



Media coverage of Internally Displaced Persons in the Ukrainian mass media
Sumy, Chernihiv, Zhytomyr, Vinnytsya, Dnipro, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Cherkasy regions
Funded by the European Union

Media coverage of IDPs in the Ukrainian mass media

North/Centre of Ukraine
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1. INTRODUCTION

This is the third of the monitoring reports which will be published in the framework of the project 'Regional Voices: Strengthening conflict sensitive coverage in Ukraine's regional media', funded by the European Union. The project is implemented by a media consortium led by the Thomson Foundation, and consists of the European Journalism Centre, 'Spilnyi Prostir' Association, MEMO 98 and the International Institute for Regional Media and Information.

The total 24 regional monitoring reports on coverage of IDPs in the local Ukrainian media (regional monitoring reports, comparative cross-regional monitoring reports, comparative monitoring reports by monitoring periods and final report) will be prepared in between 2015 - 2017. The first media monitoring report assessed the findings from 1 to 23 October 2015 and the second monitoring report assessed the findings from 15 to 28 February 2016.¹

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.



¹ All the reports covering first monitoring period are available at <http://regionalvoices.eu/en/monitoring> and http://www.prostir-monitor.org/reports/wave1_region_pdf.html. The second period reports are available at [http://www.prostir-monitor.org/reports/en/wave2_region_pdf.html\(regional\)](http://www.prostir-monitor.org/reports/en/wave2_region_pdf.html(regional)) and http://www.prostir-monitor.org/upload/reports/final-reports-wave-2/Summary_W2-en.pdf (final)



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 – 14 June 2016, the monitoring team conducted the third monitoring of a number of monitoring exercises, with a special focus on how the topic of IDPs has been reported. The monitoring sample consisted of a total of 203 monitored media (50 TV channels, 66 print media and 87 online media outlets) in 24 regions of Ukraine divided into four main parts:

- ★ East (Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv oblasts;)
- ★ North/Centre (Sumy, Chernihiv, Zhytomyr, Vinnytsya, Dnipro, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Cherkasy);
- ★ South (Odessa, Kherson, Zaporizhyya, Mykolayiv, Autonomous Republic of Crimea);
- ★ West (Volyn, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, Khmelnytsky, Chernivtsi).

The sample of monitored media in the Northern and Central regions (oblasts) of Ukraine was extensive and included 73 media outlets in the region (17 TV channels, 25 newspapers and 30 online media outlets). In comparison with the previous two monitoring periods there were some minor changes in the sample. The newspaper 'Chervonyj hirnyk' ('The Red Miner') issued in Kryvyj Rih (Dniprovskaya oblast) was taken out of the sample since it did not provide any coverage of IDPs during the previous monitoring periods. Given the fact that the Sumy print media provided minimum coverage of the IDP-related problems, the sample was expanded and the 'DS-Express' newspaper was included to the sample to expand it. Moreover, the online edition of "Ves Kirovohrad" (The Entire Kirovohrad) ceased to be updated regularly, so it was replaced by the site "Novyny Kirovohradshchyny" ("News of Kirovograd region").

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

★ Of the eight monitored regions in the North and Centre, the media from the Dnipro oblast provided the most active IDP-related coverage, whereas the Chernihiv media provided the least volume of such information.

- ★ There was a small increase of IDP-related coverage on television and in newspapers. By contrast, online media devoted almost two times less coverage in comparison with the second monitoring period.
- ★ Language and terminology concerning IDPs was generally correct and media overall avoided sensationalism.
- ★ A few instances of media focusing on human side of IDP stories were observed in Chernihiv and Poltava.
- ★ There were instances when the media did not keep balance and provided only 'one-sided' coverage.
- ★ There was a general lack of analytical materials concerning IDPs. Journalists generally did not question official statements by authorities or ask them probing questions and did not pay enough attention to verification of facts.
- ★ Media in general tended to passively transmit official statements, highlighting statistical data, but without any proper fact checking.

3. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The sample of monitored media in the Northern and Central regions (oblasts) of Ukraine included 72 outlets in the region (17 TV stations, 25 newspapers and 30 online media outlets). The sample included at least one state-owned TV station and one state-owned newspaper from each of the eight oblasts, with the remaining media chosen for the monitoring sample being privately owned.

The results of the previous monitoring periods revealed that the IDPs-related issues formed only a marginal part of the media coverage (ranging from 1.8 per cent on television and 1.2 per cent in newspapers in the second monitoring period). In the third media-monitoring period there was an increase of the IDP-related coverage - the share of allocated time and space ranged from 2.5% per cent of total news programmes' airtime devoted to IDP-related stories in the monitored TV channels to 2.9% of such coverage in the monitored newspapers). By contrast, the monitored online media devoted almost two times less coverage in comparison with the second monitoring period when it comes to the total number of characters. This was partly due to the fact that the materials on IDPs became shorter, mostly in the form of short announcements, without any broader context or analysis.

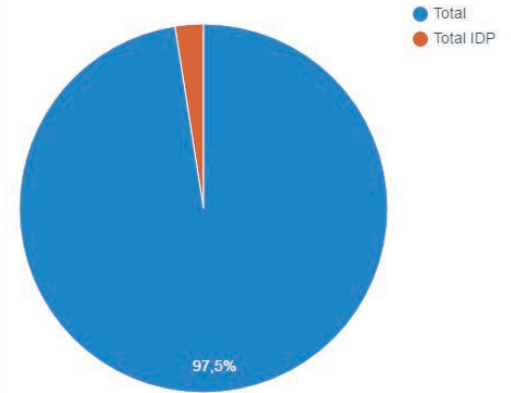


CHART 1 (ABOVE) The share of IDPs-related coverage of the total monitored coverage in all monitored TV channels during the third monitoring period (1-14 June 2016)

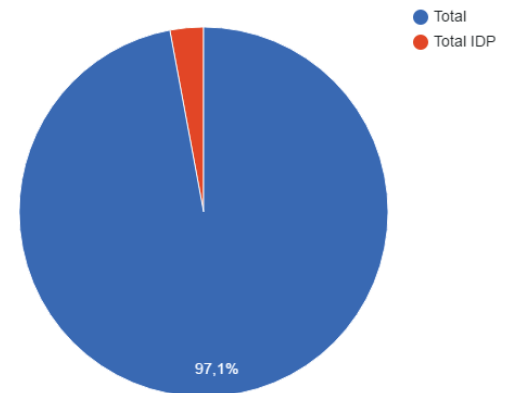


CHART 2 (ABOVE) The share of the IDPs-related coverage of the total monitored coverage in all print media during the third monitoring period (1-14 June 2016)



subjects mainly in a neutral and positive manner, the monitored newspapers provided a significant portion of negative coverage to IDPs (nearly one third of the coverage). For example, the 'Dnepr Vechernii' newspaper covered a story of a minibus (marshrutka)² driver who treated IDPs negatively.³

CHART 4 (BELOW) The share of the coverage on all monitored TV channels devoted to different topics in the IDP-related stories

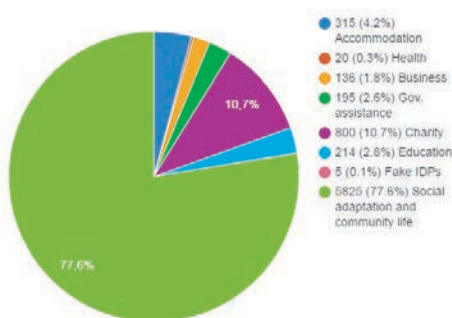


CHART 5 (BELOW) The share of the coverage devoted to different subjects (entities) monitored in the framework of IDP-related stories on all monitored channels

