



*Centar za građansko obrazovanje*  
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## THROUGH WHOSE EYES DOES THE RTCG **REPRESENT THE MONTENEGRIN REALITY?**

Report on the RTCG's representation of different  
social actors in 2013 – 2015



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July 2016

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**Publisher:**

Centre for Civic Education (CCE)



*Centar za građansko obrazovanje*

*Centre for Civic Education*

**Library:**

Democracy

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**Design and production:**

Centre for Civic Education (CCE)

**Proofreading:**

Centre for Civic Education (CCE)

ISBN 978-86-85591-74-7

COBISS.CG-ID 30928912

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# INTRODUCTION

The project “*Through whose eyes does the RTCG represent the Montenegrin reality?*” was designed within the sub-programme *Media and democracy* of the Centre for Civic Education (CCE) in order to raise awareness about the role of a public broadcaster and promote one of its most important tenets – *objective and balanced reporting*. To that end, this analysis offers an overview of the appearances of representatives of political parties, public institutions and state administration bodies, unions, businesses, non-governmental organisations and academic community, in the news and analysis programmes of the RTCG. The timeframe adds further value to this analysis, as it focuses on the years following the changes in the editorial structure of the RTCG and ahead of the upcoming 2016 parliamentary elections: a period in which the public broadcaster RTCG has an even greater responsibility to provide information to the public in a professional manner.

*Declaration on freedom of expression and information* of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe binds its member states, including Montenegro, to foster plurality of opinion: “...states have the duty to guard against infringements of the freedom of expression and information and should adopt policies designed to foster as much as possible a variety of media and a plurality of information sources, thereby allowing a plurality of ideas and opinion.”

The RTCG has been undergoing a transformation for over a decade, but the limitations of this transformation are apparent not only from the general public opinion in Montenegro, but also from the assessment of the Council of RTCG, which stated in its Conclusions of November 2015: “*It was noted that the reporting on some events in the news programme was not balanced and objective, particularly with regard to the latest political developments in Montenegro, i.e. the protests of DF*”. It added that: “*RTCG, as the public broadcaster, must edit and broadcast its news programme in an impartial manner, and avoid polarizing reporting that would violate the citizens’ rights as guaranteed by the law and international media standards. Every deviation from the planned business policy and journalists’ code of conduct must be sanctioned without prejudice to the position of the perpetrator in the company hierarchy, and we advise the general director to urgently take the necessary measures to prevent such omissions in the future*”<sup>1</sup>.

Representative of the non-governmental organisations in the Council of RTCG **Goran Đurović**, who has often publically criticised the work of RTCG, recently said: “*What I know for sure is that the director of TVCG, since her appointment, had been obstructing the transformation of RTCG into a public service by doing nothing to incorporate the law, professional principles and standards into its reporting. Along with her colleagues the former editor of the first channel, the current editor of the news programme and the head of the board, she devotedly sought to protect the ruling political party and withhold the information of public interest from the citizens. The result of such practices*

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<sup>1</sup> Session held on 16.11.2015.

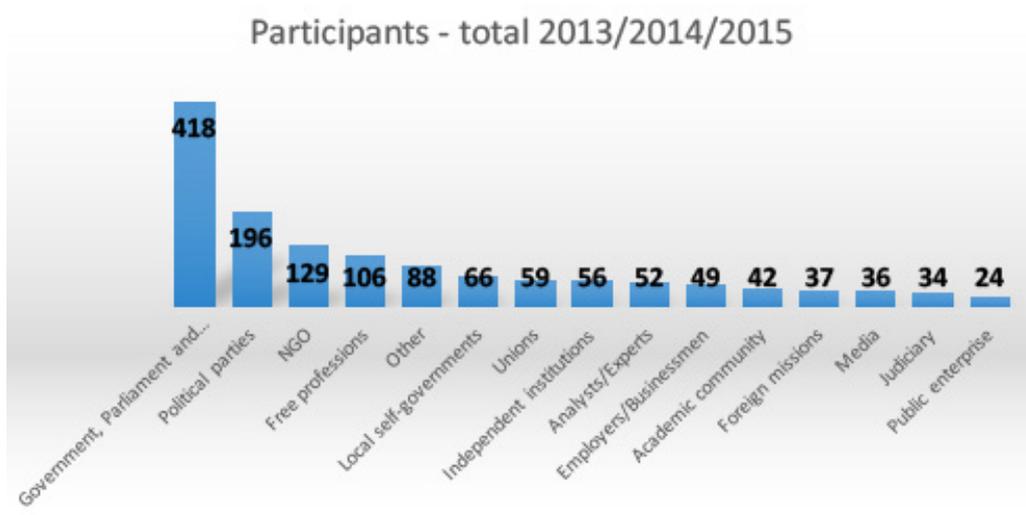
are numerous complaints by viewers and negative assessment of the citizens, as evidenced by the January public opinion poll<sup>2</sup>. Explaining the results of the opinion poll conducted in January 2016, Đurović stressed that: *RTCG is the second most trusted broadcaster, and the number of respondents who associate RTCG with “regime-run media” has increased.* He also warned that the number of respondents in whose opinion the news programme of RTCG deteriorated since last year.<sup>3</sup>

In the analysis of balancing and plurality of opinion at RTCG, CCE used official documents, adopted by the Council of RTCG according to the competencies granted to it by the Law on public broadcasting services of Montenegro<sup>4</sup>. The administrative service of the Council of RTCG, headed by the president of the Council **Vladimir Pavićević**, was very forthcoming in responding to our requests for free access to information.

Data processing included the analysis of daily and weekly political news programmes, classified by the annual reports of the Council of RTCG as integral part of the news programme of the Television of Montenegro: *Dnevnik 2, U centar, Okvir, Otvoreno, Replika, Izazov, Robin Hud, Intervju s povodom*. The analysis left out the show *Mehanizam*, due to its character as a specialized investigative programme, as well as *Putevi života*, as the majority of its episodes are framed as reports.

	2013	2014	2015
Analysed show:	Dnevnik	Dnevnik	Dnevnik
	U centar	U centar	U centar
	Okvir	Okvir	Okvir
	Otvoreno	Otvoreno	Otvoreno
	Robin Hud	Robin Hud	Robin Hud
		Replika	Replika
		Intervju sa povodom	Izazov
		Izazov	

The final analysis covered 596 shows broadcasted in the course of 2013, 2014, and 2015. The programmes involved 1392<sup>5</sup> guests – representatives of political parties, public institutions, Government, Parliament, state bodies and institutions, local self-governments, unions, non-governmental organisations, academic community, independent institutions, judiciary, employers/businessmen, analysts, experts and others.



<sup>2</sup> [http://www.monitor.co.me/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=6772:goran-urovi-lan-savjeta-rtcg-ne-opstruira-samo-radojka-rutovi-&catid=4687:broj-1330&Itemid=6032](http://www.monitor.co.me/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6772:goran-urovi-lan-savjeta-rtcg-ne-opstruira-samo-radojka-rutovi-&catid=4687:broj-1330&Itemid=6032)

<sup>3</sup> Report on the work of member of the Council of RTCG Goran Đurović for the period September 2014 - June 2016

<sup>4</sup> Law on Public Broadcasting Services “Radio of Montenegro” and “Television Montenegro”, Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro no. 51/2002

<sup>5</sup> This overview is based on number of guests per show, with note that cross examination is indicating lower number since certain guests are repeating in the same or different shows

# LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The role of the public broadcaster is defined by the Law on public broadcasting services of Montenegro<sup>6</sup>. Article 2 of this Law stipulates that: *“The activity of public broadcasting services from the paragraph 1 of this article encompasses the production and broadcast of programme, such that it: satisfies the democratic, social, educational, cultural and other needs of public interest of every segment of the Montenegrin society; ensures realisation of the right and interest of citizens and other subjects with regard to information, regardless of their political, religious, cultural, racial or gender affiliation; and provides timely and quality information services”*. Article 9, paragraph 2 and 3 of the Law oblige the RTCG to: *“...2) satisfy the interests of the public at the national and local level in a balanced manner, with the appropriate representation of informative, cultural, educational, sports and entertaining programme; 3) provide a forum for open and free expression of different opinions and views on the issues of public interest...”*

The role of the public broadcaster is also defined by the Law on media<sup>7</sup>, which in Article 2 prescribes: *“The Republic of Montenegro guarantees the right to free establishment and uninterrupted work of media on the principles of: freedom of expression; freedom to research, collect, share, publish and receive information; free access to every source of information; protection of individual personality and dignity, and free flow of information. The Republic guarantees equal access to information to domestic and foreign legal and natural persons, in line with this Law and the Law on broadcasting services.”*

Furthermore, the Law on electronic media<sup>8</sup> in article 74 obliges public broadcaster to: *“inform the public objectively and in a timely manner about political, economic, cultural, educational, scientific, sports and other significant events and occurrences in the country and abroad”*.

