



First monitoring report (Autonomous Republic of Crimea,
Kherson, Mykolayiv, Odessa and Zaporizhya)
Funded by the European Union

Media coverage of IDPs in Ukraine (South)

1-23 October 2015

Prepared by
**Association Spilnyi
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1 INTRODUCTION

This is the first of the monitoring reports which will be published in the framework of the “Regional Voices: Strengthening conflict sensitive coverage in Ukraine’s regional media” project implemented by the Thomson Foundation, the European Journalism Centre, Association Spilnyi Prostir, MEMO 98 and the Institute for Regional Media and Information.

The overall objective of the project is to decrease potential areas of conflict through balanced news output in the regional media, thereby contributing to a decrease in communal tensions, specifically between internally displaced persons (IDPs) and their host communities. This will be achieved by strengthening regional media’s ability to respond to the conflict through enhanced independence and quality of content as well as by strengthening regional media access to networks, both within Ukraine and beyond its borders.

The project envisions development of an early warning capacity of incendiary coverage of conflict-related issues through consistent media monitoring and evaluation, including on election coverage, of participating regional media. Spilnyi Prostir and MEMO 98 jointly prepared methodology of monitoring the media coverage of IDPs and trained 65 regional analysts (in Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Odessa) to conduct quantitative and qualitative analysis of the regional media coverage in connection with the above-mentioned topic.

Between 1 – 23 October 2015, the monitoring team conducted the first monitoring of a number of monitoring exercises, with a special focus on how the topic of IDPs is reported ahead of the 25 October local elections. The monitoring sample consisted of a total of 207 monitored media (51 TV channels, 65 print media and 91 online media outlets) in 24 regions of Ukraine divided into four main parts:

- ★ Eastern part (Donetsk, Kharkiv and Luhansk);
- ★ Northern/Central parts (Dnipropetrovsk, Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Sumy, Vinnytsya and Zhytomyr);
- ★ Southern part (Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Kherson, Mykolayiv, Odessa and Zaporizhya);
- ★ Western part (Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Khmelnytsky, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, Volyn and Zakarpattia)

The sample of monitored media in the Eastern regions of Ukraine was rather extensive, composed of 36 media outlets in the region.

In February 2014, Russian troops without insignia entered the region of Autonomous Republic of Crimea and as a result of following events and based on the 16 March referendum, that was not recognised by the international community and rejected by the UN General Assembly



non-binding resolution affirming the “territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders”, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Crimea on 18 March signed the Treaty on Accession, ratified by the Russian Federal Assembly on 21 March.

As a consequence, in February-March 2014 the newly established Crimean government, that is internationally unrecognised and considered occupational by the Kyiv authorities, obliged the media of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC) to re-register according to the law of the Russian Federation. However, the independent media were in many cases refused a new license (broadcast media) or denied registration (print and online media).

In the follow-up, a number of media had to leave the peninsula, such as online Centr Zhurnalistskych Rozsliduvan, online Podijj v Krymu, online Black Sea News and Chornomorska TV and Radio Station¹. In addition, since they were refused news license or re-registration the following media ceased to continue from 1 April 2015: ATR TV channel, which was the only Crimean-Tatar channel in the world, Lyali TV, a children channel and Meydan radiostation. Also the newspapers Avdet, Kirim and QHA news agency terminated their activity.

In March 2014, the nation-wide Radio Svoboda launched a Crimea-related multi-media project entitled ‘Krym. Realii’ (The Crimea. The Reality), later accompanied by a weekly TV programme under the same name. However, according to the station’s Crimean correspondent >>

¹ FREEDOM HOUSE, HUMAN ABUSES IN RUSSIAN-OCCUPIED CRIMEA, AVAILABLE AT [HTTPS://FREEDOMHOUSE.ORG/REPORT/SPECIAL-REPORTS/HUMAN-RIGHTS-ABUSES-RUSSIAN-OCCUPIED-CRIMEA#VKH4X9BJSW](https://freedomhouse.org/report/special-reports/human-rights-abuses-russian-occupied-crimea#VKH4X9BJSW)



Lilya Budzhurova, its online edition ended up among black-listed media outlets, the journalists of which are not allowed to cover any public events. Reportedly, the mentioned ATR TV channel, QHA news agency² and 15 minutes, all online media sources radio were also labeled with a 'non-grata' status.

