



MEDIA MONITORING DURING THE ELECTORAL PERIOD AND ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

for the presidential elections of November 1, 2020

Report no. 5
October 23-31, 2020



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

I. GENERAL DATA

1.1 Project goal: Monitoring and informing the public about the editorial behavior of media outlets during the electoral period and electoral campaign for the presidential elections in the Republic of Moldova.

1.2 Monitoring period: September 14, 2020 – November 15, 2020.

1.3 Criteria for selecting media outlets to be monitored:

Media outlets were selected on the basis of the following objective criteria:

- a) form of ownership;
- b) geography;
- c) language of broadcasting;
- d) audience.

Thus, the monitoring refers to public and private media outlets with national and regional coverage, broadcasting in Romanian and Russian.

1.4 Monitored media outlets: Accent TV, Jurnal TV, Moldova 1, NTV-Moldova, Prime TV, Primul în Moldova, Pro TV, Publika TV, Televiziunea Centrală, TV8.

1.5 Television programs subject to monitoring (between 17:00 and 23:00):

- a) main newscasts;
- b) electoral programs;
- c) electoral debates.

1.6 Methodological framework

Statistical data: Data were collected and analyzed on the basis of a monitoring methodology developed by the Oxford Media Research Center for the monitoring projects of the international organization for freedom of expression Article 19. The methodology was updated in late 2018 and early 2019 with the assistance of experts from the Italian organization Osservatorio di Pavia.

This methodology is characterized by the use of 1) quantitative indicators, including the type, duration, topics of media coverage, news sources, frequency and duration of electoral competitors' appearances in news; and 2) qualitative indicators, establishing the tone in which political actors and electoral candidates were presented. Each news story or opinion is subject to a content and context assessment to determine whether it is favorable or unfavorable to a party/electoral competitor. A positive or negative content and/or context of a news story does not necessarily indicate the bias or partisanship of the media outlet that broadcast the news. A story might favor or disfavor one of the subjects, and yet be unbiased and professionally correct. Only if one of the subjects tends to be constantly favored or disfavored over a certain period of time, one can say there is imbalance.

ABBREVIATIONS

CPA — central public administration

LPA — local public administration

CEC — Central Electoral Commission

BE Unirea — Electoral Bloc Unirea

PACE — “We Build Europe at Home” Party

PAS — Action and Solidarity Party

PCRM — Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova

PLDM — Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova

PDM — Democratic Party of Moldova

PNL — National Liberal Party

PPDA — Dignity and Truth Platform Party

PP Şor — Shor Party

PSRM — Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova

PUN — National Unity Party

II. DATA ANALYSIS

General conclusions

Between October 23 and October 31, 2020, the 10 monitored television stations broadcast a total of 629 materials with direct and indirect electoral tangency, with a total airtime of approximately 53 hours. Of these, 587 were news stories, 26 programs, and 16 debates, which were organized at 5 of the 10 monitored stations.

Topics. The most often addressed topics related to politics (287), the electoral process (140), and social issues (74). The stations informed about the campaign activities of electoral candidates, accusations launched by some electoral competitors against others, the results of electoral surveys, civil society reports on the fairness of candidates in elections, the work of the Central Electoral Commission. Materials on social issues were of direct electoral nature (electoral promises of competitors to increase pensions, salaries, etc.), but also indirect, about the activity of central and local public administration, which could favor or disfavor some candidates for the position of head of state.

Protagonists/sources. In the analyzed news stories and programs, the most often cited/mentioned were citizens (230); representatives of CEC (144); Government (112); LPA (97); diplomats, officials, and foreign observers (64); experts (59); and civil society (56). The three parties most cited/targeted in news were Pro Moldova (132 times), PSRM (76), and Shor Party (62), and the top three candidates in terms of frequency of approach were Igor

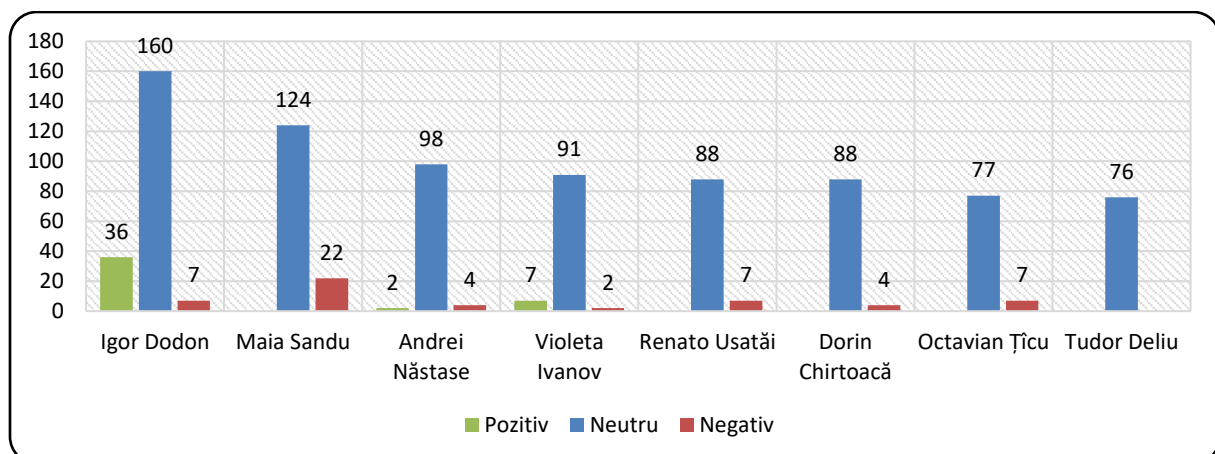
Dodon, independent candidate supported by PSRM (208 appearances/mentions, with direct speech of 1,851 seconds); Maia Sandu, PAS candidate (147 appearances/mentions, with direct speech of 1,103 seconds); and Andrei Nastase, PPDA candidate, (105 appearances/mentions, with direct speech of 928 seconds).

