



First monitoring report (Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk,
Khmelnysky, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, Volyn, Zakarpattia regions)
Funded by the European Union

Media coverage of IDPs in Ukraine (West)

1-23 October 2015

Prepared by
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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.

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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 the 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 2015 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 Western regions of Ukraine was rather extensive, composed of 65 media outlets in the region. Following is the summary of the main findings concerning the coverage of IDPs in these outlets:

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ★ Media in Western regions belong to those that covered the IDP topic most actively.
- ★ The stories often lacked more analytical and contextual information. This was particularly appalling given the complex and complicated nature of these stories. Also, a more in-depth and investigative approach was almost non-existent.
- ★ While examples of qualitative informing were rare, there was some media, such as Ivano-Frankivsk-based channel Studio 3, that in its news contained more systematic reporting, including also some investigative moments. Additionally, Volyn TV aired a series of programmes (‘East and West Together’) focused on the human side of IDP stories.
- ★ The stories were rarely followed up, often leading to the perception that media reporting was rather item-driven, without aiming for a long-term vision or more profound public discussion
- ★ The findings revealed quite a significant portion of stories with distorted balance, one of the prime journalistic standards. This was accompanied by poor sourcing and lack of diversity in viewpoints concerning their challenges in new social environments.
- ★ Monitored media showed a visible tendency to present IDP-related stories in a ‘sensational-like’ manner, including in an election-related >>



context, when IDP-issues were used as a tool to seek popularity ahead of polls.

3 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The sample of monitored media in the Western regions of Ukraine was rather extensive, with the media ownership, potential impact, and ratings as the criteria of selection. As a result, the sample composed of 65 most popular and top-rated outlets in the region, divided as follows:

- ★ 18 local TV stations – one state-owned and one or two major private channels per oblast;
- ★ 26 newspapers – at least one state-owned publication and several major private ones per oblast;
- ★ 21 online media – most visited news-oriented websites in each oblast.

The monitoring findings revealed that the IDP-related topics did not attract particular media attention prior to the local elections (the share of allocated time and space ranged between 2.1 per cent in monitored TV channels to 0.8 per cent in print media).

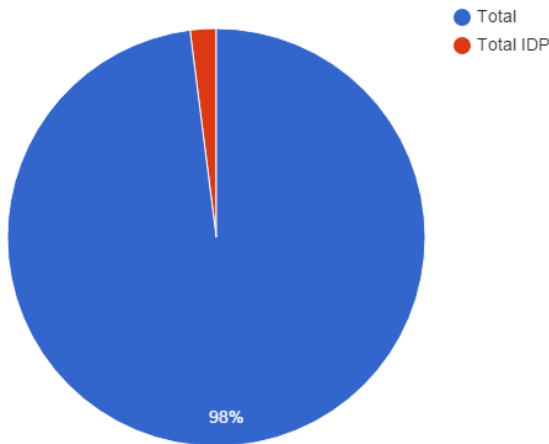
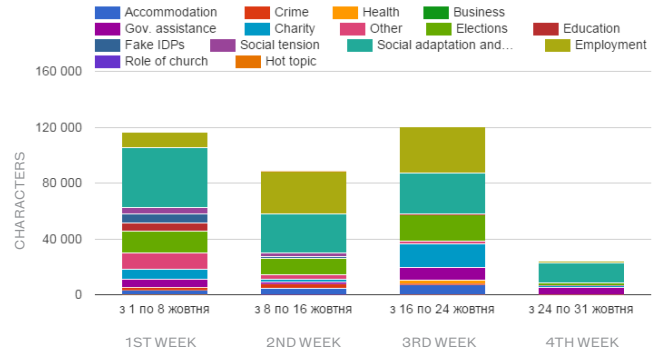


CHART 1 The share of the IDP-related coverage of the total monitored coverage in all monitored TV channels during the first monitoring period (1-23 October)

CHART 2 (OPPOSITE, TOP) The share of the IDP-related coverage of the total monitored coverage in all online media

3.1 TELEVISION

The monitored channels dedicated in the lead-up to the local elections some 2.5 hours (8,936 seconds) of their news coverage to the issues concerning IDPs. It amounted to some 2.2 per cent of total 115 hours



(414,686 seconds) of news programmes, what represents some 6.5 min per day for all 18 monitored channels altogether, or some 22 seconds per channel a day.

