

BIRODI

Zoran Gavrilović

FROM THE CAMPAIGN OF OFFICIALS TO THE INDUSTRY OF POPULISM



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MONITORING MEDIJA

Broj analiziranih priloga na televizijama



TV PINK
je posvetio najveće
vremena emitovanju
priloge vezanih za
izbore 2022.
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Predstavljamo nalaze za period od 15. 02. do 31. 03. 2022.

BIRODI



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I INTRODUCTION

Media monitoring by the Bureau for Social Research - BIRODI, particularly of television networks, daily newspapers, and internet-based media, is approaching its tenth year. We first started monitoring the daily press, prime time news and political broadcasts in 2012, during the election campaign, and reported our findings every two weeks using the methodology adopted from MEMO 98¹. The readers of *Danas*, the opposition daily *Pravda*, and the subscribers of *Skay plus* were the main audiences for the monitoring results. These media outlets were then in the service of the opposition, which is now in power.

In our media monitoring, we did not receive any attention from other media. In several cases we were explicitly told that our monitoring results would not be broadcast if they were unfavourable to the TV station in question (RTS). There were “threats” that we would be “monitored” by the sampled media (PRESS), while the management of TANJUG threatened to sue us after our findings showed that there was a dysfunctional relationship between this state agency and the private media, as evidenced by the overwhelming takeover of news from the state-run TANJUG by the private Pink TV.

Given the frequency of elections (2012, 2014, 2016, 2020, and 2022) and the monitoring of a similar media sample (RTS, Pink, Prva, Happy, B92-O2-B92 and N1), we have become chronographs of the media (counter)transition.

BIRODI’s sociological drive “forced” us to avoid empiricism or processing data from media analysis, which by definition means monitoring everything and everyone. We used conceptual generalisations or the construction of a conceptual apparatus to create a more accurate monitoring system.

As a result, terms such as “campaign of officials” and “party cameras” were invented, which are now an essential part of every election glossary in Ser-

1 www.memo98.sk

bia. These expressions were developed quite early in our first election-related media monitoring. Thanks to the research material generated by our election and non-election monitoring, and thanks to various themes, we were able to establish the terms “industry of populism” and its pandemic subform “Covid Caesarism”.

Our findings were cited in the reports of international organisations, especially ODIHR, which proved to us that our efforts were not in vain. The academic community finds BIRODI’s analyses relevant and uses them as warp and woof. We were invited to give lectures at universities. We joined the BEACON project, adding an international component to our efforts and recognition in Serbia.

BIRODI’s ten years of media research, which were first intended to improve and since 2016 to protect the democratic public from abolition, also brought us many challenges. Verbal threats were made against us, the public prosecutor’s office was urged to respond to BIRODI’s findings, and both the President of the Republic and the REM Council made defamatory statements and branded us.

Based on the results of the non-electoral and electoral media monitoring and the analysis of the (dys)functional institutional and normative framework in the media subsystem of society, we will first present our understanding of the public and the method of its monitoring. Then we will focus on the normative framework and describe the state of the public and its most important elements, especially the media.

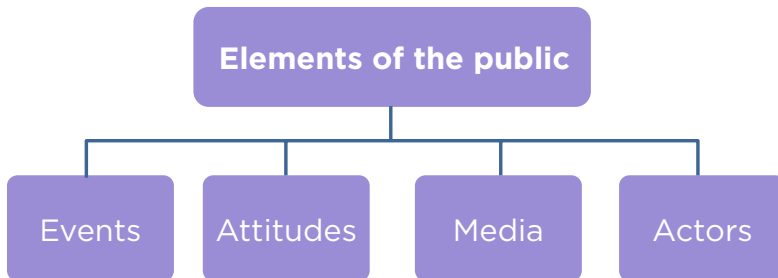
Additionally, we will discuss the concept of electoral integrity. From that vantage point, we will examine the process of negotiating the electoral circumstances that took place in Serbia with the facilitation of the European Parliament.

II DEFINITION OF THE PUBLIC

The aim of this publication is to identify the circumstances and make recommendations to improve public integrity, which is a prerequisite for the rule of law, institutional integrity and freedom of speech. The findings of the study were developed through the operationalisation of analytical concepts.

In order to define, articulate and realise general and particular interests through a deliberative process based on personal and collective attitudes, we will first introduce the key concept of the public sphere as the space where social actors exercise their rights and fulfil their duties in the institutional, normative and technological environment directly through (un)organised events and/or facilitated through professional media and online communication platforms (media). Such a robust definition of the public will serve to operationalise and help us develop analytical units for monitoring and evaluation of the public in the following areas: media (informative, analytical, critical, advocating, entertaining, promotional, propagandist, labelling), events (original/legitimate, organised, pseudo and imposed), attitudes (freely expressed or unrevealed, full or empty, own or adopted or imposed) and actors with their interests and needs, rights, obligations and values.

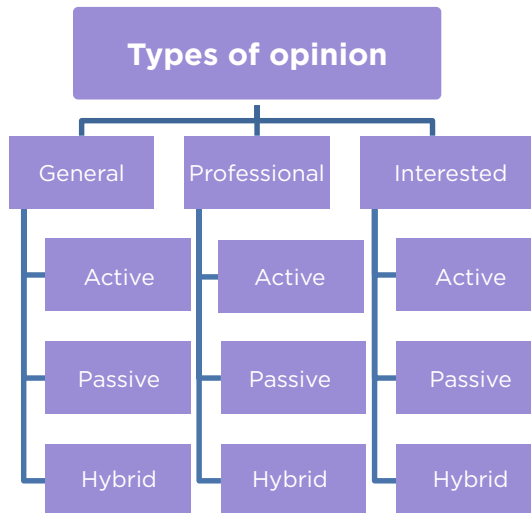
Scheme 1 Elements of the public



The event or manifestation of the public in a particular social, political, economic, institutional and normative environment is used as the central analytical unit in monitoring and evaluation of the public. The needs, interests, rights and obligations of the actors as well as the surrounding circumstances determine the origin of the event. An event is a manifestation of sociality with its own cause, occasion, type of impact, outcomes, participants with their own interests and motivations, social groups, content manifestation (speeches, messages, advertisements, etc.), values, organisation and social and physical environment. For the monitoring of the public, it is necessary to keep an event register.

We will call the point of view, which is also known as attitude towards someone or something, opinion. Opinion is based on the cognitive, conative and emotional dimensions of a particular issue, event or actor. It can be positive, negative or neutral. There are three types of opinions: public, professional and interest-based. Public opinion comprises the attitude of all members of a political community (a state) towards an actor and/or an issue. Professional opinion expresses the attitude of one or more professions (members of a profession and professional associations) towards an actor and/or an issue. Interest-based opinion expresses the attitude of a stakeholder group, especially towards itself as an actor and “its own” issues.

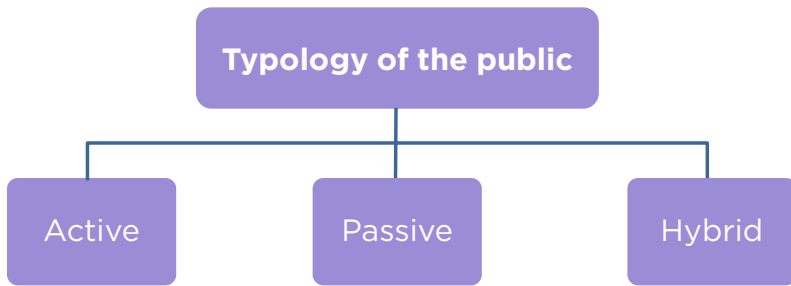
Scheme 2 Opinion typology



Within this typology of opinions, for each opinion category we can identify an active opinion that tends toward deliberation, i.e., represents its constituent part and result. Along with active opinion, there is also passive opinion, which is distinguished by exclusion from public sphere. In addition to the two types of opinions already described, there is also a hybrid opinion based on manipulation, censorship, or coercion of something or someone.

The public can be divided into three categories: active, passive, and hybrid, depending on its development and state of its elements.

Scheme 3 Typology of the public



The media are examined from the perspective of their functionality as a component of public monitoring and evaluation, i.e., whether they serve as a tool for information, analysis, reminder, verification, or holding public actors accountable, or whether they serve as means of promotion, propaganda, and labelling. Depending on their (predominant) function, they can be: citizens’ media services, advocates, bulletins, tabloids, promoters, propagandists and servicemen.

Last but not least, actors are divided into sectors, such as the public sector or the state and the private sector or political parties, trade unions, citizens’ associations and business associations. Each sector has its own values, interests, rights and duties.

The foregoing gives us the opportunity to create a structural and functional model of public analysis that focuses on: the typology of the media, their function, the state of the public, and the typology of events.

Table 1 Functional and structural analysis framework

Event organizers						
Event type	Institutional event		Non-institutional event		Pseudo event	
Media function	Professional media	Advocates	Tabloids	Bulletins	Propagandists	Servicemen
Media function	Deliberation, advocacy, research and holding Government accountable		Promotion and entertainment		Propaganda and labelling	
Result	Active public		Passive public		Hybrid public	

Based on the data gathered, this analysis allows us to examine the public in an epistemologically appropriate manner.

III ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL PUBLIC

For integrity monitoring and evaluation of the electoral process in Serbia, *The Analytical Integrity Matrix of Democratic and Authoritarian Society* was developed as a theoretical starting point for the BIRODI methodology. It is based on the premise that integrity at the societal level has two opposing, ideal-type variables: Democracy and various forms of personal power. We were able to obtain the content of the *Analytical Integrity Matrix* through additional operationalisation.

Table 2 Analytical integrity matrix of democratic and authoritarian society

	Integrity of democratic society	Integrity of authoritarian society
Type of social organising	Participatory associations	Community of loyalty and leadership
Solidarity type	Interests	Emotions, tradition
Regulator	Norm	Power
Regulatory framework	Institutions	Will
Decision-making	Public deliberation	Octroyed by leaders or minority
Type of elections	Voting elections	Acclamation elections
Who elects	Citizen	Supporter
Who is elected	Institutional interest representatives	Leaders and/or millenarian movements
Communication	Free media	Industry of populism

Political parties, trade unions, professional associations and experts chambers, businessmen's chambers and associations, and civil society organizations

(NGOs) are examples of participatory associations. These are formal and functional organisations with the aim of defining, promoting, and achieving the specific interests of various social groups.

In contrast to the aforementioned, there are associations that only formally function as civil society organisations, but are in reality controlled by the organisation's leadership, where the informal power of the leader(ship)s exceeds the formal powers.

Particular interests serve as the cornerstone of social solidarity in democratic societies because the identification of these interests has a magnetic attraction for interested actors to join organisations. As opposed to institutionalised interest, authoritarian integrity is based on emotions, traditions, and collective identities. The power (of the law-makers) as a regulator is fundamentally different from the law as a regulator, which has a legal content, certainty of reward and sanction, as well as social expediency. It is informal, individual, ambiguous, situational, and unfair to everyone. The same applies to regulatory framework.

The will of the decision-maker, whose decisions are determined by personal or group gains, stands in contrast to institutions, which have their own internal procedures.

The second factor that distinguishes the two types of integrity is the decision-making process. On the one hand, there is deliberation (public discussion where the media serves as a stage for interested parties to dialogue and exchange views on decisions), while on the other hand, decisions are imposed from the top down by leaders or the "facilitating" minority. Elections, where citizens can cast their votes for candidates based on clearly defined interests, can be held in a deliberative context. In contrast, voter support in acclamation elections is developed in a non-deliberative environment with poorly defined and conflicting interests. This is precisely the factor that distinguishes voters into citizens who exercise their right to vote and to be elected, and certain types of minions who publicly support the leader with their vote. Based on this distinction, we can argue that there are two different types of voting: One is voting for a leader or millenarian group and the other is voting for an institutionalised representative who represents the interests of the electorate.

With the presentation of the difference between the free media as a platform for deliberation and the industry of populism, we conclude our remarks on the content of the *Analytical Integrity Matrix*. The industry of populism is a type of media activity aimed at media promotion, propaganda and media retaliation, in contrast to the free media, which are instruments of deliberation that base their actions on compliance with media laws and the professional code of journalists.

From a sociological perspective, the proposed *Analytical Matrix* is intended to provide an explanation of the social context in which we perceive the integrity of a society. For this reason, it is safe to say that both types of integrity are useful

and (self-)sustaining. Nevertheless, it is necessary to examine where they stand in relation to the three key principles mentioned by Pope: Rule of Law, Sustainable Development and Quality of Life.

Through the analytical matrix presented, we would like to point out a fact identified by the French anthropologist Georges Balandier in his study *Political Anthropology*². In other words, pre-modern politics also exists alongside modern politics, and when we look at society or try to make an impact through our involvement, that's where we have to start. By presenting this *Analytical Matrix*, we hope to provide a context for the analysis that is different from the context of the modern bureaucratic state that Serbia is trying to achieve through European integration.

Analytical and Methodological Framework of Monitoring the Electoral Integrity

We will first define the key concept of electoral integrity in order to clearly understand the situation in the field of the integrity of the electoral process, which, because of its importance, has a significant impact on societal integrity. It is the sum of institutional, normative, professional and civic integrity, which includes available resources (material, technical and organisational, practises), results achieved and influence.

According to the methodology of our analysis, we need to break down the previously presented definition into its components, describe each one in detail and compare them with the other sections of the definition as well as the main definition. In this way, we arrive at a structural and functional analysis of the electoral integrity.

We will examine each one in turn. The institutional aspect of electoral integrity is represented in the integrity of electoral institutions, including both those directly in charge of implementing and upholding the legality of the electoral process and those which play a supporting role in elections. We primarily have in mind election commissions and regulatory bodies in charge of media conduct, the parliamentary supervisory body, courts, and public prosecutions. From a functional standpoint, all listed institutions have their own roles and/or responsibilities, and how they carry them out determines whether they can be characterized as having integrity. When it comes to the competence of (non)electoral participant in the electoral process, integrity is functional. The Serbian Constitution, laws and

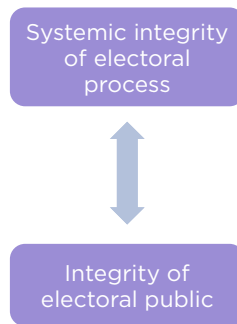
2 <https://www.bibliotekaxxvek.com/balandije-or-politika-antropologija/>

bylaws, namely the instruments of ethical regulation (codes of ethics) that (in) directly regulate the rights and obligations of electoral actors, or the competence of institutions, define everything listed above. All this leads to the normative integrity of the electoral process.

A particular type of connection between institutional and normative integrity of the electoral process is the professional integrity of public officials and public servants, i.e. the members of public professions. They put their expertise and professional ethics on the altar of electoral integrity in an effort to manage and make decisions within the electoral process, that is, use their professional knowledge to interpret and apply electoral legislation aiming to ensure fair and transparent conditions for the elections. The aforementioned constitutes the integrity of the electoral process, namely, its systemic aspect.

As opposed to the systemic aspect of electoral integrity, there is the integrity of electoral public.

Scheme 4 Model of correlation between systemic integrity of electoral process and electoral public



The integrity of electoral public serves as a type of controller or a corrector of the system's integrity. The integrity of the electoral public is comprised of stakeholders, or interested parties, including voters, political parties, and the marketing and opinion polling agencies affiliated with them. It also includes donors. On the other hand, the media, experts chambers, professional groups, the academic community, and national and international organisations that work to promote a fair and transparent electoral process, (do not) contribute to the integrity of the election participants.

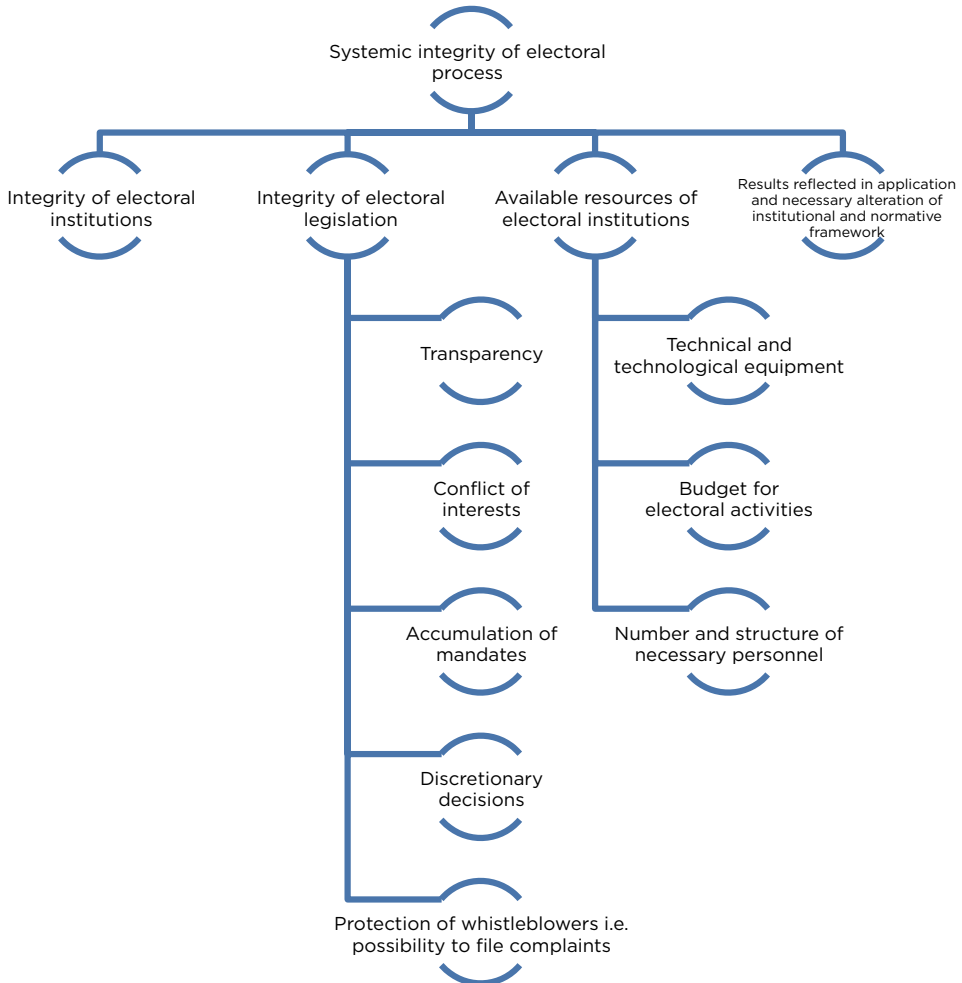
The electoral public influences the integrity of the electoral process through deliberation to make it participatory, inclusive, representative and legitimate. Journalists, statement analysts and pollsters all play an important role in the deliberative process. Their task is to create a kind of platform for the electoral debate with their research, analysis and reports. Pollsters collect data on priorities and issues and publicly present citizens' views on candidates and their programmes, while journalists ask questions, hold candidates accountable and remind on behalf of the public.

Our model for monitoring and evaluating the integrity of the electoral process is based on observing both systemic and public aspects and their interaction. In this way, we obtain research material that enables us to assess not only whether elections are fair and transparent, but also whether post-election institutions, notably the Parliament and the Government, will have legality, legitimacy and, eventually, integrity.

Systemic integrity of electoral process is demonstrated through:

- Integrity of electoral institutions,
- Integrity of electoral legislation,
- Available resources of electoral institutions,
- Results reflected in the application and necessary institutional and normative changes.

Scheme 5 Elements of electoral process systemic integrity



The integrity of electoral institutions is measured through the development and implementation of integrity plans taking into account the presence of the content that (in)directly impacts the electoral process integrity. The objective is to compare what was written with what was implemented in order to identify any gaps in the competences that the relevant institution has in the election process.

In the normative level of the electoral legislation integrity, the focus of the analysis should be placed on the manner in which the electoral legislation regulates the following:

- Transparency,
- Conflict of interests,
- Accumulation of mandates,
- Discretionary decisions,
- Protection of whistleblowers i.e. possibility to file complaints before, during and after elections.

All of the aforementioned should be considered within a larger international context, specifically one established by the Council of Europe - Venice Commission and the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO), more specifically OSCE/ODIHR.

The criteria for evaluating the integrity of candidates in the electoral lists include transparency, conflict of interests, accumulation of mandates, (non)existence of criminal acts /offences, and anti-corruption compliance resume.

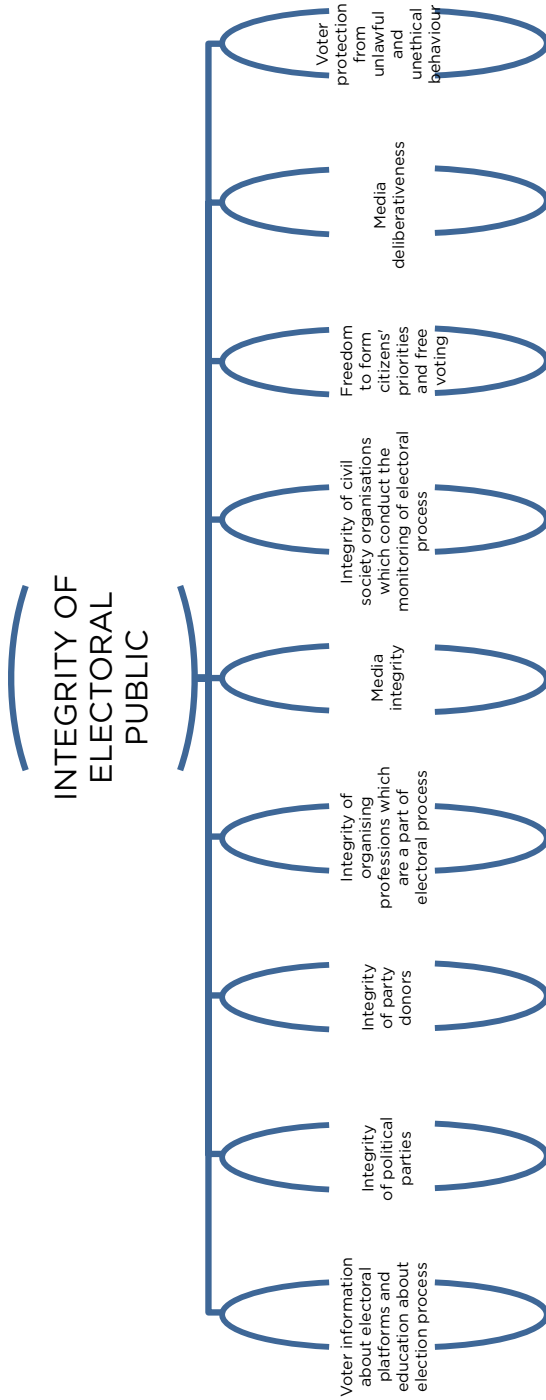
When we talk about the resources of electoral institutions, we mean the technical and technological equipment, the budget for electoral activities, the number and structure of the necessary personnel, and cooperation with other electoral institutions. The result, as an element of integrity, also implies the compliance with the normative framework and the imposition of penalties for non-compliance, i.e. the adoption of proposed changes to the normative framework.

As opposed to the systemic integrity of the electoral process, there is the integrity of the electoral public. Monitoring of the electoral public integrity includes the analysis of:

- Voter information about electoral platforms and education about the election process,
- Integrity of political parties³,
- Integrity of party donors,
- Integrity of organising professions that are a part of the electoral process,
- Media integrity,
- Integrity of civil society organisations which conduct the monitoring of the election process,
- Freedom to form citizens' priorities and free voting,
- Deliberativeness of the media,
- Protection of voters from unlawful and unethical behaviour.

3 The Bureau for Social Research in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation wrote why and how political parties should have integrity and proposed how it should be built. For more details, see <https://www.birodi.rs/plan-integriteta-politickih-partija-mehanizam-za-unapredenje-borbe-protiv-korupcije/>

Scheme 6 Elements of electoral public integrity



Citizens-voters express their electoral integrity through their political identity, priorities and voting behaviour⁴. They also demonstrate this integrity by using their legal right to vote and by being prepared to stand up for that right when it is abused. Political parties are representatives of the interests of (parts of) society and they (should) have their own integrity plan that regulates the following areas: funding, management/decision-making, intra-party democracy, appointment to public office, and whistleblower protection.