Gender. Most of the times, the sources/protagonists cited/mentioned in materials were men (60%), with women accounting for 23%, which is 3 percentage points more than in the previous monitoring period.

The tone of coverage. The political parties that were presented mostly neutrally, but also in positive light, were Shor Party (17 times) and PSRM (14 times). These parties also appeared three times in negative light, along with Pro Moldova, PAS, and PDM. The tone of presentation of the central public authorities, especially the Government, was 45 times positive, 65 times neutral, and once negative, and of the LPA – 10 times positive, 9 times neutral, and 4 times negative.

Electoral candidates were presented neutrally in newscasts and programs in most cases. Igor Dodon had the most appearances in positive light (36 times), benefiting at the same time from the positive materials about the activity of the central public administration and the local public administration, but also of the PSRM (69 in total). At the same time, Igor Dodon had 7 appearances in negative light as an electoral competitor, being disadvantaged by the negative coverage of PSRM, CPA, and LPA (8 in total). The tone of presentation of the Shor Party candidate Violeta Ivanov was positive 7 times, and she was also advantaged by the positive appearances of Shor Party (17 times) and disadvantaged by the negative appearances of this party (3 times). The PAS candidate Maia Sandu was disadvantaged by negative tone in 22 cases.

The tone of presentation of candidates in news and programs of electoral nature, frequency / 10 stations



Media behavior

Between October 23 and 31, 2020, the public television station Moldova 1 offered access to news to all electoral candidates who organized campaign activities, presenting them neutrally in most cases, as well as political parties. Among electoral competitors, Igor Dodon,

independent candidate supported by PSRM, appeared once in a negative context, about the accusations made by participants in debates, and the Government representatives were presented mainly neutrally and twice in positive light. The station treated all electoral competitors who appeared in news about the campaign equally, talking about their electoral objectives.

Primul în Moldova, NTV Moldova, and Accent TV often used the same angles of approach, showing clearly privileged treatment of some electoral candidates. These stations followed and broadly covered the campaign activities of Igor Dodon, independent candidate supported by PSRM, who was massively favored both by the high frequency of appearances/airtime allocated to direct speech (65 appearances/mentions, with direct speech of 1,075 seconds), as well as by the positive tone (34 times). The stations also broadcast 64 positive materials about the activity of PSRM, CPA, and LPA, which were favorable for Igor Dodon. The PAS candidate Maia Sandu was mentioned more than cited at these stations (55 appearances/mentions, with direct speech of 155 seconds), and the tone of her presentation was negative in 22 cases. The other competitors were presented less often. It should be noted that most of the candidates, with the exception of Renato Usatii of Our Party, appeared in at least one news story about their electoral platforms. Igor Dodon had most of such appearances, being featured daily in extensive news stories. He was the protagonist of 18 news stories that presented his electoral promises, while the other candidates were the protagonists of at least 1-2 news stories about the campaign. In some cases, the station included in relevant materials either its own critical opinions on the electoral objectives, or certain footage aimed to present the candidates in negative light.

Prime TV provided equal access to all electoral candidates, who were presented in several news stories about their electoral objectives, mostly in neutral light. The political parties mentioned/cited in materials appeared neutrally in most cases, except for Shor Party, which also had five appearances in positive light. Likewise, CPA representatives appeared in the news mostly in a neutral context.

Publika TV informed about the electoral promises of most of the electoral competitors, with the exception of Tudor Deliu, the PLDM candidate, whose activities were not covered. Most of the relevant materials presented the electoral candidates in neutral light, as well as the representatives of political parties and public institutions.

Jurnal TV treated the competitors equally in the news, informing about the electoral meetings/promises of them all, the tone of coverage being in most cases neutral. Igor Dodon, independent candidate supported by PSRM, had four appearances in negative light, especially in programs. Political parties were presented mostly neutrally, with the exception of Pro Moldova and PSRM, which were presented in negative light once each.

Pro TV Chisinau informed about the electoral objectives of the majority of candidates, with the exception of Igor Dodon and Violeta Ivanov, and the news stories were mainly based on statements from electoral debates. The majority of electoral competitors were presented in a neutral tone, except for Igor Dodon, who also had two appearances in negative light. Most of the parties were presented neutrally, as were the public institutions.

TV8 covered the electoral campaign mostly in programs with direct or indirect electoral tangency. The station did not inform in the news about the electoral objectives of the candidates, except for Maia Sandu of PAS, Dorin Chirtoaca of BE Unirea, and Octavian Ticu of PUN, who were the protagonists of news stories based on statements made during debates. The other candidates were featured in news on topics other than the campaign. Most of the time, the tone of presentation of electoral candidates was neutral. Igor Dodon, independent candidate supported by PSRM, had two appearances in negative light, especially in programs. Political parties and public institutions were presented neutrally.

