

Regional Media: Situation, Problems and Expectations

Based on Results of a Three-Year Monitoring

In 2009, the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression (CPFE) conducted an expert survey among Armenian media managers and employees. When asked to evaluate the situation with pluralism in the media during various-level elections and in other times, many media representatives, especially those from the regions of Armenia, gave themselves high scores (on a 0 to 10 scale). Almost every media manager stated that “we ensure pluralism”.

Quite the opposite is true in reality: the three-year studies (2006-2009) conducted by the *Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression* show that pluralism (especially, political pluralism) remains the weakest point for regional media (one may assume that a more comprehensive study would have revealed that the same is true for many national media. Such assumption is grounded on the results of the research implemented in various years by the partner journalistic organizations).

One month of the study in 2007 coincided with campaign for the RA National Assembly elections, while a month in 2008 coincided with presidential election campaign. The majority of the regional and municipal media observed within those periods failed to ensure political pluralism during these periods.

The majority of television stations had not announced tariffs for airtime during both election campaigns, which essentially meant giving up an opportunity to make money from political advertising. Some stations called this decision a general intention to refrain from covering the campaign. The director of one of the regional television stations gave a noteworthy answer to the question about why he was not sending a television crew to cover an opposition party's rally taking place at that very moment within 100 meters of the studio. He said that they didn't cover the campaign at all. As they say – no comment here.

We had noted the following in the conclusion of our 2007 study: “There is almost no political pluralism and diversity on television in the period before and after elections. In the times of elections, television stations either did not broadcast any materials on the campaign at all (which would have ensured political pluralism), or they covered only one party or candidate, or they did ensure some pluralism (by focusing on the main political forces), but, nevertheless, gave advantage to the ruling party or its candidate.”

The results of the 2008 study were not very encouraging, either: “For the most part, television companies refrain from covering the activities of various political forces or presenting their views on issues of public importance, especially in the times when there are no elections. This leads to a lack of pluralism on television. Only the *Tsaig*, *GALA* (both in Gyumri) and *Ankyun Plus 3* (Alaverdi) news reports contained elements of pluralism.”

One can say that the same trend continued in 2009. Only five of the 14 monitored television stations can be said (albeit with reservations) to have ensured political pluralism.

Any talk of political pluralism in local newspapers is pointless. Most regional print media, with very few exceptions, is doing everything it can to avoid political subjects and does not cover elections (or covers them very little), but when it does, it covers mainly the campaign of one ruling party or presents that party's campaign platform.

The results of the 2009 CPFE study, presented in this publication, may be useful for improving political pluralism in the local media. Nevertheless, everything depends on the media

management's position. In this case, any advice is meaningless. As one of the television managers said during a visit to the regions, "Don't you think I know that I am supposed to be ensuring political pluralism, especially during elections? But..." Then he told us that representatives of the local branch of the ruling party had "urged" him in clear terms to stay away from election campaign coverage.

Nevertheless, CPFE insists once again on the following message to the media:

Provide more opportunities for political forces and civil society representatives to present their views on various topics of importance in television news programs and newspapers, without giving advantages to any specific party, group or organization, and do it at the media's initiative, without waiting for proposals from these groups.

Pluralism was not the only criterion used to monitor regional media. Following are the other main monitoring criteria:

- a) **Adequacy of coverage** : did the media outlet reflect in its publications and news reports all the important events that have taken place in the area of its coverage?
- b) **Timeliness** : was the information broadcast on time or was it late?
- c) **Accuracy** : was the information reported in articles or television reports factually true/accurate?
- d) **Objectiveness of Coverage/Impartiality** : when preparing articles or television reports, did they use information from different available and informed sources, and did they separate facts from commentary?
- e) **Quality of Presentation**: attractiveness of materials for the audience, the layout and design of newspaper pages, the style and language of newspaper reports, journalistic work, camera work, director's work in television reports, quality of sound and pictures, length of materials and their sequence.
- f) **Thematic Coverage**: what topics were emphasized in newspaper reports and television news programs?

For the purposes of this monitoring, a **material** (story) is a unit of newspaper text (article, news report, etc.) or broadcast (report, individual report within a news program, etc) that is separate in terms of themes, structure and form.

Emphasizing the Importance or Adequacy of Coverage

The monitoring group, together with local partners, had compiled calendars of the most important events in the area of coverage of each particular media outlet, which were compared to events covered by that particular media on that particular day.

We had noted the following in connection with this issue in our 2007 conclusions: "The majority of inadequate coverage happened during the RA National Assembly elections and the pre-election campaign period, when some media, especially some television stations, refrained

from covering campaign meetings or other events organized by certain political parties or candidates. At the same time, the monitoring group has noted facts of not covering certain important day-to-day events." The situation remained essentially the same in 2008, especially in the period of presidential election.