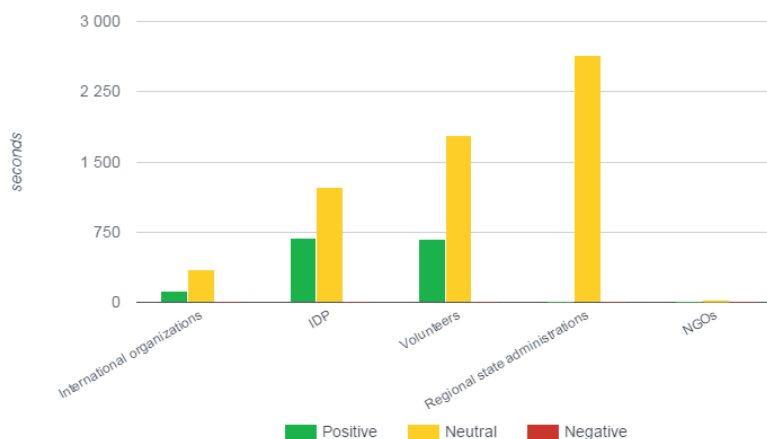
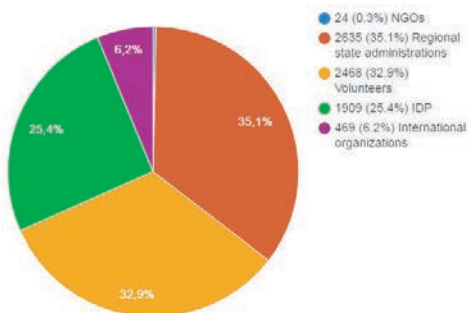


CHART 6 (ABOVE) The coverage of the tone in which the monitored subjects (entities) were portrayed in the framework of IDP-related stories on all monitored channels

3.3 ONLINE MEDIA

The monitored online media outlets devoted a total of 53,383 characters (nearly 30 of standard A4 pages) to the IDP-related stories. This is nearly two times less than during the second monitoring period when the coverage amounted to nearly 59 pages. The most significant coverage in online media was dedicated to social adaptation and community life (29% , state aid (18.8% , business (18.3% . Other topics, such as employment (6.5% , charity (5.3% , accommodation (4.3% , 'fake IDPs' (1.5% , social tension (0.5% received much less coverage.

“The monitored TV channels in the Northern and Central oblasts of Ukraine overall provided a total of 2.5 per cent of their air time to the IDPs-related coverage”



² Marshrutka is a form of a share taxi service used in the CIS and some other countries

³ Article 'Arrived!' in the 'Dnepr Vechernii' newspaper from June 7, 2016

⁴ Article titled 'IDPs will be checked at their places of residence' published at 0564.ua online resource 14 June, 2016 : <http://www.0564.ua/news/1260123>

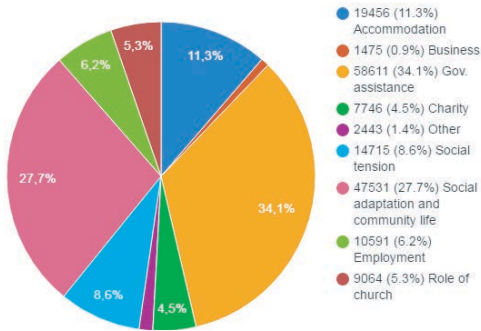


CHART 7 (ABOVE) The share of space allocated to IDP-related topics in all monitored print media

