[BG] CEM report on the presidential and legislative election campaigns

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On 14 February 2022, *Съветът за електронни медии* (the Council for Electronic Media – CEM) published its Report on the specialized monitoring of the election campaign for the president and vice president of the Republic of Bulgaria, and for the snap elections for the 47th Parliament.

Through its monitoring, CEM establishes how media service providers reflect upon the election campaign of political parties, and to what extent media outlets comply with the requirements of *Изборен кодекс* (the Election Code) and *Закон за радиото и телевизията* (the Radio and Television Act).

Through its 418 pages, CEM presents its findings on the activity of all types of media service providers during the election campaigns, analysing more than 25 TV channels and radio stations - including national public radio and television, and the major TV channels. For the second time now, the report also includes detailed information on the performance of some non-linear media services, which included audio and audiovisual content related to the elections. The report analyses and focuses on seven of the major online platforms.

The main conclusions of CEM that deserve to be mentioned are as follows:
Journalism, in the audio and audio-visual content during the election campaign, is limited in practice by political PR and party strategies for presenting candidates. The content of some media providers is openly and completely ruled by propaganda. Several channels have used subconscious methods of suggestion as used in propaganda (such as multiple repetitions, out of context repositioning of excerpts from the program schedule, one-way messages – including merging the informational campaign with political agitation). Quality political journalism is increasingly losing ground in its mission to contribute to the public consensus between different groups and political interests. Editorial content is limited even on some of the major national channels. There is a mixture of editorial and agitation content which is due to the blurry definition of political advertising in the law. The monitoring found that journalists in radio and television studios, in polythematic programs and non-linear media services, made efforts to reach a reasonable conversation about the future governance of the country, but against the background of all the media production during the campaign, these efforts seemed to be insufficient. Yet again, the Report acknowledges the extremely low participation of political leaders in discussion formats. The one and only presidential

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debate did not compensate for this scarcity. Pre-election debates organized by some media providers seemed quite strange, in the opinion of CEM, considering that the invited participants have been like-minded. Hence, the media authority considered such forms as an interview. The report also notes that men have participated much more often than women in the monitored programs and content.

Доклад за специализираното наблюдение на предизборната кампания за президент и вицепрезидент на Република България и за извънредните избори за 47-мо Народно събрание

https://www.cem.bg/controlbg/1402

Report on the specialized monitoring of the election campaigns for president and vice president of the Republic of Bulgaria and for the snap elections for 47th Parliament

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