

**ANALYSIS
OF FINDINGS
OF MONITORING
OF MEDIA
REPORTING 2018**

Skopje, December 2018

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Authors:
Center for Civil Communications, BIRN,
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Dejan Georgievski

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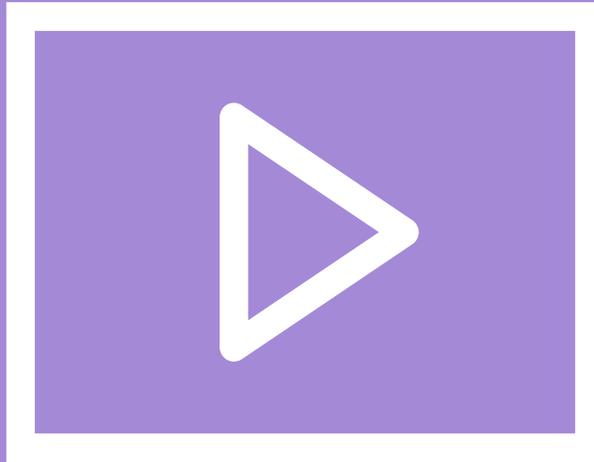


INTRODUCTION

The monitoring of the media to assess the quantity and quality of investigative and analytical journalism is conducted under the auspices of the "Investigative Journalism for Promotion of Reforms" Project, financed by the European Union. The aim of the project that has been implemented since 2016 is to promote the growth of accurate and investigative journalism in view of improved public information and protection of public interest. In other words, the aim is to stimulate the newsrooms and the journalists to dedicate greater effort to in-depth and detailed analysis of problems and thus separate themselves from the flood of short, quick, superficial and sensationalist

information, providing the citizens with the context and better insight of the actual situation.

This is the third media monitoring action, after those implemented in 2016 and 2017. This year, the monitoring again covered the investigative and analytical articles published and aired by the media, starting from the point that analytical journalism implies to seek for meaning in complex social topics and place them in the proper context in order to explain them to the public, combining aspects of investigative journalism and straightforward explanatory reporting.

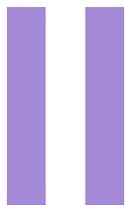


The main goal of the monitoring was to secure sufficient and relevant information, of sufficient quality, to allow for assessment of quantity and quality of investigative and analytical journalistic articles, as well as the topics and subject-matters covered by those articles.

The findings of the monitoring will also serve as basis in the design and implementation of series of other actions that will aim to improve reporting in the media in general. For journalists and media, it can

help identify the weaknesses of their past reporting practices and provide directions for improvement of their reporting.

For NGOs, on the other hand, the analysis can indicate the areas in which increased engagement may be needed to ensure more regular, more professional and objective informing of the public.



METHODOLOGY

“ The monitoring methodology was designed and prepared with the aim to provide, among other things, answers to the following key questions: ”

- To what extent are investigative and analytical journalism present in Macedonian media?
- What is the quality of investigative stories and analytical articles (in terms of reliance on sources, representation of different sides and stakeholders, the presence of elements such as: credibility, relevance, confidence, etc.)?
- Whether articles adhere to basic standards of professional journalism?
- In which areas are investigative and analytical journalism most present, and from which areas are they absent?

The monitoring covered articles that represent any and all forms of analytical and/or investigative journalism, that is, articles that belong to the genres of news, extended news and reports.

The media covered by the monitoring were selected¹ on basis of criteria that took into consideration the existing situation in the media sector, the aims of the monitoring, the need to analyse the findings, the project's thesis and postulates, and the past experience in the area. The selection process made effort to ensure that the media included in the monitoring sample are traditional, relevant, have high audience ratings and are suitable for monitoring; to ensure that both electronic and print media were included; to ensure that it included media with different geographic coverage - national and local; to ensure that there were media publishing and broadcasting in both Macedonian and Albanian languages; and to ensure that there were media with different ownership structure and with diverse editorial policies.

With those criteria in mind, the following ten media outlets were selected:

¹ The term "article" shall cover both articles published in the print media and the reports aired in TV newscasts.

- 1** MRTV – national public service broadcaster, in Macedonian language;
- 2** Alsat M TV – national commercial TV broadcaster, broadcasting in Albanian;
- 3** Sitel TV – national commercial TV broadcaster, in Macedonian language;
- 4** Telma TV – national commercial TV broadcaster, in Macedonian language;
- 5** Tera TV – regional commercial television broadcaster, based in Bitola, in Macedonian language;
- 6** Nezavisen - national daily newspaper, publishing in Macedonian²;
- 7** Sloboden pečat – national daily newspaper, publishing in Macedonian;
- 8** Koha – national daily newspaper, publishing in Albanian language;
- 9** Kapital – national business weekly magazine, in Macedonian;
- 10** Fokus – national weekly magazine, in Macedonian.

² In 2016 and 2017, the monitoring also covered the "Dnevnik" daily, which folded operations in 2017. In 2018, a decision was made that it should be replaced by the newly established "Nezavisen" daily newspaper.