The same holds true for the integrity of party donors, where it is necessary to ascertain whether donor agreements are a common practice and what such agreements contain, namely, what is the subject and purpose of the donation. Donation is a form of pre-election voting, where interested parties "investment time, activism and material resources" in a certain electoral platform, thereby deciding to support it openly and in the public.

The activities of professional associations as guarantors of professional expertise, have a significant impact on the integrity of the electoral process. This is evident from the very fact that they have the power to control members of a profession and prevent them from acting unethically or unprofessionally. An important indicator of the integrity of elections is therefore the number and type of cases in which professional and ethical rules have been violated, as well as the sanctions imposed. The integrity of the public professions depends on the way they organise themselves. Serbian professional associations of journalists have less influence, while pollsters do not have a domicile association, as despite all attempts, all efforts to establish such associations have failed.

The integrity of civic, trade union, religious and economic organisations, as well as professional associations as a form of citizens' association, is of particular importance for the integrity of the electoral process. This primarily concerns autonomy in terms of state funding and staffing at the level of civil organisations to prevent artificial support and manipulation with the needs and interests of those involved in the associations.

Without civic integrity, electoral deliberation is a dead letter, for it becomes a simulation and imitation of the electoral process and serves its contradictions and abuses. If citizens do not fight for the rule of law or the laws and institutions that govern social relations, it becomes an empty shell. This view gave rise to civic electoral observation to promote free voting after free information and electoral education.

Ultimately, the media create a deliberative space for the electoral public through their content, questioning the electoral participants instead of the voters and reminding them of previous promises and their (non-)fulfilment. When this is not the case, elections are reduced to mere acclamation.

4 One of the possible methods of researching voter integrity is presented in the study *The Industry of Populism*. <http://www.birodi.rs/industrija-populizma/>

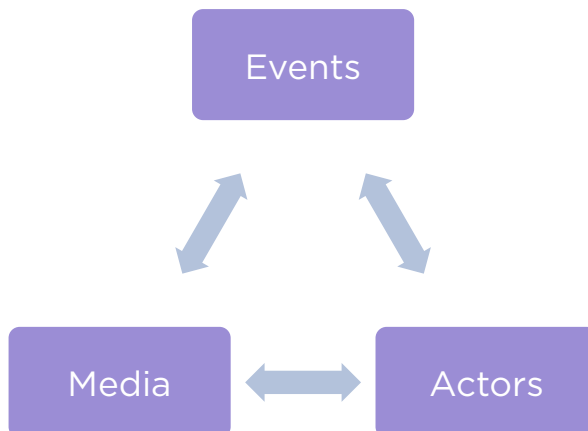
To make sure that the proposed monitoring and evaluation model “works”, we provided “double control”, analysing the electoral process integrity in a functional way, through the analysis of four functions:

- Representation – who formulates electoral priorities, whether or not they are formulated in the process of electoral deliberation, who dominates in the electoral deliberation, what is the integrity of public professions
- Regulation – what are the laws’ contents and their integrity
- Institutionalisation – what are the resources, integrity and influence of institutions
- Realisation – implementation of the election process within the parameters of regularity

Methodology of Monitoring and Evaluation of the Public

Through this analysis, which is based on the monitoring of event and media typologies, that is, media functions and results in the form of media typology, we arrive at the integrity of the public, which rests on three elements: events, media and actors.

Scheme 7 Elements of the integrity of the public



The monitoring and evaluation of the public includes not only the factual dimension embedded in the events, but also the media dimension, which involves the analysis of the content of the public presentation of the event through the communication channels at two levels: Media and Actors. The media level includes:

Rank of the event/announcement, time, tone of reporting, reporting discourse, argumentation, sources, genre, actors, adherence to journalistic professional standards. The actor level includes analysis at the level of the actor/participant of the event: actor, time, tone, discourse, argumentation, object (about whom) and epithets. Based on these indicators, the media can be classified as a means of information, advice, research and analysis, entertainment, advocacy, promotion, propaganda or retaliation.

The event hierarchy, general information about the event, interest evaluation and connection with the event, attitude towards the event and its dimensions, general involvement and event-related involvement, socio-political identity and sociodemographics are all included in the third dimension, which is attitudinal, and includes measuring citizens' attitudes about events.

IV MONITORING RESULTS OF PRIMETIME CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMMES

The monitoring covered primetime news broadcasts on RTS, Pink, Happy, Prva, B92 and N1 television channels between 1 December 2020 and 31 January 2022. The focus of our monitoring was news in which the President of the Republic, Serbian Government representatives, members of the ruling and opposition parties, and representatives of the European Union - i.e. China, Russia and the USA - appeared as actors.

Let us first note that six television channels were monitored for a total of 300 hours and 21 minutes. Almost one third of the total analysed time was spent monitoring Pink TV news, while only one tenth of the time was spent on Radio Television of Serbia.

Table 3 Scope of reporting by news broadcasts on analysed television channels

RTS	30:04:43
Pink	96:06:22
Happy	56:16:42
Prva	34:57:12
B92	35:45:04
N1	47:10:55
Total	300:21:00

Looking at the general tone of the coverage, two-thirds of the total monitored time had positive connotations, while just over a quarter of the time was neutral. Less than one-tenth of the time observed in the news on six television stations had a negative connotation. This reveals the promotional character of the monitored media.

Table 4 Cumulative tone of reporting in the news of the analysed television channels

	Positive		Neutral		Negative		Total	
	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%
Total	192:05	64,0	82:36:01	27,5	25:39:16	8,5	300:21	100,0

To get a more accurate picture of media coverage, we will break down our results by television channel. The result is that during the monitoring period, the news of all private television channels with national coverage (Pink, Prva, Happy and B92) reported positively on the actors more than two-thirds of the time. The coverage of RTS as a public broadcaster was also positive, although slightly less so. The only exception to this finding was N1 TV, which covered the news mainly neutrally.

Table 5 Tone of reporting by analysed television channels

RTS							
Positive		Neutral		Negative		Total	
63939	59,0	43747	40,4	598	0,6	108284	10%
Pink							
Positive		Neutral		Negative		Total	
263063	76,0	46047	13,3	36873	10,7	345983	32%
Happy							
Positive		Neutral		Negative		Total	
148326	73,2	53514	26,4	762	0,4	202602	19%
Prva							
Positive		Neutral		Negative		Total	
92663	73,6	28026	22,3	5144	4,1	125833	12%
B92							
Positive		Neutral		Negative		Total	
97409	75,7	27889	21,7	3407	2,6	128705	12%
N1							
Positive		Neutral		Negative		Total	
26144	15,4	98139	57,8	45573	26,8	169856	16%
						1081263	100%

Despite the fact that Article 123 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia⁵ stipulates that the Serbian Government is responsible for conducting foreign and home policy, monitoring of primetime current affairs programmes has revealed that this constitutional norm is nothing but dead letter.

Overall, within the two-member executive, the President of the Republic of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, had the most time (two-thirds). Prime Minister Ana Brnabić only had a tenth of the total time available to members of the executive. The following ministries received the most attention in the monitored news: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Finance. Such media representation shows the political power of each ministry, namely the government's priorities. In support of this,

5 [Ustav Republike Srbije \(Ustav Srbije\) \(paragraf.rs\)](#)

data shows that despite the fact that Serbia is an EU candidate country, the presence of the ministry responsible for European integration is marginal.

In general, reporting on the executive branch was mainly positive, with little criticism or negative coverage. Specifically, just under two-thirds of the monitored time devoted to either the President or the government was positive, just over a third of the reporting time in the six monitored newscasts on the same number of television channels was neutral, and just under 4% reporting time devoted to the executive branch was negatively nuanced.

When the time and the percentage of positive time in the analysed period were “multiplied,” the President of the Republic, Aleksandar Vučić, was the most positively presented actor at the executive level, with 80.7% of positive time. The Ministry of Rural Welfare had the highest percentage of positive time (83%), while the Ministry of Defence, led by Nebojša Stefanović, had the highest percentage of negative time (13.1%).

Table 6 Distribution of reporting at the level of Executive Branch (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Vučić, Serbian President	464991	61%	80,7	16,3	3,0
Ana Brnabić, Government President	82873	11%	67,0	30,4	2,6
Ministry of Health	36854	5%	55,4	43,3	1,3
Ministry of Internal Affairs	26658	3%	70,5	24,4	5,1
Ministry of Finance	24090	3%	70,3	21,9	7,9
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	17919	2%	74,7	24,5	0,8
Ministry of Defence	17718	2%	55,3	31,6	13,1
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	16010	2%	61,2	37,0	1,7
Ministry of Mining and Energy	15068	2%	57,8	38,4	3,7
Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure	9168	1%	79,0	18,4	2,6
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications	8992	1%	45,9	53,3	0,9
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	8662	1%	33,7	64,1	2,1
Ministry of Rural Welfare	8232	1%	83,0	17,0	0,0
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	5284	1%	66,3	30,6	3,1
Ministry of Environmental Protection	4393	1%	66,9	29,3	3,7
Ministry of Culture and Information	4093	1%	66,4	31,3	2,3
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	3127	0%	64,9	30,2	5,0
Ministry of Youth and Sports	2512	0%	77,9	22,1	0,0
Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development	2492	0%	74,1	18,4	7,5
Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue	2268	0%	41,2	58,8	0,0
Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography	1923	0%	59,4	33,2	7,4
Ministry of European Integration	1922	0%	46,1	51,0	2,8
Ministry of Justice	1409	0%	45,7	47,3	7,0
Ministry of Economy	1229	0%	51,2	48,8	0,0
Total time and average time percent	767887	100%	62,2	34,2	3,48

In general, in the monitored primetime current affairs, the parties in the Serbian National Assembly that supported Ana Brnabić's Government were presented in a positive-neutral manner, with little or no negative connotation.

When it came to the time available to the parties supporting the Serbian Government, the Serbian Progressive Party dominated with 63% of the total time and more than half of the positive representation. To this is added 16% of the presence of Aleksandar Vučić as President of the Serbian Progressive Party, who in this role was also positively represented in almost 34% of the time, indicating the media dominance of the Progressives among the ruling parties in the analysed news programmes.

The Socialist Party of Serbia ranked second in terms of presence in the newscasts, accounting for only 8% of the time, with neutral presentations accounting for 58.8% of that time. The United Serbia, the coalition partner of the Socialist Party of Serbia, took third place in terms of ruling party representation with 6% of the time. Within that time, Dragan Marković Palma's party was the most negatively represented (41%).

With the exception of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians, which was present for only 1% of the total time within the sample of parliamentary majority, i.e. 77% of the neutral time, the representation of other parties in power was generally low and mostly positive.

Table 7 Distribution of reporting at the level of ruling parties (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Aleksandar Vučić, Serbian Progressive Party	11217	16%	73,3	24,1	2,6
Serbian Progressive Party	43649	63%	56,5	24,0	19,5
Socialist Party of Serbia	5438	8%	39,6	58,8	1,6
Serbian Patriotic Alliance, Aleksandar Šapić	1935	3%	8,6	68,5	22,9
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	717	1%	16,9	77,0	6,1
United Serbia	4153	6%	19,3	38,7	41,9
Party of United Pensioners of Serbia	307	0%	79,2	20,8	0,0
Serbian Renewal Movement	375	1%	76,0	24,0	0,0
Social Democratic Party of Serbia (Ljajić)	972	1%	71,7	26,2	2,1
Total time and average time percent	68763	100%	49,0	40,2	10,7

Aleksandar Vučić represented the Serbian Progressive Party as its President during the non-election period for 11217 seconds, or 73.3% of positive time. The total representation of the Serbian Progressive Party and Aleksandar Vučić as its unchallenged leader accounted for only 2%.

Table 8 Aleksandar Vučić and Serbian Progressive Party

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Aleksandar Vučić, President of the Serbian Progressive Party	11217	2%	73,3	24,1	2,6
Serbian Progressive Party	43649	8%	56,5	24,0	19,5
Aleksandar Vučić, President of Serbia	464991	89%	80,7	16,3	3,0
	519857				

In contrast to the extremely positive (advertising) reporting about Aleksandar Vučić as President of the Republic of Serbia and/or the Serbian Progressive Party and the predominantly positive portrayal of the Serbian Progressive Party in the news programmes analysed, the opposition parties were presented neutrally on average. However, as is often the case with average values, they can hide more than they reveal. This general finding only partially accurately describes the situation encountered during our monitoring.

Namely, the data presented in Table 9 introduce nuances that provide arguments for previous monitoring conclusions.

Among the opposition parties, the Party of Freedom and Justice was the most strongly represented. It accounted for half of the total observed airtime in the sample of TV stations analysed, more precisely, the news programmes (53%). At the same time, at the level of the monitored news programmes of television stations with national coverage and N1 TV, the Party of Freedom and Justice was the most negatively represented party in the observed period (75.9%).

The People's Party is the second party represented in the opposition bloc. It received 12% of the time given to opposition parties. Its highly negative representation accounted for 43% of the total time of its media representation in the analysed news programs. The League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina was the most negatively represented party, accounting for 63% of the negative time.

Dveri (Gates) (57.1% of positive time) and the Democratic Party of Serbia (52.2% of positive time) were the most positively represented opposition parties. During the monitoring, the Democratic Party was mostly neutrally presented (53%), while the Movement of Free Citizens was mostly neutrally presented (72.7%) among opposition actors. In the non-election monitoring period their representation was low (1%) but neutral. The Don't Drown Belgrade Movement is a rare example of an opposition actor who was presented positively (83%), but only for a short period of time (2%).

Table 9 Distribution of reporting at the level of opposition parties (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Party of Freedom and Justice	39146	53%	12,8	11,4	75,9
People's Party	8656	12%	28,1	28,9	43
Dveri (Gates)	4131	6%	57,1	33,3	9,7
Democratic Party	2268	3%	36,8	53	10,2
Democratic Party of Serbia	1096	1%	52,2	47,8	0
Liberal Democratic Party of Serbia	697	1%	21,5	21,5	57
League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina	490	1%	0	33,1	66,9
New Serbia	56	0%	0	100	0
New Party	776	1%	13,9	86,1	0
Oath keepers	101	0%	39,6	55,4	5
Party of Modern Serbia	223	0%	0	100	0
Serbian Radical Party	751	1%	23,6	55,1	21,3
Don't Drown Belgrade	1613	2%	83	15,3	1,8
United Valley - SDA Sandžak	917	1%	9,2	85,8	5
Civic Democratic Forum	142	0%	43	57	0
Movement of Free Citizens	597	1%	26,5	72,7	0,8
1 in 5 Million	26	0%	80,8	19,2	0
Movement for Reversal	116	0%	51,7	48,3	0
Opposition	7054	10%	3,8	37,1	59,1
Enough is Enough	241	0%	37,3	62,7	0
Together for Serbia	1746	2%	20,4	33	46,6
Social Democratic Party	1153	2%	15,3	63	21,8
Better Serbia	113	0%	45,1	54,9	0
Liberation Movement	357	0%	0	50,4	49,6
Healthy Serbia	51	0%	72,5	27,5	0
New Communist Party of Yugoslavia	37	0%	89,2	0	10,8
Movement of United Phantoms	68	0%	100	0	0
Aleksandar Jovanović Ćuta	964	1%	41,3	36,3	22,4
Montenegrin Party	77	0%	0	49,4	50,6
Zdravko Ponoš	164	0%	0	50	50
Total time and average time percent	73827	100%	33,5	46,3	20,2

The reporting of the international actors on most of the monitored TV channels showed the persistence of the matrix that BIRODI had observed in previous monitoring. In terms of international actors, of the total current affairs air-time monitored, the European Union accounted for half (50%), the US for slightly less than a third (30%) and China and Russia for a tenth each. However, if we look at the percentage of positive coverage, we see that Russia was by far the most positively portrayed of the four actors observed (81.2%). China (68.2) took second place. The European Union was the most neutrally portrayed actor (79.6%), while the portrayal of the USA was also neutral to a high percentage (66.4%) and furthermore the USA was the actor with the most negative time (17.8%).

Table 10 Distribution of reporting at the level of international actors (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
EU	30010	50%	16,2	79,6	4,2
USA	18202	30%	15,8	66,4	17,8
Russia	7134	10%	81,2	17,1	1,7
China	5828	10%	68,2	22,5	9,3
Total time and average time percent	61174	100	45,3	46,4	8,3

Radio Television of Serbia

Overall, public service RTS coverage of the executive branch was positive (54.9%) – neutral (44.8%) and almost uncritical (0.3%). RTS devoted half of the monitored time (47%) received by the executive branch to the President of the Republic, Aleksandar Vučić, whose representation was dominant and also mostly positive (80.7%). Other actors in the executive branch were not in the focus of the media. This also applies to Prime Minister Ana Brnabić (14%), who was present on the monitored programmes for less than a sixth of the time observed.

The absence of negative or critical portrayals of the work of the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister as well as the ministries was striking, with the exception of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Mining and Energy, which had negligible negative airtime.

In their news reports, RTS journalists were most positive about the Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Defence. Ministries that had a “small share” of negative time included the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management and the Ministry of Mining and Energy.

Table 11 Distribution of reporting in the news of RTS at the level of Executive Branch (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Vučić, Serbian President	36418	47%	80,7	19,2	0,0
Ana Brnabić, Government President	11027	14%	67,2	32,8	0,0
Ministry of Finance	3732	5%	70,9	28,8	0,3
Ministry of Economy	310	0%	55,2	44,8	0,0
Ministry of Environmental Protection	526	1%	57,4	42,6	0,0
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	1068	1%	56,9	39,2	3,8
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	968	1%	36,8	63,2	0,0
Ministry of Mining and Energy	2328	3%	53,8	43,0	3,2
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications	842	1%	18,8	81,2	0,0
Ministry of Justice	442	1%	41,2	58,8	0,0
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	85	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue	388	0%	68,8	31,2	0,0
Ministry of Internal Affairs	1516	2%	59,2	40,8	0,0
Ministry of Defence	1967	3%	73,1	26,9	0,0
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	4363	6%	63,2	36,8	0,0
Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure	1020	1%	66,2	33,8	0,0
Ministry of European Integration	504	1%	29,8	70,2	0,0
Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development	643	1%	78,2	21,8	0,0
Ministry of Health	6456	8%	55,3	44,7	0,0
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	2304	3%	58,6	41,4	0,0
Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography	213	0%	7,5	92,5	0,0
Ministry of Youth and Sports	206	0%	73,3	26,7	0,0
Ministry of Culture and Information	694	1%	68,9	31,1	0,0
Ministry of Rural Welfare	159	0%	77,4	22,6	0,0
Total time and average time percent	78179	100%	54,9	44,8	0,3

The data on the representation of political parties, whether in power (2918 seconds) or in opposition (2077 seconds) in relation to the presence of members of the executive branch (78179 seconds), speak of a kind of departmentation of the news broadcast by the public broadcaster. It should be added that the coverage of the ruling parties on RTS was mostly neutral, with no negative or critical coverage.

Within the sample of ruling parties, we were confronted with the dominance of the Serbian Progressive Party. Namely, of the total monitored time, this party was featured in the RTS news for 39%, of which 56.7% was neutral. The Socialist Party of Serbia also received mainly neutral presentation (67.1%) and ranked second with 14%, while the Justice and Reconciliation Party was third but positively represented with 11% of the total time observed (75.2 %). The representation of other parties constituting the parliamentary majority was low and neutral.

Table 12 Distribution of reporting at the level of ruling parties in RTS news (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Aleksandar Vučić, President of Serbian Progressive Party	536	18	43,3	56,7	0,0
Serbian Progressive Party	1136	39	32,9	67,1	0,0
Socialist Party of Serbia	410	14	21,7	78,3	0,0
Serbian Patriotic Alliance	71	2	16,9	83,1	0,0
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	131	4	35,9	64,1	0,0
United Serbia	156	5	6,4	93,6	0,0
Party of United Pensioners of Serbia	0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Serbian Renewal Movement	33	1	100,0	0,0	0,0
Party of Justice and Reconciliation	318	11	75,2	24,8	0,0
Social Democratic Party of Serbia	122	4	0,0	100,0	0,0
Movement for the Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia	5	0,0	0,0	100,0	0,0
Socialist Movement	0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Total time and average time percent	2918	100	27,7	55,6	0,0

The analysis of the opposition parties clearly showed several trends. First trend was that RTS news programmes were neutral when covering the opposition parties. In the second trend, with the exception of the New Communist Party of Yugoslavia, which was presented in (only) four seconds, the Party of Freedom and Justice and the People's Party received the most negative time, while having the highest representation. In the monitoring period, the Liberal Democratic Party (52.1%) had the most positive coverage in the RTS news.

Table 13 Distribution of reporting in the RTS news at the level of opposition parties (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Party of Freedom and Justice	298	14%	27,2	61,7	11,1
People's Party	273	13%	3,7	85,7	10,6
Dveri (Gates)	172	8%	11,6	88,4	0,0
Democratic Party	172	8%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Democratic Party of Serbia	187	9%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Liberal Democratic Party	96	5%	52,1	47,9	0,0
League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
New Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
New Party	179	9%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Oath keepers		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Party of Modern Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Serbian Radical Party		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Don't Drown Belgrade		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
United Valley - SDA Sandžak	287	14%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Civic Democratic Forum		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Movement of Free Citizens	5	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
1 in 5 Million		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Movement for Reversal		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Opposition	149	7%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Enough is Enough	18	1%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Together for Serbia	149	7%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Social Democratic Party	88	4%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Better Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Liberation Movement		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Healthy Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
New Communist Party of Yugoslavia	4	0%	0,0	0,0	100,0
Movement of United Phantoms		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Aleksandar Jovanović Ćuta		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Montenegrin Party		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Zdravko Ponoš		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Total time and average time percent	2077	100%	3,1	38,2	3,9

The reporting of the RTS on global actors demonstrated the persistence of the matrix that BIRODI had previously identified through monitoring. The EU was again the most represented (59%), followed by the USA (18%), Russia (14%)

and China (with 9% of the total time given to international actors). Unlike the EU, which was presented neutrally with 82.2% and the USA with 89.4%, the coverage of China (82.6%) and Russia (81.4%) was dominantly positive. It should be noted that this time, with the exception of the EU, none of the other three actors (0.8%) received any negative coverage.

Table 14 Distribution of reporting in the news of RTS at the level of international actors (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
EU	6481	59%	16,9	82,2	0,8
USA	1983	18%	10,6	89,4	0,0
Russia	1554	14%	81,4	18,6	0,0
China	1051	9%	82,6	17,4	0,0
Total time and average time percent	11069	100%	47,9	51,9	0,2

PINK

The news on Pink TV fully expressed the trend of positive reporting on the executive branch and the supremacy of Aleksandar Vučić within that branch of power.

Aleksandar Vučić, the President of the Republic of Serbia, received 84% of the time allocated to the Executive Branch in Pink's news programmes, which gave the Executive Branch more than two-thirds of the positive time. Vučić received 88.9% of the favourable advertising time throughout that period.

Other representatives of the Executive Branch were marginally represented, including Prime Minister Ana Brnabić, who accounted for 7% of the time given to the Executive Branch.

The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Ministry of European Integration, the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, and the Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development were the ministries that Pink's news most favourably portrayed. The Ministry of Mining and Energy, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, and the Ministry of Environmental Protection were among the ministries with negative time.

