

ANNUAL REPORT

2018 MOLDOVAN PRESS STATUS INDEX



Chisinau, 2019

ABBREVIATIONS

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| AMSC | Audiovisual Media Services Code |
| API | Association of Independent Press |
| ATUG | Administrative Territorial Unit of Gagauzia |
| BCC | Broadcast Coordinating Council |
| CC | Competition Council |
| CEC | Central Electoral Commission |
| CIJ | Centre for Investigative Journalism |
| CO | Council of Observers |
| CoE | Council of Europe |
| EU | European Union |
| IJC | Independent Journalism Centre |
| MIA | Ministry of Internal Affairs |
| MP | member of Parliament |
| MPSI | Moldovan Press Status Index |
| NCPPD | National Centre for the Protection of Personal Data |
| NGO | non-government organization |
| NPAI | National Public Audiovisual Institution |
| OSCE | Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| PAG | People's Assembly of Gagauz-Yeri |
| PAS | Action and Solidarity Party |
| PC | Press Council |
| PLDM | Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova |
| PCRM | Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova |
| PDM | Democratic Party of Moldova |
| PPDA | Platform Dignity and Truth Party |
| PPEM | European People's Party of Moldova |
| PSRM | Socialist Party of the Republic of Moldova |
| RF | Russian Federation |
| RM | Republic of Moldova |
| RPAI | Regional Public Audiovisual Institution |
| SCJ | Supreme Court of Justice |
| SOE | state-owned enterprise |
| US | United States |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

METHODOLOGY

This report is an assessment of the situation of the media in the Republic of Moldova (RM) in 2018 based on two elements:

- the Moldovan Press Status Index (MPSI) methodology (see the MPSI Table in Annex 1 and the Explanatory Table in Annex 2);
- a review and assessment of events that occurred during the reference period that had a direct or an indirect impact on the situation of the media in Moldova.

To create the 2018 index, an MSPI a team of 14 experts established by the Independent Journalism Center (IJC) evaluated seven indicators of the realities of the situation of Moldovan media:

- legal framework regulating media activity;
- political context;
- economic environment;
- professional environment;
- quality of journalism;
- information security from the media's perspective;
- journalists' security.

The team consisted of one lawyer; four media managers; and nine media experts including one from the Transnistrian region, one from the Administrative Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (ATUG), one from the Press Council (PC), one from the Broadcast Coordinating Council (BCC), one from print media, one from online media, and three from media non-government organizations (NGOs) (Annex 3). Each expert filled in the MPSI table individually and submitted it in writing.

The indicators together comprise 15 open-ended statements each with 5 choices for completion. Each choice was scored from 0 to 4 with 4 as the highest score and 0 as the lowest. The MPSI value is the average of the scores for the indicators. The index rates the situation of Moldovan media as good, relatively good, marked by serious problems, critical, or very critical as follows:

60–50: good

49–39: relatively good

38–28: serious problems

27–17: critical

16–0: very critical

The MPSI methodology thus diagnoses the situation of the media as a whole and also analyzes each indicator separately to reveal areas that require intervention to improve it for the benefit of Moldovan citizens and society. MPSI results are compared over the past three years in Annex 5.

INDICATORS

I. LEGAL FRAMEWORK REGULATING MEDIA ACTIVITY

This indicator contains three open-ended statements.

The legal framework for media is: a) sufficient, b) mostly sufficient, c) largely sufficient, d) sufficient to a small extent, e) insufficient.

The experts' choices establish whether there are regulations governing all types and all levels of media (print, audiovisual, online, central, regional, community, public, private); and whether there are regulations on the freedom of expression, editorial independence, access to information, defamation, protection of journalists and information sources, and decision-making transparency, among others.

I.1.1. Timeline of Events

- ▶ On 8 February after two readings, Parliament approved the draft law proposed by the government extending the deadline for transition to digital terrestrial television until 1 March 2020. The reason was that Moldova could afford to broadcast simultaneously in analog and digital formats as long as it did not create disturbances in the signals in neighboring countries and that delaying the transition would give additional time to citizens to purchase special digital signal conversion devices and properly equipped TV sets. Many media experts criticized the Moldovan authorities for postponing the transition as it would *have meant a great step forward in pluralistic information space, as well as the fulfilment of the international commitment that Moldova took many years ago*.¹
- ▶ The amendments to the Audiovisual Code regarding the fight against foreign propaganda in RM entered into force on 12 February.
- ▶ In February, the People's Assembly of Gagauz-Yeri (PAG) adopted a decision establishing Gagauz Radio Day to be celebrated on 21 August.²
- ▶ The draft of the new Audiovisual Code was registered in Parliament on 22 March. This document was developed by national and international experts within the Working Group on Improving the Media Law and was named the Audiovisual Media Services Code (AMSC) of the Republic of Moldova. The draft code was to be submitted for expert review to the Council of Europe (CoE), the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The working group was created in June 2017 at the initiative of Speaker of Parliament Andrian Candu with the support of the joint project of the EU and CoE, Promoting Media Freedom and Pluralism in the Republic of Moldova. The working group also received technical assistance from the United States (US) Embassy in Moldova, from Freedom House, and from Internews Moldova.³
- ▶ The AMSC draft was voted by Parliament in the first reading on 20 April. In the same plenary session, members of Parliament (MPs) adopted the draft law on the National Concept on Media Development in the Republic of Moldova. Both drafts were developed by national and international experts within the Working Group on Improving the Media Law.⁴

¹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/deputa%C8%9Bii-au-votat-pentru-noul-termen-al-tranzi%C8%9Biei-la-televiziunea-digital%C4%83-1-martie-2020>

² <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=38923>

³ <http://parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/3937/Page/0/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>

⁴ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/parlamentul-votat-%C3%AEn-prima-lectur%C4%83-proiectul-codului-serviciilor-media-audiovizuale>

- ▶ A new draft law on advertising developed by IJC experts was registered as a legislative initiative in Parliament on 4 June. Before that, the draft law was discussed in the Working Group on Improving the Media Law.⁵
- ▶ In mid-June, the BCC and the project Promoting Media Freedom and Pluralism in the Republic of Moldova organized a round table titled “*Presentation of updated and revised draft of the BCC monitoring methodology of radio broadcasters*” conducted by the international expert Rast’o Kuzel. The monitoring methodology was to be subsequently approved at a BCC public meeting.⁶
- ▶ Parliament adopted the National Concept on Media Development in the final reading on 14 June. The purpose was to demonstrate both the adherence of Moldova to European values on media functioning and the commitment to create an environment enabling the media to be economically and editorially independent.⁷
- ▶ On 11 July, the specialized Parliamentary committee endorsed a draft law according to which the Competition Council (CC) had to take media legislation into account when assessing economic concentration and dominant positions in the field. The Law on Competition stipulates that an enterprise or a group of enterprises is presumed, until proved otherwise, to be holding a dominant position in a relevant market, “...when the share or the aggregate shares in the relevant market registered for the period analyzed exceed 50%.” In this regard, the AMSC draft establishes that an entity holds a dominant position in the formation of public opinion if, “...the weighted audience share of audiovisual media services assigned to it exceeds 35% of the significant market.” If both drafts are approved, the shares set forth in the code will be taken into account instead of those stated the Law on Competition.⁸
- ▶ A draft law approved on 13 July by Parliament in the first reading provides that the state will cover a part of the expenses for films, documentaries, and TV shows produced in Moldova with foreign investment. When the law is adopted, the government will approve a regulation implementing it that will also set the amount of the annual financial resources that the state will allocate to fund cinematographic and audiovisual productions.⁹
- ▶ The AMSC draft was voted by Parliament on 26 July in the second reading. Parliament also re-affirmed the previously expressed vote for the National Concept on Media Development in the Republic of Moldova submitted to the head of the state for review. The draft law on attracting foreign investment in film production and other audiovisual works was voted in the final reading.¹⁰
- ▶ A draft law providing for a number of amendments to seven legislative acts was registered in Parliament at the end of July including reducing the period for delivering information of public interest to applicants, defining the notion of journalist, establishing a mechanism for issuing permits to foreign journalists, offering facilities for personal data processing to media outlets, amending some provisions on state secrets and repealing the Law on Press. The draft law was developed by the Working Group on Improving the Media Legislation and contained the recommendations made by several media experts, including IJC and Association of Independent Press (API) experts.¹¹
- ▶ The Law on the National Concept on Media Development in the Republic of Moldova came into force at the end of August when it was published in the *Official Gazette*.¹²
- ▶ In the first sitting of the autumn session, the Parliamentary Committee for National Security, Defense and Public Order endorsed a draft law amending and supplementing some legislative acts on tax exemptions for audiovisual work intended for program services and/or for publishing and disseminating periodicals and/or for disseminating information by any means of communication. The draft stipulated that a tax of 18% on dividends, including shares or equity shares, obtained by the media would be retained and paid into the budget; that monthly income exceeding an average national monthly salary forecast for that year would be considered as non-taxable income; and that tax breaks would be granted for wages earned at the workplace based on an individual labor contract. The provisions were to be applied in the 2019–2025 tax period inclusively. The draft is to be debated and voted by Parliament.¹³
- ▶ At the beginning of October, the Parliamentary Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance examined the new draft Law on Advertising.

⁵ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/%C3%AEn-parlament-fost-%C3%AEnregistrat-noul-proiect-de-lege-cu-privire-la-publicitate-elaborat-%C3%AEn>

⁶ <http://cca.md/news/comunicat-de-pres-15>

⁷ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/parlamentul-votat-%C3%AEn-lectura-final%C4%83-concep%C8%9Bia-na%C8%9Bional%C4%83-de-dezvoltare-mass-media>

⁸ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/consiliul-concuren%C8%9Bei-va-trebui-s%C4%83-%C8%9Bin%C4%83-cont-de-legisla%C8%9Bia-mass-media-la-evaluarea>

⁹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/statul-va-subven%C8%9Bia-par%C8%9Bial-produc%C8%9Bia-cinematografic%C4%83-%C8%99j-tv>

¹⁰ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/audiovizualul-din-moldova-are-o-lege-nou%C4%83-parlamentul-adoptat-codul-serviciilor-media>

¹¹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/%E2%80%8Bwho-who-%C3%AEn-parlament-ajuns-proiectul-de-lege-care-explic%C4%83-cine-sunt-jurnali%C8%99tii-%C8%99i-oblig%C4%83>

¹² <https://www.moldpres.md/news/2018/08/23/18007531>

¹³ http://www.realitatea.md/modificari-legislative-mass-media-ar-putea-beneficia-de-facilitati-fiscale_84071.html?utm_source=topmedia.md&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=rss&utm_content=topmedia.md

The draft was developed by the Working Group on Improving Media Law and submitted to Parliament by a group of MPs, including Speaker Andrian Candu.¹⁴

- ▶ Starting in October, media outlets were excluded from the list of entities that have access to information on people who submit declarations under the Law on Tax Amnesty. Information on those persons will be presented only at the request of the National Integrity Authority of the Office for Preventing and Fighting Money Laundering and the holders of the declarations themselves. Thus, the media will no longer be able to get information about such taxpayers as provided in the Tax Code. According to the experts, this provision contradicts the rights of the press stipulated in the tax law thereby limiting the rights of journalists to access information.¹⁵
- ▶ On 11 October following controversial debates, Parliament voted the new Law on Advertising in the first reading. This document was developed by the Working Group on Improving Media Law and registered as a legislative initiative by Speaker Andrian Candu and MPs Vladimir Hotineanu and Corneliu Mihalache.¹⁶
- ▶ The AMSC draft was passed by Parliament on 18 October in the final reading. The new law will replace the 2006 amended Audiovisual Code.¹⁷
- ▶ In November, the specialized Parliamentary Committee reconsidered the AMSC draft and recommended that Parliament reaffirm its vote after the head of state refused to promulgate the document.¹⁸
- ▶ Amendments to Article 70 of the Contravention Code were published in the *Official Gazette* increasing fines for “calumny” from 2,400–3,600 lei to 3,000–4,500 for individuals and from 3,600–7,500 to 4,500–9,000 for persons in positions of accountability. The minimum alternative sanction for unpaid community work also increased to 40–60 hours instead of 20–60 hours for individuals. As an alternative sanction, persons in positions of accountability will be deprived of the right to carry out certain activities for a period of six months to one year. Before the amendment, deprivation of this right could be applied for a period of three months to one year.¹⁹

- ▶ In mid-November, Parliament voted amendments to the Audiovisual Code in the first reading that allowed broadcasters to use the name of localities according to the language in which they are mentioned. The amendments were proposed by the Socialist Party of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM).²⁰
- ▶ CoE media representative Silvia Grundmann urged Moldovan authorities to pass laws on advertising and access to information at the concluding conference of the EU-CoE joint project, Promoting Media Freedom and Pluralism in the Republic of Moldova. The four laws drafted by the working group were passed in the final reading: the Audiovisual Media Services Code and the National Concept on Media Development of the Republic of Moldova, the Law on Attracting Foreign Investment in Film Production and Other Audiovisual Work and the Information Security Concept of the Republic of Moldova. The Law on Advertising and the Law on the Protection of Personal Data were adopted in the first reading. Although it was registered in Parliament, the draft on amendments and addenda to seven laws including the Law on Access to Information and the Law on Freedom of Expression were not on the MPs’ agenda.²¹

I.1.2. Experts’ Opinions and Assessments

- ▶ The legislation is largely sufficient.
- ▶ The year 2018 was marked by important progress in media legislation. The approval of the National Concept on Media Development will provide a regulatory framework for media activity that will guarantee its functioning based on democratic principles and in a secure media environment, establishing the legal and economic framework for the management of this field. The document is essential because it provides a clear media development policy which hasn’t existed so far. The concept will be advantageous for Moldovan media in a number of ways. Another important aspect is the AMSC approval effective 1 January 2019.
- ▶ The existing regulations apply to all types of media except online media. The legislation safeguards the freedom of expression.

¹⁴ https://www.realitatea.md/legea-cu-privire-la-publicitate-va-fi-modificata-vor-fi-introduse-schimbari-precum-instituirea-regimului-juridic-al-publicitatii-politice_84716.html

¹⁵ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/mass-media-fost-exclus%C4%83-din-lista-celor-care-pot-afila-cine-depus-declara%C8%9Bii-conform-legii>

¹⁶ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/temperaturi-ridicate-%C3%AEn-parlament-deputa%C8%9Bii-au-discutat-%C8%99i-au-adoptat-%C3%AEn-prim%C4%83-lectur%C4%83-noua>

¹⁷ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/codul-serviciilor-media-audiovizuale-votat-%C3%AEn-lectur%C4%83-final%C4%83-deputa%C8%9Bii-au-venit-cu-amendamente>

¹⁸ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/comisia-parlamentar%C4%83-pentru-mass-media-reexaminat-proiectul-codului-serviciilor-media>

¹⁹ <http://www.bizlaw.md/amenzi-mai-mari-pentru-cei-care-invinuiesc-alte-persoane-de-savarsirea-infractiunilor>

²⁰ <http://newsmaker.md/rus/novosti/proshchay-kishineu-telekanalam-razreshat-govorit-po-russki-40126>

²¹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/%E2%80%9Eam%C3%A2narea-nu-este-o-op%C8%9Biu-ne%E2%80%9D-reprezentanta-consiliului-europei-%C3%AEndeamn%C4%83-autorit%C4%83%C8%9Bile-din>

- ▶ Moldova's media legislation is largely sufficient.
- ▶ Media outlets operating exclusively on line are still not explicitly regulated by media law; the only legal obligations derive from their legal status if they are registered as legal entities. Otherwise, it is up to each editorial office to ensure a certain institutional transparency or, in general, whether to ensure it or not.
- ▶ There are not enough laws regulating this domain and providing more clarity. The impression is that there is still a desire for ambiguous legal norms to be applied randomly.
- ▶ In 2018 after eight years of discussions and delays, Parliament finally adopted a new Audiovisual Code that provided the necessary legal framework for transposing the EU's Audiovisual Media Services Directive. Parliament also passed a law aimed at stimulating foreign investment in audiovisual production. Furthermore, Parliament adopted for the first time the National Concept on Media Development. The effects of the new regulations are going to unfold over the years; however, in 2018, Parliament did not adopt four major draft laws developed by the Working Group on Improving the Media Law including the new Law on Advertising and amendments to the Law on Access to Information. Therefore, the legislation in these domains remains insufficient and obsolete, and the problems reported by the media community remain unresolved.
- ▶ Parliament adopted a very important law in 2018 regarding the AMSC, but not the Law on Advertising (adopted 20 years ago). At the same time, experts and journalists stated that the documents were developed under conditions of non-transparency with some MPs having a selective attitude to the proposed draft laws.
- ▶ The AMSC adopted in 2018 and effective on 1 January 2019 contains a set of clearly defined regulatory norms aligned with international standards. In 2018, this domain was regulated by the same rules which were insufficient and inefficient here and there.
- ▶ Media legislation is currently insufficient. As online media is not regulated, it can publish anything, ignoring professional ethical norms. If there is no legislation, there are no mechanisms to protect journalists and citizens from on line attacks.
- ▶ The work of the Working Group on Improving Media Law dedicated to refining the legal framework for media regulation in Moldova is worth highlighting.
- ▶ In the Transnistrian region, there is legislation regulating the activity of all types of media at large: print, audiovisual, online. It has provisions for the activity of state and department media, obtaining and disseminating information, and protecting information sources. The legislation does not regulate the activity of municipal media. There's no law on freedom of expression and or on protecting journalists.

The statement scored 29 points, one point more than the previous year, which means there are serious problems.

(2) Media legislation is a) in line, b) mostly in line, c) largely in line, d) in line to a small extent, e) not in line with international standards.

Choices determine the extent to which regulations are tolerant, clear, and accurate and whether they guarantee an adequate environment for the mission of the media, for freedom of expression, and for access to public information. They also indicate if no legal amendments affecting the media have been made or if there have been cases of refusals to reform laws.

I.2.1. Timeline of Events

- ▶ In mid-January, the Comrat Court of Appeals reviewed the BCC case against the Construction Division of the Executive Committee of Gagauzia regarding the licensing of broadcasters and service providers. The BCC took this case to court in 2013 based on the fact that the executive committee had issued licenses to private broadcasters in the region, and cited ATUG legislation on the licensing of certain types of activities. The BCC referred to national legislation that empowers a single authority to grant these licenses. Several court hearings with more than one panel of judges did not solve the problem in 2018.²²
- ▶ In early February, the government promised once again to provide disadvantaged families that did not have TV sets able to receive the digital terrestrial television signal with converter boxes. According to [Government Decision No 240 of 08.05.2015](#), the Ministry of Finance was to allot MDL 100 million for converter boxes for disadvantaged families in the draft 2016 State Budget Law. Finding this amount of money by the end of 2017 turned out not to be feasible which is when the transition to digital television should have been completed, so [the government postponed the transition deadline](#) to 1 March 2020.²³
- ▶ In February 2018, the newspaper *Profsoiuznie vesti* ceased publication in the Transnistrian region following a targeted change in local legislation by the Tiraspol authorities. Journalists who worked for this newspaper rated the actions of the self-proclaimed authorities as “settling a score” with an inconvenient newspaper.²⁴
- ▶ In February, after the candidates for a new Regional Public Audiovisual Institution (RPAI) Council of Observers (CO) were nominated, four of them withdrew their names citing various reasons including pressure from local politicians. Previously, the PAG leadership had accepted their applications to participate in the contest.²⁵
- ▶ In March, the PAG appointed a new RPAI CO with the votes of 18 MPs out of 35. In protest, a group of MPs walked out saying that there were no grounds for the previous CO to resign *in corpore*. Members of the previous CO challenged the decision in court and at the time of the new designation, there was still no verdict.²⁶
- ▶ At the end of April, the new RPAI CO appointed a new acting director even though there was no court decision on the resignation of the previous CO. The next court hearing on this case was set for 2 May 2018.²⁷
- ▶ At the conference organized on 19 May by the Media and Public Relations Committee of the Civil Society Council of the President of the Republic of Moldova, Igor Dodon proposed creating a fund for local media outlets that require support to function.²⁸ Throughout 2018, the idea was neither developed nor accomplished.
- ▶ At the end of May, a new scandal broke out in ATUG generated by the appointment of the acting director of the RPAI by the new CO. The acting director did not hold a diploma that would have confirmed his higher education as ATUG law requires.²⁹
- ▶ At the end of June, the draft AMSC was presented at a debate held in Brussels under the auspices of the European Parliament. The debate was entitled “The New Audiovisual Code of the Republic of Moldova: a Method to Counter Propaganda.”³⁰ Several Moldovan MPs participated in the debate, but the authors of the draft code did not.
- ▶ At the beginning of July, Radio Orhei filed a lawsuit against the BCC after [the authority issued a broadcasting licence in April to a radio station with a similar name](#): Radio Orhei FM. The administration of Radio Orhei demanded the revocation or amendment of the BCC decision since it took into account neither the fact that Radio Orhei has been operating with a well-known name for 12 years nor the legal provisions on intellectual property and competition rules thus confusing program consumers and condoning unfair competition.³¹
- ▶ In July, in a draft government decision submitted for public debate, the state-owned enterprise (SOE) House of Press Complex would be reorganized by merging it with the General Division for the Administration of Buildings of Moldova. The draft triggered concern in some media outlets on the grounds that rental rates, which had already increased at the beginning of the year, could change. An [investigation](#) car-

²² <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=32358>

²³ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/guvernul-promite-din-nou-familiiilor-defavoryzate-dispozitive-gratuite-pentru-recep%C8%9Bionarea>

²⁴ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/autorit%C4%83%C8%9Bile-de-la-tiraspol-au-modificat-le-gisla%C8%9Bia-local%C4%83-pentru-%C3%AEnchide-un-ziar-incomod>

²⁵ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=38898>

²⁶ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=39564>

²⁷ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/consiliul-de-observatori-al-grt-numit-un-nou-director-interimar-al-companiei>

²⁸ <http://trm.md/ro/politic/igor-dodon-propune-crearea-unui-fond-de-suport-pentru-sursele-mass-media-locale/>

²⁹ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=40603>

³⁰ <https://radiochisinau.md/proiectul-codului-serviciilor-media-prezentat-la-bruxelles-sub-auspiciile-parlamentului-european---70478.html?fbrefresh=1530094760>

³¹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/radio-orhei-%C3%AEn-litigi-cu-cca-dup%C4%83-ce-de-numirea-postului-fost-%E2%80%99Eclonat%C4%83%E2%80%99D>

ried out in 2015 by IJC revealed that over 2,300 sq. m. of the total 10,000 sq. m. of the House of Press had been transferred into economic management or privatized between 1998 and 2004. In 2012, criminal charges were pressed against three former directors and the accountant of the House of Press SOE because of millions of lei in fraud. The SOE is a self-management enterprise and the State Chancellery is its founder.³²

- ▶ In July, the contest for the appointment of the RPAI's executive director was announced by the new CO, but it failed as not one application was submitted.³³
- ▶ President Igor Dodon refused to promulgate the New Audiovisual Code because he objected to limits on the amount of informational content produced in the Russian Federation (RF) and the prohibition of Russian content of a military nature.³⁴
- ▶ On 7 November, the RPAI's CO requested that PAG MPs explain the procedure for electing the executive director of the institution. This explanation was sought because only one application had been submitted in the contest for that position. The job became vacant after the new CO dismissed the previous executive director.³⁵
- ▶ In mid-December, Parliament confirmed three new members of the BCC, all of whom were former employees. The new members were selected out of 10 candidates who participated in the contest.³⁶

I.2.2. Experts' Opinions and Assessments

- ▶ The law still has gaps, especially when vague provisions that can be interpreted for someone's benefit are in place.
- ▶ Access to information of public interest could be restricted by the new Law on Personal Data Protection that passed in the first reading.
- ▶ The law is too permissive for platforms that act as media outlets and that do not even make any contact data available. Instead, they publish pseudo-journalistic material and sometimes even fake articles that are not signed by identifiable people, which contributes to tension among editorial offices and fuels disorientation and distrust among media consumers.
- ▶ Certain laws are generally in line with international standards, but their enforcement is selective depending on the economic and political interests of decision makers.
- ▶ Authorities oppose adopting comprehensive public policies aligned with European standards that would create proper conditions for media development, including for local/regional media.
- ▶ There's no appropriate balance between the freedom of expression and private life, these being conflicting norms. Too much weight is given to freedom of expression to the detriment of private life. There is no uniform judicial practice in exercising the freedom of expression, in particular when it comes to access to information on matters of public interest.
- ▶ The tax laws do not support the development of independent media. They treat independent media outlets as businesses. For example, fees paid to the state by a local/regional TV station can sometimes be higher than those paid by other businesses, while local TV stations in fact have the role of local public television. These channels do not have subscribers and invest their own resources in production and in broadcasting infrastructure. The new code, if approved by Parliament, would mean that the tax of 1% of the turnover paid by broadcasters would be ruled out next year, but it is unclear what tax charges would replace it. The situation as a whole does not guarantee an appropriate environment for the mission of the media.
- ▶ Even though some laws are good, the quality of their enforcement hampers media development. The advertising market is still monopolized. The authorities' first attempts to ensure

³² <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/%E2%80%9Ecasa-presei%E2%80%9D-va-trece-%C3%AEn-subordinea-unei-direc%C8%9Bii-din-cadrul-guvernului-valeriu-sahar-neanu>

³³ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=41598>

³⁴ <https://deschide.md/ro/stiri/politic/39116/DOC--Dodon-a-refuzat-s%C4%83-promulge-Noul-Cod-al-audiovizualului-s%C4%83rind-%C3%AEn-ap%C4%83rarea-producelor-media-ruse%C8%99ti.htm>

³⁵ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=43594>

³⁶ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/parlamentul-confirmat-trei-noi-membri-ai-cca-%E2%80%93to%C8%9Bii-sunt-fo%C8%99ti-angaja%C8%9Bii-ai-autorit%C4%83%C8%9Bii-de>

clarity of audiovisual audience measurements excluded small broadcasters from the process. The regulation gives access to Audience Measurement Committee membership to the largest advertising players, and two politically affiliated broadcasters are among the 15 members of the committee.

