hit into the opponent, to discredit him and to mislead people, not to inform the viewers. The channel journalists managed to do all this by selecting fragments from speeches and including them in the news, as well as by selecting the information about the event, intentionally breaking rules for assurance of the news balance, commenting the facts and launching accusations without any proofs.

Ren TV channel covered the event too, inclusively on its website, inserting 14 news on the topic, a majority of which contained ironical appreciations, expressions and opinions of the journal-

[1] Case study <http://mediacritica.md/studiu-de-caz-conferinta-de-securitate-de-la-munchen-reflectata-de-posturile-rusesti-retransmise-republica-moldova/>

[2] Case study <http://mediacritica.md/studiu-de-caz-eliberarea-din-arest-grupului-petrenco-argumentul-emoției-locul-informatiei-obiective-etichetare-tendentiozitate/>

ists, on the first conference day. [Example](#): ‘The American politician voiced the requirements in an incomprehensible manner: it seems that Russia should ensure access of humanitarian cargoes in the districts of conflict and to release the hostages. Kerry, as usual, did not say anything concrete. It is not clear what humanitarian access he spoke about and what Russia has to do with this, as well as it is not clear what kind of ‘prisoners’ our country must free’. In other news, *Ren TV* selected fragments from the speeches of some speakers, mostly on US-Russia and NATO-Russia relations, and broadcasted them shortly, unilaterally and in an unbalanced way, thus ignoring other subjects and opinions expressed at the conference.

Subject 3. Release of ‘Petrenco group’ (February 22nd, 2016)^[2]

On February 22nd, 2016, Riscani Sector Court of Chisinau municipality released six participants of the September 2015 protest in the front of the Prosecutor General’s Office, including the former communist deputy Grigore Petrenco, from the detention center and placed them under house arrest, under the ‘guarantee of socialist deputies’. They were released after the Socialist deputies submitted a guarantee to the court.

Jurnal TV echoed the accusations against the democrat Vlad Plahotniuc in its news lasting about four minutes and headed ‘Petrenco Group, under House Arrest’, even if Vlad Plahotniuc has no apparent relation to that subject. The structure of the news violated the principle of balance: it gave priority to some sources against others. The author included two inserts of the statements of Petrenco, two more of the group’s lawyer Ana Ursachi, one of Igor Dodon and an insert of the statements of a ‘former party colleague’ of Petrenco, Alexandr Petcov. All of them expressed the same opinion – the group had to be released earlier, and two of the speakers accused the justice of acting ‘against Vlad Plahotniuc’s order’.

The fact that journalists gave in their news an important space for accusations against Plahotniuc and did not make enough efforts to find the objective reality, such as to ask Igor Dodon why the guarantee was not submitted earlier, while ‘Petrenco group’ was in custody for six months, but only on the day when the prisoners were to meet the rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, as Petrenco himself accused in his statement, indicated that the news was aimed, besides information sharing, to launch the accusations against Plahotniuc. Thus, the news was transformed into a **tendentious** product built by the techniques similar to those ones of manipulation, not of objective journalism.

Publika TV treated that subject in the news headed ‘Igor Dodon, the Guarantor of Antifa Leader. Grigore Petrenco under House Arrest’ and using the images taken from the Socialist leader’s Fa-

cebook page but lacking the relevant details, such as a planned visit to the prison of the rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, or the answer to the question why namely then the socialists submitted a guarantee for those six detainees. Instead of this, the text repeated several times the phrase 'extremist movement' that Petrenco allegedly led. Since the authors offered no other information about that movement, the viewer would remember only that it was an extremist one, a notion that might be associated with 'danger', 'hate', 'violence'. Thus, release from custody, which by itself was an informational opportunity for the news, was presented alongside with labeling of the central person, and that procedure resulted in creation of antipathy and rejection. The label 'leader of the extremist movement' was neither proven, nor necessary in the news, since Petrenco and his colleagues were accused of riots but not of extremist activities.