Table 15 Distribution of reporting in the news of Pink TV at the level of Executive Branch (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Vučić, Serbian President	221661	84%	88,9	11,0	0,1
Ana Brnabić, Government President	19073	7%	86,8	13,2	0,0
Ministry of Finance	2798	1%	80,4	19,6	0,0
Ministry of Economy	125	0%	44,8	55,2	0,0
Ministry of Environmental Protection	254	0%	62,2	33,9	3,9
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	230	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	501	0%	51,7	48,3	0,0
Ministry of Mining and Energy	121	0%	0,0	91,7	8,3
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications	456	0%	32,5	67,5	0,0
Ministry of Justice	52	0%	57,7	42,3	0,0
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	75	0%	93,3	0,0	6,7
Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Internal Affairs	4925	2%	78,4	21,6	0,0
Ministry of Defence	2143	1%	63,3	29,0	7,7
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	474	0%	62,2	37,8	0,0
Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure	1064	0%	90,9	9,1	0,0
Ministry of European Integration	71	0%	93,0	7,0	0,0
Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development	208	0%	90,4	9,6	0,0
Ministry of Health	6581	2%	66,2	33,8	0,0
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	888	0%	65,7	34,3	0,0
Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography	176	0%	71,6	28,4	0,0
Ministry of Youth and Sports	1262	0%	82,4	17,6	0,0
Ministry of Culture and Information	531	0%	87,8	12,2	0,0
Ministry of Rural Welfare	1647	1%	90,2	9,8	0,0
Total time and average time percent	265316	100%	68,3	26,4	1,1

In the reporting about ruling parties in the news of Pink TV, positive tone was also predominant.

The Serbian Progressive Party dominated in the news of Pink TV news with 58% of the time and 92.2% of the positive time. In addition, the President of the Serbian Progressive Party, Aleksandar Vučić, received 35% of the total time given to the ruling parties by Pink TV. Other ruling parties were marginalised on Pink

TV where no party had more than 2% of the time allocated to the ruling parties combined, while negative time was allocated only to the Socialist Party of Serbia (4.7%).

Table 16 Distribution of reporting in news of Pink TV at the level of ruling parties (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Aleksandar Vučić, President of the Serbian Progressive Party	6921	35%	83,2	16,8	0,0
Serbian Progressive Party	11394	58%	92,2	7,8	0,0
Socialist Party of Serbia	214	1%	32,2	63,1	4,7
Serbian Patriotic Alliance	258	1%	32,2	67,8	0,0
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
United Serbia	358	2%	24,3	75,7	0,0
Party of United Pensioners of Serbia	111	1%	60,4	39,6	0,0
Serbian Renewal Movement	81	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Party of Justice and Reconciliation	120	1%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Social Democratic Party of Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Movement for the Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia	5	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Socialist Movement	74	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Total time and average time per-cent	19536	100%	52,0	30,9	0,4

Since 2016, Pink TV's coverage of opposition parties during its primetime current affairs programme has been extremely recognizable. In particular, the representation of influential opposition parties was (extremely) higher and more adversely portrayed.

In the course of this monitoring, the role of villains among the opposition parties covered in Pink's newscasts was given to: Party of Freedom and Justice with 75% representation and 98.6% negative time, People's Party with 7% representation and 98.7% negative time, Democratic Party with 1% representation and 89.5% negative time, while Dveri (Gates) had the same percentage of representation as Democratic party and 60.1% negative time. On the other hand, the most positively represented opposition parties during the monitoring period were the Democratic Party of Serbia with 91.5% and the Oath Keepers with 88.9% of the positive time.

Table 17 Distribution of reporting in the news of Pink TV at the level of opposition parties (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Party of Freedom and Justice	26608	75%	0,0	1,4	98,6
People's Party	2648	7%	0,5	0,8	98,7
Dveri (Gates)	213	1%	10,3	29,6	60,1
Democratic Party	200	1%	0,0	10,5	89,5
Democratic Party of Serbia	59	0%	91,5	8,5	0,0
Liberal Democratic Party	213	1%	46,9	24,4	28,6
League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina	49	0%	0,0	59,2	40,8
New Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
New Party		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Oath keepers	45	0%	88,9	0,0	11,1
Party of Modern Serbia	34	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Serbian Radical Party	111	0%	59,5	37,8	2,7
Don't Drown Belgrade	10	0%	0,0	0,0	100,0
United Valley - SDA Sandžak	60	0%	0,0	40,0	60,0
Civic Democratic Forum		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Movement of Free Citizens	92	0%	0,0	94,6	5,4
1 in 5 Million		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Movement for Reversal		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Opposition	3727	10%	1,6	0,0	98,4
Enough is Enough	5	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Together for Serbia	809	2%	0,0	2,0	98,0
Social Democratic Party	269	1%	14,1	4,5	81,4
Better Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Liberation Movement	177	0%	0,0	0,0	100,0
Healthy Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
New Communist Party of Yugoslavia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Movement of United Phantoms		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Aleksandar Jovanović Ćuta	250	1%	0,0	44,8	55,2
Montenegrin Party		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Zdravko Ponoš	82	0%	0,0	0,0	100,0
Total time and average time percent	35661	100%	10,1	18,0	36,4

The monitoring results of Pink's news on global actors confirm the previously presented model of more extensive, i.e. neutral and negative coverage of the EU and the USA, i.e. positive coverage of China and Russia.

The EU and US were equally present in the total time that Pink TV gave to international actors, with 37% and 35% respectively. The portrayal of these two actors was just as neutral. Namely, the EU received 68.9% and the USA 60.6% of the neutral time. The US had twice as much negative time (36.3%) compared to the EU, which received 16.3% of Pink TV's negative time.

In the monitoring period, another pair of international actors, China and Russia, were positively presented in the Pink's news programmes. Thus, within 9% of the time received by international actors, China had 81.2% positive time, and within 19% of the Pink's news time, Russia was presented with 94.6% positive time.

Table 18 Distribution of reporting in the news of Pink TV at the level of international actors (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
EU	3718	37%	14,8	68,9	16,3
USA	3469	35%	3,2	60,6	36,3
Russia	1883	19%	94,6	5,4	0,0
China	910	9%	81,2	18,8	0,0
Total time and average time percent	9980	100%	48,5	38,4	13,1

HAPPY

Happy TV's coverage of the Executive Branch was characterised on the one hand by positive coverage of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the President of the Republic, but on the other hand, in contrast to Aleksandar Vučić's ultimate dominance as part of the Executive Branch, the percentage of representation of the President of the Republic in the monitored period, accounted for only a third of the total time given to the Executive Branch in Happy TV news.

Despite the reduced time for Aleksandar Vučić in the news of this television station with national coverage, the proportion of positive portrayal of the President of the Republic was at the advertising level (86.4%).

With the exception of the Ministry of Justice, which received one fifth of negative time, all other ministries were presented generally positively or neutrally: Ministry of Environmental Protection, Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure.

Table 19 Distribution of reporting in the news of Happy TV at the level of Executive Branch (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Vučić, Serbian President	48919	35%	86,4	13,6	0,0
Ana Brnabić, Government President	13978	10%	68,2	31,8	0,0
Ministry of Finance	6863	5%	80,9	18,8	0,3
Ministry of Economy	733	1%	54,8	45,2	0,0
Ministry of Environmental Protection	1288	1%	94,3	5,7	0,0
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	2593	2%	71,8	28,2	0,0
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	4315	3%	45,3	53,7	1,0
Ministry of Mining and Energy	9699	7%	70,2	29,3	0,5
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications	5260	4%	63,9	36,1	0,0
Ministry of Justice	425	0%	40,0	38,1	21,9
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	1615	1%	93,9	6,1	0,0
Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue	1152	1%	24,6	75,4	0,0
Ministry of Internal Affairs	4091	3%	78,2	21,8	0,0
Ministry of Defence	5238	4%	70,3	29,7	0,0
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	6509	5%	85,7	14,3	0,0
Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure	4323	3%	90,5	9,5	0,0
Ministry of European Integration	96	0%	10,4	89,6	0,0
Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development	824	1%	85,2	14,8	0,0
Ministry of Health	9670	7%	70,6	29,4	0,0
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	3765	3%	66,9	31,9	1,2
Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography	954	1%	97,9	2,1	0,0
Ministry of Youth and Sports	940	1%	73,3	26,7	0,0
Ministry of Culture and Information	1483	1%	81,0	19,0	0,0
Ministry of Rural Welfare	6053	4%	82,0	18,0	0,0
Total time and average time percent	140786	100%	70,3	28,7	1,0

It was also evident that Happy TV's reporting on political parties became less critical, more promotional and more neutral. This channel also presented the Serbian Progressive Party mostly in a positive light, with almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the time available to the ruling coalition parties. Interestingly, the President of the Serbian Progressive Party was present only 2% of the time, 53% of which was neutral.

The Progressives were followed by the Socialists with 15% of the total time and 69.6% positive time, while the other ruling parties were marginally presented with no more than 3%.

Table 20 Distribution of reporting in the news of Happy TV at the level ruling parties (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Aleksandar Vučić, President of Serbian Progressive Parties	302	2%	47,0	53,0	0,0
Serbian Progressive Party	12436	73%	82,4	17,6	0,0
Socialist Party of Serbia	2522	15%	69,6	30,4	0,0
Serbian Patriotic Alliance	366	2%	11,5	88,5	0,0
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	42	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
United Serbia	518	3%	54,1	45,9	0,0
Party of United Pensioners of Serbia	176	1%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Serbian Renewal Movement	52	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Party of Justice and Reconciliation	170	1%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Social Democratic Party of Serbia	477	3%	99,0	1,0	0,0
Movement for the Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia	10	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Socialist Movement		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Total time and average time percent	17071	100%	63,6	28,0	0,0

On average, Happy TV's news coverage of the opposition parties was neutral. However, this neutral style of reporting was relative. Pink TVs' model of reporting on the opposition parties was also seen on Happy TV. During the monitoring, the Freedom and Justice Party (19%) and the People's Party (12%) were the most represented parties in Happy TV news, but they also had the most negative representation along with the Freedom and Justice Party (42 .5%) and the People's Party (24.4%).

The most positively represented opposition parties on Happy TV were the Democratic Party of Serbia (100.0%) and the Serbian Radical Party (21.6%).

Table 21 Distribution of reporting in the news of Happy TV at the level of opposition parties (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Party of Freedom and Justice	214	19%	0,0	57,5	42,5
People's Party	131	12%	0,0	75,6	24,4
Dveri (Gates)	5	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Democratic Party	5	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Democratic Party of Serbia	104	9%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Liberal Democratic Party		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina	25	2%	0,0	100,0	0,0
New Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
New Party	39	3%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Oath keepers		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Party of Modern Serbia	88	8%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Serbian Radical Party	51	5%	21,6	78,4	0,0
Don't Drown Belgrade		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
United Valley - SDA Sandžak		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Civic Democratic Forum	39	3%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Movement of Free Citizens		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
1 in 5 Million		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Movement for Reversal		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Opposition	174	15%	0,0	5,7	94,3
Enough is Enough	5	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Together for Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Social Democratic Party	211	19%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Better Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Liberation Movement		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Healthy Serbia	5	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
New Communist Party of Yugoslavia	33	3%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Movement of United Phantoms		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Aleksandar Jovanović Ćuta		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Montenegrin Party		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Zdravko Ponoš		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Total time and average time percent	1129	100%	7,4	37,2	5,4

In our monitoring, we found that the news editors of Happy TV did not abandon their past practice when it comes to reporting on the USA and the EU or Russia and China. In contrast to the mainly neutral reporting on the USA and the EU, in the observed period, Happy TV reported on Russia and China mostly positively. Thus, the EU was given 41% of the time that all international actors had and was represented with 79.4% of the neutral time. At the same time, the USA occupied 34% of the total time of which 56% was neutrally connoted. Russia received 11% of the total news time on Happy TV of which 87.1% was positive. The reporting style was noticeable in the case of China, which within 14% of the time, was positively represented with 83.9%.

Table 22 Distribution of reporting in the news of Happy TV at the level of international actors (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
EU	4746	41%	17,7	79,4	2,9
USA	3916	34%	41,9	56,3	1,8
Russia	1318	11%	87,1	12,9	0,0
China	1575	14%	83,9	16,1	0,0
Total time and average time percent	11555	100%	57,6	41,2	1,2

Prva TV

Prva TV also showed a dominance of positive and neutral coverage of the executive branch during the monitoring. The same reporting style was used with the President of the Republic, Aleksandar Vučić, as part of the executive branch. Of the total time allocated to the executive branch in primetime programmes over the 13-month monitoring period, the President of the Republic accounted for 60% and his portrayal was 90.1% positive (advertising). Only 15% of the time was devoted to the President of the Serbian Government, with an exceptionally high proportion of positive presentations (86.3%).

The most positively presented ministries in the news of Prva TV were: Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of European Integration and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whereas the most negatively presented were: Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government.

Table 23 Distribution of reporting in the news of Prva TV at the level of the Executive Branch (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Vučić, Serbian President	55861	60%	90,1	9,9	0,0
Ana Brnabić, Government President	14049	15%	86,3	13,7	0,0
Ministry of Finance	1741	2%	92,4	7,6	0,0
Ministry of Economy	5	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Environmental Protection	1028	1%	68,5	31,5	0,0
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	232	0%	69,4	30,6	0,0
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	991	1%	11,2	88,8	0,0
Ministry of Mining and Energy	189	0%	61,4	38,6	0,0
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications	556	1%	11,2	88,8	0,0
Ministry of Justice	322	0%	66,8	33,2	0,0
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	165	0%	60,6	33,3	6,1
Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue	119	0%	37,0	63,0	0,0
Ministry of Internal Affairs	3116	3%	79,2	20,8	0,0
Ministry of Defence	3027	3%	71,4	17,3	11,3
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	3580	4%	80,5	19,5	0,0
Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure	779	1%	80,2	19,8	0,0
Ministry of European Integration	135	0%	81,5	18,5	0,0
Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development	461	0%	45,8	13,4	40,8
Ministry of Health	4613	5%	67,8	32,2	0,0
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	1461	2%	76,3	23,7	0,0
Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography	253	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Youth and Sports	77	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Culture and Information	332	0%	68,1	31,9	0,0
Ministry of Rural Welfare	291	0%	81,4	18,6	0,0
Total time and average time percent	93383	100%	62,0	35,6	2,4

On average, the ruling parties were presented neutrally in the news of Prva TV. The most represented party within the ruling parties was the Serbian Progressive Party with 42% of the time allocated to the ruling majority parties. When added the time given to the President of the Progressives, Aleksandar Vučić, it can be observed that the largest party of the ruling coalition accounted for two-thirds within the representation, and was positively represented for almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the time.

The Socialist Party of Serbia took the second place with 15% of the time given to parties that make up the majority in the Government. However, that party was represented neutrally 85% of the time. Other parties were marginally represented, with the exception of the United Serbia (8%) and the Party of Justice and Reconciliation (7%).

Table 24 Distribution of reporting in the news of Prva TV at the level of ruling parties (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Aleksandar Vučić, President of Serbian Progressive Party	1621	24%	92,0	8,0	0,0
Serbian Progressive Party	2876	42%	64,3	35,7	0,0
Socialist Party of Serbia	1054	15%	14,7	85,3	0,0
Serbian Patriotic Alliance	130	2%	8,5	91,5	0,0
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	5	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
United Serbia	581	8%	43,0	57,0	0,0
Party of United Pensioners of Serbia	5	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Serbian Renewal Movement		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Party of Justice and Reconciliation	475	7%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Social Democratic Party of Serbia	88	1%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Movement for the Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia	13	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Socialist Movement		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Total time and average time percent	6848	100%	26,9	56,5	0,0

Pink TV's model of reporting on opposition parties was also evident on Prva TV. Namely, the most influential parties were the ones mostly covered, but also the most negatively presented.

This finding mainly relates to the Party of Freedom and Justice, which received 28% of the time given to all opposition parties. At the same time, it was represented with 81.4% negative time. We identified a similar model of reporting on the People's Party that was given much less time (9%), but 84% of that time accounted for negative portrayal. If we compare the representation of parties and

the percentage of positive time received, it can be seen that Dveri (Gates) (59.8%) and the Serbian Radical Party (36.3%) were the most positively represented opposition parties in the news of Prva TV.

Table 25 Distribution of reporting in the news of Prva TV at the level of opposition parties (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Party of Freedom and Justice	1502	28%	4,9	13,7	81,4
People's Party	507	9%	4,7	11,2	84,0
Dveri (Gates)	905	17%	59,8	14,6	25,6
Democratic Party	88	2%	28,4	23,9	47,7
Democratic Party of Serbia	135	3%	25,2	74,8	0,0
Liberal Democratic Party	192	4%	0,0	10,4	89,6
League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina	148	3%	0,0	0,0	100,0
New Serbia	5	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
New Party	83	2%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Oath keepers	3	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Party of Modern Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Serbian Radical Party	248	5%	36,3	49,6	14,1
Don't Drown Belgrade	15	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
United Valley - SDA Sandžak	5	0%	0,0	0,0	100,0
Civic Democratic Forum		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Movement of Free Citizens	20	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
1 in 5 Million	5	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Movement for Reversal		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Opposition	896	17%	0,0	89,1	10,9
Enough is Enough	13	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Together for Serbia	36	1%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Social Democratic Party	115	2%	47,0	53,0	0,0
Better Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Liberation Movement		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Healthy Serbia	40	1%	92,5	7,5	0,0
New Communist Party of Yugoslavia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Movement of United Phantoms(PUF)		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Aleksandar Jovanović Ćuta	244	5%	0,0	70,1	29,9
Montenegrin Party	77	1%	0,0	49,4	50,6
Zdravko Ponoš	62	1%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Total time and average time percent	5344	100%	10,0	45,6	21,1

The news programmes of Prva TV reported on international actors in the same manner as the other channels. On the one hand, the EU and the USA received more coverage that was neutral and negative, and on the other hand, China and Russia received less but very positive coverage. The USA received the most time in the news of Prva TV (47%), of which 47.1% and 39.4% was neutral. During the monitoring period, the EU accounted for 38% of the news time that Prva TV allocated to international actors, of which 76.6% was neutral. Within 9% of the time, Russia was positively presented in 92.9% of the cases, while in 6% of the time, the time "granted" to China was 90.4% positive.

Table 26. Distribution of reporting in the news of Prva TV at the level of international actors (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
EU	3666	38%	15,0	76,6	8,4
USA	4478	47%	13,5	47,1	39,4
Russia	912	9%	92,9	6,6	0,5
China	565	6%	90,4	9,6	0,0
Total time and average time percent	9621	100%	53,0	35,0	12,1

B92

B92 TV followed the trend of national television channels in reporting largely positively and neutrally, namely uncritically on the Executive Branch, which consists of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the President of the Republic of Serbia.

From December 2020 to January 2022, this broadcaster dedicated to the positive presentation of the Executive Branch almost 60% of the time. On this television channel, the President of the Republic of Serbia was also the main actor within the Executive Branch accounting for 58% of the total time reserved for the Executive Branch of which 86.3% was positive. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia was present with 12% of total time allocated to the actors of the Executive Branch, where 70% of that time was positive.

The ministries that were positively presented in the news of B92 TV in the monitored period were: Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography, Ministry of Culture and Information and Ministry of Environmental Protection, while the Ministry of Mining and Energy and the Ministry of Defence received the most negative time.

Table 27 Distribution of reporting in the news of B92 TV at the level of the executive branch (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Vučić, Serbian President	60526	58%	86,3	13,7	0,0
Ana Brnabić, Government President	12085	12%	70,0	30,0	0,0
Ministry of Finance	4851	5%	89,5	10,5	0,0
Ministry of Economy		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Environmental Protection	559	1%	90,9	9,1	0,0
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	970	1%	66,2	33,8	0,0
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	647	1%	27,8	72,2	0,0
Ministry of Mining and Energy	373	0%	49,1	34,3	16,6
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications	859	1%	42,7	57,3	0,0
Ministry of Justice	111	0%	42,3	57,7	0,0
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	157	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Internal Affairs	9285	9%	86,7	13,3	0,0
Ministry of Defence	1072	1%	72,7	21,1	6,3
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2348	2%	68,3	31,7	0,0
Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure	1011	1%	93,4	6,6	0,0
Ministry of European Integration	328	0%	58,5	41,5	0,0
Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development	224	0%	90,2	9,8	0,0
Ministry of Health	2948	3%	58,1	41,9	0,0
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	5296	5%	76,9	23,1	0,0
Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography	58	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Youth and Sports	24	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Culture and Information	234	0%	95,7	4,3	0,0
Ministry of Rural Welfare	82	0%	26,8	73,2	0,0
Total time and average time percent	104048	100%	58,0	32,7	1,0

When the time allocated to the Serbian Progressive Party (47%) and its President Aleksandar Vučić (17%) was added together, it was clear that this party was present in the sample of ruling parties and positively portrayed in the B92 TV news more than half the time. Again the Socialist Party of Serbia took second place (8%) with its neutral presentation (98.6%). Other parties were represented at the minimum, either positively or neutrally, with no more than 5%.

Table 28 Distribution of reporting in the news of B92 TV at the level of ruling parties (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Aleksandar Vučić, President of the Serbian Progressive Party	794	17%	69,5	30,5	0,0
Serbian Progressive Party	2152	47%	67,6	32,4	0,0
Socialist Party of Serbia	364	8%	0,0	98,6	1,4
Serbian Patriotic Alliance	156	3%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
United Serbia	238	5%	23,1	76,9	0,0
Party of United Pensioners of Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Serbian Renewal Movement	45	1%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Party of Justice and Reconciliation	250	5%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Social Democratic Party of Serbia	225	5%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Movement for the Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia	8	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Socialist Movement	353	8%	91,5	8,5	0,0
	4585	100%	46,0	37,2	0,1

Pink TV's reporting model on the opposition parties was also featured on B92 TV. It was clear in this case because the Party of Freedom and Justice received as much as half of the time within the sample of opposition parties, but was also negatively represented 90.5% of the time. The second-placed People's Party received 11% of opposition time, but also 96.7% of negative time.

The Liberal Democratic Party (79.2%), the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina (75.4%), Together for Serbia (100.0%) and the Democratic Party (47.6%) were among the most negatively presented parties.

The most positively presented opposition parties, albeit with very little allocated time, were Dveri (Gates) (94.3%), Social Democratic Party (65.5%) and the Democratic Party of Serbia (40.0%).

Table 29 Distribution of reporting in the news of B92 TV at the level of opposition parties (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Party of Freedom and Justice	2083	51%	6,5	3,0	90,5
People's Party	453	11%	0,0	3,3	96,7
Dveri (Gates)	509	13%	94,3	1,6	4,1
Democratic Party	21	1%	0,0	52,4	47,6
Democratic Party of Serbia	115	3%	40,0	60,0	0,0
Liberal Democratic Party	96	2%	0,0	20,8	79,2
League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina	191	5%	0,0	24,6	75,4
New Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
New Party	42	1%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Oath keepers	2	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Party of Modern Serbia	57	1%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Serbian Radical Party	12	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Don't Drown Belgrade		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
United Valley - SDA Sandžak		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Civic Democratic Forum	32	1%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Movement of Free Citizens		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
1 in 5 Million		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Movement for Reversal		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Opposition	329	8%	23,1	3,0	73,9
Enough is Enough	8	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Together for Serbia	20	0%	0,0	0,0	100,0
Social Democratic Party	84	2%	65,5	34,5	0,0
Better Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Liberation Movement		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Healthy Serbia	6	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
New Communist Party of Yugoslavia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Movement of United Phantoms		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Aleksandar Jovanović Ćuta	5	0%	0,0	0,0	100,0
Montenegrin Party		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Zdravko Ponoš		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Total time and average time percent	4065	100%	75,7	21,7	2,6

When it comes to the coverage of international actors on B92 TV, the results of our monitoring were the same as the ones above. This television channel also showed a greater presence of the EU (49%) and the USA (26%), as well as neutral reporting on the EU (54.6%) and the USA (80.4%) with the presence of critical reporting, while reporting on Russia (77.7%) and China (83.6%) took significantly less time but was highly positive.

