

Analysis of the News Programme of the Public Media Service RTCG

October and November 2025



Kingdom of the Netherlands



Centar za
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Summary

The analysis of the central news programme of the Public Media Service RTCG – *Dnevnik 2* – during October and November 2025 indicates a high volume of informational content, but also continuous structural and professional shortcomings in the manner of reporting, the selection of topics and interlocutors, and the positioning of the public interest.

During the observed period, 61 editions of *Dnevnik* were broadcast in the 19:30 time slot, with an average duration of about 29 minutes. Short news, statements, and announcements dominated, while authored, investigative, and analytical formats were significantly less represented.¹ Although minor quantitative differences were recorded between the two months, the qualitative patterns remain almost identical, indicating a stabilized and long-established editorial approach.

Despite the presence of a certain number of interviews and reports, they were not sufficient to balance the prevailing factual and often superficial approach to covering topics. Editorial initiatives were most often related to stories about personal experiences and life circumstances, as well as topics from the field of agriculture. At the same time, there is a clear predominance of reports based on statements and announcements by government representatives, which in most cases were neither further contextualized nor used as a basis for additional journalistic initiative or critical questioning.

Key Findings

• Thematic structure and triggers for reporting

In both analyzed months, the largest number of reports referred to events organized outside government institutions, followed by current events organized by the institutions themselves. In November, an increase in reporting on government activities is noticeable, as well as a higher number of so-called pseudo-events, which reinforces the impression that RTCG primarily acts as a transmitter of institutional activities rather than as a critical corrective of the authorities.

An example of a pseudo-event is a news piece broadcast on 20 November stating that the Government adopted information on the need to provide speech therapy and special education services. The adoption of such information in itself means little without addressing basic journalistic questions – when, how, and by whom – as well as providing context.

In terms of topics, sports is the most represented field in both months, significantly shaping the overall structure of the *Dnevnik*. In addition to sports, politics, world and regional news dominate, while social issues, including social policy, education, healthcare, culture, and human rights, remain secondary. European integration is present in the news programme but is mostly reduced to relaying statements from officials, without deeper analysis of the obligations arising from the process, the challenges in its implementation, or the concrete consequences for citizens.

It is particularly noticeable that topics concerning vulnerable social groups are almost systematically neglected. In October, children, youth, the unemployed, and persons with disabilities do not appear at all as interlocutors, while in November their presence is merely symbolic and insufficient to speak of genuine inclusiveness. The LGBT community is almost completely invisible in the central news programme in both months.

¹ A total of 566 news pieces, statements and/or announcements were broadcast, 100 authored reports, 21 interviews, 302 thematic/report segments, 24 feature reports, as well as one media piece that could not be classified within the defined genres.

• Selection of subjects and objects of reporting

The analysis shows that representatives of the executive branch, political parties, international actors, and sports entities are predominantly represented as both subjects and objects of reporting. Although the opposition appears relatively often in reports, this does not contribute to a genuine balance in reporting, as the content most often boils down to relaying opposing political statements without broader context, analytical framing, or additional explanations that would allow the audience to gain a deeper understanding of the issues.

Citizens are most often present in the programmes through short surveys or as participants in certain events, while they rarely appear as holders of problems or interlocutors whose perspectives and experiences are systematically followed. This limits the ability of the public service to adequately reflect the needs and problems of different social groups. At the same time, non-governmental organizations and experts remain insufficiently represented as relevant sources who could contribute to a critical assessment and better understanding of complex social issues.

“Anti-Turk” protests and RTCG’s limited editorial response

The end of October was marked by an attack on a young man in Zabjelo, initially attributed in reports to Turkish citizens and which attracted significant public attention. The incident quickly gained a broader social dimension, especially on social networks, where xenophobic narratives and calls for gatherings appeared.

The first public event was recorded on 27 October, when citizens organized a protest walk “against Turks”. RTCG reported on this event in Dnevnik, but only through a short informational report, without deeper analysis. Although the protests opened the issue of growing xenophobia and hate speech in the public sphere, the topic did not receive a more significant analytical framework, nor did it occupy a central place in the programme. It is also concerning that the day before there was no report in Dnevnik about the attack itself, although the RTCG portal published the information at 18:22.

Already on 28 October, the Dnevnik opened with an interview with the acting director of the Police Directorate, Lazar Šćepanović, while the protest in front of the Government building was still ongoing. Although alarming and potentially dangerous messages could be heard at the protest, the studio conversation did not address key questions regarding the institutional response to such gatherings.

The journalist in the studio did not question the fact that the police were securing a gathering directed against a national group, nor was there an open discussion about the phenomenon of so-called “people’s patrols”. Also absent was the legitimate question of under what conditions the police assess the need to restrict or disperse gatherings that may encourage hate speech or threaten the safety of citizens.