On the website of *Accent TV*, the subject was treated in three news: 'Socialist Deputies Claiming for Release of Petrenco Group, at Their Own Risk', 'Petrenco Group Released under the Guarantee of Socialist Deputies', 'Dodon: Release of Political Prisoners as Another Step to Victory'. So, Igor Dodon and Socialist deputies were presented as positive heroes fighting for release of 'political prisoners', however, the reporters failed to ask for a response to the accusations made by the released himself, who said that release was an attempt to keep away the group members from meeting the rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The journalists did not ask Igor Dodon why they claimed for release exactly then, given that Petrenco and his colleagues had been in custody for a half a year. Instead of this, one of the news quoted a touching message written by Igor Dodon on Facebook: '*Today, these guys will be at home with their relatives and loved ones. They will hug their mothers, wives and children. They will have dinner with their relatives. Finally, the children will see their fathers for the first time during a half a year. It is our main success for this moment*'. This was the way to revoke the 'argument of feeling', a process of manipulation appealing to emotionality, in order to give more credibility to a message, to the detriment of presenting the objective information and that one of rational nature.

Subject 4. General Assembly of Judges (March 11th, 2016)^[1]

The traditional General Assembly of Judges was held at the Republican Palace of the capital on March 11th, 2016, and in the course thereof, there were totaled the 2015 activities of the judiciary system and were highlighted the branch-wise problems. The president of the Superior Council of Magistracy Victor Micu, the Minister of Justice Vladimir Cebotari and some judges came with speeches about the challenges in that sector. Since that was an annual event, given the fact that the Republic of Moldova was frequently criticized for corruption in the judicial system and for

the lack of progress in the development of reforms in that sector recently, that topic was one of public interest.

Publika TV reported about the event in the news headed 'The Ministry of Justice Working to Restore the Confidence in the Judicial System' and based on the initiative of the Minister of Justice to sanction the judges and other public figures guilty of the fact that the Republic of Moldova had lost lawsuits at the European Court of Human Rights. This was despite the fact that the subject was older, i.e. the measures for recovery of damages incurred by the state due to losing certain cases at the Strasbourg Court were launched on January 27th, 2016, a month and a half before the event, hence, that information was related only tangentially to the Assembly. There was a **change of emphases and a camouflage** of other acts produced during the event, especially of the criticism uttered by some judges from the rostrum, with regard to political influence over the justice and to the corruption in the system. So, the audience was unable to find out what really happened there: who and what speeches uttered, what the magistrates thought about the problems in the system or the way how they responded to the accusation of the lack of trust or integrity.

Sputnik.md treated the subject in a similar manner, reproducing fragments of the speech of the Minister of Justice without balancing the news, as required by the journalistic standards^[2], with the reaction of the second sources, i.e. representatives of the criticized system (Superior Council of Magistracy, Supreme Court of Justice, courts).

Prime TV based the news on the initiative on recovery of the damages suffered by the state due to the actions of judges and other dignitaries too. Being headed 'Reform of the Justice Scaring the Magistrates', the news began with the statement '*The initiative of Minister of Justice to make financially responsible those, who were guilty of sentencing of Moldova at the ECHR, upset some magistrates*'. Both the heading and the phrase misled the consumers because it did not seem from that what followed that the reform would frighten or upset the magistrates.

Ziarul National and *Jurnal TV* focused on criticisms addressed to the system and to the opinions expressed by the judges and court presidents. *Ziarul National* headlined 'Harsh CRITICISM at the General Assembly of Judges. Minister of Justice Announcing the NEWS in the System' and quoted there the magistrate

[1] Case study <http://mediacritica.md/studiu-de-caz-adunarea-general-a-judecatorilor-prestatia-ministrului-justitiei-vs-vocea-neauzita-magistratilor/>

[2] http://ijc.md/Publicatii/resurse/jurnalistica_grigoryan_ro.pdf

Tatiana Raducanu, who talked about the bad image of justice and urged the colleagues not to yield to any pressure when judging certain cases, as well as the Minister Cebotari with the information about innovations he wanted to introduce in the court administration. *Jurnal TV* aired the news lasting about five minutes, posted on the website and headed 'Taking Potshots at the Court of Justice'. The reporters of this channel offered more space to oral interventions of judges, including in the news a piece of the speeches of four magistrates, who had critical opinions about the Ministry of Justice and the Superior Council of Magistracy and talked about corruption in the system. When it came to the Minister of Justice, it was only announced that 'both the Minister of Justice and several magistrates' contradicted the SCM President, who said that quality of the justice acts had improved in 2015.