- The Transnistrian legislation is not adjusted to international standards sufficiently. The Trans-

nistrian Constitution provides for recognized standards that underpin media activity, but the general provisions are not detailed in legal acts that guarantee their practical implementation. For example, there are no norms that regulate the limits on freedom of opinion. The legislation on access to information also does not provide guarantees aligned with international standards.

The second statement scored 31 points, one point more than in the previous year, which means there are serious problems.

(3) *Media legislation is applied correctly a) every time, b) very often, c) often, d) seldom, e) never or almost never.*

The choices determine the extent to which decision makers (e.g., Parliament, government, the judiciary, BCC, CO) comply with legislation, i.e., there is no pressure; there is transparency; there are prompt and efficient responses to all applications for waivers; there have been no cases of refusal by state authorities to provide requests for information of public interest; there have been no cases of abusive withdrawal of accreditation; there have been no cases of censorship by banning publication/dissemination, by confiscating print runs, or by abusively withdrawing broadcasting licenses.

I.3.1. Timeline of Events

- At the end of February, the BCC fined RTR Moldova television station MDL 50,000 for violating Broadcasting Code provisions on foreign propaganda in Moldova.³⁷
- At the end of February, after PAG appointed a new RPAI CO, the CO delegated an acting chairperson for the regional public broadcaster.³⁸ PAG voted for the new CO despite the fact that its decision to dissolve the previous CO had been challenged in court.
- In mid-March, the Chisinau Central Court obliged blogger Veaceslav Balacci to publish a disavowal information on former Finance Minister Veaceslav Negruta that he had posted a year before on his blog. Mr Negruta challenged the blogger in court for publishing fake and defamatory information.³⁹
- In March, Ren TV Moldova was fined 5,000 MDL for pretending to observe the legislation on sign language interpretation of the news.⁴⁰

- At the end of March, the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) ruled in favor of RISE Moldova and obliged the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) to disclose the information requested by journalists in April 2016. The MIA had refused to provide the information referring to the Law on Personal Data Protection.⁴¹
- At the beginning of May, the IJC presented the results of a poll on institutions that violate the Law on Access to Information most often. According to 23 editorial offices, the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection ranked first followed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and Chisinau City Hall. The authorities often invoked protection of personal data and trade secrets as grounds for refusals. Other reasons included needing to learn more information about the issues, they were not aware of the request, busy agenda, the expert was on leave, and this information is provided for payment, among others.⁴²
- In May, the Comrat Court of First Instance refused to hear the lawsuit against PAG on the annulment of the decision to dismiss the previous RPAI CO. The decision could be appealed in a higher court.⁴³

³⁷ <http://topmedia.md/televiziunea-rtr-moldova-amendata-de-cca-cu-50-de-mii-de-lei---101427.html>

³⁸ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=38931>

³⁹ <https://ru.crimemoldova.com/news/social/blogera-balakchi-obyazali-oproverg-nut-statyu-o-byvshem-ministre-finansov-negrute/>

⁴⁰ <http://www.ziarulnational.md/de-ras-si-de-plans-un-post-de-televiziune-din-r-moldova-se-prefacea-ca-respecta-legislatia-stiri-pentru-surdo-muti-pe-care-nu-le-inteleg-nimeni/>

⁴¹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/curtea-suprem%C4%83-de-justi%C8%9Bie-dat-c%C3%A2%C8%99tig-de-cauz%C4%83-rise-moldova-%C8%99i-obligat-mai-s%C4%83-ofere-informa%C8%9Bie>

⁴² <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/accesul-la-informa%C8%9Bie-jurnali%C8%99tii-au-indicat-institu%C8%9Bile-cele-mai-%C3%AEnchise-fa%C8%9B%C4%83-de-pres%C4%83>

⁴³ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=40310>

- ▶ In May, MIA suspended the management of the Rezina police following the confiscation of a *Cuvantul* [The Word] newspaper print run and announced the initiation of an internal investigation into this case. This was done as a result of an appeal by media NGOs and at the request of Prime Minister Pavel Filip.⁴⁴
- ▶ On June 18, the Chisinau Court in Ciocana issued a judgment in the case of *Jurnal de Chisinau* newspaper reporter Nadejda Roscovanu who was beaten a year ago by a kiosk owner because she took photos of an expired croissant. The court sentenced the guilty person to a fine of 1,000 conventional units, equivalent to MDL 50,000, moral damages to the victim in the amount of MDL 60,000, and MDL 5,000 for legal assistance expenses.⁴⁵
- ▶ On 28 June, the Comrat Court of Appeals canceled the PAG decision to dismiss the RPAI CO in December 2017. The decision could be challenged at the SCJ.⁴⁶
- ▶ In July, the Members of the European Parliament and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini expressed their concern about the media situation in Moldova during the debates that took place in Strasbourg regarding the political situation after the invalidation of the elections in Chisinau. The resolution voted by the European MPs emphasized the situation when journalists become victims of stigmatization campaigns and face politically motivated criminal charges or are threatened whenever they defend people with dissenting voices, while journalists' access to information is also restricted.⁴⁷
- ▶ In July, media NGOs protested the superficial nature of the investigations by MIA and the Rezina District Prosecutor's Office in the case of the obviously illegal seizure of the print run of the independent regional weekly newspaper *Cuvantul* on 10 May 2018. Despite the clear procedural violations and the abuse of power committed by Rezina Police Inspectorate employees, the Directorate for Effective Inspection of the General Police Inspectorate and the Rezina District Prosecutor's Office did not establish any deviations from the law. Media NGOs requested the Prosecutor General to initiate an inspection into whether the actions undertaken by MIA and the district prosecutor were lawful. They also requested the MIA Minister to order further investigation of the circumstances and to sanction the police officers who overstepped their authority.⁴⁸
- ▶ In July, Ombudsman Mihail Cotorobai took action on his own initiative on Ilan Shor's threatening and offensive message to journalists and political opponents at the protest of 20 July. The Ombudsman filed a solicitation with the General Prosecutor's Office against the controversial mayor of Orhei calling for a fast and appropriate response from the competent authorities. Cotorobai said that the statements made by Shor about his political opponents and journalists were extremely dangerous and unacceptable. Ilan Shor promised that once he came to power he would enforce a lustration law in relation to journalists, "paid to write nasty things about people" about whom he used licentious and offensive language (obscene words *gadî* and *jivotniie*).⁴⁹ The Ombudsman considered that such statements, in addition to intimidating political opponents and journalists, incite violence against individuals or groups of people, propagate stereotypes, and generate hatred and divisions between people.
- ▶ At the end of July, the court of first instance dismissed as unfounded the request for a summons filed by photo reporter Constantin Grigorita against President Igor Dodon and the Presidential Administration regarding the defense of access to information rights. The decision could be appealed in the Chisinau Court of Appeals. After asking Igor Dodon an inconvenient question at a press conference, Grigorita was no longer accepted at public events organized by the Presidency.⁵⁰
- ▶ A new acting editor-in-chief of the PAG publication *Вести Гагаузии* (*Gagauzia News*) was appointed in September.⁵¹ Several analysts believed that the editor-in-chief was changed due to political reasons.
- ▶ In mid-September, the SCJ ruled in favor of PAG thus legalizing the new RPAI CO. On 21 December 2017, the PAG had dismissed the entire CO on the grounds that several management irregularities were found. The ATUG Broadcasting Law has been repeatedly criticized by experts because it allows interference in RPAI's work.⁵²
- ▶ In October, the Court of Appeals sent the case of

⁴⁴ <https://www.timpul.md/articol/ultima-ora-mai-a-suspendat-din-functie-conduce-re-a-politiei-din-rezina-in-urma-confiscarii-tirajului-ziarului-cuvantul-130306.html>

⁴⁵ <http://jurnal.md/ro/news/73056b3f8a4e8d5/sentinta-in-cazul-reporterului-ziarului-jurnal-de-chisinau-batuta-acum-un-an-de-proprietarul-unui-magazin.html>

⁴⁶ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=41357>

⁴⁷ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/uniunea-europeana-c4%83-%C3%AE%899i-exprim-c4%83-deschis-%C3%AEgrijorarea-fa-c4%83-de-situa-c8%9Bia-presei-independente-din>

⁴⁸ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/declara-c5%A3ie-mai-c5%9Fi-procuratura-rezina-au-reac-c5%A3ionat-formal-c3%AEen-cazul-sechestr-c4%83rui-tirajului>

⁴⁹ <http://www.jurnal.md/ro/news/81036a7b2a8d08b2/avocatul-poporului-deme-rs-la-pg-impotriva-lui-sor-se-impune-o-reactie-operativa-din-partea-autoritatilor-com-petente.html>

⁵⁰ <http://agora.md/stiri/47959/prima-instanta-a-respins-cererea-de-chemare-in-judecata-a-fotojurnalistului-constantin-grigorita-impotriva-presedintelui>

⁵¹ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=42625>

⁵² <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/%E2%80%9Etelenovela%E2%80%9D-de-la-comrat-curtea-suprem%C4%83-de-justi%C.8%9Bie-pus-punct-%C3%AEen-cazul-demiterii-membrilor>

journalist Nata Scobioala to the prosecutors for repeated review stating that, “the criminal prosecution was not complete and objective” since not all the arguments put forward by the management of the company concerned were elucidated. The Criminal College of the Chisinau Court of Appeals decided to table the ruling of the court of first instance and declared the prosecutors’ ordinances null and void. The cases against Nata Scobioala were initiated after she wrote an investigation jointly with the Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism mentioning the Green Farm Company managed at that time by former Minister of Defense Valeriu Plesca, currently a businessman. The article stated that Plesca would have taken loans from banks, some of which were later liquidated. Plesca also requested that Nata Scobioala be held accountable for, “deliberately spreading unverified false information and accusations of committing a crime.”⁵³

- ▶ In October, the new RPAI administration was accused of dismissing several employees only to replace them with employees of the online portal where the acting executive director had previously worked. Furthermore, the new administration was accused of winding up the only correspondents’ group in Copceac, leaving two employees jobless.⁵⁴
- ▶ At the beginning of November, the Head of the Chisinau Prosecutor’s Office declared that Ilan Shor, Mayor of Orhei, wouldn’t be held accountable for his threats against journalists because criminal law did not stipulate that mayor’s acts represented a criminal offence. Representatives of media and human rights NGOs asked prosecutors to investigate Ilan Shor’s statements in terms of instigating hatred. Among the signatories were Amnesty International Moldova, the Legal Resources Centre in Moldova, Information Centre GENDERDOC-M, and Promo-LEX.⁵⁵
- ▶ On November 5, Ombudsman Mihail Cotorobai sent a repeat request to the General Prosecutor’s Office asking the latter to examine the threatening statements of Mayor Ilan Shor against journalists in July. Furthermore, Mr Cotorobai asked the Speaker of Parliament to urgently adopt the law package on crimes of hate and prejudice. The solicitation was submitted after the Head of the Chisinau Prosecutor’s Office declared that Ilan Shor wouldn’t be held accountable for his threats against journalists because criminal law did not stipulate that a mayor’s acts represented a criminal offence.⁵⁶

I.3.2. Experts’ Opinions and Assessments

- ▶ Public institutions are not very open to collaborating with the media, or rather are selective with media outlets. An uncommon case that marked 2018 and which can be qualified as censorship was the seizure of a print run of the independent regional weekly newspaper *Cuvantul* by the Economic Police Department of the Rezina Police Inspectorate. Also, several journalists were denied access to various public events.
- ▶ The legislation is being implemented with great gaps. In spite of the fact that media privatization was to be completed long ago, some state owned media still exist in some regions. Although civil servants’ penalties for refusing to provide information of public interest have been tightened, none of them has been held accountable.
- ▶ The implementation of the legislation continues to be deficient, in particular with regard to access to information. Late, vague, incomplete, or inaccurate answers are still provided on the grounds that they are related to personal data or are not of public interest.
- ▶ I personally think we have a fairly good legal framework, but it is not applied appropriately. For example, I and my colleagues in the editorial office noticed that Law No 982 of 11.05.2000 on Access to Information is being violated regularly, and those who violate this law most often are state officials, including high-ranking officials (ministers, heads of agencies, directors of SOEs). Many of our information requests remain unanswered or are answered after the legal deadline has expired when the subject is out of date, so ultimately, the readers are under informed. I am also aware of the Broadcasting Code which stipulates that an entity may hold no more than two broadcasting licenses; in Moldova, although *de jure* some TV stations belong to one person, *de facto* their beneficiary is another person. Although the law is not directly violated, the spirit of the law is violated which leads to the convergence of media ownership in the hands of a small group of people who, in the case of the Republic of Moldova, are politicians.
- ▶ Enforcement of media law is ineffective; it is also the case in other areas. For example, more than a year has passed since a group of unknown people destroyed the television transmitter of the Elita TV regional station in Rezina, and no one has been held accountable for that. The management of Elita TV sought the support

⁵³ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/curtea-de-apel-remis-procurorilor-pentru-reexaminare-cauza-%C3%AEn-care-figureaz%C4%83-jurnalista-nata>

⁵⁴ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=43444>

⁵⁵ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ilan-%C8%99or-nu-va-fi-tras-la-r%C4%83spundere-pentru-amenin%C8%99Barea-jurnali%C8%99tilor>

⁵⁶ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/demers-repetat-al-avocatului-poporului-c%C4%83tre-procuratura-general%C4%83-pentru-examinarea>

of the police who initiated criminal prosecution procedures; however, the prosecutor insisted that there were no indicators of a criminal offense. The case has thus been delayed so far despite staggering damages especially given the difficult situation of regional TV stations.

- In terms of law enforcement, the trends remain the same as in previous years. We see the same selective application of sanctions in certain areas—here I mean audiovisual media institutions. For example, when some television stations published fake news, the BCC regarded it as source protection ([BCC Decision No 32/199 of 3 December 2018](#)) and did not establish any violations of the legislation in force. When some media outlets deliberately misinformed consumers through truncated information, through titles meant to shock, or through omissions, the BCC did not see any violations ([Decision No 30/192 of 15 November 2018](#)). In 2018, the BCC investigated on its own initiative two cases regarding the observance of the conditions for the placement of advertisements in audiovisual programs ([Decision No 5/19 of 26 February 2018](#) and [Decision No 11/71 of 24 April 2018](#)). Although both cases were about the same subject, they were investigated separately two months apart. In the case of the first monitoring report, the BCC imposed penalties for the smallest deviation from the law while in the second, the BCC was much more lenient and did not apply any penalty at all. On 5 April 2018 in [Decision No 9/54](#), the BCC issued Radio Orhei FM a broadcasting license although there

was already a radio station with nearly the same name operating in the Moldovan media market. The BCC did not take into account the provisions of intellectual property legislation and competition rules in this case, giving way to unfair competition and confusion among information consumers. During the 2018 elections, several TV stations said they would not cover the campaign, but despite those commitments they did cover it, and [the regulatory authority did not monitor them and also delayed investigating notifications received on this matter](#). Subsequently, these stations were only penalized by [public warnings](#).

- It is generally impossible to obtain detailed information about auctions organized by the authorities or about spending public money in Gagauz-Yeri. There have also been cases when not all accredited media were admitted to events of public interest. For instance, not all journalists were able to attend the meetings with the President of Turkey who was on an official visit to the autonomous region.
- No serious cases of violations of media legislation have been recorded in the Transnistrian region. The so-called authorities approve the “necessary legal rules” when they intend to pressure the independent press. The adoption of legislation laying down special rules for using the term “trade union” can serve as an example, and its application has led to the closing of the newspaper *Trade Unions News* (Прессоюзные вести).

This statement scored 23 points, one point less than in the previous year, which means the situation is critical.

According to the experts, the legal framework regulating media activity scored 27.66 points, 0.33 points more than in the previous year, which means the situation is marked by serious problems. The score is only 0.66 points away from a critical situation (17–27 points)..

II. POLITICAL CONTEXT

The indicator contains one statement.

The political situation for media activity is: a) favorable, b) favorable for the most part, c) largely favorable, d) favorable to a small extent, e) unfavourable.

The choices took into account (i) the effects of a stable or unstable political situation on the natural mission of the media; (ii) pressure on journalists and media outlets from politicians or parties to protect political or other interests; (iii) parties or politicians use of state institutions to pressure journalists; (iv) pressure on journalists or media outlets from state institutions in the form of police investigations, brutal interventions meant to intimidate the media, arrests or detentions for investigative purposes, seizing or copying data from computers, seizing or copying documents, or listening in on communications; (v) politics that provoked political partisanship or information wars with media participation.

II.1. Timeline of Events

- ▶ At the end of January, TV 10 was harshly attacked by Victor Stepaniuc, former Deputy Prime Minister of Moldova. In a post on his Facebook page, he argued that TV 10 “...spends every hour of its time to liquidate our state – the Republic of Moldova: It makes unionist, anti-state, anti-Moldova propaganda; it uses concrete messages and actions against the statehood, sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Moldova.” He also asked the government a question: “When are you going to pass a law against unionist propaganda, gentlemen MPs and civil servants?!” When he was invited to a show to share his opinion about TV 10, he did not accept the invitation and declared that TV 10 must be liquidated.⁵⁷
- ▶ In mid-February, the PC examined the complaint of the Acting Mayor of Chisinau Silvia Radu against TV 8 journalists who made the report “[All Talk and No Action. Ice and Snow Banks in Front of the Gates of Filip, Dodon and Radu.](#)” PC members found that TV 8 journalists had not acted in bad faith in this case and that ethical rules had not been violated.⁵⁸
- ▶ In February, some residents of Hancesti strongly opposed the closing of Jurnal TV, which was suggested by a Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM) mayor at a meeting with district authorities attended by Speaker of Parliament Adrian Candu, Prime Minister Pavel Filip, and Minister Chiril Gaburici.⁵⁹
- ▶ A former PAG member and one of the leaders of the PDM branch office and of the Noua Gagauzie [New Gagauzia] movement attending a show of a private radio station in the region accused the RPAI of political bias. In its turn, the RPAI management denied that not all political entities in the region are represented on its shows.⁶⁰
- ▶ In March, media NGOs expressed their concern over the attempt of the European People’s Party of Moldova (PPEM) to put pressure on certain media outlets and teach them “how to do journalism.” PPEM published [an open letter](#) on its official Facebook page calling on TV 8, Jurnal TV, and Unimedia.info to balance the statements concerning Iurie Leanca (Deputy Prime Minister) so as to “provide accurate information to the audience.” Party members were bothered by the fact that in the background of news items featuring them, “Iurie Leanca almost always is negatively labeled with the (collective!) decision taken during his mandate as Prime Minister to grant state guarantees to the three decapitalized banks.”⁶¹
- ▶ In mid-March, BTV in Balti challenged Moldtelecom SOE in court because the latter had refused to include the TV station in its IP television network for three years. BTV management believed that Moldtelecom had no grounds to refuse them and that they had been the subject of harassment as they’re not under the control of the ruling party. Note that in the autumn of 2017, the BCC did not duly extend BTV’s broadcasting license due to the planned transition to digital terrestrial television. Later, though, the authorities extended the transition deadline to 2020.⁶²

⁵⁷ <http://www.timpul.md/articol/un-fost-viceprim-ministru-vrea-sa-lichideze-un-post-de-televiziune-independent-126925.html>

⁵⁸ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ce-decis-consiliul-de-presă-cu-privire-la-plângerea-pri-maritei-interimare-silvia-radu>

⁵⁹ <http://jurnal.md/ro/social/2018/2/19/locuitori-din-hancesti-s-au-opus-ferm-inchiderii-jurnal-tv-initiativa-propusa-de-un-primar-pd-la-o-intalnire-cu-participarea-lui-candu-filip-si-gaburici-doar-de-acolo-aflam-adevarul/>

⁶⁰ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=38850>

⁶¹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ong-urile-de-media-calific%C4%83-apelul-ppem-la-adresa-jurnal%C5%9Filor-drept-imixtiune-%C3%AEn-activitatea>

⁶² <https://point.md/ru/novosti/obschestvo/beltskoe-televidenie-podalo-v-sud-na-moldtelekom-iz-za-otkaza-prinimat-kanal-v-setku-veshchaniia>

- ▶ At the beginning of April, the official website of the Нова Гараузия (New Gagauzia) civic organization announced the new RPAI CO. The previous acting director of the RPAI declared that the members of PAG were forced to vote for Нова Гараузия representatives in the CO.⁶³
- ▶ In April, RPAI employees went on strike against an attempt to take over the television station. At a meeting held in front of the RPAI, the management requested the support of all people who cared to protest the “raider attack” on the regional public broadcaster made by the Нова Гараузия organization which has the support of the PDM.⁶⁴
- ▶ On 10 April, a police officer visited [the editorial office of TV10](#) on the grounds that it was mentioned in a February complaint filed with the police referring to the show VERBE and to journalist Valentin Buda, an editorialist on TV 10. The editorial office noted that it had not received any police summons informing them of its involvement in any complaint filed with the police. At the same time, TV 10 expressed its concern about these police visits and noted that Article 4 of the Law on Freedom of Expression and Article 8 of the Broadcasting Code ensure journalists’ editorial independence and freedom in Moldova.⁶⁵
- ▶ At the beginning of May, media NGOs expressed their concern over what Speaker Andrian Candu said in a briefing on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day. When asked why he had not come to talk with the participants in the Solidarity March, Andrian Candu had a tough answer: “They (participants in the March – A/N) do nothing else but write projects, get external funding and spend that money. And they are accustomed to organizing protests on this day of the year. But instead of organizing a protest, you better come, put your shoulder to the wheel and do something.” In the signatories’ view, the attempts to diminish the role of free media and NGOs in a society taking only the first steps on the path of democracy do not fit into the pro-European discourse of the current government.⁶⁶
- ▶ In May, media NGOs asked the Minister of Internal Affairs to reject the unlawful seizure of the print run of *Cuvantul* rating this incident as serious abuse at the hands of the police and an attempt to intimidate the journalists of the weekly independent newspaper who had lately published various investigations about the personal assets and interests of district leaders, particularly of Eleonora Graur, President of Rezina District and Deputy-President of the Democratic Party.⁶⁷
- ▶ At the end of May, the RPAI CO dismissed Acting Executive Director Vladimir Cilcic accusing him of a number of deviations from legislation in his work in 2016. In his turn, Cilcic noted that in 2016 the RPAI had had several leaders and that he intended to challenge in court the CO’s decision which he believed to be illegal.⁶⁸
- ▶ In May, media NGOs expressed their concern about limiting the access of certain journalists from [GagauzMedia.md](#) and [Nokta.md](#) portals from Comrat to a factory belonging to the Japanese Company Fujikura where Minister of Economy Chiril Gaburici, the Japanese Ambassador in Moldova Masanobu Yoshii, and ATUG leaders went on a working visit. While the press services of Bashkan Irina Vlah invited the press to the event the day before by publishing an announcement on its website, the journalists of the two portals were not allowed to enter because they were not on the list. The representative of the Bashkan’s press service argued that access to information was restricted because only official press services were granted access to that event. The video footage that subsequently appeared online showed that media outlets such as Publika TV and Gagauzinfo.md had access to the event.⁶⁹
- ▶ At the end of June, media NGOs expressed their concern about the National Centre for the Protection of Personal Data (NCPDP) actions asking the newspaper *Ziarul de Garda* to “...describe the way they check the accuracy of information...” used in the article [“Partidul Șor, lider la capitolul venituri și cheltuieli. Cine sunt principalii donatori care finanțează campania electorală”](#) [“The Șor Party, Leader in Revenue and Expenses. Who are the Main Donors Funding the Election Campaign.”] The newspaper referred to the financial statements this political party submitted to the Central Election Commission, as well as to other unnamed sources. The NCPDP based their request on Article 20(1)(a) of the Law on Personal Data Protection which stipulates that the Centre has to monitor compliance with laws on information protection and to control their application, particularly the right to information, to access to information, to monitor the data, and to object. Media NGOs reminded the NCPDP that according to Article 14 of the Broadcasting Code, “...confidentiality of information sources (...) is guaranteed by law,

