[BG] CEM report on the snap parliamentary elections in July 2021

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On 12 August 2021, *Съвета за електронни медии* (the Council for Electronic Media – CEM). published its *Специализиран мониторинг на аудио- и аудио-визуално съдържание за парламентарния вот на 11.07.2021 г.* (Specialized report of audio and audio-visual content for the parliamentary vote on 11July 2021 – the Report). In the Report, CEM presents the data and findings based on the specialised monitoring process of the activity of media service providers during the pre-election campaign.

The main purpose of the monitoring process was to establish the way in which the providers of media services reflect upon the pre-election campaign of the political parties and if they comply with the requirements of *Изборен кодекс* (the Election Code) and *Закон за радиото и телевизията* (the Radio and Television Act).

For the first time, the Report also includes information on the performance of the on-demand media services which broadcasted audio and audio-visual content related to the elections. Specifically, the report focuses on six online platforms.

Based on this observation CEM has concluded that, in comparison with the regular elections held on 4 April 2021, the snap elections took place in a calmer environment, despite the epidemic situation. The Covid-19 disease was displaced by traditional hot topics such as corruption, abuses of power, problems in the judiciary, health care, etc.

CEM points out that ministers were frequent guests in radio and television studios, some even participating several times in specific programs. According to the regulator, the media coverage on the work of the executive bodies makes a strong imprint on electoral attitudes.

Furthermore, the Report found that in the pre-election content there was a lack of political debates and leadership clashes. The interest in pre-election debates, therefore, decreased in comparison with the regular elections held on 4 April 2021 from 70.6% to 66.2%, according to data from the Exact poll commissioned by CEM.

The Report also notes the mixture of editorial and agitational content (i.e. between political propaganda and journalism). CEM underlines the behavior of the

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hosts of the talk shows and the journalists, who do not clearly distinguish between the two types of messages, as the main reason. As a consequence, CEM asks the legislators to define more clearly and unambiguously the terms “political advertising” and “political agitation”.

Finally, CEM Report underlines the huge amount of freely broadcasted content which was mainly provided by the national media providers.

Специализиран мониторинг на аудио- и аудио-визуално съдържание за парламентарния вот на 11.07.2021 г.

https://www.cem.bg/controlbg/1371

Specialized monitoring of audio and audio-visual content for the parliamentary vote on 11.07.2021

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