The monitoring covered the articles published or aired by the selected media in the periods March 26-April 27, April 16-April 22³, and May 7-May 13⁴ of this year.

The monitoring combines quantitative and qualitative analysis that yields results which, in addition to numerical data, provide insight in the quality of analysed articles from the viewpoint of adherence to the standards of professional journalism.

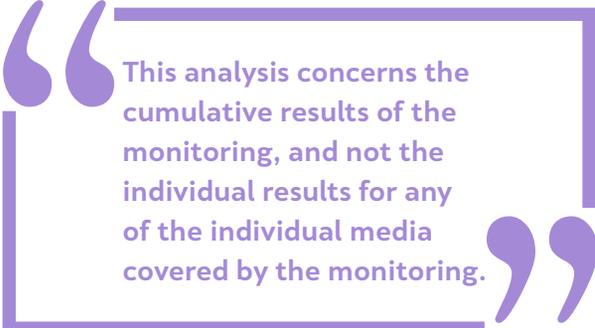
The articles and their contents were analysed in view of the following aspects:

- The genre (whether it was an investigation or analysis);
- Topic/subject-matter they covered;
- Placement – page or minute of newscasts in which they were published/aired;
- The newspaper department/newscast section in which an article was published/aired;
- The size/length of the article/story;
- The lead to the article on the front page or among the news that received top-billing in the newscast;

³ Due to technical issues, the newscasts of MRT1, Telma TV and Sitel TV were monitored in the period April 17-23, 2018.

⁴ Due to technical reasons, Telma TV was monitored in the period May 7-12, 2018, and also on May 14, 2018.

- The illustrations and images used;
- The author of the article/story;
- Number, status and location of sources;
- Fair and balanced approach;
- Motivation to write/prepare the article/story;
- Consultation of stakeholders and the manner in which their views were presented in the article/story, etc.;
- Relevance, impartiality, originality, etc.



This analysis concerns the cumulative results of the monitoring, and not the individual results for any of the individual media covered by the monitoring.



Figure 1: Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents for various categories. The categories are: 'I don't know', 'I don't want to', 'I don't have time', 'I don't have the resources', 'I don't have the skills', 'I don't have the information', 'I don't have the motivation', and 'I don't have the energy'. The percentages are: 10%, 15%, 20%, 25%, 30%, 35%, 40%, and 45% respectively.

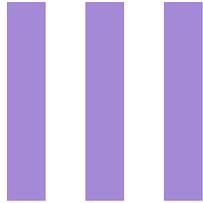
The chart illustrates the reasons for not participating in the program. The most common reason is 'I don't have the energy' at 45%, followed by 'I don't have the motivation' at 40%, 'I don't have the information' at 35%, 'I don't have the skills' at 30%, 'I don't have the resources' at 25%, 'I don't have time' at 20%, 'I don't want to' at 15%, and 'I don't know' at 10%.

The chart shows that the majority of respondents (85%) have a reason for not participating in the program. The most common reason is 'I don't have the energy' at 45%, followed by 'I don't have the motivation' at 40%, 'I don't have the information' at 35%, 'I don't have the skills' at 30%, 'I don't have the resources' at 25%, 'I don't have time' at 20%, 'I don't want to' at 15%, and 'I don't know' at 10%.

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KEY FINDINGS

- The monitoring in 2018 noted greater presence of investigative reports compared to the previous two years.
- The number of investigative reports increased to 2% of the total coverage, compared to 0.4% in 2016 and 0.8% in 2017.
- Largest number of analytical and investigative articles covered the subjects of politics, economy and judiciary, and there was a notable increase of number of articles dedicated to environment and urban planning.
- More than a half (57%) of all analytical and investigative articles were announced on the front pages of the respective newspapers or in the leads of top-billing news in the newscasts (53% in 2017).
- 35% of the articles were illustrated with original photographs and video footage, which is the highest proportion for the whole duration of the monitoring programme.
- Most of the articles are signed with the full name of the author.
- There was a notable increase of number of articles covering "pseudo-events" (press-conferences, press releases, statements, sessions of different bodies, etc.).
- The number of analytical and investigative articles that resulted from independent investigations of journalists has dropped.
- The monitoring noted an increase of articles that quote three or more sources of information.
- For the first time since the start of this monitoring programme, we noted a domination of articles that consult several parties involved in an issue - 42% of the total analysed material.



- Most stories rely on named sources of information and there were no articles that relied exclusively on anonymous sources.
- The number of articles that didn't consult all stakeholders remains high at 51% of the total number of analysed articles.
- The state institutions continue to be the most commonly used source of information.
- Compared to 2016 and 2017, when the Government appeared as source of information between 0 and 1 percent, this year it appeared as source of information in 6% of all cases.
- The state institutions are followed on the list of sources of information by representatives of the academia in second place, accounting for 9.5% of all listed sources, followed closely by the political parties and the civil sector, with 9% and 8% of all listed sources, respectively.
- The monitoring noted an increase of number of articles that presented documents or imply that the journalist has in his/her possession documents to prove the presented claims.

