

Montenegro

Prime-time news programs on TVCG and TV IN

TV MONTENEGRO IS MORE THOROUGH, TV IN IS MORE DIVERSE

Association of Young Journalists

Introduction & methodology

In April 2007 the Association of Young Journalists carried out monitoring and comparative analysis of prime-time news programs on two TV stations:

- Public Service of Montenegro /TVCG1/ (Dnevnik 2)
- Television IN /TV IN/ (INpuls).

The monitoring was conducted on a sample of 7+1 day during April 2007 - where the seven dates were defined before the start of monitoring. The eighth day was chosen freely, as the day on which the most relevant event happened that month (in this case it was April 18 when followers of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church were prevented from entering a monastery in Cetinje):

Week I: Monday, April 2; Tuesday, April 3

Week II: Wednesday, April 11; Thursday, April 12

Week III: Wednesday, April 18; Friday, April 20

Saturday, April 21

Week IV: Sunday, April 29

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Dnevnik 2 - The primetime news program on TVCG1, chosen as the main news program of the national Public Broadcasting Service, which has special obligations in terms of reporting objectively and professionally.

INpuls - According to the latest polls, IN television enjoys growing credibility, the highest at the moment among privately owned televisions in Montenegro, and that is why the Association of Young Journalists chose their main news program INpuls as the best reference for comparison with the Dnevnik 2 program on the Montenegrin public broadcasting service.

Besides analytical monitoring, the Association also conducted statistical monitoring of the two programs in relation to several aspects: covered topics, territorial distribution, news forms, content.

General conclusions

■ The main difference between the two programs is how items are covered and presented. Items from their own production dominate Dnevnik 2 on TVCG, while other information - agency news and news taken from other media - is present in only a very small number. On the other hand, the news structure of INpuls on IN television is of miscellaneous production and the majority of news is from agencies.

■ IN television, in terms of content, is more oriented towards presenting the broadest possible range of information in its primetime news program, while TVCG in Dnevnik 2 follows the concept of a smaller number of topics, but covered more thoroughly.

■ Both televisions in their main news programs similarly cover events such as roundtables, Parliament sessions, councils, press conferences. The differences are the most evident in thematic news stories, prioritization and how information is covered and presented.

■ What is easily noticeable in both primetime news programs is absence of criticism, or more precisely, absence of a critical approach in covering the day's events. Promotion is far more present than criticism, especially in stories covering the area of

tourism, which on both televisions are almost completely deprived of any critical attitude.

■ Dnevnik 2 noticeably precedes INpuls when it comes to covering events related to visits of Montenegrin delegations to foreign countries because, unlike IN TV, TVCG usually sends a TV crew to cover such events directly. These kinds of items as a rule are affirmative with regard to Montenegrin state politics and are completely deprived of any kind of critical remarks.

■ Considerably more thorough coverage of issues in Dnevnik 2 is the most evident in stories that deal with social topics and topics from everyday life. INpuls often presents one-sided views when reporting on the Montenegrin Orthodox Church; TVCG covers in more detail than INpuls the topic of adoption of the new Constitution. Dnevnik 2 gives much space to promotion of national politics by reporting on visits of Montenegrin delegations to foreign countries and occasionally openly promotes commercial companies.

■ Reporting in Dnevnik 2 on TVCG is accompanied by footage that is more dynamic than in the case of INpuls, primarily thanks to the fact that in most cases the footage is from the scene, while footage or still pictures that keep being repeated dominate in INpuls.

■ Dnevnik 2 reports much less on events from the region, especially from Kosovo, than is the case with INpuls.

■ Dnevnik 2 from time to time broadcasts information from the Government's official protocol, usually at the end of the political news bloc, and such information is given in short forms - the presenter reads an item lasting up to 30 seconds, usually covered by picture or footage taken at the official protocol meeting. Inpuls also broadcasts this, although rarely, and when it does, it is presented in a somewhat broader form.

■ When it comes to the topic of human rights, the two televisions' coverage was fair and balanced. The most current event from this field - threats to investigator of human rights' violations Aleksandar Zeković - was covered by the two TV stations thoroughly and fairly in their main news programs.