⁶³ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=39723>

⁶⁴ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=39786>

⁶⁵ <http://topmedia.md/jurnalstii-unionisti-sunt-intimidati-redactia-10-tv-a-fost-izbita-de-politie-102060.html>

⁶⁶ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/declara%C8%9Bie-ong-urilor-de-media-privind-afirma%C8%9Bile-pre%C8%99edintelui-parlamentului-despre-ac%C8%9Bieuna>

⁶⁷ <http://api.md/news/view/ro-ong-urile-de-media-cer-ministrului-de-interne-sa-scoata-sechestrul-illegal-de-pe-tirajul-ziarului-cuvantul-1808>

⁶⁸ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=40692>

⁶⁹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/condamn%C4%83m-admiterea-selectiv%C4%83-jurnal%C8%99tilor-la-evenimentele-de-interes-public>

while any journalist (...) is allowed not to reveal data that could help identify the source of information obtained in direct connection with his or her professional activity.” Moreover, Article 13 of the Law on Freedom of Expression stipulates that a criminal prosecution body or a court can obligate a person to reveal an information source only in a criminal trial in cases of extremely or exceptionally severe crimes as a measure of last resort.⁷⁰

- ▶ At the end of July several human rights organizations showed their solidarity with media organizations that condemned the threats against journalists made in a video post on social networks by Ilan Shor, Mayor of Orhei and leader of Shor political party. The signatory organizations asked law enforcement bodies, public authorities, and election authorities to take all necessary measures to prevent and stop hate speech which could become extremely dangerous for society during future election campaigns.⁷¹
- ▶ At the beginning of August, the management of public TV station Moldova 1 launched a public call after members and supporters of the Action and Solidarity Party (PAS), Platform Dignity and Truth’ Party (PPDA) and Liberal Democratic Party (PLDM) organized a flash mob at their headquarters: “Regretfully, the attempts to denigrate Moldova 1 arranged by the parties PAS and PPDA continue in the form of deeply politicized and speculative statements that are in no way objective and substantiated by facts,” the public call said.⁷² Moldova 1 was repeatedly accused of political bias both by civil society representatives and on the basis of the results of monitoring the main information issue.
- ▶ On 7 August, media NGOs rated as inadmissible the Shor Party attacks against Radio Orhei journalists who tried to cover a public demonstration but were not allowed to. Note that any violation of journalists’ legitimate rights to report on events of public interest is to be punished under Article 180 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova.⁷³
- ▶ In September, the Head of the Anti-corruption Prosecution Office ordered its subordinates to communicate with journalists only through its press service. The chief prosecutor’s order made it harder for journalists to work.⁷⁴

- ▶ In mid-September, a TV 8 reporter was denied access to the PDM press room where PDM leader Vlad Plahotniuc was holding a press briefing regarding the last decisions taken by ruling party members. Asked about the reasons for not letting the reporter in, PDM representatives invoked the editorial policy of the TV station which the party doesn’t acknowledge.⁷⁵
- ▶ On 18 September, a TV 8 reporter again was denied access to a briefing organized by the PDM. While at the speech desk, Prime Minister Pavel Filip was asked why the TV 8 reporter was denied access. He answered that the TV station was not objective.⁷⁶
- ▶ On 2 October, the access of Jurnal TV journalists to a PDM briefing was restricted as the access of TV 8 reporters had been in previous weeks. Thus, both the rights of journalists and the rights of citizens were violated (Article 20 of Law on Press and Article 6(1) of Law on Freedom of Expression).⁷⁷
- ▶ In mid-October, a Jurnal TV team was denied access to Orhei Town Hall. The journalists tried to talk with Mayor Ilan Shor, but they were not allowed to enter although it was a public building.⁷⁸
- ▶ On 21 October at the PDM meeting organized in the capital city, several journalists were prevented from covering the event because of “necessary security measures.”⁷⁹
- ▶ In November, *Ziarul de Garda* journalists were not allowed to film in Orhei Land amusement park. The events held there were related to Town Day and were organized by the Town Hall. According to park staff, the reason for denying access was that reporters were not accredited.⁸⁰
- ▶ In mid-November after the European Parliament assessed the level of implementation of the Association Agreement with the Republic of Moldova four years after it was signed, it emphasized its concerns regarding the media and civil society: “The monopolization of the media and advertising markets, the weakening of independent news outlets, the overdue implementation of the new audiovisual code, attempts to limit the freedom of action and to

⁷⁰ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ong-urile-de-media-%C3%AE%C8%99i-exprim%C4%83-%C3%AE%ngrijorarea-fa%C8%9B%C4%83-de-presiunile-exercitate-asupra-jurnali%C8%99tilor>

⁷¹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ong-urile-din-domeniul-drepturilor-omului-solicita%C4%83-sanc%C8%99Bionarea-lui-ilan-%C8%99or-pentru>

⁷² <http://trm.md/ro/social/moldova-1-solicita-societati-civile-sii-misiunilor-diplomatice-sa-ia-atitudine-fata-de-incercarile-de-a-exercita-presiune-asupra-postului-public-de-televiziune/>

⁷³ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ong-urile-de-media-calific%C4%83-drept-inadmisibile-atacurile-partidului-%E2%80%9E%C8%99or%E2%80%9D-la-adresa>

⁷⁴ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/%E2%80%9E%C4%83-sun-pa-pa%E2%80%9D-%C8%99eful-procuraturii-anticorup%C8%99Bie-ordonat-subalternilor-s%C4%83-comunice-cu>

⁷⁵ <http://agora.md/stiri/49643/un-jurnalist-nu-a-fost-lasat-sa-intre-la-briefingul-partidului-democrat-motivul-invocat-de-formatiune>

⁷⁶ <http://tv8.md/2018/09/18/video-tv8-interzis-din-nou-la-pdm-cum-a-comentat-pavel-filip/>

⁷⁷ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/apel-c%C4%83tre-partidul-de-guvern%C4%83m%C3%A2nt-%C8%99i-ambasade-privind-%C3%AE%ng%C4%83direa-accesului-jurnali%C8%99tilor>

⁷⁸ <http://www.jurnal.md/ro/news/c08a3f39431e19fb/video-echipa-jurnal-tv-interzisa-si-la-primaria-orhei.html>

⁷⁹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ong-urile-de-media-condamn%C4%83-abuzurile-fa%C8%9B%C4%83-de-jurnali%C8%99ti-la-mitingul-pdm>

⁸⁰ <https://agora.md/stiri/51522/video-jurnalistii-de-la-ziarul-de-garda-nu-au-fost-lasati-sa-si-faca-meseria-la-orhei-le-a-fost-interzisa-intrarea-pe-teritoriul-orheiland>

discredit representatives of civil society.”⁸¹

- ▶ At the end of November at a press conference held by Shor Party representatives, a [Jurnal TV camera crew](#) was denied access on the grounds that it had no accreditation. The party’s spokesperson told a Jurnal TV journalist via a [text message](#) that she would not be allowed into the event “...if you are not an impartial media institution.” At the conference, Deputy Party President Marina Tauber [attacked another journalist](#) who asked her an inconvenient question. Tauber accused the journalist of having been, “...paid out of the stolen billion” to ask such a question.⁸²
- ▶ At the beginning of December, the PDM accused Jurnal TV journalists of using false identities. The BCC was notified about this. On the other hand, the Jurnal TV lawyer rated the notification with the BCC as, “a vicious way to intimidate the media.” The democrats were unhappy with the publication of an article entitled “[Employees of the Post Office – Emissaries of PDM](#)”. That piece of information was about postal workers from Floresti who were allegedly given orders to collect signatures and persuade people to vote for the PDM. A Jurnal TV reporter obtained confirmation of this fact by calling the post office and introducing himself as a PDM representative.⁸³
- ▶ In December, socialist MP Oleg Savva reacted to [a post](#) about his income, verbally attacking journalist Mariana Colun from the [Anticoruptie.md](#) portal and threatening to sue her. Article 9(4) of the Law on Freedom of Expression stipulates that people in public positions may be subject to criticism and their actions may be checked by the media, “... as to the way in which they exercised or exercise their duties, to the extent that this is necessary to ensure the transparency and the responsible exercise of their duties.” At the same time, media law provides that journalists may disseminate information of public interest.⁸⁴
- ▶ On 20 December, a TV 8 reporter was denied access to a press conference organized by the Shor Political Party. Furthermore, he was [forced](#) by security officers to leave the building on the grounds that the room where the press conference was held was private property. The party’s press officer invoked TV 8’s editorial policy as the reason for denying access.⁸⁵

II.2. Experts’ Opinions and Assessments

- ▶ The political situation has been a roadblock for media activity and hasn’t allowed for its development and for the development of the media market.
- ▶ The 2018 political situation affected media activity through pressure exerted on journalists, especially by politicians, in the form of limited access to certain events; verbal attacks on journalists; ridiculing the media outlets they represent; hostile attitudes; and refusing to answer journalists’ questions. Such practices were promoted by both the ruling or parliamentary parties and by extra-parliamentary parties. At the same time, some media outlets were fully involved in political partisanship which almost started an information war.
- ▶ My personal observations make me affirm that the country is moving toward an authoritarian state. Representatives of the ruling party use disinformation and intimidation methods, and in relation to the media they resort to defamation.
- ▶ The political environment has favored the maintenance of two large “parallel worlds” in the media. The former consists of politically affiliated media that reflect reality exclusively from the point of view of the government or the political patron in a more than positive light. On the other hand, we have the independent media which tries to reflect reality in the most equitable way possible, but the relation between the two worlds is clearly in favor of the affiliated media.
- ▶ The 2018 political context did not stimulate media activity. The public signals conveyed by politicians were daunting, the pressure and attacks on the media outlets that were inconvenient to the government intensified, more restrictions were imposed on the access to information of public interest, and some media channels were denied access to events organized by political parties. Political decision makers’ rhetoric on media freedom did not correspond to their actions.
- ▶ Despite direct or indirect political pressure, the media in the RM are free to report on public interest issues, and, for the most part, have access to information and are not directly persecuted.
- ▶ The most important TV stations are owned directly or through intermediation by politicians. Therefore, the editorial policy of these stations reflects the owners’ agenda. On the other hand, the television broadcasters that are not

⁸¹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/parlamentul-european-preocupat-de-monopolizarea-pie%C8%9Bei-mass-media-%C8%99i-de-alte-%E2%80%9Eregrese-ale>

⁸² <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ong-urile-condamn%C4%83-restric%C8%9Bion%C4%83rile-%C8%99i-atacurile-la-adresa-jurnali%C8%99tilor-din-partea>

⁸³ <https://agora.md/stiri/52266/doc--pdm-acuza-jurnalisti-jurnal-tv-de-folosirea-identitatii-false--reactie-modalitate-de-intimidare-a-presei>

⁸⁴ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ong-urile-de-media-condamn%C4%83-atacurile-verbale-ale-deputatului-savva-%C3%AEn-adresa-unei-jurnaliste>

⁸⁵ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/condamn%C4%83m-restric%C8%9Bionarea-accesului-la-informa%C8%9Bie-jurnali%C8%99tilor-de-la-tv8-de-c%C4%83tre>

subject to the whims of politicians and have a balanced editorial policy depend to a considerable extent on grants offered by international organizations.

- ▶ In my opinion, there is no policy support for proper media development in the RM.
- ▶ Over the last two years, we've been witnessing a "closure" of state institutions to journalists' requests for information or, at least, to those coming from journalists from particular editorial offices. Politicians holding key positions in the state avoid answering our questions, even if these questions are asked directly (face to face). Recently, an MP shut the door in the face of a colleague, actually catching her body in the door. Most state institutions treat our requests for information this way which makes me assume someone from the top has issued instructions in this regard. Journalists have many times been prevented from freely practicing their profession at various public events in Chisinau or Orhei, for instance. We also have cases when certain media outlets (Jurnal TV, TV 8) were denied access to events organized by a ruling political party.
- ▶ The political situation is characterized by "camouflaged instability;" it is not favorable for media activity. In 2018 this situation was aggravated. The Law on Personal Data Protection has become a tool for restricting access to information, a restriction reported by many journalists and national and local editorial offices. In Rezina, the print run of *Cuvantul* newspaper was seized, and the editor linked that action by the police to its investigations published on the fraudulent management of public funds. In Orhei, journalists were chased away from an event by the Deputy President of the Shor Party. The spreading of fake news escalates as parliamentary elections are approaching. At the same time, studies on perception conducted by Internews Moldova showed that 25% of the public believes that the news that criticizes the government is fake. Although the RM has anti-propaganda legal provisions, propaganda continues to find its way through into the country's media landscape. In addition, television broadcasters from the RF continue to benefit excessively from the advertising market in the RM while the authorities remain passive observers.

- ▶ The year 2018 was marked by a political situation that further affected the exercise of the media's natural mission in the RM. In June, when examining the validation of the new local elections for the capital's mayor, Judge Rodica Berdilo from the Chisinau Court [restricted the access of the media to the court hearing](#). At the end of June, *Ziarul de Garda* journalist [Viorica Tataru was denied access to the SCJ](#). At the beginning of October, the entire [TV 10 television station team announced its resignation](#) reportedly because management forbid its employees from publishing a news item critical of the government.
- ▶ It appears there is some political stability in Gagauz-Yeri, but this does not mean that the media operates under better conditions. The press seems to be under pressure from state institutions, from tax authorities, and from the police. For example, after the publication of items criticizing the authorities, the fiscal service "invited" the responsible media outlet manager for discussions. There was the case when after a journalistic investigation was broadcast, someone attempted to destroy certain media property in order to intimidate journalists. Going to the police for protection of the media outlet's property had no results except that the media outlet manager was invited to the police station several times only to finally be told that due to lack of evidence, finding the perpetrators was impossible. Also, the political climate has divided the Gagauz media into "ours" and "not ours." "Our" media outlets obtain money, diplomas, and positions while the media outlets that try to remain independent from the authorities cannot obtain even basic information on certain events of public interest.
- ▶ The political situation cannot be favorable for the work and development of media outlets and journalism if a significant part of the media is politically subordinate or affiliated.
- ▶ In the Transnistrian region, the political situation is favorable for state media and unfavorable for independent media. No obvious cases of pressure on journalists have been noted for the very reason that most of the media are state-owned or municipal, and as such, they reflect reality as the so-called authorities please.

The statement scored 20 points, one more than last year, which corresponds to a critical situation (17–27 points).

III. THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

This indicator includes two statements.

(1) Media are a) completely economically independent, b) economically independent to a large extent, c) economically independent to a medium extent, d) economically independent to a small extent, e) not economically independent.

The answers determine the following:

- whether economic legislation has separate provisions for media as businesses;
- whether legislation provides for special ownership concentration limits and/or for audience size;
- if the economic situation favors financial independence;
- if public media are adequately, sufficiently, and securely funded;
- if competition in the media and advertising markets is fair and allows for dynamic media development;
- if the competitive environment allows media to cover costs for the most part from advertising, print sales and/or media products, collaborations, co-productions, etc.;
- if advertising is paid for and is accessed in accordance with ratings;
- if credible circulation/audience measurements operate;
- whether anti-monopoly mechanisms are in place;
- if media invests in development including upgrading media products;
- if there are no dominant positions with regard to ownership;
- whether fair competition allows all media access to advertising depending on audience size;
- if there has been pressure on journalists and media outlets from companies or business people manifested by offering or canceling advertising contracts or conditioning the signing of contracts on not publishing certain information or on dismissing journalists.

Note: typically, a dominant position means that an owner's media holds more than 1/3 of the market share or that the first three owners have accumulated more than 50% of the market share.

III.1.1. Timeline of Events

- In mid-January, a change in the RM commercial advertising market was reported. Thus, two sales houses—Media House controlled by the PDM leader and **Exclusive Sales House controlled by the Socialists**—agreed to collaborate. The agreement reduced the fees for customers who agreed to place advertisements through these sales houses. The agreement provided that 80% of advertising budgets be allocated to Casa Media and 20% to Exclusive Sales House. The representatives of the two sales houses denied any kind of deal.⁸⁶
- On 19 January, the PAG approved the Весті Гараузії (*Gagauzia News*) newspaper budget for the first quarter of the year. PAG members specified that the law on the status of this newspaper hadn't been discussed at the time which is why the newspaper was, de facto, outside the legal field. The appropriation of the whole year's budget for this newspaper was to be discussed only after the adoption of a law on its reorganization.⁸⁷
- At the end of January, four TV stations—PRO TV Chisinau, RTR-Moldova, Jurnal TV and TV 8—filed a joint complaint to the CC in which they accused the commercial advertising sales houses Casa Media and Exclusive Sales House of entering into a cartel agreement that was an abuse of dominant market position. The complainants claimed that there were reasonable grounds and suspicions that Exclusive Sales House and Casa Media Corp, "...implemented anti-competitive practices through a horizontal agreement that resulted in limited competition in the market." According to them, the sales houses had reached an agreement offering advertisers ad-

⁸⁶ <http://newsmaker.md/rus/novosti/lidery-prodazh-kak-demokraty-i-sotsialisty-podruzhilis-seylz-hausami-35614>

⁸⁷ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=38033>

ditional discounts of up to 44% off the list price for placing audiovisual advertising if they were willing to allocate 100% of their own advertising budgets to these two sales houses.⁸⁸

- ▶ In March, the Court of Accounts found misstatements amounting to about MDL 4 million at the National Public Audiovisual Institution (NPAI). This included a misstatement of expenses for procuring the Video Uplink portable system of MDL 1,382,000 compared with the MDL 514,000 originally planned for the system and also of materials worth over MDL 342,000 purchased from 2004 to 2016 that were not in use because they were outdated and unfit for use for the future. During the financial audit, the NPAI received state budget subsidies amounting to more than MDL 90 million with only 20% of their expenses paid from their own revenue.⁸⁹
- ▶ The US Department of State report on human rights released in April contained extremely harsh conclusions with respect to media in the RM. The issue of media monopoly has not been resolved nor has the control of most of the media in the country by oligarchs that, as the research noted, “distort information in their favor.”⁹⁰
- ▶ At the end of April, Reporters without Borders launched the [World Press Freedom Index](#) in which the RM ranked the 81st, one position lower than last year. The index established that media in Moldova is diversified but highly polarized, just like the country which is characterized by chronic instability and the excessive influence of local oligarchs. While media outlets compete among themselves in a climate exacerbated by the crisis in Ukraine, the facts that the regulatory authority is not independent and that the “fight against propaganda” is still prominent are issues to be worried about.⁹¹
- ▶ In mid-May, more than 40 managers from various regional media outlets convened in Chisinau at the conference Local Mass-media: Quo Vadis? organized by the API to identify solutions to economic, financial and editorial issues they encounter. Conference participants called on the authorities to pay more attention to local media issues and to develop sustainable public policies in this regard.⁹²
- ▶ On 23 May, station TV 10 launched two years ago announced that it was suspending its work

for an indefinite period of time, “...due to the lack of financial resources needed for running the station.”⁹³

- ▶ At the end of May, PRO TV Chisinau went again to the CC in relation to the complaint filed by the four broadcasters (PRO TV Chisinau, RTR-Moldova, Jurnal TV and TV 8) regarding an alleged cartel agreement in the advertising market between Casa Media and Exclusive Sales House. PRO TV Chisinau claimed that it had not received an answer concerning the issuing of the investigation order and requested information on the status of the complaint. Furthermore, the broadcaster called for an urgent response from the council since the station was, “...substantially affected by this situation.” CC representatives declared that the investigation into the complaint was underway.⁹⁴
- ▶ At the beginning of June, the advertising market monopoly and the alleged cartel agreement were addressed at a meeting of the Parliamentary Committee for Economy, Budget and Finance with the participation of the CC President. Some MPs proposed interviewing the CC President during Parliament’s plenary session, but this request was rejected.⁹⁵
- ▶ In June, the RPAI CO decided to close the only correspondents’ center in Gagauzia-Yeri, the one in Copceac village “...for the purpose of optimizing expenses.”⁹⁶
- ▶ In June, API flagged a critical situation affecting most of the periodicals in the RM after companies importing newsprint from the RF announced a rise in the price of newsprint from EUR 620–650 per tonne to EUR 770 per tonne, an increase of 25% that seriously impacted periodicals.⁹⁷
- ▶ In late July, Jurnal TV announced it was going on a forced vacation for the entire month of August during which it was supposed to obtain new headquarters and run a fundraising campaign.⁹⁸ At the end of July, the TV station also made an appeal for fundraising to continue its work.⁹⁹
- ▶ At the beginning of August, media NGOs requested that the government preserve the orig-

⁸⁸ <http://topmedia.md/postul-de-televiziune-impuls-tv-isi-sistea-activitatea---101432.html>

⁸⁹ <http://jurnal.md/ro/economic/2018/3/21/curtea-de-conturi-a-constatat-abateri-de-circa-patru-milioane-de-lei-la-teleradio-moldova/#update-12608992>

⁹⁰ <https://www.europalibera.org/a/tortur%C4%83-%C3%AEn-penitenciare-traseism-politic-control-oligarhic-asupra-presei-raportul-departamentului-de-stat-desore-moldova-in-2017/29187609.html>

⁹¹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/reporteri-f%C4%83r%C4%83-frontiere-ate%C4%83-o-degradare-libert%C4%83%C8%9Bii-presei-%C3%AEn-%C8%9B%C4%83rile-ex-sovietice-%C8%99i-%C3%AEn>

⁹² <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/zilele-libert%C4%83%C8%9Bii-presei-mass-media-local%C4%83-caut%C4%83-solu%C8%9Bii-de-supravie%C8%9Buire>

⁹³ <http://topmedia.md/un-post-de-televiziune-din-r-moldova-isi-suspenda-activitatea---102661.html>

⁹⁴ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/pro-tv-chi%C8%99in%C4%83u-solicita%C4%83-repetat-intervent%C8%9Bia-autorit%C4%83%C8%9Bii-na%C8%9Bionale-pentru-protect%C8%9Bia>

⁹⁵ <http://jurnal.md/ro/news/c66882e9c2b6c8a6/monopolul-de-pe-piata-publicitatii-subiect-tabu-presedinta-consiliului-concurentei-ar-fi-bine-sa-nu-fie-atata-mediati-zare.html>

⁹⁶ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=40948>

⁹⁷ <https://unimedia.info/stiri/publicatiile-periodice-din-republica-moldova-s-au-pomenit-intr-o-situatie-critica-hartia-de-ziar-s-a-scurtit-cu-25-la-suta-156131.html>

⁹⁸ <http://www.jurnal.md/ro/news/89814e1cb21f4868/jurnal-tv-in-vacanta-fortata-pentru-toata-luna-august-val-butnaru-in-toamna-revenim-cu-o-televiziune-la-o-no-ua-treapta.html>

⁹⁹ <http://tv8.md/2018/07/27/video-sustine-echipa-tv8-acum-puteti-dona-pe-patreon-si-paypal/>

inal designation of the House of Press complex in Chisinau and not allow rates to rise for media outlets renting space in that building. The government had proposed that the House of Press complex be transferred to the management of the General Division for the Administration of Government Buildings. Some editors and journalists estimated that after the reorganization, rental rates in this building could rise again and that the entire complex might be put up for privatization.¹⁰⁰