However, the amount of inadequate coverage tends to decrease over the years. For instance, about 42 percent of television news reports were considered inadequate in 2007, but this number decreased to 33 percent in 2008 and 18 percent in 2009. In other words, local television stations start to emphasize the importance of including all the main events in their news programs. The same cannot be said about print media. Except for a few regularly published local newspapers (*Loru Marz, Sevan, Geghama Ashkharh, Syunyats Yerki*), the criterion of adequacy of coverage was applied only tentatively to other newspapers, because many of them do not cover events at all, but rather devote more space to memoirs, irrelevant interviews or materials that serve their authors' ambitions while giving almost nothing to the audience. (For example, one of the political newspapers had devoted an entire page to an analysis of Yeghishe Charents' *Vision of Death*, while the town is chock-full of problems. There still exist many such facts).

CPFE recommends the following to improve adequacy of coverage:

Cover all the important events and issues that are of interest to the public, affect it directly and take place in the area for which a given media outlet is responsible, is a priority in any regional media's news policy. If any really important event or issue does not get media attention, then it is obvious that this particular media outlet would lose a part of its audience.

Therefore, we think that local media should do the following to ensure adequacy of coverage:

- establish closer cooperation with state and local self-governance bodies, non-governmental organizations, local offices of political parties and other organizations in order to get information on their activities on time. It is necessary to look for other sources of information and stay in touch with them constantly. Moreover, it is desirable to ensure that this cooperation is mutual. Nevertheless, the media should show initiative in this matter and be proactive.

- determine the information needs of its audience and adjust its work to reflect these needs. In this regard, the results of two studies (sociological and expert surveys) conducted by CPFE may be useful. The results of the 2008 study have been distributed to the media, and the 2009 studies are published in this book.

- Some television stations have hotlines or dedicated phone lines that the public can call to report issues of interest. CPFE thinks this is a good way for the local media to stay abreast of the local developments.

How Long is A Day or Timeliness of Coverage

How long is a television day? In other words, how much can be covered in one day? Considering the fact that the number of events taking place in the regions is not very high and

that the majority of television stations have technical capacity, which is mostly in tune with modern requirements, it should be possible for everyone to cover the events of the day on the same day, unless these events take place after the news program is broadcast.

Most of the coverage on television is timely. Studies conducted over the last three years demonstrate that the timeliness of coverage has been improving year after year. In 2007, the number of untimely (late) television materials was 17 percent of the total number of monitored materials, in 2008 – 14 percent, and in 2009 – 12 percent. In some of the leading regional television companies, such as *Tsaig* and *GALA* (Gyumri) and *ALT* (Armavir), there was no late coverage at all in the period of monitoring in 2009.

The situation is slightly different in the case of print media. As noted before, the majority of newspapers are published on a bi-weekly or a monthly basis, and the issue of timeliness is pushed into the background. At the same time, there is a newspaper called *Loru Marz* (Vanadzor), which is published twice a week, and it covers the events in the city and in the marz in a mostly timely fashion.

Nevertheless, it is not only possible but necessary to cover the most important events and significant issues in local newspapers, even if they come out monthly, and such events and issues are numerous in the regions. However, the CPFE monitoring group has noted cases of ignoring such events and issues. In many cases, memoirs and other “harmless” literary materials prevail unjustifiably over the coverage of events. In general, a common trend of avoiding urgent topics can be noticed.

The timeliness of coverage in newspapers is also affected by the fact that the majority of newspapers are published in Yerevan, which means they are brought to the printing house a few days before they are published. Modern printing houses are needed in all the marzes. In this regard, it is surprising that when the *Kumayri* newspaper in Gyumri was evicted from its premises, they also dismantled the printing press.

CPFE invites the attention of all donor organizations to the following: the issue of establishing printing houses in the marzes can be raised and resolved in the same way as was done with the Gind printing house in Yerevan.

We recommend the following to the media to improve timeliness of coverage:

- Establish the principle of “covering the day’s events on the same day” in television companies. In order to do this, television companies should keep a records of day’s events and organize their work accordingly. It is unacceptable to broadcasting materials without mentioning the date of the event or by simply saying that the event had taken place “recently.”

- Print media outlets should do their best to cover the events that had taken place in the period between their most recent and the next issue. It could be done as a series of briefs about such events or in-debt coverage of the most important and urgent ones among them. Print media should also avoid publishing materials with the word “recently.”

- Print media can make up for the lack of event coverage by writing about and persistently covering various issues of great importance to the specific region (agricultural produce sales, day-to-day problems, social issues and others). Unfortunately, this is done very seldom now.