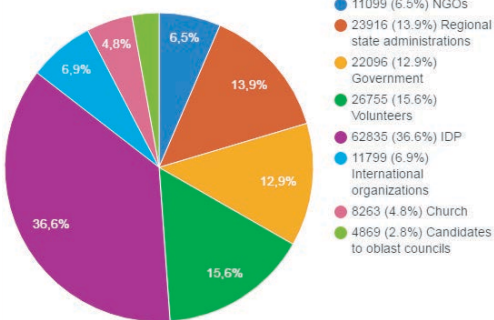
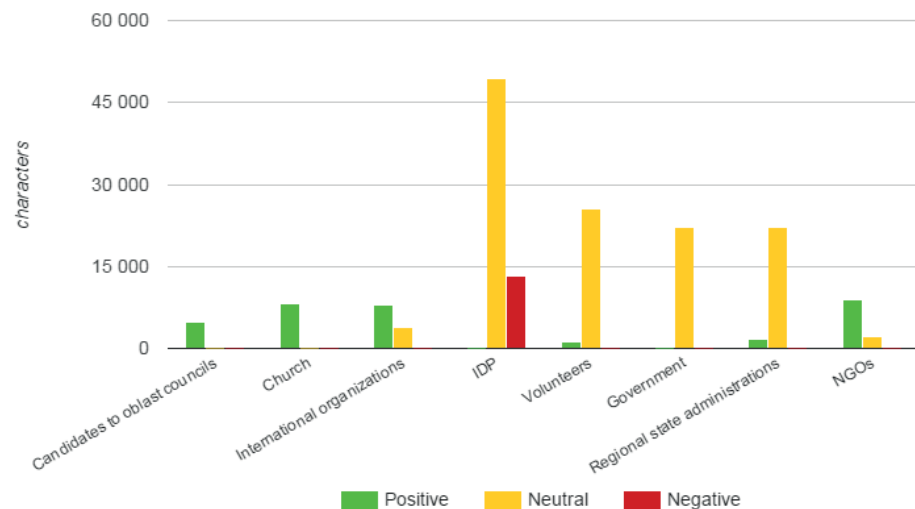


CHART 8 (ABOVE) The share of the coverage on all monitored print media devoted to different subjects (entities) monitored in the framework of IDP-related stories.



CHART 9 (BELOW) 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



As for the monitored subjects, coverage on the IDPs per se dominated in the online media (70.6% of the total volume of IDP-related coverage), followed by regional state administrations (14.9%). NGOs (6.9%), volunteers (2.4%), political parties (1.7%) and international organizations (0.9%) were less covered.

As for the tone of the coverage, most of the materials in online media were either neutral or positive.

⁵Online-edition 'ProCherk', 7 June 2016, web-address: <http://procherk.info/news/7-cherkassy/43475-evakujuvane-z-donbasu-pidpriemstvo-uspish-no-stae-na-nogi-v-cherkasah>

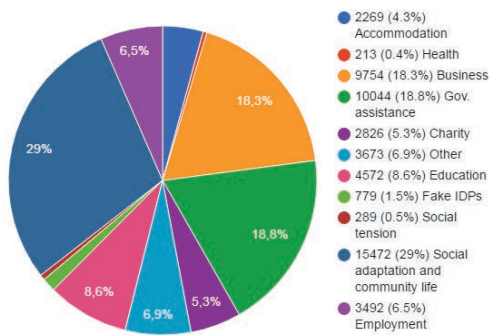


CHART 10 (ABOVE) The share of the coverage on all monitored online media devoted to different topics in the framework of IDP-related stories

