

## Media Coverage of the 2009 Parliamentary Elections Campaign

### Media Monitoring Report Number 1

5 –18 February 2009

*Coalition 2009 is a voluntary union of non-governmental organizations, aiming at contributing to the development of free, fair, transparent and democratic elections of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova and to the consolidation of the civil society, for ensuring the conscious participation of citizens at the election process, the respect of electives' rights and the equality principles of the election competitors. Coalition 2009 continues the efforts of civil society to contribute to the conduct of free and fair elections started by Coalition 2005 and Coalition 2007. Currently the Coalition consists of 66 NGOs.*



*The project “Monitoring mass media during the campaign for parliamentary elections 2009” is funded by the Eurasia Foundation through the Swedish Agency for Development and International Cooperation (Sida/Asdi) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the donors.*

## 1. General Data

**Goal of the project:** to monitor and to inform public opinion on mass media performance during the electoral campaign for 2009 parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova

**Monitoring time frame:** 5 February–5 April 2009

### **Selection criteria for media outlets to be monitored:**

- ownership (public/private)
- audience/impact
- language

### **Media outlets monitored:**

**TV:** Moldova 1, PRO TV, NIT, Euro TV Chişinău, TV 7

**Radio:** Radio Moldova, Antena C, Vocea Basarabiei

**Print press:** *Moldova Suverană, Nezaşisimaia Moldova, Săptămîna, Flux, Moldavskie Vedomosti, Jurnal de Chişinău, Timpul de Dimineaţă, Komsomolskaia Pravda v Moldove, SP (Bălţi), Vesti Gagauzii (Comrat), Realitatea (Sorooca), Cuvîntul (Rezina)*

**Press agencies and online publications:** Moldpres, Infotag, [www.omg.md](http://www.omg.md), [www.unimedia.md](http://www.unimedia.md)

### **Monitoring schedule:**

**TV:** Monday-Friday between 6:00 and 9:00 and 18:00 and 23:00

Saturday and Sunday: from 8:00 to 22:00

**Radio:** from 6.00 to 13.00 and from 17.00 to 20.00, daily

**Print press/Press agencies and online publications:** daily

## **The team**

The project is being implemented by the Independent Journalism Centre and the Independent Press Association in partnership with IMAS-INC Institute for Marketing and Survey, Chişinău.

## 2. Methodology

The monitoring methodology has been developed by Oxford Media Research for the monitoring projects of the international organization Global Campaign for Free Expression “Article 19”. The methodology’s characteristics are as follows: 1) use of a broad spectrum of quantity indicators, including type, duration, topic of coverage, news sources, frequency and duration of appearance of certain persons in the newscasts. 2) the quality component is more developed than in other methodologies, which allows to establish the biasness of the monitored outlet during the coverage of events. Each news article or opinion is subject to a content and context assessment, to determine if it favors or disfavors one or another party / one or another political entity. A negative or positive content and/or context of the news does not necessarily indicate the biasness

or partisanship of the station broadcasting the news. It is possible that a news article favor or disfavor one of the subjects and, nonetheless, be equidistant and professionally correct. Only if there is a tendency to favor or disfavor one of the subjects for a certain period of time can we say that we are dealing with an imbalance.

### **3. General conclusions**

#### ***3.1 Broadcast media***

From 5 to 18 February 2009, the 8 TV and radio stations monitored had 2943 broadcasts related to the electoral campaign. The greatest number of news programs, talk shows (opinion programs) and electoral advertisements (political party broadcasts) were broadcast by Moldova 1, Radio Moldova and Antena C.

The public broadcasting stations with national coverage—Moldova 1 and Radio Moldova—broadcast a great deal of news about initiatives of the party currently in power, i.e., the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM), from that party's perspective. Moreover, news critical of PCRM was lacking, and in some cases other electoral candidates were presented in a bad light. The public broadcasters further favored PCRM by giving it priority when broadcasting political advertisements as PCRM spots were broadcast at the beginning or at the end of political advertisements or both. For example, on February 18 at 19:45, Radio Moldova broadcast political spots in the following order: PCRM, Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM), PLDM, and PCRM.

Private media outlets such as NIT and Antena C also broadcast a preponderance of news stories that portrayed PCRM in a positive light and the opposition parties mainly in a negative one. During its news programs, EU TV slightly favored PCRM and the Christian Democratic Popular Party (PPCD), and criticism of opposition parties was insignificant. During talk shows, on the other hand, EU TV favored PPCD and was especially critical of PLDM and Alianța Moldova Noastră (AMN). In contrast, PRO TV, TV 7 and Vocea Basarabiei broadcast news about PCRM that was both favorable and unfavorable; however, the unfavorable reports prevailed especially on Vocea Basarabiei during talk shows.

Quoting candidates as sources for election news was unbalanced at Moldova 1, Radio Moldova, NIT and Antena C. During Moldova 1 news programs, government representatives, the President, the president of Parliament and other PCRM representatives were quoted 156 times while candidates from all other parties were quoted 129 times. Euro TV, PRO TV, TV 7 and Vocea Basarabiei were more balanced in this regard.

From 5 to 18 February no electoral debates were broadcast by the media channels monitored. It is noteworthy that the decision to organise debates only after the expiration of the deadline for registering candidates favors the governing party and contradicts the principle of providing comprehensive and objective information about candidates.

#### ***3.2 Print press/press agencies/online publications***

The print media as well as the press agencies and the online publications monitored reported on the electoral campaign from different perspectives based on the opinions of their editors. Some media institutions favored a particular party by presenting it only in a positive context during news items and opinion articles. Thus *Moldova Suverană*, *Nezavisimaia Moldova* and [www.omg.md](http://www.omg.md) directly promoted PCRM, at the expense of other parties, especially liberal ones. Similarly, the state press agency Moldpres presented PCRM in a positive context and either

neglected or indirectly criticized opposition parties. *Flux* also criticized opposition parties and favored PPCD. *Flux* seldom criticized PCRM, and *Moldova Suverană* and *Nezavisimaia Moldova* did not report negatively on PPCD. The news in *Komsomolskaia Pravda v Moldove* directly supported PCRM and the Social Democratic Party (PSD).

In contrast, *Timpul de dimineață*, *Jurnal de Chișinău*, *Moldavskie vedomosti*, *Cuvântul* [www.unimedia.md](http://www.unimedia.md) directly criticized the governing party and presented opposition parties active in the electoral campaign including PLDM, AMN and the Liberal Party (PL) in a positive context. *Săptămîna* did not criticize PCRM. *SP* criticized PCRM but did not favor any other party. The press agency Infotag strived to maintain balanced coverage and to present all the parties involved in the electoral campaign equally and to report without exception on all the events related to the campaign, usually without interpreting statements or taking them out of context.

*Realitatea* and *Vesti Gagauzii* did not publish any relevant articles during this monitoring period, and articles seeking to educate the public about the election were seldom published in any of the newspapers.

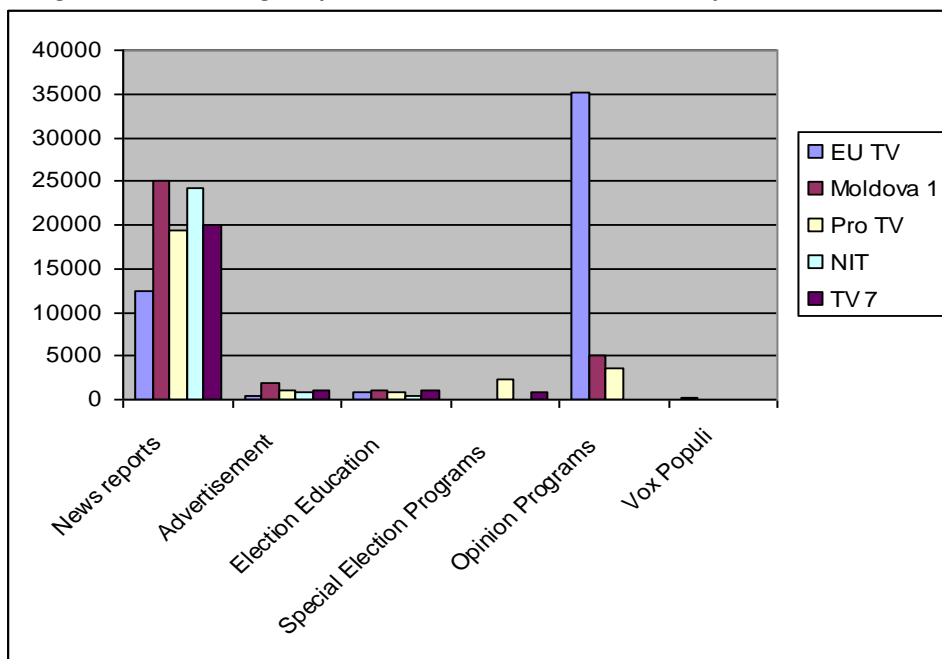
#### 4. Broadcast monitoring data

##### 4.1 Involvement in the electoral campaign

###### 4.1.1 TV

During this monitoring period, the 5 TV stations monitored were actively involved in the electoral campaign broadcasting electoral news each of a length between 12500 seconds and 25000 seconds. The largest news volume with an electoral impact was broadcast by Moldova 1 and NIT. Moldova 1 broadcast most of the electoral advertisements. Though, generally speaking the overall number of the electoral advertisement and of educational spots was relatively small. EU TV broadcast most of the talk shows (see Diagram 1). PRO TV is the only station that hosted three electoral candidates on one show (on “În profunzime” on 9 February).

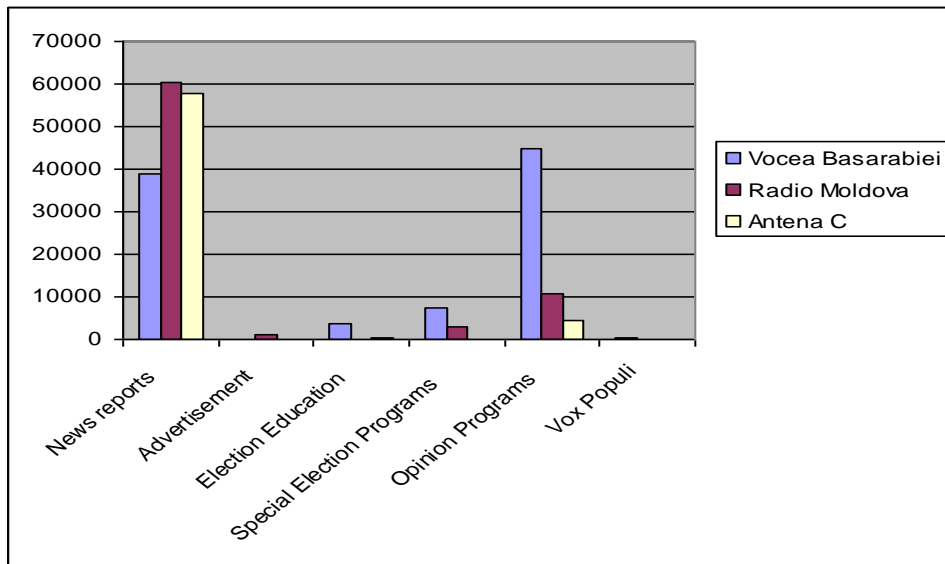
Diagram 1: The length of broadcasts on TV in seconds from 5 to 18 February 2009



#### 4.1.2 Radio

Of the 3 radio stations monitored, the most electoral news was broadcast by Radio Moldova and Antena C at approximately 60,000 seconds each (17 hours). Vocea Basarabiei occupied first place in broadcasting talk shows and educational programs specifically on the election with approximately 45,000 seconds (12 and a half hours) of programming. Electoral advertisements were lacking on Vocea Basarabiei and Antena C (see Diagram 2). Most of the neutral news was broadcast on Vocea Basarabiei.