Consequently, some independent media, having abandoned the territory of the peninsula, are continuing their work on the continental part of Ukraine. Among these is a relatively new news agency entitled Holos Krymu. Thus, alongside with the term internally displaced people, there emerged a new category – internally displaced media.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

★ Media in Southern regions belong to those that covered the IDP topic in a rather limited and superficial manner, mostly in the context of other topics and problems.

★ Regrettably, the topic of IDPs was often presented passively, in the context of other issues. It leads to the perception that media consider the topic rather marginal, without a longer perspective or more profound public discussion.

★ The reports of derogatory comments were rare, however, the monitoring still revealed such cases. This approach was visible in some Zaporizhya media.

★ The findings revealed a number of stories with lack of diversity, one of the prime journalistic standards. This was accompanied with a poor sourcing, problems with terminology (IDPs, refugees) and almost non-existing analysis.

★ Alongside, there were numerous cases where media omitted to present positions of the IDPs themselves. Such an approach was often seen when reporting about the authorities, when issues were presented from a 'power' perspective without balancing them by the opinions from the IDPs.

★ Nevertheless, the media of the region presented their audience with a fully-fledged account concerning the Ukraine-EU grant aid-schemes directed at IDPs, helping to understand the problem consequences.

★ While qualitative informing was in general rare, there were few media, such as Mykolaiv-based Oblast State TV and Radio Broadcasting Station, which showed good examples of human approach in their reporting. In addition the channel alongside with Odessa-based www.reporter.com.ua also offered its audience some investigative insights.

3 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The sample of monitored media in the Southern regions of Ukraine included 36 most popular and top-rated outlets in the region, divided as follows:

- ★ 11 local TV-stations – one state-owned and one or two major private channels per oblast;
- ★ 11 newspapers - at least one state-owned publication and several

major private ones per oblast;

- ★ 14 online media – most visited news-oriented websites in each oblast.

The monitoring findings revealed that the IDPs-related topics did not attract particular media attention prior to the local elections (the share of allocated time and space ranged between 1.4 per cent in monitored TV channels to 0.5 per cent in print media).

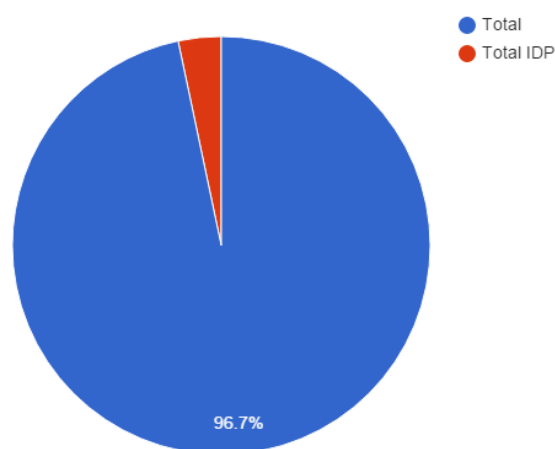


CHART 1 The share of the IDP-related coverage of the total monitored coverage in all monitored TV channels during the first monitoring period (1-23 October)

