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Election Monitoring Newsletter №11, 28 January 2005

This newsletter highlights some of the trends in the Ukrainian presidential candidates' access to the central and regional media, as well as media coverage of their activity during the campaign for presidential elections. The data covers the media coverage of the campaign for the period of August to November, as well as two weeks of additional campaigning prior to the repeat second round of voting, held on 26 December. The latter period was monitored to identify changes that occurred as a result of the 'Orange Revolution', during which many Ukrainians protested against widespread irregularities in voting processes and the initial proclamation of former Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich as president of Ukraine on 22 November.

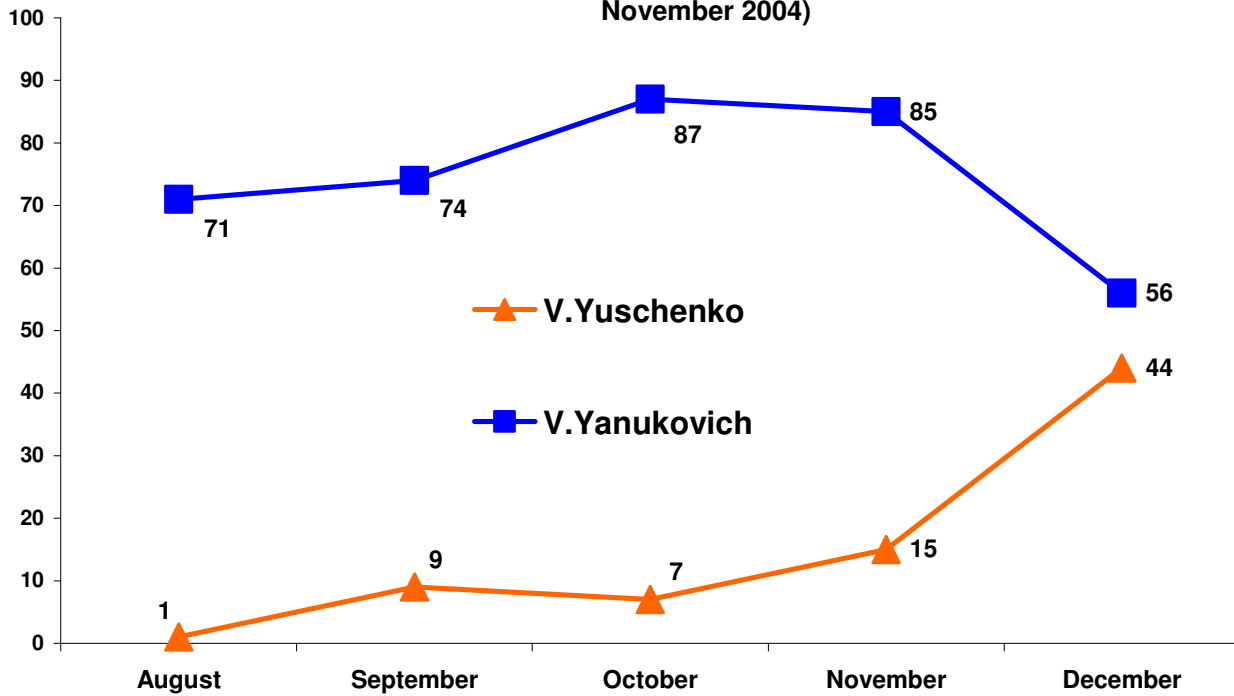
The re-run of the second round was held on 26 December. A preliminary statement by the International Election Observation Mission, issued the following day, assessed the re-run as a significant improvement from the first and second rounds of voting. On 28 December, the Central Election Commission, with 100 percent of votes counted, announced that Yuschenko had gained 51.99 percent and Yanukovich 44.19 percent of votes. On 31 December, Yanukovich officially resigned as Prime Minister.

ACCESS TO MEDIA: NATION-WIDE TV CHANNELS

Throughout the electoral campaign, opposition leader Viktor Yuschenko had considerably less access to nation-wide television stations than his main competitor, Viktor Yanukovich. A relative increase in access was observed in November, yet this is likely to be explained by the fact that the number of participants in the presidential race was reduced to two, freeing up time for Yuschenko.

