



Media coverage of Internally Displaced Persons in the Ukrainian mass media  
Volyn, Zakarpattya, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, Khmelnytsk, Chernivtsi regions  
Funded by the European Union

# Media coverage of IDPs in the Ukrainian mass media

West 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.

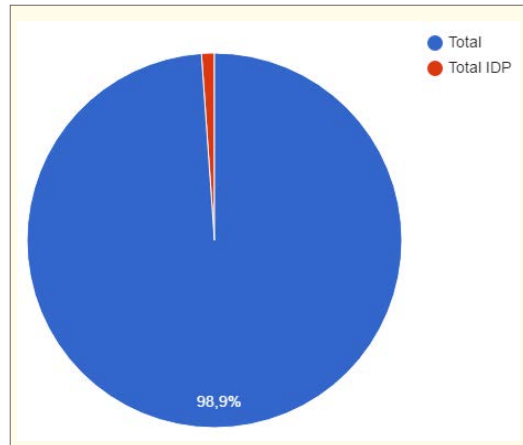


CHART 1 The share of IDPs-related coverage of the total monitored coverage in all monitored TV channels during the third monitoring period (1-14 June 2016)

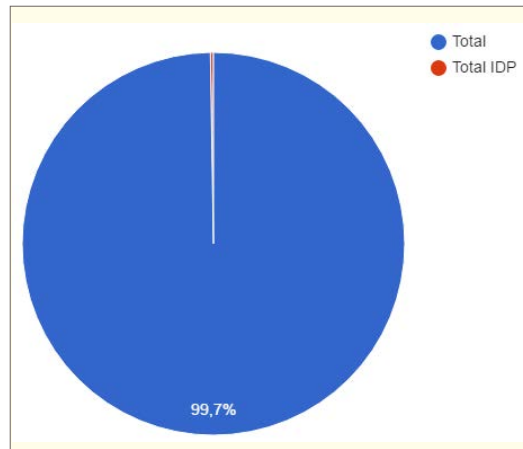


CHART 2 The share of the IDPs-related coverage of the total monitored coverage in all print media during the third monitoring period (1-14 June 2016)

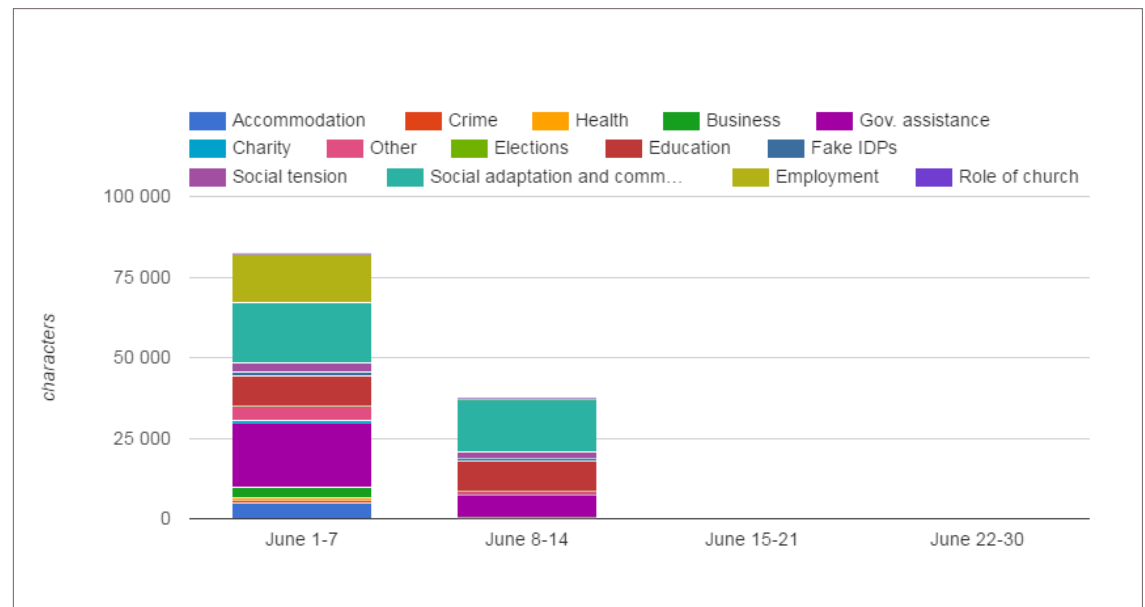


CHART 3 (ABOVE) The share of IDPs-related coverage of the total monitored coverage in print and online media divided according to the topics covered