Diagram 2: The length of radio broadcasts in seconds from 5 to 18 February 2009



#### 4.2 Frequency of quoting candidates as sources, the length of TV appearances and the length of time party representatives spoke during election news broadcasts

On Moldova 1 during this two-week period, government representatives, the President, the president of Parliament and other PCRM representatives were quoted 156 times and appeared on the screen for 2730 seconds (46 minutes). All the other parties were quoted 129 times and all their representatives appeared on screen for a total of 3222 seconds (54 minutes). This decidedly unbalanced reporting is reflected in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency of quoting sources and length of appearances of candidates on Moldova 1

Party/Affiliation	Number of quotations	Length of TV appearances in seconds	Length of speaking time in seconds
GOV	100	1761	1462
PRES	24	309	65
AMN	23	580	431
PSD	20	559	407
PCRM	20	524	390
PLDM	23	512	378
PL	17	665	409
PD	13	349	261
PARL	12	116	27
PPCD	5	68	63

UC	4	107	80
PS	3	131	78
PMU	3	115	104
MAE	3	71	64
PC	3	32	32

Note: GOV=Government, PRES=President, AMN=Alianța Moldova Noastră, PSD=Social Democratic Party, PCRML=Communist Party of Moldova PLDM=Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, PL=Liberal Party, PD=Democratic Party, PARL=Parliament, PPCD=Christian Democratic Popular Party, UC=Centrist Union, PS=Socialist Party, PMU=United Moldova Party, MAE=European Action Movement, PC=Conservative Party

At NIT the lack of balance was even more pronounced. The governing party, the President, the president of Parliament and other PCRML representatives were quoted 196 times while all other parties were quoted only 50 times, and the length of PCRML appearances was 4106 seconds (68 minutes) while that of all others was 959 seconds (16 minutes).

*Table 2: Frequency of quoting sources and length of appearances of candidates on NIT*

Party/Affiliation	Number of quotations	Length of TV appearances in seconds	Length of speaking time in seconds
GOV	90	1608	1282
PCRML	49	1019	734
PRES	39	1068	98
PARL	18	411	286
AMN	15	212	148
PL	8	215	162
PLDM	7	44	29
PSD	6	162	111
PS	4	174	170
PPCD	4	68	39
MU	4	64	64
PD	2	20	0

Note: GOV=government, PCRML=Communist Party of Moldova, PRES=President, PARL=Parliament, AMN=Alianța Moldova Noastră, PL=Liberal Party, PLDM=Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, PSD=Social Democratic Party, PS=Socialist Party, PPCD=Christian Democratic Popular Party, MU=Moldova Unită, PD=Democratic Party

PRO TV had a balanced approach towards all election candidates. PCRML representatives were quoted as news sources 69 times, PL was quoted 56 times, PLDM 53 times, PSD 44 times and AMN 36 times. In terms of the length of appearances PL ranked first at 714 seconds (12 minutes) followed by PSD at 656 seconds and PLDM at 650 seconds (11 minutes) AMN at 553 seconds (9 minutes) and government representatives at 327 seconds (5 minutes) (Table 3).

*Table 3: Frequency of quoting sources and length of appearances of candidates on PRO TV*

Party/Affiliation	Number of quotations	Length of TV appearances in seconds	Length of speaking time in seconds
PL	56	714	809
PLDM	53	650	633
PSD	44	656	552
AMN	36	533	580
GOV	34	39	138
PCRML	33	288	266
PD	29	292	288

PPCD	14	146	93
UC	13	124	178
MAE	12	184	208
PMU	9	85	112
PC	5	90	54
PS	3	40	62
SB	2	64	38
RAVN	1	8	8
PPR	1	5	0
PARL	1	2	0
PRES	1	0	0

Note: PL=Liberal Party, PLDM=Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, PSD=Social Democratic Party, AMN=Alianța Moldova Noastră, GOV=government, PCRM=Communist Party of Moldova, PD=Democratic Party, PPCD=Christian Democratic Popular Party, UC=Centrist Union, MAE=European Action Movement, PMU= United Moldova Party , PC=Conservative Party, PS=Social Party, SB=independent candidate Sergiu Banari, RAVN= Ravnopravie, PPR=Republican Popular Party, PARL=Parliament, PRES=President,

In election news on EU TV, the government, the President, the president of Parliament and other PCRM representatives were quoted as sources 42 times, PSD representatives were quoted 22 times, PPCD officials were cited 20 times, PLDM 10 times, PL 6 times, and AMN 6 times. The length of appearances was proportionate to the frequency sources were quoted, thus PCRM appearances accounted for 672 seconds of the news broadcasting time (11 minutes), PSD accounted for 477 seconds (8 minutes), PLDM for 241 seconds (4 minutes), PPCD for 181 seconds (3 minutes) and PL for 57 seconds (1 minute) (Table 4).

*Table 4: Frequency of quoting sources and length of appearances of candidates on EU TV*

Party/Affiliation	Number of quotations	Length of TV appearances in seconds	Length of speaking time in seconds
GOV	34	569	686
PSD	22	477	305
PPCD	20	181	319
PLDM	10	241	97
PL	6	57	20
AMN	6	29	17
PRES	5	0	0
PCRM	3	103	64
PD	3	15	25
AV	2	0	22
PS	2	0	0
MAE	1	14	14

Note: GOV=government, PSD=Social Democratic Party, PPCD=Christian Democratic Popular Party, PLDM=Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, PL=Liberal Party, AMN= Alianța Moldova Noastră, PRES=President, PCRM=Communist Party of Moldova, PD=Democratic Party, AV= Alianța Verde, PS=Socialist Party, MAE=European Action Movement

On TV 7, the government, the President, the president of Parliament and other PCRM representatives were quoted as news sources 43 times, PLDM sources were quoted 61 times, PD was cited 53 times, PL sources were quoted 48 times, PSD 23 times, AMN 20 times, PPCD sources 16 times and MAE and Centrist Union (UC) sources were quoted 11 times each. As for length of appearance on the screen, PL was first with 1042 seconds and PD was second with 1032 seconds (17 minutes) followed by PDLM at 795 seconds (13 minutes). PCRM representatives accounted for 436 seconds (7 minutes) (Table 5).

*Table 5: Frequency of quoting sources and length of appearances of candidates on TV 7*

Party/Affiliation	Number of quotations	Length of TV appearances in seconds	Length of speaking time in seconds
PLDM	61	795	690
PD	53	1032	985
PL	48	1042	791
PSD	23	392	307
PCRM	22	239	155
AMN	20	241	150
GOV	19	155	135
PPCD	16	87	26
MAE	11	278	245
UC	11	216	152
PPR	5	55	38
PC	3	93	89
PRES	2	42	13
RAVN	2	40	0
MU	1	13	13
PS	1	0	5

Note: PLDM=Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, PD=Democratic Party, PL=Liberal Party, PSD=Social Democratic Party, PCRM=Communist Party of Moldova, AMN=Alianța Moldova Noastră, GOV=government, PPCD=Christian Democratic Popular Party, MAE=European Action Movement, UC= Centrist Union, PPR=Popular Republican Party, PC=Conservative Party, PRES=President, RAVN= Ravnopravie, MU=Moldova Unită, PS=Socialist Party,

PCRM sources predominated on Radio Moldova news programs. They were quoted 381 times, and the length of their speaking time was 11,276 seconds (188 minutes/3hours). The other candidates were quoted as news sources 56 times (6.8 times less frequently), and their length of speaking time was 800 seconds (13 minutes or 14 times less).

*Table 6: Frequency of quoting sources and the length of speaking time for candidates at Radio Moldova*

Party/Affiliation	Number of quotations	Length of speaking time in seconds
GOV	251	8823
PRES	55	518
PCRM	41	380
PARL	34	1555
AMN	15	129
PSD	11	180
PL	10	123
PD	10	55
MAE	7	52
PLDM	6	50
PPCD	4	0
UC	3	0
PS	2	122
PU	2	89

PMU 1 0

Note: GOV=Government, PRES=President, PCRM=Communist Party of Moldova, PARL=Parliament, AMN=Alianța Moldova Noastră, PSD=Social Democratic Party, PL=Liberal Party, PD=Democratic Party, MAE=European Action Movement, PLDM=Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, PPCD=Christian Democratic Popular Party, UC=Centrist Union, PS=Socialist Party, PU=Humanist Party, PMU= United Moldova Party

On Antena C, the government, the President, the president of Parliament and other PCRM representatives were quoted 314 times as election news sources, and they talked on the radio for 4287 seconds (71 minutes). Other candidates were quoted 45 times (7 times less frequently) and had a total speaking time of 182 seconds (3 minutes or 23 times less).

*Table 7: Frequency of quoting sources and the length of speaking time for candidates at Antena C*

Party/Affiliation	Number of quotations	Length of speaking time in seconds
GOV	171	3068
PCRM	90	1105
PRES	45	114
PSD	14	56
PL	11	56
PARL	8	0
AMN	7	50
PS	3	30
PLDM	3	0
UC	2	0
PD	2	0
AV	1	0
PR	1	0
RAVN	1	0

Note: GOV=Government, PCRM=Communist Party of Moldova, PRES=President, PSD=Social Democratic Party, PL=Liberal Party, PARL=Parliament, AMN=Alianța Moldova Noastră, PS=Socialist Party, UC=Centrist Union, PD=Democratic Party, AV= Alianța Verde, PR=Republican Party RAVN= Ravnopravie,

On Vocea Basarabiei, PCRM representatives were quoted as election news sources 56 times, PL sources were quoted 52 times, PLDM were cited 52 times, PD 24 times, PSD 22 times, AMN 18 times, UC 12 times, European Action Movement (MAE) 9 times and PPCD 8 times. As for speaking time, PL and PLDM got 1074 and 1071 seconds respectively (18 minutes), AMN had 718 seconds (12 minutes), MAE had 350 (6 minutes), UC had 303 (5 minutes), PD had 203 (3 minutes) and PSD was last with 195 seconds. PCRM representatives spoke during election news programs broadcast by Vocea Basarabiei for 119 seconds (2 minutes) (Table 8). It should be mentioned that generally government representatives refuse to participate in Vocea Basarabiei radio programs.

*Table 8: Frequency of quoting sources and length of speaking time at Vocea Basarabiei*

Party/Affiliation	Number of quotations	Length of speaking time in seconds
PL	52	1074
PLDM	52	1071
PCRM	32	75
PD	24	203

PSD	22	195
AMN	18	718
GOV	17	44
UC	12	303
MAE	9	350
PPCD	8	63
PRES	5	0
PC	4	0
PPR	4	0
PMU	3	0
PARL	2	0
PS	1	38

Note: PL=Liberal Party, PLDM=Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, PCRM=Communist Party of Moldova, PD=Democratic Party, PSD=Social Democratic Party, AMN=Alianța Moldova Noastră, GOV=Government, UC=Centrist Union, MAE=European Action Movement, PPCD=Christian Democratic Popular Party, PRES=President, PC=Conservative Party, PPR=Popular Republican Party, PMU= United Moldova Party, PARL=Parliament, PS=Socialist Party,

### ***4.3 Frequency of news broadcasts directly or indirectly favorable to or critical of candidates***

Moldova 1, NIT, Radio Moldova and Antrena C broadcast a large number of news items depicting PCRM in a positive light. Examples are the initiatives of President Vladimir Voronin to increase scholarships for students and to raise wages for medical and public sector employees, to start the second stage of indexing monetary savings from the soviet period, to lower bread prices and transportation tariffs and to provide socially disadvantaged families with free health insurance. Other news items presented young people, “enchanted by the fact that President Voronin thinks about their lives.” Additional reports highlighted “important successes of youth policies” and informed the public that Moldova’s health insurance system is a “regional model,” that external investment has reached a very high level this year, that Moldovans currently living in Portugal will be included in the social protection system thanks to an agreement Prime Minister Greceanăi signed in Lisbon, that many Moldovans are returning home and that the size of the population is stable.