Televiziunea Centrală provided relatively equal access to news to electoral candidates. Igor Dodon, independent candidate supported by PSRM, had the most appearances/mentions, and Violeta Ivanov of Shor Party had the most airtime for direct speech. The station informed about the campaign activities of most candidates, with the exception of Octavian Ticu of PUN and Tudor Deliu of PLDM. Most of the electoral candidates were presented neutrally, except for Violeta Ivanov, who was presented positively 4 times and neutrally 4 times. Violeta Ivanov was also favored by the positive appearances of Shor Party (12), the tone of presentation of the other parties being neutral.

Moldova 1



Between October 23 and 31, 2020, the public television station Moldova 1 broadcast 96 news stories and one program of direct and indirect electoral nature, and 4 electoral debates, with a total duration of 18,017 seconds or 5 hours.

Topics. Most often, the relevant topics referred to politics (33), the electoral process (23), social issues (13), external relations (8), and economy (7). Topics such as education, expatriates, sports, corruption, integrity, environment, and so on were also addressed.

During the reporting period, Moldova 1 informed about the meetings of all candidates with voters, accusations of some competitors against others, the results of three electoral polls, the activity of CEC, precautions on election day and banning of voters being transported to polling stations, accreditation of national and international observers. At the same time, the station broadcast materials with indirect electoral tangency, about activities and initiatives of the central public administration, such as allowances granted to young workers in the seed production industry (large allowances, as for young teachers or doctors), or the Government's announcement that pensions and allowances for pensioners were paid almost in full.

Protagonists/sources. The relevant materials broadcast by Moldova 1 cited/mentioned several protagonists, most often representatives of the CEC (23), civil society (15), citizens (10), etc. Among public institutions, the most often cited/mentioned were representatives of the Government (10 times), with 176 seconds on the screen and 146 seconds of direct speech.

Maia Sandu (PAS), Dorin Chirtoaca (BE Unirea), and Igor Dodon (independent candidate supported by PSRM) were the candidates cited/mentioned most often on Moldova 1, and among the first among political parties was Pro Moldova. The station treated all electoral competitors equally, presenting them in news stories about the campaign, talking about their electoral objectives.

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of candidates in news and programs, seconds

Subjects	Political affiliation	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Maia Sandu	Action and Solidarity Party	17	449	148
Dorin Chirtoacă	BE Unirea	16	382	126
Igor Dodon	Independent/Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	16	343	108
Andrei Năstase	Dignity and Truth Platform Party	14	366	152
Violeta Ivanov	Shor Party	14	300	68
Octavian Țicu	National Unity Party	12	286	75
Renato Usatîi	Our Party	12	262	96
Tudor Deliu	Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova	10	230	81

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of parties in news and programs, seconds

Subjects	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Pro Moldova Party	8	111	37
Action and Solidarity Party	7	35	0
Dignity and Truth Platform Party	6	30	0
Our Party	5	25	0
Shor Party	5	25	0
Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	4	20	0
Electoral Bloc Unirea	3	15	0
National Unity Party	2	10	0
Democratic Party of Moldova	1	5	0

All candidates or their representatives took part in electoral debates, except for Violeta Ivanov (Shor Party) and Igor Dodon (independent candidate supported by PSRM). The participants benefited from equal time, and the moderators behaved impartially in relation to participants, intervening correctly when necessary.

Gender. Most of the times, the sources and protagonists of relevant materials on Moldova 1 were men (56%), women being mentioned or cited in 18% of cases.

Tone. In the vast majority of cases, electoral candidates were presented neutrally, as were political parties. Among the candidates, Igor Dodon, supported by PSRM, appeared once in a negative context, being accused by participants in the debates, and Government representatives were presented mainly neutrally (8 times) and twice in positive light.



Between October 23 and 31, 2020, the television station Accent TV broadcast 67 news stories and two programs with electoral tangency, with a total airtime of 10,815 seconds or 3 hours. About 10 percent of the news was given priority by appearing at the beginning of newscasts. The station did not hold electoral debates during the reporting period.

Topics. Among the topics most often addressed by Accent TV were those related to politics (37), the electoral process (11), economy (5), LPA (4), social issues (3). Accent TV broadcast several materials about Igor Dodon’s visits to the regions of Moldova, as well as calls to action and statements made by the independent candidate supported by PSRM. At the same time, Accent TV broadcast materials about the activity of LPA and CPA, including topics about city development projects in Chisinau, managed by the representatives of Chisinau Mayor’s Office, led by PSRM exponent Ion Ceban. Topics of indirect electoral nature include approval of the first tranche of the loan granted by the Russian Federation to help Moldovan farmers, with the note that Igor Dodon has negotiated with Vladimir Putin to make this happen; the 3-fold increase of compensations for people with locomotor disabilities; the Government’s involvement in solving the problems of some localities; and so on.

Protagonists/sources. Relevant materials often cited/mentioned representatives of the CEC (17 times); civil society (10); diplomats, officials, and foreign observers (9); LPA (9); citizens (7); experts (5). Members of the Government had 14 appearances of 242 seconds and direct interventions of 96 seconds. Igor Dodon, independent candidate supported by PSRM, was the competitor with the largest presence in the relevant materials of Accent TV, both in terms of frequency and airtime allocated to direct speech. Maia Sandu of PAS and Renato Usatii of Our Party were targeted/mentioned without being cited. Political parties, with the exception of PSRM, were only mentioned, without direct speeches.

