



MONITORING REPORT
of television stations from the Russian Federation that are rebroadcast in
the Republic of Moldova
(General conclusions¹)

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11 – 26 April 2017

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¹ The full report in Romanian is published on the website www.api.md under the heading: **Știri API | Rapoarte de monitorizare | 2017**, link: <http://www.api.md/page/ro-2017-311>

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

During the period 27 March 2017 - 26 April 2017, the Association of Independent Press (API) has carried out the monitoring of the content of five most important TV stations from the Russian Federation, which are rebroadcast in the Republic of Moldova by local broadcasters, in order to identify and analyze the messages conveyed by these media outlets on some sensitive issues, including issues of regional and geopolitical importance.

Goal of monitoring

Analysis and public reporting of propaganda and information manipulation messages used by media institutions that are rebroadcast in the Republic of Moldova, related to most important regional and international topics/issues.

Development, on the basis of the results of monitoring, of suggestions and recommendations aiming at ensuring protection of Moldovan information space against propaganda messages, fake news and media manipulation, transmitted by the TV stations that are rebroadcast from abroad.

TV stations that are being monitored

Under this project, API conducted monitoring of the content of five most relevant Russian TV stations rebroadcasted in the Republic of Moldova, namely:

- *Pervii Kanal*, rebroadcasted in the Republic of Moldova by *PrimeTV* (broadcast license holder: „General Media Group Corp” S.R.L.; administrator: Petru Jelihovschi; owner/final beneficiary: Vladimir Plahotniuc),
- *RTR*, rebroadcasted in the Republic of Moldova by *RTR Moldova* (broadcast license holder: „TV-Comunicații Grup” S.R.L.; administrator: Evghenii Sergheev; owners/final beneficiaries: «Российское общество по организации и управлению проектами в области средств массовой информации и массовых коммуникаций» – 50%, Valentina Stețco – 25%, „SB Grup Media” SRL – 25%),
- *NTV*, rebroadcasted in the Republic of Moldova by *NTV Moldova* (broadcast license holder: P.P. „Exclusiv Media” S.R.L.; administrator: Petru Burduja; owner/final beneficiary: Corneliu Furculița),
- *REN TV*, rebroadcasted in the Republic of Moldova by *REN Moldova* (broadcast license holder: „TELEPROIECT” S.R.L.; administrator: Victor Marcenco; owners/final beneficiaries: AT Intermedia, Veaceslav Fiodorov),
- *STS*, rebroadcasted in the Republic of Moldova by *STS Moldova* (broadcast license holder: „Real Radio” S.R.L.; administrator: Victoria Rusu; owner/final beneficiary: Dorin Pavelescu).

Subject to monitoring

We monitored the original programs of the five TV channels retransmitted in the Republic of Moldova between 06.00 and 24.00, over the period 27 March 2017 – 26 April 2017, which directly or indirectly addressed the most important regional and international issues / topics that are named under this monitoring “sensitive issues”.

The list of sensitive issues:

1. Internal situation in Ukraine, the Russian Federation relations with Ukraine and any other issue related directly or indirectly to Ukraine.
2. Situation within the European Union in general, in any EU member state, the EU relations with the Russian Federation and any other issue related directly or indirectly to the EU, including BREXIT.
3. Internal situation in the US, the Russian Federation relations with the US.

4. Internal situation in the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation relations with Moldova and any other issue related directly or indirectly to Moldova.
5. Coverage of issues that are directly or indirectly related to NATO, including NATO and the USA involvement in regional and international conflicts.
6. Coverage of issues relating to the CIS, the Eurasian Union, the Russian Federation cooperation with former Soviet Union republics.
7. Coverage of debates, discussions, negotiations at international level, on topics covering military conflicts or other conflicts worldwide.
8. Coverage of other controversial topics where the Russian Federation position contrasts with the position of other countries or groups of countries.
9. The content that promotes the geopolitical interests of the Russian Federation and Vladimir Putin as the leader able to influence/solve problems internationally.
10. The content that opposes European culture and values, materials attacking lifestyles in other countries and broadcasting distorted messages.

(the list of sensitive issues could be complemented during monitoring)

The following types of programs, including those retransmitted over the period under monitoring **was monitored**:

- News bulletins;
- Analytical programs;
- Talk-shows and other programs with guests in the studio or guests interviewed live "remotely" or in advance;
- Analytical programs hosted by one journalist;
- Entertainment programs;
- Russian documentaries and movies;

Content that was not monitored:

- Programs made by Moldovan stations / companies retransmitting Russian TV stations or other programs by Moldovan companies;
- Commercials and advertising programs;
- Sports competitions;
- Movies other than Russian.

II. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS (11 – 26 April 2017)

Russian TV stations that were monitored broadcast unilateral information, addressing sensitive issues (see the list above) from the perspective of the responsibility of the West, first of all the US, NATO and the EU for the escalation of military conflicts and generally for all negative things happening in the region and worldwide; there are speculations of the imminent outbreak of a nuclear war because of the US; Ukraine is always declared to be solely responsible for the military conflict in the eastern regions and depicted as a failed state, ruled by corrupt individuals, close to Nazi ideology; the Russian Federation and Russian President Vladimir Putin are presented as the only true fighters for peace and for the self-determination of the peoples in the world, as fighting terrorism, loyal defender of democratic values and Christianity; prevailing news and opinions in talk-shows, informative and analytical programs and some entertainment programs convey the message that the EU morally degrades and is on the verge of disintegration, while the US and NATO pursue only war and destabilization; the situation in the EU in general and in some

EU member states, such as France and Germany, is shown in a bad light, leaders of these countries are ridiculed and labeled so that to emphasize their lack of perspicacity, dependence on the US will and incapacity to resolve crisis situations. Thus, television stations monitored broadcast propaganda messages and constantly manipulate public opinion.

PERVYI KANAL

The shows and news broadcast of **Pervyi Kanal**, rebroadcast by Prime TV continued the editorial policy of presenting/covering events from the perspective of Kiev's aggression against breakaway regions in eastern Ukraine, the responsibility of the USA and anti-terrorist international coalition for triggering a humanitarian catastrophe in Mosul, Iraq, the "unfounded" US attack on Syria, the danger of a new world war provoked by the United States, the threat NATO poses to Russia, on the one hand, and the role of the Russian Federation as the guarantor of peace in Syria and other regions where there are ongoing military conflicts, on the other hand.

The information manipulation techniques used by Pervyi Kanal are as follows: selective presentation of issues; unilateral and biased coverage of events; exacerbating the facts; interpreting the source message or selective quoting; labeling - use of nicknames or pejorative or other qualifiers, etc.

In most cases, sources of information in news depended on each other, the accusations, most often, were not balanced by the replies of those accused, while reporters quite often were biased not only due to the selective presentation of information and sources but also by including their own opinions in the reports.

Most of the time, the way of selecting issues and addressing them in informative and analytical programs was evidence of subjectivity and bias of the authors that by their comments aimed to amplify certain messages. In some cases, image tricks were used by using video images from movies to convey negative messages about protagonists.

Talk shows resorted to aggressiveness and many show elements. In all cases, discussions were mimicked, people having different opinions from those exposed by hosts and guest were also invited to the studio but they were most often ridiculed and even verbally abused. Moderators labeled guests and presented information sarcastically or mockingly and used derogatory remarks against some people/states or guests.

RENTV

The issues addressed by **Ren TV**, rebroadcast by Ren Moldova, most often related to the situation in Syria, Ukraine, Russian-American relations, elections in France, the role of the Russian federation in keeping peace in Syria. The manner to approach them was quite schematic: the USA, US-based masonry and Europe are to be blamed for everything bad that is occurring in the world, while Russia is the agent/promoter of good in the world.

Newscasts often included unilateral news, from one perspective – pro-Russia, anti-NATO and anti-USA. As a rule, the right of reply and pluralism of opinion were not ensured. It is worthwhile mentioning the bias of materials seen in the inclusion of personal opinion in news, selection of issues and sources in order to convey messages in line with the editorial policy of the station.

Information-analytical programs covered issues the station deems important; they are analyzed in detail and sometimes commented on. The usual approach is biased, the materials being interpreted from the point of view of the station that is in line with the official position of the Kremlin.

The analytical programs and documentaries used propaganda messages; subtle or open propaganda elements are seen in the vast majority of cases. As a rule, the programs promote

Russian lifestyle and culture, glorify the Russian army, and acclaim the President Vladimir Putin. At the same time, they criticize and defame values and lifestyles of the European states, the US, attack NATO and Western media. In most cases, manipulation techniques are used in programs such as information selection, generalization, using phrases such as - *according to experts, according to political analysts, according to scientists*. Also, very often are used expressions like - (Это ещё не всё!), *And that's not all!*, (Вы удивитесь!) *That will surprise you!*, (Посмотрите!), *Look!*, to emphasize and amplify certain messages to emphasize and amplify certain messages and draw attention to some details. In many cases, allegations are used, authors using terms such as - (быть может), *it's possible*, (быть может это лишь очередное совпадение), *it may be another coincidence*, (но некоторые эксперты уверены), *however, some experts are certain*.

It should be mentioned that some programs made in Russia were broadcast by Ren Moldova station, which rebroadcasts the Russian content, but were not broadcast by the television station in Moscow that day.