The most covered issues were in particular social adaptation and community life (59.9% of total volume of IDP coverage), employment (11.1%), voting rights of IDPs (11.3%), charity (5.2%) and state assistance (4.3%).

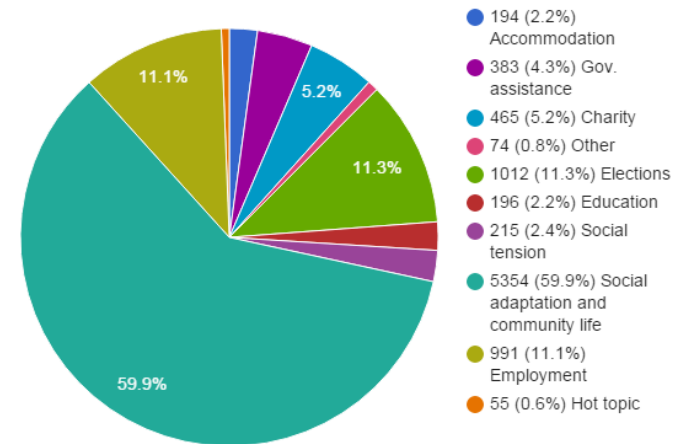


CHART 3 The share of the coverage on all monitored TV channels devoted to different topics in the framework of IDP-related stories

Concerning the monitored subjects, the most covered subjects within IDP-related stories were IDPs per se (66.2% of total volume of IDP coverage); regional state administrations (17.4%) civil-society organisations (17.4%) and international organisations (4.7%).

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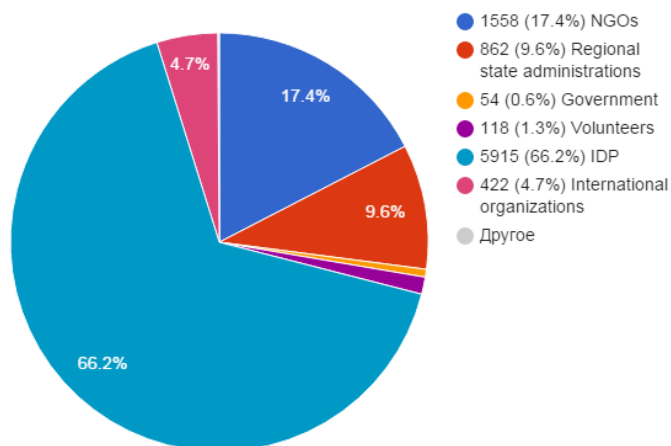


CHART 4 The share of the coverage devoted to different subjects (entities) monitored in the framework of IDP-related stories on all monitored channels

In terms of tone, IDPs were presented in an exclusively positive or neutral manner, with no accounts of negative or critical remarks.

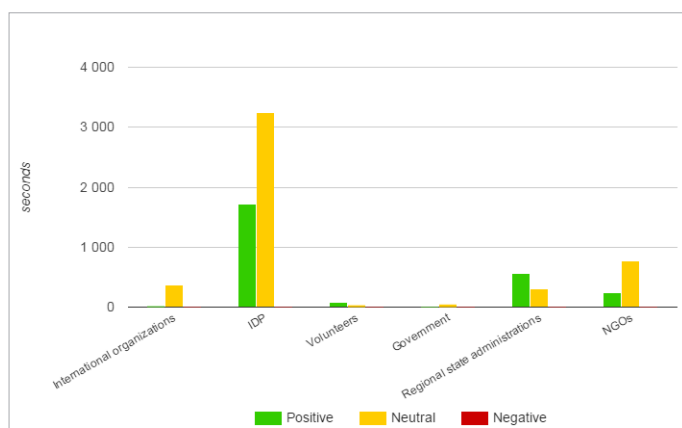
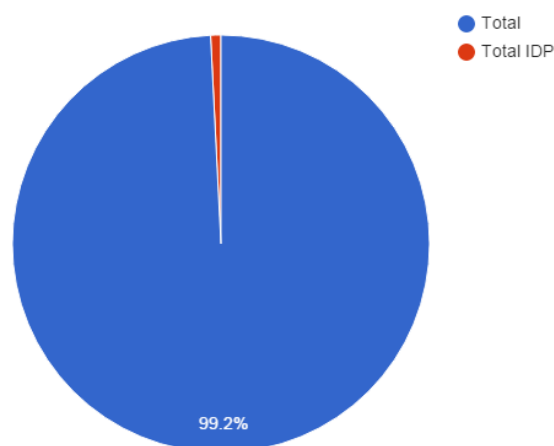


CHART 5 The coverage of the tone in which the monitored subjects (entities) were portrayed in the framework of IDP-related stories on all monitored channels

3.2 PRINT MEDIA

Local monitored newspapers showed indifference in their pre-election coverage as far as the IDP-related stories were concerned as they amounted to not more than 0.8 per cent of total relevant-related space.