Finally, the role of the public broadcaster and its internal organisation are more precisely regulated by the Statute of the Public Enterprise RTCG.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Law on Public Broadcasting Services “Radio of Montenegro” and “Television Montenegro”, Official Gazette of RM no. 51/2002

<sup>7</sup> Law on Media, Official Gazette of RM no. 51/2002

<sup>8</sup> Law on Electronic Media, Official Gazette of Montenegro. 46/2010

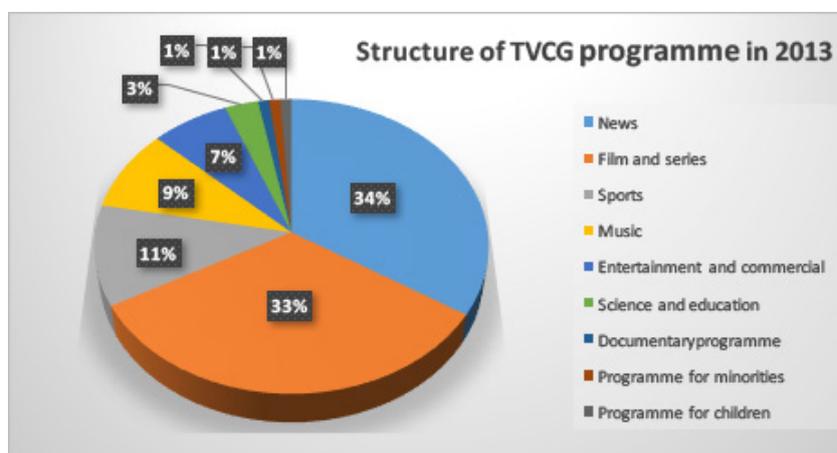
<sup>9</sup> [http://rtcg.me/sw4i/download/files/article/Statut\\_RTCG\\_19\\_03\\_2012.pdf?id=3](http://rtcg.me/sw4i/download/files/article/Statut_RTCG_19_03_2012.pdf?id=3)

# OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS – 2013

In the course of 2013, Montenegro held presidential as well as local elections in several municipalities. All were covered by RTCG in line with the Rules<sup>10</sup> adopted by the Council of RTCG. Progress was noticeable in terms of production and organisation, as well as in improved programme formats during the 2013 presidential elections, with a debate between the main candidates as the jewel in the crown. Though its organisation and production was modelled after high quality news and political programmes, it nevertheless displayed significant limitations in the journalistic aspects of the format. Notably, the topics for debate set by the RTCG revealed the lack of basic knowledge about the competencies of the President of state, and lead the participants to discuss issues that are formally outside the jurisdiction of the President. As a consequence, the citizens were deprived of objective information on the candidates. One such topic was the economic development of Montenegro, which according to the Constitution is completely outside the competencies of the President.

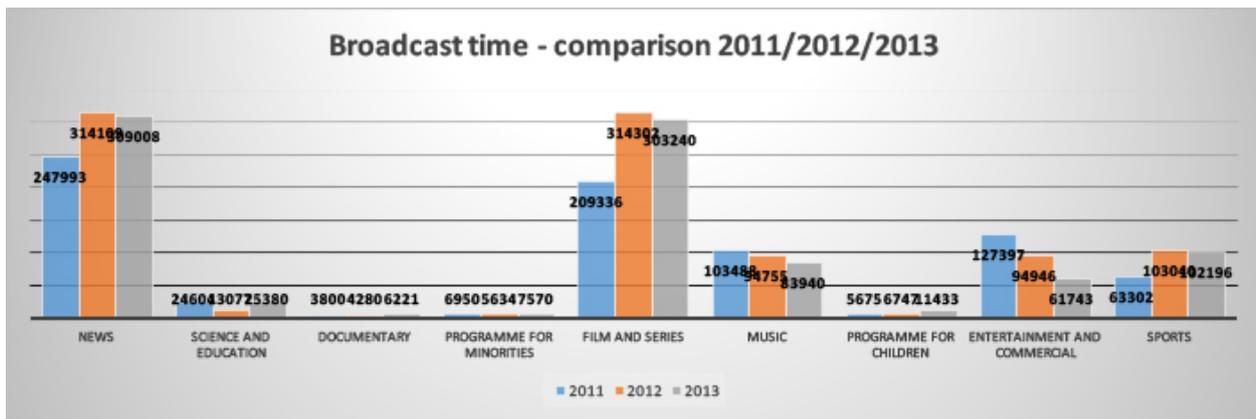
The report “Realisation of programme orientation with the respect of programme principles of Television Montenegro (TVCG) for the period January – December 2013”<sup>11</sup> notes that: “political, socio-economic, social and cultural topics were covered through a new specialised programme “U centar”, as well as through the existing shows “Okvir” and “Otvoreno”. In addition to this, TVCG broadcasted specialised programmes “Putevi života”, “NVO-sektor”, “Vijesti na gestovnom”, as well as “Robin Hood”, which is cited in some parts of the report as independent production, and in others as co-production.

The 2013 programme structure of RTCG was dominated by news, film, series and sports content. Only 3% of the programme contains science and education content, and even that was an increase compared to 2012 (according to the RTCG report, 12 303 minutes more). The number of minutes dedicated to news programme declined compared to 2011 and 2012, but the decline was minor. At the same time, the number of broadcast minutes dedicated to science and education, as well as programmes for minorities and programmes for children increased.



<sup>10</sup> [http://www.rtcg.me/sw4i/download/files/article/Pravila\\_za\\_lokalne\\_izbore1.pdf?id=279](http://www.rtcg.me/sw4i/download/files/article/Pravila_za_lokalne_izbore1.pdf?id=279)

<sup>11</sup> Received based on the request of CCE for free access to information from the Council of RTCG



CCE’s analysts noted that the viewership of the programmes covered by the report was likely overstated. The RTCG estimates are based on the so-called “diary” method, whereby the respondents fill out questionnaires through surveys and based on immediate recollection of programmes and televisions. More recent estimates of Telekom and Ipsos Strategic use IPTV method (Extra TV) and software Arianna (Ipsos) to produce more precise results. IPTV measures the viewership directly but does not provide information on the demography of viewers, which was obtained by Ipsos. By cross-referencing the data, they compiled a more detailed overview of viewership per target group. This, more reliable, method of measurement indicates that the viewership of RTCG programmes is considerably lower than that obtained through the original method.

RTCG’s official report also fails to commend on the shortcomings of the news programme, and instead lists the following achievements: “Good information/plenty of information. Professionalism, seriousness, quality. Current information/speed of reporting. Plenty of content, quality and tradition.” Financial instability is identified as the main problem, and to solve it the report suggested that “partnership with as many institutions and non-governmental organisations as possible would be beneficial, as it would give RTCG access to different funds and grants to supplement its own limited budget, and create the conditions favourable to effective production of quality programme that would satisfy the needs of citizens and help RTCG to fulfil the demanding role of the public broadcaster.”

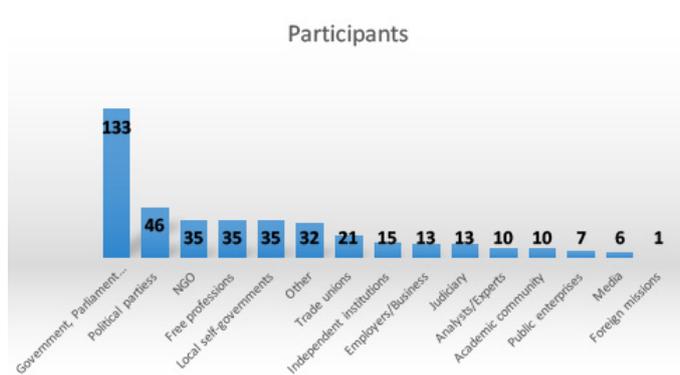
In the course of 2013, 175 programmes analysed in this study (*Dnevnik* – 23 shows, *U centar* – 49 shows, *Okvir* - 34 shows, *Otvoreno* – 37 shows, *Robin Hud* – 32 shows) hosted altogether 412 guests, representatives of political parties, public enterprises, the Government, Parliament, state administration bodies, public institutions, institutions, local governments, trade unions, NGOs, analysts and experts, academics, independent institutions, the judiciary, foreign missions, businessmen, free professions, and others.