Reflecting such an event expressing several relevant opinions, the journalists had the task to quote sources so as to respect the balance of opinions and to present the facts in a manner as closer to the reality as possible. However, the information was presented to the public selectively, depending on the editorial policy of the media channel.

Subject 5. Manifestations on March 2nd, to Commemorate Those, Who Fallen in 1992 in the Course of the Dniester War^[1]

On March 2nd, 2016, there took place several events to commemorate those, who lost their lives in the course of the 1992 Dniester war, including a meeting, which took place in Chisinau, with participation of the Government representatives. The veterans of the armed conflict laid the flowers and marched till the Memorial Complex in Pantelimon Halippa Street.

In its news bulletin at 07:00 p.m., *Jurnal TV* broadcasted the six-minute news placed earlier on the web-site under the heading 'Candu booed by the Combatants'. The first video sequence in the news comprised the final part of the speech of the Parliament chairman Andrian Candu and the moment when the meeting participants were shouting 'It's a shame!'. Further, the journalists informed about the fact that the officials and veterans laid the flowers. Then there followed a grouping of voices of the participants of the Dniester war, saying that they were unsatisfied with their living conditions, but some of them explained why they had responded to Candu's speech in such a way. *'The nation's leadership turned their backs on us and does not respect us anymore. They reduced our benefits and everything else. They*

forgot about us. They forgot to give us apartments, they forgot to render us assistance...', – said one of the participants.

The reporters did not ask those interviewed what pension they had, so as that the TV audience would be able to assess whether it was small or big; what benefits had been annulled and when, during what Government. The veterans' opinions were presented so as that to render an impression that namely the actual leadership was responsible for annulment of benefits and for small pensions, although the actual leadership had been holding the power for less than two months... For the purpose of right information sharing, the journalists had to publish the official data about the amount of pensions and allowances, which the veterans and disabled servicemen of the Dniester war benefited from, which would comply with the deontological rule stipulating verification of the information. The same news included two video clips lasting, in total, for a minute or so, where two of the leaders of the party 'Platform of Dignity and Truth' Andrei Nastase and Alexandru Slusari criticized the leadership and made public statements.

Hence, the journalistic material lacked equilibrium and that very event was used to promote some political actors and, respectively, to smear some others, whose opinion was not included at all. There were prevailing the accusing opinions addressed to the leadership and the used sources transmitted the information, which was not checked by the reporters.

In the course of the day, *Publika TV* informed about commemorating events and the journalists combined the actions that took place in two localities – Cocieri, a village where battles took place in 1992, and Chisinau, in their materials broadcasted in the news bulletin at 07:00 p.m. The reporters discussed with three veterans, who narrated about the moments from the battle but did not refer to their actual life or to the county situation. That reportage also included a fragment from Andrian Candu's speech and the images were edited so as that there was **ignored** the reaction of those, who listened to him. As it was seen from other media sources, the veterans shouted 'It's a shame!...' Thus, there was reflected only a part of the facts.