■ During the monitoring period no serious violations of the Code of Ethics for journalists were observed, nor were there any significant lapses in covering current events.

Coverage and presentation of information

The most evident difference in news coverage on the two programs is the news form they use. Dnevnik 2 has far more reports from the field than INpuls. The primetime news program on TVCG favors items that are formatted as features from their own production, while on Inpuls most of the time the anchor reads information accompanied by footage, and they have far less TV stories from their own production. As a result of this concept, Dnevnik 2 always has less news items than Inpuls.

TVCG covers the topics it reports on much more thoroughly than INpuls. Dnevnik 2 rarely broadcasts anything that they do not have their own story on, while INpuls relies greatly on agency news. Because of this, Dnevnik 2 fails to cover a certain number of topics that Inpuls informs of in shorter form.

The orientation of Dnevnik 2 towards their own TV news production is especially pronounced when it comes to events happening outside Montenegro. Most often, these are visits of political or economic delegations from Montenegro to a foreign country. Unlike INpuls, Dnevnik 2 very often has its own camera at the scene of the event. These stories, as a rule, are affirmative for Montenegrin state politics and are completely deprived of any form of critical remark.

Examples of such items are coverage of a signing ceremony for a declaration of cooperation in the field of energy during a summit in Ohrid, reports from tourism fairs and a story on a visit of a delegation of the Montenegrin Union of Employers to Berlin.

Also, with regard to coverage of events with cameras at the scene, TVCG has an advantage over IN television because they have their own bureaus both in the north of the country (Bijelo Polje) and in the south (Herceg Novi). That way they cover more events from these regions than IN TV, in terms of use of their own news production capacities.

In Dnevnik 2, the news form in which information is read by the anchor and accompanied by picture or footage is applied only when presenting protocol news and news from Serbia or the region, and it is aired before the world affairs section. News presented in this form is usually very short.

Main differences in coverage

During the monitoring period, in the selected program samples there were certain oscillations in reporting in the two main news programs on the same current events.

The Constitution

Dnevnik 2 dealt much more thoroughly with the issues concerning the adoption of a new Montenegrin constitution, presenting it from several different angles.

A good example of this is April 3 when both televisions opened their primetime news programs with quotes from an interview given by President Filip Vujanović, with special accent on his stands on the Constitution. However, Dnevnik 2 continued the item with another item featuring the stands of the independent analyst Srđan Darmanović on the subject and also presented a Vox Populi, with citizens' views on the new Constitution and the procedure for its adoption. This way Dnevnik 2 brings the problem of adoption of the Constitution closer to their viewers by representing different point of views, while INpuls gives only President Vujanović's stand.

Religion, Minorities & Human Rights

TV IN reports more extensively on the Montenegrin Orthodox Church than Dnevnik 2 on TVCG. Inpuls regularly transmits information related to the Church, positioning it rather high on the list of priorities. Dnevnik 2 on TVCG is not so consistent in covering topics in connection with the Church, and when it does cover them, it does not give them such a high priority as IN television. Also, not infrequently INpuls gives only one side of the story, supporting the interests of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church.

The best illustration of this conclusion is INpuls' program on April 12th when TV IN violated one of the basic principles of journalism - objective reporting. Namely, Inpuls presented an utterly one-sided report on a dispute over Church property, yet giving it absolute priority - the first five items dealt with this

issue. Inpuls started with quotes from a press release from the Serbian president's office summarizing his talks with Montenegrin President Vujanović on this issue, lasting 26 seconds. This was followed by statements affirming the stands of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church, which included a statement of Church Deacon Sreten Vujović, allegations by member of the Social Democratic Party Main Board Novak Adžić and an appeal by investigator of human rights' violations Aleksandar Zeković addressed to President Vujanović. In this context, the other side was completely neglected - Inpuls did not present a single stand of the Serbian Orthodox Church. On the other hand, TVCG's coverage of this topic was broadcast in the 18th minute of Dnevnik and consisted only of excerpts from the release issued by the Serbian president's office, lasting 33 seconds.

