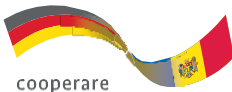




Cofinanțat de  
Uniunea Europeană



cooperare  
germană  
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT



UK International  
Development

Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

Implemented by

**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

# COVERAGE OF CORRUPTION in Moldovan Media

*Monitoring  
Report No* **1**

**S U M M A R Y**



Chișinău, 2023

# I. General

This document presents the results of the monitoring of how 13 media outlets covered corruption issues in the three planned reports. The monitoring is carried out within the project “Strengthening Investigative Journalist Network in Republic of Moldova and Increasing Their Capacity To Investigate Corruption Cases,” implemented by the Association of Independent Press in partnership with the Center for Investigative Journalism (CIJM).

**Subject of monitoring:** media content on corruption in **education, health, social care, agri-food** or **other** areas, with an indication, but without qualitative assessment.

**Period of monitoring:** June – November 2023

## **Content of monitoring:**

- a. In print and online media – full content;
- b. In broadcast media – main news edition of the day and, where appropriate, cycle or sporadic broadcast programs, between 17.00 and 23.00 – for television; and 17.00–20.00 – for radio.

## **Media outlets monitored: selection criteria**

- a. Public and private
- b. Local/regional and national
- c. Print, online and broadcast
- d. Renown (audience of media outlets)
- e. Romanian and Russian language
- f. Non-specialized in journalistic investigations and/or coverage of corruption issues

## **List of media outlets monitored**

- 1. TV Moldova 1
- 2. Jurnal TV
- 3. TV GRT (Comrat)
- 4. Elita TV (Rezina)

5. ProTV.md
6. Publika.md
7. TV8.md
8. Nokta.md (Comrat)
9. Esp.md (Bălți)
10. Radio Moldova
11. Newspaper *Unghiul* (Ungheni)
12. Newspaper *Observatorul de Nord* (Soroca)
13. Studio-L TV (Căușeni)

## Monitoring indicators: quantitative and qualitative, according to methodology

### Collection of data

The data was collected for the entire monitoring period and covers the media outlets monitored taken together and separately, which allows to formulate general recommendations and recommendations for each media outlet monitored.

**Quantitative data:** the score given by the monitor to each content monitored according to the quantitative indicators in the Monitoring Sheet was summed up.

### Interpretation of quantitative data:

The minimum score indicates insufficient coverage of the topics. Quantitative data are analyzed in a particular manner and are assessed/interpreted separately from the score collected by the qualitative indicators.

**Obtaining qualitative data:** the score given to each content according to the numerical values of the qualitative indicators in the Monitoring Sheet is summed. Each content subject to monitoring can score a maximum of 40 points.

### Interpretation of qualitative data:

**Up to 5 points:** corruption coverage practically missing

**Up to and including 12 points:** corruption coverage is flawed

**Up to and including 19 points:** corruption coverage is acceptable

**Up to and including 26 points:** corruption coverage is relatively good

**Up to and including 33 points:** corruption coverage is good

**Up to and including 40 points:** corruption coverage is very good

## CONCLUSIONS GENERATED BY QUANTITATIVE/ QUALITATIVE (first report)

1. The number of contents in the four thematic areas monitored (education, health, social assistance, agri-food sector) is insufficient to ensure a visibility of the phenomenon of corruption that is able to keep this social scourge topical and in the attention of society.
2. The periodicity of the appearance of the topics monitored in the media reveals either a planning that is at odds with reality, or a lack of planning of editorial activity in the segment of coverage of issues of general social interest, which ultimately reveals major lapses in editorial policy.
3. It seems implausible that, in reality, the number of corruption cases in health is 4-5 times higher than the number of corruption cases in education, social assistance and the agri-food sector combined. Rather, the media monitored neglected to cover them, thus contributing to a distorted perception of the real situation in these areas.
4. The apparent preference for news genres in the coverage of corruption, especially petty corruption, in fact indicates a narrow and superficial approach to the problem rather than a complex (as is the problem) and in-depth treatment thereof. It is important that every alleged case of corruption, big or small, is reported, but what matters most is that every case is cleared up. Assumptions fuel suspicions. Evidence breeds certainty. For the harmonization of social and inter-human relations, certainty comes first.
5. Own content makes up slightly more than half of the total number, although naturally it should prevail.
6. The number of main and secondary protagonists per subject monitored is unacceptably low. There are no outliers, where there is at least a relative lack of balance among the protagonists.

