

**SAMPLE MEDIA MONITORING REPORT—SLOVAKIA***(Included with permission of MEMO'98.)*

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**REPORT ON MEDIA COVERAGE OF SLOVAK POLITICS****Week Two: July 20, 1998 through July 26, 1998**

Released on July 30, 1998

MEMO'98 is an independent and non-partisan effort -- formed by the Helsinki Citizens Assembly and the Association for Support of Local Democracy -- to systematically monitor the media coverage of the Slovak parliamentary elections scheduled for September 25 and 26, 1998. MEMO'98's findings are offered not to support any one candidate or political party. By following a well-defined and rigorous methodology, MEMO'98 seeks to present information that helps the Slovak public gain information it needs to make the well-informed choices demanded of citizens in a democratic society.

After the second week of monitoring news broadcasts on the two major television stations and the two major radio stations, and after the first week of monitoring five major newspapers, MEMO'98 found a wide difference in the type of news presented by different outlets as well as major differences in the ways that major political entities are portrayed. Following is the second of periodic reports that MEMO'98 will issue through the September elections.

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**HIGHLIGHTS**

**The second week of monitoring television and radio produced data that confirm trends revealed during the first week. If anything, differences in the amount of coverage and the portrayal of relevant political subjects appeared more dramatic in the second week.**

- **48% of the time given to politically significant stories on STV news last week was devoted to the incumbent government with another 28.6% devoted to HzDS. Coverage of political parties not part of the ruling coalition totaled 13.3% of the relevant news coverage.**

- **STV continued to portray the incumbent government and ruling coalition in a positive light and opposition parties mostly in a negative light. STV also frequently neglected to air contrary views.**
- **TV Markiza offered 26.4% of their relevant news coverage to government activities and an additional 8.5% to HzDS. Parties outside the ruling coalition received a total of 37.6% of total significant news coverage.**
- **TV Markiza offered generally negative portrayals of HzDS and more negative than positive coverage of the government. They aired consistently positive or neutral views of opposition parties, and of SNS.**
- **Of the five newspapers monitored, Slovenska Republika stood alone in devoting the majority of its space to HzDS and the government while consistently portraying both subjects in a positive light.**

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## TELEVISION

Slovaks who watch Television Markiza news receive a dramatically different view of politically significant events than do viewers of STV. During the week ending July 26, 1998, STV offered significantly more coverage of the government and ruling coalition parties than Markiza. This difference was even more dramatic than in the first week of monitoring. Markiza, in turn, reported much more on the SDK, SDL and SOP than did STV. More important than the amount of coverage, however, was the ways significant political parties and government activities were portrayed.

- STV consistently portrayed the Government and HZDS in a positive light while usually portraying SDK, SOP and SDL in a negative or neutral light. Markiza offered both positive, negative and neutral coverage of the government. Their portrayal of HzDS is more often negative than positive. Positive views of SDK, SDL, SMK and SOP were the norm on Markiza. They also presented SNS in either a positive or neutral manner.

There continued to be differences in the balance within each story on these television stations. Markiza, on at least one occasion, presented a story in a way favorable to itself without giving the complete story.

- 23.7. 1998 19:00 - During a presentation of the MEMO'98 results for the week ending July the 19<sup>th</sup> 1998, Markiza presented the data as showing that its news cast was the most objective. This was not an accurate portrayal of our conclusions. We suggested only that preliminary data revealed a possible trend that merits additional examination.

STV seems to present stories in a one-sided or unfair manner even more frequently. Following are examples from last week:

- 22.7., 24.7., 26.7. 1998 19:30 - In a series of stories concerning the successes of various Slovak governments in the area of paid debts for privatized companies, for two weeks STV has presented statistical data without citing other economic factors or opposition opinions.
- 23.7. 1998 19:30 - STV dedicated extensive coverage to the presentation of a petition concerning non-privatization of selected companies. The stories appeared to be promoting HzDS. STV returned to the story of this petition on July the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.
- 24.7. 1998 19:30 - In a story on the floods in Eastern Slovakia, STV cited opinions of the government and its expert as “correct”. They then aired file footage and editorial commentaries that made other parties’ opinions sound false.
- 26.7.1998 19:30 - In a story analyzing the involvement of SDK Vice-chairman Volf in a motoring accident, Mr. Volf was presented in an extremely negative light and the story was accompanied by file footage of a wrecked car. Mr. Volf was not given an opportunity to comment on the event.
- 20.7, 25.7.1998 - “Nazory” (Opinions), “Poznamka” (Comment) - In a series of stories, the opposition was presented in a negative light. To support this view, STV used materials gathered from other media outlets, and only negative portrayals were chosen.