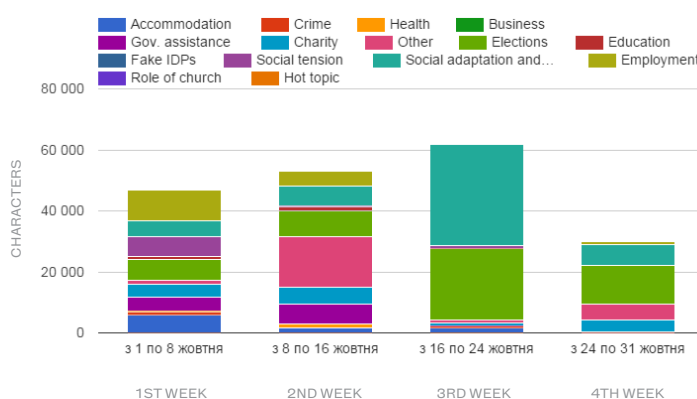


CHART 2 The share of the IDP-related coverage of the total monitored coverage in all online media

3.1 TV CHANNELS

As for the tone of the coverage, IDPs themselves were portrayed in overall balanced manner, with mostly neutral and positive tone. The volume of neutral and positive IDP-related coverage exceeded the total volume for all other subjects. Volunteers and regional state administrations were also given negative coverage. As for the >>

² FOLLOWING THEIR CLOSURE, ATR TV CHANNEL AS WELL QHA NEWS AGENCY TRANSFORMED THEIR ACTIVITIES INTO ONLINE CONTENT, NOW AVAILABLE AT [HTTP://ATR.UA](http://atr.ua) AND AT [HTTP://QHA.COM.UA](http://qha.com.ua)

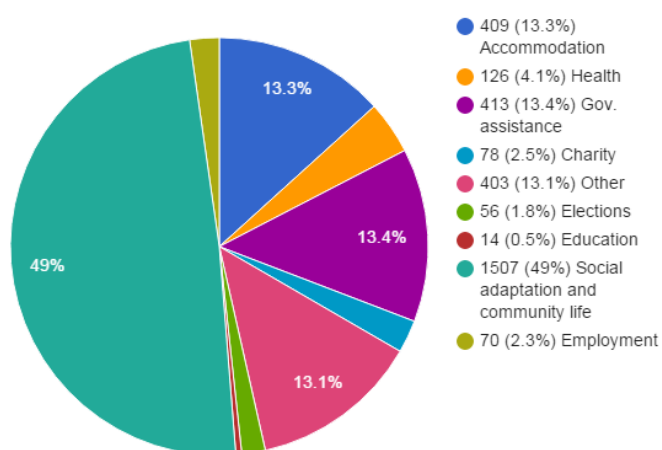


coverage of other selected subjects, a positive and neutral tone prevailed.

The monitored channels dedicated in the lead-up to the local elections some 58 minutes (3,525 seconds) of their news coverage to the issues concerning IDPs. It amounted to 1.4 per cent of total 68 hours (246,128 seconds) of news programmes, what represents 2.5 min per day for all 11 monitored channels altogether, or some 14 seconds per channel a day.

The most covered issues were in particular social adaptation and community life (49% of total volume of IDP coverage), accommodation (13.3%) and state aid (13.4%).

CHART 3 The share of the coverage on all monitored TV channels devoted to different topics in the framework of IDP-related stories



Concerning the monitored subjects, the most covered subjects within IDPs-related stories were IDPs per se (64.6% of total volume of IDP coverage); followed by the volunteers (18.8%) and regional state administrations (10.7%).