7. Some content, although small, is not distributed via social networks. In the age of information technology this is an anachronism. Going to where the content user/recipient is actually located is a better practice for the newsroom than waiting for the content user/recipient (who does not have to) to find the newsroom.
8. Most of the content on the themes monitored is produced in Chişinău and in the closest district to the capital – Ialoveni. Such a situation can be explained, but not justified – the phenomenon of corruption is widespread everywhere. The complete lack of relevant subjects from abroad and, above all, from neighbouring countries, cannot in any way contribute to the possible adoption of best practices in the coverage of corruption.
9. The vast majority of content – 80 percent – falls into the average and below average quality category. Users/beneficiaries of media content deserve to be offered quality journalism.

## Results per media institution

A qualitative evaluation of the items (out of a maximum of 40 possible points) found that Jurnal TV (26 points), Radio Moldova (25), TV8.md (24.82), TV Moldova 1 (23.50), Publika.md (23.00), ProTV (22.78), Esp.md (21.17), and Nokta.md (20.00) covered corruption items in the four areas quite well. It also found that the coverage of corruption in these areas is acceptable for *Unghiul* (15.75) and *Observatorul de Nord* (15.00), while Elita TV and TV GRT practically did not air corruption items on education, health, social assistance or in the agri-food sector in prime time.

## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Coverage of corruption in general and coverage of corruption in the four areas of social interest (education, health, social assistance, agri-food sector) to become a priority topic in the editorial policy of the media monitored.
2. Coverage of corruption in the four areas should be systematic in order to ensure uniform media visibility, which can be achieved most rapidly by careful and precise planning of editorial tasks.

3. Broaden the range of journalistic genres in covering corruption cases, with a clear focus on analytical/investigative ones, as these are the most appropriate in elucidating any case we cover. However, a corruption case, if not solved, remains only a suspicion, a hypothetical case, nothing more.
4. Continue the practice of faithful coverage of foreign subjects, or of coverage with interventions, because it diversifies the media offer and helps to keep the issue topical. Cases of foreign coverage of dubious quality should be avoided. It should also be noted that taking over media content without its own quality content is not the profession of journalism.
5. Items on the topic should be spread/disseminated to as wide an audience as possible, using unconditional and unambiguous use of the channels available for this purpose and, first and foremost, the social networks most popular with users.
6. Broaden the geographical scope of coverage of corruption cases, based on the understanding of at least two assumptions/postulates: a) the lack of media coverage of corruption in a particular region contributes to an ingrained social misperception that corruption is missing in that region, and b) in order to eradicate any case of corruption, it must first be uncovered and publicly exposed/disclosed. The geographic scope should also include topics at least from neighbouring countries in order to familiarize the public with good practices and to possibly gain useful experience in covering and fighting corruption.
7. There should be particular rigour with regard to the quality of the topics, given the specific nature of the phenomenon of corruption, the coverage of which requires all the precision, accuracy and strength of the evidence.
8. Strengthen professional capacities to ensure thorough documentation, additional skills in dealing with corruption issues and rigorous application of journalistic principles in the production of media content.

**For more details, please access the links below:**



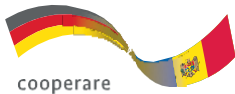
[Corruption Media Coverage Not Sufficient In Some Public Interest Areas](#)

[Monitoring Report no. 1](#) (in Romanian language)





Co-funded by  
the European Union



cooperare  
germană  
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Implemented by

**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

# COVERAGE OF CORRUPTION in Moldovan Media

*Monitoring  
Report No* **2**

**S U M M A R Y**



## CONCLUSIONS GENERATED BY QUANTITATIVE/ QUALITATIVE (second report)

1. During the reference period, there was a significant increase in the number of items in the themes monitored, but the frequency of the four themes, as in the previous period, has been uneven.
2. Similarly to the first monitoring period, in some decades thematic items were either few or absent, and in others – there was an abundance of them. This indicates that newsrooms wait for items/events, rather than look for/plan them.
3. Media outlets, as in the previous period, in 75 percent of cases, covered the topics monitored by means of informative journalistic genres, although the specificity of the theme rather calls for analysis and investigation.
4. The number of own topics has increased and it would be good for this to become a clear trend.
5. The overall data show a relative balance among the main protagonists; however, there is lack of balance, some of which obvious, in several of the newsrooms monitored.
6. Compared to the previous monitoring period, the share of high-audience stories has increased, but the opportunities at hand to distribute media content as widely as possible have yet to be adequately exploited.
7. The geographical coverage of corruption issues is still narrow. In 4 months of monitoring, topics from the capital and 2 districts – Ialoveni and Ocnita – prevailed. Separate topics covered 9 other regions. At the same time, 25 municipalities and districts, or 2/3 of Moldova's 37, remained without monitored media attention in terms of corruption coverage.
8. In percentage terms, the share of low and high quality items decreased by 5 and 2 percent accordingly compared to the first monitoring period. In contrast, the share of average quality items increased by about 7 percent. In other words, the situation has stagnated rather than evolved in this segment.
9. The recommendations contained in Monitoring Report 1, although fully accepted, have been partially implemented. This state of affairs is also indicative of the results of Report 2 – those newsrooms which followed them evolved with more or less consistency and, conversely, those which ignored



them stagnated and regressed. Heavy arguments would have to exist for one to either accept or ignore the recommendations.