CHART 6 (OPPOSITE, TOP) The share of space allocated to IDP-related issues in all monitored print media



Among the most covered topics were employment (40.7% of total volume of IDP coverage), social adaptation and community life (28.8%), as well as state aid (8.9%), voting rights of IDPs (8.2%), “fake” IDPs (6.3%).

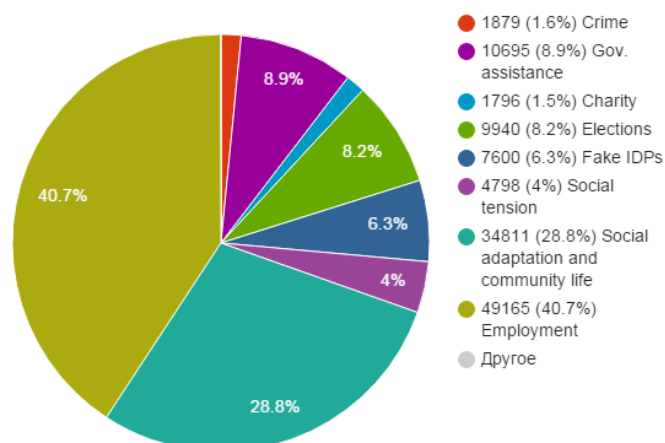


CHART 7 The share of the coverage on all monitored print media devoted to different topics in the framework of IDP-related stories

As for the monitored subjects, IDPs themselves received a dominant share (78.7% of total volume of IDPs-related coverage), followed by other subjects, such as regional state administrations (8.8%), central government and CSOs (4.9% each), and volunteers (2.4%).

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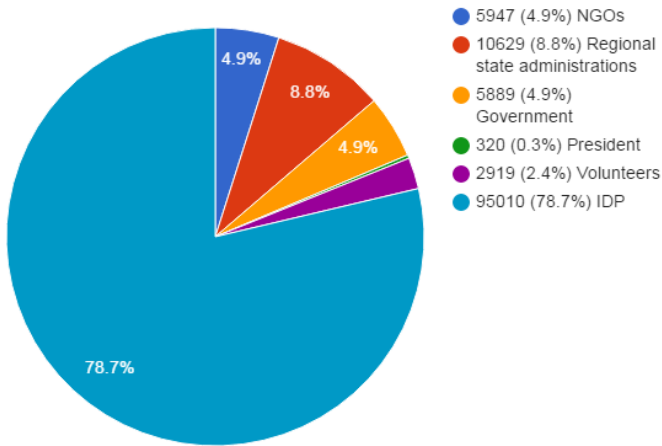
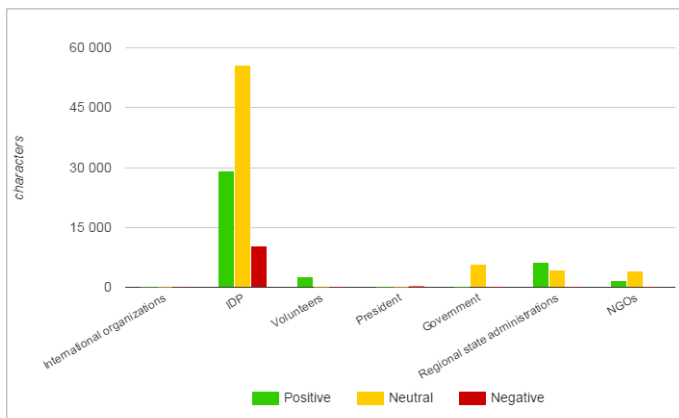


CHART 8 The share of the coverage devoted to different subjects (entities) monitored in the framework of IDP-related stories on all monitored print media

Concerning the tone, IDPs themselves were mostly portrayed in a neutral and positive manner, with a portion of critical information as well – amount of which was higher than for other monitored subjects altogether. In the rest of the subjects, their coverage was predominantly positive or neutral.

