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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



Chişinău, 2023

Coverage of Corruption in Moldovan Media

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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).



I. General

This report presents the results of the monitoring of how 13 media outlets covered corruption issues. This is the third of 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: October–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/Publika.media
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 (Căușeni).

Monitoring indicators: quantitative and qualitative, according to the methodology (see Annex 1 in Romanian)

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 (*attached*) 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

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS QUANTITATIVE/ QUALITATIVE DATA

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.