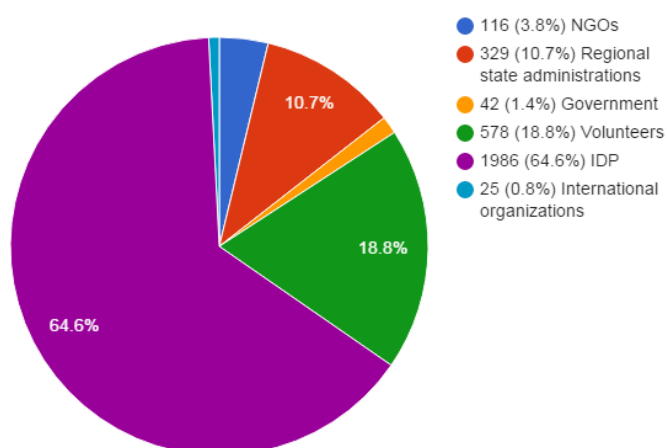
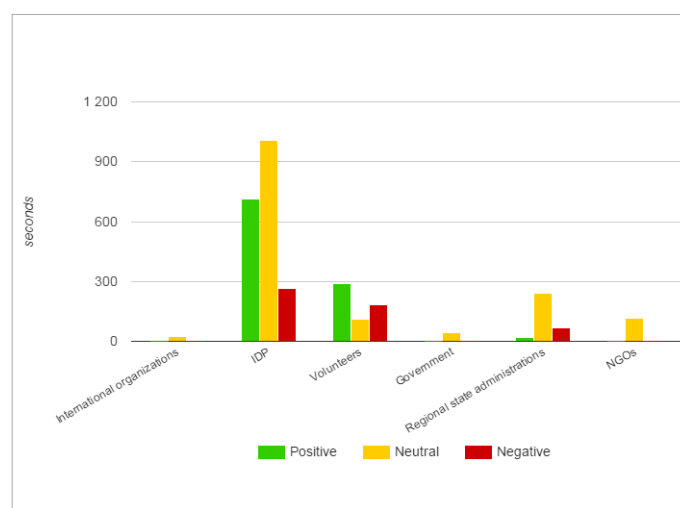


CHART 4 (BOTTOM LEFT) The share of the coverage devoted to different subjects (entities) monitored in the framework of IDP-related stories on all monitored channels

In terms of tone, IDPs were presented in mostly neutral and positive way. While their coverage amounted also to a portion of negative information (in absolute terms it was the most among all the monitored subjects), volunteers proportionally received even more negative coverage. As for the coverage of other selected subjects, a positive and neutral tone prevailed.

CHART 5 The coverage of the tone in which the monitored subjects (entities) were portrayed in the framework of IDP-related stories on all monitored channels



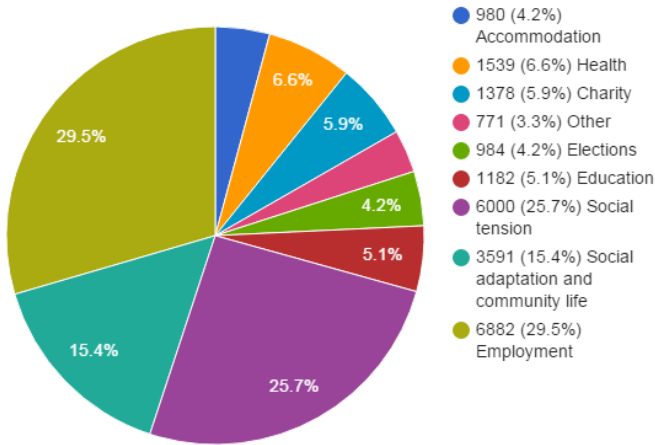
3.2 PRINT MEDIA

Local monitored newspapers showed in their pre-election coverage indifference as far as the IDP-related stories are concerned as they amounted to not more than 0.5 per cent of their total relevant-related space.

Among the most covered topics were mainly employment (29.5% of total volume of IDP-related coverage), social tensions (25.7%), social adaptation and community life (15.4%), as well as health (6.6%), charity (5.9%), accommodation (4.2%).

CHART 6 (NEXT PAGE) The share of space allocated to IDP-related issues in all monitored print media

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As for the monitored subjects, IDPs themselves received a dominant share (83.8% of total volume of IDPs-related coverage), followed by other subjects, such as regional state administrations (8.8%) and international organisations (3.4%).