These same media outlets particularly criticized PL by the way in which the conflict between Termocom and Chișinău’s mayor was presented in the news. In addition, during the news program “Mesager” on February 7, one report was on the missing bus station on Vadul lui Voda Street. Mayor Chirtoaca was mentioned in the report, but he was not interviewed about the issue. Moreover, Moldova 1 broadcast every single detail of PL and AMN press conferences when provocative questions were addressed to the members of these parties who were unsatisfied with the places they got on the election lists. Unfavorable news about PCRM was also presented in a biased way on Moldova 1. For example, on February 10 a bulletin saying that AMN had asked that PCRM be excluded from the electoral campaign because the party had violated the Electoral Code was broadcast, but the fact that PCRM had launched its campaign before registering at the Central Electoral Commission was not mentioned. Another example was the request for clarification made by PD regarding a concert on the occasion of St. Valentine’s Day when PCRM engaged in electoral propaganda. The news was again presented in a biased way so that PD claims were not understood; PCRM was not even mentioned (news on 15 February at 21:00). Although regulations approved by the Central Election Commission forbid audiovisual media institutions from broadcasting the participation of electoral candidates in sporting events, entertainment shows and talk-shows unless they are special programs for elections, Moldova 1 broadcast news about the St. Valentine’s Day concert when President Voronin was addressing a youth event. A similar editorial policy was encountered at NIT and Antena C.

NIT criticized PLDM on February 7 when it reported that one of the participants in the demonstration in front of the General Prosecutor's Office was a candidate on the party's list for municipal elections in 2007 (see diagrams 3, 4, 5 and 6).

Diagram 3: Frequency of news broadcasts favorable to or critical of candidates on Moldova 1 by party

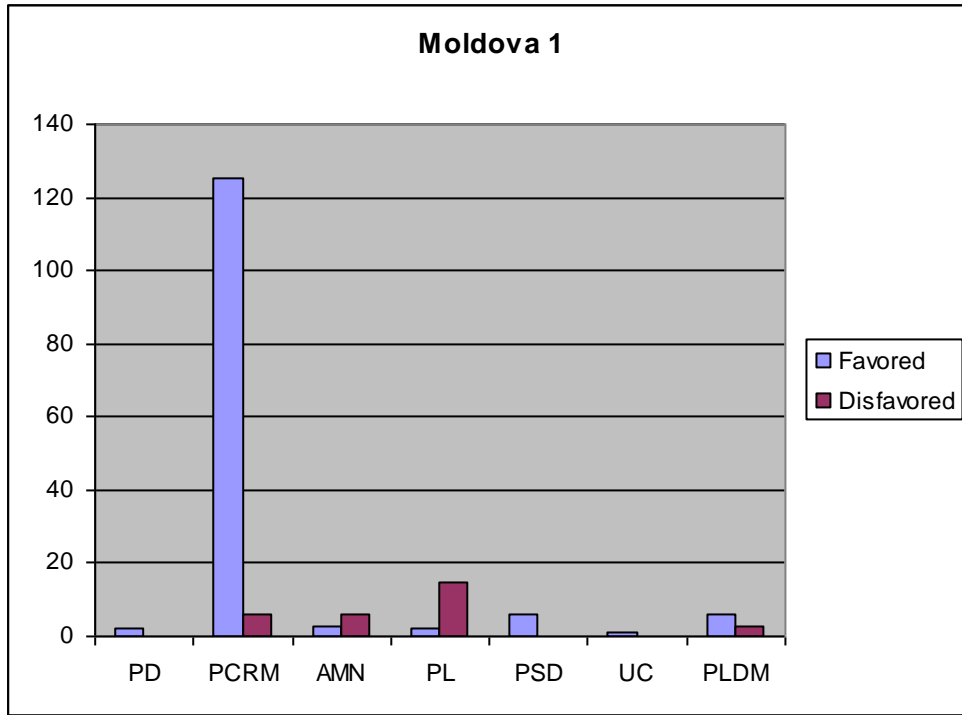


Diagram 4: Frequency of news broadcasts favorable to or critical of candidates on NIT by party

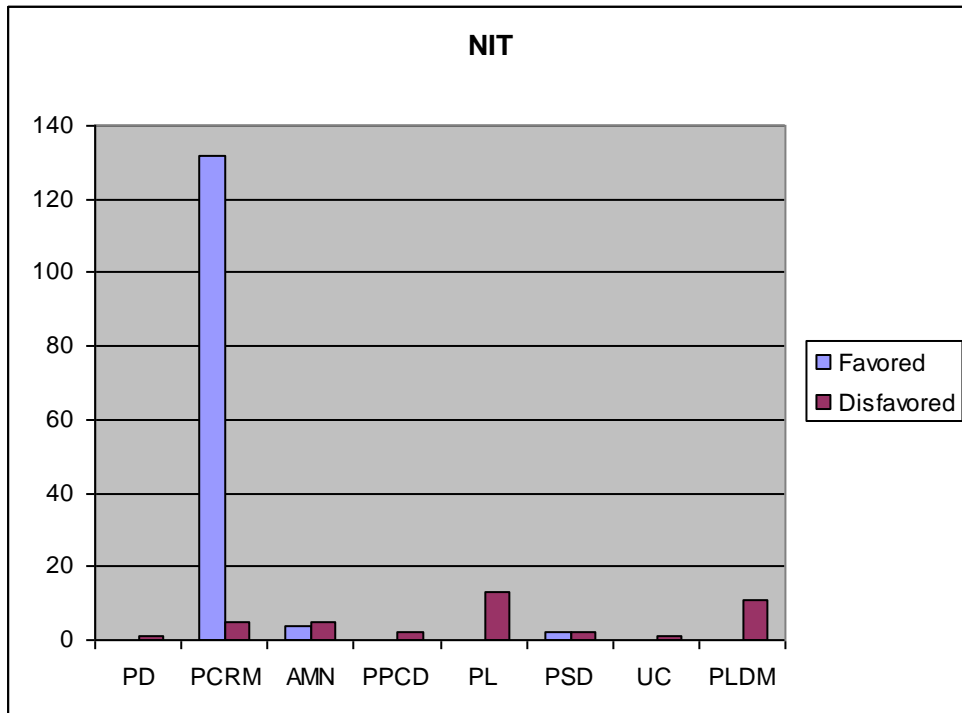


Diagram 5: Frequency of news broadcasts favorable to or critical of candidates on Radio Moldova by party

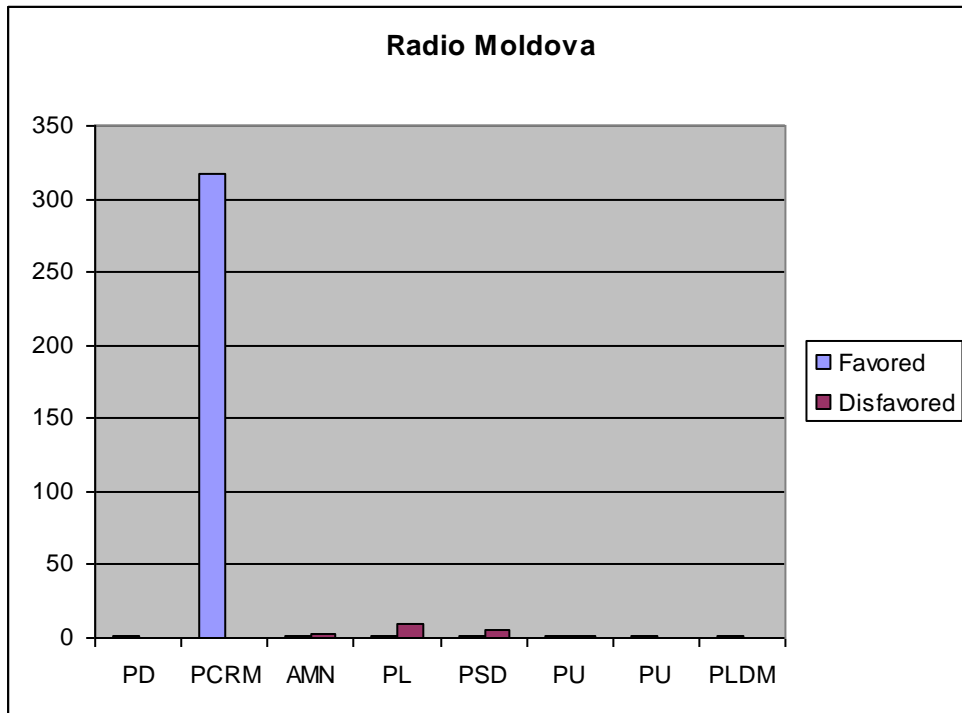
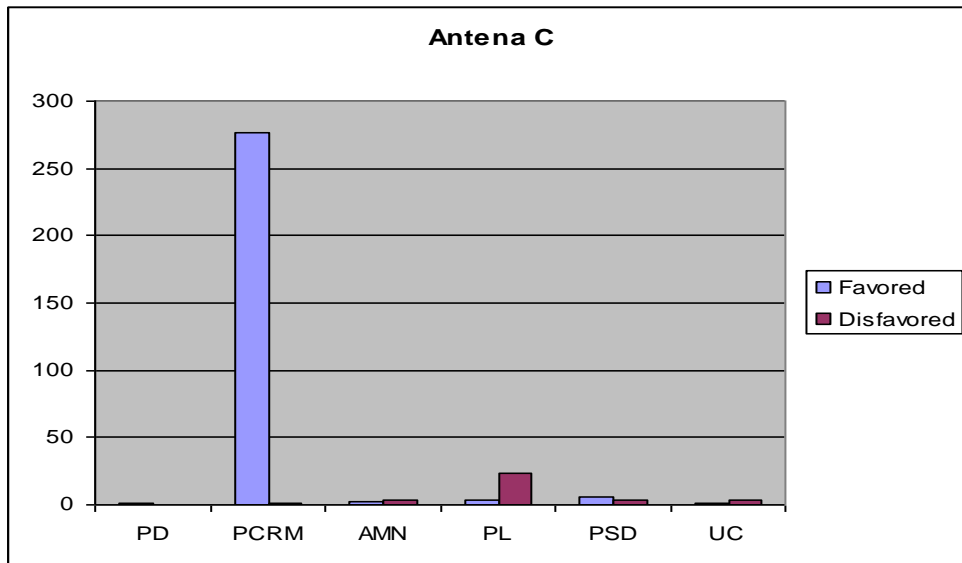
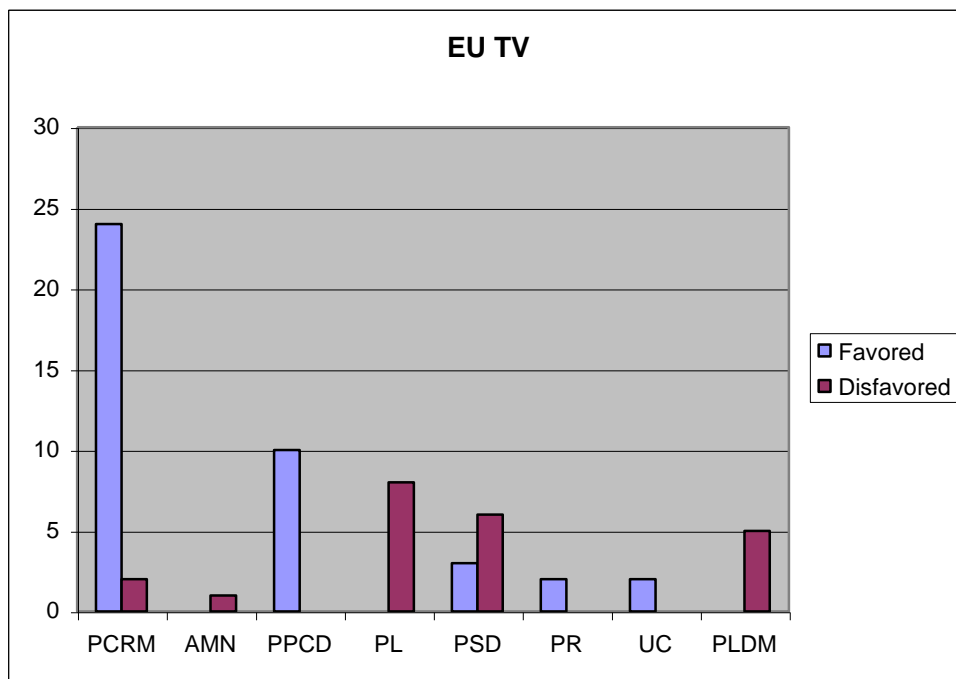