Also, the previous day - April 11, Inpuls gave pretty high priority to criticism by Metropolitan Mihailo regarding a statement given by President Vujanović in which he said that the state would protect the property of anyone who has legal ownership over it. TVCG did not cover this event in its primetime news program at all.

On April 20 INpuls showed once again its adherence to the Montenegrin Orthodox Church or rather its readiness to criticize the Serbian Orthodox Church. In the 9th minute of Inpuls they aired an item, 1 minute and 54 seconds long, presenting the stands of Dragan Ivančević (Liberal Party) who criticizes the state authorities and the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists, saying that they are trying to preserve the absolute monopoly of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro. The same day Dnevnik 2 presented the same statement in the form of an agency news item, 22 seconds long, in the 14th minute of the program.

The day that the dispute between the two churches culminated, however, both televisions' coverage of the event was balanced. Both Dnevnik 2 and INpuls reported without considerable oscillations on police intervention in preventing an attempt by Montenegrin Orthodox Church followers to enter the Cetinje Monastery on April 18, as well as subsequent reactions by both churches and different political parties.

When it comes to subjects concerning minorities, coverage on both televisions was fair.

Perhaps the biggest difference was observed on April 11 with regard to the positioning of a story covering a request made by the Muslim society Matica Muslimanska for the state to recognize Muslims the right to citizenship. This information in Inpuls was placed at the very beginning (4th item in hierarchy in the 8th minute of the program), while Dnevnik 2 presented an item on the same topic in the second part of the program (13th place and 22nd minute).

One of the most current topics of the month - threats delivered to investigator of human rights' violations Aleksandar Zeković - was covered by the two TV stations thoroughly and fairly in their main news programs.

Social Topics & Priorities

The two televisions in their primetime news programs had different approaches to coverage of social, communal and everyday life topics. Dnevnik 2 covers these topics more seriously than Inpuls, producing more detailed stories on various topics from everyday life, with considerable initiative in identifying current topics from this field. Inpuls is generally more passive than Dnevnik 2 in this regard.

An example is April 2 when Dnevnik 2 covered an all too current issue from everyday life - citizens' trading on the stocks market. The topic was very well covered with several excerpts from interviews with citizens on the spot, i.e. in brokers' offices, explaining their motives for trading on the market. The story also showed two excerpts from interviews with stock market representatives who explained the phenomenon of citizens' massive trading on the market. The same day Dnevnik 2 covered the issue of abortion in the Constitution.

An example of good self-initiated thematic coverage is Dnevnik 2 from April 21 when it aired in the second part of the program an item on the growing number of divorces in the municipality of Bijelo Polje. Also, on April 29 Dnevnik 2 showed in the second part of the program a story on an expedition of Norwegian enthusiasts to Lovćen and an item on the start of fishing season on Black Lake /Crno Jezero/.

INDICATOR OF PUBLIC INTEREST

A different approach to coverage of social topics was evident also on April 11 when Dnevnik 2 chose as the day's priorities items on the start of a hunger strike in a forestry company and on the situation at Bjelasica Rada Company in Bijelo Polje. Dnevnik 2 placed these two items in the 4th and 5th place, while Inpuls placed them in the second half of the program and they were the 16th and 17th news items according to the priority hierarchy. In addition, they did not have a feature on the start of the hunger strike; instead, they only presented an agency news item accompanied by video shots.

A very illustrative example is also April 12 when perhaps the most obvious difference was observed in terms of prioritizing news on the two televisions. That day Dnevnik 2 placed social issues at the very top of priorities, while Inpuls placed religious issues. In the first six minutes, Dnevnik 2 aired items on social problems - an item on an announced pension raise, on statistical data released by Monstat on the average wage and an item on the postponement of a strike of utility service workers. The same day Inpuls devoted the first five minutes to religious issues, airing five items concerning a dispute between the Montenegrin Orthodox Church and Serbian Orthodox Church on ownership over properties, including buildings and land.