Table 30 Distribution of reporting in the news of B92 TV at the level of international actors (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
EU	2963	49%	40,0	54,6	5,5
USA	1563	26%	11,0	80,4	8,6
Russia	924	15%	77,7	21,8	0,5
China	581	10%	83,6	16,4	0,0
Total time and average time per-cent	6031	100%	53,1	43,3	3,7

N1 TV

N1 TV has entered BIRODI monitoring as a cable channel in order to be able to compare the coverage of this mainly topical and political TV channel with that of TV channels with a national reach.

In contrast to television channels with national coverage, which reported positively on the Executive Branch headed by Aleksandar Vučić as the President of the Republic, N1 reported neutrally on the same actors and in the same time period. However, the President of the Republic, Aleksandar Vučić, received the most time in the news of N1 TV (48%). Admittedly, unlike television channels with national coverage, where Aleksandar Vučić was presented positively and frequently at the advertising level (over 75% of the positive time), in the news of N1 TV this actor was presented mainly neutrally (57.4%) accounting for one third of negative time and 9.2% of positive time, thus coming very close to ideal presentation of an actor. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, with 15% of the total time, accounted for 71.6% of neutral presentation.

Among the ministries that were given the most positive time in the N1 TV news were: Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, Ministry of European Integration and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while the ministries that received the most negative time were: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography and Ministry of Defence.

Table 31 Distribution of reporting in the news of N1TV at the level of the Executive Branch (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Vučić, Serbian President	41606	48%	9,2	57,4	33,4
Ana Brnabić, Government President	12661	15%	11,2	71,6	17,2
Ministry of Finance	4105	5%	12,8	41,8	45,4
Ministry of Economy	56	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Environmental Protection	738	1%	7,3	71,8	20,9
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	191	0%	0,0	36,6	63,4
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	1240	1%	4,8	83,5	11,7
Ministry of Mining and Energy	2358	3%	14,9	69,4	15,7
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications	1019	1%	2,7	89,4	7,9
Ministry of Justice	57	0%	0,0	91,2	8,8
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	1030	1%	33,2	53,2	13,6
Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue	609	1%	56,0	44,0	0,0
Ministry of Internal Affairs	3725	4%	8,7	54,8	36,5
Ministry of Defence	4271	5%	9,1	50,1	40,8
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	645	1%	41,7	35,8	22,5
Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure	971	1%	12,5	62,9	24,6
Ministry of European Integration	788	1%	45,6	47,6	6,9
Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development	132	0%	30,3	69,7	0,0
Ministry of Health	6586	8%	12,4	80,2	7,4
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	2296	3%	7,3	82,6	10,1
Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography	269	0%	3,0	43,9	53,2
Ministry of Youth and Sports	3	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Culture and Information	819	1%	15,1	73,5	11,4
Ministry of Rural Welfare	0	0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Total time and average time percent	86175	100%	14,1	63,0	18,8

N1 TV predominantly reported about the parties in power neutrally. As opposed to the other monitored television channels, the Serbian Progressive Party, together with Aleksandar Vučić, occupied the central place in the time slot intended for the parties of the ruling majority. Nevertheless, the Serbian Progressive Party was represented mainly negatively (62.2%), in contrast to Aleksandar Vučić, who was negatively represented as the President of the Serbian Progressive Party with only 28.2%. The United Serbia received 12% of the time and among all parties that support the Government of the Republic of Serbia was the second party in terms of representation, whereas its negative representation accounted for 75.7%. The most positively represented party from those in power was the Serbian Renewal Movement with 45.1% of positive time on N1TV.

Table 32 Distribution of reporting in the news of N1 TV at the level of parties (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Aleksandar Vučić, President of the Serbian Progressive Party	1043	5%	4,4	67,4	28,2
Serbian Progressive Party	13655	68%	1,7	36,1	62,2
Socialist Party of Serbia	874	4%	10,0	82,0	8,0
Serbian Patriotic Alliance	954	5%	1,9	51,7	46,4
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	539	3%	5,9	85,9	8,2
United Serbia	2302	12%	5,3	19,1	75,7
Party of United Pensioners of Serbia	15	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Serbian Renewal Movement	164	1%	45,1	54,9	0,0
Party of Justice and Reconciliation	40	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Social Democratic Party of Serbia	60	0%	0,0	66,7	33,3
Movement for the Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia	320	2%	5,6	94,4	0,0
Socialist Movement	5	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Total time and average time percent	19971	100%	6,7	71,5	21,8

Even in the case of opposition parties, the coverage was predominantly neutral. The most represented opposition party on N1 TV was the Party of Freedom and Justice with 33% of the time given to all the parties that make up the opposition bloc and 55.7% of positive presentation. The People's Party ranked second with 18% of the opposition time and 51.4% positive time.

The most positively presented parties or movements on N1 TV were "1 in 5 Million", Civic Democratic Forum, "Don't Drown Belgrade" and Democratic Party of Serbia. On the other hand, the Liberal Democratic Party (88.0%), the Serbian Radical Party (37.1%) and the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina (20.8%) received the most negative time.

Table 33 Distribution of reporting in the news of N1 TV at the level of opposition parties (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Party of Freedom and Justice	8441	33%	55,7	41,4	2,9
People's Party	4644	18%	51,4	44,7	3,9
Dveri (Gates)	2327	9%	55,7	43,6	0,8
Democratic Party	1782	7%	45,5	54,5	0,0
Democratic Party of Serbia	496	2%	67,3	32,7	0,0
Liberal Democratic Party	100	0%	0,0	12,0	88,0
League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina	77	0%	0,0	79,2	20,8
New Serbia	51	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
New Party	433	2%	24,9	75,1	0,0
Oath keepers	51	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Party of Modern Serbia	44	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Serbian Radical Party	329	1%	3,0	59,9	37,1
Don't Drown Belgrade	1588	6%	84,3	14,5	1,2
United Valley - SDA Sandžak	565	2%	14,9	84,2	0,9
Civic Democratic Forum	71	0%	85,9	14,1	0,0
Movement of Free Citizens	480	2%	32,9	67,1	0,0
1 in 5 Million	21	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Movement for Reversal	116	0%	51,7	48,3	0,0
Opposition	1779	7%	7,4	92,6	0,0
Enough is Enough	192	1%	46,9	53,1	0,0
Together for Serbia	732	3%	48,8	51,2	0,0
Social Democratic Party	386	2%	7,5	84,2	8,3
Better Serbia	113	0%	45,1	54,9	0,0
Liberation Movement	180	1%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Healthy Serbia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
New Communist Party of Yugoslavia		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Movement of United Phantoms(PUF)	68	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Aleksandar Jovanović Ćuta	465	2%	85,6	14,4	0,0
Montenegrin Party		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Zdravko Ponoš	20	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Total time and average time percent	25551	100%	33,8	50,7	5,5

In the course of our monitoring, we came to the conclusion that the coverage of international actors in the news on N1 TV varied. Thus, in N1 news, the EU (65%) and US (22%) were also more prominent, but in a very neutral way - EU (92.4%) and US (94.8%). Coverage of Russia (4%) and China (9%) was lower but neutral when it came to Russia (73.8%) and neutral (48.5%) and negative (47.4%) when it was about China.

Table 34 Distribution of reporting in the news of N1 TV at the level of international actors (time and tone)

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
EU	8436	65%	7,6	92,4	0,0
USA	2793	22%	5,2	94,8	0,0
Russia	543	4%	5,5	73,8	20,6
China	1146	9%	4,1	48,5	47,4
Total time and average time percent	12918	100%	5,6	77,4	17,0

V ELECTORAL MEDIA MONITORING

Electoral Monitoring of Primetime Current Affairs Programmes from 15 March to 31 March 2022

In the following part of the publication, we will present the findings of the monitoring of primetime newscasts during the presidential and parliamentary election campaign in Serbia held on 2 April, this year. The monitoring included RTS, Pink, Happy, Prva, B92, and N1 news programmes and coverage of public officials (Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, ministers, President of the Republic), electoral lists that had been made public, and presidential candidates. The foregoing actors were mostly featured in news items within election time slots (79.4%), with only every fifth news item (20.6%) broadcast outside the slot.

Table 35 Reporting on election actors in the election and non-election slot

	N	N %
Election slot	3899	79,4
Non-election slot	1014	20,6
Total	4913	100,0

When analysed by TV channel or news, Prva TV, RTS and Pink TV broadcast the largest number of monitored news items about the above actors in the election campaign, while N1 TV broadcast the fewest.

Table 36 Number of news items on election actors by television channels

	N
RTS	925
PINK	914
HAPPY	825
PRVA	1067
B92	877
N1	305
Total	4913

The greatest focus in the primetime current affairs programmes was mainly placed on parliamentary elections and subsequently on presidential elections.

Table 37 Number of news items on election actors by type of elections

	N
Parliamentary	2259
Presidential	1001
Belgrade city	541
Local	16
It is difficult to determine the general content	112
Other news items	984

In general, we can conclude that the monitoring results of the coverage of the representatives of the executive branch during the election do not deviate from the previously presented monitoring results of the non-election period.

At the same time, the coverage of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the President of the Republic of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić (72.1%), was predominantly positive during both the non-election period and the election period, while within the executive branch, President Aleksandar Vučić (80%) had a clear temporal dominance in terms of his assumption of the competences of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

During the monitoring period, a significant number of ministries or ministers were represented by the status related to the campaign of officials, which denotes positive coverage of a state body or public official as described in Article 2 of the Anti-Corruption Law. The most positively represented ministries included: Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Environmental Protection, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue

Admittedly, there were also ministries and ministers that were negatively represented. Specifically, this was the Ministry of Defence, which had the most negative coverage in both analysed periods. The Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Mining and Energy, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, and the Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development followed with the most negative exposure.

Table 38 Cumulative reporting on executive branch during the election campaign-campaign of officials

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Vučić, Serbian President	80310	80%	85,3	10,6	4,1
Ana Brnabić, Government President	5688	6%	83,7	16,3	0,0
Ministry of Finance	1562	2%	77,7	20,0	2,3
Ministry of Economy	93	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Environmental Protection	461	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	313	0%	70,9	25,9	3,2
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	574	1%	34,1	65,9	0,0
Ministry of Mining and Energy	804	1%	54,0	38,8	7,2
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications	1415	1%	63,6	36,4	0,0
Ministry of Justice	274	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	570	1%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue	158	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Internal Affairs	1946	2%	58,9	24,4	16,7
Ministry of Defence	563	1%	0,0	55,2	44,8
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	612	1%	73,9	26,1	0,0
Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure	753	1%	95,6	0,0	4,4
Ministry of European Integration	54	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development	36	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Health	2320	2%	49,2	50,8	0,0
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	1313	1%	93,3	6,7	0,0
Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography	156	0%	10,3	89,7	0,0
Ministry of Youth and Sports	51	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Culture and Information	260	0%	80,0	20,0	0,0
Ministry of Rural Welfare	94	0%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Total time and average time percent	100380	100%	72,1	24,4	3,4

Unlike in the 2012 election campaign, when there was a diversity of individuals who were dominant in terms of time and tone, ten years later we observed the dominance of one official, the Republic President Aleksandar Vučić, and the invisible Government of the Republic of Serbia. In this media dominance of Aleksandar Vučić, which is not a novelty but a consistent pattern since 2014, Pink TV was the protagonist, although other TV channels with national reach were also contributing.

Table 39 Cumulative reporting on executive branch during the election campaign - campaign of officials by television channels

	RTS		PINK		HAPPY		PRVA		B92		N1	
	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time
Vučić, Serbian President	4238	67,6	39483	97,2	6836	83,2	11455	89,1	12148	91,6	6150	4,5
Ana Brnabić, Government President	826	69,1	835	100,0	1610	97,8	442	63,3	1716	87,4	259	0,0
Ministry of Finance	28	0,0	150	100,0	78	20,5	248	100,0	800	100,0	258	0,0
Ministry of Economy	93	100,0		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0
Ministry of Environmental Protection		0,0	126	100,0	195	100,0	140	100,0		0,0		0,0
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	122	70,5	10	100,0	126	100,0		0,0	45	0,0	10	0,0
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	36	0,0		0,0	538	36,4		0,0		0,0		0,0
Ministry of Mining and Energy	114	82,5	10	0,0	576	59,0		0,0		0,0	104	0,0
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications	227	52,0		0,0	874	89,5		0,0	314	0,0		0,0
Ministry of Justice	28	100,0		0,0	186	100,0	30	100,0	30	100,0		0,0
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	98	0,0	12	0,0	104	0,0	56	0,0	76	0,0	224	0,0
Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue		0,0		0,0	158	100,0		0,0		0,0		0,0
Ministry of Internal Affairs	56	0,0	800	81,3	186	100,0		0,0	579	53,7	325	0,0
Ministry of Defence	40	0,0	196	0,0		0,0		0,0	70	0,0	257	0,0
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	76	0,0	22	100,0	514	83,7		0,0		0,0		0,0
Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure		0,0	28	100,0	438	100,0	28	100,0	226	100,0	33	0,0
Ministry of European Integration	54	100,0		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0

Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0		36	100,0		0,0
Ministry of Health	170	76,5	442	62,0	1315	26,2		0,0		0,0		393	100,0		0,0
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	34	100,0		0,0	413	100,0		0,0		0,0		822	94,6	44	0,0
Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography	140	0,0		0,0	16	100,0		0,0		0,0			0,0		0,0
Ministry of Youth and Sports	6	100,0	45	100,0		0,0		0,0		0,0			0,0		0,0
Ministry of Culture and Information		0,0		0,0	208	100,0		0,0		0,0			0,0	52	0,0
Ministry of Rural Welfare		0,0	94	100,0		0,0		0,0		0,0			0,0		0,0
	6386		42253		14371		12399					17255		7716	

The only monitored TV outlet that deviated from this model of reporting was N1 TV, where the coverage of executive branch was not promotional but, on the contrary, neutral-critical. Thus, despite the fact that Aleksandar Vučić, as the President of the Republic, was also the dominant actor on N1TV, this actor was presented mainly negatively (50.4%) - neutrally (45.1%), while the Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia received 100% neutral presentation.

Table 40 Reporting on the executive branch during the election campaign on N1 TV

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Vučić, Serbian President	6150	80%	4,5	45,1	50,4
Ana Brnabić, Government President	259	3%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Finance	258	3%	0,0	86,0	14,0
Ministry of Economy		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Environmental Protection		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	10	0%	0,0	0,0	100,0
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Mining and Energy	104	1%	0,0	73,1	26,9
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Justice		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	224	3%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Internal Affairs	325	4%	0,0	0,0	100,0
Ministry of Defence	257	3%	0,0	5,8	94,2
Ministry of Foreign Affairs		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure	33	0%	0,0	0,0	100,0
Ministry of European Integration		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Health		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	44	1%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Youth and Sports		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Ministry of Culture and Information	52	1%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Rural Welfare		0%	0,0	0,0	0,0
Total time and average time percent	7716	100%	0,2	25,4	20,2

Unlike 2012, when our monitoring of primetime newscast coverage during the parliamentary election campaign identified the existence of more equal and equal actors and when the lists of the opposition Serbian Progressive Party and the then-ruling Democratic Party were significantly more represented together than the other lists, i.e. had the same positive presentation, ten years later parliamentary election monitoring showed that the existence of more equal and equal actors was such that a list of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (36%) was significantly more equal than the other electoral lists.

This was followed by the list of coalition partners, the Socialist Party of Serbia and the United Serbia, with twice as little time (10) but with a high percentage of excessively positive representation. The list of the Serbian Radical Party had the same percentage of time. Behind these parties were the coalitions United for the Victory of Serbia and We Must with 8% each. The coalition NADA and the Patriotic Alliance were represented with 7% and 6% respectively.

All the above parties had a very positive presentation when monitoring results were analysed together. The existence of a very positive representation is a consequence of the party camera phenomenon that BIRODI has been pointing out for a decade. We repeat: it is a phenomenon where campaign staff deliver their promotional content to media newsrooms to be aired as media content with little or no intervention. This results in the advertising presentation of electoral lists or presidential candidates, in violation of Article 47 of the Law on Information, i.e. the Rulebook on the Protection of Human Rights in the Field of Provision of Media Services, and the Serbian Code of Journalists.

Table 41 Cumulative reporting on electoral lists

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Aleksandar Vučić – Together We Can Do Anything	22197	22%	80,7	6,5	12,8
Ivica Dačić, Serbian Prime Minister	10132	10%	97,7	1,2	1,1
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	859	1%	75,1	24,9	0,0
Serbian Radical Party Dr. Vojislav Šešelj	10266	10%	98,4	1,6	0,0
United for the Victory of Serbia	8397	8%	79,4	3,9	16,6
NADA Coalition	6879	7%	98,9	0,7	0,4
Serbian Party Oath Keepers	4875	5%	97,7	2,1	0,2
Mufti's Bequest	4341	4%	94,4	5,6	0,0
We Must Coalition	8044	8%	97,7	2,3	0,0
Sovereignists	6659	6%	96,9	2,8	0,4
Boris Tadić Let's Go People	4093	4%	88,4	9,5	2,2
Patriotic Block for the Restoration of the Kingdom	5802	6%	99,9	0,1	0,0
SDA of Sandžak	2198	2%	98,6	1,4	0,0
Together for Vojvodina	3731	4%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Albanian Valley Coalition	195	0%	81,5	18,5	0,0
Kidnapped Babies Ana Pejić	458	0%	93,4	6,6	0,0
Roma Party	615	1%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Russian Minority Council	484	0%	32,6	0,0	67,4
Dodik, when in the context of Serbian elections	570	1%	79,6	20,4	0,0
Miša Vacić	2167	2%	99,3	0,0	0,7
Total time and average time percent	102962	100%	89,5	5,4	5,1

The segmented presentation of the monitoring findings by television channels that broadcast the monitored primetime current affairs programmes showed that there was a difference in the presentation of electoral lists between the TV news with national coverage and N1 TV.

While almost all electoral lists were presented extremely positively on TV channels with national coverage, on N1TV this was not the case for the electoral lists of the Serbian Progressive Party, Socialist Party of Serbia, United Serbia, Oath Keepers, Social Democratic Party and Together for Vojvodina.

Table 42 Cumulative reporting on electoral lists by television channel

	RTS		PINK		HAPPY		PRVA		B92		N1	
	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time
Aleksandar Vučić - Together We Can Do Anything	1350	96,3	2485	94,0	4451	97,3	5270	92,4	4542	98,0	4099	15,4
Ivica Dačić, Serbian Prime Minister	1125	100,0	1156	96,4	2559	100,0	3254	100,0	1806	100,0	232	19,8
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	58	100,0	134	58,2	407	100,0	96	0,0	102	100,0	62	0,0
Serbian Radical Party Dr. Vojislav Šešelj	1096	100,0	1071	96,5	2787	100,0	2792	97,3	2309	97,8	211	97,6
United for the Victory of Serbia	1197	100,0	1701	27,2	528	100,0	1856	100,0	1348	76,0	1767	90,7
NADA Coalition	1024	100,0	941	100,0	1473	100,0	1677	100,0	1508	100,0	256	70,3
Serbian Party Oath Keepers	960	100,0	962	94,0	826	100,0	1521	100,0	551	100,0	55	0,0
Mufti's Bequest	993	96,4	870	100,0	601	100,0	1119	90,0	712	93,0	46	0,0
We Must Coalition	1008	97,6	692	89,6	995	100,0	2602	100,0	1614	100,0	1133	92,4
Sovereignists	1009	100,0	881	96,6	1561	100,0	2110	97,3	1024	95,5	74	0,0
Boris Tadić Let's Go People	565	100,0	503	82,9	432	100,0	1201	100,0	769	90,2	623	49,4
Patriotic Block for the Restoration of the Kingdom	921	100,0	864	100,0	1543	100,0	1619	100,0	726	100,0	129	96,1
SDA of Sandžak	487	93,8	485	100,0		0,0	807	100,0	419	100,0		0,0
Together for Vojvodina	776	100,0	310	100,0	878	100,0	1089	100,0	678	100,0		0,0
Albanian Valley Coalition	195	81,5		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0
Kidnapped Babies Ana Pejić	240	100,0	203	92,6	15	0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0
Roma Party	158	100,0	93	100,0	310	100,0	54	100,0		0,0		0,0
Russian Minority Council	158	100,0		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0	326	0,0

The principle of “there can only be one” who is more equal than the others was also evident in the presidential candidates.

The first favourite, Aleksandar Vucic, received 26% of the time of all presidential candidates with 88% positive portrayal. In second place was the candidate of the right-wing coalition NADA, Miloš Jovanović, with 18% of the time of all candidates and a very positive 98.7%. Third place in time received as a candidate for President of Serbia was Biljana Stojković with 14% of the time, which was consistently positive. In third place was Zdravko Ponoš with 13% of the total time, i.e. 63.4% positive time. This candidate had the most negative time (30.3%).

It is easy to see that all candidates were presented in a positive light. This is because their campaign staff created paramedia content and delivered it to newsrooms to be broadcast as such on election news and prime time, thus perpetuating the “party camera” phenomenon that we have been highlighting since 2012.

Table 43 Cumulative reporting on presidential candidates

	Total time	Share in total time	Percent of positive time	Percent of neutral time	Percent of negative time
Aleksandar Vučić	10966	26%	88,8	2,9	8,3
Zdravko Ponoš	5593	13%	63,4	6,3	30,3
Miloš Jovanović	7557	18%	98,7	1,3	0,0
Srđan Škoro	56	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Boško Obradović	5060	12%	99,2	0,8	0,0
Biljan Stojković	6099	14%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Milica Djurdjević Stamenkovski	3692	9%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Branka Stamenkovic	3305	8%	100,0	0,0	0,0
Total time and average time percent	42328	100%			

The presence of “party cameras” was noted during the coverage of the presidential campaign in the primetime news broadcasts. In this case, too, the TV channels with national frequencies offered free unlawful and unethical advertising in the media to all candidates except for Zdravko Ponoš on Pink TV and B92 TV. On cable TV, N1 advertised Boško Obradović and Biljana Stojković.

Table 44 Cumulative reporting on presidential candidates by television channels

	RTS		PINK		HAPPY		PRVA		B92		N1	
	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time	Total time	Positive time
Aleksandar Vučić	1038	100,0	3237	98,8	1368	100,0	2042	100,0	1930	100,0	1351	11,7
Zdravko Ponoš	820	98,5	1630	25,2	698	96,0	965	100,0	1162	51,1	318	31,4
Miloš Jovanović	829	98,6	976	98,4	1263	94,3	1456	100,0	3033	100,0		0,0
Srdan Škoro		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0	56	0,0
Boško Obradović	746	100,0	700	100,0	928	95,5	1020	100,0	1576	100,0	90	100,0
Bijan Strojковиć	707	100,0	709	100,0	455	100,0	1018	100,0	3088	100,0	122	100,0
Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski	683	100,0	677	100,0	986	100,0	1158	100,0	188	100,0		0,0
Branka Stamenković	506	100,0	305	100,0	393	100,0	645	100,0	1456	100,0		0,0

Electoral monitoring of daily newspapers from 15 March to 31 March 2022

In parallel with the monitoring of the primetime newscasts, the monitoring of daily press was conducted during the election period on the sample of Politika, Večernje novosti, Blic, Informer, Danas and Nova daily. The subjects of the monitoring were the same actors as those featured in the news, but this time they were presented in the articles of the daily newspapers.

Among the analysed daily newspapers, Danas reported most extensively on the election campaign (25.5%), followed by Vecernje Novosti (19.8%) and Politika (19.6%).

Table 45 Number of monitored news items by daily newspapers

	Number of news items	Percent
Politika	594	19,6
Večernje novosti	601	19,8
Blic	325	10,7
Nova	386	12,7
Informer	353	11,6
Danas	773	25,5
Total	3032	100,0

In almost half of the articles (45.5%) it was not possible to determine which elections were reported on. Of the articles where it was clear which election was being covered, 15.3% were about presidential elections and 8.3% were about parliamentary elections.