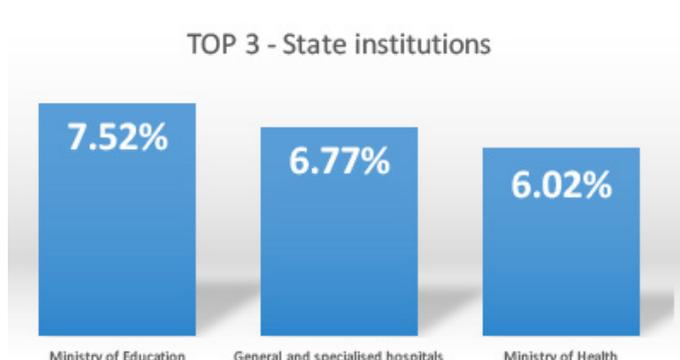
Overall, most frequent guests were representatives of state institutions, who constituted a third (32.28%) of all guests featured on TVCG. The second most frequently invited were representatives of political parties (11.17%), local self-governments (8.50%) and non-governmental organisations (8.50%)<sup>12</sup>. Notwithstanding the importance of executive government in the shaping of public policies and decisions relevant to the everyday lives of citizens of Montenegro, as well as the need

<sup>12</sup> In programmes *Dnevnik*, *U centar*, *Okvir*, *Otvoreno*, *Robin Hud*

of public to be timely informed about their activities, the presence of the executive in the public service programmes is disproportionate, especially compared to the representatives of those groups who may question the quality of work of the executive government. This is most apparent in the distribution of appearances of representatives of political parties, which is marked by overwhelming presence of guests from the ruling parties that also make up the executive government.



Among the guests from within public bodies, the most frequent appearances were by representatives of the Ministry of Education (7.52%), followed by the representatives of general and specialised hospitals (6.77%), Ministry of Health (6.02%), and Administration for Inspection Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Ministry of Tourism and Sustainable Development (5.26%). The three most featured public institutions made the majority of their appearances in shows *Otvoreno* (17) and *Robin Hud* (8).



As for political parties, the most frequent guests of RTCG programmes were representatives of the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists (24%) and Socialist People's Party (24%), followed by Democratic Front (20%), Positive Montenegro (15%), and Social-Democratic Party (7%). They appeared most frequently in shows *U centar* and *Okvir*.

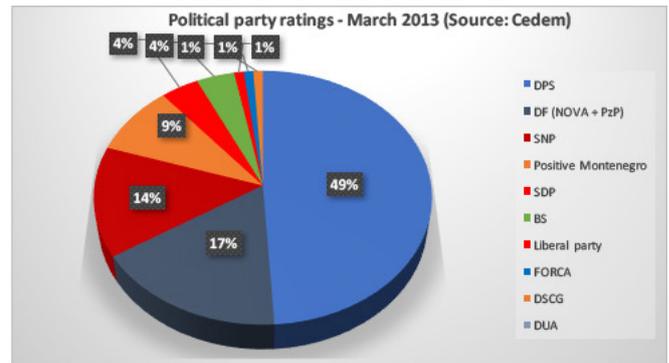
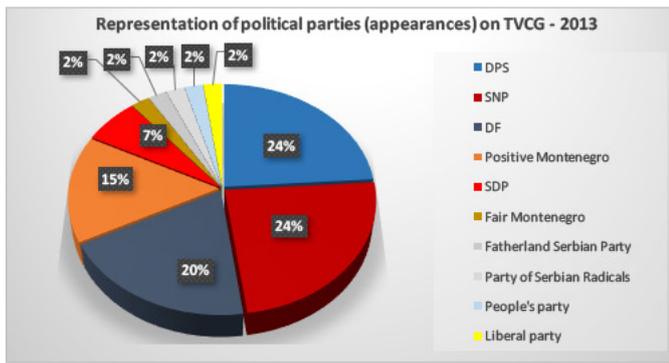
**Darko Pajović**, president of Positive Montenegro, appeared three times on the show *U centar* in 2013, twice in a period of less than one month<sup>13</sup>. **Andrija Mandić** (DF) and **Srđan Milić** (SNP), were twice guests of the same show, appearing two times in two months in the show edited by **Andrija Nikolić**<sup>14</sup>. It is worth noting that Andrija Mandić, a member of the presidency of DF, was invited more often than **Miodrag Lekić**, leader of DF and then the most popular politician in Montenegro.<sup>15</sup>

It is also notable that DF, the most powerful opposition force at the time, had nevertheless fewer appearances than SNP - a party with half as many members in the Montenegrin parliament. would suggest some form of favouritism by RTCG towards a certain opposition party. At the same time, representatives of SDP did not appear even once in *U centar*, whereas the show hosted a number of representatives of non-parliamentary political parties – Fair Montenegro, Serbian Party Fatherland, Party of Serbian Radicals, People's Party, as well as the Liberal Party, which at the time held far fewer seats in the Parliament than SDP.

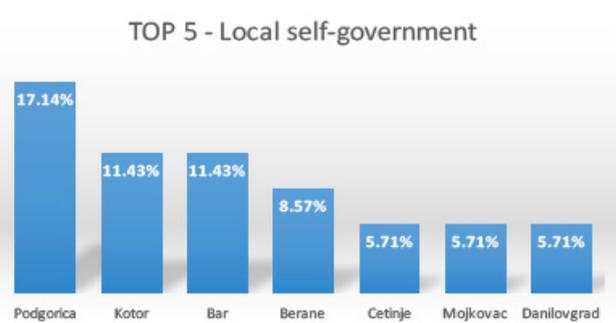
13 17. January and 6. February 2013

14 5. March and 15. May 2013

15 <http://www.vijesti.me/tv/miodrag-lekic-najpopularniji-politicar-u-crnoj-gori-130380>



Local self-governments, with a total of 35 appearances, most frequently appeared on *Dnevnik* (15 times). Their representatives were regionally fairly balanced, regardless of their political affiliation, although it should be noted that CCE did not analyse the content of RTCG programmes and their attitude towards the guests, and instead focused only on the frequency of representation of different political actors. The most frequent appearances were by the representatives of the capital city Podgorica, followed by municipalities of Kotor, Bar, Berane, Old Royal Capital Cetinje, Mojkovac and Danilovgrad.



Equally balanced was the representation of trade unions, whose members appeared altogether 21 times in various shows, most frequently in *Okvir* (15). The number of appearances was almost equally divided between the Federation of Trade Unions of Montenegro, Union of Free Trade Unions of Montenegro and independent trade unions.

Representatives of non-governmental organisations appeared 35 times in 2013 on the shows covered by this study, of which 15 times in the show *Robin Hud*, 14 times in *Otvoreno* and six times in *Okvir*. The most frequent guests of RTCG from the NGO world were representatives of the Consumer protection Centre Montenegro (CEZAP), with 7 appearances, followed by Civic Alliance (GA) with four appearances, out of which three were on the show *Robin Hud*, which is also produced by the GA. Next in line was the NGO Circle of Life with three appearances, out of which two were also in the show *Robin Hud*. A number of leading NGOs publically recognised for their critical approach, such as MANS, Institute Alternative, CCE and others, never appeared as guests in the news programmes of RTCG in 2013.



Out of the total number of guests (412) and shows (175) in 2013, the greatest number came from DPS, followed by SPP, Ministry of Education, DE, general and specialised hospitals, Basic Court, Employers' Federation, Ministry of Health, Positive Montenegro, and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

TOP 10 by guest appearances in all shows	DPS
	SNP
	Ministry of Education
	DF
	General and specialised hospitals
	Basic court
	Employer's Federation
	Ministry of Health
	Positive Montenegro
	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

The five most frequent guests of the politics and news programmes<sup>16</sup> *U centar*, *Okvir*, *Replika* and *Izazov* in 2013 were: **Srdan Milić** – SNP (4), **Aleksandar Damjanović** – SNP (4), **Rade Krivokapić** – KAP<sup>17</sup> trade union (4), **Andrija Mandić** – DF (3), **Darko Pajović** – Positive Montenegro (3), **Damir Šehović** – SDP (3), **Nebojša Dožić** – Government representative in the Committee for KAP and later the CEO of KAP (3), and **Zoran Masoničić** – UFTUMNE (3).

<sup>16</sup> The study did not calculate the total number of guests in the shows *Otvoreno* and *Robin Hud*.