What is “Beijing” or Accuracy of Coverage

When evaluating the media for accuracy of coverage, we not only considered whether materials were factually true, but also looked at the accuracy of names, locations and other factual information. When analyzing the accuracy of local reports, the monitoring group worked together with local partners to verify the truthfulness of every piece of information.

According to interim summaries, problems with accuracy are not significant and are mainly related to pronunciation and transliteration of names of people, locations and organizations in translated materials from foreign media.

For example, one of the television stations kept saying *Beijing* when referring to the Chinese capital in its international news program. Naturally, the majority of its viewers would not know what city they were talking about, because the capital of China is called “Pekin” in the Armenian language. Other mistakes (in various television stations) included the following: the French socialist party was referred to as the *social* party, the tennis player Federer was called *Federner*, and Kakha Kaladze was presented as the *team captain* of the Italian Milano football team.

Two different regional television stations used two different names for the French town of Bussy-Saint-George when reporting on the visit of that town’s delegation to Armenia. One television station referred to it as *Bassi-Saint-George*, while the other called it Bussy-*Saint-Geokh*.

According to a report on a regional television station, “the purpose of Advocacy and Assistance Centers is to fight against *anti-corruption* crimes”. There was another instance when Levon Aronyan was introduced at the *president of the Armenian Chess Federation*.

Here are two of the “noteworthy” mistakes found in newspapers. In one of the articles, Nikol Galanteryan was referred to as *Galan Teryan*, while another article informed its readers that the King of Swaziland, Mswati III was born in 1968 and that he celebrated his 40th anniversary this year (2009). The material was obviously translated from a foreign article published in 2008.

We do not mention the names of these particular media outlets on purpose, because these mistakes are typical and could have appeared easily in any television or newspaper report.

Nevertheless, the results of our monitoring indicate that the monitored media outlets report mainly accurate information. Since interim results have been provided to media managers, we hope that they will pay closer attention to the issue of accuracy.

Considering the fact that most of the problems with accuracy have to do with pronunciation and transliteration of names of people, locations and organizations in materials translated from foreign media, the monitoring group advises media outlets to hire more quality translators that would have a perfect command of the Armenian language, in addition to the knowledge of a foreign language. All translated materials should be edited by professional editors, and this should be a requirement.

Use Different Sources or Objectiveness/Impartiality of Coverage

The criterion of objectiveness or impartiality of coverage was applied to local materials requiring that different opinions and information from different sources be presented. If the material was presented on the basis of information from a single source, or if it contained only one point of view, then the material was deemed "not objective." All the materials constituting commercial or political advertising, or materials containing elements of advertising were also considered as not objective by the monitoring group.

The majority of regional television stations use several sources when preparing materials (news, reports, etc.). Often, when presenting a problem, journalists try to get not only the official position, but also the opinions of local residents or beneficiaries. In this regard, the situation has improved, especially in television news programs, since the presentation of the 2007 and 2008 conclusions. Thus, in 2007, local materials deemed to be not objective by the monitoring group made up about 21 percent of the total monitored materials, in 2008 – 20 percent, and in 2009 – only about 10 percent.

In the case of newspapers, the number of not objective materials is significantly lower. However, this is explained by the fact that most of the regional print media contain mostly memoirs, feature stories or interviews, rather than articles covering urgent issues of public importance that would require that different viewpoints be presented. In other words, the criterion of objectiveness was not applicable to many of the monitored newspaper materials.

Nevertheless, we think it is important to remind that the following is necessary:

- Make it an editorial principle to use several sources and present different opinions when analyzing any issue.

- Refuse the broadcasting of commercial or political advertising or materials containing elements of advertising as part of news programs. The same, i.e. a clear distinction between advertising and other materials, relates to printed media.

"Harmless" Choice or on Themes

The 2008 and 2009 monitoring also analyzed the range of topics covered in television news programs and in newspapers. The monitoring revealed that local television stations pay a lot of attention to international news, followed by local issues in the areas of education and culture (and sports, also) and then by issues related to the activities of local self-governance bodies and community problems. However, not all local media cover international events. This subject is prominent thanks to being covered by several television companies. In particular, international news make up about 37 to 40 percent of news programs on Gyumri's *GALA* and *Tsaig* television stations, while stations like Kapan's *Sosi* or Sevan's *STV1* do not report any international news, but rather focus on the coverage of local issues.

Topics related to culture and education prevail in newspapers. Often, these are articles about school or kindergarten events. On the whole, regional media outlets prefer to cover the so-called "harmless" topics, perhaps in order to avoid conflicts on the local level.

The Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression thinks that local media outlets should focus more on local issues, but they should not be limited to official reports. The results of the 2008 sociological survey of the audience, conducted by CPFE, may be useful for the selection of topics to be addressed in the media. These results have been provided to regional media managers.

"The Collective Bouquet of Expectations Has Blossomed in the Winter's Bosom..." or Quality and Style of Presentation

When judging the quality of presentation of materials and publications, the CPFE monitoring group considered their creative and technical components. In newspapers, the group looked at the language and style of the publications, their general layout and design and the attractiveness of captions, headlines and photos. In the case of television programs, attention was paid to the work of journalists, cameramen and directors, the quality of sound and pictures, length of materials and their sequence.

Thus, the television news programs are still full of unnecessarily long reports, lasting 4 minutes and more. With few exceptions, news reports are not grouped and put in order, no consideration is given to the urgency, relevance and proximity of each report and to other well-known criteria. Sometimes, the anchor's text for a transition from one report to another is very complex and difficult for the audience to understand. One can also notice unnecessarily long leads, where various topics are mixed in, and the viewer cannot see any logical connection between the lead and the actual report.

The monitoring group also found news reports presented by reading the text only, without video materials. However, regional media has made progress in this regard in the three years of monitoring. For example, materials without video made up between 27 to 42 percent of all the monitored materials on different television stations. In 2008, this number decreased to 25 to 30 percent on television stations that had been monitored the year before, whereas on the stations monitored for the first time, this number ranged from 39 to 60 percent. In 2009, this number decreased to 30-40 percent on these stations, and dropped below 20 percent on stations that had been monitored in 2007. The managers of these stations state that they have taken into consideration the recommendations made by CPFE as a result of monitoring during the previous years.

There are cases, when national or international news are presented without citing the source.

Some television reports are full of praises and sometimes even exaggerated epithets when referring to certain individuals or organizations. There are also many lyrical side notes. For instance, one of the television stations called a well-known business a *great businessman* in a report that was praising him. In the same report, the journalist said the following: *"They say that there exist certain phenomena in nature that are best covered with the evaluation of time."* Perhaps only the author really knows that that sentence means.

It is even less understandable when another television stations includes in its news report a material that is supposed to be an interview with the head of the marzpetaran's financial-economic department. In reality, though, the said official is shown sitting in his office and listing some numbers and indicators. This extremely uninteresting and boring flow of numbers is completely incomprehensible for viewers, and the whole thing lasts about 7 minutes.

The shortcomings in the work of journalists (unpolished sentences, use of incomprehensible abbreviations, failure to mention the date of the event or saying that the event had taken place “recently”) and of cameramen (filming at an awkward angle, dark shots, etc.) remain of concern.

The monitoring group has also noted political and commercial advertisements presented as news, which is not only illegal, but is also against basic rules of professionalism.

In the case of **newspapers**, as well as television stations, the monitoring group considered the differences in technical capacity, frequency of publication and volume of various media outlets.

The studies over the last three years have demonstrated an improvement in newspaper layout, and some newspapers have started using more photographs (*Syunyats Yerkir*, *Loru Marz*). However, some other newspapers (*Zangezur*, *Kumayri*) should pay attention to this issue, because they still have pages with no photos sometimes. Bad quality of photos is a common problem. Most of the newspapers should work more to improve their design and layout.

Materials are often presented in flowery language, with lots of superlative adjectives. Here is the first sentence in one of the local newspapers: ***“The Collective Bouquet of Expectations Has Blossomed in the Winter’s Bosom...”*** The same newspaper has inappropriate congratulations or thank you notes to or from the marzpet (governor).

Another newspaper contained a report under the heading of *160 minutes and 60 questions*, about a press conference dedicated to President Serge Sargsyan’s first anniversary in office. The report contains no information at all. The only thing that was mentioned was that S. Sargsyan “gave a detailed and very inspiring answer” to the question asked by the newspaper’s editor-in-chief (the question itself was not specified).

Positive Trends

Having examined the activities of regional media, the monitoring group has also noted a number of positive trends.

Discussions with media managers reveal that they are critical about the conditions in which media outlets operate and are willing to support the journalistic community’s efforts aimed at improving these conditions. Joining the initiative to establish a self-regulation system for the media and participating in this process was one of the manifestations of such willingness. Most of the monitored media outlets have signed the *Common Code of Conduct* for the media who have joined the self-regulation initiative (above 40 of them as of today). There is also a desire to get involved in the processes that are taking place in the capital city, which is important for improving the general situation in the whole country’s information sector.

The monitored media outlets are trying to expand their network of sources of information by establishing ties with Yerevan-based and national media in order to share information with them. As a result, they are able to present materials about important national events to their audiences.