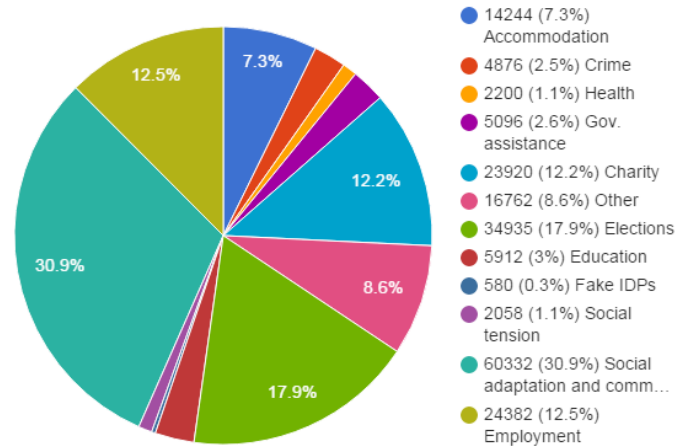
CHART 9 The coverage of the tone in which the monitored subjects (entities) were portrayed in the framework of IDP-related stories in all monitored print media



3.3 ONLINE MEDIA

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 (17.9%), employment (12.5%), charity (12.2%) and accommodation challenges (7.3%)

CHART 10 (OPPOSITE) The share of 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 (65.1% of the total volume of IDPs-related coverage). The other presented subjects were central government (8.3%), CSOs (8.1%), and regional state administrations (5.5%).

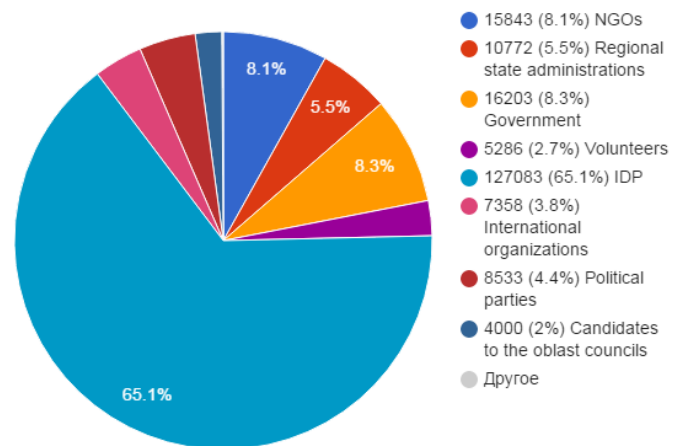


CHART 11 The share of the coverage devoted to different subjects (entities) monitored in the framework of IDP-related stories on all monitored online media

Neutral and positive tone prevailed in online reporting concerning the IDPs. At the same time, however, they received bigger amounts of negative coverage than other monitored subjects together. Central government and regional state administrations also amounted for a certain portion of negative coverage, nevertheless neutral tone was dominant. The tone of accounts towards the rest of the subjects was mainly positive and neutral.