• Tone and professional standards of reporting

The majority of reports in both analyzed months were assessed as neutral. However, the analysis shows that a neutral tone in many cases does not necessarily mean professional, balanced, and responsible reporting. On the contrary, such

One-sided picture – RTCG without a critical review of Amfilohije

A significant event in October was the decision of the President of Montenegro, Jakov Milatović, to posthumously award Metropolitan Amfilohije of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC). RTCG reported on this exclusively through news coverage, without questioning the legitimacy of the decision and without presenting critical viewpoints. From the announcement of the decision on 19 October to its implementation on 24 October, questions about Amfilohije and the nature of the state decoration remained unaddressed.

In the Dnevnik of 19 October, the information was highlighted as the news of the day but remained at the level of a mere statement – without analysis of the legal basis or reactions from civil society, which later criticized the decision. The presenter’s wording was also problematic, referring to the anniversary of Amfilohije’s death as his “repose”, a term appropriate for church services but not for a public broadcaster. RTCG did not provide space for civil society views criticizing the president’s decision and the explanation that Amfilohije contributed to building social peace. This ignored controversial aspects of his role during the wars of the 1990s, including support for the ideology of “blood and soil”, glorification of the Chetnik movement, denial of the genocide in Srebrenica, etc.

A similar practice was recorded on 24 October when the order was officially awarded – reports included the President of the State and the current SOC Metropolitan Joanikije, again without critical context. On 5 November, when the Special State Prosecutor’s Office (SDT) opened a case against the President following a complaint by activist Jelena Marković, RTCG only reported that the complaint had been filed for abuse of office, again without presenting the ongoing criticism from civil society.

Reporting on 28 October about the unveiling of the monument to Amfilohije in Kolašin was also problematic. RTCG did not provide full information about Amfilohije’s actions and legacy, nor did it question the fact that Metropolitan Joanikije awarded the highest decoration of the Metropolitanate to poet Matija Bećković, known for denying the Montenegrin nation. It is unacceptable that such a complex and controversial topic passed through the central news programme without critical treatment, while praises directed at Bećković were broadcast at the same time.

“neutrality” often boils down to merely transmitting statements and announcements without additional context, critical questions, or consideration of the broader social and political picture.

In both months, numerous examples of uncritical reporting on the actions of the authorities were recorded, particularly on topics with strong political and social implications, such as the posthumous decoration of Metropolitan Amfilohije, the actions of institutions regarding the controversial monument to Pavle Đurišić, and the fight against corruption and organized crime. In such cases, RTCG mostly remained at the level of basic information, omitting problematization, the confrontation of different viewpoints, and deeper analytical coverage.

Illustrative in this regard is the report on the Amfilohije monument broadcast on 28 October, where the interlocutors were Andrija Mandić, Speaker of Parliament; Petko Bakić, Mayor of Kolašin; writer Matija Bećković; and Metropolitan Joanikije – all of whom shared the same position. Another example is the report broadcast on 5 November in which ministers spoke about the European Commission’s report. Although more positive than previous ones, the report also contained numerous recommendations and warnings regarding issues Montenegro must address and demonstrate commitment to through measurable results. It is the obligation of the media, particularly the Public Service, to insist on and problematize these aspects, rather than ignore them.

There is also a noticeable practice of broadcasting reports with only one interlocutor, as well as sequences of statements by various political actors without any visible journalistic contribution in interpreting and contextualizing the content. For example, the report on the voter registry verification on 8 October featured only one interlocutor from the Ministry of Interior. Particularly problematic are the so-called pseudo-events, through which the activities of high-ranking state officials are presented as news of public interest even though they often do not bring substantive information relevant to citizens.

- **Attitude toward internal pluralism and employees**

In November, the issue of the RTCG management’s attitude toward employees who criticize the leadership of the Public Service became particularly evident. Reporting on disciplinary proceedings and trade union protests was minimal, one-sided, and did not provide space for opposing views. Such an approach further calls into question RTCG’s role as a public service while confirming the perception that the media outlet operates under strong managerial influence rather than reflecting pluralism of opinion within the institution itself.

A silenced topic - Krnovo, historical revisionism, and reactions

The central news programme of RTCG did not report on the event in Krnovo on 11 October, when the President of the Parliament, Andrija Mandić, laid a wreath marking the deaths of members of Chetnik units from the Second World War, while the memorial service was led by Bishop Metodije.

This event represented an important trigger for opening the issue of increasingly present revisionist tendencies in the public sphere, particularly in the context of political interpretations of the historical role of Chetnik commander Pavle Đurišić and his formations. However, RTCG failed to include this topic in the central news broadcast at all, thereby depriving the public of the context necessary to understand the political and social significance of the event.

RTCG also did not transmit the reactions of civil society recorded by other media outlets, which pointed out that those who died in Krnovo were not “barely-grown young men”, as the President of Parliament described them, but armed Chetnik units. Non-governmental organizations warned that such commemorations contribute to revisionism and the relativization of the role of collaborationist formations in the Second World War, but the Public Service did not recognize this as a topic of public importance.

The absence of reporting on this event once again raises the issue of editorial criteria in topic selection, particularly when it comes to politically and socially sensitive questions concerning historical facts and political interpretations by those in power.