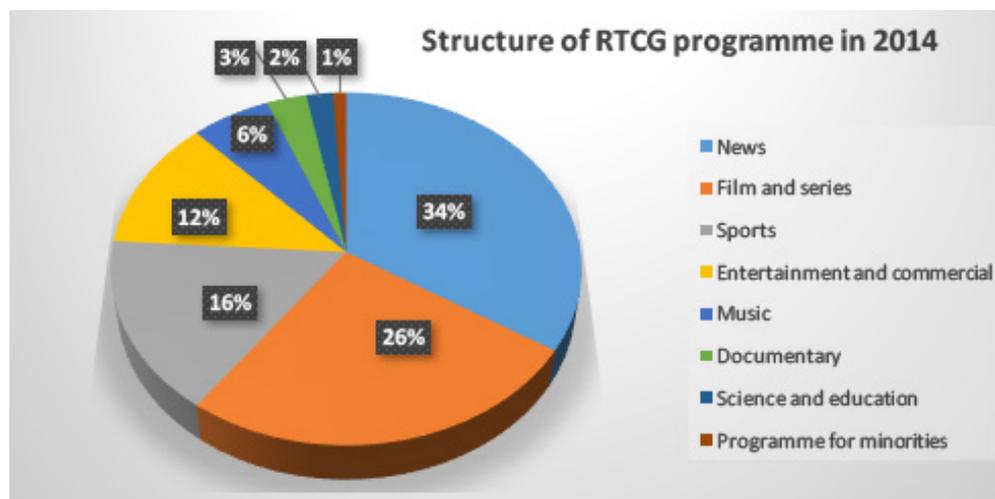
<sup>17</sup> KAP - Aluminum Company Podgorica

# OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS – 2014

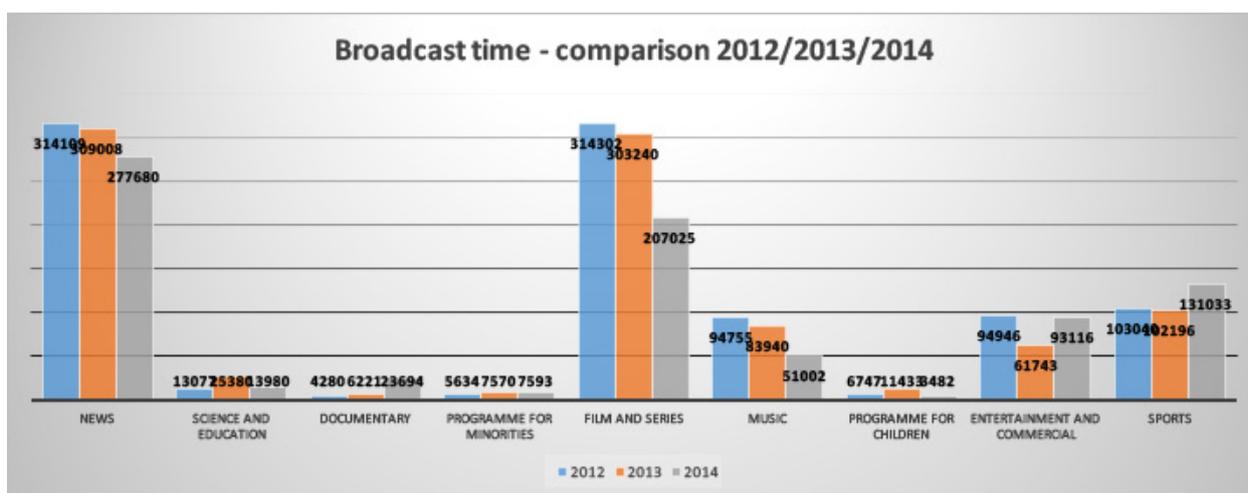
Local elections took place also in 2014, this time in the municipalities of Ulcinj (January), Berane (March), Podgorica, Bar, Bijelo Polje, Danilovgrad, Žabljak, Kolašin, Plav, Plužine, Pljevlja, Rožaje, Šavnik, the newly formed municipality of Gusinje, and city municipalities Golubovci and Tuzi (May). The RTCG's coverage included three debates, the electoral night and regular news programmes, for a total duration of 914 minutes. Debates on the public broadcaster were organised in strict accordance with the format prescribed by the rulebooks<sup>18</sup>. This also meant that the debates practically consisted of mere citation or paraphrasing of the written programmes of the competing parties, without engaging with the real problems encountered by the citizens those municipalities, and thus without the liveliness that would captivate the viewers' attention and provide new information.

TVCG adapted part of its programme for the deaf and hard-of-hearing persons (*Dnevnik* in sign language), an improvement in its approach towards vulnerable groups.

As in 2013, the structure of RTCG programme for 2014 was dominated by news (34%), film and series (26%), sports (16%), followed by entertainment and commercial shows (12%), musical (6%), documentary (3%) and scientific and education programme (2%). Also similar to the previous year, there was a decrease in the number of broadcast minutes dedicated to the news programme, despite the elections (30 000 minutes less), accompanied by a marked increase in the share dedicated to the documentary programme.



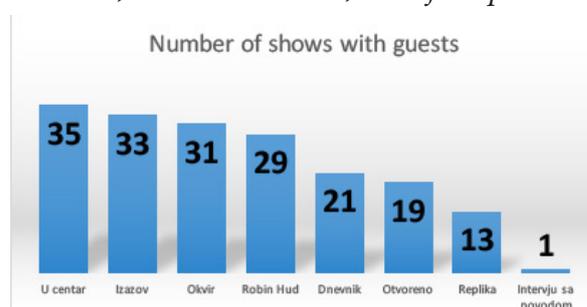
<sup>18</sup> [http://www.rtcg.me/sw4i/download/files/article/Pravila\\_za\\_lokalne\\_izbore1.pdf?id=279](http://www.rtcg.me/sw4i/download/files/article/Pravila_za_lokalne_izbore1.pdf?id=279)



The report “*Realisation of programme orientation with the respect of programme principles of Television of Montenegro (TVCG) for the period January – December 2014*”<sup>19</sup>, adopted by the Council of RTCG, identified some weaknesses of RTCG reporting, among other: “*As it still operates with the analogue technology, the quality of picture and sound at RTCG cannot meet the expectations the audience. It is also difficult to find guests that would be both credible and ready to discuss current topics in specific moments*”.

Once again RTCG stressed the problem of financial instability which, as noted in the report: “*did not allow for expansion of staff and technical capacities. Municipal elections imposed a specific form of coverage and broadcast of pre-election activities, hence during that period, the majority of resources was dedicated to election campaigns where the Public broadcaster has specific and very precise legal obligations*”. The conclusion repeats the remarks of the 2013 report regarding the need for stronger partnerships with institutions and NGOs along with more specific proposals for the staff and production improvements: “*Purchase of new cameras and mounting chains could be accompanied by recruitment (internship) and training of graduates or postgraduates of FPN<sup>20</sup> for video journalism... It is obvious that Podgorica, whose administrative and cultural capacities concentrate the largest number of events in this city, is still overemphasised in the programme coverage. A similar project is planned by colleagues from HRT, who also hope to reduce costs in the existing regional centres.*”

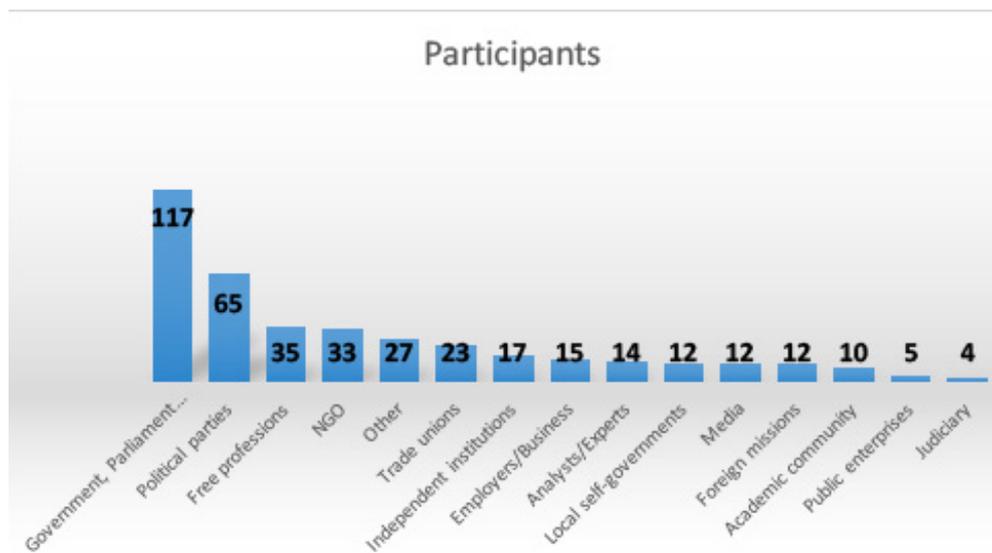
During 2014, the 182 shows analysed by CCE (*Dnevnik* – 21 shows, *U centar* – 35 shows, *Okvir* - 31 shows, *Otvoreno* – 19 shows, *Robin Hud* – 29 shows, *Replika* – 13 shows, *Izazov* – 33 shows, *Intervju sa povodom* – 1 show), featured altogether 401 participants - representatives of political parties, public enterprises, the Government, Parliament, public administration bodies, public institutions, institutions, local governments, trade unions, NGOs, analysts and experts, academics, independent institutions, the judiciary, foreign missions, businessmen, free professions, and others.



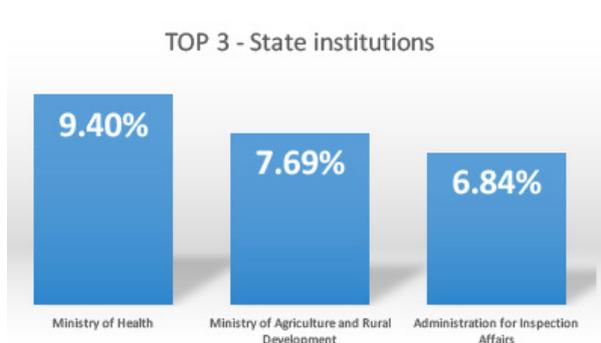
Almost a third of the guests (29.18%) of TVCG were representatives of state institutions, followed by significantly fewer representatives of political parties (16.21%), free professions (8.73%), NGOs (8.23%), and others.

