

Report on the Media Coverage of the First Round of the 2021 Local Election Campaign

Skopje, 25 October 2021 – The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services published the Report on the broadcasters' manner of reporting during the first round of the election campaign (from 27 September until 15 October 2021). The monitoring covered a total of 13 programme services: the national commercial television channels of Alsat-M, Alfa, Kanal 5, Sitel, Telma, 24 Vesti, 21-M, Shenja and Klan Macedonia, and the programme channels of the Public Broadcaster – MRT1, MRT2, the Parliamentary Channel and the First Programme of the Macedonian Radio .

The monitoring conducted in this period found no violations of the provisions of the Electoral Code.

All commercial national-level services made efforts to provide media coverage of the election campaign and nearly all reserved a number of special information programmes for the participants in the elections, apart from reporting in the daily news programmes. The campaign wasn't covered in accordance with the principles of equality in the case of the mayoral candidates, and proportionality in the case of the municipal council candidates. The news desks followed the election campaign in a pragmatic fashion, mostly in tune with the expectations based on the general political experience gathered from the previous election processes, giving priority to SDSM and VMRO/DPMNE and their coalition partners, and not in tune with the starting principles of the stated legal requirements. However, there were many objective reasons for such a conclusion, in this case starting from the basic one – the enormous number of verified candidates for Skopje City, for the Skopje municipalities separately, and also for all

other municipalities in the country.

The Public Broadcasting Service observed the legal requirements concerning the structure of daily news programmes, the broadcasting of debates and the free political presentation. The Parliamentary Channel aired free political presentation of a number of participants in the elections, scheduling the airtime in accordance with the relevant legal provision.

The only ones to provide reporting for people with sensory disabilities were MRT 1 and TV 24 Vesti.

Parallel to this monitoring, the Agency also monitored paid political advertising aired by 41 television stations and 48 radio stations, which had registered with the State Election Commission within the legally-defined deadlines. The Report on this monitoring shall be published within the deadline stipulated by the Electoral Code.

The Report on the broadcasters' manner of reporting during the election campaign (the period from 27 September until 15 October 2021) is available at [this link](#).