Most of the media outlets actively avail of the opportunities provided by the Internet to cover international developments. They also use information reported by transnational broadcasting companies (*CNN*, *Euronews* and others). This is important in terms of both enriching the amount of available information and using the style of operation of these television companies as an example.

Despite technical, staffing, financial and other problems, media managers are inclined to work towards improving their work, also by giving consideration to expert advice.

Human Resources Are Key or Common Problems

Regional media continues to experience a shortage of professional staff. Some media managers talked about an outflow of staff members. They said that, having reached a certain level, good professionals leave for the capital city to work for the national media, while finding new employees is difficult.

In order to solve this issue, the mass media can use their potential and resources for putting together training courses for journalists (cameramen, directors), so that the best ones are then attracted to work in the media.

Media managers could be advised to establish close contacts with Yerevan-based and local (Gyumri, Vanadzor) higher educational institutions that have journalism departments, offer internship opportunities for their students, select the most gifted ones among them and, if possible, reimburse some or all of their tuition fees, on condition that they will work for that particular media outlet for three years after they graduate.

The monitoring group believes that it is necessary to establish a permanently functioning system of training and improving of qualifications, or to restore the courses that were available in the 90s. The monitoring group would like to invite the attention of donor organizations to this urgent issue.

Broadcasting legislation remains the most pressing issue. It is impossible to expect any significant progress in the area of broadcasting unless the law is amended dramatically and a fair competitive environment is ensured.

The "encroachments" on the media legislation in 2009 are also of concern. In particular, this refers to the regressive initiatives to amend the Law on Mass Media and the RA Civil Code.

The next urgent issue is the transition to digital broadcasting. Even though regional television stations have more or less adequate technical equipment today, their technical capacity does not encourage much hope of going digital in the next few years. Broadcasters themselves have stated this as well. *Internews* media support NGO and the *Information Law and Policy Center* organized a number of meetings and discussions with regional television and radio managers, which resulted in 13 regional television companies sending a letter to the RA Minister of Economy and Chairman of the Inter-Agency Commission on Digital Broadcasting, Nerses Yeritsyan, on September 2, 2009. Copies of the letter were sent to the RA Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan, the RA Human Rights Defender Armen Harutyunyan, and the chairman of the RA National Assembly's standing committee on science, education, culture, youth affairs and sports Artak Davtyan. The letter raised a concern about the ability of "regional television and radio companies, who are weak links and relatively unstable financially, to meet all the requirements for making the transition to digital broadcasting." The authors of the letter found it necessary to note the fact that regional television and radio companies play an extremely important role in community development. "In view of the above, we think it is important to consider the interests of regional television and radio stations when moving to a digital broadcasting system and to ensure that they are in favorable conditions by adopting a milder and more differentiated approach to them, compared to companies operating in the capital city. We also attach great importance to our right to be informed and expect that programs aimed at introducing a digital broadcasting system will be developed in an open fashion in order to prepare for the future transition."

The reply of the Minister of Economy to this letter was more than strange. In his reply dated 17 September, 2009, the minister simply informed that a draft government decision on the subject is already there and they are prepared to cooperate with all the stakeholders.

Finally, the most painful issue is:

Implicit Censorship

It has become a serious threat to both regional and national media.

The 2005 report on the *Growing Threat of "Soft" Censorship* issued by the *Open Society Legal Initiative* presents various forms of covert censorship, which can be divided in four groups:

- a) *Abuse of public funds and monopolies* (i.e. abusive allocation of the financial resources of governmental and public mass media, and TV companies in the first place, for specific political interests, also – the advertising of the companies that have a state ownership or a monopolistic position on the market is placed only in the dependable media);
- b) *Abuse of regulatory and inspection powers* (i.e. broadcast licensing processes are manipulated to benefit political allies or silence independent voices; critical media find themselves subjected to a barrage of selective and draining fiscal, labor or other regulatory inspections so that those are punished who are subjected to political pressure);
- c) *Abuse of legislation on libel and offensive language* (it is not so difficult to obtain court decisions against undesirable journalists under the circumstances of the dependency of the judiciary on the executive authorities and their level of corruption), and
- d) *Extra-legal pressures* (i.e., intervention in the editorial policies or the contents of specific publications/reports through the so-called "telephone censorship", seeking to bribe reporters and editors; applying physical violence or threats towards the media representatives).

Almost all the four forms are used in Armenia. However, the monitoring group found that the abuse of regulatory and supervisory functions and extra-legal pressure are especially prevalent in the monitored regions. For instance, depriving *A1+* television company of its frequency (these companies being undesirable for the authorities) and *A1+* company's subsequent "defeat" in all future competitions for frequencies have created dangerous precedents and served as a warning to all broadcasters. Moreover, by its failure to give a frequency to *A1+* even after the decision of the European Court of Human Rights, the state has sent a message to all other stations that it will not hesitate to use any means to put pressure on any media it finds undesirable.

