

Second Monitoring Report on the Local Elections' Media Coverage Published

Skopje, 1 October 2021 – The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services prepared the Second Monitoring Report on the Media Coverage of Local Elections in the period before the start of the election campaign (from 1 to 26 September 2021). The Report analyzes the 24-hour programme of the MRT1 and of six commercial television stations at the state level: 24 Vesti TV, Alsat-M TV, Alfa TV, Kanal 5 TV, Sitel TV and Telma TV .

The monitoring results showed that, during this time, there had been no violations of the provisions of the Electoral Code. In the pre-election period, MRT1 did not air any debate face-offs between participants in the election process, which the Public Broadcasting Service is obliged to organize according to Article 76-a, Paragraph 11 of the Electoral Code. Only MRT1 and 24 Vesti TV fulfilled the obligation to ensure reporting in the sign language for the hearing impaired.

The fatal fire that broke out in the modular medical Covid center in Tetovo has pushed to the background all current, domestic political and social topics since that tragic 8th September day. More and more news editorial teams have decided to fill in the pre-election period with interviews, media outlines of the mayoral candidates, with an accent on the twelve party and independent options for Skopje Mayor.

A great portion of the media content was preoccupied with the decades-long inter-party rivalry and the journalistic coverage of this unconstructive politicization of all social spheres relativizes, i.e. makes ambiguous, even the news content and reports.

The prevailing impression received from monitoring media approach towards the party or independent election options is that the topics that are logically expected to be covered in the pre-election period – the urbanistic and social conditions, interventions and plans, the local authorities' accountability and, above all, the citizen's voice regarding the (poor) quality of the existing city policies – are losing their public, media primacy, and that even they are being covered through a strikingly polarized partisan view.

The individual reports on the national programme services that were being monitored are contained in the Second Monitoring Report on the Media Coverage of the Local Elections, available at the following link.