During the reporting period, Accent TV covered in detail the campaign activities of Igor Dodon (5 news stories on electoral objectives and one in his support), Violeta Ivanov (in 4 news stories), Andrei Nastase (in 3 news stories about electoral promises). The other candidates, with the exception of Maia Sandu of PAS and Renato Usatii of Our Party, were the protagonists of 1-2 news stories about the campaign. Sandu and Usatii were only mentioned in the news without direct speeches.

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of candidates in news and programs, seconds

Subjects	Political affiliation	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Igor Dodon	Independent/Party of Socialists of	16	940	254

	the Republic of Moldova			
Maia Sandu	Action and Solidarity Party	10	791	0
Violeta Ivanov	Shor Party	9	229	89
Octavian Țicu	National Unity Party	8	130	34
Andrei Năstase	Dignity and Truth Platform Party	7	182	62
Tudor Deliu	Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova	7	176	81
Dorin Chirtoacă	BE Unirea	7	158	70
Renato Usatîi	Our Party	4	179	0

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of parties in news and programs, seconds

Subjects	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	5	2,176	2,138
Pro Moldova Party	4	20	0
Action and Solidarity Party	1	5	0
Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova	1	5	0
Democratic Party of Moldova	1	182	0

Gender. The analyzed materials were unbalanced in terms of gender, 59% of the relevant sources being men, and 18% – women.

Tone. Igor Dodon, independent candidate supported by PSRM, was the only one to have appeared in positive light (10). The other competitors appeared mostly in neutral light, but also negative, and most of the negative appearances were of Maia Sandu of PAS (4). The tone of presentation of political parties was predominantly neutral. Among public institutions, the Government had the most appearances in positive light – 11, especially in stories of indirect electoral nature, which favored Igor Dodon.

Jurnal TV



During the reporting period, Jurnal TV broadcast 56 news stories and 4 programs of direct or indirect electoral nature, as well as 2 debates. The total airtime allocated to materials of direct or indirect electoral nature was 30,722 seconds or about 8.5 hours.

Topics. The topics covered in newscasts and programs focused on politics (20), the electoral process (15), and social issues (14), as well as issues of corruption, law and the Constitution, human rights, and so on. The station informed about the electoral meetings of all electoral candidates; a group of MPs leaving the Pro Moldova party; the voting procedure in the localities where no places for polling stations were identified, including for voters from the

Transnistrian region; the civil society's efforts of electoral education; soundbites with citizens about their intention to vote; and so on.

Protagonists/sources. In the relevant materials, the most often cited/mentioned were citizens (32), especially in materials about opinions on electoral issues, as well as electoral candidates, primarily Igor Dodon (independent candidate supported by PSRM), Maia Sandu (PAS), Violeta Ivanov (Shor Party), and Andrei Nastase (PPDA). Sources from categories other than candidates, parties, or public institutions included experts (12); diplomats, officials, and foreign observers (7); LPA (6); CEC (6); NGOs (3). During this period, Jurnal TV focused on the meetings of all electoral competitors with voters, treating them equally in the news.

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of candidates in news and programs, seconds

Subjects	Political affiliation	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Igor Dodon	Independent/Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	20	405	105
Violeta Ivanov	Shor Party	9	245	60
Maia Sandu	Action and Solidarity Party	9	245	95
Andrei Năstase	Dignity and Truth Platform Party	8	250	75
Octavian Țicu	National Unity Party	6	150	45
Renato Usatîi	Our Party	6	160	51
Dorin Chirtoacă	BE Unirea	5	100	10
Tudor Deliu	Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova	4	70	20

All candidates or their representatives, except for Igor Dodon and Violeta Ivanov, participated in the two electoral debates organized during the reporting period. The participants got equal airtime, and the moderator had a correct and balanced behavior.

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of parties in news and programs, seconds

Subjects	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Pro Moldova Party	8	100	80
Action and Solidarity Party	2	1,350	1,025
Dignity and Truth Platform Party	2	1,030	975
Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	1	10	0
Democratic Party of Moldova	1	10	0
Shor Party	1	10	0

Gender. The majority of the relevant materials were unbalanced from a gender perspective, as most often the sources/protagonists cited/mentioned were men (67%), women accounting for 28% of the total.

Tone. The tone of presentation of electoral candidates was in most cases neutral. Igor Dodon appeared mostly in neutral light, especially in the news, but also four times in negative light, especially in programs. Political parties were presented mostly neutrally, with the exception of Pro Moldova and PSRM, which were also presented in negative light once each.

NTV Moldova



Between October 23 and 31, 2020, NTV Moldova broadcast 59 news stories and 6 programs relevant to monitoring. The airtime allocated to them was 23,971 seconds or 6.7 hours. The station did not hold any debates during the reporting period.

Topics. The most often addressed topics focused on politics (27), the electoral process (16), social issues (12), and economy (8). NTV Moldova informed about the campaign activities of some candidates, the results of electoral polls, the activity of the CEC. Most of the relevant materials covered the activities of CPA. The station also addressed topics of state subsidies for seed producers; salary increases; the Government's promises to grant 12 million lei to 22 farmers to start businesses, double compensations for irrigation, and allocate another 24 million lei to help farmers affected by drought; the significant increase in the level of water supply, due to the Government's financing of dozens of projects for the installation of aqueducts, etc.

The station also reported on the approval by the Russian government of the first tranche of the loan for Moldovan farmers, after the presidential administration in Chisinau reached an agreement with Moscow; close Moldovan-Russian relations and the export of our products to the Russian market without taxes, due to agreements between the presidential administrations of the two states; and other such issues.