<sup>19</sup> Obtained on the basis of CCE's request for free access to information from the Council of RTCG

<sup>20</sup> FPN – Faculty of Political Sciences



Representatives of executive government and state apparatus, along with the ruling parties, accounted for the greatest number of appearances on TVCG. Even accounting for their powers and responsibility for decisions of importance for the state and society as a whole, this frequency of appearances on the public service broadcaster is disproportionate relative to their critics, whose role is also essential for the proper functioning of the Montenegrin society and whose interests ought to be equally represented by the public broadcaster.



The public body most frequently appearing on RTCG in 2014 was the Ministry of Health (9.40%), followed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (7.69%), Administration for Inspection Affairs (6.84%), and the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism and Institute for Public Health (5.13% each). The three most featured public institutions made the majority of their appearances (28) in shows *Okvir* (11), *Otvoreno* (7) and *Robin Hud* (5).

As regards political parties, the most frequent guests on RTCG were again representatives of the ruling DPS (24,62%) and opposition party SNP (24,62%), followed by Democratic Front (15,38%), Positive Montenegro (13,8%), SDP (10%) and others. They appeared most frequently in shows *Izazov*, *Replika*, *U centar* and *Okvir*.

*Izazov*, edited by **Isidora Sekulić Šoć**, demonstrated the most glaring lack of balance in terms of the range of featured opinions. Out of 13 appearances of representatives of political parties, nine were by the representatives of political actors advocating Montenegro's accession to the NATO, and only four who objected to it. Adding to it another 11 guests from the executive government structures, which implementing the policy of Montenegro's integration into the NATO, it is evident that on this topic there is no balance in the selection of interlocutors on the show. The imbalance is even greater considering that our analysis did not include representatives of the foreign embassies and the NATO, who also appeared on *Izazov* to promote Montenegro's accession to the alliance.

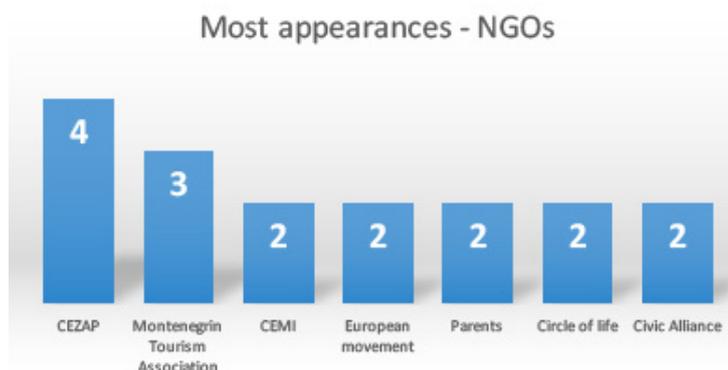
Unlike in 2013, the show *U centar* had a more balanced approach in 2014, but with only one appearance from the ranks of SDP - **Jusuf Kalamperović**, president of council of SDP. SDP's representatives in the executive government were also featured on the show, with appearances by

**Raško Konjević**<sup>21</sup>, Minister of Interior and **Dragan Bogojević** leader of the electoral list “European face of Podgorica”<sup>22</sup> at the local elections in Podgorica.

Just as in 2013, the strongest opposition political group Democratic Front had nearly 10% less media time than SNP, which at the time had only half as many seats in the parliament, and a far lower support as indicated by public opinion polls.<sup>23</sup>



Non-governmental organisations appeared 33 times on the shows covered in this analysis, 11 times were on the show *Robin Hud*, and 6 times on shows *Otvoreno* and *Okvir*. The highest number of appearances by NGOs (4) was by CEZAP (Consumers protection Centre Montenegro), followed by the Montenegrin Tourism Association, Civic Alliance (GA), CEMI, European movement in Montenegro, Parents and Circle of Life with two appearances each. As before, the strong critically-oriented NGOs were ignored by RTCG’s news and politics programme, even though their activities were more relevant and visible in 2014. This is all the more jarring because 2014 saw numerous smear campaigns waged against the leaders of these NGOs, and yet they were given no time to present their views in the news programme of the public broadcaster RTCG.



Representatives of local self-governments appeared on TVCG only 12 times this year, and their appearances were roughly balanced regardless of the political affiliation of the municipal leadership. It should be noted, however, that this only concerns the frequency of appearances, as CCE did not analyse the content of the shows. Participation of trade union representatives was balanced, with a total of 23 appearances equally divided between Federation of Trade Unions of Montenegro, Union of Free Trade Unions of Montenegro and independent unions. About half (12) of these appearances were in the show *Okvir*.

21 This appearance is counted under the number of appearances by executive government representatives.

22 Joint candidate of SDP and Positive Montenegro.

23 According to the poll conducted by Ipsos, average rating for 2014 (Source: Ipsos Strategic, data kindly supplied by Ipsos Strategic-a)

Considering the total number of guests (401) and shows (182) in 2014, the most frequently featured actors were DPS, SNP, Ministry of Health, DF, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Union of Free Trade Unions of Montenegro, Positive Montenegro, Administration for Inspection Affairs and University of Montenegro.<sup>24</sup>

TOP 10 by guest appearances in all shows	DPS
	SNP
	Ministry of Health
	DF
	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
	Union of free Trade Unions
	Positive Montenegro
	Administration for Inspection Affairs
	Federation of Trade Unions of Montenegro
	University of Montenegro

The five most frequent guests of politics and news shows<sup>25</sup> *U centar*, *Okvir*, *Replika* and *Izazov* in 2014 where: **Srđan Milić** – SNP (3), **Mladen Bojanić** – Positive Montenegro, later independent MP (3), Snežana Jonica – SNP (3), **Petar Ivanović** – then Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (3), **Dušan Marković** – vice president of Government (3), **Srđa Keković** – UFTUMNE (3), and **Gordana Đurović** – Faculty of Economy/UOM(3).

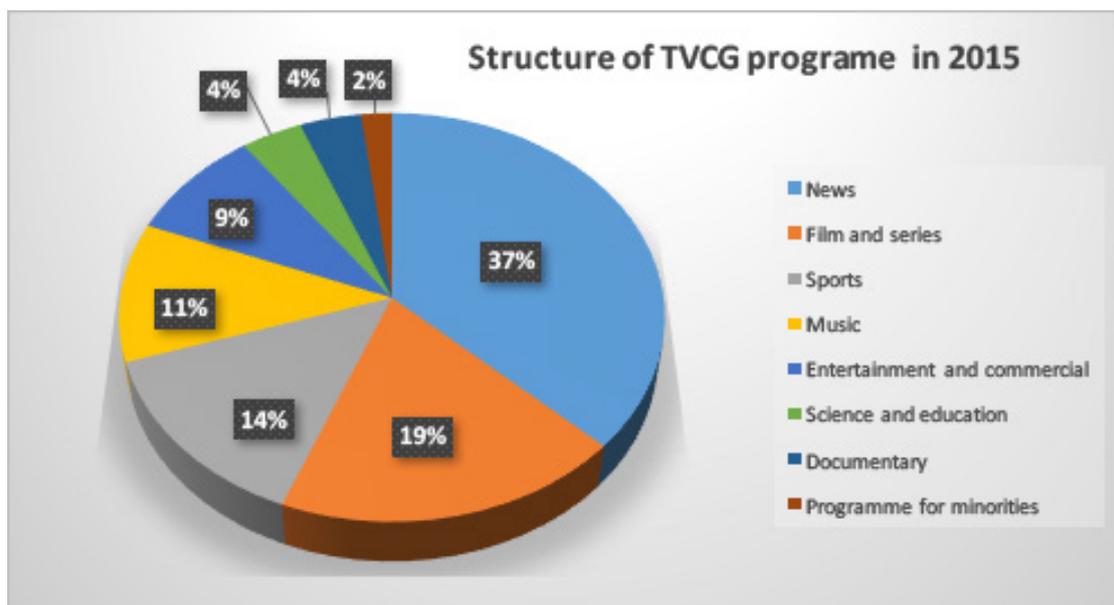
<sup>24</sup> It should be stressed that, although introduced as employees at the University of Montenegro, many guests of the programmes analysed in this study appeared in the capacity of independent experts or analysts in their areas of their expertise, and not as experts of higher education.

<sup>25</sup> The study did not calculate the total number of guests in the shows *Otvoreno* and *Robin Hud*.