The political events surrounding the 'Orange Revolution' had a significant impact on the access of the main presidential candidates to leading television channels such as private Inter and 1+1, and State-funded UT-1. Between 10 and 25 December, the average amount of direct time (using the candidates' voice) in the news of these television channels became nearly identical for both candidates, while in the past there had been a sharp discrepancy. Yanukovich was allocated 56 percent and Yuschenko 44 percent of the overall direct time given to the presidential candidates.

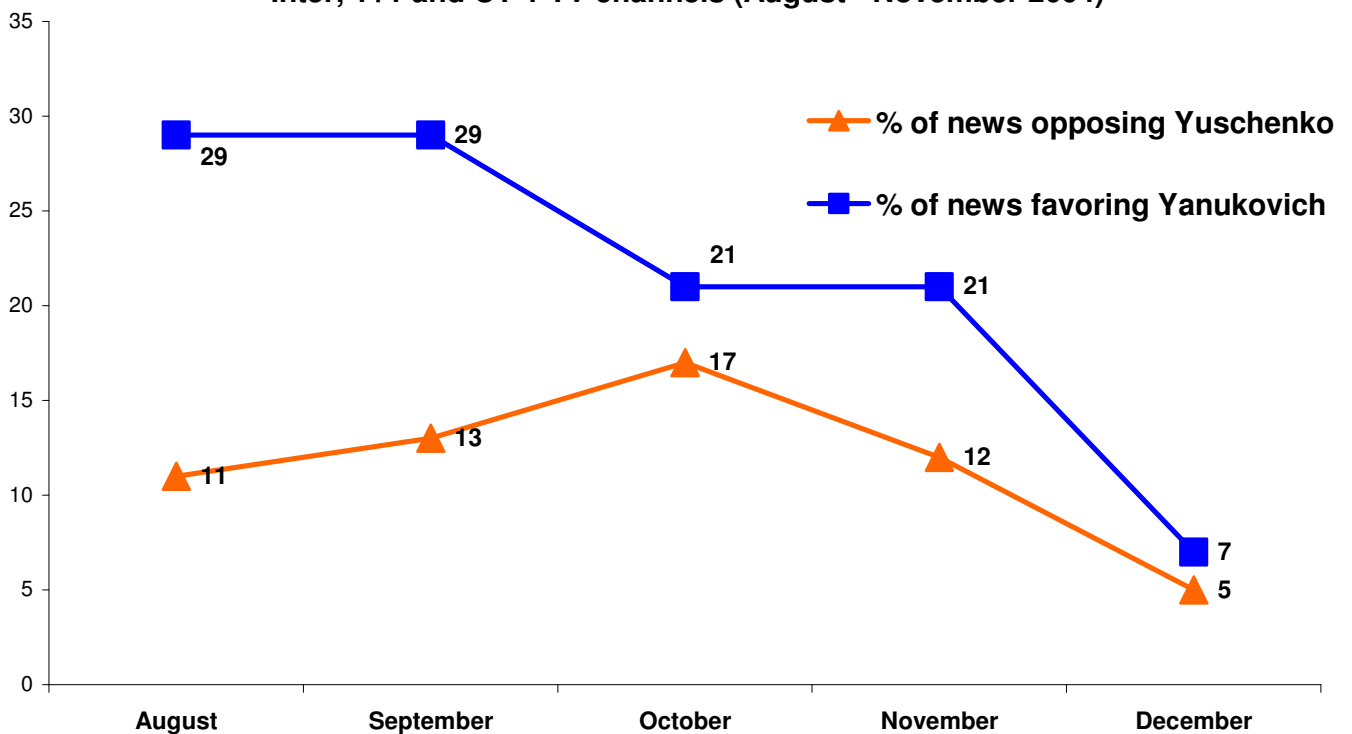
Average shares of V.Yuschenko and V.Yanukovich's direct time in the news, out of the total time for both presidential candidates, on Inter, 1+1 and UT-1 TV channels (August - November 2004)



Though the State-funded nation-wide Radio 1 provided far less direct time to candidates than television channels and the print media, the impact of the 'Orange Revolution' was still observed. Whereas Yuschenko had no direct time at all in Radio 1's news between August and November 2004, in the last two weeks before the re-run of the second round his share of direct time in the news amounted to 37%.