- ▶ In mid-September, API demanded in a public call that Posta Moldovei SOE not abuse its dominant position in the distribution market. According to the call, the only distributor of periodicals in the country had imposed drastic conditions on editorial offices in service contracts for 2019. For instance, Posta Moldovei proposed that editorial offices provide it space on their front pages for the free placement of its advertisements and also reserved the right to modify the mark-up for the retail sale of periodicals even though that mark-up already constituted 36% of the sales price. It further sought the right to refuse to distribute periodicals if more than 50% of the quantity sent for sale were returned for three consecutive months.¹⁰¹
- ▶ In the first semester of the year, the number of subscribers to pay television dropped by 5800 (1.8%) compared with the end of last year and totalled 317,900. The volume of revenue from the sale of these services decreased by MDL 1.9 million (2.3%). The decrease in the total number of subscribers to pay television was determined by the smaller base of subscribers to cable television which over a period of six months decreased by 17,900 (9.7%) and totalled 166,300. At the same time, the subscriber base connected to the IPTV network increased by 12,200 (8.7%) and totalled 151,700. The turnover of cable television providers decreased by MDL 1.9 million compared with 2017 and that of IPTV network providers by MDL 67,300 and totalled MDL 32 million. As a result of this change, the average monthly income per subscriber to pay television decreased by 6 lei (13%).¹⁰²
- ▶ Station Jurnal TV which in late July had announced a month-long forced holiday resumed broadcasting after two months on 30 September.¹⁰³
- ▶ Exclusive Media SRL, a company founded by

PSRM MP Corneliu Furculita who owns NTV television station and the *Argumenty i Fakty* (*Arguments and Facts*) newspaper, had been under the scrutiny of anti-corruption prosecutors since July 2016. [Exclusive Media SRL had previously been mentioned in an investigation by RISE Moldova](#) and was involved in a large-scale money laundering criminal case. The case had been at the criminal prosecution stage for more than two years while prosecutors submitted requests to Switzerland for rogatory commissions.¹⁰⁴

- ▶ At the beginning of October, the BCC approved the regulation for selecting the company in charge of TV audience measurement. TV stations, advertising companies, and other major advertising stakeholders were to convene in a general meeting to initiate the process. For the first time in the RM, TV audiences will be measured by a company selected in line with a special regulation.¹⁰⁵
- ▶ Like Vlad Plahotniuc and Igor Dodon, politician Ilan Shor has built a media conglomerate with his Orhei TV and [Televiziunea Centrala](#) stations (formerly [Euro TV](#)). Some of the shows were to be anchored by people close to the mayor of Orhei such as his wife Jasmin or his deputy Diana Memet. According to management, the funding sources for the stations were obtained from “loans from several individuals and legal entities.” According to [Anticoruptie.md](#), officially the beneficiaries of the two TV stations are Rita Tvik, founder of the Novosti-Moldova News Agency, and her husband Vladimir Novosadiuc, head of Sputnik Moldova Agency. Their names appeared in the Kroll Report as Unibank shareholders who borrowed MDL 12 million from Harrogate Consulting LLP. The press reported in 2014 that together they facilitated the takeover of Euro TV and Alt TV by the mayor of Orhei. Rita Tvik is also the founder of Klassika Media SRL, the company that established Media Resources SRL and Alternativ-TV SRL. According to the statements submitted to the BCC, the company that owns the two TV stations is Media Resurse SRL.¹⁰⁶
- ▶ At the end of November, Parliament passed amendments to the Competition Law in the last reading according to which new rules specifically on economic media concentration were introduced that were different from those referring to concentrations in other areas.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ong-urile-de-media-%E2%80%99Ecasa-presei%E2%80%9D-trebuie-redat%C4%83-comunit%C4%83%C5%A3ii-jurnaliste>

¹⁰¹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/o-nou%C4%83-presiune-po%C8%99tei-moldovei-asu-pra-presei-scrise>

¹⁰² <https://radiochisinau.md/numarul-de-abonati-la-serviciile-tv-contr-plata-in-scade-re--74961.html>

¹⁰³ <http://www.jurnal.md/ro/news/49857771c393b841/jurnal-tv-revine-de-astazi-in-case-le-oamenilor-nu-ratati-relansarea-postului-de-televiziune-incepand-cu-ora-15-00.html>

¹⁰⁴ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/exclusiv-media-firma-fondatoare-postului-ntv-moldova-de-doi-ani-sub-lupa-procurorilor-oamenii>

¹⁰⁵ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/cca-aprobat-regulamentul-pentru-procedura-de-alegere-companiei-care-va-m%C4%83sura-audien%C8%9Bab-tv>

¹⁰⁶ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/concentrare-media-%C3%AEn-audiovizualul-moldovei-nou-televiziuni-de-la-orhei-afiliate-lui-ilan>

¹⁰⁷ <https://point.md/ru/novosti/ekonomika/zakonodatelstvo-dopolniat-normami-po-ot-senke-ekonomicheskoi-konsentratsii-v-smi>

- ▶ At the end of December, 76 broadcasters presented advertising conditions for electoral candidates to the BCC and the Central Electoral Commission (CEC). The TV stations owned by PDM leader Vladimir Plahotniuc charged the highest fees. He was the number one candidate in the PDM list for the national constituency as well as the candidate for the single-party Nisporeni constituency. Candidates were charged EUR 4,000 per minute of advertising on Prime TV and EUR 2,000 on Publika TV. The advertising fee set by Canal 2 and Canal 3 TV stations, the official owner of which is Oleg Cristal, political advisor of Vladimir Plahotniuc, was EUR 1,500 per minute. Televiziunea Centrala charged EUR 1,500 for one minute of advertising, while Orhei TV charged EUR 1,000. Both stations are affiliated with the Mayor of Orhei and the leader of the Shor Party, Ilan Shor. EUR 500 was the fee per minute on NTV Moldova and Exclusiv TV, both owned by socialist MP Corneliu Furculita. Accent TV, another PSRM affiliate which had previously donated funds to the party, charged EUR 50 per minute. The election advertising fee set by RTR Moldova was EUR 1,000 per minute, public television station Moldova 1 charged EUR 900 per minute, and Moldova 2 charged EUR 150. Pro TV Chisinau charged EUR 840 for broadcasting one minute of electoral material while EUR 500 was the fee for one minute on TV 8. N4 television station set a fee of EUR 480 per one minute while Jurnal TV charged EUR 400 and REN Moldova announced a fee of MDL 7,800 (less than EUR 400). With the exception of the television stations owned by Ilan Shor in Orhei, the other regional stations set their fees between MDL 3,600 and 4000 per one minute.¹⁰⁸

III.1.2. Experts' Opinions and Assessments

- ▶ Under the current circumstances, it is almost impossible to be economically independent, and thus editorially independent. Sometimes in order to keep afloat, media outlets disregard certain code of ethics provisions which in the long run becomes a major issue. In the conditions of an economic environment like this, however, it is often the only recourse. There is simply no other option.
- ▶ The economic situation does not favor the financial independence of media outlets. Pub-

lic media is not sufficiently funded to develop and deploy new technologies and to pay decent wages to employees. Under these circumstances, public media cannot cope with competition from private institutions. The competitive environment doesn't allow the media to cover all its expenses with advertising revenue. Under such conditions, mechanisms that have proved to work the best for obtaining additional funds have been collaborations, projects and co-productions. Not all media can afford to invest in development, including upgrading media products.

- ▶ There's only a handful of economically independent media outlets in Moldova. Most of the independent media depend financially on grants and donors.
- ▶ The economic environment has deteriorated, and some independent media outlets with independent editorial policies are near bankruptcy. The cartel agreement between politically controlled advertising agencies has had an impact on some TV stations. The considerable increase in the price of newsprint put print media in an extremely difficult situation. The authorities didn't want to get involved in solving these issues or in mitigating their effects on media outlets. Pressure and even intimidation from politically controlled advertising agencies intensified such that some editorial offices broke with the code of ethics and participated in denigration campaigns against the political opponents of the government. On the whole, the economic situation of the media has deteriorated considerably which has also affected editorial policies.
- ▶ That current level of economic media independence is due to projects and grants.
- ▶ In 2018, the concentration of media ownership under the domination of political interests and the monopolization of the advertising market continued to be pressing issues. Also in 2018, some media outlets in the RM continued to be tools of manipulation and disinformation as they were economically dependent on their final beneficiaries. Moreover, in addition to the two major media holdings, [a third one appeared](#), and the older holdings expanded, opening [regional offices](#).
- ▶ The economic environment in Gagauz-Yeri cannot contribute in any way to the financial and editorial independence of the media. With the exception of the regional public broadcaster, the other media are constantly looking for funds. The advertising market is not developing. Businesses do not advertise for fear of attracting the attention of tax authorities. There is very little commercial advertising coming from

¹⁰⁸ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/c%C3%A2t-e-taxa-pentru-apari%C8%9Bia-candida%C8%9Bilor-%C3%AEn-campania-electoral%C4%83-la-tv-prime-tv-vrea-4000-de>

the center. European grants are life savers, but even they are not so common in the regions.

- ▶ The media market is regulated sufficiently in terms economic management in the field. All forms of advertising are available in the market: There are advertising agencies and TV and online audience measurements. In terms of advertising products, the market is underdeveloped due to the small amount of available funds. Concurrently, advertising management firms (advertising sales houses) are used as tools for channeling advertising streams in an unfair manner.
- ▶ Generally, media in the Transnistrian region are economically unsustainable enterprises. The government and municipal press work on public budget money. The media controlled by Serif Holding is funded by the latter. Only a few media institutions survive on advertising, sales, and projects funded internationally.¹⁰⁹ The advertising market is underdeveloped. Newspaper circulation is small,¹¹⁰ the purchasing power of the population is weak, industry and agriculture have not recovered yet from the decline.

The first statement scored 15 points, three points less than last year, which corresponds to a very critical situation (0 – 16 points).

(2) Media are a) editorially independent, b) independent to a great extent, c) independent to a moderate extent, d) independent to a small extent, e) not independent.

The answers to this statement determine the following:

- *whether media outlets, regardless of financing, are editorially independent;*
- *whether owners, patrons, and financiers dictate or impose their editorial policies;*
- *if economic and financial factors are separate from editorial ones;*
- *whether advertisers, sponsors, and donors impose editorial conditions;*
- *if there is customized journalism;*
- *if there is party-affiliated media or party-funded media.*

III.2.1. Timeline of Events

- ▶ On 24 June, TV 10, which in May had announced it was closing due to lack of financial resources, resumed broadcasting thanks to investors from Romania.¹¹¹
- ▶ In mid-July, TV and online journalists from the six countries of the Eastern Partnership Region (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) were invited to apply for funding to produce investigative coverage on important topics such as corruption, freedom of expression, and violations of human rights. The funding was to be provided by the EU through the OPEN Media Fund Project.¹¹²
- ▶ At the end of October, the BCC approved the full membership of the committee that will select the TV audience measurement company. The tender committee is a collegial body made up of 15 voting members of whom 5 are representatives from the 5 broadcasters that had the highest revenue from TV advertising in 2018 except for election advertising; 5 are representatives of the 5 advertising agencies that had the highest revenue from TV advertising in 2018; and 5 are representatives of the 3 local advertising clients who allocated the highest budgets for TV advertising in 2018. Non-voting observers included two from the sales houses that earned the highest revenue from TV advertising in 2018 and two BCC members. The tender committee was to be convened based on the schedules of the committee members and with the approval of the BCC.¹¹³
- ▶ TV 10 staff announced that they had resigned *in corpore* because their management allegedly prohibited them from publishing a news item criticizing the government's decision to extradite Turkish citizens. In a Facebook post, a former employee of the TV station explained that the editorial team decided to resign as an act of solidarity with a colleague who had been sacked. He clarified that over the prior couple of weeks, the TV station's management had been suggesting how they should write about certain topics, but the journalists had ignored those recommendations. According to the author of the post, on 26 September the team was allegedly told not to publish the criticism of the Moldovan government by Helmut Scholz of the left-wing GUE/NGL group in the European Par-

¹⁰⁹ The 'Добрий день' newspaper, the Internet TV station 'Днестр-ТВ' and 'ЛИК-ТВ'.

¹¹⁰ 1000-1500 copies is considered a normal print run.

¹¹¹ <http://topmedia.md/postul-de-televiziune-10tv-revine-pe-micile-ecrane-datorita-investitorilor-din-romania-video---103000.html>

¹¹² <http://topmedia.md/jurnalistii-din-r-moldova-pot-obtine-finantare-europeana-pen-tru-proprie-reportaje-de-investigatie---103323.html>

¹¹³ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/cca-aprobat-componen%C8%9Ba-deplin%C4%83-comisi-ei-care-va-alege-compania-privind-m%C4%83surarea-cotelor-de>

liament, but despite those instructions, the team broadcast the item. No statement was ever made regarding this matter on either the website of TV 10 or on its Facebook page. When launched, TV 10 proclaimed itself to be the first independent TV channel in Moldova founded from donations and grants and, “informing viewers objectively on the realities in the Republic of Moldova and in the world.” It was launched in September 2016 in partnership with the newspaper *Tim-pul* led by Silviu Tanase and the Actiunea 2012 (Action 2012) unionist movement.¹¹⁴

- ▶ At the end of October, the BCC informed the broadcasters participating in the Broadcasting Program Project Selection Contest funded from the Broadcasting Support Fund for 2018 that in order to fairly and objectively provide financial resources for the production of the projects it needed the national public broadcaster to provide information on the cost of producing one minute of TV and radio broadcasting. The data provided by the public broadcaster showed that one minute of television broadcasting cost MDL 471 and one minute of radio broadcasting cost MDL 53.¹¹⁵
- ▶ Orhei TV and Televiziunea Centrala TV stations were launched on 8 November in Orhei on Town Day. In the first newscasts Ilan Sor played a key role. The director of the two TV stations, Dumitru Chitoroaga, stated that the broadcasts of the two stations would contain, “...only unbiased and impartial news from Moldova and abroad” and that their editorial policy would, “... stay as far as possible away from politics.”¹¹⁶
- ▶ In November, 11 months after filing, the CC was still investigating the complaint of four broadcasters regarding a potential cartel agreement between two advertising sales houses. PRO TV Chisinau, RTR-Moldova, Jurnal TV and TV 8 had [lodged](#) a complaint with the CC on 19 January 2018 in which they accused Casa Media and Exclusive Sales House of concluding a cartel agreement. The CC had yet to provide a clear answer to the question. According to the complaint, Casa Media and Exclusive Sales own 75% of the advertising market and share the customers’ budgets in a ratio of 80% to 20%, offering additional discounts of up to 50% to those who conclude exclusive contracts with them. The representatives of the two advertising sales houses denied the existence of a cartel agreement.¹¹⁷

III.2.2. Experts’ Opinions and Assessments

- ▶ For the most part, the media are not editorially independent. It is obvious that patrons and funders dictate the editorial policy of some private media outlets.
- ▶ The media is largely biased and serves one political party or another. Nonetheless, the media that depend on grants manage to maintain editorial independence.
- ▶ The independent press continues to depend on grants provided by international organizations which means that we must wonder how long the independent press will still be around. Audience donations are too small to guarantee financial sustainability, and revenue from advertising covers an insufficient part of the expenditures that a media outlet needs to make.
- ▶ Since many media outlets are owned by, affiliated with, or connected to politics, obviously we cannot speak about them being editorially independent. Instead of informing their audiences fairly, they are rather the press and PR services of their owners and their entourages, either openly or secretly.
- ▶ A diversity of financial resources in media outlets’ budgets and the business model of the independent media outlet remain an unfulfilled dream.
- ▶ After decades of investing in their own infrastructure for production and broadcasting, regional broadcasters cannot afford digitization. They cannot afford either the EUR 5,600 monthly that Radiocomunicatii SOE charges for a place in the multiplex or the minimum investment of EUR 200,000 required to adapt existing infrastructure to broadcast a digital television signal and the transition to online platforms. TV stations in Chisinau can also barely cope with reality, but those in the country’s regions face an even worse situation.
- ▶ Editorial independence that naturally results from financial independence hardly exists in the Moldovan media arena. The outlets with large budgets are the ones most often warned by civil society regarding non-compliance with ethical norms.
- ▶ There are very few independent TV stations, and it is hard for them to persevere in the media market under today’s circumstances.
- ▶ For several years the BCC has granted money for the development of regional media from the Broadcasting Support Fund as part of the Broad-

¹¹⁴ <http://topmedia.md/redactia-postului-10-tv-concediata-in-urma-unui-reportaj-cespun-jurnalistii-104266.html>

¹¹⁵ <http://cca.md/news/n-aten-ia-radiodifuzorilor-8>

¹¹⁶ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/%C3%AEn-primul-buletin-de-%C8%99tiri-de-la-%E2%80%99Eteleviziunea-centrala-C4%83%E2%80%9D-ilan-%C8%99or-le-promis-orheienilor-c4%83-%C3%AEn>

¹¹⁷ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/consiliul-concuren%C8%9Bei-%C3%AEnc%C4%83-mai-%E2%80%99Einvestigheaz%C4%83%E2%80%9D-%E2%80%93-de-11-luni-pl%C3%A2ngerea-patru-radiodifuzori>

casting Program Project Selection Contest. In 2018, however, certain segments of regional media were barred from participating in the contest, and outlets that obtained funds in 2017 were asked to reimburse some of the money without offering a plausible reason for the request. Regional broadcasters that believed they had been wronged sued the BCC even though they had little hope of winning. Many regional media outlets may disappear because of this attitude. Journalists often write what their patron likes out of fear of losing their jobs.

- Editorial independence could be strengthened if all editorial offices published their editorial

policies and if they were publicly committed to them, irrespective of who the patrons were. Otherwise, journalists will remain controlled by their patrons, regardless of whether they are pro-government or pro-opposition. In real terms, I believe that media with independent editorial policies account for no more than 10% of the media market.

- In the Transnistrian region, media funded from the state budget or the holding's sources cannot be editorially independent. Only a few private media outlets try to keep both economic and editorial independence.

The second statement scored 17 points, one less than last year, which means the situation is critical.

According to the experts, the economic environment of media scored 16 in 2018, regressing by two points compared with last year, which means the situation is very critical (0–17).

IV. PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The indicator contains two statements.

(1) *The professionalization of the media is: a) sufficient, b) sufficient for the most part, c) largely sufficient, d) sufficient to a small extent, e) insufficient.*

The choices establish whether there are standard elements of professionalization, i.e., a common body of knowledge (theory and practice of democratic journalism), educational institutions (faculties, courses of all durations, ongoing training courses); codes of ethics (for journalists and institutions including media outlets); and professional associations (employers' associations, trade unions, clubs, NGOs).

IV.1.1. Timeline of Events

- ▶ On 31 January, the Moldovan PC and the Ombudsperson protecting children's rights, Maia Banarescu, held discussions at the round table "Observance of the Abused Child's Rights: Duties of Journalists and Public Institutions." The participants highlighted the latest cases of serious violations of the rights of child victims of any form of abuse and the responsibilities of public institutions in this regard as well any negative effects of the media's incorrect approach to topics related to abused children.¹¹⁸
- ▶ In mid-February, the **PC launched district focus groups on journalists' ethics and accountability. The first meeting was held in Orhei.**¹¹⁹
- ▶ To help journalists in Moldova report on cases of sexual violence more fairly, the PC developed [guidelines](https://consiliuldepresa.md/ro/news/view/mas-rotund-respectarea-drepturilor-copii-lui-abuzat-obligatiile-jurnalistilor-i-ale-institutiilor-publi) containing key recommendations for writing about rape, sexual assaults, and sexual harassment. The guidelines were published on the PC website thus providing free access to all those interested.¹²⁰
- ▶ At the beginning of March on the occasion of the International Open Data Day, the e-Government Center and the Youth Development for Innovation Foundation organized a press club attended by investigative journalists, editorialists, bloggers, online opinion leaders, media NGOs, the private sector, and the IT sector. During the event, the three-month-long national campaign "Do You Know What Your Government Does?" was launched. It involved access to and the usefulness of open data in areas such as the media, the non-governmental sector, IT, and business. International Open Data Day has been celebrated for seven consecutive years as an initiative of countries that want transparent, efficient, and open governance for their citizens developed on the basis of new information technologies.¹²¹
- ▶ In mid-March, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Moldova invited journalists to attend the UN Human Rights Academy to be held in Comrat. The courses were split into three modules and taught by UN experts who were winners of human rights awards in various years, and were scheduled from April through June. They included practical activities like developing and publishing at least two articles on a given topic. The author of the best articles was to go to Geneva in early 2019 to cover the session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The academy started activities in Chisinau in 2016.¹²²
- ▶ In mid-April, students of the Faculty of Journalism and Sciences of Communication participated in media education training with IJC representatives. Fake news; bots; and manipulation by playing with people's feelings, photos, and text were discussed. Young journalists were trained to obtain accurate information and what tools to use to check it, thus developing critical thinking—an indispensable element for a journalist-to-be.¹²³
- ▶ The first Zinefest Chisinau Festival was launched

¹¹⁸ <https://consiliuldepresa.md/ro/news/view/mas-rotund-respectarea-drepturilor-copii-lui-abuzat-obligatiile-jurnalistilor-i-ale-institutiilor-publi>

¹¹⁹ <https://consiliuldepresa.md/ro/news/view/consiliul-de-pres-a-dat-start-cluburilor-de-discu-ii-n-regiuni>

¹²⁰ <https://consiliuldepresa.md/ro/news/view/consiliul-de-pres-a-elaborat-un-ndrumar-de-reflectare-n-pres-a-cazurilor-de-abuz-sexual>

¹²¹ <http://egov.md/ro/communication/events/club-de-presa>

¹²² <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=39243>

¹²³ <http://jurnalism.usm.md/?p=2530>

at Moldova State University on 16 May under the project Media-Zine: from Theory to Practice that was initiated by a representative of the Moldovan diaspora in Poland. The project was in operation from 10 to 16 May. Students of the Faculty of Journalism and Sciences of Communication participated in training to inform them about progress and concepts in media sciences and to enhance their skills by developing analytical and critical thinking as well as some entrepreneurial skills. After training, the students created their own work and presented it at the festival. The project was implemented under the Diaspora Engagement Hub Government Grant Program by the State Chancellery via the Bureau for Diaspora Relations and funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.¹²⁴

- ▶ The Ongoing Training Centre under the NPAI was officially inaugurated on 14 June. The Centre was created as part of the project Promoting Media Freedom and Pluralism in the Republic of Moldova financially supported by the EU and the CoE and has a training room for courses equipped with state-of-the-art equipment. Initially, courses were to be conducted by 10 in-house trainers for over 150 employees of Tel-radio Moldova Company in 2018.¹²⁵
- ▶ In June, Agora.md reported that students at the Academy of Citizen Journalism (ACJ) visited its studio to see with their own eyes how video material is produced on line. They created their own newscast and presented it in front of the teleprompter. ACJ aims to minimize the influence of propaganda in Moldova by theoretical and practical education and by training a new generation of carefully selected participatory journalists. Citizen journalism implies that people without professional training in journalism can use modern tools and the Internet to check, monitor, share, and analyze topics of public interest independently or in collaboration with others. The ACJ project is implemented with the financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation.¹²⁶
- ▶ At the end of June, the public association Lawyers for Human Rights launched the [VreauInfo.md](http://vreauinfo.md) platform to facilitate requesting information of public interest. The association's representatives believe that this website will be useful not only for citizens but also for investigative journalists, civil society representatives, and civic activists as well. Public institutions in their turn

will not incur postal or printing expenses. This platform was created under the multi-annual project Respect the Right to Public Information through Strategic Litigation and by Creating an Open-Source Platform for Making Public Freedom of Information Requests to Public Bodies funded by Freedom House, a partner of Internews in implementing the project Media Enabling Democracy, Inclusion, and Accountability in Moldova' funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).¹²⁷