## RADIO

In the week ending July 26, 1998 Slovak Radio offered slightly more coverage of the government and the ruling coalition than did Radio Twist. Radio Twist offered much more coverage of SDK and SDL. Slovak Radio’s portrayal of the government and HzDS was much more often positive than negative. Radio Twist offered both positive and negative portrayals of the government and HzDS. Both stations aired numerous stories considered by our monitors to be neutral. SDK was often portrayed positively by Radio Twist and both positively and negatively by Slovak Radio.

Our monitors also noticed particular instances when Slovak Radio appeared to seek opportunities to give the government additional favorable news coverage or failed to offer opportunities to opposing views.

- 20.7. 1998 12:00 – Radiozurnal aired a story concerning the visit of a representative of the Croatian Parliament to Slovakia. He was met by members of the Slovak government and HzDS deputies to Parliament. This information was repeated 4 times in the same

program, providing much more coverage to the government than was offered to others in equally important news stories.

- 22.7. 1998 18:00 - Vice-Prime Minister Kalman spoke about the fact that the social situation in Slovakia is peaceful, our nation has better than average minority policies and that the integration of Slovakia into NATO is a success. No space was given to opposing opinions.
- 23.7. 1998 18:00 - Vice-Prime Minister, Sergej Kozlik blamed the privatization of Nafta Gbely on the Voucher privatization launched by Mr. Carnogursky's government. The information was unbalanced because other parties were not given an opportunity to express their opinions.

#### NEWSPAPERS

MEMO'98 expanded our media monitoring project in the week beginning on July 20, 1998 to include five major newspapers: Novy Cas, Sme, Pravda, Praca and Slovenska Republika.. Our data reveal that four of the newspapers monitored tend to portray the government and HzDS in a negative light. Slovenska Republika stands out as strongly pro-government and consistently favorable to HzDS.

- Pravda dedicated 13% of their relevant news space to the government, which was portrayed most often in a negative light. 29.5% of politically important news was devoted to HzDS with much more negative news than positive. SDK was granted 12.7% of the coverage and was most often portrayed positively. ZRS received 20.7% of coverage, most of it negative. Other parties received less coverage.
- Sme offered much more coverage to HzDS last week (46.4%), but most of it was negative. News about the government took up 20% of relevant space, and the news was also more often negative. 12.6% of relevant space was devoted to SDK with consistently positive or neutral portrayals.
- Novy Cas also portrayed the government and HzDS in a negative light much more often than positively. The government received 7.3% of relevant coverage and HzDS 48.2%. SDK and SDL were consistently portrayed positively or neutrally. SDK was granted 13% of relevant space and SDL 3.6%. Novy Cas offered SMK 16.4% of their pertinent space, all in a two-page interview rated as neutral by our monitors.
- Praca gave 30.1% of their coverage to the government, with most stories rated as negative. 29% of relevant space was devoted to HzDS. The great majority of these were also negative portrayals of HzDS. Stories about SDK took up 11.2% of the relevant space in Praca last week. Most of these stories were rated positive or neutral. SDL and SOP were given much less coverage, but they were portrayed in a consistently positive

light.

- Slovenska Republika offered far more coverage to HzDS than any other news source. Fully 57.8 percent of relevant coverage was devoted to HzDS, and all stories were ranked either positive or neutral. Another 14.7% of space was devoted to the government, and all of these stories were also either positive or neutral. All opposition parties combined received 21.7% of relevant space and all but one of these stories were negative (one neutral rating was attributed to a reference to SMK). Included in one issue during the week was an 8 page insert of the HzDS weekly newspaper.

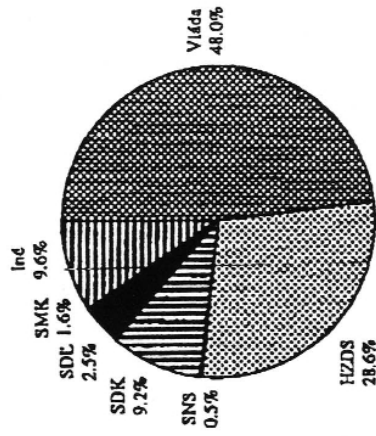
### CONCLUSION

Data from the second week of media monitoring by MEMO'98 reveals wide differences in the way political subjects are portrayed and in the amount of coverage provided to different political subjects. Two weeks of monitoring indicate that not all media outlets follow the same standards of balance and fairness. Our data continue to show that STV frequently neglects to offer Slovaks opposing views on particular stories. MEMO'98 will gather data throughout the pre-election period to determine if this is a consistent trend. Our next report will be issued two weeks from today and will contain cumulative data for a full four weeks of monitoring.