<sup>1</sup>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](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](http://www.prostir-monitor.org/upload/reports/final-reports-wave-2/Summary_W2-en.pdf) (final)



media outlets in the region (Television – 19, Print media – 25, Online media – 21). In comparison with the previous two monitoring periods, there were some minor changes in the sample mainly caused due to termination of activities by a number of media or even a change of name – which was the case of the online media outlet “Pohlyad” which is now called “Vid I Do”.

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ★ There was a decrease in the amount of IDP-related coverage in comparison with the previous monitoring periods.
- ★ The trend identified in the previous periods of the lack of analytical reports on IDP-related issues continues.
- ★ Language and terminology concerning IDPs was correct, non-humiliating and non-abusive. The tone of the coverage on majority of materials was neutral.
- ★ Journalists generally and predominantly did not question statements by state officials or ask them probing questions. This was most remarkable in Rivne oblast and Zakarpattya.
- ★ In Ivano-Frankivsk oblast, some TV channels failed to report on IDPs-related topics and issues.
- ★ At the same time, however, there were some media which offered positive solutions to the problems of IDPs in some of their reports. However, such stories were in a short supply. Specifically, this was observed in Volyn, Chernivtsi and Khmelnytskyi.
- ★ There were couple of instances when media focused on human side of IDP stories. This was observed in Zakarpattya and Ternopil oblasts.
- ★ There were also a few examples where hidden advertising appeared in the framework of stories which focused on human side of IDP-related issues.

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 Western regions of Ukraine was extensive and included 65

## 3. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The sample of monitored media in the Western oblasts included 65 outlets (19 TV stations, 25 newspapers and 21 online media outlets). The sample included at least one TV station and one state-owned newspaper from each of the eight oblasts, with the remaining media chosen for the 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. In the third media monitoring period, the share of allocated





time and space ranged from 1.1 per cent of total news airtime devoted to IDP-related stories on monitored TV channels (it was 1 per cent during the second monitoring period) and 0.2 percent of such coverage in the monitored newspapers (it was 0.4 per cent during the monitoring period).

#### 3.1 TV CHANNELS

The monitored TV channels in the Western part of Ukraine provided a total of 1.1 per cent of their airtime to the IDP-related coverage (in terms of total time, this amounted to approximately one hour of coverage on each of the 19 monitored TV channels out of the total volume of monitored airtime - 80 hours or roughly 12 seconds of daily coverage on each channel. By comparison, during the second monitoring period, the IDP-related coverage also amounted to 1.1 per cent of the coverage (in term of total time it was a combined total of one hour and seven minutes of the IDP-related coverage on all 19 monitored channels out of the total volume of monitored news airtime which was 97 hours).

The most covered topics in this monitoring period were social adaptation and community life (54.3% of the total volume of IDP-related coverage), followed by accommodation (10%), state aid (9%), charity (8.7%), and health (8.4%).

Concerning the monitored subjects, the coverage focused primarily on IDPs (86.6% of total volume of IDP-related coverage) and NGOs (13.3%). The rest of the subjects were generally not presented.

In terms of tone, the monitored TV channels portrayed the subjects in a neutral and positive manner. As for the coverage of IDPs, they were covered in a neutral and positive way whereas the coverage of NGOs was exclusively neutral.



#### 3.2 PRESS

The monitored local newspapers devoted even less coverage to IDP-related stories than television. As mentioned above, the coverage devoted to IDP-related issues on all monitored newspapers combined was only 0.3 per cent of the total coverage which represent a drop in comparison with the second monitoring period (when such coverage was 0.4 per cent). As for the coverage of topics, the most covered ones were the employment (28.7%), social adaptation and community life (24.1%), state aid (20.5%), accommodation (13.2%), followed by the social tension (7.1%), 'fake'



<sup>2</sup>'Halychyna' newspaper, 2 June 2016, publication 'National unity - is not a subject of belief but rather a condition of our survival', web-address:

<http://www.galychyna.if.ua/publication/culture/dmitro-bilii-sobornist-ce-ne-pitannja-viri-a-umova>





IDPs (2.5%), health (1.4%), role of church (1.1%).