- ▶ In late August, the School of Advanced Journalism in Chisinau in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft e. V. in Berlin announced the launch of a joint project aimed at creating a Moldovan-German network of journalists. The project was dedicated to young German and Moldovan journalists who are to bring to the forefront the impact of the European Neighbourhood Policy in the Republic of Moldova, to throw light on our country, and to promote cooperation with German partners.¹²⁸
- ▶ In September, the BCC held the regional workshops Broadcasting Content: Competition, Regulation, Creativity, and Social Dynamics in Cahul and Balti for local broadcasters and service distributors. The seminars were attended by representatives of state institutions and civil society who cooperated with media outlets on topics regarding children in situations of violence and abuse; accidents; suicide or suicide attempts; sexual abuse; physical or mental violence; HIV/AIDS infection; basic ethical standards in media products; protecting the identity of children in negative situations; and non-discrimination against children and their parents by ethnicity, social status, or disability.¹²⁹
- ▶ The Centre for Investigative Journalism team, the Anticoruptie.md team and a photo reporter, and members of API decided not to cover the PDM National Assembly For Moldova organized in Chisinau on 21 October to protest the PDM's earlier decision to restrict the access of TV 8 and Jurnal TV journalists to events organized at PDM headquarters. The journalists ignored the event both because, "Over the past years, since the PDM came into power, access to information of public interest has deteriorated considerably," but also due to the more frequent attacks of trolls affiliated with the party against journalists and in social media including thefts of images and cloning some journalists' personal pages.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ <https://brd.gov.md/ro/content/lansarea-primei-editii-festivalului-zinefest-chisinau>

¹²⁵ <http://trm.md/ro/comunicate/compania-teleradio-moldova-lanseaza-centrul-de-instruire-continua/>

¹²⁶ <http://agora.md/stiri/46968/video--buletinul-curiozitatilor--prezentat-de-studentii-academiei-de-jurnalism-participativ>

¹²⁷ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/vreauinfomd-o-nou%C4%83-platform%C4%83-care-automatizeaz%C4%83-solicitatea-informa%C8%9Bilor-de-interes-public>

¹²⁸ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/oportunitate-re%C8%9Bbeaua-moldo-german%C4%83-de-jurnal%C8%99ti-porne%C8%99te-online>

¹²⁹ <http://cca.md/news/cca-desf-urat-primul-seminar-la-cahul>

¹³⁰ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/unii-jurnal%C8%99ti-au-renun%C8%9Bla-s%C4%83-reflecte->

- ▶ At the end of November during the 2018 Media Forum, the guest speaker President Aiste Zilinskiene of the Lithuanian Internet Media Association said that she had helped Moldovan colleagues develop a new code of ethics for journalists that would meet democratic standards and the new challenges in the field. PC President Viorica Zaharia said that a first version of the code had already been developed and that it would be sent to journalists for consultation.¹³¹

IV.1.2. Experts' Opinions and Assessments

- ▶ Fewer and fewer good students graduate from journalism faculties, and affiliated media outlets providing higher salaries lure the best ones. All editorial offices can do in order to have skilled staff is to begin teaching journalism to pupils, not even to freshmen.
- ▶ The media has access to a range of courses and training to improve performance and to develop.
- ▶ Educational institutions take as a basis the theory and practice of modern journalism. The provisions of the Code of Ethics meet international requirements, but they are not always observed.
- ▶ It is very difficult for journalists in Moldova to adapt to the new realities of the Internet age. New media take a long time to appear, particularly in the regions.
- ▶ Speaking in purely technical terms, media professionalization is more than sufficient for a market like Moldova's. We have enough universities and graduates. However, in professional terms, very few of them can enter an editorial office and fully tap into their journalistic skills.
- ▶ Regarding ethics, the key mission of any editorial office is to inform the audience, so it follows the provisions of the Moldovan Journalists' Code of Ethics irrespective of whether the office committed to following it at the PC or not. At the same time, reality shows that for many outlets this code is just a mishmash of words. Since the PC is an institution recognized only by media of good faith, currently only readers/viewers can directly accuse the editorial office of violating ethical norms.
- ▶ Things haven't changed significantly in this respect. The faculties in this field are late in re-orienting their curricula to the actual needs of the media market. This gap to some extent is covered by professionalization programs implemented by NGOs and various internal and international bodies. Concurrently, politically controlled media trusts prefer to train their collaborators in-house and do not allow them, with a few exceptions, to participate in external programs and training.
- ▶ Journalists have access to professional training courses organized in Moldova and abroad. Furthermore, the quality of education at the faculties of journalism has improved compared to the 2000s, but the extent to which it meets the needs of the market is still limited.
- ▶ Although there are media education institutions, I think that they are not effective because the quality of education is far from what the market demands.
- ▶ Even if there are several faculties of journalism in the RM, I notice a shortage of journalists. Many editorial offices are looking for reporters but cannot find them. In addition to the fact that few graduates of journalism faculties choose to work in the media, many of them do not have the necessary skills, and editorial offices that hire them must invest resources, especially time, in their training. I believe that universities should change the way they train future journalists. A good example would be the School of Advanced Journalism. Although it trains a small number of people a year, it provides journalists who later prove to be very good.
- ▶ The diversity of projects provides professional training opportunities including distance education. The problem, however, is about where the well-trained people are employed. On the one hand, journalists receive the necessary professional training at the university. Subsequently, they participate in various workshops and training with national and international experts organized by professional associations. On the other hand, in recent years, more and more media outlets face staffing gaps as finding good media managers, journalists, and technicians has become a real challenge.
- ▶ The faculties of journalism are still very weak. In most cases, what students are taught doesn't meet the requirements of the market (audience, beneficiary).
- ▶ Journalists are also trained at the university in Gagauz-Yeri, but very few of them work in the media after graduation. Paradoxically, we prepare staff, but we do not have staff. Almost all editorial offices have professionals who train their own colleagues. Workshops, round ta-

adunarea-na%C5%A3ional%C4%83-pdm-pentru-moldova-%E2%80%9E%C3%AEntre-misiunea-de-relata-corect-evenimentele-%C8%99i-presiunea

¹³¹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/forumul-mass-media-2018-jurnalistul-%C3%AEntre-misiunea-de-relata-corect-evenimentele-%C8%99i-presiunea>

bles, training sessions, etc. are organized both in the regions and in Chisinau, to which some very good experts are invited. At the same time, the phenomenon of headhunting is widespread among editorial offices. Competition in the labor market is not fair.

- ▶ The Republic of Moldova has faculties of journalism, but they do not have enough resources and skills to educate professional journalists. Furthermore, there's no academic training for some media professions. Media NGOs contribute to the education of journalists by sporadi-

cally organizing training in various topics. Regarding entertainment shows, video products, etc., the overall effort is not enough.

- ▶ At the faculty of journalism at the university in the Transnistrian region, students get theoretical training only. At present, journalists can get appropriate training only if they participate in training organized by NGOs. There is a code of ethics in the Transnistrian region developed by the Union of Transnistrian Journalists, but not all journalists are familiar with its provisions.

The first statement scored 31 points, one point more than in the previous year, which means that the situation is marked by serious problems (28-38 points).

(2) Media professionalization is a) efficient, b) efficient for the most part, c) largely efficient, d) efficient to a small extent, e) inefficient.

The answers to this statement determine whether standard elements are appropriate and functional; maximum use is made of each element; educational institutions are guided by theory and practice of modern journalism; codes of ethics not only meet international requirements but are also observed; and professional associations at all levels are effective and serve the media's benefit.

IV.2.1. Timeline of Events

- ▶ On World Press Freedom Day celebrated annually on 3 May, the Moldovan PC launched **the campaign "The Media Can Be Accountable. We Sign the Code of Ethics!"** Editorial offices that had not yet publicly adhered to professional standards were asked to sign the Code of Ethics thus confirming their commitment to accountability to the public.¹³²
- ▶ At the beginning of April, the PC sent an open letter to the Ombudsperson for protecting children's rights saying that on Orthodox Easter eve some politicians and parties posted pictures that showed them giving presents to families in need on social media and in the press. Some captions mentioned the poverty and vulnerability of the recipients while in other cases this was clear in the pictures. Children living in poverty were displayed and information about their families' lives was also disclosed. This amounts to exploiting children's images for political purposes which is prohibited by the legislation protecting children's rights. That legislation states that such public disclosures are

not allowed if the best interests of the child are affected. In these cases, identifying and deliberately presenting children in a context meant to generate pity and compassion can affect their development in a friendly and secure environment. The PC condemned such promotions and urged the Ombudsperson to take action.¹³³

- ▶ In September, 15 reporters, video operators, and photographers from radio and TV stations and from the written media in the country participated in the 2018 Press Cup organized by the National Army. They competed in three contests: passing an obstacle course with military elements, target pistol shooting, and submachine gun shooting. The project was initiated in 2011 to strengthen collaborative relationships between the Ministry of Defence and media outlets in Moldova.¹³⁴
- ▶ As a result of the campaign "The Media Can Be Accountable. We Sign the Code of Ethics!" conducted throughout 2018, 115 media outlets and organizations had **signed** the Journalists Code of Ethics by November. The PC, the initiator of the campaign, urged editorial offices that had not done so to sign the Code of Ethics and concurrently to tell the public.¹³⁵

¹³² <https://consiliuldepresa.md/ro/news/view/consiliul-de-pres-a-lansat-campania-presa-poate-fi-responsabil-semnm-codul-deontologic>

¹³³ <https://consiliuldepresa.md/ro/news/view/oprii-exploatarea-imaginii-copilor-n-sco-puri-politice>

¹³⁴ <http://www.army.md/?lng=2&action=show&cat=122&obj=5213#.XEgmBlwzM8>

¹³⁵ <https://consiliuldepresa.md/ro/news/view/campania-presa-poate-fi-responsabil-semnm-codul-deontologic-continuu-alte-patru-redatii-i-au-declarat>

- ▶ In October, the Government Press Club was organized for the first time. Pension reform was debated at the first meeting. The event gathered representatives of media outlets and civil servants responsible for the implementation of pension reform. The government promised to hold meetings of the press club in future to discuss topics of social importance.¹³⁶
- ▶ At the beginning of December, the IJC and the Expert Forum from Romania held a press club during which political clients and tools to investigate fraud in public procurement and the illegal funding of political parties were debated. On this occasion, the forum launched a guide for journalists, civic activists, subject-matter experts, and ordinary citizens to allow for a step-by-step analysis of client-like behaviors.¹³⁷
- ▶ In December, the PC awarded the winner of the National Award for Journalistic Ethics and Deontology to *SP* the weekly newspaper from Balti. In all, 16 media outlets participated in this annual contest. The award was given at the 2018 Journalists of the Year Gala (24th edition) organized by the IJC and the Press Freedom Committee.¹³⁸

IV.2.2. Experts' Opinions and Assessments

- ▶ Although we have faculties of journalism, they fail to develop the students' skills required today in the media market.
- ▶ The Code of Ethics for the most part meets international standards, but it is not observed even by its signatories. Regarding professional associations, in many cases they are only perfunctory, and sometimes they act and react selectively, not necessarily for the benefit of the media.
- ▶ I believe that media managers are the biggest problem. They are not specifically trained at journalism faculties, and accordingly cannot make quality products that they can sell. There are reasons why the process of professionalization is not effective.
- ▶ We have enough educational institutions, but their effectiveness is questionable. Graduates often cannot stick to their guns in editorial offices, and they wind up studying one thing and doing otherwise in practice. The diffuse media market has a particular role in this as the quality of the product is very easily replaced by efficiency but at a cost.
- ▶ Reality shows us that for many media outlets the Code of Ethics is just a document, not an obligation they are committed to observing.
- ▶ Currently, there are great training opportunities for journalists including abroad, but few seize them. Not knowing English continues to be an impediment.
- ▶ There are many journalism graduates, but a good many of them choose to work in other areas which reduces drastically the educational institutions' efficiency. Furthermore, many journalists have left Moldova in recent years.
- ▶ The efficiency of the professionalization process is mostly due to the efforts of media NGOs or non-governmental projects. Local media particularly benefit from these opportunities; however, once well trained, professionals from local/regional television stations are easily recruited by those with large budgets in the capital city, and employee turnover remains unchanged or even increases. Thus, the migration of professionals leaves a hole in local editorial offices.
- ▶ Can we even talk about the efficiency of professionalization? The avalanche of fake, denigrating, and politically ordered news demonstrates the real state of inefficiency and unprofessionalism.
- ▶ Ethical norms in ATUG are very often violated, possibly due to the lack of trade unions or strong media NGOs capable of protecting journalists facing pressure from the authorities.
- ▶ In the Transnistrian region there is no information on cases when the Union of Journalists or the Transnistrian trade unions would have supported journalists. The Central Media NGO provides free legal aid to the media, but in 2018 no one requested such support.

The second statement scored 23 points, one point less than in the previous year, which means the situation is critical (17–27 points).

According to the experts, the professional environment of the media in 2018 scored 27 points which is similar to the previous year and means the situation is critical (17–27 points).

¹³⁶ <https://gov.md/ro/content/lansarea-clubului-de-presa-al-guvernului-subiectul-reformei-pensiilor-dezbatus-prim-a-sedinta>

¹³⁷ <https://investigatii.md/ro/opportunitati/conferinta-club-de-presa-efor-lanseaza-detectorul-de-clientelism-la-chisinau>

¹³⁸ <https://consiliuldepresa.md/ro/page/noutati>

V. QUALITY OF JOURNALISM

The indicator contains three statements.

(1) External pluralism a) exists, b) exists for the most part, c) exists to a large extent, d) exists to a small extent, e) does not exist.

The answers to this statement determine if there is a variety of media of all types and levels (print, audiovisual, online, central, regional/local/community, international, public, private, generalist, and niche/specialised) and if there is an acceptable/reasonable proportion of media of all types.

V.1.1. Timeline of Events

- ▶ In late April, the BCC approved the broadcasting license for TVN which was to operate in the north of the country in Balti as a generalist channel. According to the broadcasting grid, TVN was supposed to broadcast its own information and analytical programs and newscasts on events happening in Moldova's 11 northern districts in Romanian and Russian as well as a talk show every day. The editorial office was to collaborate with the Vasile Alecsandri National Theatre in Balti to produce entertainment and children's shows. According to the State Registration Chamber, the founder and only shareholder of the station was Eugeniu Muntean a businessman in Balti who committed to funding the work of TVN in the years to come. It was registered on 10 April 2018. The company was to hire a total of 30 people.¹³⁹
- ▶ Media experts who monitored the implementation of the 2017–2019 National Action Plan Implementing the EU-Moldova Association Agreement concluded that when it comes to media, the document mainly refers to the development of broadcasting at the expense of print and online media. That is why experts recommended revising the Action Plan to take into account the development of the entire media system and to bring it closer to European standards.¹⁴⁰
- ▶ In mid-August, regional online portals in Drochia, Balti, Ialoveni, Basarabeasca, and Comrat presented their media platforms. They wanted to diversify independent sources of information for rural areas. The launching of the platforms was possible with the support of external partners under the project Supporting Start-ups in Online Media in the Regions of Moldova and the Professionalization of Regional Press to Ensure Objective Information and Make Local Elected Officials More Accountable implemented by API and funded by the Government of Great Britain.¹⁴¹
- ▶ In September, the BCC approved by a majority of votes the change of name of Euro TV in Orhei to Televiziunea Centrala. This TV station is affiliated with Ilan Shor, Mayor of Orhei and Shor Party leader. According to the press, the takeover of Euro TV and of Alt TV by the mayor of Orhei was brokered in 2014 by the couple Rita Tvik and Vladimir Novasadiuc (both mentioned in the Kroll Report commissioned by Moldovan authorities to investigate bank fraud).¹⁴²
- ▶ In early October in Chisinau, a documentary series in the reality television genre about the lives of employees at emergency services and the police was launched. The pilot project "24 FRONT LINE" was implemented by the Realitatea [Reality] Group and was created by the Milk Films Video Production House with financial support from the European Endowment for Democracy Content Fund. For two weeks, the Front Line team followed the staff of emergency services and police on emergency calls, accidents, and cases of aggression and domestic violence among others. Four camera crews documented the protagonists' personal stories and the day-to-day work of doctors and police officers around the clock. As part of the project, which followed a pilot video,

¹³⁹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/la-b%C4%83%C8%9Bi-va-ap%C4%83rea-un-nou-post-de-televiziune-%E2%80%93-tvn>

¹⁴⁰ <http://media-azi.md/ro/la-cji?page=18>

¹⁴¹ <http://trm.md/ro/social/cinci-portaluri-media-on-line-regionale-lansate-cu-susurul-guvernului-marii-britanii/>

¹⁴² <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/cca-binecuv%C3%A2ntat-%E2%80%99Televiziunea-central%C4%83%E2%80%9D-de-la-orhei>

45-minute-long episodes were supposed to be produced.¹⁴³

- ▶ On 18 December, the BCC approved the application for a broadcasting license for the new television station Orizont TV managed by a company registered on 4 December 2018. According to the representatives of the new station, it would broadcast cultural and children's shows and would not get involved in the soon-to-start election campaign. It would be an apolitical channel.¹⁴⁴

V.1.2. Experts' Opinions and Assessments

- ▶ There is a variety of media of all types.
- ▶ The country has multiple and diverse media but not enough niche publications.
- ▶ We can say there's external pluralism.
- ▶ For the most part, the media is concentrated in Chisinau; this fact is also reflected in the content of the newscasts which are based on events mainly in the central part of the country.
- ▶ Apparently, there is a certain amount of media diversity, but the geographical proportions (national versus local and regional) are unsatisfactory. At the same time, external pluralism is strongly marked by the political affiliation of many beneficial owners of media organizations.
- ▶ External pluralism exists to only a small extent in the Republic of Moldova because the information space is still dominated by Russian media outlets. The most watched TV stations in our country broadcast shows from the RF, and the most popular newspaper is also a Russian one. Although there are also several Romanian and international TV stations, their number is much smaller compared with the Russian ones.
- ▶ In 2018, Moldovan media did not make any progress in this regard. We have various media types, but there is no internal pluralism.
- ▶ There is diversity, but some journalism genres are avoided both for financial and professional reasons. There is no diversity of international TV channels with translation/subtitling in Romanian. Channels in Russian prevail.

- ▶ There is external pluralism in Gagauz-Yeri ensured by many audiovisual, public private, and online media outlets
- ▶ In the Republic of Moldova, media diversity developed thanks to the efforts of a number of media groups to establish all types of media: TV, radio, online, and print, although the last is losing its popularity.
- ▶ There is a range of media of all types in the Transnistrian region. Nevertheless, the shortage of media outlets/products in languages other than Russian is noticeable.

This statement averaged 37 points, one point more than in the previous year, which means that the situation is marked by serious problems (28–38 points).

(2) Internal pluralism a) exists, b) exists for the most part, c) exists to a large extent, d) exists to a small extent, e) does not exist.

The answers to this statement determine if there is a variety of media products (such as journalism genres, topics, geography, protagonists, and authors taking into account gender balance) in each media outlet regardless of type.

V.2.1. Timeline of Events

- ▶ On 20 February, the NPAI announced the relaunching of the Telefilm Chisinau documentary production studio with the support of European partners. The studio intended to make 10 films in 2018, 6 of which were to be funded by the EU and CoE under the project Promoting Media Freedom and Pluralism in the Republic of Moldova. TeleFilm Chisinau is an art association making artistic films, documentaries, and musical films that was founded in 1959.¹⁴⁵
- ▶ The first documentary produced at TeleFilm Chisinau after the studio reopened was "Slovenia mea cu Ala Adamia" ["My Slovenia with Ala Adamia"], and was screened in Chisinau at the Patria-Loteanu Cinema on 27 February. The film presented the culture, traditions, and people of Slovenia through the eyes of our compatriot Ala Adamia who had lived in that country for eight years. The TeleFilm Chisinau team noted that the next documentaries will focus on Croatia,

¹⁴³ <http://topmedia.md/video-15-un-serial-documentar-in-format-reality-despre-viata-angajatilor-serviciilor-de-urgenta-si-a-politiei-a-fost-lansat-la-chisinau---104290.html>

¹⁴⁴ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/o-nou%C4%83-televiziune-la-ORIZONT-cca-aprobat-li-cen%C8%9Ba-de-emisie-pentru-ORIZONT-TV>

¹⁴⁵ <http://trm.md/ro/social/documentarele-telefilm-chisinau-in-curand-pe-micile-ecrane/>

Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, and Czech Republic.¹⁴⁶

- ▶ In mid-May at a press conference, the management of Radio Patrino announced that a radio show to promote Roma women and young people would be launched in the following months. During a live show of about one hour, listeners will be able to call in or send messages with questions for the experts present in the studio. Successful Roma people and the problems the Roma community struggles with are very rarely written about, which was a reason for launching the program. As a rule, only their weddings and luxury homes or some of their traditions are covered by the media, but almost always on a negative manner.¹⁴⁷
- ▶ Elita TV in Rezina produced six debate programs called “*Asa cum este*” [“*As It Is*”], and had them translated into sign language as well, thus becoming the first regional TV channel offering this type of service. The institution’s management is looking for funds to continue the project while the BCC highlighted that not all TV stations have complied with the obligation to ensure daily interpretations of at least one newscast into sign language. The lack of sign language professionals is another issue in this case. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Research should act, and universities should educate sign language professionals.¹⁴⁸
- ▶ In mid-September, two more documentaries were released by the TeleFilm Chisinau studio of NPAI: “*Teatrul Mare din Soroca*” [“*The Big Theatre in Soroca*”] and “*Legamint*” [“*The Vow*”]. Studio funding was renewed with European partners’ support.¹⁴⁹

V.2.2. Experts’ Opinions and Assessments

- ▶ Media outlets generally have a wide range of products. The whole range, however, is covered only by public television.
- ▶ Considered separately, each media outlet suffers from a lack of diversity of products they offer to the public including specific topics or genres, audio/video content, games and entertainment shows.
- ▶ Internal pluralism is problematic. Few media outlets have truly diversified content; most of them focus on making news and analytical shows. The remaining air time is filled with re-broadcasts from abroad.
- ▶ Internal pluralism is deficient, particularly when it comes to the topics and geography of coverage (most are from Chisinau and focus on the work of Parliament, the government, city hall, etc.). In many cases, the principle of gender equality among protagonists was not observed.
- ▶ As we have trusts and each of them owns several TV stations that broadcast the same news, we cannot speak about authentic internal pluralism in these circumstances.
- ▶ There’s some internal pluralism, predominantly at the local level. The lack of financial resources influences the quality of the media in the Republic of Moldova. For instance, broadcasters had to cover a massively re-broadcast program grid in 2018 to have the volume stipulated by law.
- ▶ Few TV stations allow people to hear the opinions of the general public in one program. In fact, the public doesn’t quite get the chance to listen to a diversified range of opinions. Furthermore, some TV stations and online and print platforms form an information chain originating from the same “command point.” The same information, like a carbon copy, moves from one source of information to another and thus shapes (misinforms) public opinion.
- ▶ Internal pluralism is a big problem. Even regional public broadcasters with nearly 60 employees cannot ensure a diversity of programs, not to mention private outlets with up to 10 employees. There are almost no genres such as investigative journalism, success stories of young entrepreneurs, shows about the lives of villagers, history shows, children’s shows, etc.
- ▶ Most of the media in the Transnistrian region operate with the support of either the author-

¹⁴⁶ <http://trm.md/ro/social/studioul-telefilm-chisinau-a-lansat-primul-film-documentar-slovenia-mea-cu-ala-adamia/>

¹⁴⁷ <http://topmedia.md/program-radio-pentru-promovarea-femeilor-si-tinerilor-de-etnie-roma-la-radio-patrin---102531.html>

¹⁴⁸ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/elita-tv-realizat-%C3%AEn-premier%C4%83-pentru-un-post-regional-emisiuni-traduse-%C3%AEn-limbajul-mimico>

¹⁴⁹ <http://trm.md/ro/cultura/doua-noi-documentare-marca-telefilm-chisinau-au-fost-lansate-la-chisinau/>

ities, or Serif Holding Company. These media outlets are technically well equipped, but they adhere to the editorial policy dictated by their patrons. Although private media exists, it is negligible in terms of number and influence and cannot provide actual internal pluralism.

The second statement scored 28 points, one point more than in the previous year, which means the situation is marked by serious problems (28–38 points).

(3) The media is a) quality, b) quality for the most part, c) largely quality, d) quality to a small extent, e) there's no quality media.

The answers to this statement determine whether (i) media products are produced according to professional and technical standards; (ii) media products are offered appropriately (what, when, and how radio/TV programs are proposed, what cable TV packages are proposed, how print and online media are framed); (iii) the quality of media products is compromised by deviations from professional standards (propaganda, misinformation, manipulation, etc.).