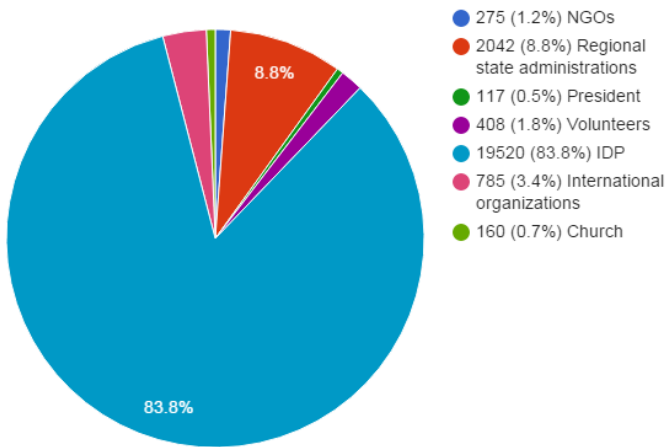
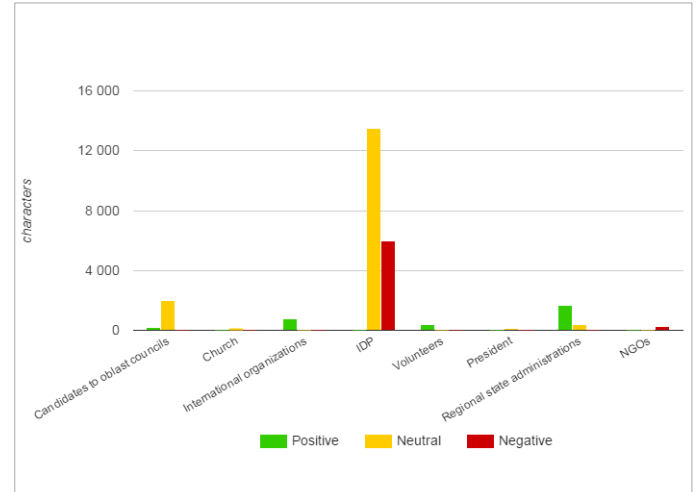


CHART 7 The share of the coverage on all monitored print media devoted to different topics in the framework of IDP-related stories.

As for the tone of the coverage, monitored newspapers portrayed IDPs exclusively in a neutral and negative manner. Some negative coverage was also given to NGOs. However, the rest of subjects presented in the IDP-related stories were shown in positive and neutral tone.

CHART 8 (TOP RIGHT) The coverage of the tone in which the monitored subjects (entities) were portrayed in the framework of IDP-related stories in all monitored print media

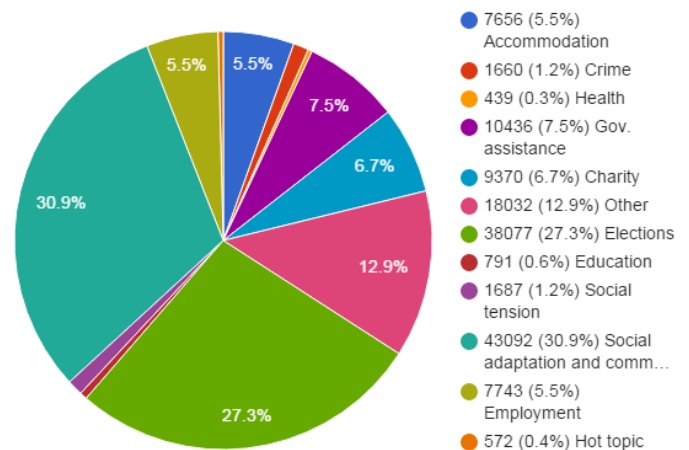


3.3 ONLINE MEDIA

The monitored online media devoted to IDP-related stories a combined total of 141,602 characters (some 78.5 of standard A4 pages) in the monitoring period.

Overall, the most significant coverage in online media was dedicated to social adaptation and community life (30.9% of total volume), voting rights of IDPs (27.3%), state aid (7.5%), employment and accommodation challenges (5.5% each).