Attached are graphic presentations of the amount of coverage offered to significant political entities by each of the outlets monitored. Also attached are charts illustrating the tendencies of these media outlets to portray these entities in either a positive or negative light.

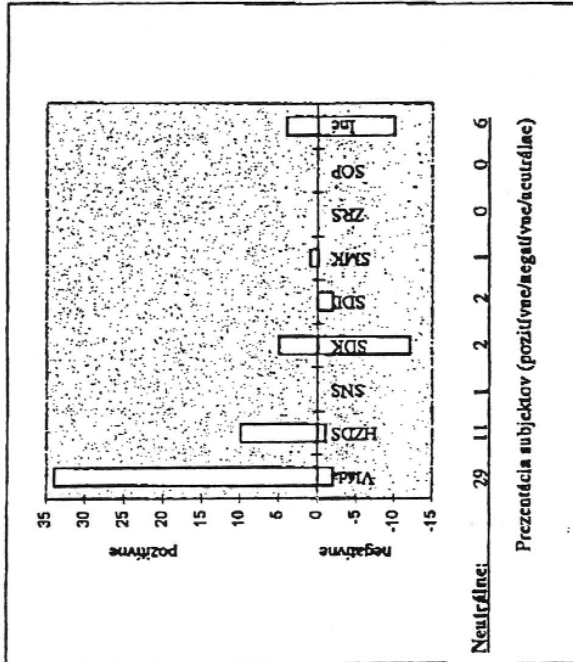


Vysielanie Novín STV  
od 20. 7. do 26. 7. 1998



Príbor venovaný jednotlivým politickým subjektom  
(v percentách z celkového času poskytnutému jednotlivým subjektom)  
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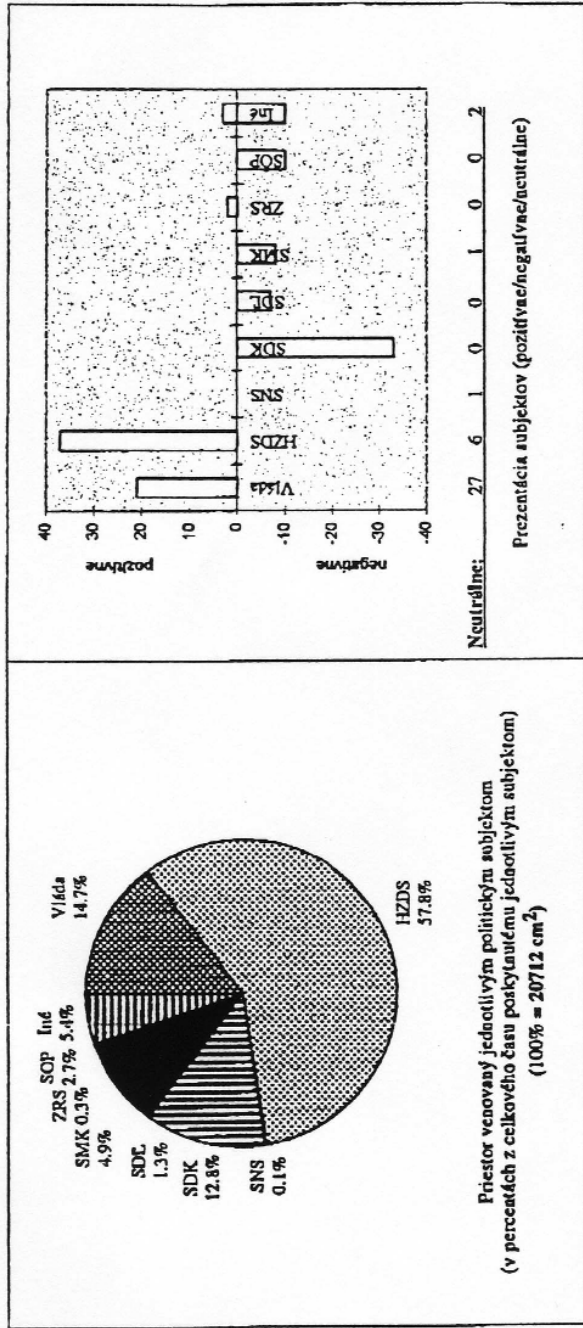
05/08/1998



Neutrálne: 29 11 1 2 2 1 0 0 6  
Prerátacia subjektov (pozitívne/negatívne/neutrálne)



Denník Slovenská republika  
od 20. 7. do 25. 7. 1998



05/08/1998