IV

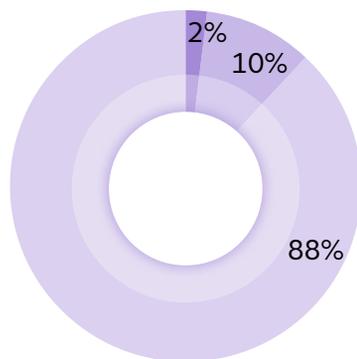
DETAILED RESULTS OF THE MONITORING

Monitoring finds highest percentage of investigative reports as share of total volume of coverage over the last three years.

In the period covered by this monitoring report, we registered a total of 183 investigative and analytical articles published by the monitored media. That amounts to 11.7% of the total number of published articles (1565) and follows an upward trend compared to both 2017 (9%) and 2016 (5%).

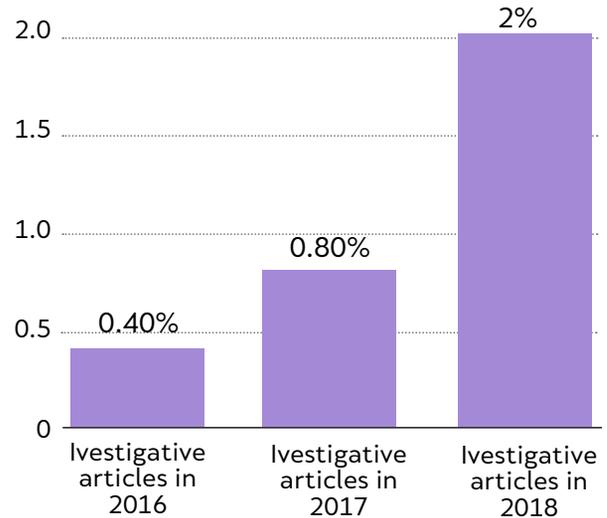
A detailed qualitative overview indicates that, compared to the previous two years, the number of exclusively investigative articles has grown significantly. While in 2016 investigative articles accounted for just 0.4% of the total volume of published journalistic articles, with the corresponding figure for 2017 standing at 0.8%, the number of investigative reports has grown to 2% of the total published coverage in 2018. Viewed on its own, this certainly is not a significantly high figure, but is an important indicator that the media increasingly and continuously recognize the need to prepare and publish investigative articles.

Presence of analytical and investigative articles in the media



- Investigative report
- Analysis
- Other articles

Investigative articles as share of total published coverage (per year)



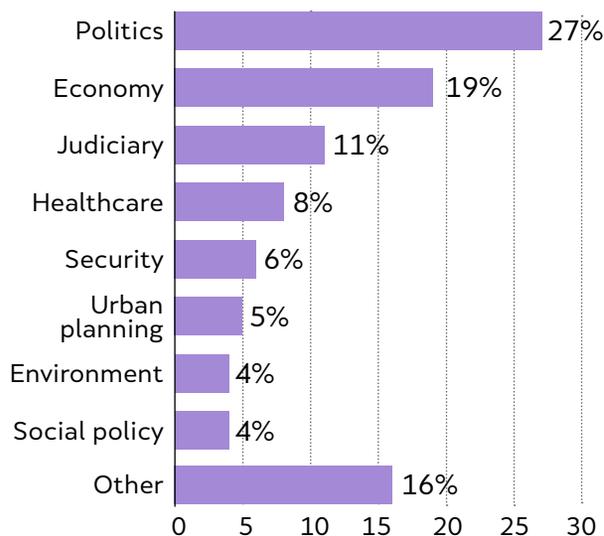
In 2018, just as in the previous two years, the majority of the investigative and analytical articles were published in the departments on national affairs “Makedonija” (36% of all articles) and “Current affairs” (23.5%), followed by “Economy” (11%) and “Analyses” (5%).

Largest number of analyses and investigations were dedicated to politics, economy and judiciary.

The qualitative analysis of media contents shows that most frequently covered topics by investigative and analytical articles were politics (27%) and economy (19%). This time, however, they were joined by the judiciary with 11% and healthcare with 8%. In comparison with previous years, there was also a notable increase of volume of coverage of environmental issues and urban planning.

Investigative and analytical articles published and aired by the media continue to be predominantly inspired by current political affairs and developments. Such a finding is supported by the fact that the share of investigative and analytical stories dedicated to the judiciary has increased in a year characterized by numerous trials in cases filed by the Special Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Macedonia.

Representation of different topics as share of total number of investigative stories



The trend of long investigative and analytical articles continues in 2018.

The analysis of the length of the published stories shows that 44.5% of the investigative and analytical stories and articles are very long (take a full page or several pages in the print media, or longer than 2.10 minutes in

television newscasts), 43% are long (from half a page to full page in the print media and between 1.40 and 2.10 minutes of TV newscasts), while 12.5% are of medium or short length (up to half a page in the print media and up to 1.40 minutes in TV newscasts).