The same is proven by an unprecedented state campaign against Gyurmi's *GALA* television station that started at the end of 2007 and continued in 2008. The campaign involved the office of the President, the national television and radio commission, the tax service, the courts, the agency for enforcing judicial decisions and the municipality of Gyumri.

Extra-legal pressure is a form of covert censorship that is difficult to prove, except in cases of threatening a media outlet or journalists, terrorizing them, beating them up, withdrawing an entire issue from circulation and other similar circumstances, when there are concrete facts. However, such pressure is manifested immediately in the given media's broadcasts or on its pages (for instance, media boycotts of politicians who are "undesirable" for the authorities).

Experts think that the regional television stations' failure to allocate time for political advertising during the 2007 parliamentary and the 2008 presidential elections is one of the

manifestations of this problem. Another manifestation of the same problem was that the media ignored and did not cover the campaign events organized by certain political parties and candidates, and devoted excessive amounts of time to the ruling and pro-government parties and politicians. Also, there was an almost complete lack of political pluralism in other times, when there were no elections. It should also be noted that local media may be subjected to pressure by both national and local bodies.

Overt censorship was introduced in March 2008, when a state of emergency was declared in Yerevan, and regional media was also affected by this.

For instance, representatives of the authorities had “advised” local media to refrain from reporting political news other than the official reports. As a result, some media outlets simply scrapped their news programs in the period of March 1-20 or preferred to report only non-political news.

Such extra-legal pressure is also a form of censorship, which is a blatant violation of the law.

Annex. Volume of Monitoring

From December 2006 to August 2009, the *Committee to Protect Freedom of Speech* carried out a monitoring of regional media.

In the first phase of the project (from December 2006 to September 2007), the monitoring covered three marzes – Lori, Shirak and Syunik.

In the second phase (from January to September 2008), the marzes of Tavush, Gegharkunik and Armavir were added to the first three.

In the third phase (from January to August 2009), the other four marzes – Ararat, Aragatsotn, Kotayk and Vayots Dzor – also were included; thus the monitoring covered all the 10 marzes.

In the second and third phases, a sociological study and a survey among experts were also conducted to find out the audience’s expectations from the media (2008), the attitude of NGOs and political parties towards the media, and the opinion of media managers about the situation with freedom of expression and information in Armenia, as well as to get their self-assessment of their own media outlet (2009). This second survey also covered the capital city (the results of this study are presented in this book).

FIRST STAGE (December 2006 to September 2007)

The monitoring covered main news programs on *Lori TV* and *Mig* (Vanadzor), *Last* (Goris), *Sosi* (Kapan), *GALA* and *Tsaig* (Gyumri) television stations and publications in the *Lori Marz* (Vanadzor), *Syunyats Yerkir* (Kapan), *Zangezur* (Goris) and *Kumayri* (Gyumri) newspapers, except announcements, ads, TV listings and entertainment materials.

The monitoring was conducted in three different timeframes in each marz:

Lori – December 16-22, 2006; March 10-16 and June 16-22, 2007

Syunik – January 20-26, April 14-20, July 14-20, 2007

Shirak – February 17-23, May 5-11, September 1-7, 2007.

