

President, Parliament and the National Anticorruption Directorate increase media presence

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and the Center for Independent Journalism present a new monitoring of political reporting in Romania

President Klaus Iohannis, the Romanian Parliament and the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) gained more visibility in Romanian media in 2015. This is one of the findings of a survey, commissioned by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and conducted by the research institute "Market Links". It was presented on 16th March in Bucharest in cooperation with the Romanian "Center for Independent Journalism". The trends in political reporting were analysed in four daily newspapers and four TV channels. The coverage of the most important politicians in Romanian media remains predominantly critical.

The most mentioned politician in the Romanian media in 2015 was the former Prime Minister Victor Ponta who resigned from office in November last year. He was mentioned in 25 percent of the analysed political news items on TV channels and in dailies, down from 36 percent in the previous year. In contrast, President Klaus Iohannis could increase his media presence from 14 percent to 19 percent of the analysed news. Third to fifth of the most mentioned politicians in 2015 are ranked the former President Traian Băsescu, PSD leader Liviu Dragnea and Elena Udrea from the "People's Movement" (Mișcarea Populară).

More than 19.000 political news items on the TV channels Antena 1, PROTV, Realitatea, TVR1 and in daily newspapers Adevărul, Evenimentul Zilei, Jurnalul Național and România Liberă were analysed.

Amongst the Romanian institutions, the Parliament and the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) could increase their media presence. "The frequent mentioning of DNA is due to allegations of corruption against politicians," explained Ioana Avadani, Executive Director of the "Centre for Independent Journalism" (CIJ).

According to CIJ, it is appropriate that the politicians are presented rather critically in the media. "There is more negative than positive coverage of high ranking politicians in the media. This means that media, at large, are fulfilling their role as watchdogs of democracy," said Ioana Avadani. The least negative coverage had President Klaus Iohannis and PSD leader Liviu Dragnea. Most critical was the reporting about Elena Udrea ("People's Movement") and former President Traian Băsescu.

Beyond that, many journalists still evaluate the media situation in Romania critically. This was a conclusion of debates at the South East Europe Media Forum in November 2015 in Bucharest, co-organised by the

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KAS Media Program. Many experts criticise the political influence on several media, amongst others by secret services. CJI director Ioana Avadani explained that the political reporting was also distorted by pressure from advertisers. Because of financial shortages, many editorial teams worked less professionally, and the quality of reporting is getting worse, she added. "The aim should be to raise awareness for quality journalism in the society and to encourage media literacy. This is especially important for younger users and on the internet."

A previous, representative opinion poll from December 2014, commissioned by the KAS Media Program, showed that only 28 percent of the Romanians believe the media in the country to be independent. "Political campaigns and hidden advertisements are incompatible with quality media," commented Christian Spahr, Head of the KAS Media Program South East Europe. "More and more citizens notice whether they are being informed independently or not. The increasing media diversity thanks to the internet contributes to this awareness. Biased media with hidden agendas will continue to lose public approval. This is a huge challenge especially for the print media – they will remain relevant only if they consequently invest in quality."

The KAS Media Program South East Europe offers training for journalists and fosters professional exchange between media experts in ten countries in the region. It also supports projects for modern political communication.

Further information is available on: www.kas.de/medien-europa/en