CHART 9 The share of the coverage on all monitored online media devoted to different topics in the framework of IDP-related stories

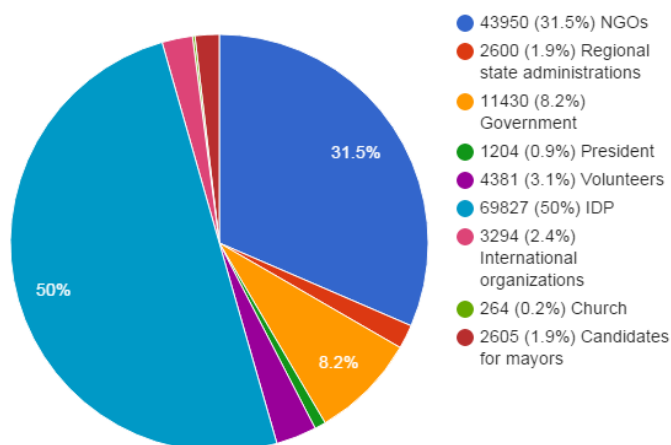


Among the monitored subjects IDPs themselves received the biggest portion of coverage (50% of the total volume of IDPs-related coverage). The other presented subjects were CSOs (31.5%), then the central government (8.2%), volunteers (3.1%) and international organisations (2.4%). >>



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CHART 10 The share of the coverage devoted to different subjects (entities) monitored in the framework of IDP-related stories on all monitored online media



Neutral and positive tone prevailed in online reporting concerning the IDPs, with some portion of negative coverage. The tone of reports concerning other subjects was almost entirely neutral and positive.

CHART 11 (TOP RIGHT) The coverage of the tone in which the monitored subjects (entities) were portrayed in the framework of IDP-related stories in all monitored online media

4 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The preliminary findings revealed that overall the IDP-related issues were covered only in a limited amount in the media from the Southern regions. They were more frequently present in the Crimea-based media as well as in media internally displaced from the Crimean peninsula. Nevertheless, overall, there was an evident lack of analytical large-scale stories.

At the same time, there were a few examples of quality IDP-related reporting.

The Crimean-based ATR TV online channel in almost every news bulletin informed its audience about the “civil blockade of the Crimea”³. However, IDP-related issues were given only infrequent coverage. A good example was a story about a Ukrainian patriot lady, a teacher from Eupatoria, who moved to Kyiv (9 October 2015). Even though the term ‘IDP’ was not used, the story clearly implied that the woman had to leave the peninsula.

The Mykolaiv channels also showed some good examples of human approach in their reporting. The broadcasters devoted coverage of IDPs accommodation issues, including their views and commentaries. Mykolaiv Oblast State TV and Radio Broadcasting Station aired a story about an IDP from the annexed Crimea titled ‘Crimea. Returning Home’ (8 October) and featuring a young man who is working as leading artist of the Mykolaiv State Regional Puppet Theater. The report presents his

³ UKRAINIAN ACTIVISTS AND TATARS ARE TRYING TO PREVENT FOOD AND OTHER COMMODITIES THAT THEY CONSIDER OF HIGHER QUALITY AND CHEAPER, TO REACH CRIMEA BY BLOCKING THE ROADS



destiny and life challenges after he moved from Crimea.

Mart TV and Radio Station, the Mykolaiv-based broadcaster, on 16 October reported about an EU-supported project entitled 'New Opportunities for Accommodation, Education and Employment of IDPs in Mykolaiv'. The grand total of the grant project was 265,000 Euro. The project is to be implemented by Mykolaiv local authorities. The project envisages the provision of repair services in the dormitories where IDPs are going to reside and in the kindergartens for IDP children, the purchase of clothes, linen and other essentials. Additionally, the project is aimed at organising a consistent study process for IDP school and pre-school children, being instrumental in IDPs psychological adaptation to new life and setting up a center for social and economic support. In Mykolaiv-based newspapers such as Nikolaievskii Novosti, Vechernii Nikolaiev and Yuzhnaya Pravda, the project was presented even more extensively.