Volume of Monitoring

| Media Outlet | Phases of Monitoring/ Newspaper Issue Dates | Total Duration of Monitored TV Materials | Number of Monitored Materials | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | | Total | Including local |
| Lori TV (Vanadzor) | 16-22.12. 2006 | 118 min | 36 | 34 |
| | 10-16. 03.2007 | 102 min 42 sec. | 58 | 30 |
| | 16-22. 06.2007 | 93 min 12 sec. | 27 | 24 |
| Mig TV (Vanadzor) | 16-22.12. 2006 | 65 min | 24 | 24 |
| | 10-16. 03.2007 | 76 min 40 sec. | 33 | 20 |
| | 16-22. 06.2007 | 45 min 57 sec. | 15 | 15 |
| Last TV (Goris) | 20-26.01. 2007 | 48 min 45 sec | 21 | 12 |
| | 14-20. 04.2007 | 61 min 34 sec | 23 | 18 |
| | 14-20. 07.2007 | 55 min 52 sec | 27 | 19 |
| Sosi TV (Kapan) | 20-26.01. 2007 | 79 min 2 sec | 41 | 31 |
| | 14-20. 04.2007 | 124 min 30 sec | 55 | 42 |
| | 14-20. 07.2007 | 62 min 20 sec | 36 | 21 |
| GALA TV (Gyumri) | 17-23.02. 2007 | 188 min 35 sec | 171 | 31 |
| | 05-11. 05.2007 | 234 min 20 sec | 134 | 40 |
| | 01-07. 09.2007 | 167 min 40 sec | 141 | 27 |
| Tsaig TV (Gyumri) | 17-23.02. 2007 | 105 min 8 sec | 80 | 27 |
| | 05-11. 05.2007 | 132 min 30 sec | 133 | 19 |
| | 01-07. 09.2007 | 179 min 53 sec | 156 | 36 |
| Loru Marz newspaper (Vanadzor) | 16.12. 2006 | | 18 | 18 |
| | 20.12. 2006 | | 19 | 18 |
| | 10. 03. 2007 | | 16 | 15 |
| | 14. 03. 2007 | | 16 | 14 |
| | 16. 06. 2007 | | 10 | 9 |
| | 20. 06. 2007 | | 17 | 17 |
| Zangezur newspaper (Goris) | 22. 01. 2007 | | 11 | 4 |
| Kumayri newspaper (Goris) | 22. 02. 2007 | | 24 | 9 |
| | 10. 05. 2007 | | 23 | 5 |
| | 06. 09. 2007 | | 17 | 5 |
| Syunyats Yerkir newspaper (Kapan) | 14. 07. 2007 | | 15 | 7 |

SECOND STAGE (January to September 2008)

The monitoring covered the main news programs on *Ankyun Plus 3* (Alaverdi), *Lori* (Vanadzor), *ALT* (Armavir), *GALA* and *Tsaig* (Gyumri), *Kyavar* (Gavar), *STV1* (Sevan), *Kamut* (Noyemberian), *Last* (Goris), *Sosi* (Kapan) television stations, as well as *Loru Marz* (Vanadzor), *Kumayri* (Gyumri), *Sevan* (Sevan), *Syunyats Yerkir* (Kapan) and *Zangezur* (Goris) newspaper publications, except announcements, ads, TV listings and entertainment materials.

Armavir, Gegharkunik and Tavush marzes were visited by the monitoring group twice, whereas Lori, Shirak and Syunik - once, since the media from these marzes were included in the study carried out in the first year of the project and here it was only necessary to record the changes in the trends observed in the previous timeframe.

Phases of monitoring by marzes:

Lori – January 6-12, 2008

Armavir – February 14-20 and June 16-22, 2008

Shirak – March 21-27, 2008

Gegharkunik – April 12-18 and August 21-27, 2008

Tavush – May 4-10 and September 6-12, 2008

Syunik – July 19-25, 2008

Volume of Monitoring

| Media Outlet | Phases of Monitoring/ Newspaper Issue Dates | Total Duration of Monitored TV Materials | Number of Monitored Materials | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | | Total | Including local |
| Ankyun Plus 3 TV (Alaverdi) | 06-12. 01. 2008 | 67 min 03 sec | 31 | 21 |
| Lori TV (Vanadzor) | 06-12. 01. 2008 | 76 min 42 sec | 17 | 17 |
| ALT TV (Armavir) | 14-20. 02. 2008 | 97 min 40 sec | 58 | 18 |
| | 16-22. 06. 2008 | 102 min 21 sec | 69 | 16 |
| GALA TV (Gyumri) | 21-27. 03. 2008 | 169 min 37 sec | 93 | 26 |
| Tsaig TV (Gyumri) | 21-27. 03. 2008 | 186 min 40 sec | 141 | 39 |
| Kyavar TV (Gavar) | 12-18. 04. 2008 | 29 min 23 sec | 11 | 11 |
| | 21-27. 08. 2008 | 26 min 47 sec | 12 | 12 |
| STV1 TV (Sevan) | 12-18. 04. 2008 | 34 min 04 sec | 10 | 10 |
| | 21-27. 08. 2008 | 31 min 31 sec | 16 | 16 |
| Kamut TV (Noyemberian) | 04-10. 05. 2008 | 17 min 58 sec | 5 | 5 |
| | 06-12. 09. 2008 | 52 min 30 sec | 6 | 6 |
| Last TV (Goris) | 19-25. 07. 2008 | 17 min 09 sec | 3 | 3 |
| Sosi TV (Kapan) | 19-25. 07. 2008 | 55 min 38 sec | 23 | 23 |
| Loru Marz newspaper (Vanadzor) | 09. 01. 2008 | | 14 | 13 |
| | 12. 01. 2008 | | 9 | 6 |
| Kumayri newspaper (Gyumri) | 27. 03. 2008 | | 18 | 13 |
| Sevan newspaper (Sevan) | 16. 04. 2008 | | 17 | 16 |
| Syunyats Yerkir newspaper (Kapan) | 24. 07. 2008 | | 24 | 19 |
| Zangezur newspaper (Goris) | 25. 07. 2008 | | 8 | 6 |