Accenttv.md announced in those two news reflecting the subject about the fact that there would take place a march, and referred to the commemorating action organized by the Party of Socialists (PSRM) on the bridge over the Dniester river in the locality of Vadul-lui-Voda. The journalists informed just in the first proposition that the PSRM representatives laid the flowers on the bridge, and reproduced in the remaining part of the text the statements of the leader Igor Dodon with regard to the Dniester conflict and his promises related to settlement of the Transnistrian conflict through federalization of the Republic of Moldova, in case if the socialists took the power. The text was accompa-

[1] Case study <http://mediacritica.md/studiu-de-caz-manifestatiile-din-2-martie-selectarea-faptelor-si-promovarea-politica/>

nied by photographs and a video sequence with Igor Dodon's statements. We may deduce from the way the event was reflected in, that the authors did not follow the goal to give the complete information to the consumers but contented themselves with a unilateral and selective approach. Moreover, the facts were used as a trigger for political promotion of the Party of Socialists and its leader.

Subject 6. Protests of the Motor Vehicle Owners against Road Tax Increase (March 29th and 30th, 2016)^[1]

Several media sources informed on March 29th and 30th that tens of drivers blocked with their cars the access roads to Cahul-Oancea customs point, since they had a grudge against a provision from the budgetary and tax policy approved by the Government and related to increase of the road tax for the owners of the motor vehicles registered abroad. The owners of the motor vehicles registered in the Republic of Moldova took part in the protest too, claiming for non-increase of the fuel excise duties and taxes for car import.

The program [Newsroom dated March 30th](#) on *Publika TV* dedicated 10 minutes to this subject and included therein a reporter's live standup on the site, the news and the studio discussion with a journalist of that channel. Nevertheless, the material lacked one of the mandatory sources: protesting drivers. The journalists narrated about that event, however, they ignored the initiators and protagonists. The subject, in its essence, referred to a conflict between two parties – leadership and a group of people. The reasons of a party were ignored but the reasons of their adversaries were emphasized. Thus, there took place a **selective and unilateral presentation of the information**. This means that, according to the [Journalist's Ethical Code](#), a journalist shall ask for opinion of all subject-related parties. The reporters forgot to inform about the fact that another reason for protests was increase of the tax on vehicle import but the indignation due to increase of the fuel excise duties was announced in passing, in a journalist's live standup on the site. The studio discussion with the journalist Aleksandr Barbov, as well, was focused on dissatisfaction of the owners of the motor vehicles registered abroad, however, without mentioning the planned increase of the fuel excise duties, which would affect the entire population. The invitee presented several arguments for the Government's proposals and accused the owners of the motor vehicles registered abroad. As a consequence, *Newsroom* presented that protest in a manner favorable only for a part - leadership.

Jurnal TV [offered more details](#) about the protest, however, the news had the signs of disequilibrium, since the only source used was the drivers. The reporters neither included in the news the reasons of the Ministry of Finance for increase; nor the response of the authorities to the protest and to the accusations made by

the participants was requested, although one of the accusations referred to the fact that *'increasing the taxes, the leadership tried to recover the billion stolen from the banking system'*. However, there was included, as a response, a background phrase saying that some days ago *'the Minister of Finance Octavian Armasu declared that the authorities were trying to find solutions for this case, but gave to understand that they would NOT renounce increase of the vignette'*.

Subject 7. Protest Organized by the Party 'Platform of Dignity and Truth' on April 24th^[2]

On 04.24.2016 Sunday, in Chisinau, there took place a protest action organized by the 'Platform of Dignity and Truth' and claiming for, amongst other things, conduct of early parliamentary elections on the same day with the presidential election on October 30th cy. The manifestation started in the Great National Assembly Square but thereafter, the protesters surrounded the building of the Government. After that, they marched till the residence of the democrat Vlad Plahotniuc in Bulgara Street and to the location of GBC Company belonging to him, in Cantemir Avenue. There were confrontations in both places, between the demonstrators and the policemen, who formed the protective cordons but somebody from the crowd threw eggs and stones into the public order defenders. On the second day, the Minister of Internals announced that there had been open a criminal case on mass disorders and that 17 policemen had been wounded.

