[BG] Report on the Monitoring of the Pre-election Campaign

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Rayna Nikolova
New Bulgarian University

In November 2011, the Council for Electronic Media (CEM) issued a report on the monitoring of the pre-election campaign in Bulgaria for the election of the president and vice-president as well as of mayors and municipal councilors. The CEM has considered 19 television programmes, four of which pertain to the National Television Broadcaster (BNT). The overall review of the results indicates the following forms of political propaganda presented in television programmes: videos, chronicles, debates, discussions, interviews, addresses, business cards, reports and messages. The CEM has made the following conclusions:

1. The public media that are restricted by present legislation on elections have difficulties in achieving a real equality and pluralism of viewpoints. They are hindered in meeting, with a variety of information, the needs of their audience and thus to be able to implement fully successfully their public function during the campaign.

2. Private broadcasters fail to make sufficient use of the potential freedom in their programmes to let journalism dominate, rather than paid propaganda.

3. The media campaign could be assessed as impressive in quantitative terms. But there are some problems identified in the analysis: the uniformity of forms and the lack of debate on controversial issues. The lack of a pre-election theme developed and offered by journalists underplays the impact and its meaning. It is a fundamental purpose to satisfy the right of the audience to make an informed choice based on richly varied and selected content, which was not sufficiently achieved.

4. The removal of legal deficits is obviously urgent: a clear definition of political advertising, replacing the term - an anachronism - "agitation", a liberalisation of the rules on public media and a clear regulation concerning the commercial media (at least as a requirement to make paid advertising recognisable to the audience). The campaign shows the need for a synchronisation of media legislation and legislation on elections. Even better, would be the elaboration of a clear and comprehensive set of regulations on the media coverage of elections. Such regulations should be included in a specialised media law.

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Доклад за резултатите от наблюдението върху радио- и телевизионните програми на доставчици на медийни услуги по време на предизборната кампания за избиране на президент и вицепрезидент и органи на местна власт 23 септември-23 октомври 2011

http://www.cem.bg/download.php?id=3390

Report on the monitoring results on radio and television programmes of media service providers during the pre-election campaign for the election of the president and vice-president and members of local authorities, 23 September-23 October 2011

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