A very illustrative example of TV IN's superficial coverage of social issues in its primetime news program is also a report on a workers' strike at a forestry company from Pljevlja on April 18. The example represents conceptually different reporting, resulting in incomplete information, in this case in Inpuls. The main primetime news program on TV IN covers the Pljevlja forestry workers' strike in the 22nd minute of the program and presents the following information: *“Workers of the Pljevlja Forestry Company, who have been on a hunger strike for eight days now because of unpaid wages and other dues, will make a decision on further activities in a meeting tomorrow, the Company's Strike Committee announced after meeting with representatives of the company's majority owners.”* The same day TVCG in its main news program, also in the 22nd minute, aired an item on the meeting of the Strike Committee of Pljevlja's forestry company with Government representatives headed by Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management Milosav Andelić, which was also attended by Union representatives. The story contained excerpts from interviews with the president of the

Strike Committee and the Deputy Minister, clearly presenting the intentions of the Strike Committee to continue the strike if their requests are not met and a promise given by the Ministry of Forestry that they would find a way to solve the crisis in the next two days.

In this manner, the two media outlets presented completely different information on the same problem, where far more complete and accurate information was provided by TVCG in Dnevnik 2.

However, the same day TVCG failed to report in Dnevnik 2 that the strike at the Bjelasica Rada factory was called off, while INpuls presented this information in an item lasting 26 seconds.

This is another indicator that the whole concept of reporting mainly on events where the television has its own crew has its flaws - TVCG thus fails to cover certain events which INpuls mentions in the short form of agency news items. Thus, for example, INpuls covers continuously the problems of taxi drivers, which Dnevnik 2 reported on pretty poorly.

Specifics

TVCG has some regular blocs in its primetime news program, such as live transmissions from the Voice of America studio in Washington on Mondays, weekly review on Sundays and interview on Saturday.

TVCG in its primetime news program very rarely covers events from the region. Yet when they do, these items are presented in a very short form. Inpuls, on the other hand, covers these topics regularly, usually after a bloc of top news from Montenegro and before the world affairs bloc, but also in the short form of agency news items.

Dnevnik 2 on Sundays is apparently more relaxed from political issues and space is given to corporate and municipal topics and topics from everyday life, human interest pieces, thematic stories.

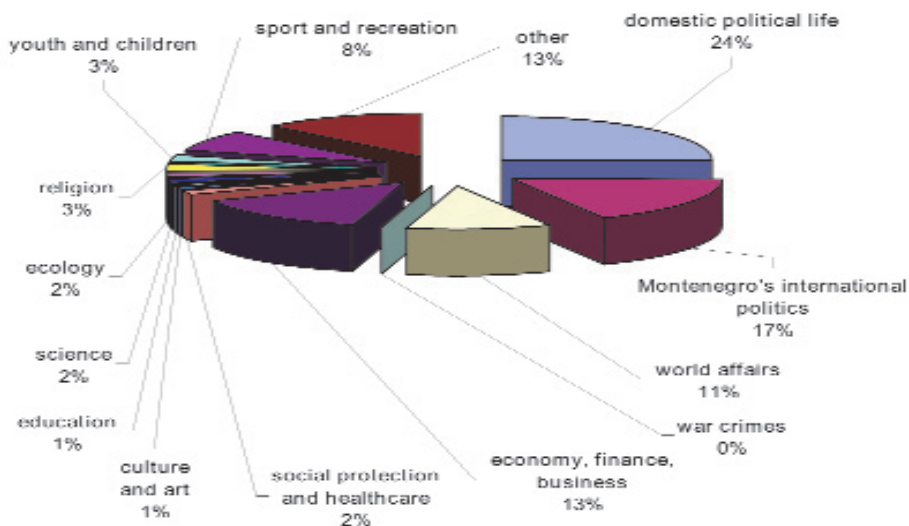
Unlike TV IN, Dnevnik 2 occasionally airs items concerning campaigns or other activities of commercial companies. Thus, for example, in Dnevnik 2 from April 11, in the 28th minute of the program an item was broadcast on the opening of a branch-office of Commercial Bank Budva (Komerčijalna banka AD Budva) in Podgorica. The item was very affirmative for the bank and promoted its services and plans for the immediate future.