As for the monitored subjects, IDPs themselves received the bulk of the coverage (57.2% of total volume of IDP-related coverage), followed by the government (28.3%), regional state administrations (12.2%) and volunteers (2.3%).

In general, the tone of the coverage of monitored subjects was mainly neutral or positive tone. The coverage of IDP was exclusively neutral and positive. While the government received neutral and negative (14 per cent) coverage, representatives of the regional state administration were presented both in a positive and neutral manner (28 per cent and 47 per cent respectively). As much as 25 per cent of the coverage was negative. Both central and local governments received negative coverage in an interview with Mr. Dmytro Bily<sup>2</sup>, a writer and historian from Donetsk who currently works in Lviv, he criticized the authorities for their failure to put maximum effort not to allow separatism in the region and to return Donetsk to Ukraine.

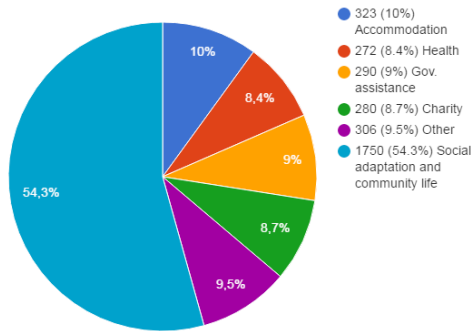


CHART 4 (ABOVE) The share of the coverage on all monitored TV channels devoted to different topics in the IDP-related stories

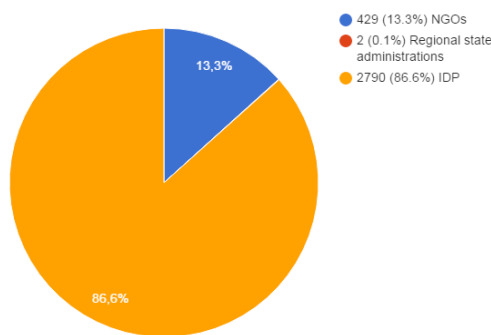


CHART 5 (ABOVE) The share of the coverage devoted to different subjects (entities) monitored in the framework of IDP-related stories on all monitored channels

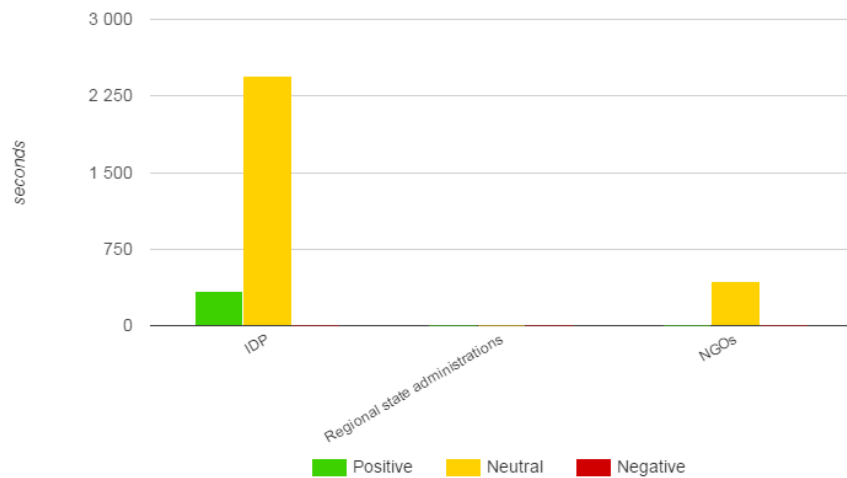


CHART 6 (ABOVE) The coverage of the tone in which the monitored subjects (entities) were portrayed in the framework of IDP-related stories on all monitored channels