V.31. Timeline of Events

- ▶ In mid-May, the BCC fined several television broadcasters for violating the law on the coverage of the election campaign of 20 May. BCC members found that some broadcasters compromised themselves in this campaign and showed clearly which candidate they supported. TV 8, Accent TV, NTV Moldova, Exclusiv TV, RTR Moldova and Jurnal TV were fined MDL 5,000, and Ren Moldova¹⁵⁰ was fined MDL 7,500.
- ▶ In the Report on the Monitoring of Media Behavior During the Election Period published by the IJC on 22 May, most of the media monitored between 12 and 19 May 2018 did not provide equal access to all candidates, did not ensure pluralism of opinion, and did not report on the election campaign fairly and objectively. The key conclusions showed that in the last week of the campaign, almost every broadcaster favored or disfavored certain candidates while some TV stations openly promoted others. National broadcasters Prime TV, Canal 2, and Publika TV, which announced that they would not report

on the election campaign, were not monitored by the BCC and broadcast a number of election items in their newscasts directly favoring independent candidate Silvia Radu and disfavoring Andrei Nastase, the PPDA/PAS/PLDM candidate. NTV Moldova and Accent TV openly promoted Ion Ceban, the PSRM candidate for Chisinau City Hall, and Alexandr Usatii, the candidate of the same party for Balti Town Hall. In some news items, Jurnal TV directly favored Andrei Nastase, the PPDA/PAS/PLDM candidate and disfavored independent candidate Silvia Radu.¹⁵¹

- ▶ **At the end of June, an IJC report found that** attempts by journalists to misinform the public via manipulation techniques had amplified in recent months, the most common of which were the priority information technique, the internal or external enemy technique, the national rescuer, and the suggestion technique. The report indicated that Moldovan media continued to report issues of public interest on the basis of political preferences, favoring certain political parties and politicians. According to the report based on the results of monitoring 12 media outlets, journalists used a mix of facts with opinions and generalizations to violate ethical rules. The most frequent ethical violations included references to sources that could not be verified, not observing the right to reply, truncating text and quoting discourse out of context. The findings related to Publika TV, Prime TV, Canal 2, Canal 3, Moldova 1, Jurnal TV, Accent TV, RTR Moldova, and NTV as well as to online portals Noi.md, Sputnik.md, and Deschide.md. The report analyzed the way several events of public interest were reported: the sentencing of Chiril Lucinschi in the first instance; the demonstrations of 1 May and 9 May; the No Fear March; the second round of elections for Chisinau mayor; and the protest of 24 June against the invalidation of the mayoral mandate of Andrei Nastase. The IJC recommended that the BCC take action and monitor the TV stations whose content was reported as a source of manipulative or false information.¹⁵²
- ▶ In July, **Ombudsman Mihail Cotorobai expressed his disappointment with how Prime TV addressed the news about his reaction to statements made by the Mayor of Orhei and President of the Shor party.** He believed that some of the coverage misled the general public and obviously truncated his message. Prime TV used Ilan Shor's statements that were not mentioned in the press release issued by the Office of the Ombudsperson and did not reflect the hate

¹⁵⁰ <http://topmedia.md/alegeri-locale-mai-multe-posturi-de-televiziune-au-fost-amendate-pentru-incalcarea-legislatiei-electorale---102587.html>

¹⁵¹ <http://topmedia.md/un-nou-raport-majoritatea-radiodifuzorilor-nu-au-reflectat-corect-si-echidistant-campania-pentru-alegerile-locale-2018-doc---102650.html>

¹⁵² <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/raport-cji-%C3%AEn-ultimele-luni-s-au-amplificat-tentativele-de-dezinformare-publicului-prin>

speech and instigation to hatred and violence Shor's message. The Ombudsman believed that the general public was misinformed about the reasons that he reacted to this case because the news was presented inaccurately. He referred to Article 2.3 of the Journalists' Code of Ethics of Moldova, "The journalist shall accurately assign quotations. The quotations shall be precise and in the case of partial quotations, the journalist shall be obliged to not distort the message of the person quoted." **Mr Cotorobai also said that during his mandate as Ombudsman he constantly monitored the freedom of the media and of expression. Concurrently, he presented his opinion on various relevant issues in press releases and annual reports on the observance of human rights and freedom of expression in the Republic of Moldova in 2015, 2016, and 2017, and he emphasized the role of the media in promoting human rights and freedoms, the rule of law, and respect for human dignity.**¹⁵³

V.3.2. Experts' Opinions and Assessments

- ▶ Editorial offices depend financially on their clients. Sometimes, each commercial client is important. That is why more and more editorial offices consciously do not practice quality journalism and accept self-censorship on certain topics, even if they disagree with what they end up producing.
- ▶ The quality of media products is affected because of insufficient funding. Media outlets cannot invest in high-quality products because they are not able to cover the costs. The quality of some media products is also affected by the lack of pluralism and the low number of journalistic investigations and original material. To a large extent, the media is a mirror of the political agenda and not vice versa, as it should be in fact.
- ▶ Many media outlets do a low-quality job not only in terms of content or grammar, but also in terms of the design of media products. There are still some newspapers printed in long outdated black-and-white versions.
- ▶ Things are probably worse in terms of TV quality because some outlets with considerable coverage are directly or indirectly politically affiliated. While at the local level the situation is more relaxed, at the central level—except for several TV stations maintaining their impartiality—the battle is easily visible. Almost every news item is shaped in a way to put owners and their entourages in the best light and their competitors in the worst light, often through simple manipulations.
- ▶ Many media outlets are owned by politicians, directly or through interposed intermediaries, and the editorial policies meet politicians' interests.
- ▶ Media products are often not in line with ethical norms. Children's and victims' rights are violated in the rush for an audience. Politically controlled media outlets became tools of propaganda and manipulation and, in some cases, misinformation too (for instance the election campaign in Chisinau and the fake news about renting the city out to Arabs; the fake news about the threats against Moldovan diplomats in Germany).
- ▶ Moldovan media is highly polarized politically which ultimately affects quality.
- ▶ There are few appropriate quality media products because entertainment products prevail over educational ones.
- ▶ The poor quality of the media is due to the financial shortages of some outlets and to employees' poor professionalism.
- ▶ In addition to manipulation and misinformation, technical quality is far from perfect. It has become normal that media products come from one and the same source. The government-launched multiplex is also talked about from the point of view of its signal quality.
- ▶ Affiliated media can only be poor quality media. When such outlets release fake and biased news, they actually become dangerous as well. An example of this is the fake news broadcast by Publika TV on 7 September 2018 which said there were death threats against the diplomats and employees of the Embassy of the Republic of Moldova in Berlin and that embassy and consulate staff were evacuated at the request of the Berlin Intelligence Services. Without contacting the Moldovan officials concerned or the German police, Publica TV embarked on discussions with local experts who all insisted that such aggressive reaction against Moldovan citizens was to be expected and that it was revenge. Other media outlets also broadcast this information.
- ▶ Many political programs, subjects tackled at official meetings and briefings, visits of foreign delegations, etc. in the ATUG are covered. In fact, many journalists serve the politicians and not the ATUG population.

¹⁵³ <http://ombudsman.md/ro/content/comunicat-de-presa-48>

- The quality of media products is influenced by information technologies and national legislation and imposes requirements for the quality of local content. We still have to wait for the quality to improve.
- The quality of products is far from perfect because relevant sources of information are often missing and few experts are involved in tackling subjects. Analytical and economic material, journalistic investigations, and material on human rights and ethnic minorities are rare.

The third statement totaled 17 points, one point less than in the previous year, which means the situation is critical (17–27 points).

Overall, the quality of journalism scored 27.33 points, i.e. 0.33 points more than last year, which means the situation is marked by serious problems, only 0.33 points away from critical.

VI. INFORMATION SECURITY FROM THE MEDIA'S PERSPECTIVE

This indicator includes two statements.

(1) There are local media outlets in the information space that contribute to strengthening information security a) fully, b) for the most part, c) largely, d) to a small extent, e) not at all.

The choices determine whether (i) most audio/TV frequencies are owned by broadcasters under RM jurisdiction; (ii) broadcasters provide program services that meet pluralism and quality requirements; (iii) program services include at least 25% local content (except for advertising, promos, and teleshopping) broadcast for the first time between 6:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.; (iv) cable offers include national and foreign stations with program services that cannot undermine the country's information security; (v) the majority of print media outlets by number and print run and the majority of online media by number and number of users offer content that meets pluralism and quality requirements and is at least 50% local content; (vi) films for TV are purchased taking into account information security; (vii) there is an adequate media literacy system; and (viii) there is social immunity to propaganda.

VI.1.1. Timeline of Events

- In mid-January, the BCC required broadcasters and service distributors to adapt to the provisions of the anti-propaganda law. According to the BCC decision, broadcasters are to protect citizens from external attempts to misinform them or to provide them manipulative information and are to avoid media provocations against the RM by denying broadcasts/re-broadcasts of TV and radio programs with informative, analytical-informative, military, or political content not produced in EU Member States, the US, Canada, or states that did not ratify the

European Convention on Transfrontier Television. Violations will incur fines ranging between MDL 40,000 and 70,000 and for repeated violations of between MDL 70,000 and 100,000. A broadcasting license can be withdrawn only after the gradual application of sanctions. Furthermore, the BCC approved a new model for the General Concept of Program Services. According to the model, broadcasters were to submit the General Concept of Program Services for approval by 9 February 2018. In their turn, service distributors were to submit notifications of changes they would make in their re-rebroadcast program services. At the same time, the BCC would also monitor broadcasters and program distributors throughout 2018 to

see whether the new provisions were complied with. The Law Supplementing the Broadcasting Code of the Republic of Moldova with rules meant to ensure information security was published in the *Official Gazette* on 12 January 2018, effective 12 February.¹⁵⁴

- In February, the IJC launched the [online workshop](#) “Identifying Fake Photos and Visual Manipulation” in which Olga Iurcova, expert and co-founder of the [www.StopFake.org](#) project, presented journalists with a number of tools to help them identify fake images and thus avoid visual manipulation. For users’ convenience, the online workshop was divided into six parts. The trainer explained the algorithm for verifying photos via a number of programs that allow finding the primary source of images and analyzing how much the image has been processed, and offers a catalog of tools for online verification of photos. Olga Iurcova also explained how the authenticity of photos can be proved with the help of Google localization tools (Maps, Earth, or Streetview).¹⁵⁵
- The new amendments to the Broadcasting Code known as anti-propaganda law entered into force on 12 February. Broadcasters and service distributors were to submit revised concepts of program services for approval by February 9. TV stations TV Gagauzia, VTV, TV RAIN, ART TV, AXIAL TV, MOLDOVA 2, PRUT TV, RTR Moldova, and REN Moldova as well as radio stations GRT FM and ART FM failed to comply with the new requirements and were fined MDL 5,000 each by the BCC. Non-observance of the broadcasting legislation by broadcasters and service distributors results in fines that range between MDL 40,000 and 70,000, and in case of repeated violations of between MDL 70,000 and 100,000.¹⁵⁶
- In mid-February, Watch Dog community experts launched the survey “Influence of the Russian Media on Moldova’s (Geo) Political Choices.” One of its conclusions was that the TV stations that Moldovans watch play a determining role in their political choices. The survey’s authors compared the data in the public opinion barometer on preferred TV stations with the political views of the citizens regarding certain leaders of other countries. Russian President Vladimir Putin ranked first among the citizens who watched mainly Prime, NTV Moldova and RTR Moldova while German Chancellor Angela Merkel ranked first among those watching Jurnal TV, PRO TV, and TV 8. The authors specified

that the methods of analysis did not reveal a cause-effect relationship, but given the multidimensional nature of public opinion, the interdependence between media consumption and the political choices of citizens is obvious.¹⁵⁷

- At the end of February, the BCC fined RTR Moldova MDL 50,000 for violating the anti-propaganda law. The BCC found that news from the Россия 1 [Russia 1] TV station presented as “foreign” news was broadcast in the “Вести Молдова” [“News Moldova”] and “Вести недели Moldova” [“News of the week Moldova”] newscasts. Compared with the share of news on RTR Moldova, the share of news from Russia 1 represented from 28% to 41% of the total volume. The BCC also looked into how a number of service distributors implemented the provisions of the law. Two of them—TV-BOX SRL and MEGATRAFIK SRL—were fined MDL 40,000 each.¹⁵⁸
- In early April, the IJC launched [the online workshop “Fake or Fact?”](#) to support journalists and media consumers and to help them check facts and fight fake news.¹⁵⁹
- From 20 to 22 April, the IJC carried out its fourth teacher training program, this time for 18 teachers from different localities in Moldova, including the Transnistrian region. The training was based on the Education for Media curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education as well as auxiliary material for piloting this optional course. The purpose of Media Education is to increase the understanding and rational use of media products by students and to educate a knowledgeable and responsible citizenry and media consumer by building socio-cultural competencies to know/understand and appreciate social values and rules of conduct presented by the media.¹⁶⁰
- In April, the US announced that **it would provide a grant of USD 2 million for the development of local cinematography. The money was to be given to local production houses to make films and series in Moldova.** The intention behind the program was to expand local capacity for high-quality local production thereby creating opportunities for co-productions and international investments. Funding was to be provided for local TV production, licensing, and distribution of American TV formats and

¹⁵⁴ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/cca-obligat-radiodifuzorii-s%C4%83-%C8%99i-racordeze-grila-de-emisie-conform-prevederilor-legii-%E2%80%9Eanti>

¹⁵⁵ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/cji-lanseaz%C4%83-un-atelier-line-pentru-depistarea-fotografiilor-false>

¹⁵⁶ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/cca-amandat-mai-mul%C8%9Bi-radiodifuzori-care-nu-s-au-conformat-cerin%C8%9Belor-legii-anti-propagand%C4%83>

¹⁵⁷ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/concluziile-unui-studiu-posturile-tv-pe-care-le-vizioneaz%C4%83-moldovenii-sunt-determinante-%C3%AEn>

¹⁵⁸ <http://cca.md/news/comunicat-de-pres-12>

¹⁵⁹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/%E2%80%9Efals-sau-fapt%E2%80%9D-cji-ajut%C4%83-jurnali%C8%99ii-%C8%99i-consumatorii-de-produse-media-s%C4%83-depisteze-%C8%99itirile>

¹⁶⁰ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/o-nou%C4%83-genera%C8%9Bie-de-%C3%AEn-v%C4%83%C8%9B%C4%83toare-au-fost-instruite-%C3%AEn-domeniul-educa%C8%9Biei-pentru-media>

entertainment shows for Moldovan TV and for dubbing American and European entertainment content in Romanian on TV stations in Moldova.¹⁶¹

- ▶ In July, IJC announced the winners of grants for campaigns against misinformation and propaganda as part of the projects Do You Think Like Them? of the Media Creativity and Innovation Academy NGO and From Fake to Fake! of the Fact Checking FILE and Miraza SRL. Six campaigns were submitted as part of the contest. The grants were provided by the IJC as a partner in the project Media Enabling Democracy, Inclusion and Accountability in Moldova (MEDIA-M) funded by USAID and implemented by Internews. The MEDIA-M project aims to promote the development of independent and professional media in Moldova contributing to more resistance to political and financial pressures in the media sector.¹⁶²
- ▶ In August, 16 teachers from various Moldovan secondary education institutions were trained in media education to teach this optional course to 7th and 8th grade students. The training program was based on the Education for Media curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research in May 2018 and on the auxiliary materials for the piloting this optional course.¹⁶³ The IJC conducted four such training sessions during 2018.¹⁶⁴
- ▶ In late August, a new web publication appeared with a name similar to that of the Reporter de Garda project where investigative journalists from *Ziarul de Garda* work. Despite the similarity and the term “reporter” in the title, its content is totally different from what the readers of the investigations produced by the newspaper team were used to seeing. Journalists who have been fighting fake news for a longer time believe that clone websites are very dangerous for the public as they can create confusion. The publication itself was not a website because it was hosted on a blogging platform—something less common in the media which usually prefer to have websites of their own. It is not the first time media outlets have encountered sites that use the name and logo of the original website. Requests submitted to law enforcement bodies have not been successful. The authorities responsible for combating cybercrime announced that they were not able to track down the author of the cloned website. Other cloned

websites that have appeared were Jurnalul.md which resembles Jurnal.md and Ziarul Natiunii, a copy of *Ziarul National*.¹⁶⁵

- ▶ In September, several politicians, journalists, and analysts noticed fake Facebook accounts opened in their names. They included politicians Maria Ciobanu, Chiril Lucinschi, expert Victor Ciobanu, journalist Natalia Morari, and others. The journalist Natalia Morari believed that it was a new strategy used by an army of trolls paid by the government.¹⁶⁶
- ▶ During the 2018–2019 academic year, a number of teachers and professors trained by IJC began media education activities. More than 1,500 pupils from grades 3 and 4 and 7 and 8 study this subject either as an optional lesson or during head-teacher classes. In all, 45 teachers teach Media Education in primary schools in 11 districts, Chisinau municipality, and 2 towns on the left bank of Nistru River. As many as 20 teachers from 10 districts and Chisinau municipality have chosen to teach this optional course in secondary schools. All teachers and pupils involved in this process received free textbooks from IJC.¹⁶⁷
- ▶ The first Media Education Week was organized from 22 to 28 October on the initiative of IJC. Media Education Week closed with the launching of the [first training program dedicated to teachers who teach in Russian](#). About 600 pupils, 50 teachers, and 80 parents participated in the events. The activities took place in 20 lyceums and secondary schools in Falesti, Floresti, Causeni, Straseni, Orhei, Criuleni, Leova, Drochia, and Rabnita districts and in Chisinau municipality.¹⁶⁸
- ▶ In November, MP Inna Supac (PCRM) requested a hearing with Dragos Vicol, Chair of the BCC, in Parliament regarding the fact that Publika TV had broadcast [material](#) she believed was fake news (employees of the Embassy and Consulate of the Republic of Moldova in Berlin were allegedly threatened with death in the context of the expulsion of Turkish teachers from Moldova). Supac had previously sent a request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration inquiring into what happened in Berlin on 7 September. She was told that on that day protests took place, but according to the information provided by Ambassador Oleg Serebrian none of the staff of the mission or their family

¹⁶¹ <http://www.realitate.md/sua-va-oferi-un-grant-de-2-milioane-de-dolari-pentru-realizarea-filmelor-si-a-serialelor-moldovenesti-76224.html>

¹⁶² <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/au-fost-desemna%C8%9Bi-c%C3%A2%C8%99tig%C4%83torii-granturilor-pentru-campanii-%C3%AEmptova-dezinform%C4%83rii-%C8%99i>

¹⁶³ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/educa%C8%9Bia-pentru-media-trece-de-la-treapta-pri-mar%C4%83-la-cea-gimnazial%C4%83-cji-instruit-un-nou-grup>

¹⁶⁴ <https://educatia.mediacritica.md/ro/2018/12/18/10-realizari-ale-cji-in-anul-2018-in-domeniul-educatiei-media/>

¹⁶⁵ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/%E2%80%9Eatacul-clonelor%E2%80%9D-reporter-de-gard%C4%83-din-chi%C8%99in%C4%83u-are-un-site-geam%C4%83n>

¹⁶⁶ https://unimedia.info/stiri/foto-Atac-de-tip-nou-al-trollilor-Natalia-Morari-Victor-Ciobanu-dar-i-alte-persoane-publice-raportaza-profiluri-false-de-Facebook-deschise-in-numele-lor-161413.html?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=rss

¹⁶⁷ <http://topmedia.md/>

¹⁶⁸ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/s%C4%83pt%C4%83m%C3%A2na-educa%C8%9Biei-media-inspirat-sute-de-elevi-profesori-%C8%99i-p%C4%83rin%C8%9B-s%C4%83-citeasc%C4%83-pres%C4%83AEn-mod>

members received personal threats. With regard to this case, Ms Supac wanted to find out from the BCC Chair what measures were taken against Publika TV and its owner Vlad Plahotniuc for broadcasting fake news. On 8 November, the BCC Chair declared in Parliament that he personally did not find anything fake about the said TV broadcast and berated the MP for not contacting the BCC first to see whether it believed that fake information was broadcast on that show.¹⁶⁹

- ▶ On 15 November, the BCC and the Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania signed a cooperation agreement during the round table “Combating Hate Speech in the Media: Experience of Lithuania for the Republic of Moldova” organized by the BCC with the support of the joint EU and CoE project Promoting Media Freedom and Pluralism in the Republic of Moldova. Thus, the BCC will learn good practices in combating hate speech, fake news, misinformation, and propaganda.¹⁷⁰
- ▶ The OSCE was to monitor how the media in RM reported on the parliamentary election campaign of 24 February 2019. The statement was made during a press conference by Harlem Desir, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media who visited the RM from 27 to 30 November. *Inter alia*, Mr Desir encouraged Moldovan authorities to create a better environment for media development. The OSCE spokesperson noted that the concentration of a number of media outlets in the hands of people who are also important political figures violates media diversity and pluralism. “I think that quality journalism, quality information brought to the citizens’ attention by the independent media is the best response to counter propaganda, misinformation and fake news,” he added.¹⁷¹
- ▶ In December, the US Embassy in Moldova revealed a fake Facebook page of the project Stop Fals created by API. “This fake page stole the brand and content of local partners of the US Embassy in Chisinau, including the [Association of Independent Press](#) and the [Independent Journalism Center Moldova](#). Apparently, this website was created by unknown people to discredit legitimate free media outlets and confuse the Moldovan public. We know that Facebook doesn’t tolerate the use of its platform to spread misinformation or imitate legitimate organizations. We hope that Facebook will soon take action to delete the fake Stop Fals page, particularly

taking into account that affected organizations have already complained about this page many times,” representatives of the Embassy wrote.¹⁷²

- ▶ At the end of the year, the online publication of newsmaker.md reviewed the most resonant fake news. In addition to the “evacuation of the Embassy of the Republic of Moldova in Berlin,” “Cozlovskiaia’s case,” and the number of immigrants in the country, this publication also highlighted the documentary about the theft of the billion announced in February by a TV station in Chisinau. It said that the film was made by an important Ukrainian institution: Європейська правда [European Truth]. Newsmaker checked the information and found that European Truth had nothing to do with the documentary and that the TV station concerned made reference actually to a cloned website on which the film “The Theft of the Century. Another View of the Moldovan Scandal” had been uploaded. Newsmaker watched it and discovered that the film was identical to the one ordered by the Shor Party and shown at private screenings in several regions of the country. Newsmaker pointed out that the key message of the film was that the mayor of Orhei was not involved in the theft.¹⁷³

VI.1.2. Experts’ Opinions and Assessments

- ▶ Both local and foreign media outlets cope with and are doing well in terms of information security, and they get better at it every year.
- ▶ Audio and TV frequencies are owned mainly by broadcasters under the jurisdiction of the RM. Also, they mainly provide services that meet the rigors of pluralism and quality.
- ▶ Since 12 February 2018, news and analytical programs from the RF have been banned across Moldova. This has secured the information space of the country by getting rid of Russian propaganda.
- ▶ Television in Moldova continues to be first in terms of influence on the audience. Foreign TV stations, most of all Russian ones, prevail among stations with national coverage. This affects the information security of the country.
- ▶ Speaking in practical terms, the authorities are not seriously concerned about the information security of the country, and actions in this di-

¹⁶⁹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/cca-urmeaz%C4%83-s%C4%83-%C8%99i-expun%C4%83-poz%C8%9Bia-%C3%AEn-leg%C4%83tur%C4%83-cu-emisiunea-publika-tv-despre-presupusele>

¹⁷⁰ <http://cca.md/news/consiliul-coordonator-al-audiovizualului-semnat-un-acord-de-cooperare-cu-comisia-pentru-radio-i>

¹⁷¹ https://www.realitatea.md/osce-va-monitoriza-cum-mass-media-din-moldova-va-reflecta-campania-electorala_87652.html

¹⁷² https://unimedia.info/ro/news/feea7e653c14aad5/ambasada-sua-in-moldova-denunta-o-pagina-clona-a-proiectului-stop-fals.html?utm_source=Site%20Widgets&utm_medium=Last%20News%20Widget&utm_campaign=Last%20News%20Widget

¹⁷³ <http://newsmaker.md/rus/novosti/otrezannye-golovy-detey-delo-kozlovskoy-shor-ne-vor-top-glavnyh-feykov-goda-v-mold-40913>

rection are sporadic and mainly declarative. Local media outlets do not contribute enough to strengthening information security, and the authorities through the BCC do not get involved enough to diminish the influence of foreign propaganda. The anti-propaganda law has had little impact because ways to avoid the ban on broadcasting pro-Kremlin news were found very quickly (news from Moscow is aired by journalists of the pro-Russian TV stations in Moldova and presented as local product on international topics). Some of the propaganda tools such as the Sputnik agency were not affected in any way. The Gagauz Autonomy continues to be the region with the greatest Russian media influence. This situation is tolerated and encouraged by the regional authorities.