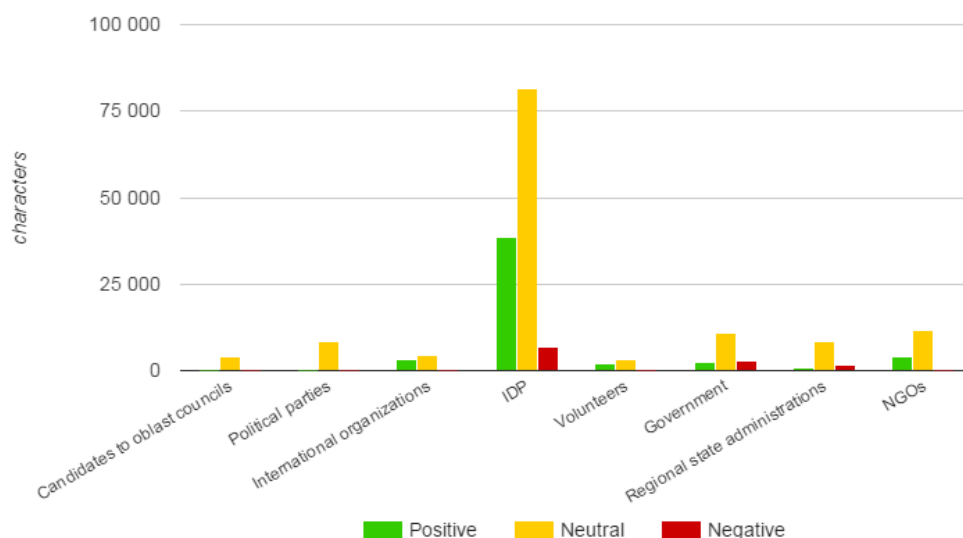


CHART 12 The coverage of the tone in which the monitored subjects (entities) were portrayed in the framework of IDP-related stories in all monitored online media

4 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The style of IDP coverage and the portrayal of IDP-related subjects in the media of Western regions of Ukraine were somewhat similar to the situation in other regions. Nevertheless, there were certain special features. Media monitoring findings revealed various shortcomings at odds with professional journalistic standards, including lack of balance, striving for sensationalism, unfriendly context, using IDP-related issues as a popularity gainer during the election campaign, human stories converted into tabloid context, poor sourcing and overall lack of long-term vision that would aim to create more profound public discussion.

At the same time, there were examples, though relatively rare, of quality reporting.

Ivano-Frankivsk-based 3 Studia television channel ran a series of four reports about IDPs. The reports provided insights into social adaptation of IDPs in Zakarpattia and charity support of international organisations and local CSOs. On October 16 there was a piece entitled 'Adaptation of IDPs' discussing the challenges and possible solution of psychological adaptation of IDPs in their new places of residence as well as living conditions and specific material needs of IDPs ahead of the upcoming winter season.

A series of human stories were made public on Volyn TV within a series of programmes entitled 'East and West Together!' and broadcast after the news bulletin throughout the whole monitored period (1-23 October). The programmes represented an example of human-faced stories, including

quality analytical reports – presenting perspectives of the war-changed viewpoints, unveiling various characters and their turn-to-maturity process. Despite their age young IDP are seen as surprisingly clear-minded and serious, in a consequence of the unfolding war events. Even if some of the IDPs are involved in the war operations (girl helping the fighters), the narrative suggests that they believe there will be time for the war to end and for them to return to their homes in Donbas.

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There was another example of a human-faced story in Ternopil-based Visti TTB programme (1 October 2015). The piece informed about the Day of the Elderly in a home for the aged in the village of Petryky. The authors identified the challenges of elderly IDPs and gave a clear account of their situation and personal insights with various interviews with IDPs.

All three monitored newspapers of Zakarpattia also contained the instances of similar journalistic approach, when the destinies of people that found temporary shelter in the region were featured in the reports. A good example was an article of 'Novyny Zakarpatya' newspaper titled The Happiness of the Four (17 October 2015).

A special feature of Lviv-based media, in particular Vysoky Zamok newspaper was that they often ran stories or commentaries of interesting people that are IDPs but positively, the journalists chose not to >>



emphasise the fact, such as in the story 'Alyona Kosheleva, a model from Luhansk Oblast – a candidate from the Radical party of Oleh Lyashko' (22 October 2015).

The online media of Volyn tend to keep balance and avoid sensationalism. Volyn Post newspaper was the media that made attempts at taking a closer look at controversial or more complex issues. 'Human stories' here were frequently covered, often with serious attempts of proper investigative reports. At the same time, the monitoring team came across an issue that was not so widely discussed in the other media – in the Volyn-based media reported about other perspectives of the IDPs existence, with an insight suggesting that their voices are not heard. However, there were various instances of low-quality reporting concerning the IDPs.

Several media outlets covered the topic of IDPs either in a very marginal manner, or ignored it entirely. State-owned Tysa-1 and M-studio TV channels from Zakarpattia gave very little attention to IDP issues, while Lviv TV provided IDPs with no coverage at all. Some print media of Western Ukraine are facing similar professionalism challenges. By following the performance of the Halychyna newspaper, for instance, the monitoring team noticed that the paper published a lot of official information, official announcements and political advertisements that amounted up to 20 per cent of total space allowed by the law. Regrettably, IDPs were given only scarce attention, with balance often being violated. There was a case when they ran a story with the use of malevolent language, based on assumptions and unverified statements – on October 13 the newspaper published an article with the headline "Everything under the FSB [Russian state secret service] control" in which the IDPs were accused of being FSB agents: 'Two other settlers of Lugansk, whose it is reasonable to suspect in cooperation with the secret services, "managed" to settle in a city in Halychyna to work...'