Diagram 6: Frequency of news broadcasts favorable to or critical of candidates on Antena C by party



EU TV also favored PCRM in its news programs by informing the public about the party's actions like raising doctors' wages and providing 38 youth with accommodations; however the amount of such coverage was not significant when compared with that on Moldova 1, NIT, Radio Moldova and Antena C. Other political parties that received favorable coverage were PPCD, PSD, and UC while PL, PLDM (during the first days of the campaign), PSD, PCRM and AMN were indirectly criticized (see Diagram 7).

Diagram 7: Frequency of news broadcasts favorable to or critical of candidates on EU TV by party



PRO TV and TV 7 broadcasts were both favorable and critical, mainly of PCRM, but the number of news items was not great. TV 7 showed a slight tendency to favor PD (diagrams 8 and 9).

Diagram 8: Frequency of news broadcasts favorable to or critical of candidates on PRO TV news programs by party

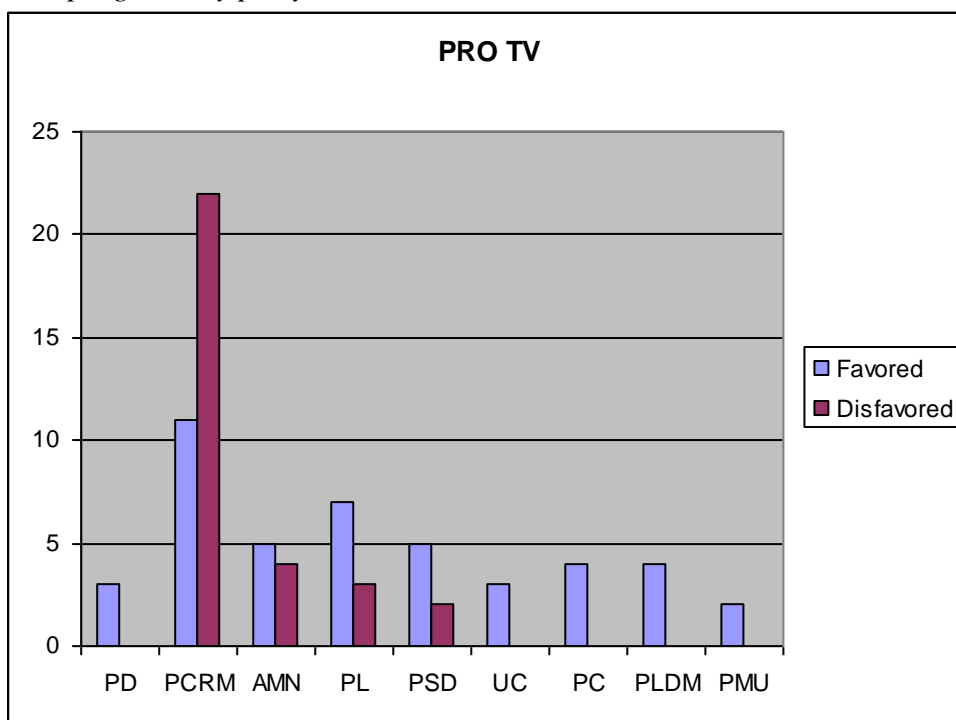
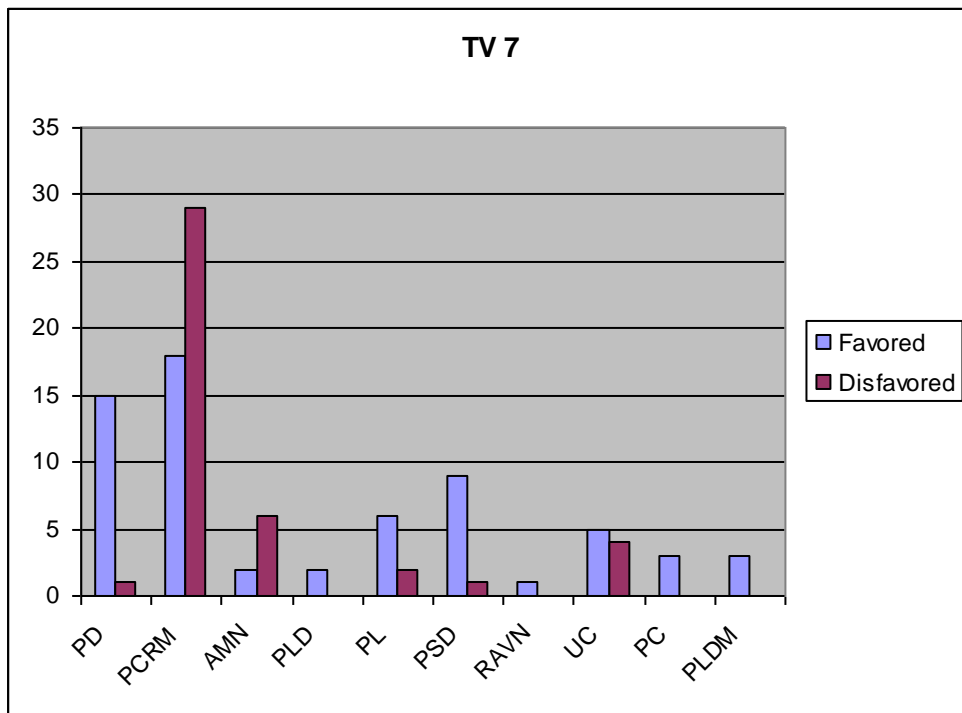
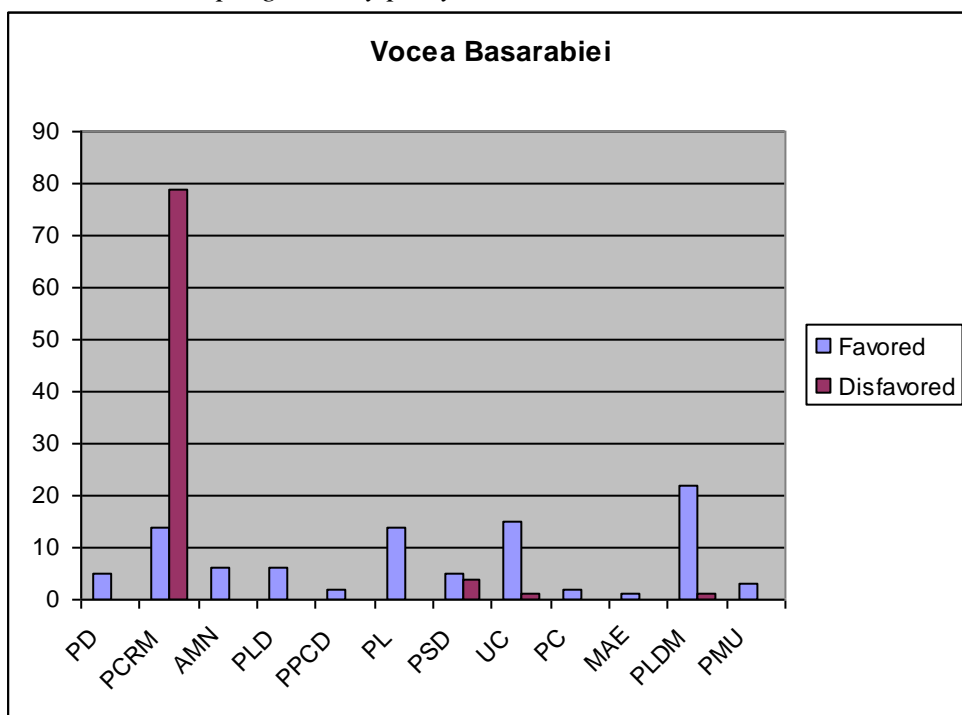


Diagram 9: Frequency of news broadcasts favorable to or critical of candidates on TV 7 news programs by party



While Vocea Basarabiei news programs criticized PCRM they also nonetheless broadcast some favorable news about the current government (Diagram 10).

Diagram 10: Frequency of news broadcasts favorable to or critical of candidates on Vocea Basarabiei news programs by party



#### 4.4 Frequency of talk shows (opinion programs) directly or indirectly favoring or criticising candidates

On its talk shows, EU TV criticized opposition parties, especially PLDM and AMN, but campaigned for PPCD. PCRМ did not get much coverage, either positive or negative (Diagram 11). Talk shows broadcast on Vocea Basarabiei, on the other hand, frequently criticized the ruling party (Diagram 12).