The elements of **fact concealment, mixture of truth and lies, and selective presentation of facts** may be distinguished in the [news broadcasted on the April 24th evening](#) by *Publika TV*. Example of the text: *'In some minutes, the protesters broke through the police cordon besides the building of the Municipal Prosecutor's Office in Bulgara Street'*. As a matter of fact, the protesters went to Bulgara Street, in order to picket the house, where Vladimir Plahotniuc lived. The police cordon was there namely due to that reason, but not in order to protect the building of the Municipal Prosecutor's Office, as it became known from the news. The journalists **concealed** the reason why the column of demonstrators had been exactly in that place. The fact that the information with the motifs was ignored in the news, might mislead the consumer and create an impression that the uncontrolled crowd had been destroying everything in their way and attacking the policemen. Another example: *'Another group of protesters went to an office*

[1] Case study <http://mediacritica.md/studiu-de-caz-nemultumirea-proprietarilor-de-autoturisme-fata-de-majorarea-taxei-de-drum-protest-fara-protestatari/>

[2] Case study <http://mediacritica.md/studiu-de-caz-protestul-din-24-aprilie-de-la-chisinau-manipulare-si-dezin-formare-en-gros/>

building, broke through the police cordon, threw stones and tried to roll over a bus'. An office building was not an object, whereto the demonstrators went accidentally, it was the headquarters of Global Business Center Company belonging to the politician and businessman Vladimir Plahotniuc, whom the demonstrators accused of capturing the state. There was also concealed the fact that the protest leaders had been calling the crown for calming down and stopping the acts of violence, and had been speaking of the risk of existence of some provocateurs. The news on *Publika TV* also lacked other relevant information on the protest, such as approval of a resolution, vindications formulated by the protesters, accusations of the Government, etc. Thus, the consumer found nothing but selective information about that event.

The majority of [news](#) about the protest, broadcasted on April 24th morning hours by *Publika TV* and *Publika.md* repeated the phrase *'The experts qualify this manifestation as an action of launching of the electoral campaign of the party 'Platform of Dignity and Truth', which is led from behind by the oligarchs Victor and Viorel Topa'*. Despite this, there was quoted none of the concrete experts, who would formulate that idea. Thus, there was made an attempt to pass off the protesters' vindications and, meanwhile, to establish credibility in the idea that there took place an electoral action. Other news on *Publika* operated with an **inexact quotation**, and this resulted in distortion of the initial message: ['CREHR Observers: Protests in the Capital Center Being the Acts of Severe Hooliganism'](#). The President of the Center for Resources for Human Rights Sergiu Ostaf listed in a Facebook post the preliminary conclusions of the CREHR observers on protest and said that throwing stones in policemen, i.e. an action taking place in Bulgara Street and in Cantemir Avenue, might be qualified as 'severe hooliganism'. The journalists divorced the qualification 'severe hooliganism' from the context and used it in the heading, extending it throughout the whole manifestation. In other words, the protest in the Great National Assembly Square was marked with no acts of violence. This procedure of manipulation through heading is acknowledged by the [specialists](#) as one of the most wide-spread, particularly, within the online medium, where the majority of consumers read and remember only headings. The similar, i.e. defective, manner was used [to quote](#), as well, a worker of the Delegation of the European Union to Chisinau, who wanted to keep the anonymity and who spoke to a reporter of [Newsmaker.md](#), wherefrom it was taken by *Publika*.

Invoking *RIA Novosti*, *Novostipmr.com* informed only about the reason for the protest and about the fact that the demonstrators surrounded the building of the Government. The other part of the facts – picketing of those two buildings and clashes with the police, **was ignored**.

Some news of *Sputnik.md*, broadcasted on April 24th **commented the facts and gave the value judgements** so as that the texts would reveal the authors' opinion. Example: the news ['Protest Organizers Preparing their Alibi'](#) attested: *'A TV-channel close to the 'Platform of Dignity and Truth' is preparing the site for the Sunday protest organizers to get off with a whole skin, in case if the manifestation overflows into violence'*. The presence of the reporter's opinion in the news contradicted the [Code of Ethics](#) binding the journalists to present the facts in a neutral manner and without appreciations.