Protagonists/sources. The materials with direct or indirect electoral tangency mainly cited/targeted citizens (19 times) and representatives of the local public administration (10), followed by CEC (7) and experts (3). Among public institutions, Government representatives had the most appearances/mentions (19 times, 563 seconds on the screen and 360 seconds of direct speech).

Among electoral candidates, the most present was Igor Dodon, both in terms of frequency and airtime allocated to direct speech. Next was Maia Sandu (PAS candidate), who was often targeted/mentioned and less often cited, and Andrei Nastase (PPDA candidate), who benefited from relatively larger direct speeches than other candidates. Political parties were rarely cited or mentioned.

It should be noted that all candidates, except Renato Usatii of Our Party, appeared in at least one news story about their electoral platforms. Igor Dodon had the most of such appearances, being featured daily in voluminous news stories. He was the protagonist of 7 news stories about electoral promises and one story of support. Andrei Nastase, Violeta Ivanov, and Tudor Deliu were each the protagonists of three news stories about the campaign. Maia Sandu appeared in a news story in which she talked about her electoral priorities, Octavian Ticu was featured in three news stories, and Dorin Chirtoaca appeared in two news stories, which focused either on the liquidation of Moldova as a state or on the dissensions between the two. Renato Usatii was not the protagonist of any news about his electoral objectives, but he appeared in a news story with a negative connotation. All candidates were often mentioned/listed in general news stories about elections, including electoral surveys, but also in news about the campaign, in background information.

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of candidates in news and programs, seconds

Subjects	Political affiliation	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Igor Dodon	Independent/Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	25	1,281	355
Maia Sandu	Action and Solidarity Party	22	1,833	62
Andrei Năstase	Dignity and Truth Platform Party	18	342	161
Renato Usatîi	Our Party	15	186	26
Violeta Ivanov	Shor Party	14	198	94
Tudor Deliu	Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova	13	182	82
Octavian Țicu	National Unity Party	13	213	84
Dorin Chirtoacă	BE Unirea	12	182	62

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of parties in news and programs, seconds

Subjects	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	4	73	32
Action and Solidarity Party	3	36	10
Shor Party	2	12	0
Our Party	2	13	0
Pro Moldova Party	2	10	0
Dignity and Truth Platform Party	1	5	0

Gender. From the perspective of ensuring gender balance in news and programs, NTV Moldova had a higher presence of men as sources – 62%, women being less frequently cited or mentioned in news and programs – 23%.

Tone. Igor Dodon, independent candidate supported by PSRM, had the most appearances in positive light, also benefiting from extensive airtime in the news. In addition to the positive materials about his campaign activities (14), Igor Dodon was favored by 20 positive materials about the activity of the Government and LPA. Maia Sandu of PAS was further disadvantaged by the large number of appearances in negative light (9). The other competitors were presented in neutral and negative light.

Prime TV



During the reporting period, Prime TV covered the electoral campaign in 48 election-themed news stories and 2 interviews included in newscasts, allocating a total of 7,505 seconds or 2.1 hours of airtime.

Topics. Prime TV most often covered topics related to politics (17), social issues (14), electoral process (12), etc., reporting on the campaign activities and electoral promises of electoral competitors, the results of electoral surveys, organization of the electoral process, and so on. Prime TV also broadcast news about several MPs leaving the Pro Moldova party.

Protagonists/sources. News stories most often cited/mentioned citizens (24 times); CEC (13); diplomats, officials, and foreign observers (8); and LPA representatives (8). Among public institutions, the representatives of the Government appeared the most often in the news (3 times, 94 seconds of appearance and 70 seconds of direct speech), and among political parties – Pro Moldova and Shor Party. Igor Dodon (independent candidate supported by PSRM), Maia Sandu (PAS), and Violeta Ivanov (Shor Party) were the candidates with the highest frequency of appearances in Prime TV news.

The station offered equal access to all electoral candidates in the news, without obviously favoring or disfavoring any of them. Igor Dodon (independent candidate supported by PSRM), Tudor Deliu (PLDM), Andrei Nastase (PPDA), and Violeta Ivanov (Shor Party) were presented in 3 news stories about the campaign, Maia Sandu – in 2 stories about the campaign and one of support, Renato Usatii (Our Party) – in 2 news stories, and Dorin Chirtoaca (BE Unirea) and Octavian Ticu (PUN) in one such news story each.

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of candidates in news, seconds

Subjects	Political affiliation	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Igor Dodon	Independent/Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	17	759	153
Maia Sandu	Action and Solidarity Party	13	593	141
Violeta Ivanov	Shor Party	9	394	117
Andrei Năstase	Dignity and Truth Platform Party	8	269	64
Tudor Deliu	Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova	7	144	14

Dorin Chirtoacă	BE Unirea	7	163	55
Renato Usatîi	Our Party	7	199	45
Octavian Țicu	National Unity Party	6	129	18

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of parties in news, seconds

Subjects	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Pro Moldova Party	16	252	83
Shor Party	6	149	54
Action and Solidarity Party	3	91	52
Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	2	10	0
Electoral Bloc Unirea	1	22	13
Dignity and Truth Platform Party	1	23	13

Gender. The rate of men cited/mentioned as sources/protagonists was 59%, the rate of women being 32%, which is 8 percentage points more than in the previous reporting period.

Tone. The electoral candidates were mainly presented in neutral light, Igor Dodon and Violeta Ivanov also benefiting each from an appearance/mention in positive light. The political parties mentioned/cited in materials were presented neutrally in most cases, except for Shor Party, which also had 5 appearances in positive light. Likewise, CPA representatives appeared in the news mostly in a neutral context.