The bias in the media coverage of the main presidential candidates also decreased in the campaign period for the repeat second round. While the average share of news opposing Viktor Yuschenko on the three main country-wide channels (1+1, Inter and UT-1) amounted to 29 percent in August, this indicator had plummeted to 7 percent by the re-run of the second round. The average share of news favouring Yanukovich amounted to 5 percent in the two weeks before the re-run, while figures for August and October were, respectively, 11 percent and 17 percent).

Average shares of news opposing Yushchenko and favoring Yanukovich on Inter, 1+1 and UT-1 TV channels (August - November 2004)

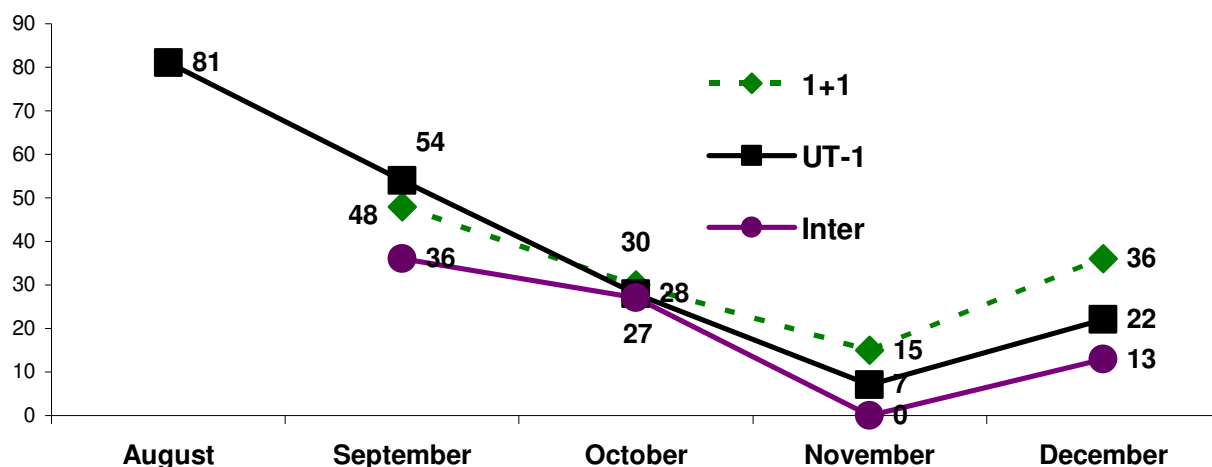


Marking a significant departure from earlier periods, the negative messages about Yushchenko and positive ones about Yanukovich were also reduced. For example, between 10 and 25 December, on Radio 1 no news 'opposed' Yushchenko and only 4 percent of news 'favoured' Yanukovich (in November there had been 6 percent of news 'opposing' Yushchenko and the same amount 'favouring' Yanukovich).

Over the electoral campaign, political advertising was used by the Yanukovich camp to discredit Yushchenko. Yushchenko was portrayed by his opponents as a person who supported extreme nationalist ideology and forces, who opposed integration with the Russian Federation, who was manipulated by NATO, US or other Western countries, and who might be leading the country to civil war. The use of political advertisement by the Yanukovich camp reinforced the negative coverage of Yushchenko's views which permeated all central television channels. Of the total number of political ads for all candidates (including those ads providing voter education), around one third was recorded as discrediting Yushchenko. These tendencies became less visible only before the re-run of the second round.

In particular, presidential candidates such as Korchinski, Baziluk, Yakovenko and Kozak, labeled as 'technical' candidates of the Yanukovich camp, seemed to have as their main objective that of discrediting Yushchenko and consequently strengthening for Yanukovich through political advertising and other means. It is remarkable that, for example, in September there were 148 political ads by Kozak, Baziluk and Yakovenko on State-funded UT-1 and only 9 by Yanukovich (Yushchenko broadcast 99 political ads). The overwhelming majority of political ads of these three 'technical' candidates were overtly directed against Yushchenko.