On the 11th of October the Mykolaiv Oblast State TV and Radio Station in their TV programme entitled 'Dotting All I's' showed an investigative report. The whole story was devoted to problems that IDPs, in particular several IDP families that were living in a sanatorium, face with accommodation. As it occurred, a local school owns the sanatorium, managers of which are requesting payments for usage of the premises. The IDPs, though, consider the bills too high, refusing to pay, even though they cannot move to a different quarter.

"The media tried to emphasise the fact that IDPs are often unable to overcome psychological and adaptation barriers on their own. In an active engagement, the journalists were not only informing about the training, but also actively seeking for help"

Similarly, Odessa websites also contained individual examples of investigative reports dealing with IDPs challenges, at first with accommodation. On 20 October www.reporter.com.ua ran a story entitled 'The volume of running water for Odessa-based IDPs with disabilities from the ATO zone to be reduced'. The story informed about the challenges of IDPs accommodated in Kuyalnik sanatorium, where the managers were trying to deprive them of the right to use hot running water. The tone of the story was neutral and the author avoided sensationalism. The described issue tried to shed light on issues related to IDPs rent, as accommodation costs are to be allocated from the Reserve Fund of Ukraine. However, there was no reaction from the government regarding the issue, and the website attempted to make the situation clear.

The journalists of MIG newspaper, based in Zaporizhyya, showed signs of quality reporting in their coverage of IDP issues, yet, they sometimes



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inconsistently used terminology, mixing 'IDP' with 'refugee', or 'temporary migrant'. On 22 October, there was a mention of IDPs in the MIG newspaper. There was a noteworthy report devoted to accommodation. It reported about a family with several children that was compelled to flee from Donetsk after their house was bombarded. They moved into a four-roomed apartment and were later provided with a new place and 47,000 UAH (1,900 EUR) to furnish it. However, the journalists did not disclose who provided repair services and allocated the money for furnishing.

Other Zaporizhyya-based media, TV-5 and Zaporizhyya Oblast State TV and Radio Broadcasting Station devoted most of their IDP-related news coverage to social adaptation. In Zaporizhyya trainings are held for participants in anti-terrorist operation (ATO, the official name of the Ukraine-Russia conflict in the Eastern parts of the country) and IDPs as well as art-therapy classes for IDP children. The media tried to emphasise the fact that IDPs are often unable to overcome psychological and adaptation barriers on their own. In an active-engagement, the journalists were not only informing about the training, but also actively seeking for help – the approach helped to identify volunteer psychologists to provide professional assistance to IDPs.

Nevertheless, the monitoring identified various problematic reports and tendencies.

IDPs were very often only mentioned at the backdrop of other topics or in the context of other issues. Pershyi miskiyi (First City channel) Odessa-based TV channel on 10 October 2015 in their news bulletin ran three pieces about Crimean military sailors that moved to Odessa Oblast. The channel featured the everyday life of the sailors, their barracks, daily routine, including dining and at training. The report contained >>



the commentaries of the sailors and psychologists that work with them. Other two pieces the channel ran could be characterised in one word – “recollections”. Those 14 seconds (11 and 3) are lost in general news broadcast. The first piece (10 October) informed about an oath-taking among sailor-students and in the narrative the journalist mentioned a marine trade school that moved to Odessa from the Crimea. Together with location clarifications the duration of the piece was 11 secs. The third story did not concern directly the IDPs as it reported about the opening of a kindergarten in Odessa. The bespoke piece, however, only mentions IDPs that also have to queue up for their children to be enrolled. On the basis of such a piece it is very difficult to draw any conclusions as to the analytical or investigative background of the story.

The Vechirnya Odessa newspaper on 6 October ran a story headed ‘Vouchers for IDPs’ about humanitarian aid for IDPs from Danish Red Cross. The narration was, however, meager, purely statistical without any concrete mention of IDPs.