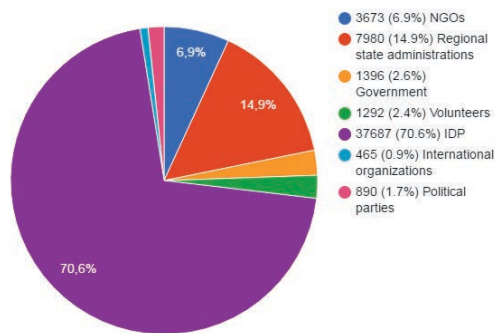
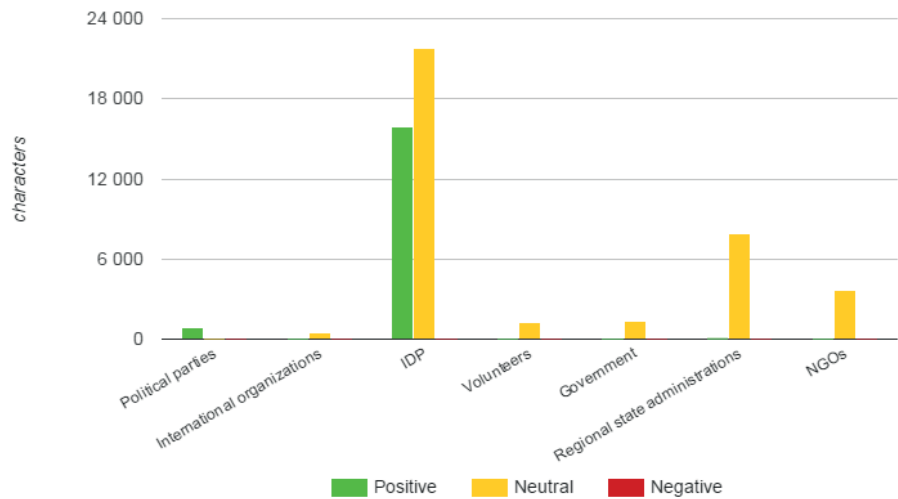


CHART 11 (ABOVE) The share of the coverage devoted to different subjects (entities) monitored in the framework of IDP-related stories in all monitored online media

CHART 12 (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



on 14 June 2016, TV Vikka featured a story on how IDPs teach children to do chemical experiments so they better understand chemistry and biology. The main idea was to show a positive example on how IDPs use their experiences to pass it on to local communities. The television perhaps could be a bit more careful when it comes to making titles of their stories as the word “chemist” has a double meaning in Ukrainian (which is to cheat) and putting it in inverted comas could have created an illusion that IDPs teach children to cheat – which was clearly not what the story said. The journalists often referred to the word combination ‘IDPs from the East’ in respect to IDPs. However, TV channels generally strictly discerned the notions of ‘refugees’ and ‘IDPs’.

The Cherkassy-based newspapers avoided sensationalism, analytical materials were not published, controversial themes were not pushed, discussions were not encouraged.

As in the prior periods, analytical coverage was insufficient in online-media. In the majority of cases, the IDP-related coverage was mainly done in the form of reports. However, there was one article titled as ‘Enterprise Evacuated from Donbass to Successfully Recover Legs in Cherkassy’⁶ that raised up the problem of the enterprise transfer from the occupied territory to the territory controlled by Ukraine.

In Chernihiv, in comparison with the second monitoring period, the stories where journalists focused on human side of IDP-related stories were missing. In addition, investigative reporting is almost non-existent on TV.

“On 14 June 2016, TV Vikka featured a story on how IDPs teach children to do chemical experiments so they better understand chemistry and biology. The main idea was to show a positive example on how IDPs use their experiences to pass on to local communities”

4 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

While overall there was an increase in the percentage of IDP-related stories on television, in Cherkassy, for example, the actual number of TV items and stories on IDP decreased. The online media adopted a similar trend. The actual increase in the percentage of IDP-related content in newspapers can be partly explained by the fact that the previous print media coverage was very marginal.

TV channels provided mainly neutral and positive coverage of the monitored subjects. For example,

⁶Publication available on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=618252934992244&id=578928492258022&substory_index=0



As a rule, while the city and oblast television identify the IDPs-related problems, they invariably do not intend to form any civic forum at the local level aimed at resolving not only the problems of IDPs but also at resolving problems which are generally topical and acute at present.

In the issue of 'Desnyanska pravda' of 2 June 2016 there was a story titled 'What do the media hide and why?' The material was prompted by a discussion organized by the Pylyp Orlyk Institute for Democracy (supported by USAID through Internews) in the Chernihiv media centre on whether or not Chernihiv journalists foster the communication between the state, ATO veterans, IDPs, and volunteers. In the same issue of the paper, there was a real human story titled 'Chernihiv to become his second home'.⁶ The coverage was dedicated to an IDP from Luhansk - Merited Journalist of Ukraine, member of the National Union of Photo-Artists of Ukraine Mr. Yuriy Khromushin. The dramatic details of his evacuation alongside with the impressions of the first year in a new city are depicted in the coverage.