Statistics

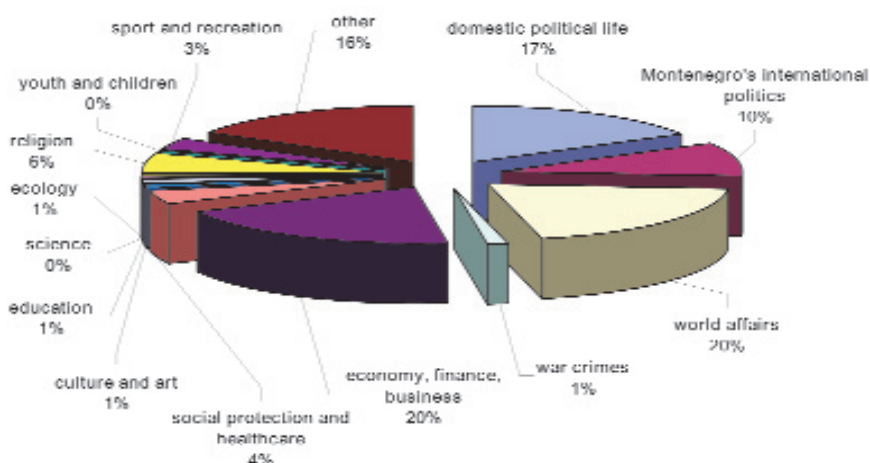
Structure of content

In this part of the report, the statistical structure of both programs is presented in 14 categories. Statistical comparison between the two programs is given through the number of items (given on this page) and duration of each item given in seconds (next page).

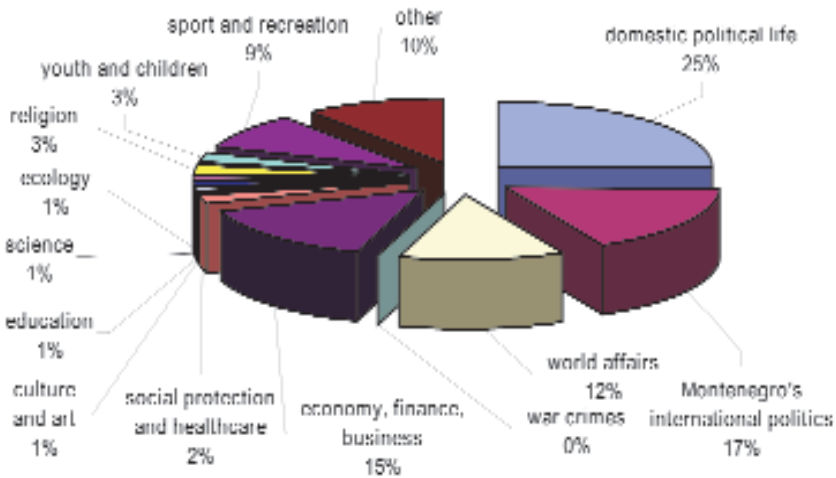
**Dnevnik 2 - STRUCTURE OF CONTENT
- NUMBER OF ITEMS**



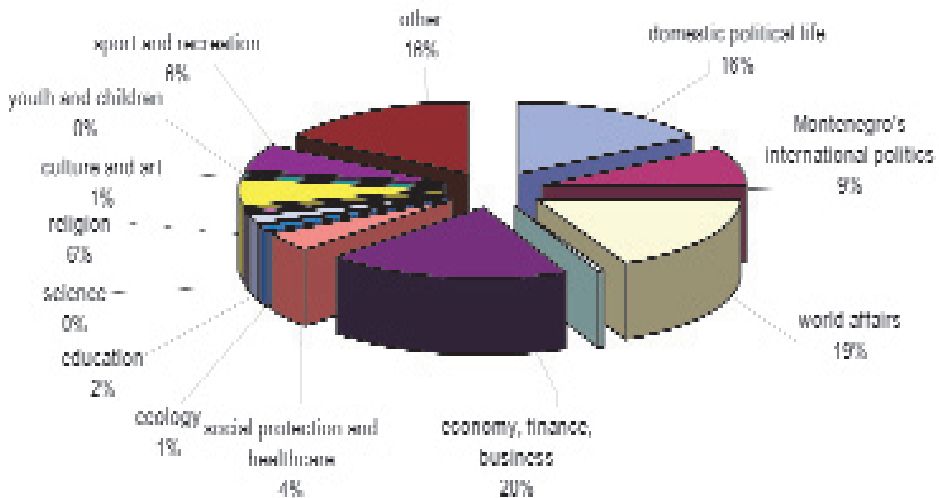
**Inpuls - STRUCTURE OF CONTENT
- NUMBER OF ITEMS**