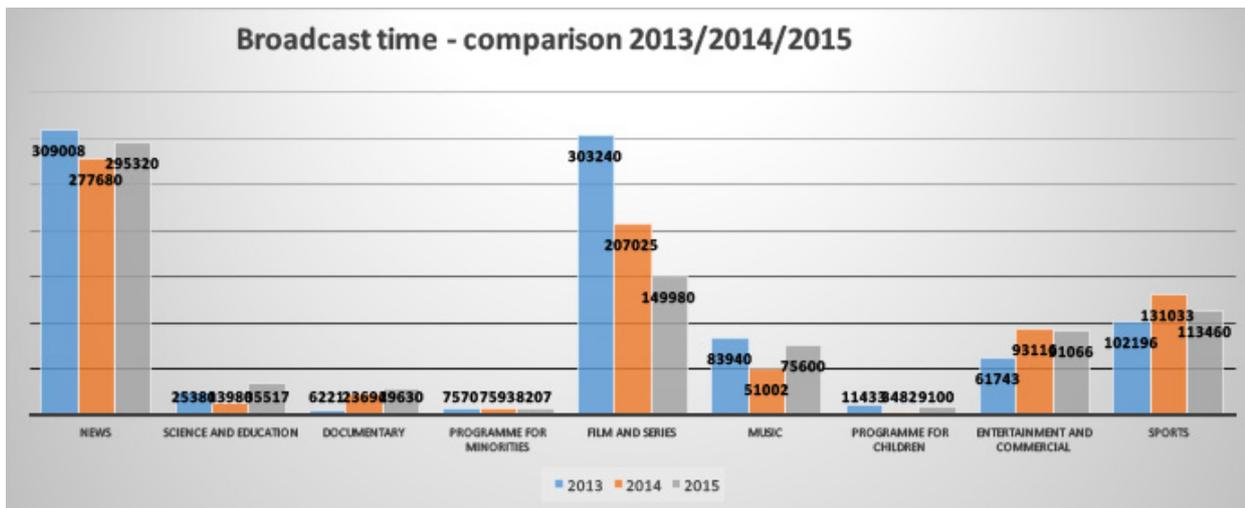
# OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS – 2015

The political developments in 2015 were marked by protests organised by the Democratic Front, with the largest protest taking place on 24 October 2015. RTCG's reporting on the protests was severely criticised by the protest organisers, as well as by the independent media, NGOs and other political parties.

As in the previous years, the structure of the RTCG programme in 2015 was dominated by news programme (37%) and film and series (19%), followed by sports (14%), entertainment and commercial programme (11%), music (9%), documentaries (4%), science and education (4%), and finally by programmes dedicated to minorities (2%).



### Broadcast time - comparison 2013/2014/2015

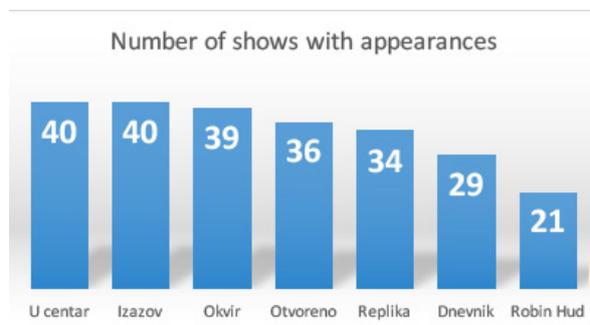


Compared to 2014, there was a notable increase in the amount of time dedicated to the news programme (by nearly 22 000 minutes), and science and education (by 22 000 minutes). More attention was also given to documentary programmes (a 6 000 minutes increase), while the share of broadcast time dedicated to film and series declined by almost 50 000 minutes. From the technical viewpoint this information is encouraging, considering that greater attention is given to the programmes with the potential to contribute to the fulfilment of RTCG’s mission to inform and educate the public, with the caveat that our analysis does not extend to the content of the broadcasted programmes.

The report “*Realisation of programme orientation with the respect of programme principles of Television of Montenegro (TVCG) for the period January – December 2015*”<sup>26</sup> states that the company programme produced 3111 hours of news programme in this year. “*Many important issues of public interest were tackled though the News programme that is broadcasted hourly on workdays and every two hours on weekends, as well as in numerous weekly reports and specialised shows. A significant portion of the news programme is taken up by the sessions of the Parliament of Montenegro*”, states the report.

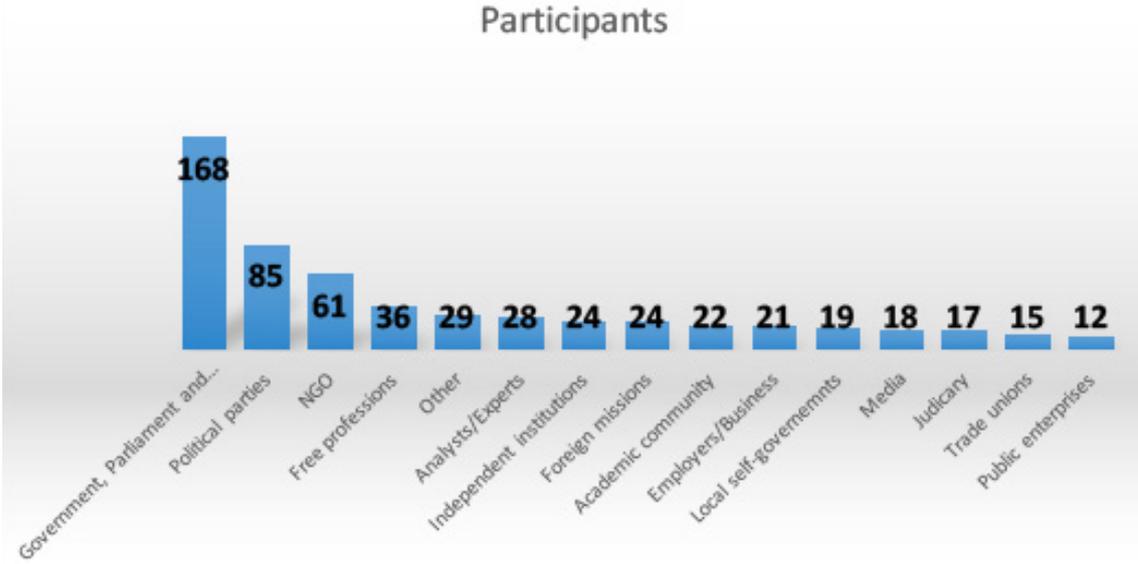
The key shortcomings are copied word for word from the 2014 report: “*As it still operates with the analogue technology, the quality of picture and sound at RTCG cannot meet the expectations the audience. It is also difficult to find guests that would be both credible and ready to discuss current topics in specific moments*”. On the other hand, it cites the following key achievements: “*Reliability, speed, objectivity, professional responsibility, modern formats, frequent use of live reporting*”. Finally, the report reiterates the problems of financial instability and the possibility of greater project cooperation with public institutions and NGOs.

During 2015, in 239 shows, subjects of CCE’s analysis (*Dnevnik* – 29 shows, *U centar* – 40 shows, *Okvir* - 39 shows, *Otvoreno* – 36 shows, *Robin Hud* – 21 shows, *Replika* – 34 shows, *Izazov* – 40 shows) appeared 579 participants i.e. representatives of political parties, public enterprises, the Government, Parliament, state administration bodies, public institutions, institutions, local governments, trade unions, NGOs, analysts and experts, academics, independent institutions, the judiciary, foreign missions, businessmen, free professions, etc.

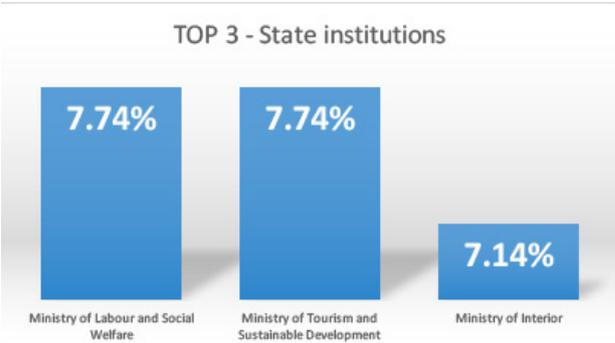


<sup>26</sup> Received based on the request of CCE for free access to information

As in the previous years, nearly a third of guests on TVCG (29.07%) were representatives of state institutions, followed by the representatives of political parties (14.68%), NGOs (10.54%), and others. The executive government and state apparatus, along with the representatives of ruling parties, remained most heavily represented on TVCG also in 2015, while their critics received far less screen time.



The most frequently featured public bodies on RTCG in 2015 were the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and Ministry of Tourism and Sustainable Development (7.74% each), followed by the Ministry of Interior (7.14%), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (6.55%), the Police Department (5.36%), Ministry of Finance (3.57%) and others. The majority of appearances of the three most featured public institutions were in the show *Okvir* - as many as 16.