The newspaper 'Hart' of 2 June 2016 also highlighted a human side of a story of a 46-year old Lithuanian Svayunas Iachunskas⁷ who in the end of 2014 together with his family had to leave the occupied Donetsk city. Not only did he move to live to the Koryukivka of the Chernihiv oblast but he also started the plywood production in the Sakhutivka village of the Koryukivskiy district.

In **Dnipro** the language and terminology of the monitored media was generally correct. The experts did not find any cases of humiliating tone or abuse. Besides, there was no case observed where an IDP would be referred to as a refugee. While the coverage of IDPs-related issues appeared to be generally balanced, it should be noted that the journalists did not present any critical position towards any official statements of the government or the local self-governance authorities and did not check any facts which were offered as truth. Analytical materials were generally missing.

In **Kirovohrad**, while covering the IDPs-related issues, journalists in general used correct language and terminology. The monitoring team in Kirovohrad did not notice any cases when IDPs were addressed as refugees. In illustrating the IDPs' problems, the media used the pictures and video footage which did not distort the content.



⁷'Our director - Best investment into village!', newspaper 'Hart' of June 2, 2016. The publication was available at web-address: <http://pro.cn.ua/ua/press/8291>



Similarly to the previous monitoring periods, apart of the lack of analytical reports, monitoring team noted a lack of any research or analysis of those issues highlighted by the governmental authorities or civic organizations. Despite some exceptions, there was a general lack of materials showing the real human stories of IDPs which could contribute to a higher interest of the public in the IDP-related issues.

The state aid was a pivotal theme raised by the local print media. The material of 'Kirovohrad truth'⁸ clarified the government's resolution on the necessity to stamp the documents on the permanent accommodation of IDPs. The article in the newspaper 'Ukraine-centre' was dedicated to the registration of IDPs in the city which the city mayor recalled in his speech at the open session of the city council.⁹

The media of *Poltava* avoided sensationalism in the coverage of IDPs. The news stories were descriptive, aimed at informing the general public on the current measures and events.

As regards to the human side of IDP-related stories, there was one such example on 'Ltava' Television and Radio Broadcasting Company. A two-minute report titled 'IDP be evicted from hostel due to debt for utilities'¹⁰ revealed how Mr. Boris Lytvynenko, a single father of two, became homeless and how his neighbor helped him by offering him a shelter. Therefore, the theme of illegal eviction and employment were raised up.¹¹

There were no findings of targeted discrimination towards IDPs. In all their coverage, the journalists

use only the terms 'forcibly displaced persons', or 'refugees'. The media in general did not provide multi-fold coverage on IDPs due to the lack of analytical reports.

The media from *Sumy* maintained a trend of poor coverage of IDPs, in particular when it comes to analytical reports. The qualitative analysis confirmed unprofessionalism of journalists. All three IDP-related items broadcast in the third monitoring period on the former oblast state television channel (OSTRBC) which was in the meantime transformed into the public broadcast service were marginal and based only on information provided from official sources.

Moreover, this information was collected incompetently with some missing information. For instance, the story on the event for the children of IDPs of 1 June¹² lacks some basic information: the organizer of the event (notion 'civic activists' is extremely wide), the place of its conduct, the frequency of such meetings, the number of kids and mothers covered. The balance of sources was formally maintained in the story: the story features IDPs (kids and adults) and volunteers. However, the coverage is marginal, with a journalist providing a brief and marginal coverage of what happened, not focusing on the current problems of social adaptation for this category of population.