THIRD STAGE
(January to August 2009)

The monitoring covered the main news programs on *ALT* (Armavir), *Abovyan* (Abovyan), *Hrazdan* (Hrazdan), *Ijevan* (Ijevan), *Kamut* (Noyemberian), *Ankyun Plus 3* (Alaverdi), *Lori* and *Mig* (Vanadzor), *GALA* and *Tsaig* (Gyumri), *Sosi* (Kapan), *Artashat* (Artashat), *Kyavar* (Gavar), *STV1* (Sevan) television stations and publications in *Hayrenakanch* (Armavir), *Tesankyun* (Noyemberian), *Tavush* (Ijevan), *Talin Ashkharh* (Talin), *Dardz* (Ashtarak), *Loru Marz* (Vanadzor), *Zangezur* (Goris), *Geghama Ashkharh* (Gavar), *Sevan* (Sevan) newspapers, except announcements, ads, TV listings and entertainment materials.

There was no media operating in Vayots Dzor.

Phases of monitoring by marzes:

Armavir – January 21-27, 2009
Kotayk – February 16-21, 2009
Tavush – March 5-10, 2009
Aragatsotn – April 24-30, 2009
Lori – May 11-16, 2009
Shirak – June 22-27, 2009
Syunik – July 20-25, 2009
Ararat – August 3-8, 2009
Gegharkunik – August 10-15, 2009.

The monitoring group visited the Vayots Dzor marz on April 20-23, 2009, and implemented other program activities. No media monitoring was carried out because the only television company with a license to broadcast in that marz is not working and there are no regularly published local newspapers.

Volume of Monitoring

| Media Outlet | Phases of Monitoring/ Newspaper Issue Dates | Total Duration of Monitored TV Materials | Number of Monitored Materials | |
|--------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | | Total | Including local |
| ALT TV (Armavir) | 21-27.01. 2009 | 110 min 29 sec | 45 | 17 |
| Abovyan TV (Abovyan) | 16-21. 02. 2009 | 99 min 43 sec | 60 | 17 |
| Hrazdan TV (Hrazdan) | 16-20. 02. 2009 | 67 min 27 sec | 54 | 9 |
| Ijevan TV (Ijevan) | 05-10. 03. 2009 | 33 min 03 sec | 13 | 11 |
| Kamut TV (Noyemberian) | 05 - 09. 03. 2009 | 15 min 39 sec | 5 | 5 |
| Ankyun Plus 3 (Alaverdi) | 11- 15.05. 2009 | 68 min 45 sec | 30 | 20 |
| Lori TV (Vanadzor) | 11-16. 05. 2009 | 140 min 33 sec | 53 | 41 |
| Mig TV (Vanadzor) | 11- 15.05. 2009 | 84 min 27 sec | 29 | 24 |
| GALA TV (Gyumri) | 21-27. 06. 2009 | 175 min 11 sec | 104 | 25 |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Tsaig TV (Gyumri) | 21-27. 06. 2009 | 138 min 17 sec | 93 | 28 |
| Sosi TV (Kapan) | 20 - 24. 07. 2009 | 57 min 04 sec | 23 | 23 |
| Artashat TV (Artashat) | 03 - 08. 08. 2009 | 35 min 08 sec | 13 | 13 |
| Kyavar TV (Gavar) | 15. 08. 2009 | 12 min 38 sec | 5 | 5 |
| STV1 TV (Sevan) | 10-15. 08. 2009 | 90 min 29 sec | 31 | 31 |
| Hayrenakanch newspaper (Armavir) | 22. 01. 009 | | 18 | 15 |
| Tesankyun newspaper (Noyemberian) | 06. 03. 2009 | | 23 | 15 |
| Tavush newspaper (Ijevan) | 08. 03. 2009 | | 21 | 21 |
| Talin Ashkhkharh newspaper (Talin) | 27. 04. 2009 | | 12 | 5 |
| Dardz newspaper (Ashtarak) | 28. 04. 2009 | | 8 | 6 |
| Loru Marz newspaper (Vanadzor) | 13. 08. 2009 16. 08. 2009 | | 9 19 | 8 18 |
| Zangezur newspaper (Goris) | 20. 07. 2009 | | 6 | 4 |
| Geghama Ashkharh newspaper (Gavar) | 12. 08. 2009 | | 19 | 17 |
| Sevan newspaper (Sevan) | 14. 08. 2009 | | 21 | 17 |