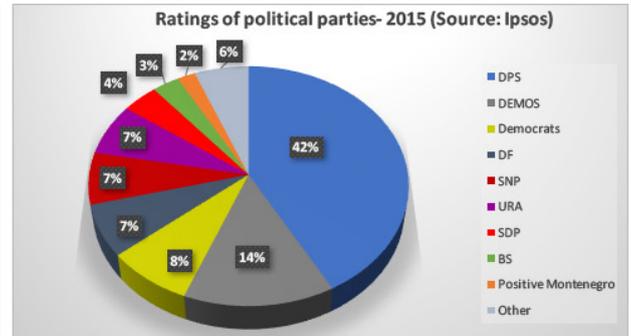
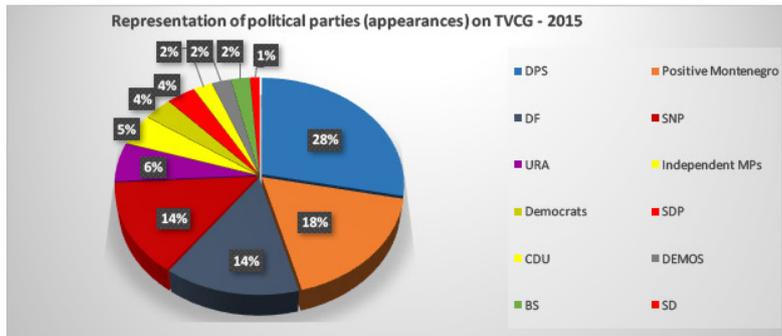
As regards political parties, the most frequent guests on RTCG were again representatives of the ruling DPS (28.24%), followed by the representatives of Positive Montenegro (17.65%), Democratic Front and SNP (14.12%), URA (4.71%) and others.<sup>27</sup> These appearances were mostly on the shows *Okvir*, *Replika*, *U centar* and *Izazov*.

The most unbalanced selection of guests was again noted in the show *Izazov* by **Isidora Sekulić Šoć**. Out of the total of seven appearances by political party representatives, six were by the representatives of entities that support Montenegro’s integration into the NATO. Representatives of executive government, NGOs (mostly those in favour of Montenegro’s accession to the NATO), as well as of the diplomatic missions to Montenegro, NATO officials and representatives of its member states also appeared on this show.

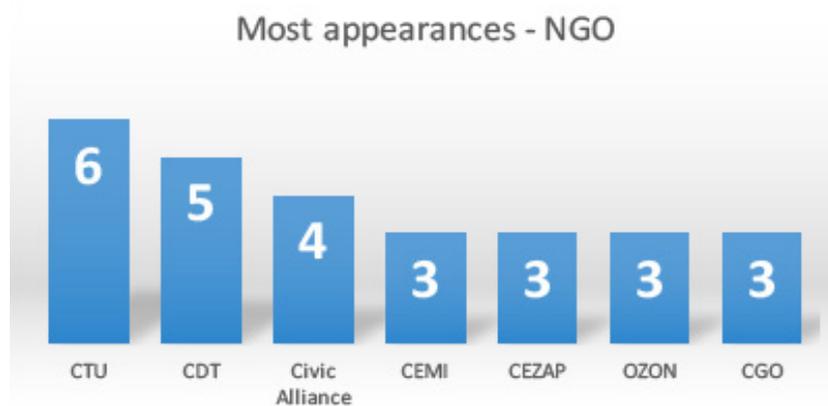
Other shows however displayed a slightly more balanced approach to their selection of guests from

<sup>27</sup>The average rating for 2015, as measured between April (when a number of new political parties appeared) and December (Source: Ipsos Strategic, data courtesy of Ipsos Strategic)

political parties compared to the previous two years. Among the opposition parties, RTCG's editors appeared to be particularly favourably disposed towards Positive Montenegro, which received media time quite out of proportion with its political rating. **Darko Pajović**, president of Positive Montenegro, appeared three times on the show *U centar*<sup>28</sup>, and the party was featured on this show on a number of other occasions<sup>29</sup>. On the other hand, representatives of SDP did not appear even once on *U centar* despite high-level turbulences within the party, although **Vujica Lazović**, deputy Prime Minister for economic policy and representative of the newly formed Social Democrats, appeared once on the show.<sup>30</sup>



In 2015, representatives of NGOs appeared far more frequently on RTCG's shows analysed in this study than in the previous two years – as many as 61 times. Over a third (24) of these appearances were on the show *Otvoreno* by **Andrijana Kadija Bulatović**. The most frequently featured NGOs were the Montenegrin



Tourism Association CTU (six appearances), followed by Centre for democratic transition CDT (5), Civic Alliance (GA) with four, an three appearances each by CEMI, CEZAP (Consumers protection Centre Montenegro), Ozon and CCE appeared three times each. It appears that in 2015 RTCG opened up for almost all relevant NGOs (MANS appeared once on the show *Otvoreno*). It is, however, important to note that critically oriented almost always appeared on the show *Otvoreno*, which was produced in cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Montenegro. The question is therefore whether this change in the composition of guest reflects the project requirements or a genuine sea change in editorial preferences.

As in the previous two years, RTCG kept a balance in inviting representatives of local self-governments, both in terms of their regional distribution and the guests' political affiliation. The same was true of the appearances of trade unions, whereas the representation of higher education institutions was heavily dominated by the University of Montenegro (18 out of 22 appearances).

<sup>28</sup> 29 January, 4 June and 24 September 2015.

<sup>29</sup> Azra Jasavić, deputy president of Positive Montenegro, appeared on 12 November 2015

<sup>30</sup> 29 October 2015

Considering the total number of guests (579) and shows (239) in 2015, most frequently featured actors were DPS, University of Montenegro<sup>31</sup>, Positive Montenegro, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Tourism and Sustainable Development, DF, SNP, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Police Department.

TOP 10 by guest appearances in all shows	DPS
	University of Montenegro
	Positive Montenegro
	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
	Ministry of Tourism and Sustainable Development
	DF
	SNP
	Ministry of Interior
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration
	Police department

The five most frequent guests of politics and news shows<sup>32</sup> *U centar*, *Okvir*, *Replika* and *Izazov* in 2015 were **Ivan Vuković** from the Faculty of Political Sciences/UOM with eight appearances, followed by **Zorica Kovačević**, the then then Minister of Labour and Social Welfare (6), **Azra Jasavić** from Positive Montenegro (5), **Darko Pajović** from Positive Montenegro (5), **Zlatko Vujović** of CEMI (5), **Snežana Jonica** from SNP (4), Prime Minister **Milo Đukanović** (4), and **Zoran Vukčević** of the Investment and Development Fund (4).

31 Note that although introduced as employees at the University of Montenegro, many guests of the programmes analysed in this study appeared in the capacity of independent experts or analysts in their areas of their expertise, and not as experts of higher education.

32 The study did not calculate the total number of guests in the shows *Otvoreno* and *Robin Hud*.

## CONCLUSIONS AND REMARKS:

- » During the previous three years, the overwhelming majority of guests on RTCG's news shows analysed by this study came from the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) and public institutions. Attempts to monopolise the public discourse through the public broadcaster are detrimental to any society's democratic aspirations, and is likely to undermine the reputation of the public broadcaster whose task should be to foster the plurality of opinion and to serve all citizens equally, regardless of whether they support or criticise the government.
- » RTCG does not provide equal opportunity in access to its politics and news programmes, nor does it take care to match the screen time given to political parties to their representation in the Parliament of Montenegro or their share of public support. In the three years analysed by this study, the four most prominent shows of this profile (*U centar*, *Izazov*, *Okvir*, *Replika*), featured guests from the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) 47 appearances, followed by the Socialist People's Party (SNP) with 38 appearances, Democratic Front (DF) with 31 appearance, Positive Montenegro with 29.5 appearances and SDP with 12.5 appearances.<sup>33</sup>
- » The situation is even more skewed with regard to the representation of some of the most developed, critically-oriented NGOs, who had practically no space to express their views on the public broadcaster, and as a consequence had to endure various forms of discrimination and assaults. In all three years, the NGOs most frequently featured on the main politics and news shows (*U centar*, *Izazov*, *Okvir*, *Replika*) were the Montenegrin Tourism Association (CTU), which appeared eight times, followed by the Centre for monitoring (CEMI) and Civic Alliance (GA) with six appearances each, the Consumers protection Centre Montenegro (CEZAP) with four appearances and NGO Alfa centre with three appearances.
- » In the 2013 - 2015 period, RTCG editors invited displayed a marked preference for the following individuals as guests in the four main politics and news shows: **Srđan Milić**, president of SNP - 10 appearances; **Snežana Jonica**, SNP official and **Darko Pajović**, president of Positive Montenegro - nine appearances; and **Azra Jasavić**, vice president of Positive Montenegro, **Aleksandar Damjanović**, SNP official and **Ivan Vuković**, lecturer at the Faculty of Political Sciences of University of Montenegro - eight appearances.
- » Among the individual shows, the most drastic example of unbalanced selection of guests was recorded in *Izazov*, edited by **Isidora Šoć Sekulić**. The show focuses on the Euro-Atlantic integration, and displays a marked preference for the option promoting Montenegro's

Political parties (total for 2013, 2014, 2015)		NGOs (total for 2013, 2014, 2015)		TOP guests (total for 2013, 2014, 2015)	
DPS	47	CTU (Montenegrin Tourism Association)	8	Srđan Milić	10
SNP	38	CEMI	6	Snežana Jonica	9
DF	31	Civic Alliance	6	Darko Pajović	9
Positive Montenegro *	29,5	CEZAP	4	Azra Jasavić	8
SDP *	12,5	Alfa centre	3	Aleksandar Damjanović	8
Shows: <i>U centar</i> , <i>Izazov</i> , <i>Okvir</i> , <i>Replika</i>				Ivan Vuković	8

<sup>33</sup> Appearance of Dragan Bogojevic, head of the list "European face of Podgorica" in the local elections in Podgorica calculated with 0.5 and 0.5 for the PCG for SDP

accession to the NATO. Its selection of guests also overwhelmingly favoured pro-NATO guests: out of 106 guests featured on the show in 2014 and 2015, CCE's analysts identified only eight guests who argued against Montenegro's accession to the NATO alliance (7.55%). Some of the guests appeared repeatedly, as many as four or five times, whereas many others who represent important social factions in the country never got a chance to express their opinion on this issue (in terms of diversity, there was a total of 75 guests).