The news on *Jurnal TV* ['New Large-Scale Protest in the Capital'](#) showed a leader of the 'Platform of Dignity and Truth' naming from the rostrum the chairman of the Supreme Court of Justice Mihai Poalelungi 'the most corrupted judge in the Republic of Moldova', without asking for a response from the person viewed. Both [Publika TV](#) and [Jurnal TV](#) used the labelling 'oligarch' in all the news, wherein there was mentioned, respectively, the politician and businessman Vlad Plahotniuc, the owner of this channel, and the businessman Victor Topa, the owner of *Jurnal TV* channel, presently staying in Germany. **Labelling** was aimed to diminish credibility and to weaken authority of the persons viewed, and, as a consequence, might develop speech clichés and, later, thinking clichés.

The elements of **emotional manipulation through use of music and lyrics** were identified, as well, on *Jurnal TV*. The news bulletin on this channel at 07:00 p.m. broadcasted a [video fragment](#) that had the generic role, before and after the news block about the Sunday protests on April 24th. Against the background of the images with the crowd gathered in the Great National Assembly Square, there was heard the 'Song of Sunrises' by Alexei Mateevici, a composition having a pronounced message calling to revolts. The music and lyrics was appreciated as the means to generate the emotions and to manipulate emotionally the wide public. Use of such a procedure is accepted in case of movies, entertainment shows or documentaries but not in case of news bulletins. In this event, *Jurnal TV* channel substituted the protest organizers with itself and became a rostrum to call the people to manifestation.

The same [news bulletin on Jurnal TV](#) at 07:00 p.m. bore a sign of another technique of manipulation with the elements of propaganda – **exacerbation of facts**. This presupposed unjustified emphasizing, artificial intensification of the fact breadth and exaggeration of feelings, in order to promote certain messages or to discredit a person or groups. The same program dedicated 45 minutes of the total number of 49 minutes to the protest conducted in Chisinau. So, the rostrum speakers and their adherents in the crowd benefited from an extended space on *Jurnal*, even if many of them expressed them same ideas.

Subject 8. Court Examination of the Criminal Case Open against Vlad Filat^[1]

Several court hearings of the witnesses in the criminal case on influence traffic and passive corruption, open against the former Prime Minister Vlad Filat took place in April 2016. Since that was a subject of major public interest, i.e. it was the first time when a former Prime Minister was on the dock in the Republic of Moldova, the hearings were followed by the media, despite the fact that they were closed ones.

On *Publika TV* and *Publika.md*, some news related to this subject was based on the only source – prosecutor of that case, without verifying her affirmations and without presenting the lawyer's reaction. An example would be the news '[New Witnesses Heard in the Case of Vlad Filat: 'Subject of Accusations Being Fully Confirmed'](#)' dated April the 9th. The text said that there was heard Iurie Leanca, Victor Bodiu, Veaceslav Ionita and Victor Barbaneagra, and that the prosecutor declared: '*The subject of accusations of Vlad Filat was fully confirmed, as a consequence of witnesses' statements, particularly – the influences he had exerted on those people holding the senior positions in 2013, when there took place an additional issue of Banca de Economii shares*'. Other sources were not presented in the news. The journalists did not make any efforts to check and to prove the prosecutor's words by interviewing the people she spoke about, i.e. the witnesses themselves, some of which made the remarks to reporters just after leaving the hearing. We might deduce from such an **ignorance** that the reporters wanted to render the only point of view – that one of the part of accusation, but deliberately forgot to interview the direct sources and the opposing side. **The facts were presented unilaterally**, this being a violation of clause 2.2 of chapter II of the *Journalist Code of Ethics* stipulating that '*a journalist should ask for opinion from all subject-related parties*'. On the same day of April 15th, *Deschide.md* published the news^[2] headed '[Exclusively. List of the Witnesses Vlad Filat Reliant on](#)' and reproducing a list of 18 people, who were attested to be the defense witnesses but whose names were allegedly divulged by anonymous sources. Neither *Deschide.md*, nor media institutions taking this news – *Publika.md*, *Accenttv.md*, *Bloknot-moldova.md*, wherefrom it was taken from *Rtr.md*, made any efforts to verify the information or to ask the lawyer about the reaction.