"Despite their age young IDP are seen as surprisingly clear-minded and serious, in a consequence of the unfolding war events. Even if some of the IDPs are involved in the war operations (girl helping the fighters), the narrative suggests that they believe there will be time for the war to end and for them to return to their homes in Donbas"

A number of channels covered IDPs in rather critical manner. TV-4, a Ternopil-based channel, informed the public on the work of municipal social services (1 October 2015), mentioning the fact that the social services of Ternopil City Council are dealing, apart from other issues, with IDP-related matters as well. The narrative of the report was that the local administration is extremely overloaded with state subsidies documentation, and that the IDP-related issues are just over the top.

In another example, Ivano-Frankivsk website www.firtka.if.ua republished



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a story from another source (16 October 2015) with a header "IDPs are not in a hurry when it comes to job search in Subcarpathia". The report quoted clear criticism expressed by Lesya Aronets, First Deputy Head of Regional Headquarters for IDP Adaptation in Ivano-Frankivsk: "Unfortunately, their activity when it comes to job search is extremely low. Once there was a vacancy at a production company with 5 thousand UAH in monthly wages and free transportation. To that I heard:" Oh, no way to that toil and moil!"

Rather hostile context was also noted in the Za Zbruchem (www.zz.te.ua), Ternopil-based website (on 7 October¹). In a story that referred to a report of national TSN TV, the authors talked about an IDP volunteer, a well-known symbol of Maidan, Lisa Shaposhnyk from Donetsk region. She once was a symbol of Maidan. Last year she settled down in Ternopil region and started organising a hostel for rehabilitation of fighters in the anti-terrorist operation (the official name of the Ukraine-Russia conflict in the Eastern parts of the country). It happened that after some time she left this endeavour and Ternopil region in search of a better life. However, the question of reports remained - where are the funds allocated for the hostel? The website referred to information broadcast by a central channel that portrays the IDP woman in negative light without any attempt to present her or other views to balance the story on what happened during her Ternopil stay. Consequently, the readers are left with negative impression of the woman. It must be noted, that she was portrayed negatively by Za Zbruchem website and other local online publications also in other occasions.

In another story (13 October) with a similar nature, the website brought a story about a grandfather of one of the pupils who came from Donbas, allegedly trespassing a school territory in one of Ternopil schools. >>

¹ AVAILABLE AT:
[HTTP://ZZ.TE.UA/SKANDALNA-VOLONTERKA-ZNOV-OPYNYLASYA-V-TSENTRI-UVAHY-VIDEO/](http://ZZ.TE.UA/SKANDALNA-VOLONTERKA-ZNOV-OPYNYLASYA-V-TSENTRI-UVAHY-VIDEO/)



While the story reported about the police being called to stop and investigate, it turned out that the man was released after verification of his personal data, since he constituted no menace for children. However, the coverage was rather sided, with a negative connotation over it².

Monitoring of Ternopil media identified another problem in IDP coverage – generalisation and depersonalisation of problems. On 7 October a short news report appeared on the same website about the continued efforts of Ternopil emergency response groups to help IDPs - “On 6 October at Ternopil city railway station emergency response groups met a family of IDPs from East Ukraine that decided to seek shelter in Ternopol Oblast. The newcomers were assisted on their way to a temporary quarter. The specialists of the Department for Psychological Assistance of State Emergency Service provided the IDPs with professional support”. However, the report was devoid of any information about the IDPs themselves, their views or more precise identification of their specific situation³.

“A number of media outlets covered ‘fake IDPs’. In Rivne, Rivne Express decided to do it by means of republication. The article entitled “Posing Oneself for an Elderly Man with a Tragic Fate a Fake IDP Cashed in on the Compassion of Ukrainians” was a translated republication of an article from the Fakty Newspaper”

It was a frequent occasion when IDPs were referred to in the context of elections. Volyn Nova and Vidomosti newspapers, both Volyn-based claimed (6 October 2015) that IDPs were unable to exercise their voting rights this year due to imperfect legislation. In one of its programmes Chernivtsi TV also touched upon elections and inability of IDPs to exercise their voting rights, in particular. Also the journalists from Chernivtsi-based Pohlyad newspaper studied the issue of inability of IDPs to exercise their voting rights in the local elections. They reported on the outcomes of the CSO round table (1 October 2015). However, the journalists used incorrect terminology in the headline and the photo caption when they referred to IDPs as refugees.