- ▶ A number of “news sites” that manipulate readers and spread fake news have appeared over the past two years. Some have been subsequently taken over by national television broadcasters in their newscasts spreading fake news to a large audience (e.g. death threats against Moldovan diplomats in Berlin etc.).
- ▶ In February 2018, new amendments to the Broadcasting Code regarding the fight against foreign propaganda in Moldova entered into force. The BCC imposed the first fines, and the TV stations that re-broadcast foreign content had to filter propagandistic content.
- ▶ Local Moldovan shows cannot compete with Russian ones. For example, a TV show on the Perviy federal channel may have a budget dozens of times bigger than the annual budget of a TV station in Moldova.
- ▶ [Law No 257 of 22 December 2017](#), also called the Law on Securing the Information Space, entered into force on 12 February 2018. This law defines the term “information security” and prohibits TV and radio programs with informative, analytical-informative, military, and political content not produced in EU Member States, the US, Canada, or in states that have not ratified the European Convention on Trans-frontier Television. Unfortunately so far, the authority that regulates broadcasting has not carried out any thematic monitoring on this issue which does not allow us to assess the impact of the new provisions. The BCC has responded to several complaints regarding compliance with these provisions. This is about the [BCC Decision No 5/21 of 26 February 2018](#) fining RTR Moldova TV station MDL 50,000 for failing to observe the provisions of Article 9(2¹) of the Broadcasting Code; the [BCC Decision No 9/53 of 5 April 5, 2018](#) fining Prime TV MDL 70,000 for failing to observe the same article; and a final decision in this respect [Decision No 17/106 of 8 June 2018](#) fining RTR Moldova MDL 85,000 for the repeated violation of Article 9 (2¹). Instead, the BCC checked service distributors mainly; some of them were sanctioned for failing to comply with the new provisions. On the other hand, local TV stations re-broadcasting foreign TV products take certain analytical information products, include them in the local newscast, and broadcast them as international news.
- ▶ There has been a confusing and dangerous situation for a while now in Gagauz-Yeri. Broadcasters operating under the broadcasting license issued by the BCC comply with legal requirements. There are, however, service distributors operating under local licenses provided by the Executive Committee of the Gagauz Autonomy.
- ▶ The joint effort of the state and of international development partners directs the local market to create a more secure information environment. The state should make greater efforts to strengthen media education, critical thinking in society, and legislative efforts to protect media space and consumers from the influence of foreign communication in the RM.
- ▶ Media in the Transnistrian region supported by the authorities aim to promote the statehood of the region. Media from RM does not have access to the market on the left bank of Nistru River. The Internet is the only way to access it.

The first statement scored 21 points, two more than in the previous year, which means the situation is critical (17–27 points).

(2) Regarding information security, there are foreign media outlets in the information space that a) do not affect it, b) affect it to a small extent, c) generally affect it, d) significantly affect it, e) fully affect it.

The choices determine whether (i) foreign media are massive in number and/or influence (audience size) either independently or through media under the jurisdiction of the RM; (ii) foreign media broadcast unsuitable messages that seriously affect information security and endanger/neutralize pluralist and quality local media messages; (iii) foreign media products promote messages that go against national interests; (iv) the broadcasting language is other than the state language; (v) foreign media use techniques of propaganda and misinformation to manipulate public opinion.

VI.2.1. Timeline of Events

- *In its first plenary sitting of the spring session, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova passed a [declaration](#) condemning the attacks of the Russian Federation against national information security and its abusive interference in Moldovan politics.* The authors of the declaration expressed concern over the upsurge in attacks by the RF on the information security of our country via Moscow-based TV stations and some Moldovan media outlets. The MPs highlighted the disturbing expansion of Russian propaganda. Moscow reacted harshly and rated Moldovan MPs' decision as "yet another anti-Russian attack."¹⁷⁴
- In early March, a group of people from the Institute for Public Policy published "[Russian Propaganda on Odnoklassniki: the Case of the Republic of Moldova](#)," a study which showed how and via what groups on this social network key propagandistic messages from the RF were retransmitted. According to the study, the ratio of such messages on Odnoklassniki represented 57% of the total number of messages analyzed by the researchers. The authors of the study intended to analyze how Russian propaganda appears on one of the most popular social networks in Moldova and to identify the main subjects debated on Ok.ru. The research results showed that of the total of 1139 messages analyzed, about 57% were propaganda messages out of which 38% were blatant propaganda while 19% were subliminal messages. The analysis showed that the key propaganda messages detected were anti-Ukraine (21.1%), anti-EU (13.1%), and pro-Russian (20%). The authors of the study also found there were no counter strategies to mitigate the impact of Russian propaganda on the Odnoklassniki social network and that such strategies need to be developed to combat fake messages as efficiently as possible. The Institute for Public Policy developed a Google Chrome extension that can help users detect fake news. According to online audience measurements, the Odnoklassniki network was the most popular in Moldova in August 2017 with over 1 million unique users per month. Please note that last year, Ukraine banned access to Russian social networks Vkontakte and Odnoklassniki as well as to Mail.ru resources.¹⁷⁵
- The Republic of Moldova is the most exposed

and the most vulnerable country to Russian propaganda in Central and Eastern Europe according to the results of a study called "Resistance to Disinformation in Central and Eastern Europe" published at the end of July. The research revealed that most of the top TV stations retransmit Russian programs, and a good deal of the online press is in favor of the Kremlin. The authors of the study also found that there are several important categories of the population prone to manipulation. They also mentioned that the measures the authorities had taken were not enough and, what is more, that the authorities were prone to favoring certain political groups. The study analysed the extent to which the 14 states monitored were vulnerable to Russian propaganda by looking at three indicators: the extent to which the population is exposed to disinformation and propaganda, the measures the state took to counter them, and the vulnerability to a potential digital war. The Republic of Moldova scored the lowest on the first two indicators. It was only outdone by Belarus on the third indicator, which proves there's little resistance to propaganda. Belarus and Latvia are among the other countries in this category, while Lithuania and Romania are doing the best from this point of view. The study found that there are three large groups in Moldova that are prone to being manipulated via the media more than the rest of the population: Russian speaking ethnic minorities that represent almost 20% of the population; some active parishioners of the Moldovan Orthodox Church which is subordinate to the Russian Orthodox Church that can be influenced by the church; and the elderly who represent more than 700,000 people the average level of education of which is lower than that of other population categories. The study was carried out following the research conducted from May 2017 to May 2018 by the Ukrainian Prism Foreign Policy Council and the Eurasian States in Transition Research Center (EAST Center) in collaboration with other research centers in Central and Eastern Europe under the project Assessment of Vulnerability and Resistance to Russia's Disinformation War: Overview and Qualitative Assessment of the Critical Infrastructure.¹⁷⁶

- Media sources promoting RF interests in Moldova have increased the number of manipulative news items and articles over the past three years while the measures taken by the Chisinau authorities continue to be insufficient to stop external, pro-Russia propaganda and its detrimental effects on Moldovan information space.

¹⁷⁴ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/parlamentul-de-la-chi%C8%99in%C4%83u-condamnat-printr-o-declara%C8%9Bie-politic%C4%83-atacurile-mediatic-lansate>

¹⁷⁵ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/un-studiu-al-ipp-relev%C4%83-prezen%C8%9Ba-masiv%C4%83-propagandei-ruse%C8%99ti-pe-odnoklassniki>

¹⁷⁶ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/studiu-republica-moldova-cea-mai-vulnerabil%C4%83-%C8%9B%C4%83-din-europa-central%C4%83-%C8%99-de-est-%C3%AEnfa%C8%9Ba>

These were the key conclusions of the analytical note developed by the Institute for European Policies and Reforms published in September. The analytical note was based on the contents of news and articles published in recent years by three online outlets working in Moldova (Sputnik.md, KP.md, and Vedomosti.md). The analysis showed that those media outlets actively promoted the interests of the Kremlin and launched manipulative information. The author of the analytical note mentioned that the news and articles published by outlets promoting the interests of Russia in Moldova systematically and efficiently sent messages against the US, the EU, and the West. The purpose was to influence Moldovans' attitudes and beliefs while attempting to promote the idea that Russia alone is able to solve the greatest issues in the world. The messages were strongly propagandistic though the range of manipulative techniques varied. Although the authorities and civil society took several measures to combat this phenomenon, additional efforts are required in this regard.¹⁷⁷

- ▶ In mid-November, Parliament in Chisinau put out a press release refuting information spread by the Russian news agencies TASS and RIA Novosti. They published articles saying that retirees in the Republic of Moldova would have to submit proof of life every six months otherwise the payment of their pensions would be suspended. A similar article was also published by sputnik.md.¹⁷⁸ In fact, this news originated in Chisinau on Sputnik Moldova, a Russian agency tolerated by the authorities. The site published that news item, and all the Russian agencies did was to take it from them.¹⁷⁹

VI.2.2. Experts' Opinions and Assessments

- ▶ We could say that the information space has been invaded by Russian TV and radio stations retransmitting across Moldova. While radio stations play music for most of their air time adding some local news now and then, things are the other way around when it comes to television. They broadcast newscasts and analytical shows or debate shows that, to a great extent, express the external position of the Kremlin in

relation to certain things that have to do with Moldova more or less. What we mean is the way in which Russia treats the EU on TV and the values that it promotes: the war in Ukraine—a country that Moldova shares a border with—and the Transnistrian region where Russian troops still remain.

- ▶ The Russian media have a strong influence via entertainment programs, films, and other products in Russian that dominate cable networks. This way, Russian values are being cultivated and spread. In some cases they contain messages that go against national interests and that are propagandistic and manipulative.
- ▶ The national media aren't concerned with strengthening information security while the foreign media that have direct access in the Republic of Moldova attempt to harm national information security.
- ▶ There are subsidiaries of foreign media outlets in Moldova that disseminate fake news, promote the interests of other states, and get involved in Moldovan politics by favoring certain people/parties and casting shadows over others.
- ▶ Most of the important Russian stations broadcast their content on Moldovan territory via TV stations with names that sound like those of their Russian counterparts (RTR Moldova, NTV, Pervii canal (First Channel), TNT, etc.) that obtained BCC broadcasting licenses.
- ▶ The Moldovan consumer continues to watch programs from abroad, including from Russia, that are manipulative even when they are entertainment shows. The media market continues to stay under the influence of disinformation programs that only make the polarization of society worse.
- ▶ There's a lot of Russian propaganda online and via cable networks. The number of cloned websites with EU addresses translating all that information into Romanian has increased. There are also "domestic" media funded from abroad, the editorial policy of which coincides with that of TV stations promoting Russian propaganda. We could also mention in this regard, the media on the left bank of Nistru River which we could regard as favoring Russia.
- ▶ In Gagauz-Yeri, media service providers mainly retransmit Russian programs and ignore the legal requirements to include local stations in their service offerings. However, as most of the population in the autonomy speaks Russian, there's a demand for Russian products. This leads to unfair competition with broadcasters that observe the national audiovisual law.
- ▶ The TV stations that work on the basis of a na-

¹⁷⁷ <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=354075&lang=2>

¹⁷⁸ https://www.realitatea.md/fake-news-marca-tass-i-ria-novosti-parlamentul-de-la-chi-inau-dezminte-informa-ile-distribuite-de-catre-presa-rusa-doc_86782.html

¹⁷⁹ <https://deschide.md/ro/stiri/politic/39541/Parlamentul-acuz%C4%83-de-dezinformatie-TASS-%C8%99i-RIA-dar-uit%C4%83-de-Sputnik-Moldova-care-a-n%C4%83scut-minciuna.htm>

tional license but that mainly retransmit Russian programs are the greatest issue. Although the new regulations require them to broadcast more local products, Moldova should give this practice up. Foreign media are not largely present in Moldova, but thanks to their financial ca-

capacity, they can exert too much influence on the mind set of society.

- In the Transnistrian region, media of all types originating in Russia are regarded as welcome both by the authorities and by most of the population.

The second statement scored 17 points, one more than last year, which means the situation is critical.

Overall, information security from the media's point of view averaged 19 points, 1.5 points more than in the previous year, which means the situation is critical (17–27 points).

VII. SECURITY OF JOURNALISTS

This indicator includes two statements.

(1) Journalists do their jobs under conditions of a) security in all cases, b) security in the absolute majority of cases, c) security in most cases, d) security in some cases, e) insecurity.

The choices determine whether journalists, regardless of how they do their jobs, have been threatened or assaulted.

VII.1.1. Timeline of Events

- ▶ In February, media NGOs expressed their concerns because of intimidation and threats from the coordinators of the Sfantul Gheorghe Charity Foundation and the Caritate.md crowdfunding platform against Liuba Sevcuic, RISE Moldova journalist. After RISE posted a teaser video about an investigation into some potential swindles involving the said charity on its Facebook page, Caritate.md posted a picture of her with the caption “We are asking her for help” on its home page. In addition, one of the charity’s co-founders continued to [intimidate](#) the journalist on a social network website using offensive language. NGOs judged this to be hate speech and intimidation against the RISE Moldova journalist.¹⁸⁰
- ▶ The Vocea Basarabiei newsroom published an open letter on 29 June conveying its distress and indignation after the PPDA leader and a party activist verbally assaulted a Vocea Basarabiei camera crew. In a live transmission on Facebook, the activist accused reporter Eliza Botnari of spreading disinformation and gave her an ultimatum to apologize publicly on camera. The reason behind it seems to be that the Vocea Basarabiei portal had posted a news item the day before about an incident in front of the Russian Embassy which showed a man attacking a group of young people who were protesting the presence of the Russian army on Moldovan territory. Vocea Basarabiei declared that it is an independent media institution that doesn’t side with any politician from the current political parties that covers news in observance of professional and journalistic ethics and that the accusations made had no moral or legal grounds.¹⁸¹
- ▶ In late July, *Ziarul de Garda* went to the MIA to protest lack of action by police officers when an employee of Chisinau City Hall made death threats against two of its reporters who were doing their jobs. The complaint was filed with the police alongside the complaints of the reporters concerned.¹⁸²
- ▶ In early August, journalists from Nokta.md portal in UTAG became the target of attacks and threats after they published an [article](#) featuring the Head of the Culture and Tourism Department Maria Semionova who is also member of the UTAG Executive Committee. The article said that although she was a civil servant, she was also doing business as a moderator of weddings and other events which is in violation of the Law on Civil Service and of the status of a civil servant. After the article was posted on its website, the editorial office was intimidated via social networks and threatened with physical violence by Mrs Semionova’s husband.¹⁸³
- ▶ A contravention case was opened in August against journalist Victor Sofroni from Soldanesti. The Rezina Prosecution Office accused Sofroni of making an intentionally fake police call although all the journalist did was ask the police to check a piece of information about a potential dead body that he had received from anonymous sources. Mr Sofroni called the head of Soldanesti police who then sent the request on to the Rezina Police Inspectorate. A police task force went to the site named but didn’t find

¹⁸⁰ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/%E2%80%8Bong-urile-de-media-condamn%C4%83-ac%C8%9Bunile-de-intimidare-jurnalistei-rise-moldova-%C8%99i-cer-mai-s%C4%83-se>

¹⁸¹ <https://deschide.md/ro/stiri/politic/33266/%E2%80%9EVocea-Basarabiei%E2%80%9D-Liderul-PPDA-%C8%99i-un-activist-au-agresat-verbal-echipa-de-filmare.htm>

¹⁸² <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=354075&lang=2>

¹⁸³ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ong-urile-de-media-protesteaza%C4%83-%C3%AEm-potriva-intimid%C4%83rii-%C5%9Fi-amenin%C5%A3%C4%83rilor-%C3%AEn-adresa-jurnali%C5%9Ftilor>

a dead body. In January 2018, the Rezina Police opened a criminal case against Sofroni on the grounds of hooliganism. Then, in July, the Rezina Prosecution Office filed that criminal case and re-classified the accusation under the Contravention Code and charged him with, “intentionally making a fake police call.” The journalist is now risking a fine. Media NGOs said the reason for opening this case and the legal classification of the alleged contravention was absurd given that all the journalist had done was to ask the police to check information he had received anonymously. Journalists have the obligation to check any information before publishing which is what Sofroni had tried to do. The opening of criminal or contravention cases against journalists doing their jobs in good faith is an unacceptable practice in a democratic society.¹⁸⁴

- ▶ In September, TV 8 journalist Natalia Morari announced publicly that the Intelligence and Security Service was watching her.¹⁸⁵
- ▶ In late September, a team of Nord TV journalists from Balti stated that Elena Gritco, Deputy Chair of Partidul Nostru political party and councillor on Balti Municipality Council, intimidated Nord TV journalists using verbal and psychological pressure at the councillors meeting. Gritco said, however, she was bothered by the fact that the Nord TV cameraman placed the camera too close to her thus invading her privacy.¹⁸⁶
- ▶ At the beginning of October, the organization Совет старейшин Гагаузии [Elderly Council of Gagauzia] asked the RPAI CO to dismiss its acting executive director. The leadership of the organization was indignant that the RPAI had refused to broadcast both the meeting of the Gagauz-Yeri Bashkan with the President of the Russian Federation and Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament and the reports on humanitarian projects implemented by the Sankt Petersburg Administration in Ceadir-Lunga and Vulcanesti that created new jobs and new enterprises.¹⁸⁷
- ▶ In October, journalist Stefan Grigorita was fined 10 conventional units (MDL 500) for calling a civil servant from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research an idiot in a Facebook post.¹⁸⁸
- ▶ On 21 October, journalists from *Ziarul de Garda* and Radio Europa Libera were harassed by guards at PDM meetings organized in the capi-

tal city who didn't let them film, pushed them around, and made them leave.¹⁸⁹

- ▶ At the beginning of November, the press wrote that journalist Vadim Ungureanu of Deschide.md was sentenced to three years in prison for “active corruption,” at least this is what seems to have happened according to a fragment of the court decision posted by V. Ungureanu himself on his Facebook page. AGORA recalled that Ungureanu had been held in detention from 20 to 23 June 2014 after being apprehended during a meeting with Dan Chirita, Head of the Monitoring Centre of the General Police Inspectorate. The journalist was accused of blackmailing Mr Chirita by promising not to publish defamatory data about him on Deschide.md in the exchange for obtaining compromising information about Moldovan celebrities as well as some state secrets. The singer Adrian Ursu also accused V. Ungureanu in the same case.¹⁹⁰ On 5 November, Ungureanu contested the District Court's decision before the Court of Appeals in Chisinau. Ungureanu declared to Media-azi.md that he found the letter about the decision of the court of first instance on his doorstep only on 26 October giving him just 15 days to contest it before the Court of Appeals. He managed to do it nonetheless. The journalist refuted the evidence provided by the prosecution insisting that the case was fabricated by representatives of law enforcement bodies to discover his sources of information. The information that the journalist had on his computer and mobile phone—both of which were searched—also served as evidence. During the three days he spent in Penitentiary No 13, he was subjected to pressure to disclose the sources of his editorial office. A case was opened with regard to the journalist's stay in the penitentiary. Several employees of the Department of Penitentiary Institutions were involved in this case. In the course of the criminal prosecution, the prosecutors found that the journalist had been detained together with five persons convicted of committing extremely serious crimes, although he was placed in a separate cell. The prosecutors believed that the employees of the penitentiary infringed his rights and allowed mental pressure to be inflicted.¹⁹¹
- ▶ In late December, PLDM MP Maria Ciobanu wrote a [Facebook post](#) that showed very little tolerance of the opinions of Victor Nichitus: ‘I feel like smashing his head in.’¹⁹²

¹⁸⁴ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ong-urile-de-media-solicita%C4%83-clasarea-procesului-contraven%C8%9Bional-%C3%AEn-cazul-jurnalistului-victor>

¹⁸⁵ <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=354075&lang=2>

¹⁸⁶ <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=354075&lang=2>

¹⁸⁷ <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=43009>

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.timpul.md/articol/%28doc%29-amandat-pentru-cuvantul-idiot-utilizat-pe-facebook--cat-va-trebui-sa-achite-un-jurnalista-din-r-moldova-135509.html>

¹⁸⁹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ong-urile-de-media-condamn%C4%83-abuzurile-fa%C8%9B%C4%83-de-jurnal%C8%99ti-la-mitingul-pdm>

¹⁹⁰ <https://agora.md/stiri/51398/doc--jurnalista-vadim-ungureanu--condamnat-la-3-ani-de-inchisoare-pentru-corupere-activa>

¹⁹¹ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/jurnalista-vadim-ungureanu-atacat-la-curtea-de-apel-decizia-privind-condamnarea-sa-pentru>

¹⁹² <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/declara%C8%9Bie-3>

VII.1.2. Experts' Opinions and Assessments

- ▶ Journalists in Moldova aren't in danger, even though there is pressure and intimidation. It's rather about economic blackmailing than about physical harm. Incisive journalists still have a voice despite attempts to denigrate them on social networks.
- ▶ Several journalists were the targets of verbal attacks and threats in 2018.
- ▶ Journalistic work triggered some small consequences though no physical harm was done to representatives of media institutions despite verbal assaults and intimidation. Their emotional confidence was shaken though. Journalists need to practice their professions freely without fearing that somebody will attack them openly in the street for their work.
- ▶ Although the Republic of Moldova has good legislation protecting journalists, they were the targets of verbal assaults and intimidation at the hands of some civil servants and politicians in 2018. What is more, the latter used hate speech several times and more frequently as the elections drew near.
- ▶ Compared with previous years, politicians were terribly rude to the independent press in 2018. Ilan Shor, Mayor of Orhei, as well as by Adrian Candu, Speaker of Parliament, accused and threatened media outlets using almost vulgar language which is inexcusable, particularly considering their positions. In the same train of thought, Marina Tauber, Mayor of Jora de Mijloc, Orhei District, behaved in a similar fashion at a public event where she verbally assaulted a journalist of local station Radio Orhei, shaking a broom suggestively all the while.
- ▶ The verbal assaults directed at Mariana Colun, investigation reporter working for Anticoruptie.md, by socialist MP Oleg Savva who was unhappy with an investigation in which he was concerned also fall in this category. Former MPs Mark Tkaciuk and Alexei Tulbure used verbal assaults on social networks too, targeting the "DezinFAKEtarea" show on TV 8 and its producer, journalist Ana Sarbu.
- ▶ In the past year, journalists' security has become ever more concerning. Threats against journalists from policy makers, verbal assaults and even threats of physical harm (Sor's threats) have become more frequent with the authorities failing to respond appropriately to such unlawfulness. What is more, the staff of law enforcement bodies themselves were among those who intimidated journalists by not letting them do their jobs.
- ▶ I haven't personally heard of severe attacks on journalists' security except for cases of intimidation that did not involve actual physical violence.
- ▶ I never felt as if my health or life were in danger while doing my job. Some attempts were made to prevent the publishing of certain articles, but none of them turned into pressure that would have stopped me from doing my job. At least not so far.
- ▶ In 2018, journalists have been the targets of multiple attacks and threats. The press and media organizations have flagged several cases: Ilan Shor, Mayor of Orhei, threatened journalists with retribution using offensive language; a Radio Orhei journalist was chased away from a public event with a broom; in Soldanesti, a journalist turned from witness into defendant in a criminal case; in Rezina, the print run of a local publication (*Cuvantul*) was seized. The Resolution of the 2018 Media Forum in Chisinau confirmed that journalists do not enjoy effective protection as several cases of journalists being intimidated or harassed because of their jobs were discussed at the forum.
- ▶ In 2018, many journalists were restricted from doing their jobs because they were intimidated, threatened, or verbally assaulted which puts journalism and the freedom of the press in Moldova at risk.
- ▶ Some people continue to regard journalism as the "enemy of the society" because they were not taught media education when they were in school.
- ▶ In Gagauz-Yeri, journalists who don't serve the authorities don't feel safe. Journalists are most often intimidated on social networks. Court complaints haven't yielded results and in no way can discourage attacks on independent media. To change things for the better, it is necessary that all media institutions operate under equal conditions observing media law and that journalists are actually protected by the law.
- ▶ In 2018, there were several cases in which politicians used offensive language and made public statements about journalists. In previous years, events and the response of civil society

were enough to build a general understanding that journalists are untouchable, regardless of their editorial policies or the way in which they do their jobs.