Table 46 Number of monitored news items by type of election

	Number of news items	Percent
Parliamentary	252	8,3
Presidential	464	15,3
Belgrade city	193	6,4
Other local elections	37	1,2
General content cannot be determined	1380	45,5
Other articles	706	23,3
Total	3032	100,0

The coverage of the executive branch in daily newspapers during the election campaign did not fundamentally differ from what we found in our monitoring of primetime current affairs programmes. The President of the Republic, Aleksandar Vučić, accounted for half of the monitored news items (53%). However, the tone of President Vučić's portrayal in this news sample was different from the (excessively

positive) one in the current affairs. In the daily newspapers, we encountered a kind of balance, which to a lesser extent slanted to the negative side, because 40.3% of the monitored space given to Vučić was negatively connoted.

The Ministry of Rural Welfare and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management were among the most positively represented ministries during the campaign, while in the same period, in this sample of daily newspapers, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Environmental Protection were most negatively represented.

Table 47 Cumulative reporting on the executive branch

	Total space	Share in total analysed space	Percent of positive space	Percent of neutral space	Percent of negative space
Vučić, Serbian President	42723	53%	30,2	29,5	40,3
Ana Brnabić, Government President	5923	7%	48,3	38,0	13,7
Ministry of Finance	2866	4%	39,1	43,2	17,7
Ministry of Economy	359	0%	46,0	54,0	0,0
Ministry of Environmental Protection	1732	2%	13,6	30,3	56,1
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	1826	2%	67,7	27,1	5,1
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	2896	4%	5,8	75,1	19,2
Ministry of Mining and Energy	2444	3%	24,7	46,3	29,0
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications	1421	2%	41,6	55,7	2,7
Ministry of Justice	121	0%	18,2	78,5	3,3
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	651	1%	25,7	56,8	17,5
Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue	72	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Internal Affairs	6613	8%	14,0	47,1	38,9
Ministry of Defence	2174	3%	12,8	68,9	18,3
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1134	1%	15,3	76,3	8,4
Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure	1748	2%	49,6	27,3	23,1
Ministry of European Integration	87	0%	27,6	72,4	0,0
Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development	98	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Health	2277	3%	40,7	54,1	5,3
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	1807	2%	32,3	47,8	20,0
Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography	1	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Ministry of Youth and Sports	14	0%	0,0	28,6	71,4
Ministry of Culture and Information	1991	2%	43,7	11,7	44,6
Ministry of Rural Welfare	182	0%	97,3	2,7	0,0
Total time and average time percent	81160	100%	28,9	53,0	18,1

Analysing the dailies, it could be concluded that the positive tone of coverage of President Aleksandar Vučić varied. In contrast to Danas and Nova, where Vučić received significantly less positive portrayal, other dailies had more positive references to Vučić, mainly Večerenje novosti and Informer. It is interesting to note that the Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Ana Brnabić, when compared to the President of the Republic, Aleksandar Vučić, had a better score when it came to positive exposure in daily newspapers, with the exception of Nova daily.

When analysing the daily press, we can see that in the election campaign, more than a half of positive presentation was given to the following ministries in:

- Politika: Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure and Ministry of Culture and Information;
- Večernje novosti: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Ministry of Environmental Protection, Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, Ministry of Culture and Information and Ministry of Rural Welfare;
- Blic: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Mining and Energy, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications and Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs;
- Nova: Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economy;
- Informer: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Rural Welfare and
- Danas: Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Health.

Table 48 Positive reporting on the executive branch depending on the daily newspaper

	Politika		Večernje novosti		Blic		Nova		Informier		Danas	
	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space
Vučić, Serbian President	11383	47,2	5205	58,2	3475	28,4	5875	7,3	4157	55,8	12628	6,1
Ana Brnabić, Government President	2485	61,7	868	52,4	594	67,3	684	0,0	384	49,7	908	31,1
Ministry of Finance	797	44,5	961	34,5	147	80,3	392	68,6	112	42,9	457	0,0
Ministry of Economy	151	0,0	8	100,0	42	0,0	157	100,0	1	0,0	791	0,0
Ministry of Environmental Protection	357	21,6	176	58,0	6	0,0	352	0,0	50	0,0	791	7,1
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	1104	72,6	282	58,5		0,0		0,0	303	89,4	137	0,0
Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	1183	3,9	72	27,8	190	0,0	390	0,0	36	0,0	1025	9,9
Ministry of Mining and Energy	586	42,2	314	31,5	69	50,7	400	18,8	69	29,0	1006	12,7
Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications	558	43,4	212	39,6	150	58,7	77	0,0	182	60,4	242	27,7
Ministry of Justice		0,0	5	0,0		0,0	72	0,0	4	0,0	40	55,0
Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	177	80,2	43	58,1		0,0	94	0,0		0,0	337	0,0
Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue	4	0,0	25	0,0	1	0,0		0,0		0,0	42	0,0
Ministry of Internal Affairs	1728	22,4	938	32,9	99	24,2	1588	0,0	361	39,6	1899	3,2
Ministry of Defence	969	7,3	336	8,6	39	0,0	66	0,0	225	52,4	539	11,1
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	397	25,9	434	7,4	96	0,0	58	0,0	46	84,8	103	0,0
Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure	780	65,9	368	51,1	125	0,0	154	17,5	20	0,0	301	45,8
Ministry of European Integration	6	0,0	24	100,0	11	0,0		0,0		0,0	46	0,0
Ministry of Innovation and Technological Development	53	0,0	5	0,0	40	0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0
Ministry of Health	1107	36,6	409	67,7	106	24,5	244	0,0	60	36,7	351	55,8
Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	613	6,9	234	86,8	18	100,0	3	0,0	19	0,0	920	34,8
Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography		0,0	1	0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0
Ministry of Youth and Sports	4	0,0		0,0		0,0	10	0,0		0,0		0,0
Ministry of Culture and Information	278	50,0	753	97,2	3	0,0		0,0		0,0	957	0,0
Ministry of Rural Welfare		0,0	125	96,0		0,0		0,0	25	100,0	32	100,0

With almost two thirds of the space, Aleksandar Vucic as a presidential candidate was the dominant actor on the pages of monitored daily newspapers. However, Vučić's ubiquity did not bring the hugely positive coverage it has seen in the news programmes. In fact, one third of the monitored space of this sample of daily newspapers portrayed Vučić in a negative or critical context.

In second place, with 15% of the total space given to all candidates was Zdravko Ponoš, who was positively represented in 45%, neutrally in 35.8% and negatively in 19.2% of the space. The representation of other candidates was 8% lower and mostly positive (Branka Stamenković and Biljana Stojković) or neutral (Srđan Škoro, Miloš Jovanović, Boško Obradović and Milica Djurdjević Stamenkovski).

Table 49 Cumulative reporting on presidential candidates in daily newspapers

	Total space	Share in total analysed space	Percent of positive space	Percent of neutral space	Percent of negative space
Aleksandar Vučić	33221	59%	60,2	6,6	33,2
Zdravko Ponoš	8272	15%	45,0	35,8	19,2
Miloš Jovanović	3754	7%	46,4	50,7	3,0
Srđan Škoro	337	1%	9,8	83,4	6,8
Boško Obradović	2796	5%	41,6	43,1	15,2
Biljana Stojković	4288	8%	49,1	45,1	5,8
Milica Djurdjević Stamenkovski	3009	5%	21,6	73,3	5,1
Branka Stamenković	1059	2%	63,4	33,0	3,7
	56736	100%	42,1	46,4	11,5

Looking at the percentage of positive coverage, the Progressives' presidential candidate, Aleksandar Vučić, was positively featured in Politika, Vecernje Novosti and Informer for more than fifty percent. The second-placed presidential candidate, Zdravko Ponoš, received more than a half of positive presentation only in Nova, while the third-placed candidate for the President of the Republic, Miloš Jovanović, had positive presentation in Politika and Nova. During the election campaign, the presentation of Bosko Obradovic as a presidential candidate in Vecernje Novosti was positive for more than fifty percent.

Biljana Stojković was positively represented, namely, was given over 50% of the positive space in Politika and Danas. Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski and Branka Stamenković were positively portrayed in Politika and Branka Stamenković was also presented positively in Blic.

Table 50 Cumulative reporting on presidential candidates by daily newspapers

	Politika		Večernje novosti		Blic		Nova		Informer		Danas	
	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space
Aleksandar Vučić	6113	98,0	7976	93,1	2803	73,0	3129	1,0	4365	93,0	8835	4,9
Zdravko Ponoš	1411	39,8	269	28,3	627	27,8	2393	77,1	1386	0,0	2186	48,8
Miloš Jovanović	1493	51,6	616	39,0	410	22,4	647	85,9	30	26,7	558	13,3
Srdan Škoro	2	0,0	2	0,0	45	28,9	52	0,0	32	0,0	204	9,8
Boško Obradović	715	47,6	374	56,1	267	18,0	886	49,1	166	27,1	388	22,2
Biljana Stojković	705	80,3	336	39,0	452	34,5	1116	35,8	288	15,6	1391	58,2
Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski	525	57,5	1339	7,2	203	0,0	74	0,0	97	0,0	771	32,6
Branka Stamenković	459	89,8	29	0,0	220	53,2	99	72,7	8	0,0	244	28,7

The electoral list led by the name of the President of the Republic and the President of the Serbian Progressive Party received 36% of space in the sample of monitored daily newspapers in which it was presented in a balanced manner. The list United for the Victory of Serbia took the second place with half as much space (19%) and 49% of positive space. The list of the Socialist Party of Serbia and United Serbia had four times less space than the list of the Serbian Progressive Party but with a higher percentage of positive representation (56.1%). The list Let's Go, People was among the first four in terms of representation, receiving 9% of the space with mostly neutral portrayal (46.7%).

Among the electoral lists that were represented mainly positively were: Kidnapped Babies Ana Pejić, We Must Coalition, while among the mostly negatively represented lists were SDA of Sandžak, Aleksandar Vučić - Together We Can Do Anything and Serbian Party Oath Keepers.

Table 51 Cumulative reporting on electoral lists in daily newspapers

	Total space	Share in total analysed space	Percent of positive space	Percent of neutral space	Percent of negative space
Aleksandar Vučić - Together We Can Do Anything	44599	36%	34,1	26,7	39,1
Ivica Dačić, Serbian Prime Minister	12349	10%	56,1	37,8	6,2
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	907	1%	7,4	83,4	9,3
Serbian Radical Party - Dr Vojislav Šešelj	4631	4%	57,5	31,8	10,7
United for the Victory of Serbia	24335	19%	47,9	31,0	21,2
Dr Miloš Jovanović NADA Coalition	4018	3%	52,1	45,8	2,1
Serbian Party Oath Keepers	1238	1%	23,6	44,7	31,7
Mufti's Bequest	1231	1%	47,4	52,6	0,0
We Must Coalition	9774	8%	49,1	39,1	11,9
Sovereignists	3212	3%	43,1	51,5	5,4
Boris Tadić Let's Go People	11219	9%	37,5	46,7	15,8
Patriotic Bloc for the Restoration of the Kingdom	3585	3%	46,9	47,9	5,2
SDA of Sandžak	394	0%	14,0	38,3	47,7
Together for Vojvodina Democratic Union of Croats	205	0%	48,3	51,7	0,0
Alternative for Changes Albanian Democratic Alternative	179	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Albanian Valley Coalition	260	0%	0,0	100,0	0,0
Kidnapped Babies Ana Pejić	627	1%	58,1	41,3	0,6
Roma Party	467	0%	25,7	73,0	1,3
Russian Minority Council	982	1%	22,0	43,9	34,1
	125285	100%	33,1	55,2	11,7

When comparing the data from the daily newspapers, the difference in coverage of the list headed by Aleksandar Vučić was clearly visible. On the one hand, there were mostly positive articles in Politika, Novosti, Blic and Informer, on the other hand, this list received almost no positive space in Danas and Nova. The analysed daily newspapers treated the list led by the Socialist Party of Serbia similarly to the list submitted by the Serbian Progressive Party, namely, this list was presented more positively in Politika, Novosti, Blic and Informer and significantly less positively in Danas and Nova.

Informer showed the same attitude to the list United for the Victory of Serbia, We Must Coalition and Let's Go People. The coalition led by the Freedom and Justice Party received the most positive space in Nova, Politika and Danas, while We Must Coalition received the most positive space in Nova and Politika, and the least space in Informer and Danas.

The electoral list Oath Keepers received the most positive space in Danas, while during the campaign, the ideologically related Serbian Radical Party had the most positive space in Politika, Večernje Novosti and Danas. NADA Coalition received the most positive space in Blic and Politika, and the Patriotic Bloc was mainly promoted by Blic and Politika.

Table 52 Cumulative reporting on electoral lists by daily newspapers

	Politika		Večernje novosti		Blic		Nova		Informer		Danas	
	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space	Total space	Percent of positive space
	Aleksandar Vučić - Together We Can Do Anything	9313	51,6	7312	66,6	3345	46,7	6455	2,7	5079	65,4	13095
Ivica Dačić, Serbian Prime Minister	4190	79,7	1554	35,3	2940	57,4	195	12,3	866	66,4	2604	29,0
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	734	7,5	76	15,8	19	0,0		0,0	11	0,0	67	0,0
Serbian Radical Party - Dr Vojislav Šešelj	2109	72,3	758	61,6	231	11,3	177	37,9	91	15,4	1265	44,4
United for the Victory of Serbia	3405	51,0	1608	42,7	1511	41,0	8232	64,3	2984	7,9	6595	46,6
Dr Miloš Jovanović NADA Coalition	1562	64,9	526	37,1	1026	71,1	253	17,8	26	0,0	625	17,6
Serbian Party Oath Keepers	83	0,0	198	26,8	258	12,0	10	0,0	20	0,0	669	31,1
Muftić's Bequest	539	60,9	445	44,5	144	35,4	10	0,0	6	100,0	87	0,0
We Must Coalition	1986	69,3	916	41,7	1301	50,8	2106	67,7	554	0,0	2911	32,7
Sovereignists	1671	42,2	569	48,5	513	67,3	153	27,5	22	0,0	284	6,0
Boris Tadić Let's Go People	2230	57,8	794	9,9	1416	21,3	2366	57,3	437	2,1	3976	29,7
Patriotic Block for the Restoration of the Kingdom	1083	54,6	455	33,8	759	55,9	388	39,7	20	0,0	880	40,7
SDA of Sandžak	66	59,1	121	9,1	65	7,7	10	0,0		0,0	132	0,0
Together for Vojvodina Democratic Union of Croats	67	100,0	78	41,0	24	0,0		0,0		0,0	36	0,0
Alternative for Changes Albanian Democratic Alternative	90	0,0	23	0,0	79	0,0	10	0,0		0,0	58	0,0
Albanian Valley Coalition	175	48,0	32	0,0	63	0,0	10	0,0		0,0	347	80,7
Kidnapped Babies Ana Pejić	258	46,5	82	0,0	63	0,0	10	0,0		0,0	54	0,0
Roma Party	182	30,8	22	54,5	104	0,0	10	0,0		0,0	664	22,3

VI THEMATIC FRAMEWORK IN NON-ELECTION AND ELECTION PERIOD (in current affairs programmes and daily newspapers during the campaign)

In the monitoring period of primetime news broadcasts from 1 December 2020 to 31 January 2022, we identified three dominant topics: internal politics, the coronavirus, i.e. the Covid pandemic, and the economy and foreign investments in Serbia. Behind these three topics were the following topics: Kosovo, foreign policy, infrastructure and the communal issues, that is, corruption and crime.

Table 53 Thematic structure of news items in the period from 1 December 2020 to 31 January 2022 in the news of television channels with national coverage and the news of N1 TV

	%
Internal politics	13,9
Coronavirus	13,9
Economy, foreign investments	13,8
Issue of Kosovo	9,5
Foreign policy	7,8
Infrastructure, communal issues	7,2
Crime, corruption	5,4
Human rights, rule of law, judicial system	4,8
Army, police	4,2
National interest	4,0
Regional issues	3,7
Media, social networks	2,2
European integration	2,0
Environmental protection	1,6
History, culture of remembrance	1,3
Criticising Government, criticising authorities	1,0
Healthcare system	1,0
Sport	0,9
Education	0,8
Public administration, public sector	0,5
Culture	0,5
Total	100,0

When monitoring results are categorised by news, it is clear that the first three themes are distinct. The top three subjects on Serbia's foreign policy, the economy, and investments were covered by RTS, a public service television network, while internal politics, the economy, and investments were prioritised by Pink, the most popular commercial television channel. The economy and investments took centre stage in Happy TV's newscast, which was followed by the Coronavirus and internal politics. Prva TV prioritised internal politics over Coronavirus and the economy and investments over other topics, much like Happy. The themes were organised in the same manner on B92 TV. Internal politics were the primary subject of N1 TV's monitored news, which was followed by the Coronavirus, crime, and corruption.

Table 54 Thematic structure of news items in the period from 1 December 2020 to 31 January 2022 by television channels

	RTS	Pink	Happy	Prva	B92	N1
Internal politics	5,9	18,2	10,6	13,3	8,4	18,8
Coronavirus	19,8	11,1	15,7	13,3	13,9	14,0
Economy, foreign investments	15,3	13,4	16,5	18,5	14,1	6,9
Issue of Kosovo	8,6	11,8	8,2	12,0	8,9	5,5
Foreign policy	13,0	7,4	7,3	8,7	11,7	2,5
Infrastructure, communal issues	6,1	8,0	10,1	4,3	7,9	4,1
Crime, corruption	1,9	6,6	1,2	4,9	4,0	11,9
Human rights, rule of law, judicial system	6,2	3,6	5,7	3,3	3,4	7,3
Army, police	3,6	2,8	4,4	5,4	7,2	3,9
National interest	2,5	4,3	4,9	4,3	6,4	1,1
Regional issues	3,6	5,6	2,3	3,6	3,8	1,5
Media, social networks	0,7	2,7	0,5	1,2	1,3	5,4
European integration	4,7	0,9	1,3	1,2	1,9	3,7
Environmental protection	2,3	0,3	2,2	1,5	1,9	2,8
History, culture of remembrance	1,6	0,5	2,3	1,6	1,5	1,2
Criticising Government, criticising authorities	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	6,2
Healthcare system	1,5	0,6	1,7	1,1	1,0	0,4
Sport	0,8	1,2	0,9	0,5	0,8	0,8
Education	0,6	0,2	2,2	0,6	0,8	1,0
Public administration, public sector	0,6	0,2	1,0	0,2	0,4	0,7
Culture	0,8	0,4	0,8	0,3	0,5	0,2
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

From the above, it can be clearly concluded that the reporting in prime-time current affairs programmes was relatively uniform in terms of prioritised topics, i.e. their representation in percentages.

The thematic structure of the monitored news during the election campaign showed relative dominance of three topics. The first related to the national interest, primarily the defence of Kosovo, but at a general level. Generality as a discourse was also applied to the topic of internal politics, while the third topic was existentially related to the economy. The topic of the Ukraine crisis, which had just begun at the time of the campaign, was one of the leading topics that were present, right behind the topic of local and communal problems.

Table 55 Thematic structure of news items in the current affairs on television channels with national coverage and N1 TV during the election campaign

	%
Nacional interest (defence of Kosovo, in general)	13,9
Internal politics (general)	10,2
Economy (strategies, GDP, wages, pensions)	10,0
Local communal and infrastructural issues	7,8
Serbia in Ukraine crisis	6,1
Electoral conditions (media, electoral lists...)	5,7
Infrastructure (opening and construction of roads, plants, sewer system...)	4,7
Agriculture (development, subsidies, strategies, status...)	3,2
State decentralisation	3,0
Foreign policy activities	2,8
Criticising Government, criticising authorities	2,6
Human rights, rule of law	2,3
Geostrategic positioning (strategies, China, Russia, EU)	2,0
History, culture of remembrance	1,9
Healthcare	1,8
Demographic policy	1,7
Kosovo (Brussels Agreement, community of Serb municipalities)	1,6
Army and police	1,5
Position of workers, employees, labour rights, law amendments	1,4
Environmental protection	1,4

Analysis of coverage by TV channels showed relative thematic homogeneity among media service providers with national coverage compared to N1 TV, which gave more space to the issues of electoral conditions in Serbia, the start of Russian aggression against Ukraine and criticism of the government, which was hardly an issue despite the ongoing election campaign.

Table 56. Thematic structure of news items in the current affairs on television channels with national coverage and N1 TV during the election campaign

	RTS	Pink	Happy	Prva	B92	N1
Nacional interest (defence of Kosovo, in general)	17,6	13,8	15,9	15,4	11,9	3,1
Internal politics (general)	12,3	10,2	10,3	10,1	11,3	3,9
Economy (strategies, GDP, wages, pensions)	11,4	9,6	11,1	9,1	10,9	5,9
Local communal and infrastructural issues	2,1	0,8	11,1	14,7	10,5	5,7
Serbia in Ukraine crisis	5,0	7,2	4,6	4,6	5,0	14,5
Electoral conditions (media, electoral lists...)	5,4	5,0	5,0	3,7	4,0	18,2
Infrastructure (opening and construction of roads, plants, sewer system...)	3,0	6,3	5,2	4,5	4,9	3,5
Agriculture (development, subsidies, strategies, status...)	4,2	3,8	2,8	3,1	2,6	1,8
State decentralisation	3,5	3,1	3,1	3,5	3,5	0,0
Foreign policy activities	2,4	4,1	2,0	2,3	3,7	2,2
Criticising Government, criticising authorities	2,1	1,2	1,7	2,9	1,7	9,4
Human rights, rule of law	2,4	2,0	2,7	2,0	2,3	2,9
Geostrategic positioning (strategies, China, Russia, EU)	2,8	2,4	1,5	2,4	1,5	0,9
History, culture of remembrance	1,5	1,6	2,9	1,4	2,1	2,0
Healthcare reforms	2,1	2,4	2,2	1,0	1,4	1,8
Demographic policy	1,8	1,9	2,0	1,5	2,1	0,0
Kosovo (Brussels Agreement, community of Serb municipalities)	1,8	1,8	0,7	1,5	2,1	2,0
Army and police	0,9	2,1	1,2	0,8	3,1	0,4
Position of workers, employees, labour rights, law amendments	1,7	1,1	1,7	1,8	1,5	0,0
Environmental protection	1,4	1,4	1,6	1,6	1,5	0,0

In contrast to television outlets, the monitored daily newspapers took a more overtly critical approach to the elections. This was shown by the fact that approximately four out of ten news items analysed the election campaign. Other topics, excluding Russian aggression against Ukraine, the economy, and government criticism, or the executive branch, were fragmented and represented with less than 5% of the available space.

Table 57 Thematic structure of news items in daily newspapers during the election campaign

	%
Analysis of election campaigns	38,6
Serbia in the Ukraine crisis	7,9
Economy (strategies, GDP, wages, pensions)	6,6
Criticising Government, criticising authorities	5,0
Infrastructure (opening and construction of roads, plants, sewer system...)	3,9
Foreign policy activities	3,3
Media, social networks , impact	2,3
Kosovo, Brussels Agreement, community of Serb municipalities	2,3
Electoral conditions (media, electoral rolls...)	2,0
National interest defence of Kosovo generally with no explication and other national interests, generally	1,8
Fighting crime	1,7
Healthcare system	1,7
Army and police, improvements	1,6
Environmental protection	1,5
History and culture of remembrance	1,5
Criticising current opposition	1,4
Internal politics in general, cannot be classified anywhere	1,3
Coronavirus (fighting the virus, vaccination, success, weaknesses ...)	1,3

The topic of election campaign analysis was most covered in Blic, Danas and Večernje novosti, and received the least coverage in Politika. In Politika, in addition to the analysis of the election campaign, the impact of the Ukraine crisis on Serbia and the economy were among the top three topics, while in Večernje novosti, in addition to the analysis of the election campaign, among the three most represented topics were the economy and Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its impact on Serbia.