Share of political ads discrediting Viktor Yuschenko, from all political ads on TV channels 1+1, Inter, UT-1



During the campaign for the second round, when the ‘technical candidates’ were no longer running, the Yanukovich camp employed two kinds of political ads which portrayed Yuschenko in a negative light. The first type of ads were not associated in any way with Yanukovich (or other former candidates / existing political forces) but delivered messages that effectively discredited Yuschenko, with the same technique that had been employed by the ‘technical candidates’. The most infamous among these associated Yuschenko with civil war. The ad featured former Soviet singer Iosif Kobzon, still much admired by many older people in Ukraine and Russia, now a successful businessman and MP in the Russian Duma. The advertisement showed peaceful pictures of Ukraine and its people suddenly interrupted by scenes of violence involving Yuschenko and key supporters. ‘Peaceful’ scenes were coupled with Kobzon singing “This beauty will become true...” and violent scenes – with “... if there will be no civil war”. Even some supporters of Yanukovich later admitted that this overstepped the boundaries of legitimate campaigning.

The political ads of the second type were milder and mostly showed common people who indirectly criticized Yuschenko’s political platform, although they made no direct reference to Yuschenko. For example, while Yuschenko had been campaigning for integration with Europe, a person in an ad stated “I don’t want to be a second hand European”, and, to further the portrayal of Yuschenko as Ukrainian ‘extremist’ and enemy of the Russian language, another person was shown in an ad stating “I am proud I am citizen of Ukraine though I speak Russian”. Those featured in the ads frequently wore the colours of Yanukovich’s campaign - white and blue - .

The Yanukovich’s counter-ads for the period before the second round’s re-run were much less blunt and aggressive than those used in previous periods, and carried slogans such as “there are more colours than orange”.

CENTRAL PRINTED MEDIA

The following nation-wide print media were monitored: ‘Golos Ukrainy’ (the Voice of Ukraine), an official edition of the Verkhovna Rada; ‘Fakty i Kommentarii’ (Facts and Comments), a private daily with a clear pro-Kuchma orientation and large circulation; ‘Ukraina Moloda’ (The Young Ukraine), an opposition newspaper with a national-democratic political orientation, ‘Silski Visti’ (Rural News), an opposition newspaper openly supporting Olexander Moroz and his Socialist Party of Ukraine, and with a large audience in rural Ukraine; and ‘Zerkalo Nedeli’ (Weekly Mirror), a weekly analytical newspaper, with a highly acclaimed reputation for high-quality independent analysis.

As reported in previous newsletters, *Golos Ukrainy* on the whole did not display biases and usually had a clear policy of neutrality in relation to unfolding political events. Throughout the electoral campaign *Fakty i Kommentarii* provided extensive and overwhelmingly favorable coverage of (then) President Leonid Kuchma. It echoed his largely negative attitude towards the opposition, its leaders and their activity. Before the re-run of the second round, the newspaper started providing more space to other political figures (for example, Volodymyr Lytvyn, the speaker of the Verkhovna Rada - the Ukrainian Parliament -) and slightly softened its negative stand towards opposition.

Throughout the electoral campaign *Ukraina Moloda*, *Silski Visti* and *Zerkalo Nedeli* did not change significantly the way they covered the elections and provided access to presidential candidates. Albeit with some variations, these newspapers’ overall position was favorable towards the opposition, its objectives and its leaders (with *Ukraina Moloda* clearly supporting Yuschenko, and *Silski Visti* supporting Olexander Moroz).

REGIONAL MEDIA

The regional media monitored displayed different attitudes in their coverage of the main candidates during the last part of the presidential race. In Crimea, nearly all media monitored provided far more access to Yanukovich than to Yushchenko. The way their activities were covered greatly varied. 'GTRK Krym' and State-funded newspaper *Krymskie Izvestia* produced hardly any news negatively portraying the opposition leader. The opposite is true for *Krymskaja Pravda*: almost two thirds of its news had a negative stand vis-à-vis Yushchenko.

The Kharkiv media continued to display the tendencies observed in previous months. The popular '7th Channel' television station demonstrated clear support for Yushchenko, and even re-broadcast some of the materials of the nation-wide opposition television channel 'Channel 5'. The other television channel monitored, 'Simon', alternated between its older policy of neutrality and an attitude slightly favoring Yanukovich or his local allies.

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