Diagram 11: Frequency of talk shows favorable to or critical of candidates on EU TV by party

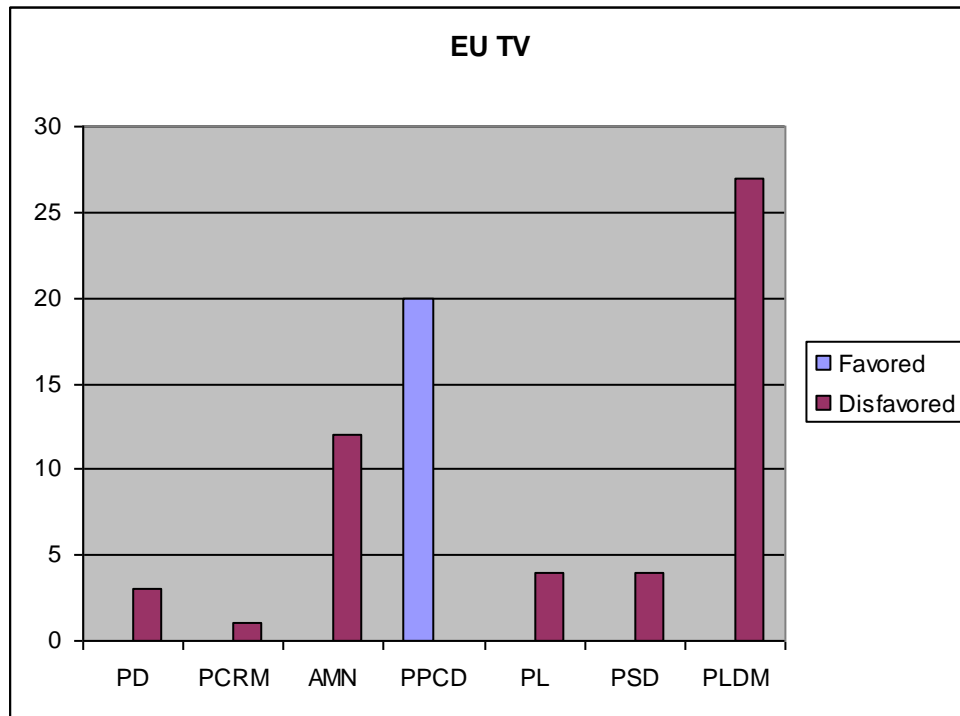
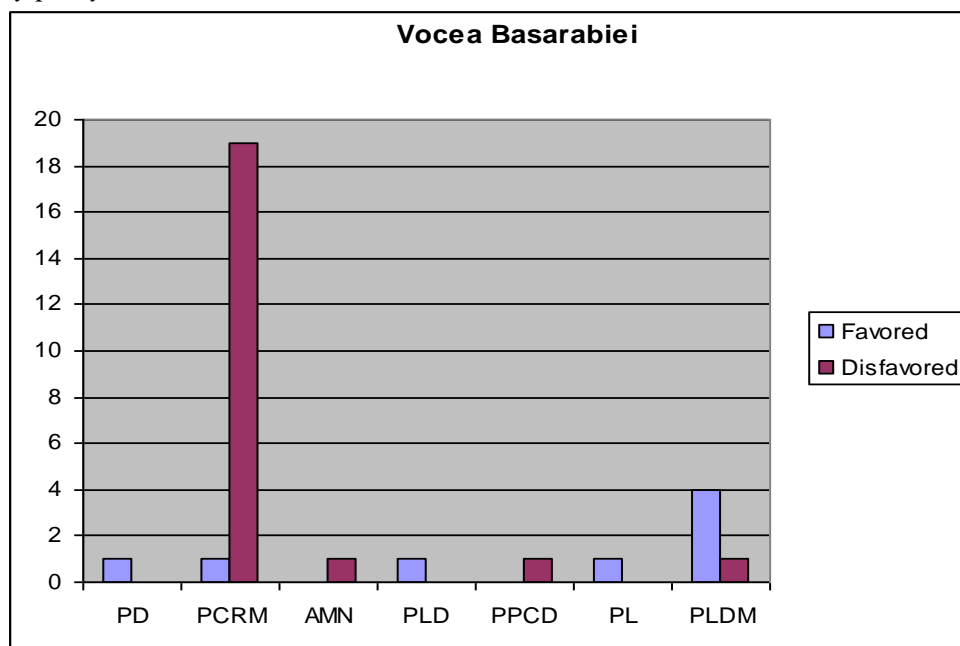


Diagram 12: Frequency of talk shows favorable to or critical of candidates on Vocea Basarabiei by party



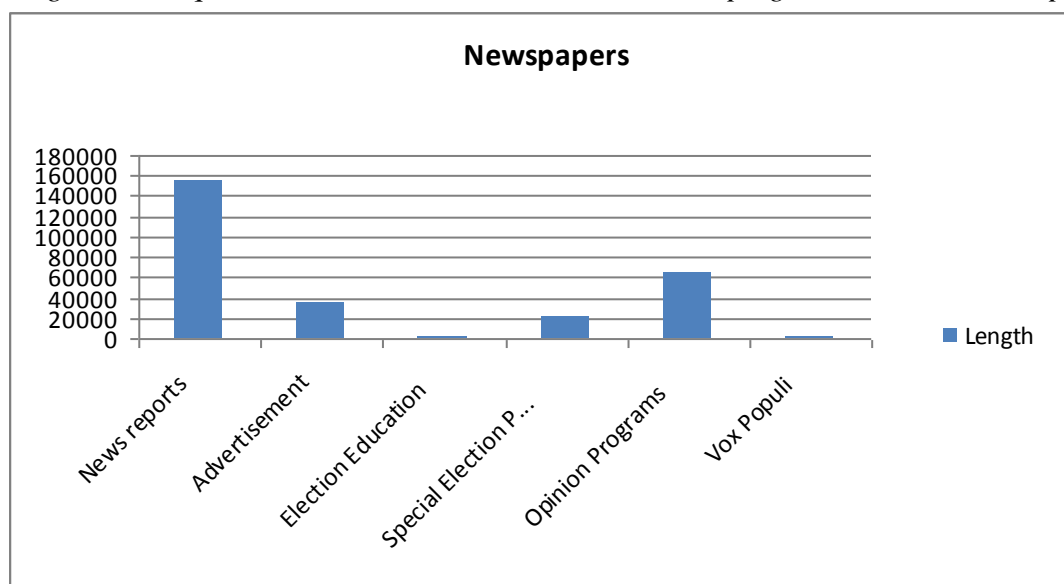
## 5. Data on print press, press agencies and online publications

### 5.1 Involvement in the electoral campaign

#### 5.1.1 Newspapers

In this two-week period, the 12 newspapers monitored published 594 articles that referred either directly or indirectly to the electoral campaign or to the upcoming elections. These articles covered approximately 280,000 square centimeters (sq cm). The majority were news articles (411), followed by opinion articles (107) and political advertisements (46). During the same period, 18 special election articles were published, i.e. interviews and debates. Articles seeking to educate the electorate, surveys and *vox pop* were the least frequent in the print press (Diagram 13).

Diagram 13: Square centimetres allotted to election campaign articles in 12 newspapers



The most space allotted to articles on the election and the campaign was in *Moldova suverană* (80,612 sq cm) followed by *Flux* (42,383 sq cm), *Jurnal de Chişinău* (37,217 sq cm), *Timpul de dimineaţă* (36,506 sq cm) and *Nezavisimaia Moldova* (36,152 sq cm.). At the bottom of the list were *Moldavskie vedomosti*, *SP*, *Săptămîna*, *Komsomolskaia pravda v Moldove*, *Cuvântul*, *Realitatea* and *Vesti Gagauzii*.

Of the correctly identified political advertisements, most were published in *Moldova suverană* (approximately 16,000 sq cm) and *Nezavisimaia Moldova* (approximately 7800 sq cm). Both newspapers published supplementary pages or full-page political ads for PCRM including information on the political programs and resolutions of the party. More than 5000 square centimetres of properly identified electoral advertisements were also published in *Jurnal de Chişinău*, but the other newspapers either published a very small number of ads or, in the case of *Komsomolskaia pravda v Moldove*, *Realitatea* and *Vesti Gagauzii* did not publish any at all.

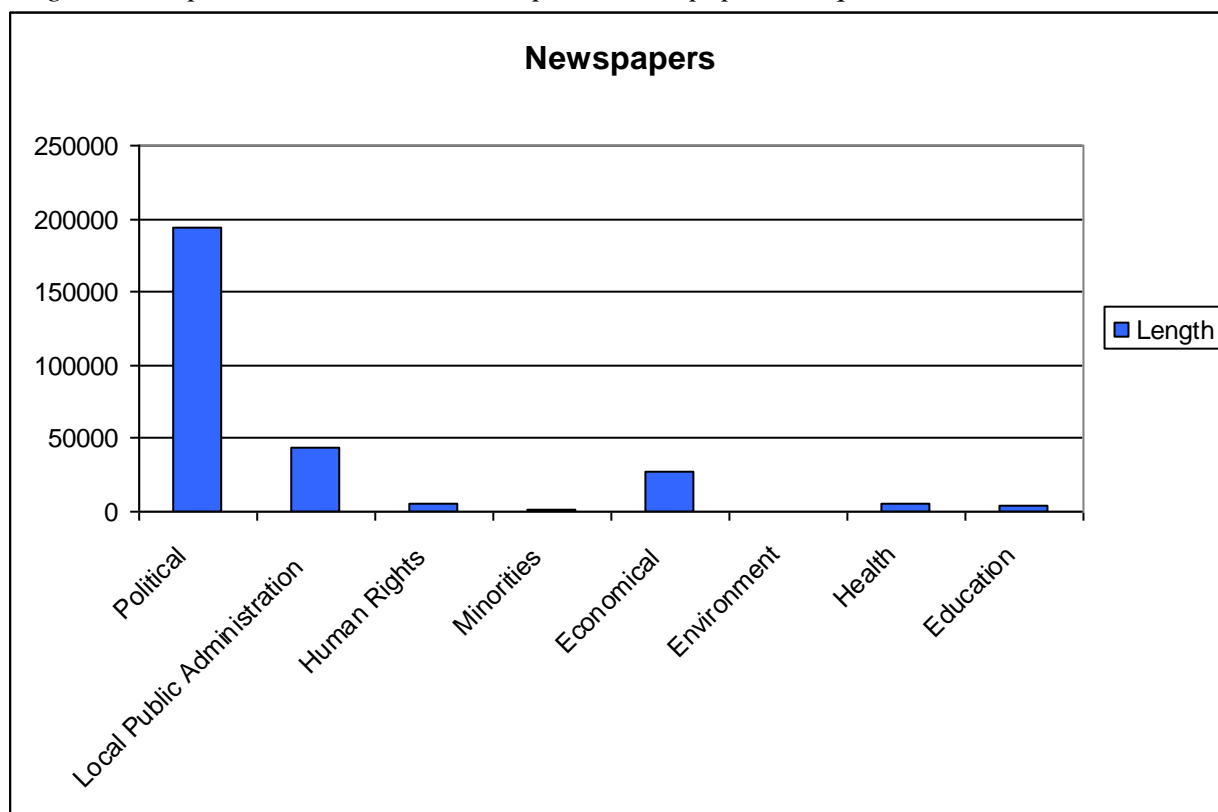
In some cases, political advertisements were not properly identified. For example, on February 17 *Nezavisimaia Moldova* published three pages of advertisements favoring PCRM under the heading “2009 Elections” without mentioning that the ads were financed by PCRM electoral funds. The same ads were published in *Moldova suverană*, however in this case the source was mentioned in accordance with regulations approved by the Central Electoral Commission. Ads

that were not approved by the Central Electoral Commission were those published in *Săptămîna* on 8 February (the declaration of PSD) and on 13 February (the speech of UC leader Vasile Tarlev for soldiers involved in the conflict in Afganistan).

Editorials about the electoral process in Moldova and about the candidates who deserved to be elected to Parliament were mostly published in *Moldova suverană* and *Flux* as well in *Jurnal de Chişinău*, *Timpul de dimineaţă*, *Nezavismaia Moldova*, *Moldavskie vedomosti* and *Săptămîna*. The only newspaper dealing with educating the electorate was the weekly *SP* from Bălţi which published a special supplement titled “Svobodnîi mikrofon.”

Regarding topics, governance, the electoral process, the local public administration and the economic situation in Moldova prevailed. The topics least covered were those related to environmental protection.