Another instance of a passing mention of IDPs was made by Skifia – Kherson Oblast TV and Radio Broadcasting Station - that allocated 21 secs of its evening newscast-time broadcast within the period of 1-23 October for IDP commentary (15 October). The story was about an innovation project for one of hospitals, the installment of solar panels, in particular. IDPs were mentioned as the residents of the hospital among others (the hospital provided them with a place to live). Such a news piece cannot be considered as the one that unveils the issues IDPs are facing.

Also, the IDPs were just mentioned in the context of elections (10 October). Thus, a story by the Hryvnia Kherson-based newspaper (headed ‘Hybrid ‘Wona’ beware of Danais’ is about war and pre-election methods of different parties, where there is one mention of IDPs: “While the war is ‘on pause’, new waves of military draft are suspended and 1.5 million of IDPs are returning home little by little, the right-wing Ukrainian sects are digging an internal hole for the peace process”.

As the findings revealed, IDPs were presented in a limited way also by the Kherson online media. The level of information was not sufficiently comprehensive for the reader to understand still-existing IDP-related issues: accommodation, employment and social adaptation. Such stories do not help in raising awareness to which the internal displacement affected the lives of permanent residents.

The media of Zaporizhya tend to pay less attention to the coverage of IDP-related issues, with the coverage being scarce, often within other topics, such as election or military. Additionally, a number of IDPs are going back to their home regions of Donetsk and Luhansk and for that reason local media do not pay as much attention to them as last year.

Regrettably, the monitors registered also instances of hate speech. The Subota Plius newspaper based in Zaporizhya mentioned IDPs in three stories (1, 15-16 October). The story of 1 October was worth particular attention, as it called for creating a negative impression of IDPs. The header itself ‘Donbas Refugees Are Ready to Tear Each Other to Pieces for Humanitarian Aid’ asserts that IDPs are monsters. The author descended to explicit manipulation, harming both IDPs and the people around them. In the story he often resorted to the speech of hatred, intolerance and foul language, referring to a Facebook user, with only a name for background information. The instances of used language were as follows: “to tear each other to pieces for humanitarian aid”, “I am not going to protect those broads [about women]...”, “...then I tell her “...knife it!””, “...when those marginal sons of a bitch are lodged right under my nose, I do mind”. In point of fact, the author blamed IDPs in the increase of crime rate in Kommunarask rayon of Zaporizhya without providing the reader with any concrete facts, referring to recollections of a local woman and police sources.

“While the journalists were able to tell the difference between ‘IDPs’ and ‘refugees’, preserving correct terminology, most of the stories were “recycled”. There was an instance, though, when an IDP-related description was derogatory in the header of a news item “The settlers forced to bring another certificate – the ‘homelessness’.”

Generally, the online media of Mykolaiv provided their readership with information that often lacked balance and the origin of sources was not always verified. The media identified IDP-related issues, but only rarely tried to address them. The coverage itself was presented neutrally and factually, however, the IDPs were not quoted at all, nor were other alternative sources of information, in comparison with a standard of resorting to the official statements. While the journalists were able to tell the difference between ‘IDPs’ and ‘refugees’, preserving correct terminology, most of the stories were “recycled”. There was an instance, though, when an IDP-related description was derogatory in the header of a news item “The settlers forced to bring another certificate – the ‘homelessness’.

Similarly, on 7 October www.dumskaya.net based in Odessa in their account headed ‘Odessa-Based IDPs are Provided with Medical Treatment on a Par with Locals’ informed its readers about the quality of medical treatment which IDPs are given in Kuyalnik sanatorium. It was stated that internally displaced persons are not experiencing either any discrimination against them or violation of their rights, since the sanatorium staff provides aid in a quality and timely matter. However, the coverage was clearly one-sided, as commentaries and the viewpoints of IDPs were missing, in particular of the ones that have already received such help⁴. ●