Primul în Moldova



The station Primul în Moldova had in the reporting period 71 news stories with direct or indirect electoral tangency, with a total airtime of 8,843 seconds or 2.5 hours. The station did not hold electoral debates during the reporting period.

Topics. The station most often covered topics related to politics (33), the electoral process (14), economy (9), social issues (6), and so on. Materials reported about the campaign activities and statements of some electoral competitors, as well as about the results of electoral surveys. Some of the materials referred to the activity of LPA and CPA: industry development, investments in infrastructure, subsidies of millions lei offered to farmers, salary increase, support offered to the inhabitants of Chisinau, which is led by the PSRM exponent, and so on. Several news stories emphasized that successes are due to Igor Dodon: for example, in the material on the almost 2-fold increase in medical staff salaries as a result of the reform implemented this year at the initiative of President Igor Dodon and the Chicu Government, or in the material on the Moldovan-Russian agreement on social security, due to which Moldovan citizens who are working or worked in the Russian Federation could get

pensions and other allowances from this country, which mentions that Igor Dodon was the one who initiated these negotiations.

Protagonists/sources. The relevant news stories most often cited/mentioned citizens (30), Government (28), LPA (14), CEC (12), business people (6). Other sources were approached less frequently. Maia Sandu (PAS), Igor Dodon (independent candidate supported by PSRM), Andrei Nastase (PPDA), and Violeta Ivanov (Shor Party) had the most appearances, and Igor Dodon had the most voluminous direct speeches in the news. Among political parties, Pro Moldova ranked first in terms of frequency. CPA often appeared in materials (28 times, 659 seconds of appearance and 604 seconds of direct speech), as well as the local public administration, which was presented in 14 news stories, including with the presence of Ion Ceban, mayor of Chisinau and exponent of the PSRM.

The station did not provide equal access to all candidates in the news. The only candidate who was constantly presented was Igor Dodon, who was the protagonist of six large news stories on his electoral priorities. News stories about Igor Dodon's campaign were large, ranging from 157 seconds to 208 seconds, and spoke about his successes, achievements, and promises to voters. In materials about the electoral meetings of other candidates, the station either included its own critical opinions on electoral objectives, or selected certain sequences to put the candidates in negative light. Primul în Moldova informed about the electoral priorities of Violeta Ivanov of Shor Party (3 news stories, of which 2 critical), Andrei Nastase of PPDA (2 news stories, of which one critical), Maia Sandu of PAS (1 critical news story), Dorin Chirtoaca of BE Unirea (1 news story), Tudor Deliu of PLDM (1 news story), Octavian Țicu of PUN (1 critical news story), Renato Usatii of Our Party (1 critical news story). In all other cases, they were mentioned in the background information of electoral news stories or were the protagonists of stories about accusations of some candidates against others.

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of candidates, seconds

Subjects	Political affiliation	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Maia Sandu	Action and Solidarity Party	23	229	93
Igor Dodon	Independent/Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	21	564	466
Andrei Năstase	Dignity and Truth Platform Party	19	243	173
Violeta Ivanov	Shor Party	19	176	96
Dorin Chirtoacă	BE Unirea	16	136	71
Octavian Țicu	National Unity Party	16	176	106
Renato Usatii	Our Party	16	144	65
Tudor Deliu	Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova	14	148	83

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of parties in news, seconds

Subjects	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Pro Moldova Party	19	101	11
Action and Solidarity Party	5	54	44
Shor Party	5	28	8
Dignity and Truth Platform Party	3	19	9
Democratic Party of Moldova	2	17	12
Our Party	2	10	0
Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	2	10	0

Gender. The rate of men cited or mentioned as protagonists and sources was 63%, women being mentioned or cited less frequently – in 27% cases.

Tone. Igor Dodon, the independent candidate supported by PSRM, was presented 10 times in positive light and 11 times in neutral light, benefiting at the same time from the positive tone of the news about CPA (21 in total). Maia Sandu of PAS had 9 appearances/mentions in negative light and 14 in neutral light. The other candidates were presented mostly neutrally, usually in short mentions. Parties appeared in most cases neutrally.

Pro TV Chişinău



Between October 23 and 31, 2020, Pro TV Chisinau broadcast 78 relevant news stories and 4 electoral debates, with a total airtime of 26,169 seconds or 7.2 hours. About 10 percent of the analyzed news stories were prioritized, being inserted at the beginning of newscasts.

Topics. The most often approached topics focused on politics (44), followed by the electoral process (21), while social issues, human rights, the Transnistrian issue were covered less often. Materials of electoral nature informed mainly about the electoral process, the activity of the CEC, the CEC banning the conduct of exit poll on election day, the rejection by the CEC of the appeal filed by one electoral competitor against another one, the reaction of candidates to the reinstatement of judges who had been targeted in the Laundromat case, the humanitarian aid provided by a foundation that allegedly also distributed leaflets of a candidate, altercations at meetings with voters, etc.

Protagonists/sources. The sources/protagonists cited/mentioned most frequently were citizens (50 times), CEC (31), LPA (24), foreign diplomats and observers (20), civil society (12), police (12), experts (12). Among electoral competitors, Igor Dodon, independent candidate supported by PSRM, had the most appearances in the analyzed news stories. Next were Maia Sandu (PAS), Dorin Chirtoaca (BE Unirea), and Renato Usatii (Our Party). Among political parties, the PSRM, Pro Moldova, and PAS had the largest presence. Government representatives had 11 appearances, with direct speech of 46 seconds.

