[BG] CEM report on the monitoring of the election campaign for the 49th Parliament

IRIS 2023-6:1/21

Nikola Stoychev
Dimitrov, Petrov & Co., Law Firm

On 27 April 2023, *Съвета за електронни медии* (the Council for Electronic Media – CEM) published its *Доклад за специализираното наблюдение на предизборната кампания за 49-то Народно събрание* (Report on the specialised monitoring of the election campaign for the 49th Parliament – the Report).

In the Report, the CEM presents its findings following the process of specialised monitoring of the activity of 14 channels of public media service providers and 13 channels of commercial media service providers related to yet another parliamentary election in Bulgaria. The Report also includes information on the performance of four online platforms. The Report covers their media behaviour during the election campaign (from 3 to 31 March 2023), on the day of reflection (1 April 2023) as well as on the day of the elections (2 April 2023).

The main purpose of the monitoring process was to establish the way in which providers had presented the campaigns of political parties and coalitions, and whether these had complied with the requirements of *Изборен кодекс* (the Election Code) and *Закон за радиото и телевизията* (the Radio and Television Act).

The CEM concluded that in the first three weeks of the campaign, the political content in the programmes of providers had been somewhat insignificant. However, the political activities had been much more dynamic in the week leading up to the election day.

The CEM made the interesting observation that inviting representatives of non-systemic parties to national television and radio channels in prime time shows ran the risk of disseminating content that violates the principles of morality and promotes hate speech and violence against certain social groups.

Furthermore, the Report finds that there was a lack of political debate and argument between leaders on opposing sides. It further emphasises that communication with the public was very much a one-way affair, and interviews tended to give the interviewees a very easy ride.

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

The Report also notes the mixture of editorial and agitational content (i.e. political propaganda versus journalism) in the programmes. The CEM argued that this mixture is to the detriment of citizens and democracy as it prevents them from making independent political choices.

Finally, the CEM reports that there was a lack of gender equality in the media campaign. It notes that there was a total of 1 341 femalewomen candidates in comparison with the much higher figure of 3 225 male candidates. Respectively, the level of promotion of women remains relatively low as in the 49th National Assembly women account for only 58 out of the 240 members of parliament.

Доклад за специализираното наблюдение на предизборната кампания за 49-то Народно събрание

https://www.cem.bg/controlbg/1462

Report on the specialised monitoring of the election campaign for the 49th Parliament

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026