The news '[Source: Administrator of Filat's Facebook Page – Angela Gonta](#)' was taken from an anonymous source too, presented as 'very informed source' and published on *Rtr.md*. It was taken from *Sputnik.md* and the text comprised a quotation of the prosecutor Adriana Betisor saying that the law-enforcement officers had identified the administrator of Filat's Facebook account, however, his/her name was not divulged. The anonymous source, which said that such an administrator was the politician's

wife Angela Gonta, completed in such a way the prosecutor's words. We should mention here that use of anonymous sources is not a practice of the quality journalism but, to the contrary, often serves to distribute false information^[3]. Use of the information from the anonymous sources should be accepted only under certain conditions with a mandatory check in other independent sources.

On April 19th, when a new court hearing in Vlad Filat's case took place, *Publika TV* broadcasted the news placed on the website under the heading '[Prison or Luxury Hotel? Conditions for Vlad Filat to Wait for a Sentence](#)'. Basing on an image taken from the portal *Today.md*, there was open the cell, wherein the former Prime Minister Vlad Filat was kept, and it was compared with a hotel: '*Vlad Filat lives alone in a cell in Penitentiary no.13, but the conditions, which he has been expecting the sentence in, are more like a hotel, than a prison*'. Thereafter, there was quoted a short statement of the accused's lawyer, who told that the accused lived alone in the cell at that moment, and mentioned in passing that a new hearing in the relevant case took place that day.

The consumers found from [other media](#) about the fact that on the same day, the deputies of the PLDM fraction tried once more, after several attempts of the same kind, to submit a guarantee for release of Vlad Filat, however, the court dismissed their motion. **Ignorance of such information and change of the news accents** from the attempt of his colleagues (insisting on arrest inopportunity) to release him, to presentation of the detention conditions as luxury ones, offered a distorted reality to the wide public. The consumer would be left with an impression that Vlad Filat was ensured preferential conditions at the penitentiary.

On April 21st, when the judges extended Vlad Filat's arrest warrant for a 30-day period, there appeared the news on *Publika.md* '[Vlad Filat's Case: Chosen Defense Witnesses Not Hurrying to Come to Help the Former Prime Minister](#)'. Despite the fact that the information was presented again from the only source, i.e. the prosecutor, the reporters mentioned only in passing about real news – extension of the arrest warrant for another month, and focused on the information they had broadcasted earlier

[1] <http://mediacritica.md/studiu-de-caz-examinarea-instanta-dosarului-penal-deschis-pe-numele-lui-vlad-filat-putine-surse-si-mult-dat-cu-parerea/>

[2] <http://deschide.md/ro/news/politic/26398/EXCLUSIV--Lista-martorilor-in-care-pune-speranta-Vlad-Filat.htm>

[3] Case study. Stimulation of critical thinking in journalists. http://www2.cji.ro/userfiles/file/Gandirea_critica/2_%20Scandalul%20Monica%20Macovei%20la%20Costinesti.pdf

(that the defense would have problems with witness summoning). This might be understood as **an ignorance and repetition for the manipulator purposes**. Hence, there was made an attempt to pass off the fact that, despite the requests of the defense and party colleagues, Vlad Filat was still kept in custody, and, meanwhile, to establish credibility of the idea that the accused had nothing to defend himself with, since his witnesses did not want to bear testimonies.

Some of the news about Vlad Filat's proceedings, placed on *Publika.md* and *Sputnik.md* were accompanied by the photographs, wherein the former Prime Minister was caught with various grimaces that might be interpreted as expressing [confusion](#), [dissatisfaction](#), [discomfort](#) or [non-esthetic positions](#). The video or photo images are used in journalism to witness from the scene, to establish credibility of some information or to help the consumer to understand the message better. When there are no images of the event, the journalists may use archive photographs or videos that are related to the subject, they narrate about. As for the above cases, although there was a possibility to place some photographs or video spots made before or after the court hearings, the journalists decided to attach to the texts some old photographs of Vlad Filat, some of them being made in Parliament but not transmitting any subject-related message and, to the contrary, presenting him in unfavorable circumstances.