In addition to election campaign analysis, the remaining two most discussed topics in Blic were Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its impact on Serbia, and infrastructure. Following the analysis of the election campaign, there were articles in Nova criticising the authorities and the government, as well as the impact of the war in Ukraine on Serbia. Every day we noticed the identical arrangement of news items in Danas. The Informer's top three topics were campaign analysis, the impact of the war in Ukraine on Serbia and the economy, with the opposition being criticised more than the government.

Table 58 Thematic structure of news items in the period of election campaign by daily newspaper

	Politika	Novosti	Blic	Nova	Informer	Danas
Analysis of election campaigns	28,9	40,0	51,4	39,3	33,4	40,3
Serbia in the Ukraine crisis	9,2	6,5	7,9	5,1	11,8	8,1
Economy (strategies, GDP, wages, pensions)	9,0	8,6	4,1	5,0	8,3	4,6
Criticising Government, criticising authorities	1,6	1,1	2,7	11,0	1,1	9,4
Infrastructure (opening and construction of roads, plants, sewer system...)	4,8	6,1	5,4	2,9	4,5	1,5
Foreign policy activities	4,3	3,7	3,0	1,6	5,3	2,6
Kosovo, Brussels Agreement, community of Serb municipalities	3,1	3,1	2,9	1,5	3,3	0,9
Media, social networks activities impact	0,9	0,9	0,2	4,5	0,7	4,7
Electoral conditions (media, electoral rolls...)	3,3	0,4	1,6	3,7	0,2	2,3
Healthcare system reforms	1,2	2,2	2,2	2,3	2,0	0,9
National interest defence of Kosovo in general, without explication and other national interests – general speech	3,4	2,5	1,9	0,6	1,3	0,9
Fighting crime	0,5	1,0	0,9	3,8	2,2	2,1
Army, police	2,7	2,0	0,5	1,2	3,3	0,6
Criticising current opposition	0,3	1,2	0,7	0,7	5,9	1,0
History, culture of remembrance	2,2	2,1	0,8	0,8	2,0	1,2
Environmental protection	1,7	1,9	1,3	1,6	0,5	1,7
Internal politics in general, cannot be classified anywhere	2,2	1,4	1,4	0,7	1,3	0,9
Coronavirus (fighting the virus, vaccination, success, weaknesses ...)	2,5	0,6	1,1	1,1	0,9	1,5
Agriculture, development, subsidies, strategies, status	2,5	1,6	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0
Social issues, elderly, the poor, vulnerable of all categories, single parents, Roma...	1,5	1,7	1,1	0,9	0,9	0,8

Aleksandar Vučić in primetime current affairs programmes as Republic President

According to one-year monitoring of primetime current affairs programmes on five national television channels and N1 TV, Aleksandar Vučić, as President of the Republic of Serbia, was the primary (co)creator of topics in news broadcasts on five national television channels and N1TV from 1 December 2020 to 31 January 2022, with the exception of July and August 2021.

This conclusion can be drawn by comparing the scope and type of topics represented in all monitored newscasts on five television outlets with national coverage and N1TV, as well as the share of such topics in newscasts in which Aleksandar Vučić was present for 129 hours and 9 seconds out of a total of 300 observed hours and 21 seconds, or slightly more than half of the observed time.

During the monitored period, opposition parties had 10 or 100 times fewer opportunities to communicate their issues and agendas than Aleksandar Vučić, who legally and in the media combined his public and party office. Thus, the SSP had ten times less time (10:52:26) to present its issues and answer to President Vučić's topics. The People's Party was covered over fifty times less than Dveri, and the Democratic Party and Don't Drown Belgrade were covered almost 450 times less. It was pointless to do this measuring for other parties.

In the activities, that often conflicted with the constitutional (Articles 111 and 112 of the Constitution of Serbia) and legal (Article 1 of the Law on the President of the Republic) powers of the President of the Republic, but also with the laws regulating the conflict of interest of public officials (Law on Prevention of Corruption, Article 40, paragraphs 1 and 2), Aleksandar Vučić did not indicate which office he represented when he spoke, thus creating the (dominant) thematic framework in which, in addition to extensive and promotional coverage, Pink TV provided the crucial support for Aleksandar Vučić by covering an identical percentage of the topics discussed by him on the news where he appeared as an actor.

Table 59 Comparison of topics and time available to President Aleksandar Vučić and opposition parties from 1 December 2020 to 31 January 2022 on five television channels with national coverage and NITV, except in July and August 2021

	Total		Vučić		SSP		National Party		Dveri		Democratic Party		Ne davimo Beograd	
	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%
Internal politics	41:44:33	13,9	17:18:55	13,4	2:48:03	25,8	1:34:14	65,3	0:39:27	57,3	0:23:51	63,1	0:01:20	5,0
Coronavirus	41:38:19	13,9	15:23:59	11,9	0:15:30	2,4	0:01:30	1,0	0:00:28	0,7		0,0		0,0
Economy, foreign investments	41:30:42	13,8	18:29:01	14,3	0:05:18	0,8	0:00:05	0,1	0:00:24	0,6		0,0		0,0
Issue of Kosovo	28:35:05	9,5	13:01:40	10,1	0:27:10	4,2	0:05:42	4,0	0:00:33	0,8	0:00:10	0,4		0,0
Foreign policy	23:33:40	7,8	14:22:59	11,1	0:10:28	1,6	0:00:53	0,6	0:00:05	0,1	0:00:05	0,2		0,0
Infrastructure, communal issues	21:30:05	7,2	10:50:30	8,4	0:04:29	0,7	0:03:02	2,1	0:01:50	2,7		0,0	0:04:28	16,6
Crime, corruption	16:21:16	5,4	6:01:18	4,7	3:45:48	34,6	0:17:31	12,1	0:03:46	5,5	0:02:48	7,4	0:01:44	6,4
Human rights, rule of law, judicial system	14:23:53	4,8	4:41:42	3,6	0:21:30	3,3	0:09:25	6,5	0:06:06	8,9	0:02:03	5,4	0:04:43	17,5
Army, police	12:34:48	4,2	5:08:12	4,0	0:04:27	0,7	0:01:42	1,2	0:01:10	1,7		0,0		0,0
National interest	11:58:57	4,0	6:14:36	4,8	0:05:22	0,8		0,0	0:01:49	2,6		0,0	0:00:10	0,6
Regional issues	11:08:43	3,7	8:20:29	6,5		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0	0:01:08	4,2
Media, social networks	6:35:29	2,2	1:44:41	1,4	2:15:30	20,8	0:00:05	0,1		0,0	0:00:03	0,1	0:00:08	0,5
European integration	5:53:33	2,0	1:39:26	1,3		0,0		0,0		0,0	0:00:17	0,7		0,0
Environmental protection	4:45:44	1,6	0:59:35	0,8	0:00:47	0,1	0:00:40	0,5	0:02:48	4,1		0,0	0:05:48	21,6
History, culture of remembrance	3:54:30	1,3	0:44:39	0,6	0:04:28	0,7	0:00:12	0,1		0,0	0:00:50	2,2	0:00:22	1,4
Criticising Government, criticising authorities	3:06:06	1,0	0:46:15	0,6	0:23:29	3,6	0:08:15	5,7	0:08:50	12,8	0:07:40	20,3	0:07:02	26,2
Healthcare system	2:54:27	1,0	0:50:46	0,7		0,0		0,0	0:01:32	2,2		0,0		0,0
Sport	2:43:28	0,9	1:42:18	1,3		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0
Education	2:33:02	0,8	0:05:05	0,1	0:00:05	0,0	0:01:00	0,7		0,0		0,0		0,0
Public administration, public sector	1:28:06	0,5	0:10:53	0,1		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0
Culture	1:26:31	0,5	0:32:48	0,4		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,0
Total	300:21	100,0	129:09	100,0	10:52:26	100,0	2:24:16	100,0	1:08:50	100,0	0:37:47	100,0	0:26:53	100,0

Table 60 Comparison of topics and time available to President Aleksandar Vučić from 1 December 2020 to 31 January 2022, except in July and August 2021, by television channels

	Total		Vučić		RTS		Pink		Happy		Prva		NI	
	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%	Sum	%
Internal politics	41:44:33	13,9	17:18:55	13,4	1:46:29	5,9	17:27:39	18,2	5:56:53	10,6	4:39:58	13,3	8:53:22	18,8
Coronavirus	41:38:19	13,9	15:23:59	11,9	5:56:42	19,8	10:38:35	11,1	8:49:31	15,7	4:38:29	13,3	6:35:53	14,0
Economy, foreign investments	41:30:42	13,8	18:29:01	14,3	4:36:19	15,3	12:53:17	13,4	9:17:13	16,5	6:27:47	18,5	3:14:29	6,9
Issue of Kosovo	28:35:05	9,5	13:01:40	10,1	2:34:33	8,6	11:22:53	11,8	4:37:55	8,2	4:12:31	12,0	2:35:59	5,5
Foreign policy	23:33:40	7,8	14:22:59	11,1	3:54:33	13,0	7:08:10	7,4	4:07:12	7,3	3:03:06	8,7	1:09:49	2,5
Infrastructure, communal issues	21:30:05	7,2	10:50:30	8,4	1:49:20	6,1	7:43:13	8,0	5:40:48	10,1	1:31:03	4,3	1:55:33	4,1
Crime, corruption	16:21:16	5,4	6:01:18	4,7	0:33:54	1,9	6:19:20	6,6	0:40:47	1,2	1:43:32	4,9	5:38:17	11,9
Human rights, rule of law, judicial system	14:23:53	4,8	4:41:42	3,6	1:51:42	6,2	3:29:12	3,6	3:11:49	5,7	1:09:34	3,3	3:27:53	7,3
Army, police	12:34:48	4,2	5:08:12	4,0	1:04:15	3,6	2:42:35	2,8	2:29:46	4,4	1:53:02	5,4	1:50:56	3,9
National interest	11:58:57	4,0	6:14:36	4,8	0:44:46	2,5	4:09:13	4,3	2:45:51	4,9	1:30:44	4,3	0:31:12	1,1
Regional issues	11:08:43	3,7	8:20:29	6,5	1:05:33	3,6	5:25:08	5,6	1:17:38	2,3	1:14:56	3,6	0:43:24	1,5
Media, social networks	6:35:29	2,2	1:44:41	1,4	0:12:46	0,7	2:37:20	2,7	0:18:32	0,5	0:24:14	1,2	2:33:56	5,4
European integration	5:53:33	2,0	1:39:26	1,3	1:25:24	4,7	0:54:30	0,9	0:42:41	1,3	0:25:52	1,2	1:43:51	3,7
Environmental protection	4:45:44	1,6	0:59:35	0,8	0:42:06	2,3	0:18:39	0,3	1:13:10	2,2	0:31:41	1,5	1:18:29	2,8
History, culture of remembrance	3:54:30	1,3	0:44:39	0,6	0:28:47	1,6	0:26:14	0,5	1:18:58	2,3	0:33:25	1,6	0:34:20	1,2
Criticising Government, criticising authorities	3:06:06	1,0	0:46:15	0,6	0:01:09	0,1	0:07:32	0,1	0:00:21	0,0	0:00:28	0,0	2:56:04	6,2
Healthcare system	2:54:27	1,0	0:50:46	0,7	0:26:33	1,5	0:33:48	0,6	0:57:34	1,7	0:22:20	1,1	0:12:00	0,4
Sport	2:43:28	0,9	1:42:18	1,3	0:14:17	0,8	1:07:38	1,2	0:31:11	0,9	0:10:51	0,5	0:22:47	0,8
Education	2:33:02	0,8	0:05:05	0,1	0:10:09	0,6	0:09:52	0,2	1:15:17	2,2	0:13:01	0,6	0:27:36	1,0
Public administration, public sector	1:28:06	0,5	0:10:53	0,1	0:10:38	0,6	0:10:41	0,2	0:35:05	1,0	0:04:19	0,2	0:18:58	0,7
Culture	1:26:31	0,5	0:32:48	0,4	0:14:42	0,8	0:20:46	0,4	0:28:21	0,8	0:06:12	0,3	0:06:03	0,2
Total	300:21	100,0	129:09	100,0	30:04:43	100,0	96:06:22	100,0	56:16:42	100,0	34:57:12	100,0	47:10:55	100,0

This finding indicates that, in addition to time dominance (half of the analysed time) and advertising reporting (over 80% positive time on average) about the President of the Republic, Aleksandar Vučić enjoyed another type of media advantage, and that was an obvious influence on the (co)creation of topics that dominated the news. This type of dominance was established by imposing issues through real and pseudo-events that were frequently (in)consistent with the powers of the President of the Republic.

This manner of reporting in the current affairs programmes which, for more than two-thirds of the media, are reliable source of information, violates Article 51 of the Constitution of Serbia, Article 15 of the Law on Public Information, Article 47 of the Law on Electronic Media and the Rulebook on the Protection of Human Rights in the Field of Media Services, Articles from 5 to 8. All of the above refers primarily to Pink TV.

In accordance with Article 24 of the Law on Electronic Media, we call upon the Regulatory Body for Electronic Media to act and determine whether the Rulebook on the Protection of Human Rights in the Field of Media Services is violated in Articles 5 to 8 by, above all, Pink TV.

Monitoring of reporting about the President of the Republic in the prime-time current affairs programmes showed time consistency in covering the President of the Republic in the daily newspapers when his portrayal was excessively positive, but also when he was covered moderately or less positively, i.e. when the coverage was mostly neutral.

Table 61 Comparison of positive time given to President Vučić on five television channels with national coverage, from 1 December 2020 to 31 January 2022, except for July and August 2021

	2020	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	Apr.	May	June	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
RTS	88,1	93,0	84,5	91,7	96,0	14,8	3,9	86,7	80,3	71,2
Pink	97,8	97,7	98,2	98,1	99,6	49,7	14,3	94,6	98,5	98,9
Happy	88,8	91,0	91,8	95,7	94,1	45,1	1,8	89,0	90,4	90,6
Prva	87,5	93,4	97,0	93,7	93,2	29,3	26,4	91,7	93,7	89,1
B92	95,0	86,7	95,4	96,9	96,4	21,6	8,6	77,3	90,1	94,2
<i>Arithmetic mean</i>	91,4	92,3	93,4	95,2	95,9	32,1	11,0	87,9	90,6	88,8

In comparison to prior months when news coverage on all TV channels was excessively positive and breached the Rulebook on the Protection of Human Rights in the Field of Media Services, the months of May and June were examples of less positive reporting on all observed TV channels.

The submitted findings urge the REM Council to investigate which (extra) editorial variables impact this type of identical reporting in the central newscasts on five national TV networks. The preceding data support the notion that news on television stations with nationwide coverage covering the President of the Republic are edited from a single location.

VII ANALYSIS OF ELECTORAL INTEGRITY

Analysis of the Draft Conclusion of the Second Phase of the Inter-Party Dialogue

The Draft Conclusion of the Second Phase of the Inter-Party Dialogue (hereafter the Draft), which was submitted on 18 September⁶, is the focus of the analysis. The analysis will concentrate on issues that fall under the purview of BIRODI's work, i.e., the risks to integrity that we have identified in our research and studies.

The establishment of the Interim Regulatory Authority (hereinafter "the Authority") recognises that the Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (hereinafter "REM") will not perform its functions under the Law on Electronic Media (Article 22 and paragraph 22 and Article 47), which were performed until the 2014 general election. The drafters proposed the formation of a REM duplicate, which overlaps with the Supervisory Board (hereinafter the Board), the body whose competences and composition are regulated by the Law on the Election of Deputies (Articles 99 and 100). Thus, in addition to the two (non-functioning) bodies, a third one was created by the Ministry of Culture and Information. The body thus created will supervise the work of the regulatory authorities for the duration of its existence, which contradicts the concept of independence of the parliamentary regulatory authorities (Anti-Corruption Agency, REM, Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection...).

The drafters proposed that "political pluralism and professional competence" should be taken into account when electing members of the Authority. By introducing this rule, the drafters promoted the concept of party state, which is regulated in Serbia by Article 5 of the Serbian Constitution and by the formation of regulatory authorities.

⁶ <https://nova.rs/vesti/politika/ekskluzivno-gotov-sporazum-o-izbornim-uslovima-vlasti-i-opozicije/>

By introducing party pluralism, the drafters promote the concept of political will, which runs counter to the concept of the rule of law and the integrity of institutions, i.e. the principle that states that the rights and obligations of participants in legal life must be regulated on the basis of what is written in the law. In particular, it is the regulatory authorities and/or the judicial authorities that ensure compliance with the rights and obligations in the electoral process, since their members are experts who do not belong to any party and are selected in a procedure in which conflicts of interest are regulated and in which there are no discretionary decisions. Such election process follows a public competition with clear criteria and defined and certain sanctions for any violation of the procedure.

The authors of the Draft opted for quite the exact opposite. REM can “elect” the members of the Authority in a non-transparent procedure, and these members will supervise the work of REM, which illustrates the conflict of interest.

On the other hand, one of the co-facilitators, the President of the National Assembly, is the leader of the party participating in the elections. He was granted the right to propose the members of the Authority, which is a conflict of interest under Article 40 of the Anti-Corruption Law, as was the case with REM and the Assembly President as co-facilitator.

The integrity of the Authority is also determined by its ability to perform its prescribed duties. Among other things, the Authority is required to establish media monitoring. In addition to human resources, it also needs technical and financial resources, namely all that the best part of REM, the Service for the Supervision of Broadcasters, already has. Selection and training of new personnel is also a challenge that will affect the integrity of the Authority.

The lack of principles guiding the work of drafters is evidenced in the fact that, unlike the analysis of media reporting, which was delegated to the Authority, REM is given the authority to develop monitoring methods. Thus, REM has kept the right to alter the appearance of media representation and tone by having the last say on media monitoring methodology.

Past experience has shown that the current composition of the REM equates tonality measurement with “censorship” and “influencing editorial policy”. These were excuses to circumvent the methodology established by the ODIHR, the Venice Commission and the Directorate for Human Rights. Such a solution will ensure that Serbia does not receive an adequate media monitoring mechanism.

All this could have been avoided if BIRODI’s proposal to replace the REM Council, which has been operating in an illegal state for seven years, had been accepted. This would have included removing the influence of the parties on this Authority by changing the method of electing the members of the Supervisory Board. Unfortunately, the Government, the opposition and the EU mediators were not prepared to uphold the rule of law and the integrity of the institutions as the only guarantors of the integrity of the electoral process. Instead, they resorted to various solutions that became part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

The decision to separate public from private broadcasters in the regulations governing the rights and obligations of public and private broadcasters additionally undermines the integrity of electoral process. BIRODI's monitoring periods, where the latest was conducted from 11 June to 30 June 2022, have shown that the news of Pink TV was in the service of informing and promoting the work of the President of the Republic of Serbia. About two-thirds of the monitored time in all current affairs broadcasts by television stations with national coverage and N1TV on the President of the Republic was spent on the Pink TV. This trend has been going on for many years and REM has not responded in accordance with Article 47 of the Law on Electronic Media. The introduction of sole recommendations will not prevent the practice described above to continue.

The Draft does not contain any information on the possible intention to amend Article 50 of the Anti-Corruption Law, which would not allow the President of the Republic to misuse public funds, i.e. to have the right to campaign officially. The submitted draft does not address the findings of the ODIHR report on the violation of the OSCE Copenhagen Document of 1990, paragraph 5.4. by the President of the Republic, who is also the President of the Party.

In the absence of addressing the above two challenges, which were not even raised by the opposition representatives, the electoral integrity relating to parliamentary elections and Belgrade City elections is jeopardized.

The Draft neither identified a risk nor formulated measures against a violation of Article 40 of the Anti-Corruption Law, which arises from the fact that the President of the Republic establishes criteria and nominates candidates from the position of party leader (Article 45 of the Serbian Progressive Party), which places future MPs in a relationship of dependency with him.

Analysis of Electoral Integrity and REM Activities

Analysis of the Proposal of Opposition Parties for the Improvement of Electoral Integrity

In our efforts to give contribution to the building of electoral integrity, we analysed the proposals offered to the public by two groups of opposition parties gathered around the New Party and the Social Democratic Party of Serbia, that is, the Democratic Party and the Freedom and Justice Party, based on the following principles:

- Integrity (regulated conflict of interest, transparency, regulated discretionary powers, accumulation of interests, ethical management)
- Legality (compliance with effective laws and institutions and their review in such a way as not to create parallel institutions with undermined integrity)
- Punishability (creating conditions for sanctioning according to the effective legal penalties and increasing the certainty of sanctions)
- Participation (elections are a process that concerns all social actors, not only political parties)

We came to the conclusion that the proposed solutions from the two platforms were based on the creation of “dual institutional solutions” with an inadequately defined and non-transparent process of appointing members to bodies, as well as legal solutions that have the nature of extraordinary legal remedies, and that it was not considered whether it was possible to use the current legal system to support electoral integrity by changing the solutions or reversing them. The proposal of the ministry or commission for electoral conditions, which was the proposal for the creation of commissions to regulate the media and enable the exercise of voting rights, is an illustration of this approach.

According to BIRIODI’s concept of electoral integrity, a suitable institutional mechanism must be identified that will have integrity, expertise, and influence in order to improve the issues that have been correctly recognised. We believe that using the current institutional solutions is more suited for maintaining the institutional-normative integrity of the institution as a whole as well as the integrity of the electoral process. We are specifically referring to the Serbian National Assembly’s Supervisory Board, whose existence is governed by the Law on the Election of Deputies (Articles 99 to 101). We see the solution in:

- Extending the competence of the Supervisory Board in accordance with the Platform requirements, which applies to the two mentioned commissions,
- Changing the proposed members of the Supervisory Board in such a way that the political parties participating in the elections are excluded, and the mentioned professional associations, universities, trade unions, civil society organizations are included...
- Introducing the process of applying for membership in the Supervisory Board, carried out by a commission composed of professional associations, universities, trade unions, civil society organizations...
- Introducing relevant criteria for the election of the members of the Supervisory Board,
- Regulating conflicts of interests and accumulation of mandates between elections and Commission members, for the purpose of appointing members and candidates, and respecting rankings when voting in the National Assembly.

The same legal solution should be incorporated in the Law on the Election of the President of the Republic, the Law on Local Elections and the Law on Provincial Elections, noting that provincial and local anti-corruption bodies per-

formed the function of the Supervisory Board, as defined by the Action Plan for Chapter 23, measure 2.2.10.31. In this manner, an institutionalised and law-based mechanism for monitoring and supporting fair and transparent elections would be established, in accordance with the concept of integrity, where the actors are not political parties, but representatives of interested and relevant social actors. In this way, “electoral integrity nest” would be constructed.

When building the “integrity nest”, regulatory bodies play a significant role, which so far have remained on the sidelines when it comes to contributing and influencing the strengthening of electoral integrity. We propose to define, agree and implement a “proactive approach to strengthening electoral integrity” of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality and the Protector of Citizens, as well as the Anti-Corruption Council, which would involve closer attention and faster response during the election campaign or in the cases related to political life in Serbia.