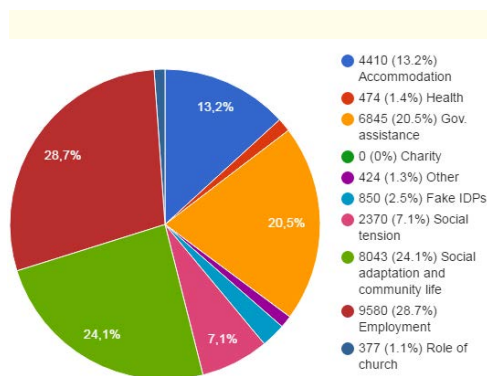


CHART 7 (ABOVE) The share of space allocated to IDP-related topics in all monitored print media

3.3 ONLINE MEDIA

The monitored 21 online media outlets devoted to IDP-related stories a total of 50 408 characters (approximately 29 standard pages A4). This is more than during the second monitoring period when it was 44 187 characters (some 23 standard A4 pages). The online media devoted most of their attention to the following topics: state aid (25.5%), social adaptation and community life (21.8%), education (18.5%), employment (10.3%), business (6.5%), charity (2%), crime (1.4%), accommodation (1.2%), and health (0.8%).

A writer and historian from Donetsk, who currently works in Lviv, criticised the authorities for their failure to put maximum effort into not allowing separatism in the region and to return Donetsk to Ukraine

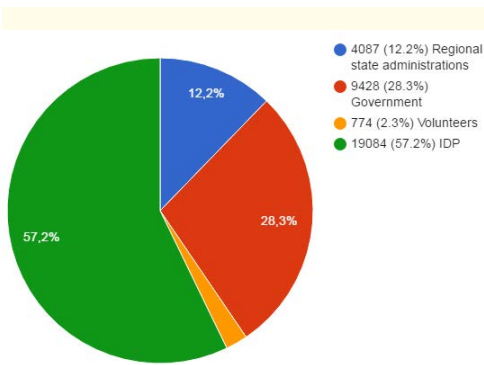


CHART 8 (ABOVE) The share of the coverage on all monitored print media devoted to different subjects (entities) monitored in the framework of IDP-related stories

As for the monitored subjects (entities), IDPs received the bulk of the coverage (59.9%), followed by NGOs (26.2%), regional state administrations (2%) and international organizations (0.7%).

As for the tone of the coverage, IDPs per se were covered predominantly in a positive and neutral manner (84% and 14% respectively). Two per cent of the coverage of IDPs was negative – this was in connection with a story published on 2 June titled 'A Ternopil citizen stabs a woman from Crimea' revealing a story of a citizen from Ternopil oblast who stabbed a 42-year old citizen of the AR of Crimean the neighboring city of Ivano-Frankivsk.<sup>3</sup>



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

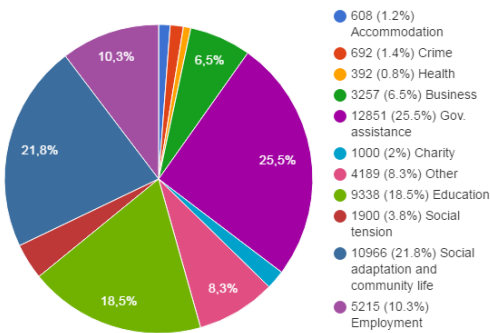
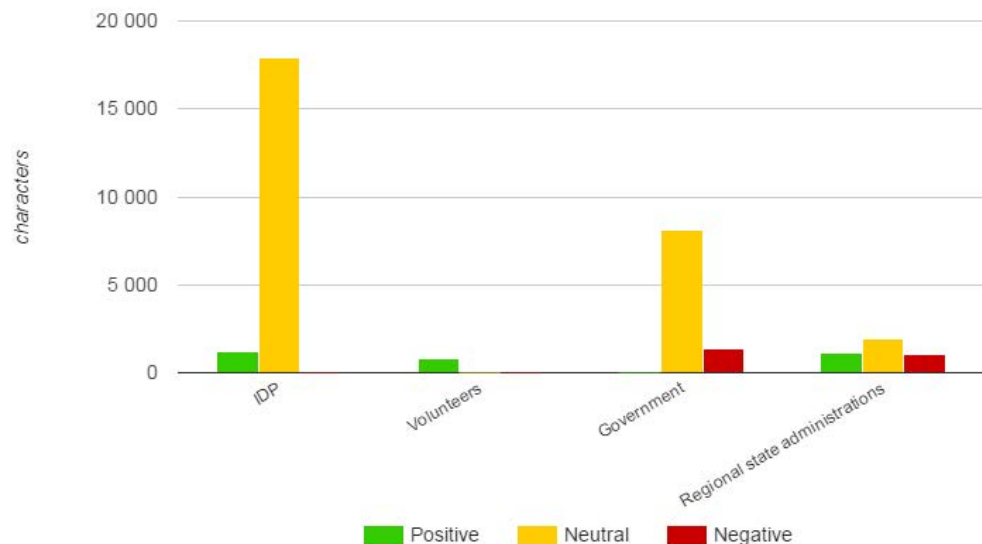