The station offered relatively equal access to electoral competitors to talk about their electoral objectives, and broadcast 1-2 news stories about the campaigns of the majority of candidates, with the exception of Igor Dodon and Violeta Ivanov of Shor Party. The news were mainly based on statements from electoral debates.

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of candidates in news, seconds

Subjects	Political affiliation	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Igor Dodon	Independent/Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	38	784	137
Maia Sandu	Action and Solidarity Party	25	495	283
Dorin Chirtoacă	BE Unirea	17	303	198
Renato Usatîi	Our Party	17	439	230
Andrei Năstase	Dignity and Truth Platform Party	14	206	94
Tudor Deliu	Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova	13	165	96
Octavian Țicu	National Unity Party	12	146	84
Violeta Ivanov	Shor Party	10	73	15

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of parties in news, seconds

Subjects	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	26	177	87
Pro Moldova Party	20	218	99
Action and Solidarity Party	16	229	148
Shor Party	12	121	42
Dignity and Truth Platform Party	8	169	115
National Unity Party	3	15	0
Liberal Party	3	29	16
Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova	3	15	0
Our Party	2	21	8
Democracy at Home Party	1	24	18

All candidates or their representatives participated in the electoral debates, except for Igor Dodon, independent candidate supported by PSRM, and Violeta Ivanov, candidate of Shor Party. The participants received equal time for speeches, and the moderator had a correct behavior in relation to all the candidates present in the studio.

Gender. The rate of men as sources/protagonists cited/mentioned in the relevant materials of Pro TV Chisinau (55%) prevailed over the rate of women as sources (20%).

Tone. The electoral competitors were presented mainly in neutral light, with the exception of Igor Dodon, who had 40 appearances in neutral light and 2 mentions in negative light.

Among political parties, the Shor Party was presented neutrally in 12 cases and negatively in 2 cases. The other political parties were presented neutrally, as were public institutions.

Publika TV



During the reporting period, Publika TV broadcast 36 news stories relevant to monitoring with a total duration of 4,687 seconds or 1.7 hours. The station did not hold electoral debates during the reporting period.

Topics. The topics most often covered by Publika TV related to politics (26) and the electoral process (9). Publika TV broadcast materials about the results of electoral surveys, the activities of presidential candidates and their statements, several MPs leaving the Pro Moldova party, and so on.

Protagonists/sources. Relevant news stories cited/mentioned as sources/protagonists the CEC (10) and citizens (7 times), and sporadically LPA representatives, diplomats, officials and foreign observers, police. Government representatives were targeted in six news stories (40 seconds of appearance and 15 seconds of direct speech). Political parties were rarely cited/mentioned, and the first in the top was Pro Moldova (news about the parliamentary faction being left by a group of MPs). The electoral candidates cited/mentioned most often in the news were Igor Dodon (independent candidate supported by PSRM) and Maia Sandu (PAS).

Publika TV informed about the electoral promises of most of the electoral competitors, except for Tudor Deliu of PLDM, who was only mentioned in three news stories, without direct speech. Igor Dodon and Maia Sandu had an equal number of appearances in news about the campaign, and the other candidates were the protagonists of 1-2 such stories each.

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of candidates in news, seconds

Subjects	Political affiliation	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Igor Dodon	Independent/Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	15	219	103
Maia Sandu	Action and Solidarity Party	10	161	122
Renato Usatîi	Our Party	6	64	44
Dorin Chirtoacă	BE Unirea	5	84	74
Violeta Ivanov	Shor Party	4	81	62
Andrei Năstase	Dignity and Truth Platform Party	4	43	22
Tudor Deliu	Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova	3	15	0
Octavian Țicu	National Unity Party	3	26	16

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of parties in news, seconds

Subjects	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Pro Moldova Party	14	222	27
Action and Solidarity Party	4	64	64
Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	2	10	0
Shor Party	2	10	0
Democratic Party of Moldova	1	5	0
Dignity and Truth Platform Party	1	8	0

Gender. From the perspective of ensuring gender equality, the balance was tilted towards men as sources – 68% compared to 26% of women as sources.

Tone. Most of the relevant materials presented the electoral candidates in neutral light, as well as the representatives of political parties. Igor Dodon, independent candidate supported by PSRM, was the only one who had an appearance in positive light. The Government was presented predominantly neutrally, as was the presidential administration.



During the reporting period, Televiziunea Centrală broadcast 48 news stories of direct or indirect electoral nature, one program, and two electoral debates, with total airtime of 11,956 seconds or 3.3 hours.

Topics. The topics covered during this period most often concerned politics (21), social issues (13), and the electoral process (12). The station mainly informed about the promises of presidential candidates, about the Pro Moldova Party being left by some MPs, the voting procedures in some localities where there are no polling stations, the CEC's ban on an exit poll that a non-governmental organization intended to organize, and so on. At the same time, the station had several news stories about the positive initiatives of Shor Party councilors in Chisinau, but also about the infrastructure modernization actions in several localities in the country, organized by Shor Party.

Protagonists/sources. Among electoral candidates, Igor Dodon, independent candidate supported by PSRM, had the most appearances/mentions, followed by Violeta Ivanov (Shor Party), Andrei Nastase (PPDA), and Maia Sandu (PAS). Among parties, the most often cited/mentioned in the analyzed materials were Shor Party representatives (16 times). Citizens were also often used in documenting news (26), in particular in the materials on infrastructure modernization and those on Violeta Ivanov's campaign activities, followed by LPA (12), CEC (7), and experts (3). Other sources/protagonists were cited/mentioned sporadically. The CPA was mentioned five times, without direct speech.