## General recommendations

1. Media outlets should plan their weekly/monthly activities in such a way as to ensure a sufficient number of media reports on the topics monitored, a systematic appearance in the media, and a more uniform distribution of such items over time, which would keep the phenomenon of corruption as a social scourge to be countered. Editors should seek out topics and cases and not just wait for them to come from outside.
2. In covering corruption cases, newsrooms should insistently explore analytical/investigative journalistic genres, which are best suited for the purpose, even if informative genres are neither to be condemned nor abandoned.
3. In reporting on corruption, newsrooms should place clear emphasis on producing their own content – the only content that can certify serious journalism. The takeovers can diversify, not replace, one’s own media offer.
4. Social media popularity, first and foremost, should be used constantly to ensure the widest possible audience for each topic, for the public benefit and for the benefit of newsrooms.
5. Geographical coverage of corruption cases should expand primarily based on the thematic stories produced in the geographical areas where the monitored newsrooms operate.
6. Newsrooms, where appropriate, should invest in the skills of journalists covering corruption issues. Note: professional skills are the key determinant in ensuring quality media content.
7. Recommendations, once accepted, should be implemented with more insistence and consistency.

**For more details, please access the links below:**



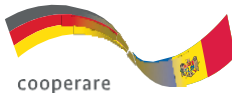
[Monitoring Report on Media Coverage of Corruption:  
Indicators Not Enough Improved](#)



[Monitoring Report no. 2](#) (in Romanian language)



Co-funded by  
the European Union



cooperare  
germană  
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Implemented by

**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

# COVERAGE OF CORRUPTION in Moldovan Media

*Monitoring  
Report No* **3**

S U M M A R Y



## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS QUANTITATIVE/ QUALITATIVE DATA (third report)

1. In the reference period **the number of thematic topics was higher than in the first monitoring period, but decreased compared to the second period.** In all three monitoring periods the frequency of topics and the distribution of topics per day were uneven. This reveals shortcomings in the activities planned by the media outlets monitored.
2. As in previous periods, newsrooms gave a clear preference to informative journalistic genres and most often covered cases of petty corruption.
3. In six months of monitoring, it has not been possible to reach a situation where all newsrooms are producing and publishing/broadcasting their own content addressing the four thematic areas.
4. Although, on the whole, a relative balance between the main protagonists was noted, cases of clear imbalance in the thematic topics of some of the newsrooms monitored were not overcome.
5. In the current monitoring period, as in previous monitoring periods, the effective possibilities of ensuring the widest possible audience for media content were either ignored by some newsrooms or partially exploited.
6. In the three monitoring periods, corruption topics were most often related to cases in Chişinău and Bălţi cities and Ialoveni and Ocnîţa districts. Separate topics also covered about ten other regions, but not enough to cover at least a third of the country's districts. This is certainly a consequence of the "copy-paste" phenomenon, deeply rooted in editorial practice.
7. **In all three monitoring periods, medium journalistic quality stories prevailed** – from 2/3 to 3/4 of the total number of media contents. At the same time, **there was no lack of stories of questionable quality in any period.**
8. **Comparative data from the three monitoring periods show that some newsrooms have evolved and most newsrooms have stagnated or regressed in their coverage of corruption.**

## GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

1. Each newsroom should adjust or, if necessary, develop and implement an editorial policy that ensures:
  - a) planned and coordinated editorial activities, including on the dimension of coverage of corruption through analytical journalistic genres;
  - b) production of one's own thematic content, covering a wide geography, and its dissemination/publication with a certain periodicity, distributing it additionally on the most popular social networks, able to give the anti-corruption issue adequate media visibility;
  - c) the practice of throwing out one's own media content that does not meet professional standards and ignoring the take-over of outside stories of questionable quality;
  - d) establishing an editorial habit of monitoring its own media offer from time to time in order to be able to intervene more accurately and in a more informed way on problematic segments.

**For more details, please access the links below:**



[Six Months of Monitoring of Media Coverage of Corruption: Modest Developments and Continuing Editorial Shortcomings](#)



[Monitoring Report no. 3](#) (in Romanian language)

The project **“Strengthening the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Mechanisms in the Republic of Moldova”** is co-financed by the **European Union, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)** and implemented by the **German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)**.

Partners of the project in Chișinău are the **Association of Independent Press (API)** and the **Center for Investigative Journalism (CIJM)** which implements the project **“Strengthening Network of Investigative Journalists in Republic of Moldova and Increasing Their Capacity to Investigate Corruption Cases.”**