In the news referring to this subject and broadcasted by *Ziarul-national.md* on April 13th, '[Court Hearings in Filat's Case May Be Public. The Defense Witnesses Coming to the Court](#)', the businessman Ilan Sor was presented as 'controversial Ilan Sor'. Labelling, especially in the news, is a practice not conforming to the deontological rules. The communication specialists include labelling within the techniques of informational manipulation, arguing that it contributes to creation of some speech clichés that, in their turn, would lead to thinking clichés^[1].

CONCLUSIONS

- A part of the monitored media institutions reflected the events that were the subject of this study, in a manner deviating from the Journalist Code of Ethics, namely: they transmitted information from the sole source, exaggerated the facts, presented commented information and used labeling, to the detriment of well-balanced information sharing and opinion pluralism. The cases of violation of the deontological rules and use of the techniques for informational manipulation were particularly stated when narrating about the internal events bearing the major political backgrounds

[1] Bogdan Ficeac, Manipulation Techniques, <http://www.docfoc.com/bogdan-ficeac-tehnici-de-manipulare-5654bd36-deb8d>

and about the subjects of external policy related to conflict situations.

- The elements of informational manipulation and propaganda were stated in the news of **Publika TV, RTR, REN TV, Jurnal TV, Sputnik.md, Accenttv.md**.
- In the subjects related to the political sphere, a part of the monitored institutions looked with favor on some political actors but was malicious to others in the texts and images, thus presenting the facts in a distorted way.
- The institutions that broadcasted the Russian-language content, presented the events in Russia, Ukraine and Syria from a point of view that was exceptionally favorable for the Russian Federation (by selecting the subjects, formulating the text, combining the images and drafting the subjects and headings), without ensuring the complete and equidistant information sharing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- When realizing the news and drafting the news editions as a whole, the media institutions should be governed exclusively by the rules of the Code of Ethics and by the quality standards in journalism, in order to reflect the reality in a proper way and to offer the objective, equidistant and clear information to the wide public.
- The journalists should abandon the practices of: unilateral presentation of the facts; using the anonymous sources without verifying the information; and commenting the information, if such practices are not included in the opinion shows or rubrics.
- The editors and proofreaders, who take and rebroadcast the news from other channels, should complete the information broadcasted and should verify it in independent sources, in the event if such news is not complete or comes from anonymous sources.
- The media institutions should select the subjects, depending on the public interest but not on other criteria, such as political or any other interests of the media trust owners.
- The media institutions should not substitute the political groups with themselves, when they criticize the situation in the country or call the people to manifestations or revolts. The journalists shall have the mission of narrating the facts in an equidistant and neutral manner.
- The owners and heads of the media institutions should re-

frain from transforming the media means into tools of propaganda and manipulation with the public opinion.

- The Coordinating Council on Audiovisual should monitor the way, in which the broadcasting organizations ensure the opinion pluralism and abide by the autochthonous laws, as well as to the European rules in the audiovisual sphere, when it comes to correct, objective and pluralist informa-

tion sharing, and should make inquiries, if required.

- The media consumers are recommended to get informed from several media sources, in order to avoid the risk of receiving erroneous and manipulating information.

This report was realized by the media expert Viorica Zaharia

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The Independent Journalism Center

ISSN 1857-002x

Director: Nadine GOGU

The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the IJC.

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Articles titled „Press freedom”, „Press and state authorities”, „Letter of law”,..., „Ethics and professionalism”, „Online journalism” and „Experiences” were writing as part of the Advocacy campaigns aimed at improving transparency of media ownership, Access to information and promotion of EU values and integration project, implemented by the IJC which is in turn part of the Moldova Partnerships for Sustainable Civil Society project, implemented by FHI 360.

The publication of these articles was made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The contents are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or of the United States Government.