- » With regard to the formal distinction between the government and opposition, the selection of guests on the show *U centar*, by **Andrija Nikolić**, at first appears fair. However, a more careful look reveals that the selection of guests does not reflect the relative weight of the parties in the Parliament of Montenegro, nor their popularity according to available party ratings. The show also conspicuously ignored representatives of SDP, except for one appearance of the president of SDP Council **Jusuf Kalamperović** in 2014<sup>34</sup>. Out of 134 guests in total in the period 2013-2015, our analysis identified 69 (51.49%) representatives of government and state institutions as well as other government-affiliated agencies, 47 participants (35.07%), from the ranks of opposition parties with at least somewhat critical opinions of the government's work (mainly representatives of Positive Montenegro and SNP - nearly half of all opposition appearances), and 18 guests (13.43%) from the wider region or those with a more neutral stance. The most frequent guests of Andrija Nikolić in the previous three years were: **Darko Pajović**, president of Positive Montenegro (seven appearances), **Srdan Milić**, president of SNP, **Milo Đukanović**, Prime Minister of Montenegro and **Andrija Mandić**, member of the DF presidency (five appearances). The show had altogether 94 guests in three years, some of them appearing on the show more frequently than others.
- » *Okvir* by **Zoran Leković** featured 227 guests in the period 2013 to 2015, with a total of 346 appearances. According to the CCE's analysis, the government parties appeared 46.53% of the time, the opposition 13.87%, and a larger proportion of screen time was given to the guests coming from other social spheres (unions, economy, expert analysts, academic community, etc.) According to RTCG's official documents, *Okvir* is primarily concerned with socioeconomic issues, but the show frequently featured other themes and sometimes overlapped with other shows in terms of topics and guests. The most frequent guests of Zoran Leković were: **Aleksandar Damjanović**, president of the parliamentary Committee for economy and SNP official; **Damir Šehović**, member of the Committee for economy and deputy president of Social Democrats (previously an SDP official); **Zoran Vukčević**, DPS official and director of Investment and Development Fund (IRF); and **Snežana Jonica**, SNP official. Each of these appeared six times on the show in the analysed period, whereas **Srđa Keković**, secretary general of the Union of Free Trade Unions and **Suzana Radulović**, secretary general of the Employers' Federation appeared five times. Economic analyst **Vasilije Kostić**, former director of the Employment Office **Vukica Jelić**, DPS official **Zoran Jelić**, president of SNP **Srdan Milić**, former Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development **Petar Ivanović**, former director of Tax Administration **Milan Lakićević**, former Minister of Labour and Social Welfare **Zorica Kovačević**, president of Montenegrin Tourism Association **Žarko Radulović**, and **Rade Krivokapić** from the KAP Trade Union appeared four times each. Moreover, although originally planned as a debate-based show, we recorded 15 occasions of single-guest interviews which were dominated by members of Government, public officials, representatives of public institutions or independent state agencies, as well as of local self-governments and persons otherwise affiliated with the state. The only exceptions were one guest from the academic community and one from the wider region. The most frequent guest of the interview format was **Petar Ivanović**, former Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, who was invited four times.

<sup>34</sup> Appearance of Jusuf Kalamperović, 12.06.2014.

- » During two seasons, 2014 and 2015, the author of the show *Replika Nevenka Ćirović* had 124 guests who appeared altogether 144 times. Our study revealed that 22.22% those were representatives of opposition, 35.42% of the government and ruling parties, and 41.36% of other social actors, some of whom had more or less close relations to the government or the opposition. Among the opposition parties, the majority of guests came from the ranks of SNP and Positive Montenegro, but unlike other news and politics shows, *Replika* provided more screen time to Democratic Front. The most frequent guests in *Replika* (three appearances each) were: **Snežana Jonica** from SNP, **Boris Raonić** from Civic Alliance, **Slaven Radunović** from DF, **Ranko Đonović**, former president of LSCG and **Mili Prelević**, a journalist in «Daily papers». Out of ten appearances by NGO representatives in 2014 and 2015 50% were by the Civic Alliance, while the remaining five slots were given to five different NGOs. Also, the same “line-up” appeared twice on the show<sup>35</sup> to discuss party congresses of SDP and DPS. Finally, even though this was originally designed as a dialogue-based show, the author conducted one interview in 2015 with the president of Montenegro **Filip Vujanović**.
- » It was not until 2015 that the editorial board decided to open doors to certain critically oriented NGOs (e.g. MANS, CCE, IA) whose project activities are well recognised by the Montenegrin and international public. This slightly improved RTCG’s record on this front, though it should be noted that most of the representatives of critical NGOs appeared on the *Otvoreno*, which was a joint project with the OSCE Mission to Montenegro. Even here, the timing was highly restricted and set in the context of a larger debate with a majority of non-critical guests, which made it hard to hold a substantial debate in which the participants would have equal opportunity to defend their position. This made it seem as if the opening towards the more critical wing of the NGO sector was rather a token gesture to fulfil a project requirement than a genuine change in editorial policy.
- » On the other hand, to the extent that it dedicated time to the topics of interest at the local level, which in our opinion was far from sufficient, TVCG took a balanced approach in inviting the guests from municipal administrations. Municipalities run by the government and opposition parties were equally represented, although it should be noted that CCE’s analysis only concerns the frequency of appearances and not the actual content of the shows. The main trade unions were also equally represented. However, among the key national universities, University of Montenegro was heavily overrepresented, and many of its employees appeared in the capacity of individual experts. At the same time, higher education as such was largely excluded from the thematic focus of the public broadcaster RTCG.
- » The reports on the implementation of programme orientation of TVCG for 2013, 2014 and 2015 that were analysed in this study are practically copy-pasted from one year to the next, following the same pattern, with only formal updates of the statistical data. They often contain identical paragraphs, and never explain why there was no progress in the problem areas identified in the previous years, or describe actions taken to ascertain accountability for such failures.
- » It is worrying that the management of TVCG does not acknowledge the weaknesses of its news programme despite numerous criticisms from the citizens, independent institutions,

<sup>35</sup> SDP Congress, broadcasted on 01.06.2015, with: Ivan Vuković, professor at FNP; Boris Raonić, Civic Alliance; Ranko Đonović, former President of LSCG; Mili Prelević, “Daily papers”. DPS Congress, broadcasted on 15.06.2015, with: Ivan Vuković, professor at FNP - Podgorica; Boris Raonić, Civic Alliance; Ranko Đonović, former President of LSCG; Mili Prelević, politics editor in “Daily papers”

opposition, as well as from some members of the RTCG Council, who have repeatedly pointed out deficiencies in its approach. To the extent that it recognises some weaknesses, the management of RTCG focuses almost exclusively on the technical and production-related issues and eschews critical review of the content.

- » CCE's analysts also noted that RTCG often deviates from the adopted programme scheme, and that there are *ad hoc* changes in the thematic focus or formats of the shows, leading to frequent overlaps in terms of topics and guests in different shows. This suggests the need for clearer and more binding guidelines for the authors to allow greater coverage of a broader range of topics and more diversity in terms of guests.
- » Although there is a separate show *Intervju s povodom* (*Interview with a cause*), it is rarely broadcasted. At the same time, a number of shows whose purpose is to feature dialogue or debate occasionally resort to the interview format, usually with the officials of executive government or the ruling parties. These changes in format are rarely warranted by the specific circumstances or topic, and thus make it seem as if RTCG was simply favouring these actors.
- » Centre for Civic Education (CCE) hopes that recent and upcoming changes in the management and structure of the news programme will contribute to further democratisation and greater openness of RTCG. At the moment, RTCG is still far from a public broadcaster that would fully justify the amounts the Montenegrin taxpayers spend on it, or serve their interests equally regardless of their beliefs or affiliations.

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