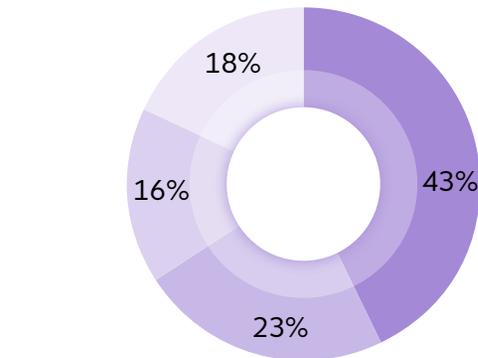
That distribution of length of stories clearly indicates that the media value investigative and analytical material and dedicate them sufficient airtime and space in their pages.

“Majority of analytical and investigative articles/stories got top-billing treatment and were announced on the front pages of the respective newspapers or in the leads of main newscasts.”

57% of the stories received top-billing treatment and were announced in the front-pages of the print media and in the leads of the main daily newscasts, which is increase of 4 percent compared to 2017 and more than 11 percent compared to 2016.

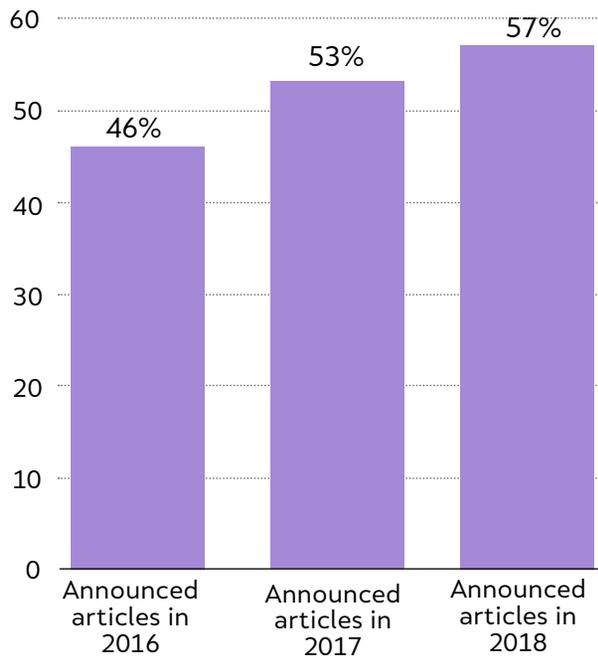
Just as in the previous two years, in 2018, too, it was the print media that were more likely to announce investigative and analytical stories on their front-pages. In 2018, however, the number of stories that were announced with both a headline and a lead exceeded the stories that were announced with a headline only.

Was an article announced on the front-page or in the lead to the main newscast?



- Not announced
- Yes (TV)
- Yes (frontpage headline only)
- Yes (frontpage headline and intro)

Articles announced on the front-page or in the leads to the main newscasts (per year)

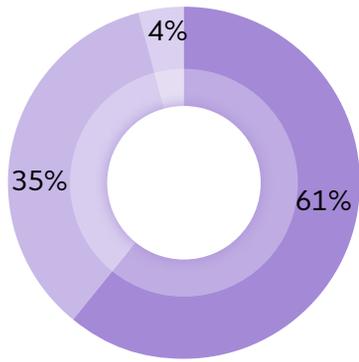


The trend of growing number of articles and stories that are announced on the front-pages and in the leads of the newscasts is an important indicator that the media increasingly recognize their contributions to protection and promotion of public interest.

“ Growing number of articles and stories use original authentic photos and video footage as illustration. ”

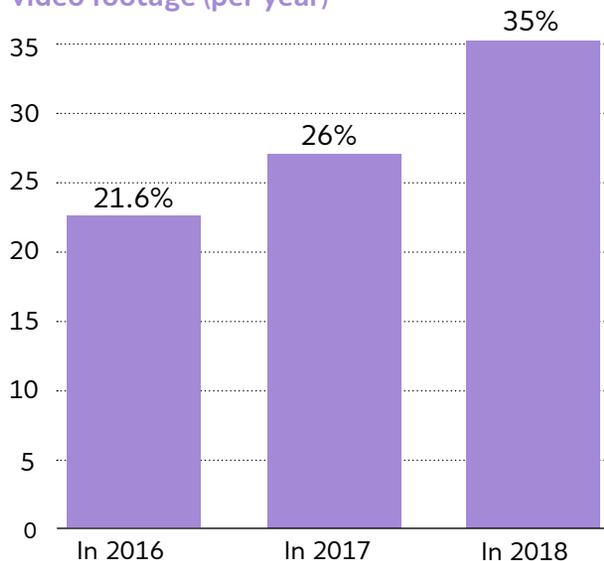
35% of the articles/stories were illustrated with original photographs and video footage, which is the highest proportion for the whole duration of the monitoring programme (21.5% in 2016 and 26% in 2017). Just 4% of the analysed articles and stories used no photograph or video footage. The only deterioration when compared with 2017 is the growing number of investigative and analytical articles and stories that were illustrated with stock photos or footage thematically related to the topic they cover. This year, their share of total number of investigative and analytical stories and articles has grown to 61%, compared to 51% in 2017.

Photograph/video footage used to illustrate the articles



- No
- Yes (stock photo, not taken at actual event)
- Yes (original photo/video footage of an actual event)

Articles using original authentic photos and video footage (per year)



The growing number of articles that use authentic illustration, combined with the reduced number of articles that didn't use any illustration whatsoever, is encouraging, having in mind the fact that every analytical or investigative story should be supported by as much original footage or illustration as possible. It helps increase the quality and relevance of the stories and stimulate the interest of the audiences.