The *Vinnitsya* media confirmed the lack of reports and articles with a proper analysis or research of the IDPs-related problems. The journalists presented just information and no analysis. When reporting on IDPs, the monitored media overall applied correct language and terminology and

avoided sensationalism when reporting on IDPs. There were however frequent cases when media did not present balanced stories on IDPs, providing only a one-sided coverage. There were no observed cases of either plagiarism or reprinting of the reports made by others.

There were some cases when mass media violated the balance of sources, as, for instance, in the story of the Television and Radio Broadcasting Company 'Vintera' on compensation to the EU the businessmen's funds.¹³ While there were no cases of either plagiarism or reprinting of the reports made by others, there were cases when rather similar plots were broadcast on TV Channel 'VITA'¹⁴ and 'VINTERA'¹⁵ on an identical theme. In a positive development, TV Channel 'VITA' broadcast a good quality item on IDPs children learning English.¹⁶ The views of teachers, children, parents and civic organizations were available. The item was available for a TV viewer unfolding the IDPs-related problems and their plans on resolving these problems.

In the media of the *Zhytomyr* oblast journalists generally undertook a correct approach and did not use any humiliating language when addressing IDPs. In the findings the journalists referred to the common terminology, i.e. the notions 'refugees', 'internally displaced persons', 'temporary displaced persons' and 'forced displaced persons'. In all the monitored stories the terms 'refugees' is not used. With the view to the findings of violations for a number of media-standards, specifically, certain instances of sensational coverage in Cherkassy; unbalanced coverage of IDPs problems, specifically, in Vinnitsya; the attitude of journalists



⁸The Cabinet of Ministers cancels the necessity to stamp statements for IDPs'. Newspaper 'Kirovohradka pravda' ('The Truth of Kirovohrad'), #39 of June 10, 2016, text available at web-address: <https://www.pravda-kr.com.ua/najs-vizhishe/6459-kabmin-skasuvav-neobkhidnist-staviti-shtampi-u-dovidkakh-dlya-pereseleltsiv.html>



to the official information provided by the state administrations, monitoring experts submit the following recommendations on how to improve the coverage of IDPs:

- ★ To do more analytical reports and investigations
- ★ To avoid unbalanced and uncritical attitude towards the official information of the state administrations
- ★ To concentrate more on the specific human stories illustrating the instances of successful co-existence of IDPs in the local communities and their real problems
- ★ To apply correct language on IDPs
- ★ To address the security issues when the reports on IDPs on the Ukrainian television channels might threaten their families on the occupied territories of Donbass

Implementation of the recommendations could improve the quality of reporting and could weaken the potential sources of social tension through the balanced coverage of events in the regional media, specifically, by not increasing the social tension between the internally displaced persons (IDPs) and their hosts.



⁹Ukraine-centre', #23 of 09.06.2016

¹⁰TV/Radio Broadcasting Company 'Ltovo', of June 3, 2016, repeated issue of June 4, 2016: <http://www.ltava.poltava.ua/news/7450>

¹¹Mr. Lytvynenko lived in a special hostel for IDPs which is state owned. Due to the agreement, an IDP can use it during three months. In the framework of the item it was mentioned that the hostel is designed for 120 inhabitants, but only 30 lived there, and that for many people it was better to rent a room for money 'not to be dependent'

¹²[http://tv.sumy.ua/23157-2/plot's time code:11.36-14.02](http://tv.sumy.ua/23157-2/plot's%20time%20code:11.36-14.02)

¹³Television and Radio Broadcasting Company 'Vointeorao' of 07.06.2016, to view the report, please follow the link: <https://youtu.be/2lWu6O2v3i0?t=7m1s>

¹⁴TV Channel 'VoooolITA', 6.06.2016: <https://youtu.be/hKLRJDRHtY?t=13m10s>

¹⁵Television and Radio Broadcasting Company 'Vionteorao' of 11.06.2016: <https://youtu.be/O56QAzWvRWQ?t=46m>

¹⁶TV Channel 'VITAoooo', 02.06.2016, to view the report, please follow the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yAnOqf75kKo&feature=youtu.be&t=9m28s>