Thus, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality can contribute to the integrity of the electoral process within her competences by using her powers to prevent not only discrimination as defined by law, but also to prevent the creation of a discriminatory environment and a culture of discrimination that legitimizes discrimination. Namely, the Commissioner for Equality has the following rights and obligations according to the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination, Article 33:

- Receives and reviews complaints pertaining to violations of provisions of this Law, provides opinions and recommendations in specific cases, and passes measures in accordance with the provisions of Article 40 of this Law;
- Provides information to the person lodging a complaint concerning his/her rights and the possibility of initiating court proceedings or some other proceedings for the purpose of protection, or recommends reconciliation;
- Files charges in accordance with Article 43 of this Law, pertaining to violations of rights guaranteed by this Law, in his/her own name, and with the agreement and on behalf of the person discriminated against, unless proceedings before a court of law have already been initiated or concluded by passing an enforceable decision;
- Submits misdemeanour notices on account of violations of rights guaranteed by this Law;
- Submits an annual report and special reports to the National Assembly about the situation concerning the protection of equality;
- Warns the public of the most frequent, typical and severe cases of discrimination;
- Monitors the implementation of laws and other regulations, initiates the passing or amending of regulations for the purpose of implementing and developing protection against discrimination, and provides opinions concerning the provisions of draft laws and other regulations pertaining to the prohibition of discrimination;

- Establishes and maintains cooperation with organs authorised to ensure equality and the protection of human rights on the territory of an autonomous province or a local government;
- Recommends measures to public administration organs and other persons aimed at ensuring equality.
The same applies to the Protector of Citizens who, according to the Law on the Protector of Citizens, has the right and obligation (Articles from 17 to 23) to:
 - control the respect of the rights of citizens, establish violations resulting from acts, actions or failure to act by administrative authorities, if they are violations of the laws, regulations and other general acts of the republic;
 - control the legality and regularity of the work of administrative bodies;
 - propose laws within his/her competence.
 - launch initiatives with the Government or National Assembly for the amendment of laws or other regulations or general acts, if he deems that violations of citizens' rights are a result of deficiencies of such regulations. He shall also have the power to launch initiatives for new laws, other regulations and general acts, if he considers it significant for exercising and protecting citizens' rights. The Government, or the competent Committee of the National Assembly, shall be obliged to consider the initiatives of the Protector of Citizens.
 - in the process of drafting of regulations, have the power to give his opinion to the Government and National Assembly on draft laws and regulations if they concern the issues relevant for the protection of citizens' rights.
 - initiate proceedings before the Constitutional Court for the assessment of legality and constitutionality of laws, other regulations and general acts.
 - publicly recommend the dismissal of an official who is responsible for violation of citizen's rights, i.e. initiate disciplinary proceedings against an employee of the administrative authorities who is immediately responsible for performed injury, when the recurring behaviour of the official or employee reveals the intent to refuse co-operation with the Protector of Citizens or when it is determined that the injury made to the person caused material or other serious damage to that person. If revealed that activities of an official or an employee of the administrative authorities contain elements of criminal or other punishable act, the Protector of Citizens shall have power to submit request, i.e. to file a motion to initiate misdemeanour, criminal or other appropriate proceedings.
 - interview any employee of administrative authorities when it is of significance for the proceedings he runs.
 - freely access correctional institutions and other places where persons deprived of liberty are held and speak in privacy with those persons.

In addition, the administrative authorities have an obligation to cooperate with the Protector of Citizens and grant him access to the premises and provide all

the data at their disposal that are relevant to the procedure he is conducting, i.e. to the objective of his preventive measures, regardless of the degree of data secrecy, unless this is contrary to the law. Furthermore, the President of the Republic, the President and members of the Government, the President of the Assembly, the President of the Constitutional Court and the officials in the administrative bodies are obliged to receive the Protector of Citizens at his request within 15 days at the latest.

The Commissioner for free access to information and personal data protection can also play a role in strengthening the integrity of the election process. According to the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance, the Commissioner has the right and obligation to:

- Monitor the respect of obligations by the public authorities regulated by this Law and report to the public and National Assembly thereof;
- Initiate the preparation or change of regulations for the implementation and promotion of the right to access information of public importance;
- Propose to public authorities measures to be taken to improve their work regulated by this Law;
- Undertake necessary measures to train employees of state bodies and to inform the employees of their obligations regarding the rights to access information of public importance with the aim of their effective implementation of this Law;
- Consider complaints against the decisions of public authorities that violate the rights regulated by this Law;
- Inform the public of the content of this Law and the rights regulated by this Law;
- Initiate procedure for the assessment of constitutionality and legality of laws and general regulations;
- Publish and update a manual with practical instructions on the effective exercise of rights regulated by this Law in the Serbian language, and in languages that are defined as official languages by law;
- Inform the public of the content of the manual via the press, electronic media, the Internet, public panel discussions and in other ways;
- Publish a guidebook according to which the Directory of the work of the state body shall be published
- In addition to the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance, the Commissioner also acts according to the Law on Personal Data Protection, which gives them the right and obligation to:
 - Supervise and ensure application of this Law in compliance with their powers;
 - Take care of the promotion of public awareness of the risks, rules, safeguards and rights in relation to processing, in particular where it is a case of processing of data on an underage person;
 - Provide opinion to the National Assembly, Government, other public authorities and organisations, in compliance with the regulations, on the statutory and other measures relating to the protection of rights and freedoms of natural persons with regard to processing;

- Take care of the promotion of the awareness of controllers and processors of their obligations prescribed by this Law;
- At the request of the data subject, provide information on their rights laid down by this Law;
- Handle complaints of the data subjects, determine whether or not there has been an infringement of this Law and inform the complainant of the progress and the outcomes of the proceeding conducted by them in compliance with Article 82 of this Law;
- Cooperate with supervisory authorities of other states with regard to the protection of personal data, in particular in exchange of information and in providing of mutual legal assistance;
- Perform inspection supervision over application of this Law, in compliance with this Law and by mutatis mutandis application of the law regulating inspection supervision, and file motions to initiate misdemeanour proceedings where they determine infringements of this Law, in compliance with the law regulating misdemeanours;
- Monitor development of information and communication technology, as well abuses and other practices of significance for the protection of personal data;
- Draw up standard contractual clauses;
- Draw up and make public the lists of types of processing activities for which impact assessment must be performed;
- Provide opinion in writing when they consider that the intended processing activities could produce a high risk unless risk reduction measures are undertaken;
- Maintain records of the data protection officers;
- Encourage drawing up of the codes of conduct and provide opinions and consents to the codes of conduct;
- Collect evidence of independence and expertise of legal entities and the non-existence of the conflict of interest in the accreditation of legal entities controlling the application of the code of conduct;
- Encourage issuing of certificates of the protection of personal data and of relevant seals and marks and prescribe criteria for certification of a certification body;
- Carry out periodical reviews of certificates;
- Prescribe and publish criteria for accreditation of a certification body and collect evidence of the independence and expertise of legal entities and of non-existence of the conflict of interest in the accreditation of a certification body;
- Authorise provisions of a contract or an agreement;
- Approve binding corporate rules;
- Maintain internal records of infringements of this Law and of measures taken in carrying out inspection supervision;
- Carry out other tasks specified by this Law.

In view of the above, we propose the formation of an Electoral Regulatory Panel comprised of representatives of the aforementioned regulatory authorities to monitor the electoral process within their competences and cooperate with the Supervisory Board of the Serbian Assembly. This would additionally strengthen the

electoral integrity nest and influence the integrity of the aforementioned institutions.

The idea of duplicating editorial offices within public broadcasters will only legalize the violation of Article 51 of the Constitution identified by BIRODI's media monitoring and audience research, because citizens will exercise their right to be informed and to receive information only partially. For that reason, seeking to apply the "electoral integrity nest" approach, we propose that the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia, the Journalists' Association of Serbia, and the Journalists' Union of Serbia form a Commission for the Integrity of Media Reporting in the Election Process with the aim of systematically monitoring compliance with the Code of Journalists of Serbia. The recommendations and advice of this Commission would be binding for the members of their professional associations, while non-compliance would constitute grounds for exclusion from the association. The Integrity Commission would have the obligation to report to the Supervisory Board on media coverage and compliance with the Code of Journalists of Serbia. An example of the need for this mechanism is the violation of the Code of Journalists of Serbia through so-called party cameras, i.e. broadcasting promotional material of electoral lists as journalistic content within the election chronicles that goes on unsanctioned and contrary to the Code of Journalists of Serbia.

This mechanism would especially apply to journalists employed in public services. The Commission for the Integrity of Media Reporting in the Electoral Process would prescribe a Rulebook on internal editorial evaluation with the support of the Bureau for Social Research, and the Commission for the Integrity of Media Reporting in the Electoral Process would have access to its findings.

Responsibility for the state of the programme rests with the Programme Council, which "takes care of satisfying the interests of listeners and viewers in terms of programme content." The Council considers the implementation of the programme concept and the quality of the programme content of the public media service, monitors the implementation of programme principles and obligations stipulated by law and in this regard informs the general director and the RTS Board of Directors, and makes recommendations and proposals. At least once a year, it organises a public debate on the programme content of the public media service". For this reason, we suggest that the selection of RTS Programme Council members be postponed and the selection process be carried out in accordance with the principles of integrity, which means according to the procedure and clearly defined criteria.

To prevent the campaign of officials, it is necessary to establish cooperation between the Anti-Corruption Agency and the Republic Media Agency for exchanging data regarding the abuse of public offices and media reporting that promotes such abuse unsanctioned. This mainly holds true for Article 50 of the Anti-Corruption Law. At the same time, paragraph five of this Article should be highlighted:

„ A public official cannot use public gatherings that he/she is part of and encounters that they have in the capacity of a public official, for the promotion of political parties, i.e. political entities, which shall, in particular, imply the use of public gatherings and encounters for public presentation of participants at elections and their election programs, inviting voters to vote for them at certain elections, i.e. boycott elections.”

The provision of paragraph 4 of this Article does not apply to public officials directly elected by the citizens. This enables the Republic President to use public resources for the party promotion, unsanctioned.

The very procedure of drawing up electoral lists has a great influence on the integrity of the electoral process. According to the statutes of the Serbian Progressive Party (Article 45), the Democratic Party (Article 41), the Freedom and Justice Party (Article 32), the Social Democratic Party (Article 34), and the People's Party (Article 70), the president of the party nominates candidates, among other things, for deputies, which creates a potential conflict of interest i.e. the elected deputies become dependent of the party president if he becomes the President of the Republic (directly) or by supporting a candidate in the presidential elections (indirectly), as defined in Article 40 of the Anti-Corruption Law. For this reason, we propose that this Article be changed so that the selection of candidates for deputies is made in a deliberative process, by a different body than just the parties used here as an example.

Regarding the proposal to establish a Commissioner who would deal with pressure on voters, we believe that the better solution is prescribed by the Law on Whistleblowers, which protects whistleblowers who point to the use of public resources and pressuring voters. In order for this system to function, it is necessary to review the existing professional, material, technical and personnel resources that exist with the subjects of the Law on Data Protection, and following that;

- Make changes, identifying a conflict of interest where the persons in charge of receiving information from whistleblowers are in a conflict of interest as defined by the Law on the Anti-Corruption Agency (Articles 40 and 41)
- Campaign to promote whistleblower rights and reporting methods
- Create an online platform for reporting irregularities that would be under the control of the Supervisory Board (BIRODI developed the www.integrist.net platform and promotional material).

The integrity of the electoral process is not possible without the integrity of the key actors, namely the political parties. Since 2014, BIRODI has been advocating an initiative to introduce mandatory integrity plans for political parties. For this reason, we propose to amend the Anti-Corruption Law, Article 95, so that political parties, i.e. movements that make up electoral lists or support a presidential candidate are obliged to have an integrity plan and cannot run for elections without the positive verification of the Anti-Corruption Agency.

The purpose of organising deliberative elections as an obligation to register the electoral list is to encourage and improve, through deliberative elections, the processes of: politicization, i.e. ideologization of public opinion, citizen participation through psychological ownership of the election process, integrity in politics and the integrity of the electoral process, and test the possibility of holding any elections in a fair and transparent atmosphere. Deliberative sources would have two phases.

The first phase would involve the mapping of the priorities of citizens and associations (professional associations, trade unions, chambers, NGOs, media, academic community). The result of this phase would be: a list of priorities, a list of solutions, profiles of MPs, councillors and candidates for a mayor and president of Serbia.

Within the second phase, promotional campaigns would be organised where candidates for councillors or deputies or the president of the Republic would have the opportunity to present solutions to the list of mapped problems as a mandatory part. Candidates would have the opportunity to nominate other priorities and propose solutions, as an optional part. Candidates would have the opportunity to present their characteristics against the mapped candidate profiles.

The two final activities of the second phase are online and offline voting of the interested public through which the opposition public would be heard, and conducting polls on a representative sample in order to hear the general public. Deliberative elections would be held at the level of one or more consenting parties or movements.

And last but not least, it is necessary to determine the legality of the work of the Republic Agency for Electronic Media, whose body, namely the Council, operates according to a statute that is not harmonized with the Law on Electronic Media. Namely, according to Article 115 of the Law on Electronic Media, it was necessary to harmonize the Statute of the REM Council with the new law within 90 days. According to Article 33 of the same law, the National Assembly of Serbia should have given its consent thereto. This fact calls into question the legality of the decisions made by this body.

Below are the recommendations that are the result of BIRODI's monitoring of electoral integrity:

- The Anti-Corruption Agency to analyse the risks to electoral legislation and laws directly regulating the rights and obligations of election actors, and to draft a proposal for amendments. This indirectly refers to the compliance of the Anti-Corruption Law, the Law on the Election of Deputies, the Law on the President of the Republic, the Law on Electronic Media and the Law on Political Activities with Article 6 of the Constitution of Serbia, which regulates the conflicts of interest.

- The Anti-Corruption Agency to analyse the risks of conflict of interest in case of Serbian President, taking into account Article 6 of the Serbian Constitution, Articles 40 and 41 of the Anti-Corruption Law and Articles 17 and 18 of the Statute of the Serbian Progressive Party, in the light of Article 118 of the Serbian Constitution.
- Amend the Anti-Corruption Law so that the President of the Republic is not exempted from the application of Article 50, which prevents the misuse of public resources for party purposes
- Within its integrity plan, the Anti-Corruption Agency to regulate potential conflicts of interest for the offices of a director, assistant director, members of the Council in relation to their proposers and political parties of which they were the members or are affiliates
- Amend the Law on the President of Serbia in such a way as to add an article by which the President of the Republic would resign from positions in a political party upon taking office and inform the National Assembly of Serbia thereof.
- Amend the Anti-Corruption Law so that political parties must have their integrity plan as an instrument of ethical management and a condition for receiving funds from public sources.
- Amend the Anti-Corruption Law in such a way as to determine the deadline by which the Anti-Corruption Agency should publish its report on the elections.
- The Anti-Corruption Agency to make an analysis of the electoral integrity based on the findings of the ODIHR observation mission, and include its report on the elections.
- Regulate the selection of members of the Supervisory Board of the National Assembly of Serbia, in such a way that the candidacy procedure and criteria for proposing and selecting members of this body are clearly defined, so that the proposer cannot nominate a person who is a member of a political party or has business or other relations with political party i.e. cannot be employed or have business relations with the media in Serbia. By amending the law, arrange that other actors can be proposers, such as professional associations, universities, civil society organisations and citizen groups.
- The Protector of Citizens, the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection and the Commissioner for Equality to proactively act during the election campaign to protect citizens' rights related to the election process.
- By amending the Law on the Protection of Whistleblowers, further define the protection of the rights of whistleblowers in the election process and regulate the role of the Republic Election Commission in the process of implementing this Law.
- The Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media to establish the practice of publishing media monitoring data in a readable format on its website or presentation <https://data.gov.rs/>
- The Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media to include the measuring of the tone actors' portrayal in its methodology for monitoring broadcasters' reporting.
- The Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media to prevent "party cam-

- era” phenomenon, in accordance with its powers.
- The Council of the Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media to analyse the statements of the Council members and establish whether there were any breaches of the Code by the members of the REM Council.
- Journalists’ Association of Serbia and Independent Journalists’ Association of Serbia to analyse the application of the Code of Serbian Journalists during the election campaign and to implement changes and improve the monitoring and sanctioning mechanism for Code violation.
- During the election process, ethical bodies of professional associations and chambers of experts to monitor with special attention cases of violations of professional codes of ethics by their members, as well as to create conditions for their reporting.
- Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue to propose the adoption of the law that would prevent the activities of so-called bot factories.

Analysis of REM Report on the Coverage by Media Service Providers During 2022 Election Campaign

The Bureau for Social Research conducted a methodological analysis of the REM report on media service provider reporting during the 2022 election campaign and concluded that the Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media (REM) admitted in its report, citing Articles 22 and 25 of the Law on Electronic Media, that it had a legal obligation to monitor media service providers. Earlier statements by members of the REM Council about the ambiguity of effective legal obligations, particularly in 2016 and 2020, were inconsistent with the REM’s legal obligations.

It is unclear from the accompanying REM’s description of methodology which normative act (law or rulebook) was used to establish the sample of media service providers that were monitored, as well as why the sample was reduced compared to 2012, when regional and local TV and radio channels were monitored.⁷ The same sample with methodologically justified modifications would provide insight into the changes that have occurred since REM began monitoring the reporting of service providers.

In its report, REM refers to OSCE Handbook for Media Monitoring⁸ which points out that when forming a sample, the following should be taken into account⁹:

7 http://www.rem.rs/uploads/files/PDF-VESTI/Izvestaj_o_nadzoru_emitera_izbori_2012..pdf

8 https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/b/1/384831_0.pdf (page 39)

9 For more details on the media monitoring methodology during elections see [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2009\)031-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2009)031-e)

- The number and variety of media outlets operating in the country;
- Ownership (public/state or private) of media outlets;
- Geographical range (national or local level) of media outlets;
- Audience/readership ratings of media outlets;
- Hours of broadcasting or frequency of publication of media outlets;
- Kind of media, targeted audiences, and their estimated impact on the public and the political elite; and
- Number of media outlets specifically targeting ethnic/linguistic minorities living in the country.

If REM had followed the aforementioned guidelines, to which it makes reference in its report, the sample of media service providers it monitored would have included both cable operators who prioritise their news programmes. Thus, some of the channels that are only carried on the state-owned MTS (Tanjug, Euronews, K1, TV Kurir), which is in the state ownership, should have been the subject of monitoring in addition to N1 and Nova (SBB), i.e. Insider (SBB and MTS), and N1 and Nova (SBB).

In support of our suggestion, the ODIHR observation mission formed a sample of media service providers for its monitoring, which included the public services RTS1 and RTV1, as well as private TV channels with national coverage B92 TV, Happy TV, RTV Pink, and Prva TV, but also cable channels from both cable operators Euronews Serbia, Insider TV, N1 TV, Nova S TV, Kurir TV, and Vesti TV¹⁰.

According to the methodology created by REM for monitoring purposes, the analytical unit of monitoring is a news item in the report rather than an actor, or a participant in the electoral process, as described in the OSCE handbook for media monitoring¹¹, to which REM refers. This indicates that the topics of news items are not only those mentioned by the media, i.e. the journalist, but also by the actor in his active, i.e. direct presentation. One actor can cover multiple issues in one news item, meaning that a news item can have multiple topics.

The report includes data on time and tonality for each observed actor, in contrast to the OSCE's methodology, which REM refers to. This includes not only each electoral list and presidential candidate, but also state officials, i.e., representatives of the executive branch (President, Prime Minister and ministers, President of the Assembly and MPs). This is especially true given the fact that the President of the Republic is the public figure who is most frequently featured on the media outlets with the highest viewership.

10 Despite the fact that Serbia had three authorities, the REM, the Interim Regulatory Authority and the Supervisory Board of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, no one monitored the print media, the monitoring of which is a mandatory part of media monitoring during elections.

11 https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/b/1/384831_0.pdf (page 40)

Table 62 Time representation of state officials and Serbian President

	Total time for holders of public office	Total time for the President of the Republic	Percent of share of the Republic President in the time given to the holders of public offices
RTS	12:41:06	8:32:14	67%
Pink	37:43:54	32:59:45	87%
Happy	16:32:37	7:39:39	46%
Prva	42:01:56	8:04:28	19%
B92	34:16:18	10:44:29	31%

The OSCE Handbook stressed on page 42 that the analyses of media monitoring should establish the following: “Are government officials benefiting from an excessive advantage due to extensive coverage of their official functions? Do media cover their activities uncritically, highlighting only successes achieved but ignoring the failures?¹²” This means that the tone of media reporting on the holders of public offices should be determined.

From the description of REM’s methodology, it is not clear whether the actors were monitored only directly (when they speak) or indirectly (when someone else speaks about them). In the OSCE Handbook for Media Monitoring, which REM quotes, the difference is made between indirect and direct presentation. In the observation missions of the ODIHR, both are measured, that is, there is a so-called “double presentation time”, which is divided into the time when an actor speaks positively, negatively or neutrally about himself and the time when another actor refers to the mentioned actor positively, negatively or neutrally¹³.

If the REM applied what was stated in its report „ *If the participant in the election campaign spoke positively, negatively or neutrally about a certain topic in a news item, that item is classified as positive, negative or neutral. Also, if one of the participants of the election campaign referred positively, negatively or neutrally to another subject (participant of the election campaign), that news item is classified as positive, negative or neutral, which is defined in the topic as: “positive, negative, or neutral about... (the relevant subject, participant of the election campaign) ”*, it can be concluded that the REM was not accurate in conducting the monitoring of media service providers when viewed from the perspective of internationally comparable methodology and principles defined by the Venice Commission, ODIHR and Human Rights Directorate of the European Council¹⁴

12 https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/b/1/384831_0.pdf (page 42)

13 Additionally, the methodology does not show whether media exposure and tone of presenting the actors were measured „only in the picture“ and indirectly presented, because it is a part of indirect presentation and should be measured.

14 [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2009\)031-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2009)031-e)

In support of the above, when it comes to measuring the tone of reporting, its application is visible at the level of topics, where the tone of reporting and the topic of reporting are mixed. Thus, the actors such as the Government, the opposition, Ponoš, Djilas, Janković and the EU are connoted negatively or positively.

Thus, when we look at the findings on media service providers relating to the tone of media reporting, we get one perspective, and when we look at the topics, especially those that contain tonality, this perspective changes. In this way, one and the same phenomenon, the tone of reporting, is measured with two indicators, which creates a very low consistency of research results and consequently their interpretation depends on the one who interprets them.

Analysis of the REM Council Report on the Series *A Decade in Power* Produced by N1 TV

Following the publication of information that the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media had conducted an analysis of the series *A Decade in Power*¹⁵, the Bureau for Social Research asked the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media - REM for free access to information and requested two documents for its analysis. The first was a description of the methodology used to analyse the series and the second was the analysis itself. We needed these two documents, firstly, to analyse the methodology used to produce the report and, secondly, to examine the content of the report in the light of the constitutional and legal framework governing freedom of expression and artistic and scientific work, i.e. the competence of the REM Council and its Supervision and Analysis Service (hereafter referred to as the Service).

It is important for the public to emphasise that any kind of research, i.e. the resulting analysis, must contain a conceptual framework so that the user/reader of the analysis can compare the collected data with the conclusions drawn from the facts systematically presented in relation to the definitions of terms mentioned above¹⁶.

In the REM's reply, signed by Olivera Zekić as President of the REM Council, BIRODI was informed that the document describing the methodology did not

15 <http://rem.rs/sr/arhiva/vesti/2022/03/saopstenje-saveta-rem-a-povodom-usvajanja-iz-vestaja-o-programskom-sadržaju-tv-n1-decenija-vlasti>

16 This was not the first time that the REM informed that they did not have the monitoring methodology. BIRODI was given the same answer after asking whether there was a monitoring methodology for the violation of Article 47 of the Law on Electronic Media, which was motivated by positive reporting of RTS and Pink TV about the Republic President, Aleksandar Vučić. The importance of monitoring methodology is reflected in the fact that such a document would define the conceptual framework used in the analysis, indicators of violation and compliance with the laws and rulebooks, all aimed at helping the Service and its members to have clear monitoring procedures, which is the main methodological assumption for a good quality work.

exist, while the series analysis made by the Service was submitted to BIRODI. Despite the lack of clearly presented methodology of the Service, we will try to define the key terms by analysing the Service's report.

Let us start from the first definition, which is the very subject of the analysis. In the analysis, the Service defined the series *A Decade in Power* as a documentary and information programme which presented the political activity of Aleksandar Vučić. The Service argued that the statements made in the series relied on information from various sources already known to the public, and that the documentary content was provided with the aim to substantiate the presented arguments that Aleksandar Vučić was a high-ranked person, while all of that was in accordance with the Law on Public Information (Article 8) and the Rulebook on the Protection of Human Rights in the Field of Media Services.