Most of the articles/stories are signed with the full name of the author.

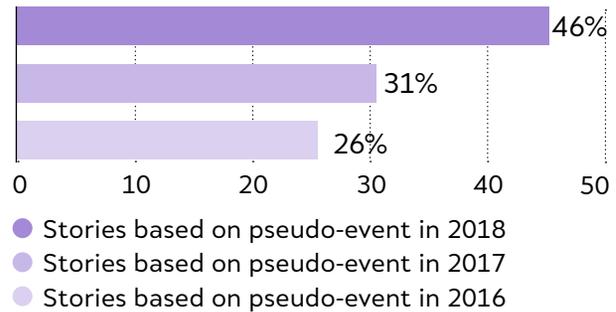
This year again a high share of 89% of the investigative and analytical articles were signed by the authors, while only 1.5% were published anonymously. The authors used only their initials in 5% of cases, while 4.5% of the articles covered by this analysis were republished from other media.

The continuously high percentage of signed articles and the reduced number of anonymously published contents helps strengthen the credibility of the media and the citizens' trust in their reporting.

“Growing numbers of articles dedicated to “pseudo-events”.”

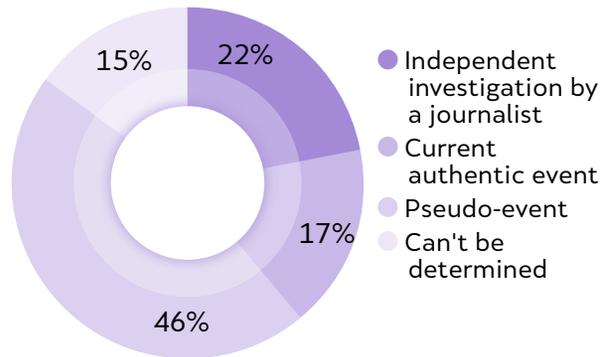
The analysis shows that 44% of the analytical and investigative articles were motivated by a “pseudo-event” (press-conferences, press releases, statements, sessions of different bodies, etc.). The respective shares of such contents in 2016 and 2017 stood at 26 and 31 percent.

Stories motivated by pseudo-events (per year)



One cause of concern is the dropping number of analytical and investigative stories/articles that resulted from independent investigations conducted by journalists. This year, they accounted for 22% of the articles covered by this analysis, the lowest figure compared to the previous two years (24% in 2016 and 31% in 2017).

Motivation to write/prepare the article/story

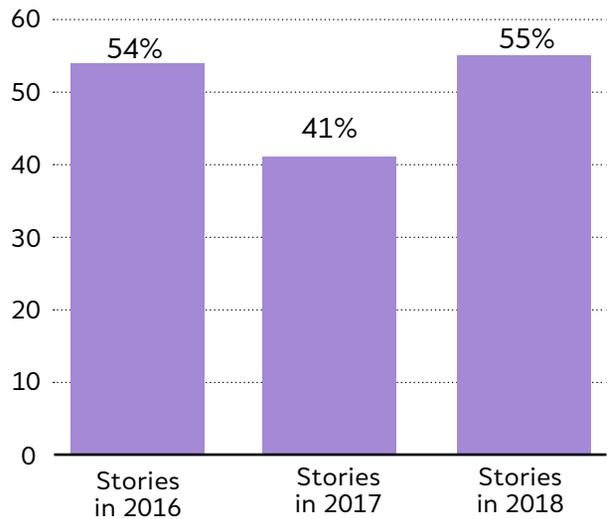


The growing number of articles motivated by “pseudo-events” and the falling number of articles that result from journalists’ own initiative indicates that the media still underperform in terms of recognizing the needs and interests of the citizens while a significant portion of the coverage is “dictated” by different centres of political, economic or other power.

“The monitoring noted an increase of stories/articles that rely on three or more sources of information.”

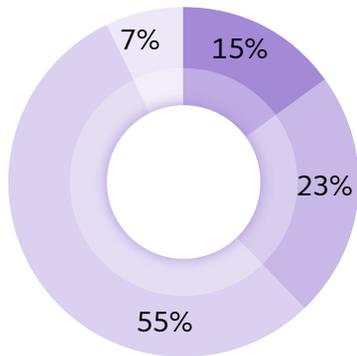
Majority of the investigative reports rely on three or more sources of information (55%). That is the highest percentage since the start of the monitoring. The respective shares of stories with multiple sources of information was 54% in 2016 and 41% in 2017.

Articles that list three or more sources of information.



The number of articles that listed no source of information amounted to 7% of all analysed articles in 2018, compared to 9% in 2016 and 5% in 2017. In 2018, the monitoring also noted falling numbers of stories that relied on a single source of information, to 15% of all articles.