RTR

The news of RTR station, rebroadcast by RTR Moldova, systematically featured distorted information and anti-Ukrainian messages (there are political reprisals in Ukraine, country's authorities are not willing to investigate the incident that occurred in Odessa in May 2014, constantly violate the truce conditions and impose blockade on separatist regions), anti-American (there are incompetent people in the US administration, because of the US actions in relation to North Korea the situation is getting tense, while the world is on the verge of a nuclear war; chemical attack on Syria was staged) and anti-European (in Europe there is regress, leaders of the EU member states act as pawns - *китайские болванчики*) puppets – in the hands of the US; the station supported and promoted the far right candidate Marine Le Pen who promotes anti-European messages during presidential elections in France). At the same time, the greatness of Russia and President Vladimir Putin was promoted, guarantor of prosperity for the peoples of the former USSR (Russia's potential is growing despite the sanctions imposed by the West, Russia's potential is growing despite the sanctions imposed by the West, while Putin ensures this development; Countries uniting around Russia are experiencing economic growth and other benefits, the countries uniting around Russia are experiencing economic growth and other benefits, while the Republic of Moldova realized the need to join the Eurasian Union after it understood the lack of prospects in terms of association with the European Union). Manipulation takes place by selecting and interpreting / commenting on facts in a biased way, presenting the information from only one source and without ensuring the right of reply, presenting some opinions (including those by reporters) as facts, etc.

The information-analytical program VESTI Nedeli and the talk show Pryamoy Efir have a marked propaganda nature, by broadcasting in an overt or subtle manner anti-Ukrainian, anti-US, anti-EU messages, promoting the idea of an international conspiracy against Russia that, despite all this, thanks to Vladimir Putin, remains almost the last defender of peace, the right of peoples to self-determination, Christian values, etc. To enhance messages, presenters make use of a grave tone of expression, emphasize and repeat certain messages, make gestures, interpret and comment on the facts, their personal opinions and/or opinions of those supporting pro-Kremlin position are presented as facts, only viewpoints in favour of Russia or those backing the opinion of the moderator are selected, opponents are introduced in a biased way, while their messages are distorted and reversed. In the talk show **«Воскресный вечер» с Владимиром Соловьёвым, "Sunday Evening" with Vladimir Solovoyov** the debates are mimicked, most guests hold anti-US,

anti-EU and pro-Russia opinions, while guest with opposite opinions are often interrupted and ridiculed, including by the host backed by the audience.

NTV

Most NTV station news (the newscast (Segodnya (Today)), rebroadcast by NTV Moldova, promotes the same anti-Western messages as other television stations monitored. Manipulation techniques and manipulation procedures such as filtering information, selection of sources, exaggerating facts and biased presentation of information were used, the news being an amalgam of facts and reporters' opinions. The majority of sources of information were mainly represented by public officials and persons with pro-Russian, anti-Ukraine and anti-US visions, without including alternative views and ensuring the right of reply. Sometimes conflicting news reports included the opinions of the accused party, but these were only brief, superficial interventions that were unable to shed light on the conflict situation. Often, news does not provide background information, while headlines and leads do not coincide with the actual information, emphasizing completely different messages. Such news confuses the viewer and conveys subliminal messages.

Information and analytical programs **Итоги недели (Conclusions of the week)** and **Центральное телевидение (Central Television)** and the show **Международная Пилорама („International Sawmill“)** have a pronounced propaganda nature; the audience is exposed to direct or subtle messages of an imminent nuclear war that will be provoked by the US President Donald trump; international conspiracy against Russia; criminal nature of the current administration of Ukraine; close disintegration of the EU, etc. In the shows, cartoons and collages are often used to show in a bad light the Kremlin opponents and archive images to strengthen the emotional effect on viewers. Manipulation takes place through the selective presentation and omitting information, biased position of the presenters, "mixing" the events, facts and their biased interpretation, the presentation of many contradictory opinions to create the false impression of pluralism with the expected effect to confuse the public, mocking, bantering and discrediting Vladimir Putin's political opponents, amplification of the voice tonality to guarantee the effect of conveying and emotional acceptance by the viewers of the messages broadcast.

STS

The television station STS, rebroadcast by STS Moldova, did not broadcast newscast relevant to this monitoring. At the same time, some entertainment shows: **6 кадров**, Шоу "**Уральских пельменей**", **Дневниковый период** that are made up of diverse sketches, include subtle messages mocking the USA and EU. Thus, in a sketch, a Russian soldier brings two German prisoners and presents them to the chief commander who scorns them and tells them that after the Second World War there are very few of them: "В лес отпустим, вас совсем мало осталось" „We are going to let you free in the forest since there are only few of you left". In another show, there was an attempt to take away a medal from a Russian sportsman who was struggling against a representative of the Anti-Doping Committee, dressed in a T-shirt with the US inscription. Finally, he, scared by the Russians, returns the medal to the athlete and says: „Мы, спортсмены, должны заниматься спортом, а не интригами, как эти грязные политики" "We, athletes, must do sports, not engage in intrigues like these dirty politicians". At the end everybody loves happily.

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