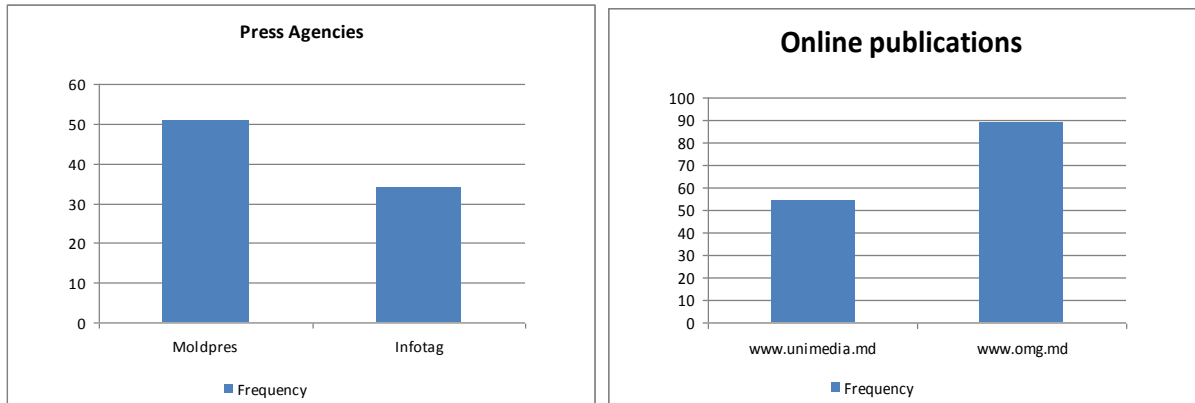
Diagram 14: Space allotted to relevant topics in newspapers in square centimeters



### 5.1.2 Press agencies and online publications

The two press agencies monitored—Moldpres and Infotag—published a total of 85 relevant articles during this monitoring period for a total of 120,000 characters (without spaces). In all, 60% of the total was published by Moldpres. Internet users had access to 143 news items covering 249 characters produced or re-produced by the online publications [www.unimedia.md](http://www.unimedia.md) and [www.omg.md](http://www.omg.md). The number of news items related to the electoral campaign was greater on [www.omg.md](http://www.omg.md); however, the surface area covered was smaller compared to that on [www.unimedia.md](http://www.unimedia.md) (Diagram 15).

*Diagram 15: Number of articles related to the electionl campaign published by press agencies and online publications*



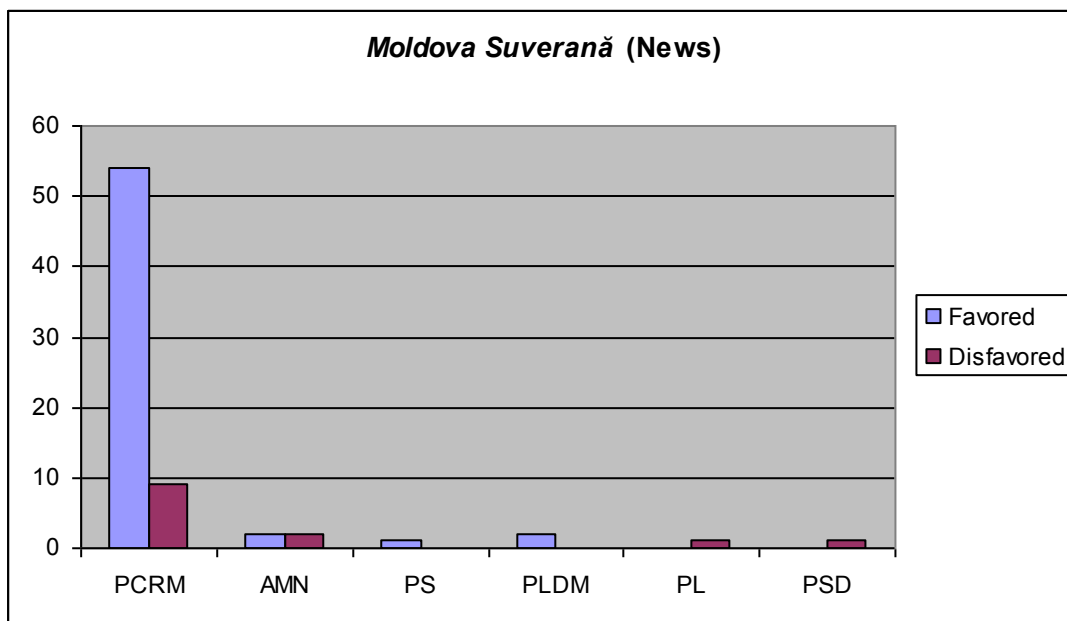
The press agencies offered a greater diversity of topics including politics, public administration, human rights, the environment, health and education. The online publications were less diverse and generally referred to politics and public administration and rarely to the economy or to health.

## **5.2 Frequency of news items or editorials that directly or indirectly favored or criticized candidates**

### **5.2.1. Newspapers**

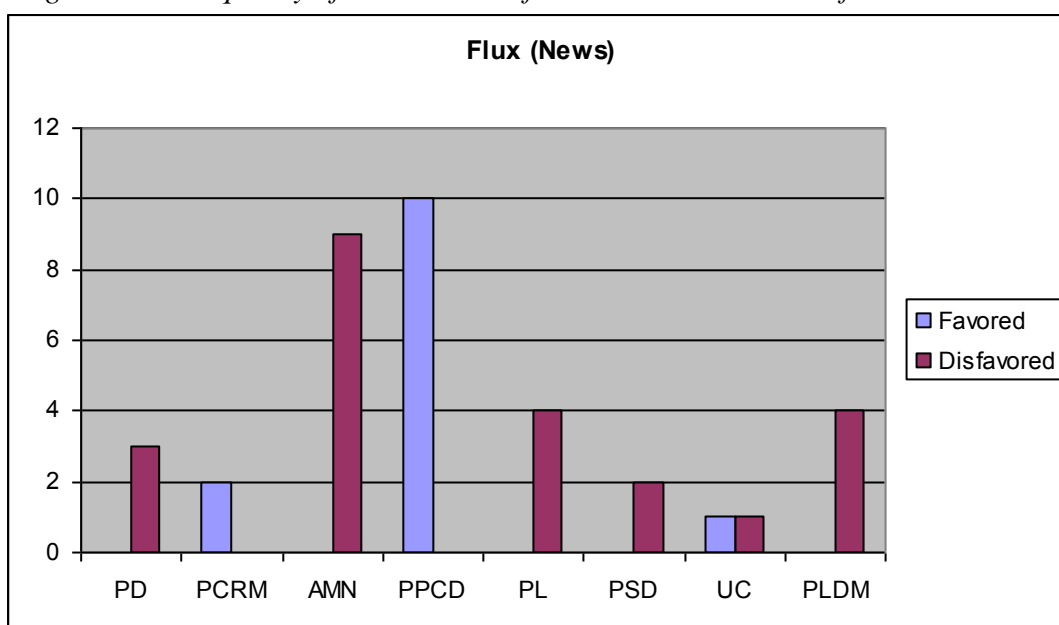
From 5 to 18 February 2009, *Moldova Suverană* clearly favored the governing party in its news and opinion articles. The initiatives of the president, the leader of the party, were praised, for example increasing scholarships to students and improving the financial situation of poor families including the distribution of “social bread.” In addition, the newspaper published several articles that described the apparent economic success of Moldova which indirectly favored PCRM. Another example is the issue on 13 February in which the newspaper informed the public of the following: “Moldova has reached a record volume of foreign investment,” “In the last seven years the general volume of the agricultural production has increased,” “The financial crisis is not endangering Moldovan wine exports,” and “Doctors will get higher salaries.” At the same time, *Moldova Suverană* published a large number of critical and sometimes defamatory articles about opposition parties and leaders who the paper accused of being corrupt, incapable of administering state money, “assassins” or “burglars.” The parties AMN, PLDM and PL were the favorite targets of this newspaper; the leaders of these parties were portrayed in an exclusively negative context (Diagram 16).

Diagram 16: Frequency of news articles favorable to or critical of candidates in Moldova suverană by party



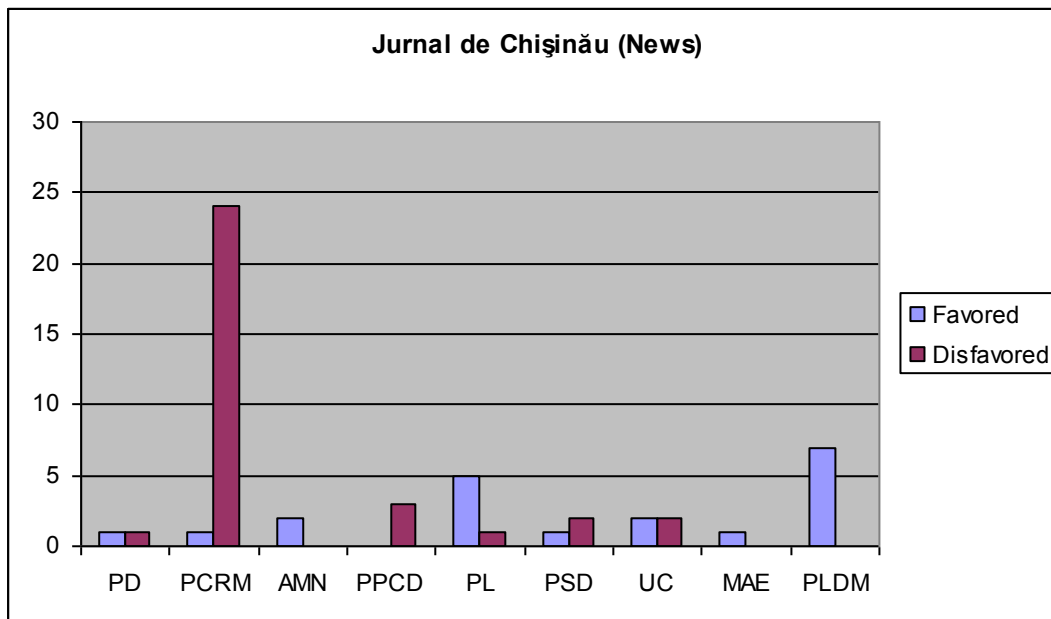
*Flux* newspaper reported positively on PPCD and was critical of the other political parties. *Flux* was critical of PCRM. Using aggressive language and cartoons in news and opinion articles and editorials, the political opponents of PPCD, namely AMN, PLDM and PL were portrayed in a negative light. With the exception of PPCD and sometimes PCRM, *Flux* did not make any positive comments about political parties in Moldova (Diagram 17).

Diagram 17: Frequency of news articles favorable to or critical of candidates in Flux by party



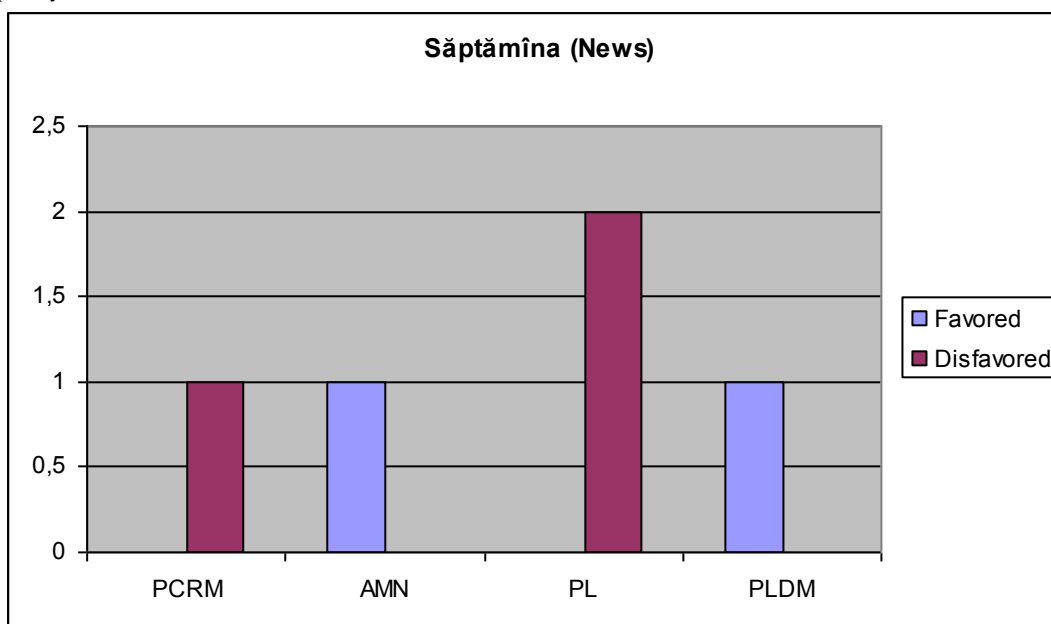
*Jurnal de Chişinău* directly or indirectly criticized the party in power by publishing news and opinion articles as well as journalistic investigations which depict it negatively and also frequently depicted PPCD in a negative light. At the same time, the newspaper reported on initiatives undertaken by the opposition parties, especially by PLDM. Other candidates were portrayed neutrally in *Jurnal de Chişinău* (Diagram 18).