**Dnevnik 2 - STRUCTURE OF CONTENT
- DURATION**



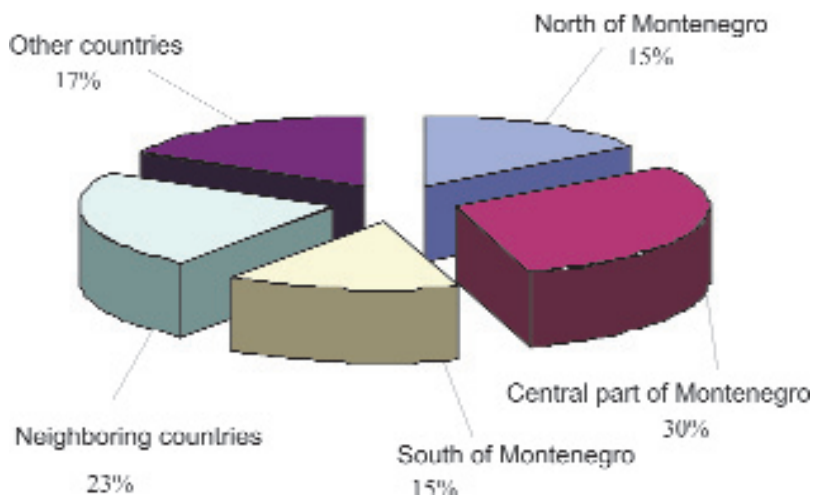
**IN Puls - STRUCTURE OF CONTENT
- DURATION**



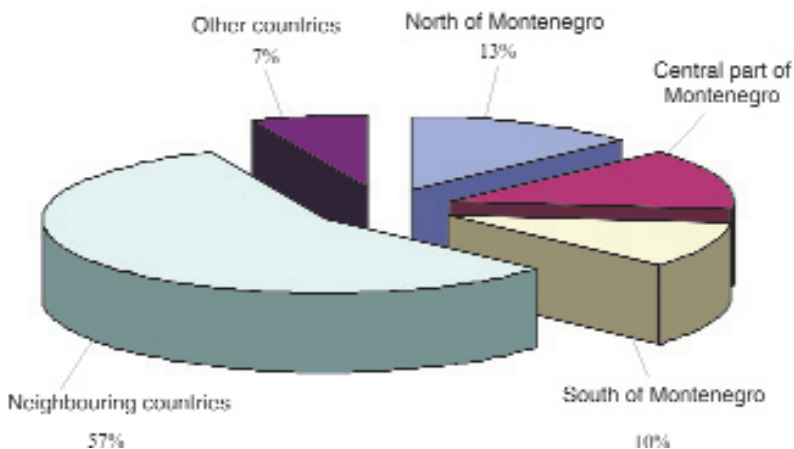
Territorial distribution

In this part of the report, we present the structure of the two programs' news coverage according to region and the structure of information according to the territorial units they refer to.

Dnevnik 2 - TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION



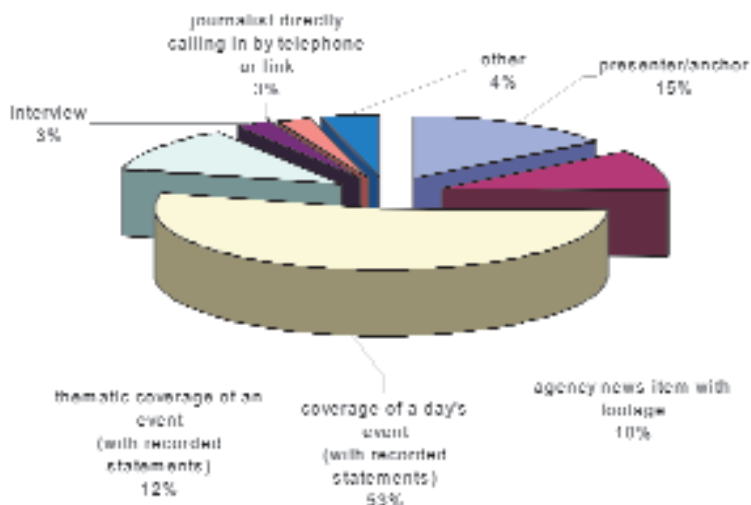
Inpuls - TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION



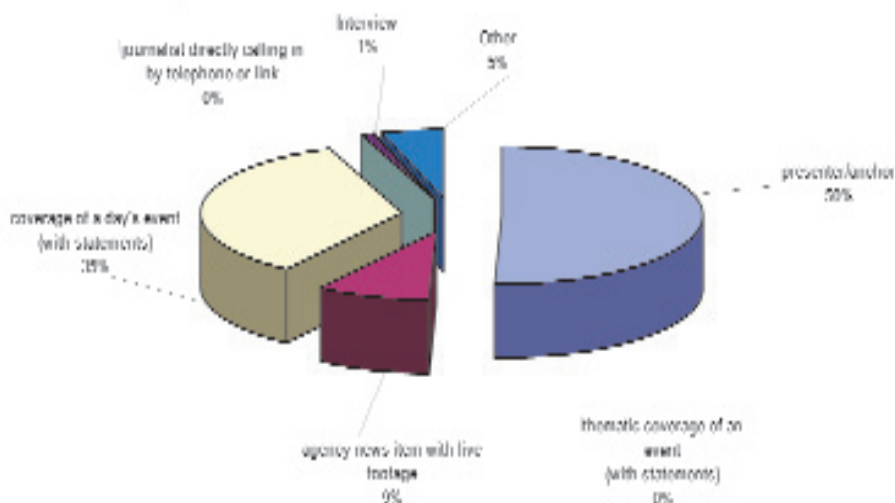
Program structure according to news forms

In this part of the report, we present the statistical structure of reports in the two programs according to the category of coverage and presentation of information.

Dnevnik 2 - PROGRAM STRUCTURE ACCORDING TO NEWS FORMS



Inpuls - PROGRAM STRUCTURE ACCORDING TO NEWS FORMS

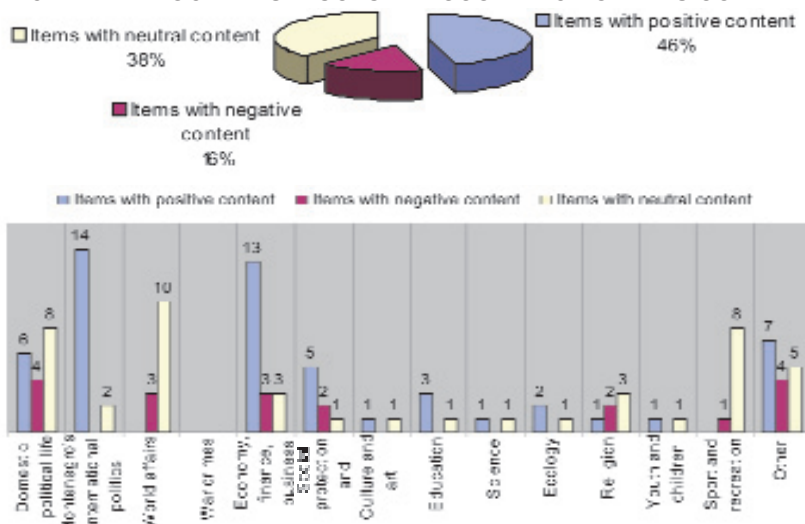


INDICATOR OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Program structure according to news content

This part of the report presents the statistical structure of the two programs according to the general content of information, i.e. according to whether the information is generally positive, neutral or negative. Journalist attitude was neutral, as the Association of Young Journalists in the monitoring period did not observe open partiality of any journalist or presenter/anchor.

Dnevnik 2 - PROGRAM STRUCTURE ACCORDING TO NEWS CONTENT



INpuls - PROGRAM STRUCTURE ACCORDING TO NEWS CONTENT