On the same page, in the second paragraph, the Service stated that the topic of the series was the "disqualification of Aleksandar Vučić". This conclusion, when it comes to the topic, deviates from the definition of *A Decade in Power* series as a documentary and information programme, that is, the nature of the description given by the Service. This is where we encountered the consequences of not having a methodology that should contain the definitions of the conceptual framework. It was essential to clarify what was meant by the term disqualification, whether it was a negative assessment as such, or, perhaps, a denial of one's abilities or values. By the way, is it not the vital task of the media and public officials to review and criticize the actions of politicians and, above all, those in power?

It should be added that someone's disqualification cannot be the topic, but possible conclusion of the analysis. This means that the Service has the opportunity to use its analytical tool to come to the conclusion that someone is disqualified only after the analytical process itself has been completed. This is how we came to the topic of the series, which is the political activity of Aleksandar Vučić as a politician (member of the Serbian Radical Party and the Serbian Progressive Party) and government official [2] (MP, First Vice-President of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Prime Minister and President of the Republic).

Time and science will tell whether Aleksandar Vučić will be highly regarded as a statesman. This is not the topic of this analysis, and such topic should not have been included in the conceptual framework of the Service's report. After presenting the generalised views on the nature of the series, the Service concluded that the series was meant to persuade the audience of the falsity of Aleksandar Vučić's authority. For these purposes, the report used the content from specific series episodes.

In support of the thesis about the disqualification of Aleksandar Vučić, the Service cited what was said about the nature of Aleksandar Vučić's authority, more specifically about the authoritarian type of rule. This is where we arrived at one of the key issues that this report had raised, namely, where the right (in this case of

the REM or of the Service) begins and where it ends when it comes to evaluating when the presentation of a theoretical or research position based on empirical facts constitutes disqualification, i.e. whether it is in accordance with:

- Article 46 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia regulating freedom of speech and thought¹⁷ and
- Articles (1 to 7) of the Law on Science and Research, notably Article 7, guaranteeing the freedom of scientific and research activities¹⁸.

In its analysis, the Service could have pointed out the scientific (ir) relevance of research data and theoretical generalizations presented in the series. To some extent it did so by concluding in its analysis that the statements seen in the series relied on publicly available information from various sources, and that documentary content was provided with the aim of substantiating the presented assessments since Aleksandar Vučić is a highly positioned person, which is all in accordance with the Law on Public Information (Article 8) and the Rulebook on the Protection of Human Rights in the Field of Media Services. And this was where the analysis of the Service should have ended.

Instead, the Service came to the conclusion that the author had a “one-sided approach” without defining methodology i.e. terms or indicators of violations of laws and regulations on the basis of which the Service would collect data and provide it to the Council for decision. This affected the credibility and comprehensiveness of the published ideas and opinions and violated the Rulebook on the Protection of Human Rights in the Field of Media Services.

The service went one step further, although it did not define the terms used further in the analysis, such as disqualification, political disqualification, moral disqualification, most severe qualification, hate speech, long-term campaigns.

In (only) four pages of analysis, interspersed with general views of the Service and citations from Articles in the Rulebook, quotes were presented as arguments for the violation of the Rulebook, and some of the arguments were the views of experts such as a professor at Belgrade law school. Questioning the truthfulness, completeness and objectivity of the expert opinions, which by their epis-

17 “The freedom of thought and expression shall be guaranteed, as well as the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through speech, writing, art or in some other manner. Freedom of expression may be restricted by the law if necessary to protect rights and reputation of others, to uphold the authority and objectivity of the court and to protect public health, morals of a democratic society and national security of the Republic of Serbia.

18 “Scientific work is free and shall not be subject to any restrictions, except for those arising from respecting the standards of science and ethics in scientific and research work, protection of human and minority rights, protection of defence and security interests, as well as environmental protection. Scientific work is subject to scientific criticism. Freedom of scientific work and creativity shall be reflected in the freedom of scientific action, freedom of choice and development of scientific methods of research and interpretation, as well as respect for copyright.”

temological nature are based on the above principles, represents a methodological failure of the analysis.

It is worth noting that, following the findings of the same Service, REM issued a decision a day later stating that Olivera Zekić, as a President of the REM Council, did not violate the Code of Members of the REM Council by presenting unconfirmed information about funding environmental protests, despite her personal statement that it was speculative information. In such scenario, there appeared to be no moral, political, or most severe qualification, i.e. hate speech.

The same Service failed to notice that Olivera Zekić referred to BIRODI as a “paramilitary REM” at least twice, and that the President of the Republic falsely accused BIRODI of supplying Twitter with information about media reporting which Twitter was using to label particular media as pro-government.

VIII SUMMARY

Before drawing conclusions from the ten-year media monitoring, we will first briefly summarise the results.

The findings of the first monitoring of primetime current affairs programmes in 2012 show the existence of the concept of “equal and more equal actors,” as demonstrated by the fact that two electoral lists, one centred around the Democratic Party and the other around the Serbian Progressive Party, had more equal representation than the other electoral lists, albeit slightly less positive.

Table 63 Representation and tone of reporting about the electoral lists for 2012 parliamentary elections in primetime current affairs programmes

	Seconds	Percentage share	Percent of positive coverage
URS – United Regions of Serbia- Mladen Dinkić	9500	13%	75
LDP – Liberal Democratic Party	9030	13%	75
Choice for a Better Life - Boris Tadic	12956	18%	66
Ivica Dačić - SPS, PUPS, JS	8376	12%	67
Let's Get Serbia Moving - Tomislav Nikolic	14171	20%	67
Vojislav Košunica DSS	8550	12%	59
Vojislav Šešelj SRS	8567	12%	56

The same pattern can be seen in daily newspapers, where monitoring results show that the two lists of the Democratic Party and the Serbian Progressive Party received significantly more space than the other electoral lists during the election campaign, but that the presentation of all electoral lists was excessively positive.

Table 64 Representation and tone of reporting about electoral lists for 2012 parliamentary elections in primetime current affairs programmes

	Seconds	Percentage share	Percent of positive coverage
Let's Get Serbia Moving — Tomislav Nikolić	76995	26%	76
Choice for a Better Life — Boris Tadić	91135	31%	80
Ivica Dačić – SPS-PUPS-JS	36627	12%	76
Democratic Party of Serbia – Vojislav Koštunica	28979	10%	79
Čedomir Jovanović – Turnaround	30619	10%	76
United Regions of Serbia – Mladen Dinkić	25979	9%	73

In the first round of the 2012 presidential elections, Boris Tadić had eight percent more time than the second-placed progressive presidential candidate, Tomislav Nikolić. In the third place, with four percentage points less, were Čedomir Jovanović and Ivica Dačić, while the former President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Prime Minister, Vojislav Koštunica, took the fifth place with 10%.

Table 65 Representation of presidential candidates in primetime current affairs programmes in 2012, during the first round

	Time in seconds	%
Boris Tadić	7141	23%
Tomislav Nikolić	4808	15%
Čedomir Jovanović	3456	11%
Ivica Dačić	3402	11%
Vojislav Koštunica	3029	10%
Zoran Stanković	2656	9%
Vladan Glišić	1678	5%
Zoran Dragišić	1654	5%
Jadranka Šešelj	1645	5%
Muamer Zukorlić	1456	5%
Ilištvan Pastor	229	1%
Total	31154	100%

Monitoring results of the second round of presidential elections showed that the two candidates who made it to the second round were quite consistent in the time received.

Table 66 Representation of presidential candidates in primetime current affairs programmes in 2012, during the second round

	Time in seconds	%
Boris Tadić	7104	54%
Tomislav Nikolić	6032	46%
Total	13136	100%

The 2014 elections heralded a shift in media coverage that extended beyond the election campaign period. The short election campaign and previous possession of the media resulted in the First Deputy Prime Minister, Aleksandar Vučić, being the key actor in the election campaign.

The media reporting model was already a predictor of future parliamentary elections, not just during the election period. The media coverage during and after the election was shaped by Aleksandar Vučić's media dominance in the capacity of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia and the leader of the electoral list, as well as by the concurrent reduction of positive time coverage of the main political rivals, where TV Pink played a significant role. As a result, during the 2016 parliamentary election campaign, the Serbian Progressive Party list received the most attention, followed by the lists of the Serbian Radical Party, the Democratic Party, the Socialist Party, and the United Serbia, as well as the Alliance for a Better Serbia. The data show that the Serbian Radical Party, Democratic Party and Enough is Enough were presented with the least positive time, i.e. that "party cameras" were least effective for these parties, especially on Pink TV.

Table 67 Representation and positive tone of reporting on electoral lists in primetime current affairs programmes on television channels with national coverage and N1TV in 2016

	Total time	Share	Percent of positive time
SNS – List Aleksandar Vučić – Serbia Wins	13050	26%	88.5%
Dr Vojislav Šešelj – Serbian Radical Party	7542	15%	47.3%
For Equitable Serbia – Democratic Party	7111	14%	56.2%
Ivica Dačić – Socialist Party and United Serbia	5253	10%	87.2%
Boris Tadić Čedomir Jovanović Alliance for Better Serbia	4740	9%	87.8%
Dveri – Democratic Party of Serbia	3248	6%	84.6%
Borko Stefanović, Serbian Left-Wing	1994	4%	88.4%
For Free Serbia – OATH KEEPERS	1827	4%	91.0%
Bosniak Democratic Party of Sandžak	1783	4%	93.6%
Saša Radulović, Enough is Enough	1429	3%	63.5%
SDA of Sandžak	1259	2%	56.5%
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians -Ištvan Pastor	1129	2%	94.9%
Together for Serbia People's Movement	138	0%	60.9%
	50503	100%	76.9%

The new presidential elections were an opportunity to verify a new model of reporting. In contrast to 2012, when there was a battle between equal and more equal candidates, Aleksandar Vučić, who ran a dual campaign, dominated the presidential election.

He conducted one campaign from the position of a Prime Minister of the Republic, which was frequently in conflict with Article 29 of the Law on Anti-Corruption Agency which prohibited public officials to use their public appearances for the promotion of their party. BIRODI unsuccessfully drew attention of the Anti-Corruption Agency to this fact. The Agency saw it as a media issue and media freedom to report on the Prime Minister's activities.

From his position as a presidential candidate, Aleksandar Vučić ran the second campaign. During the 2017 presidential campaign, the reporting strategy—which “was born” at Pink TV—was used again. Aleksandar Vučić combined the two campaigns and had positive advertising representation almost two-thirds of the time. Additionally, the media underrepresented the competition in terms of the time and percent of positive portrayal. This marginalisation mainly related to Saša Janković and Vuk Jeremić.

Table 68 Representation and tone of reporting on the candidates for the President of the Republic in the primetime current affairs programmes during the first round of election in 2017

	Total	Share	Percent of positive time
Aleksandar Vučić, presidential candidate	21217	27%	94.3
Aleksandar Vučić, Government President	28185	35%	96.4
Saša Janković	3954	6%	79.6
Vuk Jeremić	3879	6%	72.3
Vojislav Šešelj	4349	5%	97.1
Boško Obradović	3038	4%	97.3
Milan Stamatović	2556	3%	99.0
Aleksandar Popović	2483	3%	98.4
Nenad Čanak	3390	4%	97.2
Saša Radulović	2284	3%	90.6
Miroslav Parović	2263	3%	97.8
Luka Maksimović alias Ljubiša Preletačević	1081	2%	80.1
Total	92137	100%	83.6

The data from two non-election periods monitored directly after the presidential elections in 2017, i.e. in 2019, one of the rare years when there were no elections, speak of the fact that the reporting in primetime news broadcasts was consistent to the “Pink’s model.”

Table 69 Positive time given to actors in the news broadcasts of TV outlets with national coverage and N1 TV

	12 August 2017 to 14 November 2017		1 September – 30 November 2019	
	Positive time	Percent of positive time	Positive time	Percent of positive time
Aleksandar Vučić as President	62427	92.3	109542	91.1
Ana Brnabić as Prime Minister	14734	85.3	10146	84.3
Ivica Dačić as minister	6184	80.3	5058	79.8
Vojislav Šešelj	41	63.8	340	54.1
Dragan Šutanovac/Zoran Lutovac	649	83.8	385	70.8
Zoran Živković	2	53	568	76.2
Vuk Jeremić	277	43.2	165	26.0
Boško Obradović	707	38.1	445	18.0
Dragan Đilas	176	14.1	686	6.6
Saša Janković/Sergej Trifunović	868	31.6	434	35.8
Čedomir Jovanović	791	88.1	543	90.8
Nenad Čanak	373	81.8	120	96.0
Boris Tadić	110	23.5	163	67.4
Saša Radulović	220	50.9	0	0

We observed a change in the same sample of TV news during the 2020 parliamentary election campaign. Aleksandar Vučić was portrayed neutrally as the president of the Republic and of the Serbian Progressive Party despite receiving an excessive amount of media coverage.

Table 70 Cumulative representation of actors in the 2020 parliamentary election campaign by tone used in the current affairs programmes of TV outlets with national coverage and N1 TV

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Aleksandar Vučić President	3:40:59	9:19:41	0:19:32
Aleksandar Vučić President of Serbian Progressives	0:00:57	0:04:00	
Serbian Government	1:16:19	6:22:13	0:07:27
Coalition around Serbian Progressive Party	1:04:10	0:40:41	0:17:27
Socialist Party of Serbia and United Serbia	1:12:05	0:04:42	0:01:29
Movement for the Kingdom of Serbia	1:19:13	0:03:38	
Oath Keepers	1:09:07	0:03:39	
United Democratic Serbia	1:33:21	0:06:11	
Leviathan, I Live for Serbia	0:04:42	0:00:06	0:00:10
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	0:00:40	0:01:47	
Aleksandar Šapić, Victory for Serbia	1:32:18	0:04:21	
Academician Muamer Zukorlić – Straight Ahead Akademik	1:17:19	0:03:12	
BROOM 2020	1:33:10	0:03:41	
Milan Stamatović. Victory of Health, Dragan Jovanović, Better Serbia, Healthy Serbia	1:05:42	0:02:56	
Sergej Trifunović, Movement of Free Citizens	0:38:59	0:06:05	0:01:33
PRO-BOYCOTT parties	1:07:28	1:10:55	0:59:19
Dr Vojislav Šešelj, Serbian Radical Party	1:32:49	0:10:55	0:00:04
Party of Democratic Action Dr Sulejman Ugljanin	0:21:57	0:01:01	0:00:10
People's Bloc (Velimir Ilić, general Momir Stojanović)	0:47:32	0:01:09	0:00:05
Sovereignists	0:08:58	0:04:58	0:00:05
Albanian Democratic Alternative, United Valley	0:02:12	0:00:25	
Citizen Group 1 in 5 Million	0:21:42	0:02:35	
Let the Masks Drop, Green Party, New Party	0:23:22	0:02:14	0:00:05
Russian Party, Slobodan Nikolić	0:05:13	0:00:27	
Čedomir Jovanović, Peace Coalition	0:25:54	0:06:04	0:01:50

Final Considerations

Summarising the findings of the media monitoring, which focused primarily on primetime current affairs broadcasts in the run-up to and during the election, we can say that there was a departure from the model of media diversity of equal and more equal political actors in the coverage of certain topics (electoral lists and candidates for the President of the Republic). When Pink TV first established the model of media monism of Aleksandar Vučić as Serbian Prime Minister and President of the Republic, it marginalised public officials, primarily the members of the executive branch but also politicians from among the members of the Serbian Progressive Party, ruling parties and the opposition parties. This model was present during the parliamentary and presidential campaign in 2012, the extraordinary parliamentary elections in 2014, and the extraordinary parliamentary elections in 2016. In addition to the media exposure of Aleksandar Vučić, it is worth noting the excessively positive reporting of television outlets with national coverage. The same holds true for the largest number of members of the executive branch who were often portrayed positively-neutrally or vice versa, i.e. with very negative or no negative i.e. critically connoted time. The same conclusion can be drawn in relation to the parties in power, which were portrayed in the preceding fashion in the highest percentage.

There were elements of media discrimination in the case of certain opposition parties, reflected in little or no time representation or in greater time representation followed by a high percentage of negative time, which from a legal standpoint is a violation of the right to information guaranteed by Article 51 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, but also a violation of Article 47 of the Law on Electronic Media, i.e. the Rulebook on the Protection of Human Rights in the Field of Provision of Media Services. This primarily applies to television stations with national coverage.

BIRODI's monitoring also found that cable channel N1 reported more positively on opposition parties and more negatively on the executive branch than did television outlets with national coverage, which produced diversity at the media level rather than diversity of actors in terms of time balance and the tone of reporting. This situation was partly the consequence of the fact that representatives of the executive branch and the ruling party avoided guest appearances on N1TV shows.

The monitoring of print media also speaks of the diversity at the media level, where *Politika*, *Večernje novosti*, and *Informer* reported more positively about the executive branch headed by Aleksandar Vučić than was the case in *Nova* and *Danas* dailies, where the ruling parties were less positively represented, i.e. had more negative space, while the opposition parties, that is, electoral lists and presidential candidates were presented more positively and less negatively in these two daily newspapers.

In addition to the transition to media monism and the marginalisation of the media, i.e. discrimination, which led to the collapse of the public sphere and undermined the willingness of citizens to express their opinions on the one hand and trust in the media on the other, the analysis of the content of news coverage revealed the existence of unsanctioned and unconstitutional actions by the President of the Republic. Namely, the President of the Republic, whose powers are defined in Article 112 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, through an intensive interpretation of the powers defined as “representation of the state”, has taken over the powers of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, which are defined in Article 123 of the Serbian Constitution. This is possible because since 2020, the National Assembly of Serbia has been in a captive status, i.e. dependent on the President of the Republic, who exercised the powers of the party president defined in the Statute of the Serbian Progressive Party (Article 45, paragraphs 17 and 18), proposed the electoral list and supported it with his name in the campaign of the Serbian Progressive Party. The list contained the names of MPs, who, according to Article 118 of the Constitution of Serbia, should ensure that the Serbian President respects the Constitution. By acting like this, Vučić placed the MPs in a dependent relationship as defined in Article 40 paragraph 2 of the Law on Prevention of Corruption.

That this is not just an analytical hypothesis is shown by the research results of Tanasije Marinković, professor at the Faculty of Law in Belgrade, on the unsanctioned violation of the Constitution by the President of the Republic in the area of the judiciary. According to this research, President Vučić has violated the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia in the area of the judiciary 25 times since taking office, and the MPs of the Serbian Progressive Party have not acted in accordance with Article 118 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia.

In order to understand the industry of populism, in addition to the captive National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, it is of particular importance to consider the position and role of the Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (REM) as the supreme authority in the field of electronic media.

The analysis of the actions of REM so far has unmistakably shown that its latent but primary role is to legalise the state that reproduces the populism industry in such a way that its decisions legally maintain the control over the media exercised by the executive authorities and the ruling Serbian Progressive Party, with the aim of controlling the image of the government and the state of society created by the media.

There are two media spaces in Serbia, and they are getting farther apart. On the one hand, there is the reality broadcast on television channels with national coverage and media that have business and ownership relations with Telekom Srbija, and on the other hand, there is the reality broadcast on cable channels owned by United Media, which is the result of a dysfunctional REM that does not act in accordance with the Law on Electronic Media, i.e. the regulations, particu-

larly the Rulebook on the Protection of Human Rights in the Field of Provision of Media Services.

This thesis is supported by the results of the BIRODI and “Sprint insight” research on the connection between voting behaviour in the last elections and the presence of a cable TV operator in the household of the respondents. On the one hand, this clearly shows that respondents who have MTS as their operator are significantly more likely to vote for those in power, i.e. the diversity of electoral lists and presidential candidates who received votes from this population is much lower than the diversity of electoral lists and presidential candidates who were voted for by those who have SBB TV operator.

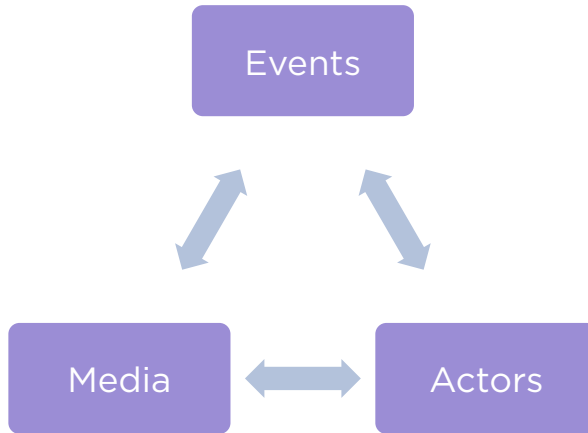
In the end, as a new beginning, we will present an analytical framework for monitoring the industry of populism, on the basis of which we will continue our research in order to contribute to the revival of the captive public in Serbia.

Table 71 Analytical framework for monitoring of the industry of populism

Purpose	Managing production, distribution and accessibility to information i.e. creating public attitudes to the actors of events	Indicators
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deideologisation ▪ Deinstitutionalisation ▪ Personalisation ▪ Production of enemies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating attitude that citizens should not be involved in politics, political activism is equated with party activism, and party activism is negative ▪ Party bureaucracy takes over public institutions ▪ A cult of the leader is created ▪ Persecution of those who are not like-minded becomes legitimate in the media and in the public
Means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ „Media” that conduct: ▪ Censorship ▪ Promotion ▪ Propaganda ▪ Labelling/Media prosecution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Media and social invisibility of undesirable actors ▪ Improved information of desirable actors ▪ Media worship of the leader as symbol of power ▪ Media death of undesirable actors
Result	Division of the public to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active public ▪ Passive public ▪ Hybrid public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marginalisation of “pockets” of active public ▪ Intensifying the trend of abstention from politics and voting i.e. (self) censorship and freedom of speech of citizens and media ▪ Intensified activities of bot factories as instrument used to undermine the public

To adequately measure the above indicators, we developed an analysis of the state of the public based on the monitoring of event and media typologies, that is, media functions and results in the form of a media typology, and we arrived at the integrity of the public, which rests on three elements: events, media, and actors.

Scheme 8 Integrity elements of the public



In addition to the factual dimension reflected in the events, monitoring and evaluation of the public includes the media dimension, which involves the analysis of the content of the public presentation of the event through the communication channels at two levels: Media and Actors. The media level includes: Rank of the event/announcement, time, tone of reporting, reporting discourse, argumentation, sources, genre, actors, adherence to journalistic professional standards. The actor level includes analysis at the level of the actor/participant in the event: actor, time, tone, discourse, argumentation, object (about whom) and epithets. Based on these indicators, the media can be classified as a means of information, advice, research and analysis, entertainment, advocacy, promotion, propaganda or retaliation.

The event hierarchy, general information about the event, interest evaluation/connection with the event, attitude towards the event and its dimensions, general involvement and event-related involvement, socio-political identity and sociodemographics are all included in the third dimension, which is attitudinal, and includes measuring citizens' attitudes about events.

In the previous sections we presented the suggestions toward the improvement of electoral integrity. In our proposal for drafting the Anti-Bot Law we seek to give our contribution to the revival of the public exposed to the bot factory and aggression of the industry of populism. The Law would have the following elements:

- Manifestations of botting (directly, indirectly, according to the type of media and social networks)
- What is bot - actor (legal or natural person who performs botting willingly or under duress)
- What is bot organiser – natural or legal person creating material and technological conditions for botting of at least one person
- Who uses botting services – legal or natural person

- What is bot platform (media, social network, public gathering)
- What is abuse of public resources through botting
- Botting and whistleblowing
- Botting and Law on Civil Servants
- Botting and Labour Law
- Botting and media coverage
- Botting and opinion polls
- Botting and professional associations and codes of conduct
- Botting and psycho-social consequences suffered by a botting victim
- Monitoring of bots (Protector of Citizens, Commissionaire for Equality, civic forms of monitoring)

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