Sources of information



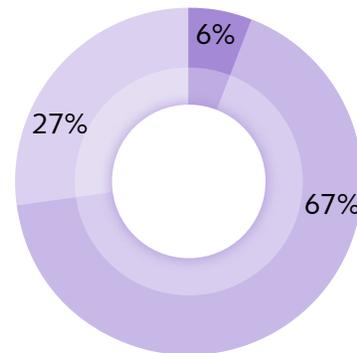
- One source
- Two sources
- Three or more sources
- No sources

The growing number of analytical and investigative stories that use multiple sources, combined with the lower number of stories that rely on a single source, undoubtedly leads to improved quality of journalistic products offered to the citizens. The types of sources, their numbers and credibility of utmost importance for the investigative work of the journalists because it is the quality of the sources and the information they provide that dictate the relevance of investigative and analytical stories.

“ High proportion of stories that name their sources of information. ”

The majority of the stories analysed for the purposes of this monitoring (67%) name their sources, while 27% of the stories rely on both anonymous and named sources. It should be pointed out that there were no stories/articles that relied exclusively on anonymous sources.

Status of sources of information

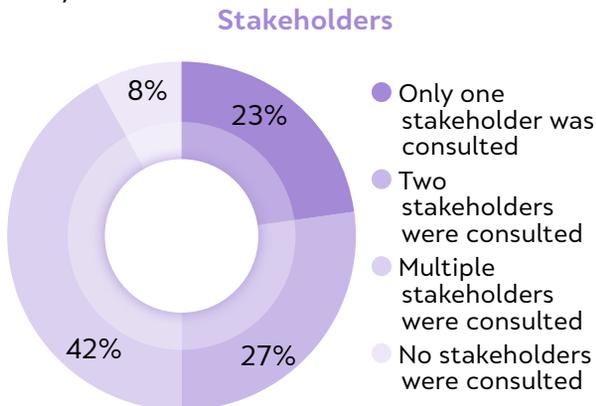


- Named
- Named and anonymous
- No sources

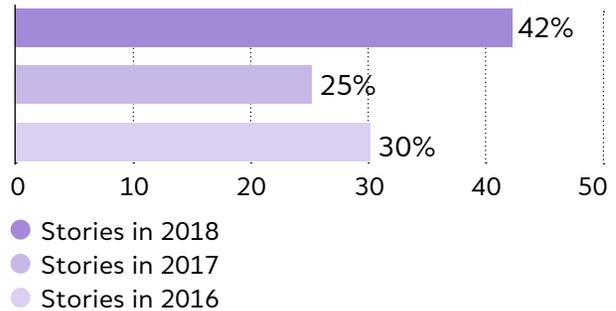
The trend of reliance on named sources is of great importance for the relevance and credibility of investigative reports.

“Monitoring notes increased number of articles that consult more than two sides of the story.”

Unlike the two previous years, in 2018 we note, for the first time, domination of articles/stories that consult several parties involved in an issue - 42% of the total analysed material. The journalists consulted two stake-holders in 27% of the articles covered by the monitoring, while in 23% of all cases they consulted just one side of the story.



Stories that consult multiple stake-holders (per year)



The increase of the number of stories that consult two and more stakeholders or present two or more sides to a story has positive influence on the impartiality, quality and credibility of journalists and their final products.

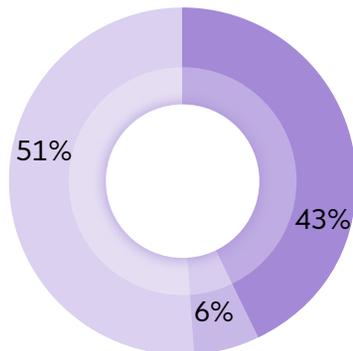
“A significant number of articles didn't consult any of the stakeholders.”

This year again the number of articles and stories that didn't consult the stakeholders remains high at 51% of the total number of analysed articles. In 2017, such stories accounted to 55% of all articles covered by this monitoring. Slight improvement

was noted with stories that consulted the stakeholder and he/she spoke to the reporter. In 2018 and 2017 the percentages stood at 43 and 40 percent, respectively. In 6% of the articles, the stakeholder was consulted, but didn't speak for the record.

The involvement of all stakeholders and presentation of all interested parties in the articles is one of the fundamental elements of professional and impartial journalism. The high percentage of articles that didn't consult the stakeholders is a serious problem for objectivity, credibility and veracity of both the journalists and the media involved.

Did the story consult the stakeholders?

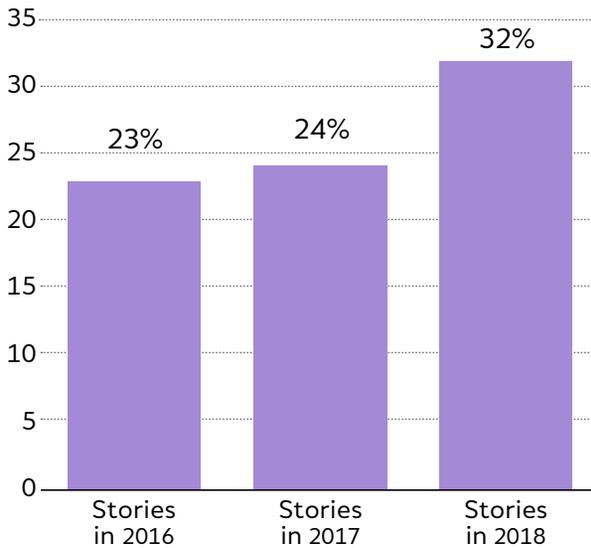


- Didn't consult the stakeholders
- Consulted the stakeholder, refused to speak for the record
- Consulted the stakeholder who spoke for the record (full quote or paraphrased)