Diagram 18: Frequency of news articles favorable to or critical of candidates in Jurnal de Chişinău by party



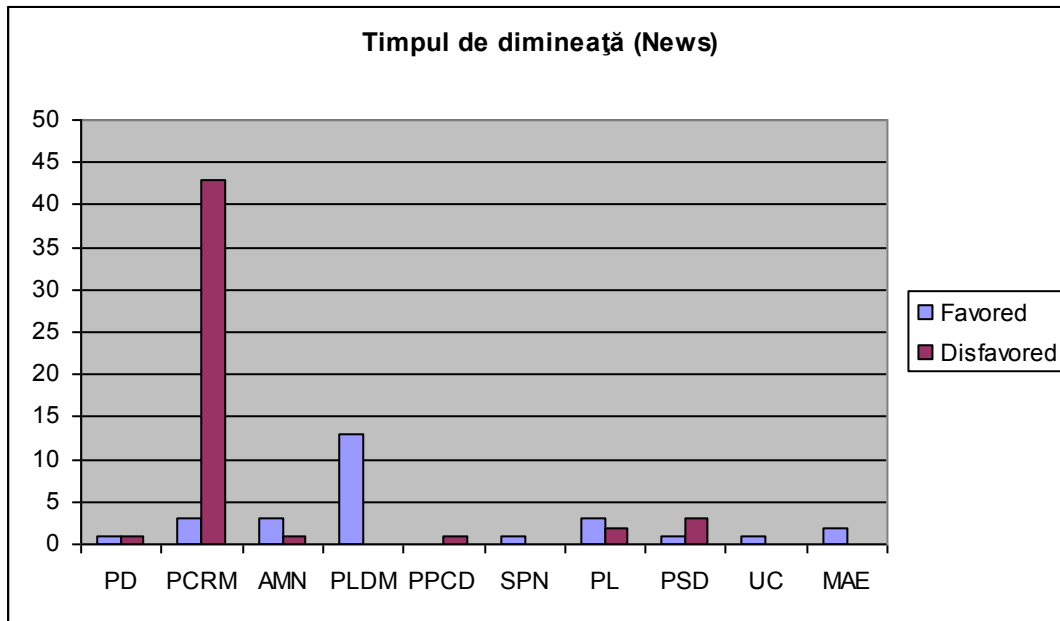
The few relevant articles during this monitoring published in *Săptămîna* depicted AMN and PLDM positively and favored PSD. The political dislikes of *Săptămîna* can be clearly observed in the article “Taxa Chirtoacă” (Chirtoaca’s Price) on February 13: “Oameni, fiţi vigilenţi! Să nu cocoţăm în parlament Prostia şi incompetenţa din centrul Chişinăului. Variante de vot: Stejarul lui Filat, Soarele lui Serafim, etc. Numai nu PL. Căci PL trebuie să se ducă exact acolo unde trebuie: în PL.” (People, be watchfull! Let’s not let stupidity and incompetence in Chişinău enter Parliament. Election alternatives: The oak of Filat, the sun of Serafim, the Mărţişor of Braghiş, etc, but not PL because PL has to go exactly where it has to: in PL) (Diagram 19)

Diagram 19: Frequency of news articles favorable to or critical of candidates in Săptămîna by party



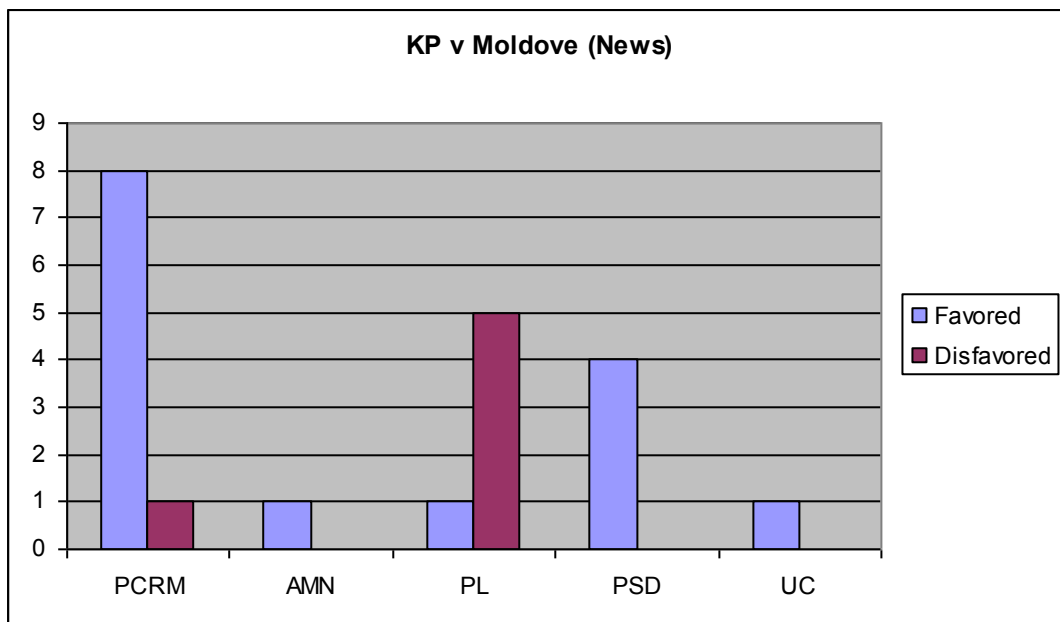
The overall tendency of the relevant articles published in *Timpul de dimineață* was to criticize PCRM and PPCD in favor of PLDM. PPCD was also presented in a negative light though fewer times than PCRM was, but the articles on PPCD occupied more space. Articles on other electoral candidates were infrequent and presented them neutrally, positively and negatively (Diagram 20).

Diagram 20: Frequency of news articles favorable to or critical of candidates in *Timpul de dimineață* by party



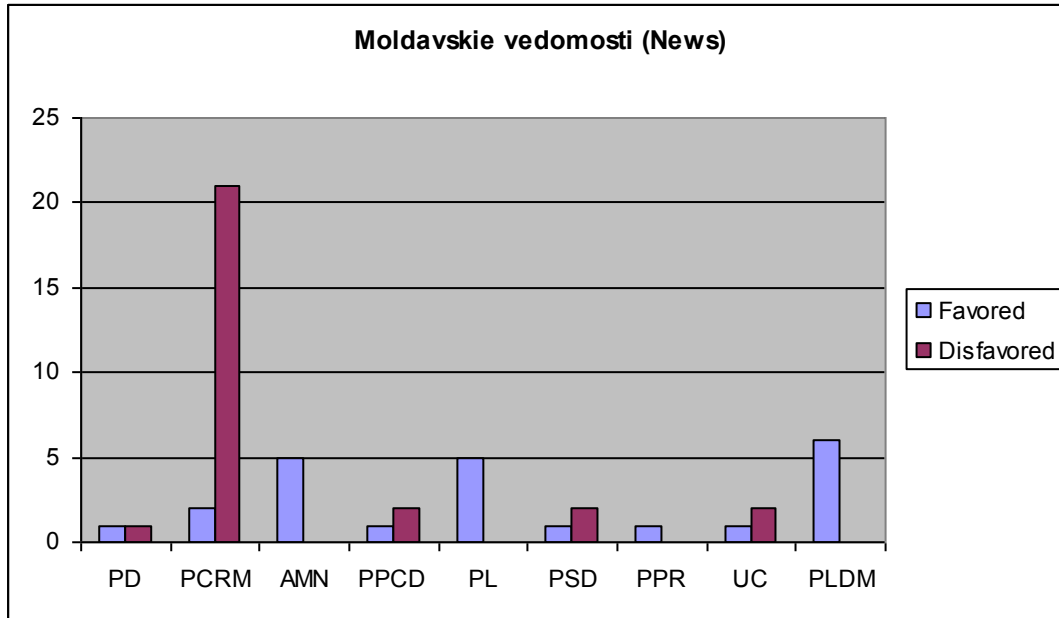
In this two-week period, *Komsomoliskaia pravda v Moldove* positively supported PCRM and PSD at the expense of PL (Diagram 21).

Diagram 21: Frequency of news articles favorable to or critical of candidates in *Komsomoliskaia pravda v Moldove* by party



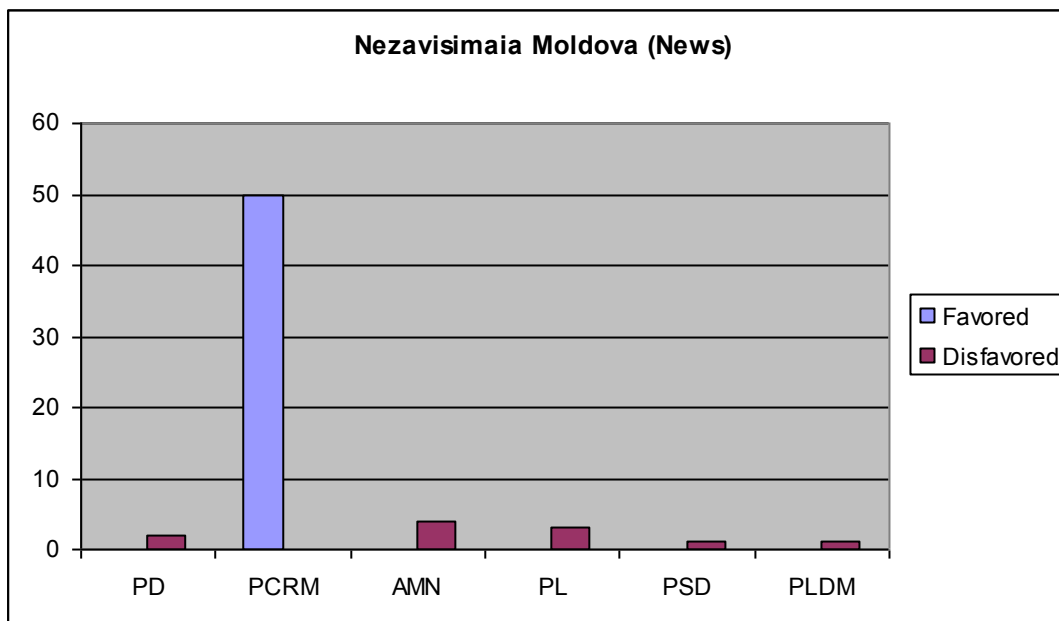
*Moldavskie vedomosti* strongly criticized the governing party and even mocked the electoral initiatives undertaken by President Voronin and the government and often directly or indirectly supported opposition parties (Diagram 22).