CHART 10 (ABOVE) The share of the coverage on all monitored online media devoted to different topics in the framework of IDP-related stories

<sup>3</sup>News portal 'Beyond Zbruch', 2 June 2016, web-address of publication: <http://zz.te.ua/zhytel-ternopilschyny-zarizav-krymchanku>

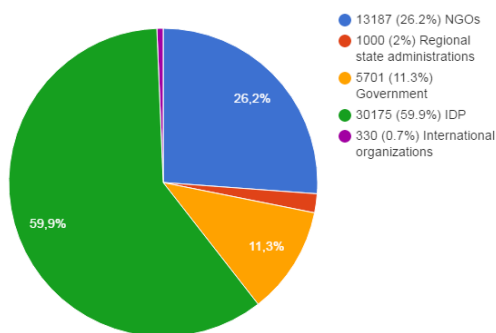


CHART 11 (ABOVE) The share of the coverage devoted to different subjects (entities) monitored in the framework of IDP-related stories in all monitored online media

#### 4 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

While in general there was limited information on IDPs, the **Volyn** media provided some examples of success stories of civil society organizations helping to resolve the problems of IDPs. As such, the publication 'FROM EAST TO WEST: new life - new opportunities'<sup>4</sup> was dedicated to possibilities of IDPs for self-realization thanks to opportunities provided by the Volyn office of the organization 'Centre of Employment for Free People'. Thanks to the project titled 'Employment and social rehabilitation of IDPs and ATO veterans', they have an opportunity to find jobs and reveal new talents in themselves. The organization focuses on providing assistance to two types of people - IDPs who left their homes due to the war in Donbas and as well as Ukrainian demobilized soldiers who fought there. They are able to attend various types of courses and master-classes. While the project has been implemented for only over a year and already 280 persons have benefited from it.

Similar to the media in Volyn, also the media of **Zakarpattya** dedicated only marginal coverage to IDPs. However, at the backdrop of this minimum, there was an instance in which a human side of a story was shown on 1 June 2016 in the program 'On time' of the TV Company 'Tysa-1'. The story focused on celebration of the International Children Day by children of IDPs. The majority of other reports were based on the official information coming from local authorities with media failing to ask probing question or do a proper verification of facts.

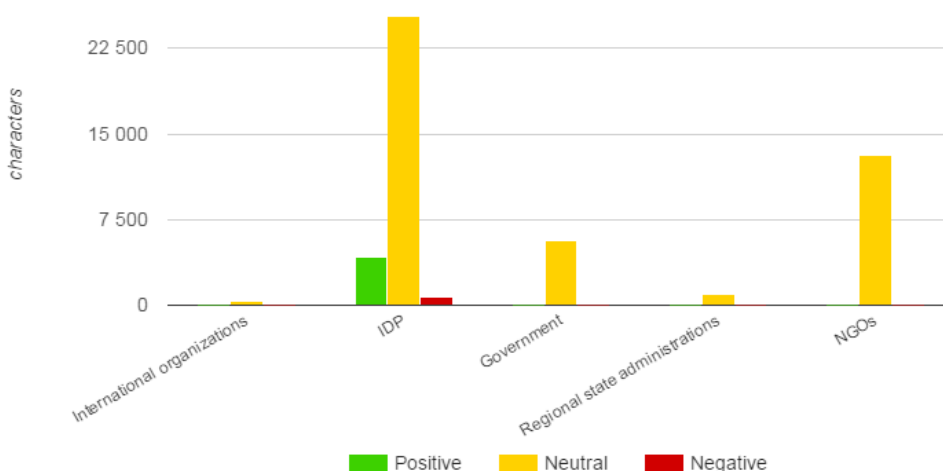


CHART 12 (ABOVE) The coverage of the tone in which the monitored subjects (entities) were portrayed in the framework of IDP-related stories in all monitored online media

**Ivano-Frankivsk** media provided only a very limited coverage of IDPs too. For example, in the period from 1-14 June 2016, the Oblast TV 'Halychyna' did not broadcast an TV Oblast State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company 'Karpaty' as well as privately owned '3rd Studio', adopted a similar tendency.