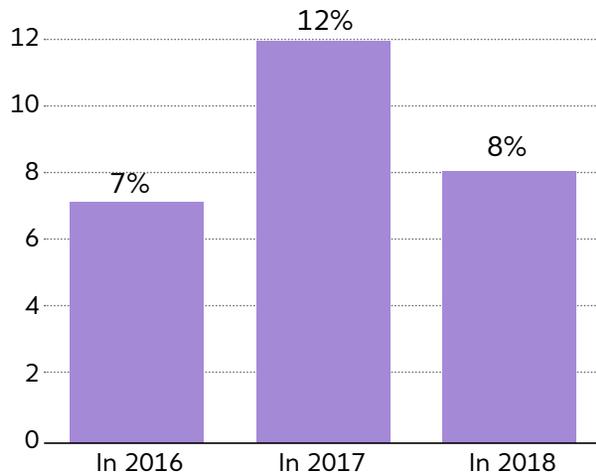
“State institutions continue to be the most commonly used source of information.”

As in previous years, in 2018, too, the most commonly used sources of information are the state institutions (government ministries, the Government, unnamed state institutions) that account to 32% of all sources used, the highest percentage for the duration of the monitoring programme (23% in 2016 and 24% in 2017). Compared to 2016 and 2017, when the Government appeared as source of information between 0 and 1 percent, this year it appeared as source of information in 6% of all cases.

State institutions as most commonly used source of information (per year)

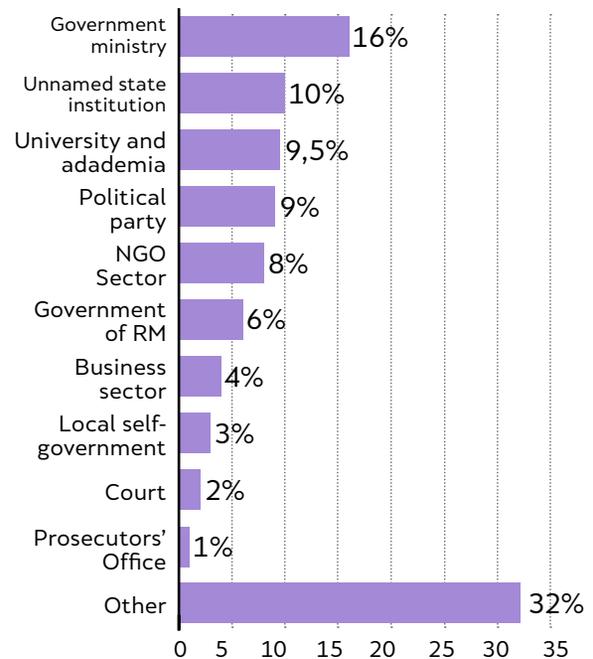


Civil sector as source of information (per year)



Representatives of the academia are in second place on the list of most used sources, accounting for 9,5% of all listed sources, followed closely by the political parties and the civil sector, with 9% and 8%, respectively.

Location of sources of information



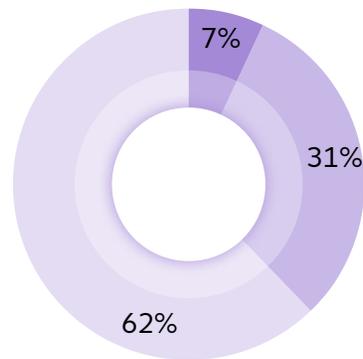
The growing participation of state institutions as sources of information for analytical and investigative stories means that they are getting more open and transparent. On the other hand, it indicates that journalists prefer to get the information

from the centres of political power rather than from the civic and independent public. In favour of that conclusion we have the fact that political parties climbed up to the third place on the list of commonly used sources of information. The inclination of journalists to rely on state institutions and political parties is only partially balanced by the members of the academic community and civil society organisations as relevant and credible sources of information.

“ The monitoring noted an increase of number of articles that presented documents or imply that the journalist has in his/her possession documents to prove the presented claims. ”

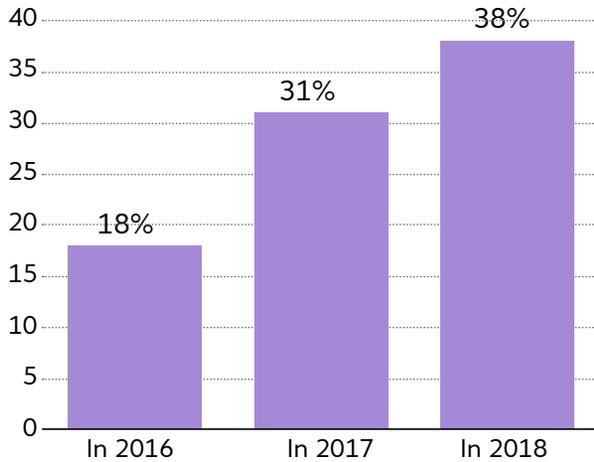
In 31% of the analysed articles and stories, it is implied that the reporter has in his/her possession documents but didn't present them in the story, while in 7% of the articles the authors also presented the documentation to prove their claims and allegations. The figures are higher than in 2017, but they are not nearly sufficient, especially in terms of stories that published documents as proof of the claims presented by the reporters or the stakeholders involved in an issue.