- **Gender aspect**

A pronounced gender imbalance was recorded in both months.

Men were significantly more represented as interlocutors and subjects of reporting—four times more in October and twice as much in November. Women most often appeared within social topics or through vox populi segments, which further indicates the presence of gender stereotypes in editorial decisions and limits a comprehensive and inclusive perspective in reporting.

Conclusion

The combined analysis of October and November 2025 of RTCG's central news programme, *Dnevnik 2*, confirms that RTCG still does not fully fulfil its legal and social role as a Public Media Service. Although it quantitatively produces a large amount of informational content, the quality of reporting remains low due to the dominance of press releases, pseudo-events, and the uncritical transmission of statements by government representatives.

The absence of an analytical approach, weak representation of socially sensitive topics, marginalization of vulnerable groups, striking gender imbalance, and lack of internal pluralism indicate a serious deficit of professional standards. A neutral tone is often used as an excuse to avoid responsible journalism, while the critical function of the media is systematically suppressed.

Although there are positive examples in the form of reports on human stories, agriculture, sport, and everyday life, the overall impression is that RTCG in the observed period functions more as a service of the government than as a service of citizens. Such practice undermines public trust in the long run and requires substantial changes in editorial policy through strengthening authorial and investigative journalism, as well as a clear commitment to the public interest as the central value of the Public Service's work.

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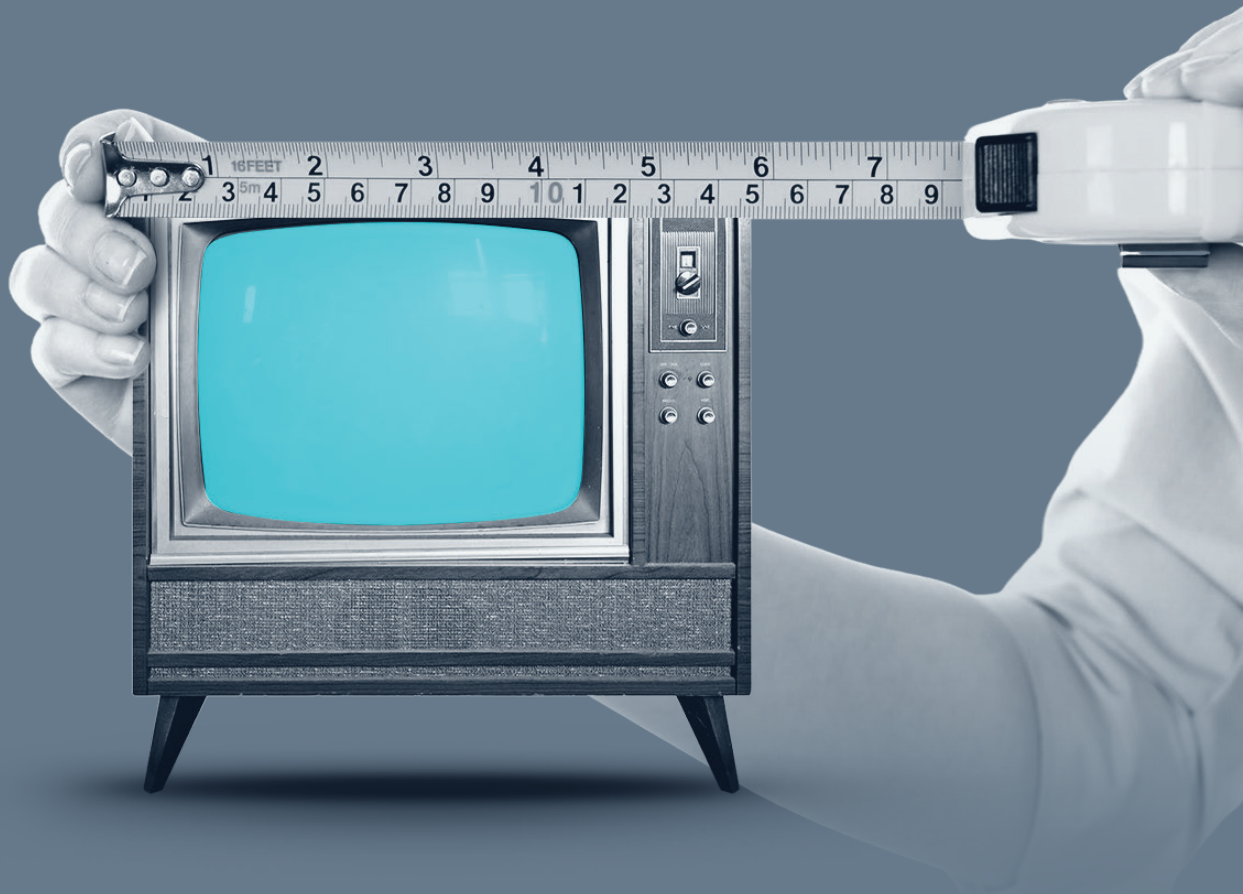
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