Violeta Ivanov of Shor Party was the protagonist of the most news stories about her electoral objectives (6), followed by Maia Sandu of PAS (4) and Andrei Nastase of PPDA (3).

Igor Dodon, Renato Usatii (Our Party), and Dorin Chirtoaca (BE Unirea) were each cited in one news story on the campaign, and Octavian Ticu (PUN) was targeted in a news story based on debates, which focused on the accusations launched there. Tudor Deliu was not cited in news stories.

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of candidates in news and programs, seconds

Subjects	Political affiliation	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Igor Dodon	Independent/Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	13	294	55
Violeta Ivanov	Shor Party	7	595	170
Andrei Năstase	Dignity and Truth Platform Party	5	290	100
Maia Sandu	Action and Solidarity Party	5	270	85
Dorin Chirtoacă	BE Unirea	2	85	20
Renato Usatîi	Our Party	2	70	30
Octavian Țicu	National Unity Party	1	45	25

Debates were attended by the representatives of the electoral candidates Andrei Nastase, Octavian Ticu, and Violeta Ivanov. Igor Dodon and Renato Usatii did not attend. The participants got equal time for speeches, and the moderator had a correct and balanced behavior, without any deviations from the rules for moderating the debates.

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of parties in news and programs, seconds

Subjects	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Shor Party	14	366	127
Pro Moldova Party	3	140	25
Action and Solidarity Party	2	65	45
Dignity and Truth Platform Party	2	45	0
Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	1	5	0

Gender. The rate of men as protagonists and sources in the relevant materials of Televiziunea Centrală was 57%, and of women – 34%, this being one of the highest indicators recorded among the monitored stations.

Tone. Most electoral candidates were presented neutrally, except for Violeta Ivanov, who was presented positively 4 times and neutrally 4 times. Igor Dodon, Octavian Ticu, and Andrei Nastase each appeared in one case in negative light. Violeta Ivanov was also favored by the positive appearances of Shor Party (12), and the tone of presentation of the other parties was neutral.



During the reporting period, TV8 had 28 news stories and 10 programs with direct or indirect electoral tangency, as well as 4 electoral debates, with a total airtime of 49,900 seconds or about 13.9 hours.

Topics. The materials broadcast by TV8 mainly related to politics (23), the electoral process (8), and integrity (5). TV8 informed about the results of electoral surveys, the campaign activities of some candidates, as well as their statements, the Pro Moldova party being left by several MPs, the activity of the CEC, and so on.

Protagonists/sources. The sources and protagonists cited/mentioned were from various categories, most often citizens (24), CEC (15), experts (15), civil society (15), LPA (9), police (9), and other media outlets (3). Among public institutions, most of the times the news cited/mentioned the representatives of the Government (15 times, with 312 seconds of appearance and 19 seconds of direct speech). The most frequently cited/mentioned electoral competitors were Igor Dodon (independent candidate supported by PSRM), Maia Sandu (PAS), and Renato Usatii (Our Party). Usatii had the most airtime for direct speeches, due to his participation in a program. In terms of frequency, Pro Moldova Party was most often targeted in news and programs, and in terms of airtime, the representatives of PCRM, PAS, and PPDA benefited from the largest space.

TV8 did not offer equal access to competitors to talk in the news about their electoral objectives. The station informed about the electoral priorities of Maia Sandu (PAS), Dorin Chirtoaca (BE Unirea), and Octavian Ticu (PUN), who were the protagonists of news stories based on the statements made during the debates. The other competitors were the protagonists of news other than those on electoral priorities.

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of candidates in news and programs, seconds

Subjects	Political affiliation	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Igor Dodon	Independent/Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	27	1,558	115
Maia Sandu	Action and Solidarity Party	13	531	74
Renato Usatii	Our Party	11	2,974	2,533
Andrei Năstase	Dignity and Truth Platform Party	9	539	45
Octavian Țicu	National Unity Party	7	417	51
Violeta Ivanov	Shor Party	6	284	23
Dorin Chirtoacă	BE Unirea	6	391	60
Tudor Deliu	Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova	5	190	51

Frequency, duration of appearance and of direct speech of parties in news and programs, seconds

Subjects	Frequency	Duration of appearance	Duration of direct speech
Pro Moldova Party	38	897	439
Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	19	542	94
Democratic Party of Moldova	13	270	0
Shor Party	13	210	25
Action and Solidarity Party	8	1,156	1,081
Dignity and Truth Platform Party	8	1,571	1,532
Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova	4	5,200	5,160
Electoral Bloc ACUM	3	25	0
Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova	3	77	15
Our Party	2	54	39

Participants in the debates were six of the eight registered presidential candidates, who participated personally or through representatives from their electoral teams. Violeta Ivanov (Shor Party) and Igor Dodon (independent candidate supported by PSRM) did not participate in debates. The moderator had a balanced behavior, without violation of moderation rules.

Gender. During the reporting period, the rate of women as protagonists/sources was 20%, and of men – 60%.

Tone. The most often, the tone of presentation of electoral candidates was neutral. Igor Dodon, independent candidate supported by PSRM, had two appearances in negative light, specifically in programs. Political parties and public institutions were presented mostly neutrally.