There were the cases of usage of IDP issue as an event for campaigning. Ivano-Frankivsk website www.kurs.if.ua covered IDPs by quoting one of the mayoral candidate of Ivano-Frankivsk Ihor Nasalyk (from Petro Poroshenko’s block ‘Solidarnist’). In the article “The residents of Ivano Frankivsk develop my mayoral action plan, - Nasalyk” (5 October 2015) the meeting of the bespoken candidate with IDPs residing in Ivano-Frankivsk was mentioned.

In another example, the news websites of Lviv, such as Zahid.net, Gal.info and Lviv portal usually report about a wide range of topics, including also from other regions of Western Ukraine. Yet, there were only 11 IDP-related items monitored throughout the period. Gal.info informed its

readers about the challenges faced by the people that were compelled to leave their homes. However, the report titled ‘Problems of IDPs require strategic decisions – Myroslav Khomyak’, in its nature resembled PR campaign materials, opening a question of outlet’s independence (the politician is allegedly one of the website owners). In the report the journalists used only quotes of Myroslav Khomyak (candidate of Nash Krai party) with agitation-like rhetoric such as “we will do everything possible that Lviv to become new homeland for Crimean, Luhansk and Donetsk residents”.



IDPs were portrayed in a patronising way in a report (on 9 October) on the meeting of Oleh Barna (member of parliament for Petro Poroshenko block ‘Solidarnist’) who met with German-Ukrainian Inter-Parliamentary Group headed by Karl-Georg Wellmann in a conference room of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. The deputy was quoted saying that “EU care for the settlers to participate in local elections is groundless, because we have provided them with assistance, accommodation, job and do everything to make the aggressor leave the territory and these people can return to their homes”⁴.

A number of media outlets covered ‘fake IDPs’. In Rivne, Rivne Express decided to do it by means of republication. The article entitled “Posing Oneself for an Elderly Man with a Tragic Fate a Fake IDP Cashed in on the Compassion of Ukrainians” was a translated republication of an article from the Fakty Newspaper. Chernivtsi-based Pohlyad newspaper also touched upon the topic of fake IDPs in a story about the life on liberated territories (Lysychansk) and ‘pension tourism’ of the Crimeans that register themselves as IDPs, actually residing on the territory of the Crimea. Rivne TV broadcasters tried to include the theme into a number of aired reports, using “staff” IDPs – the same faces for their various reports (once the IDP is shown receiving state aid, next time the same man gave a commentary on other topics).

In the online media of Zakarpattia 80 per cent of IDP-related accounts were republications. While the rest of IDP coverage included original stories containing interviews and commentaries of the IDPs, the journalists did not take more analytical approach, often relying on the facts from official institutions or IDP-related CSOs, as for example Zakarpattia-Donbas. ●

² [HTTP://ZZ.TE.UA/U-TERNOPILSKU-SHKOLU-VYKLYKALY-MILITSIYU-CHEREZ-DIDUSYA-Z-DONBASU/](http://zz.te.ua/u-ternopilsku-shkolu-vyklykaly-militsiyu-cherez-didusya-z-donbasu/)
³ [HTTP://ZZ.TE.UA/U-TERNOPIL-PRYIJHALA-SCHE-ODNA-SIMYA-Z-DONBASU/](http://zz.te.ua/u-ternopil-pryihalasche-odna-simya-z-donbasu/)

⁴ [HTTP://POGLYAD.TE.UA/PODII/OLEH-BARNA-NIMECHCHYNA-YAK-LIDER-EVROSOYUZU-POVYNNA-NA-LYSHE-PRODOVZHITY-A-J-POSYLYTY-EKONOMICHNYJ-TYSK-NA-ROSIYU/](http://poglyad.te.ua/podii/oleh-barna-nimechchyna-yak-lider-evrosoyuzu-povynna-na-lyshe-prodovzhyty-a-j-posylyty-ekonomichnyj-tysk-na-rosiyu/)