Documentation in support of the investigation/analysis



- Has presented documentation
- Is implied that the journalist has in possession supporting documentation but has not presented it
- Can't be determined/Is not relevant

Stories that present documentation or imply that the reporter has in possession such documentation but didn't present it (per year)



Supporting documentation is important from the viewpoint of credibility and relevance of stories, having in mind that only such an approach would make the journalists and the media convincing and help them increase the confidence of the citizens in their work. At the same time, it would stimulate the stake-holders to take more active participation in journalists' investigations and make contributions with additional documents, views and opinions.

V

The results of the media monitoring in 2018, compared to the previous two years, presents reasons to be optimistic - investigative reporting has been recognized by Macedonian media as an important tool to accomplish the mission of journalism.

The presence of journalistic investigations in Macedonian media has increased five-fold compared to 2016, the first year of the monitoring programme. More than a half of all analytical and investigative articles/stories were announced on the front pages of the respective newspapers or in the leads of top-billing news in the newscasts.

Unlike the two previous years, the monitoring findings indicate domination of articles that present more sides to a story and consult multiple stake-holders; that rely on named sources of information. Also, the number of articles that present

CONCLUSIONS

supporting documentation is growing and the monitoring registered no stories that rely exclusively on anonymous sources.

The growing percentage of stories that use original photos and video footage as illustration is another encouraging development, as is the fact that the majority of the articles covered by the monitoring were signed by the authors using their full names.

The monitoring found several not so positive trends regarding investigative and analytical reporting in Macedonian media. The finding that, compared to 2016 and 2017, when the Government's share as a source of information was minimal (0 to 1 percent), in 2018 it accounted for 6% of all listed sources of information, which should be a cause for alarm in the newsrooms that cherish their integrity and independence. That view is

corroborated by the finding that the number of stories resulting from investigations launched on journalists' own initiative is dropping, while the number of articles motivated by a "pseudo-event" (press conference, press release or statement, session of a state body or institution, etc.) was on the rise.

The growing participation of state institutions as sources of information for analytical and investigative stories means that they are getting more open and transparent. On the other hand, it indicates that journalists prefer to get the information from the centres of political power rather than from the civic and independent public. In favour of that conclusion we have the fact that political parties climbed up to the third place on the list of commonly used sources of information.

The inclination of journalists to rely on state institutions and political parties undermines the integrity and reputation of the media.

The fact that the number of articles didn't consult the stakeholders remains high also registers on the negative balance, keeping open the question of objectivity and credibility of journalists and media outlets.

Parallel to the need for increased presence of investigative and analytical journalism in newsrooms, there is a need to improve

the adherence to professional standards of journalism, such as fair and balanced approach to all sides of a story, or the need to consult and represent all sides and give them fair and impartial treatment.

In view of the responsibility of the media to the public, and because of their long-running credibility and legitimacy, it is crucial that they pay attention not only to what they investigate or analyse, but also how they do it.

The findings of the monitoring indicate that economy, the political crisis and the elections were the most common subjects for investigative and analytical articles/stories, which means that the majority of articles cover topics related to current political affairs and were motivated by them. The judiciary is increasingly dominant topic of coverage, and there was a notable increase of number of stories dedicated to environment and urban planning, indicating that "public interest" grows into a relevant criteria for definition of editorial policies.

VI

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improvement of quality and credibility of both everyday reporting and analytical and investigative reporting on the side of the public interest and public good is a constant challenge for any editorial office.
- The media need to continue to expand the scope of topics for investigations and analyses and, in addition to subject-matters that arise from the current political events and development, cover other areas of great interest to the citizens and the public interest, such as: Standards of living, unemployment, corruption, environment, migrations, justice, etc.
- The editors need to promote and stimulate journalists' initiatives rather than blindly following government institutions as dominant source of information.
- Editorial offices need to adopt good practices for training and enhancement of investigative and analytical capacities of their journalists. A strategic investment in training for journalists is a necessary step forward for the media.
- The media should dedicate more resources (people, equipment, etc.) to their journalistic products. Downsizing of reporting jobs and lowered quality of the available equipment translated into fewer investigative stories which are of key importance in the fight against crime and corruption.
- The industry needs greater communication and cooperation instead of competition. It should include joint realisation of certain investigations, publishing and republishing of stories of greater public interest with proper attribution.
- The NGOs need to adopt a practice to share the information they gather in their work and activities to the members of the press, in an open format, and to give the necessary support to the journalists in investigation and reporting on matters of interest to the citizens.