- In the Transnistrian region, once the would-be administration changed (when the so-called

president was elected) several journalists resigned “on their own volition” which led to the spread of self-censorship. To “put things where they belong” in the editorial office of Профсоюзные вести [*Trade Union News*], the authorities amended the law in the Transnistrian region.

The first statement regarding journalists’ security scored 28 points, one more than last year, which means the situation is marked by serious problems (28–38 points).

(2) The work of journalists entailed a) no consequences, b) minor consequences, c) consequences of average severity, d) serious consequences, e) very serious consequences.

The choices establish whether threats and aggression against journalists had any consequences. Threats are considered to include offensive language against journalists; warnings about possible physical harm to journalists, their families, or property; and allusions to death. Aggression includes quarrels and physical attacks on journalists or editorial offices in the form of beatings/maltreatment; seizing or destroying recordings, film, photographic equipment; damaging editorial office premises; seizing/kidnapping journalists; assassinating journalists.

VII.2.1. Timeline of Events

- At the end of August, a Publika TV crew claimed that it was assaulted by participants during the protest organized by PLDM, PAS and PPDA. A Publika TV reporter said she was pushed and that someone struck her microphone while she was trying to talk to the drivers and passengers who were unhappy with the fact that the protesters had blocked traffic on Stefan cel Mare Avenue. A Radio Free Europe journalist [was mistreated by Shor Party supporters](#) while filming them eating buckwheat for free.¹⁹³
- In August, media NGOs made common cause with the journalists of Nokta.md portal in UTAG who became the targets of attacks and threats after they published an [article](#) featuring Maria Semionova, Head of the Culture and Tourism Department who is also member of the UTAG Executive Committee. The article said that although she was a civil servant, she was also doing business as moderator of weddings and other events which is in violation of the Law on Civil Service and of the status of a civil servant. After the article was posted, the editorial office was intimidated via social networks and threatened with physical violence by Mrs Semionova’s husband. The NGOs also asked UTAG Bashkan Irina Vlah to commence an inquiry regarding the behavior of

people holding public positions, including the Prime-Deputy-Bashkan Vadim Ceban who had encouraged the intimidation of the journalists from Nokta.md portal. The deliberate obstruction of the activities of a media outlet or of a journalist as well as intimidation of a media outlet or journalist for criticism are offences provided for in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova. The signatory organizations requested an inquiry into and a legal qualification of another UTAG case that happened recently in Cismichioi where local councillors prohibited the recording of the local council meeting on 3 July 2018. Moreover, councillor and journalist Dmitri Ianul who tried to film the meeting was threatened by other members of the local council.¹⁹⁴

VII.2.2. Experts’ Opinions and Assessments

- Some journalists have been manhandled, pushed, and even hit. Among those responsible were politicians, bodyguards, police officers, and protesters. The journalists of Free Europe, RISE Moldova, *Ziarul de Garda*, Moldova 1, Agora.md, Publika TV, Jurnal TV and TV 8 were particularly among those attacked.

¹⁹³ <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=354075&lang=2>

¹⁹⁴ <http://media-azi.md/ro/stiri/ong-urile-de-media-protestez%C4%83-%C3%AEm-potriva-intimid%C4%83rii-%C5%9Fi-amenin%C5%A3%C4%83rilor-%C3%AEn-adresa-jurnali%C5%9Ftilor>

- ▶ At a different public event that was organized by PDM in the Great National Assembly Square, journalists from *Ziarul de Garda* and Radio Free Europe were prevented from doing their jobs.
- ▶ Generally speaking, there were no cases of physical aggression or threats that would have required law suits. There were no particular cases of altercations or of physical assaults against journalists or editorial offices.

The second statement scored 31 points, two less than last year, which means the situation is marked by serious problems.

According to the experts, journalists' security scored 29.50 points, i.e. 0.50 points less than last year, which means the situation is marked by serious problems (28–38 points).

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The average value of the scores of the experts for all seven indicators in the 2018 MPSI was 23.78, which reveals that the media situation in Moldova is critical (17–27 points). The score is an insignificant 0.09 points higher than that in 2017.

- I. **Legal framework regulating the media.** The score was 27.66 a slight increase over 2017 (27.33 points) confirming the critical situation of the media as far as this indicator is concerned. The experts took into account the fact that in 2018 important legal acts were adopted by the Working Group on Media Law Enforcement, but their effects will have to be assessed over time. Some key draft laws were also developed but did not pass the first reading in Parliament. One of these was the Law on Advertising and its amendments that would have established rules governing online media. As in previous evaluations, the experts found serious gaps in enforcement, highlighting the influence of politics on decision making in law enforcement bodies. The experts also found no change for the better in terms of the ownership regime in the media and advertising markets.
- II. **Political context.** Although the score increased to 20 points in 2018 from 19 in 2017, the situation of the media is still critical. The experts acknowledged some level of political stability, but they also flagged pressure on the press, especially from politicians and civil servants, which takes its toll journalists' ability to fulfil their natural mission. The "information war" between politically affiliated media and the independent press continued. Politicians, as a rule, refuse to answer questions from the independent press and instead favor the partisan press by accepting their invitations. In addition, the experts believed that politicians and civil servants lend themselves to misinforming the public and attacking the press that doesn't share their opinions. This can only be possible if the most influential media are politically controlled.
- III. **Economic environment.** A drop of 2 points to 16.00 compared with last year means situation is now very critical (0–16 points). The experts said it was unfortunate that the authorities were against the adoption of certain legal acts and public policies meant to economically support the press. Furthermore, no light was shed on the reasonable suspicion of a cartel agreement between two commercial advertising sales houses that four TV companies informed the CC about. Although some action was taken to identify ways to select a credible audience measurement organization, assessing the actual impact during the reference period wasn't possible. The experts believed that for now economic and implicitly editorial independence can be supported only by donations from external donors.
- IV. **Professional environment.** This score was unchanged from 2017 at 27, so the situation is still critical (17–27 points). The experts found that educational institutions continue to lag labor market demand; several specializations required by media outlets, including media managers, are not taught at universities; the efficiency of some measures undertaken this year (e.g. the establishment of the Ongoing Training Centre of the NPAI) will have to be assessed over time; the shortage of staff is ongoing despite training; and staff turnover in regional media outlets continues to be very high. The experts appreciated the efforts of media NGOs to train journalists, but they also found them to be ineffective for various reasons, including the fact that ultimately many get jobs at politically affiliated media outlets.
- V. **Quality of journalism.** The score of 27.33 points was a slight improvement over 2017 (27.00), but serious problems remain (28–38 points). The experts attributed the rise to a slight increase in external and

internal pluralism, but noted that notwithstanding, the quality of journalism continues to be influenced by political factors and that misinformation and manipulation persist. The experts noted that thanks to the anti-propaganda law external propaganda had receded somewhat but that internal propaganda, which is no less harmful for media consumers, had grown. Resonant examples were provided such as the fake news about threats against Moldovan diplomats in Germany. The experts also drew attention to the technical quality of both the audiovisual and of the print media, some of which is still printing in black and white.

- VI. Information security from the media's perspective.** Although the situation remains critical, this indicator improved by 1.50 points from 2017 (17.50 to 19.00). The experts appreciated efforts to make the information space safer but also believed they weren't enough. Moldovan media space continues to be contaminated with foreign information products coming predominantly from the Russian Federation that are of questionable quality or even harmful. The experts also stated that some progress was made in terms of media education as more teachers were trained in how to teach it. The objective of establishing a functional media literacy system nationwide continues to be attainable.
- VII. Journalists' security.** The score of 29.50 points was 0.5 points lower than that in 2017 which means there are still serious problems with security. The experts noted that verbal assaults and threats against journalists had increased in 2018. They particularly underscored the intimidation of journalists inconvenient to those in power by certain politicians and civil servants. The anemic response or lack thereof from law enforcement bodies was also mentioned. Although severe consequences did not materialize from the threats, the situation in general cannot be rated as completely safe for journalists to do their jobs.

The experts maintained that in 2018, the economic environment was the most vulnerable issue in terms of press development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The regulatory framework governing the press needs to be supplemented with provisions developed in line with the National Concept on Media Development. Mechanisms need to be created and implemented to ensure the efficient enforcement of laws that actually allow the press to fulfil its mission in a democratic society.

Public policies need to be developed and implemented that would:

- ensure that politicians do not interfere with the press;
- grant decision-making independence to the authority governing the audiovisual area;
- grant independence to bodies overseeing public providers of audiovisual media services;
- protect the media from political and party fights that interfere with their duty as a social institute;
- allow the media to inform society appropriately.

The legal provisions developed by the Working Group on Improving the Media Legislation need to be passed and then enforced in order to improve media legislation to ultimately ensure an economic environment supportive of the development of the press, including the local and the regional press. Media funding transparency should be promoted in all ways possible to deter the use of obscure sources of funds and to boost the credibility of the media.

Educational institutions need to adjust their programs so that they fully answer media market needs. The Ongoing Training Centre of the NPAI needs to

train journalists from outside the institution under mutually advantageous conditions. Efficient staffing mechanisms should be developed and implemented, particularly for the local/regional press. A new version of the Journalist's Code of Ethics needs to be developed, discussed, and observed.

Public policies ensuring the actual external and internal pluralism of the media need to be developed and enforced. The imbalance between the different types of press needs to be dealt with, particularly the differences between the national and the local/regional press. The efforts of press institutions to diversify the media products they offer to the public need to be supported and encouraged. Responsible journalism needs to be fostered by all means.

An action plan ensuring a safe media space in line with the Information Security Concept needs to be developed and implemented. The implementation of the plan would have to be closely monitored. The efforts of the press to replace foreign media products of questionable quality with high-quality local media products need to be encouraged. The efforts of civil society to expand the education of the population to develop media literacy should continue.

The law that guarantees the security of the press needs to be observed. Every time the press is impeded from doing its job, it should be made public. Law enforcement bodies need to be notified every time there's been a case threatening journalists' safety. Cases of intimidation, threat, or aggression against journalists need to be identified, and law enforcement bodies need to be informed about them when they happen. The action or inaction of law enforcement bodies in such cases should be made public periodically.

Annex 1. Methodology table

| Indicators | Statements | Score |
|--|--|---------------|
| I. Legal framework regulating the media | 1.1. The media legislation is: sufficient, sufficient for the most part, mostly sufficient, sufficient to a small extent, insufficient. | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| | 1.2. The media legislation is: compliant with international standards, compliant for the most part, mostly compliant to a large extent, compliant to a small extent, non-compliant. | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| | 1.3. The legislation is applied correctly: every time, very often, often, seldom, never or almost never. | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| Total indicator I: | | |
| Rationale for the score | | |
| II. Political context | 2.1. The political situation is: favorable for media activity, favorable for the most part, mostly favorable, favorable to a small extent, unfavorable. | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| Total Indicator II: | | |
| Rationale for the score | | |
| III. The Economic Environment | 3.1. The media are: economically independent, economically independent to a large extent, economically independent to an average extent, economically independent to a small extent, not economically independent. | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| | 3.2. The media are: editorially independent, editorially independent to a large extent, editorially independent to an average extent, editorially independent to a small extent, not editorially independent | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| Total Indicator III: | | |
| Rationale for the score | | |
| IV. Professional Environment | 4.1. The process for media professionalization is: sufficient, sufficient for the most part, sufficient to a large extent, sufficient to a small extent, insufficient. | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| | 4.2. The process for media professionalization is: efficient, efficient for the most part, efficient to a large extent, efficient to a small extent, inefficient. | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| Total Indicator IV: | | |
| Rationale for the score | | |

| Indicators | Statements | Score |
|--|---|---------------|
| V. Quality of journalism | 5.1. External pluralism: exists, exists for the most part, exists to a large extent, exists to a small extent, does not exist. | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| | 5.2. Internal pluralism: exists, exists for the most part, exists to a large extent, exists to a small extent, does not exist. | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| | 5.3. The media is: quality, quality for the most part, largely quality, quality to a small extent, not of quality | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| Total Indicator V: | | |
| Rationale for the score | | |
| VI. Information Security from the Media Perspective | 6.1. There are local media outlets in the information space that contribute to strengthening information security: fully, for the most part, largely, to a small extent, not at all. | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| | 6.2. There are foreign media outlets in the information space that: do not affect information security, affect information security to a small extent, largely affect information security, affect information security for the most part, fully affect information security. | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| Total Indicator VI: | | |
| Rationale for the score | | |
| VII. Security of Journalists | 7.1. Journalists do their jobs under conditions of: security in all cases, security in the absolute majority of cases, security in most cases, security in some cases, insecurity. | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| | 7.2. The work of journalists entailed: no consequences, minor consequences, consequences of average severity, serious consequences, very serious consequences. | 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 |
| Total Indicator VII: | | |
| Rationale for the score | | |
| Total score: | | |

Annex 2. Explanatory table

| Statements | Explanation |
|---|--|
| 1.1. The media legislation is sufficient. | There are regulations for the activity of all types of media: print, broadcast, on-line, central, regional, community, public, and private. There are regulations regarding freedom of expression, editorial independence, access to information, defamation, protection of journalists and information sources, and decision-making transparency. |
| 1.2. The media legislation is in line with international standards | The regulations are tolerant, clear, accurate, guarantee an adequate environment for the media to undertake its mission, and guarantee freedom of expression and access to public information. No amendments to legislation affecting the media were made; there were no cases of refusal to reform certain laws. |
| 1.3. The legislation is applied correctly every time | Decision makers (e.g., Parliament, government, the judiciary, BCC, CO.) comply with the legislation; there is no pressure; there is transparency; there is prompt and efficient response to all cases of waivers from the law; there have been no cases of refusal by state authorities to provide information of public interest; there have been no cases of abusive withdrawal of accreditation; there have been no cases of censorship by banning publication/dissemination or confiscating print runs, abusive withdrawal of broadcasting licenses, etc. |
| 2.1. The political situation is favorable to media activity | Stable or unstable political situation did not affect the natural mission of the media, there were no pressures on journalists and media outlets from politicians or parties to exclusively protect political or other interests of parties or politicians; parties or politicians did not use state institutions to pressure the press; there were no pressures on journalists or media outlets from state institutions in the form of police investigations, brutal interventions meant to intimidate the media, arrest or detention for investigative work, seizing or copying data from computers, seizing or copying documents, listening in on communications; the political situation did not provoke political partisanship or information wars with media participation. |
| 3.1. The media are economically independent | Economic legislation has separate provisions for media businesses; the legislation provides special limits for ownership concentration and/or audience monopolies; the economic situation favors financial independence; public media are funded adequately, sufficiently and securely; competition on the media and advertising markets is fair and allows dynamic media development; the competitive environment allows the media to cover their costs mostly from advertising, making printed copies and/or media products, collaborations, co-productions; advertising is paid-for and is accessed in accordance with audience ratings; credible circulation/audience measurements operate; anti-monopoly mechanisms are set; media invests in development, including upgrading of the media products; |

| Statements | Explanation |
|--|---|
| | <p>there are no dominant positions regarding ownership; there are no dominant positions on the advertising market, fair competition allows all media to access advertisements depending on the audience. There has been no pressure on journalists and media outlets from companies or business people manifested by offering or cancelling of advertising contracts, conditioning the signing of contracts on the non-publication of certain information or dismissal of journalists.</p> <p>NOTE: TYPICALLY, A DOMINANT POSITION MEANS THAT AN OWNER'S MEDIA HOLDS MORE THAN 1/3 OF THE MARKET SHARE, OR THE FIRST THREE OWNERS HAVE ACCUMULATED MORE THAN 50% OF THE MARKET SHARE.</p> |
| 3.2. The media are editorially independent | <p>The media, regardless of the funders, are editorially independent; the owners, patrons, funders do not dictate or impose their editorial policies; the economic and financial factor is separate from the editorial one; advertisers, sponsors and donors do not impose editorial conditions; there is no politically ordered journalism; there is no party affiliated media or party funded media.</p> |
| 4.1. The process of media professionalization is sufficient | <p>There are standard elements of professionalization: a common body of knowledge (theory and practice of democratic journalism), educational institutions (faculties, courses of all duration, ongoing training courses); codes of ethics (at the level of journalism and institutions, including media outlets); professional associations (employers' associations, trade unions, clubs, NGOs).</p> |
| 4.2. The process of media professionalization is efficient | <p>Standard elements are appropriate and functional. Maximum use is made of each element. Educational institutions are guided by theory and practice of modern journalism; Codes of ethics not only meet international requirements but are observed; professional associations at all levels are effective and serve for the media's benefit.</p> |
| 5.1. There is external pluralism | <p>There is a variety of media of all types: print, audiovisual, online, central, regional/local/community, international, public, private, generalist, and niche/specialised. There is an acceptable/reasonable proportion of media of all types.</p> |
| 5.2. There is internal pluralism | <p>There is a variety of media products (such as journalism genres, topics, geography, protagonists and authors taking into account gender balance) in each media outlet, regardless of its type.</p> |
| 5.3. There's quality media | <p>Media products are developed in line with professional and technical standards. Media products are offered appropriately (what, when, and how radio/TV programs are proposed, what cable TV packages are proposed, how print and online media are laid out). Media quality is not compromised by waivers from professional standards, by propaganda, misinformation, manipulation.</p> |

| Statements | Explanation |
|--|--|
| 6.1. There are local media outlets in the information space that contribute to strengthening information security | <p>Most of the audio/TV frequencies are owned by broadcasters subject to RM jurisdiction; these broadcasters provide program services that meet pluralism and quality requirements; program services include at least 25% of local content (except for advertising, promo and teleshopping), broadcast for the first time between 6:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. The cable offers include national and foreign channels with program services that cannot undermine the country's information security. The majority of the print media by number and print run and the majority of online media by number and number of users offer content that meets pluralism and quality requirements with at least 50% of the content locally produced. Films for TV are purchased taking into account information security. There is an adequate media literacy system. There is social immunity to propaganda.</p> |
| 6.2. There are foreign media outlets in the information space that negatively affect information security. | <p>Foreign media outlets are massive in number and/or influence (audience size), existing independently or through outlets under the jurisdiction of the RM; foreign media broadcast unsuitable messages that seriously affect information security and endanger/neutralize pluralist and quality local media messages. Foreign media products promote messages that go against national interests. The language of the broadcast messages is other than the state language. Foreign media use techniques of propaganda, misinformation, and manipulation of public opinion</p> |
| 7.1. Journalists do their jobs under conditions of security | <p>Regardless of how they do their jobs, journalists were not threatened and assaulted.</p> |
| 7.2. The work of journalists entailed no consequences | <p>Threats include offensive language; warnings about inflicting physical harm on journalists, their families, or their property; allusions to death.</p> <p>Aggression includes quarrels and physical attacks on journalists or editorial offices in the form of beatings/maltreatment; seizing or breaking recordings, films, photographic equipment; damaging editorial office premises; seizing/kidnapping journalists; assassinating journalists.</p> <p>Threats and aggression can have no consequences, minor consequences, consequences of average severity, serious, or very serious consequences.</p> |

Annex 3. Moldova Press Status Index 2018

Assessment Experts

| No | Expert | Position |
|-----|---------------------------|---|
| 1. | Alexandru Lebedev | Diez.md, Manager |
| 2. | Dina Crudu-Perciun | Teleradio-Moldova NPAI, news director at Moldova 1 TV |
| 3. | Nicolae Cuschevici | RISE Moldova, journalist |
| 4. | Anatolie Esanu | Ziarul de Garda, journalist |
| 5. | Veaceslav Perunov | SP, Balti, Manager |
| 6. | Petru Macovei | API, Executive Director; Press Council, Secretary |
| 7. | Dumitru Tira | Development and Cooperation Association, Executive Director |
| 8. | Olga Gututui | Broadcast Coordinating Council Member |
| 9. | Vitalie Zama | Lawyer |
| 10. | Angela Zaharova | Elita TV Rezina, Producer |
| 11. | Luiza Dorosenco | Media Centre, Director, Tiraspol, Transnistria region |
| 12. | Elizaveta Rotari | ATV, Comrat, ATUG, Manager |
| 13. | Adrian Petcu | NPAI Teleradio-Moldova, News Department, Radio Moldova |
| 14. | Dumitru Lazur | Council of Europe Office in Chisinau, Project Coordinator |

Annex 4. MPSI 2018 scores

| Indicators/ statements | Experts/individual assessment | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Score of statements/ indicators |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| Ind. I | Ex.1 | Ex.2 | Ex.3 | Ex.4 | Ex.5 | Ex.6 | Ex.7 | Ex.8 | Ex.9 | Ex.10 | Ex.11 | Ex.12 | Ex.13 | Ex.14 | |
| 1.1. | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 29 |
| 1.2. | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 31 |
| 1.3. | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 23 |
| Total | 7 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 27.66 |
| Ind. II | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1. | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 20 |
| Total | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 20.00 |
| Ind. III | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1. | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 15 |
| 3.2. | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 17 |
| Total | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 16.00 |
| Ind. IV | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1. | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 31 |
| 4.2. | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 23 |
| Total | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 27.00 |
| Ind. V | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.1. | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 37 |
| 5.2. | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 28 |
| 5.3. | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 17 |
| Total | 5 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 27.33 |
| Ind. VI | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.1. | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 21 |
| 6.2. | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 17 |
| Total | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 19.00 |
| Ind. VII | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.1. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 28 |
| 7.2. | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 31 |
| Total | 6 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 29.50 |
| Total | 31 | 36 | 23 | 24 | 18 | 40 | 21 | 22 | 20 | 21 | 40 | 38 | 37 | 29 | 23.78 |

Annex 5. Moldova Press Status Index 2016, 2017, 2018

| Indicators | Statements | Score of | | |
|--|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | | 2017 | 2018 |
| I. Legal framework regulating the media | 1.1. The media legislation is sufficient, sufficient for the most part, mostly sufficient, sufficient to a small extent, insufficient. | 30 | 28 | 29 |
| | 1.2. The media legislation is compliant with international standards, compliant for the most part, compliant to a large extent, compliant to a small extent, non-compliant. | 31 | 30 | 31 |
| | 1.3. The legislation is applied correctly every time, very often, often, seldom, never or almost never. | 25 | 24 | 23 |
| Total Indicator I: | | 28.66 | 27.33 | 27.66 |
| II. Political context | 2.1. The political situation is favorable for media activity, it is favorable for the most part, mostly favourable, favorable to a small extent, unfavorable. | 14 | 19 | 20 |
| Total Indicator II: | | 14 | 19 | 20 |
| III. The Economic Environment | 3.1. The media are economically independent, they are economically independent to a large extent, to an average extent, to a small extent, they're not economically independent. | 15 | 18 | 15 |
| | 3.2. The media are editorially independent, they're editorially independent to a large extent, to an average extent, to a small extent, they're not editorially independent | 22 | 18 | 17 |
| Total Indicator III: | | 18.50 | 18 | 16 |
| IV. Professional Environment | 4.1. The process of media professionalization is sufficient, it is sufficient for the most part, to a large extent, to a small extent, it is insufficient. | 40 | 30 | 31 |
| | 4.2. The process of media professionalization is efficient, it is efficient for the most part, to a large extent, to a small extent, it is inefficient | 23 | 24 | 23 |
| Total Indicator IV: | | 31.50 | 27 | 27 |
| V. Quality of journalism | 5.1. External pluralism exists, it exists for the most part, to a large extent, to a small extent, there's no external pluralism. | 37 | 36 | 37 |
| | 5.2. Internal pluralism exists, it exists for the most part, to a large extent, to a small extent, there's no internal pluralism. | 28 | 27 | 28 |
| | 5.3. The media is of quality, for the most part, largely, to a small extent, it is not of quality | 19 | 18 | 17 |
| Total Indicator V: | | 28 | 27 | 27.33 |
| VI. Information Security from the Media Perspective | 6.1. There are local media outlets in the information space, which contribute fully, for the most part, largely, to a small extent, not at all to strengthening information security | 23 | 19 | 21 |
| | 6.2. There are foreign media outlets in the information space, which do not affect, affect to a small extent, largely, for the most part, fully affect the information security. | 21 | 16 | 17 |
| Total Indicator VI: | | 22 | 17.50 | 19 |
| VII. Security of journalists | 7.1. The journalists did their job securely in all cases, in the absolute majority of cases, in most cases, in some cases, in conditions of insecurity. | 33 | 27 | 28 |
| | 7.2. The work of journalists entailed no consequences, minor consequences, consequences of average severity, serious consequences, very serious consequences. | 39 | 33 | 31 |
| Total Indicator VII: | | 36 | 30 | 29.50 |
| Total score: | | 26.66 | 23.69 | 23.78 |