The **Lviv** media provided only a marginal coverage too but at the same time broadcast some materials showing human stories. For instance, ZIK TV Channel broadcast a story on 1 June 2016 titled 'Football to unite' focusing on a campaign 'Learning to live together' in the framework of which while, soldiers from the anti-terrorist operation (ATO), IDPs from Donbas as well as orphans from the needy families played a football match together on the International Children Day. In the only other IDP-related story featured on this channel in the monitoring period, (on 13 June, titled 'Unique operation') a citizen from Crimea underwent an oncological surgery. In the framework of the item, the channel focused on the new treatment methods for people with cancer at the Lviv Regional Hospital.

The media of the Rivne oblast generally used correct language and terminology when addressing IDPs, avoiding humiliating language and sensationalism. To illustrate the materials on IDPs, the Rivne media chose proper pictures and videos

which did not distort the content. At the same time, however, the materials on IDPs were "dry" without any real attempt to show human stories on IDPs. The monitoring team observed that all materials had only one source - press-releases of the local authorities. This raised questions about such materials being one-sided and unbalanced given the fact that journalists did not ask any probing questions or verification of facts. Moreover, there were no analytical reports, no research of IDP-related problems, with journalists conducting no investigations or search for any additional information and other viewpoints.

By contrast, there was a lengthy 20-min report on IDPs broadcast by TV-4 private TV channel from the Ternopil oblast at 'Provincial news' on 10 June. The story features journalists and operators (IDPs from Luhansk) of a newly created TV Channel 'Pereselenets' (Displaced Person) visiting the office of TV-4, The main reason for their visit was to shoot a program on Petrenkos' family which was relocated a year ago to Ternopil from Mariupol. This story confirms that local journalists need some external 'stimulus' to pay attention to IDPs. They do not search for any IDP-related topics themselves, nor do they conduct any serious investigations or analysis – instead, they tend to apply brief genres not demanding research of problems or analysis of the situation.

4 Independent civic and political newspaper 'Volyn-Nova', # 1975 of 07.06.2016, web-address of publication: <http://www.volyn.com.ua/?rub=21&article=8&arch=1975>





Similar to other regions, also the media in **Khmelnysky** oblast provided only a marginal coverage to IDPs. For instance, during the entire monitoring period, the 'Podillya-Centre' TV failed to air a single item on IDPs. By comparison, there was one IDP-related story on 7 June on the 'Podilska panorama' program which was dedicated to IDPs who participated in a course for IDPs on how to defend their rights on such issues as the property issues or the electronic permits for trips to the ATO areas. The 'Podillya-Centre' Television Company currently undergoes a process of transformation from the state TV company to the oblast field office of a national broadcasting company.

The **Chernivtsi** media also demonstrated their low interest in IDP-related issues and topics. During the monitoring period, TBA TV Channel broadcast four materials on IDPs. One of them – in the framework of the program 'TBA: Themes of week' – the channel showed how to successfully resolve a problem of accommodation for IDPs by constructing houses for IDPs based on funds from the charity organization called 'Flower of hope'.

Given the identified violations of professional standards such as lack of balance when it comes to presenting information from official sources as well as rather passive coverage of important IDP-related issues and topics, we would like to offer a set of recommendations to improve the IDP-related coverage:

- ★ To increase the number of reports on IDPs, specifically, analytical reports and investigations
- ★ To ensure more active coverage of positive solutions to IDPs' problems
- ★ To focus more on human stories and to avoid broadcasting hidden advertising

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.



<sup>5</sup>TV Channel, 'Themes of week' TV program of 04.06.2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHJcJm8u17c>