Diagram 22: Frequency of news articles favorable to or critical of candidates in *Moldavskie vedomosti* by party



*Nezavisimaia Moldova* exclusively supported the ruling party by always positively depicting it in news and other types of articles while criticizing all other political parties, especially PLDM, PL, and AMN (Diagram 23).

Diagram 23: Frequency of news articles favorable to or critical of candidates in *Nezavisimaia Moldova* by party

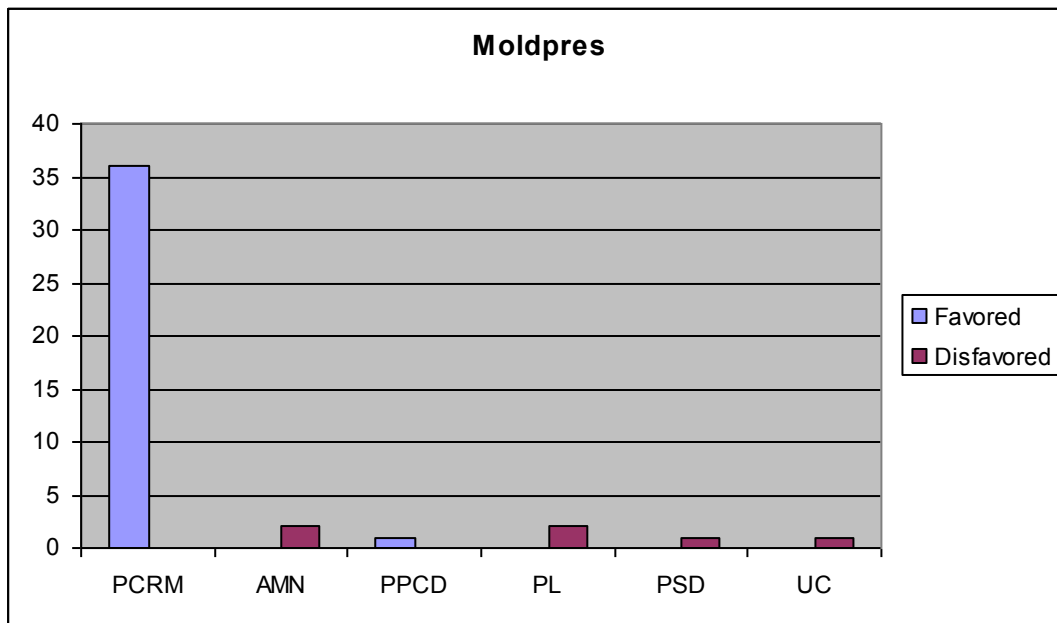


The regional newspapers *Cuvântul* (Rezina) and *SP* (Bălți) presented candidates neutrally though sometimes PCRM was depicted in both a negative and a positive light. As mentioned previously, *Realitatea* (Soroca) and *Vesti Gagauzii* (Comrat) did not publish any relevant articles during this two-week period.

### 5.2.2. Press agencies and online publications

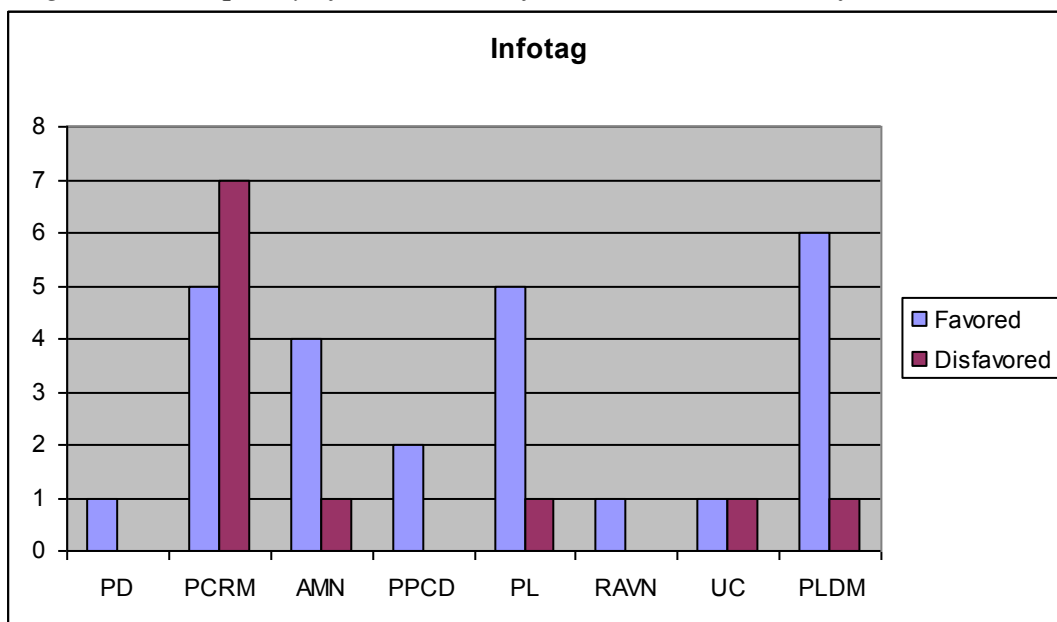
The press agency Moldpres clearly supported the ruling party by praising the initiatives undertaken by the President and the government. Frequently the agency edited the news to avoid events that mentioned the names of opposition parties so that opposition candidates were nearly absent from its news flow (Diagram 24)

Diagram 24: Frequency of news articles favorable to or critical of candidates in Moldpres by party



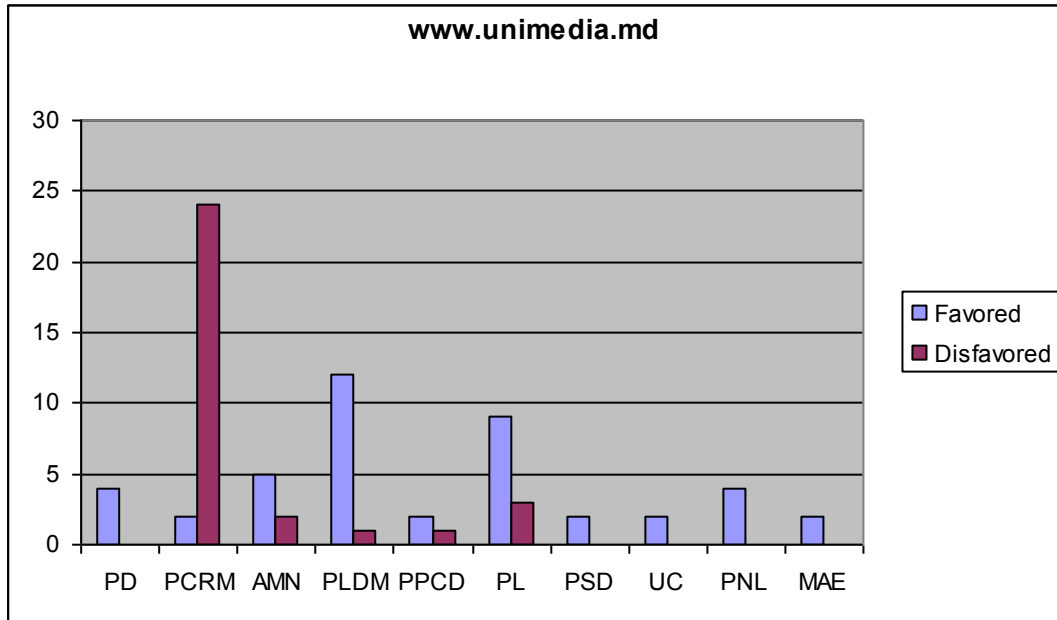
Infotag presented candidates in a more or less balanced manner depending on the events in which they participated (Diagram 25).

Diagram 25: Frequency of news articles favorable to or critical of candidates in Infotag by party



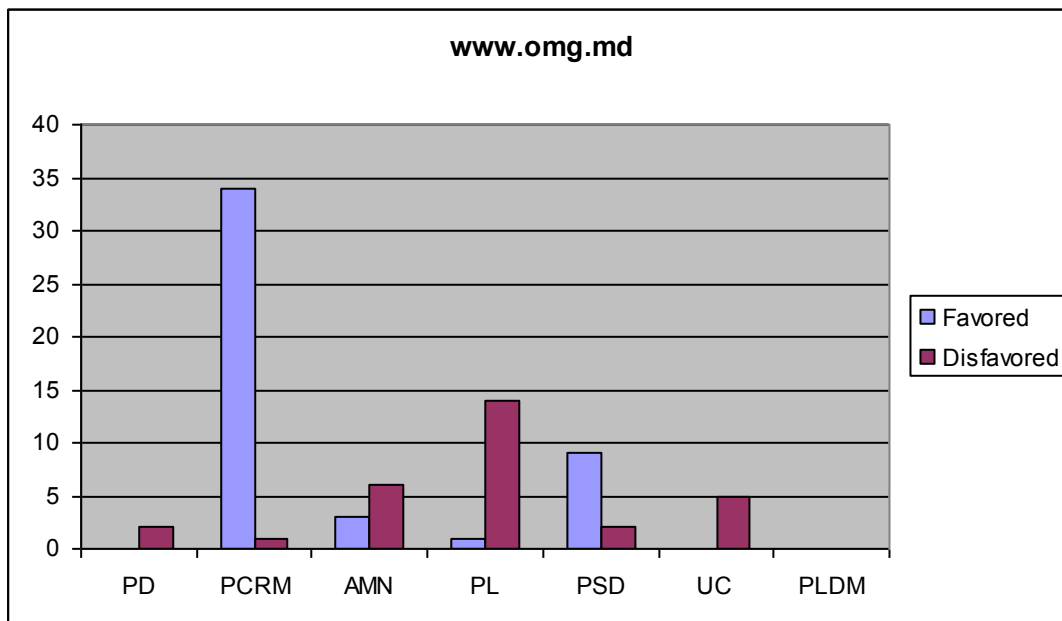
Information posted on the website [www.unimedia.md](http://www.unimedia.md) tended to be critical of PCRM and positive about opposition parties, especially PLDM and PL (Diagram 26).

Diagram 26: Frequency of news articles favorable to or critical of candidates posted by unimedia.md by party



The political preferences of [www.omg.md](http://www.omg.md) were obvious since PCRM was the subject of the majority of positive news articles posted on the site while opposition parties were often depicted in a negative manner (Diagram 27).

Diagram 27: Frequency of news articles favorable to or critical of candidates posted on www.omg.md by party



## **Abbreviations Used in this Report**

AMN	Alianța «Moldova Noastră (Our Moldova Alliance)
AV	Alianța Verde (Green Alliance)
GOV	Government: prime minister, officials, ministers, ministry representatives
MAE	Ațiunea Europeană (European Action) social political movement
MU	Moldova Unită (the party of spiritual development)
PARL	Parliament
PC	Conservative Party
PCRM	Communist Party of Moldova
PD	Democratic Party of Moldova
PL	Liberal Party
PLDM	Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova
PMU	United Moldova Party
PPCD	Christian Democratic Popular Party
PR	Republican Party
PPR	Popular Republican Party
PRES	President
PS	Socialist Party of Moldova (Patria-Rodina)
PSD	Social Democratic Party of Moldova
PU	Humanist Party
RAVN	Ravnopravie (social-political movement)
SB	Sergiu Banari (an independent candidate)
UC	Centrist Union of Moldova