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Monitoring the media coverage of the
1995 Russian parliamentary election
Final Report
15 February 1996

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The European Institute for the Media

Kaistrasse 13, 40221, Düsseldorf, Germany

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The Phare and Tacis Democracy Programme

The Phare and Tacis Democracy Programme was launched by the European Commission in 1992 to help promote democratic societies in the countries of central and eastern Europe, and the New Independent States and Mongolia.

It covers the following countries: Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia (countries eligible for Phare) and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan (countries eligible for Tacis).

Phare and Tacis are the names of the European Union's initiatives which support the development of harmonious and the prosperous economic and political links between the European Union and the above partner countries through the provision of grant finance to support the process of transformation to market economies and democratic societies.

The Democracy Programme forms part of the European Democracy Initiative of the European Parliament. Its general objective is to promote the concept of democratic society governed by the rule of law in central and eastern European countries and New Independent States and Mongolia. In particular, it aims to support

- increased knowledge of democratic practices at local and national level
- the work of non-governmental organisations which promote pluralist democratic societies
- the transfer of specific expertise and technical skills concerning democracy and the rule of law to professional groups and associations in these countries.

Some specific initiatives are taken by the Commission to meet these objectives: support for the monitoring of the Russian Duma elections, including media monitoring, was one such initiative.

This objective is also supported by providing grants to non-state, non-profit making bodies for projects in areas related to the Programme

1 Introduction

On 17 December 1995, the Russian electorate voted in their country's second parliamentary elections, to elect majority district candidates and members of party lists to sit in the State Duma (Lower House). Additionally, in some areas, there were regional and gubernatorial elections. These elections were the first to take place in political normalcy; scheduled in accordance with the Constitution rather than prompted by the dissolution of parliament.

Continuing its practice in several previous election campaigns in central and eastern European countries, the European Union agreed to fund monitoring of the media coverage of the campaign in Russia, and asked the European Institute for the Media in Düsseldorf to undertake this task.

The Institute monitored the media coverage of the December 1993 parliamentary elections in Russia. The 1995 parliamentary elections therefore represented an excellent opportunity to measure the possible progress towards democratic media structures which had been made in the intervening period. Comparisons with the findings in the previous report are therefore frequently drawn.

This is the final report of the Institute's Russian media-monitoring mission. It contains information on the past and present structure of the media and on the background to the elections. It presents the findings and impressions of the monitoring team on the election coverage, and on the broader situation of the Russian media. Finally, it seeks to make some recommendations which may stimulate discussion within Russia and which will be used by the Institute to determine future activities. The report will be translated into Russian.

1.1 Staffing

Professor Bernd-Peter Lange (Germany), Director-General of the European Institute for the Media, was the project director and monitor in Moscow.

Ms Benedicte Berner (Sweden), expert on central and eastern European media, was the monitor for the broadcast media in Moscow.

Mr Stephen Dalziel (United Kingdom), senior Russian affairs analyst of the BBC, was the monitor for the print media in Moscow.

Mr Richard Schoonhoven (Netherlands), former Director, Catholic Broadcasting Organisation (KRO), was the monitor in St. Petersburg.

Dr. Alexei Pankin (Russia), Director of the East-West Cooperation Programme of the European Institute for the Media, organised the coordination of the mission.

Mr. Yasha Lange (Netherlands), Projects manager of the East-West Cooperation Programme, was the assistant project coordinator with the team in Moscow, monitored in Khabarovsk and Irkutsk and was the editor of this report.

The infrastructure for the monitoring in Moscow was provided by the Mass Media Research Centre.

Additionally, the monitoring team received regular reports from correspondents in ten regions. These local observers added substantial background information on the situation in the country. The accounts were verified by visits to the regions and reports from other sources, which indicated their reliability. Consequently, the sections on the different regions are largely based on the reports from the correspondents.

The infrastructure in the regions was set up in collaboration with the Russian-American Press and Information Centre (RAPIC) and Postfactum Newsagency.

The contributors were: Svetlana Sheychutdinova, lecturer, Journalism department Kazanski University, Kazan; Dmitri Pablinsk, freelance researcher, Irkutsk; Piotr Mazur, chief of Regional Journalists Association, Khabarovsk; Igor Zaitsev, correspondent Postfactum Newsagency, Nizhnii Novgorod; Larissa Benevalenskaya, assistant coordinator RAPIC, Novosibirsk; Vasili Moseyev, director of Journalist Association, Perm; Anna Sharorgadskaya, coordinator RAPIC, St. Petersburg; Michael Matkin, correspondent Postfactum Newsagency, Tula; Rafael Goldberg, editor-in-chief *Tumenski Courier*, Tyumen; Sergei Kudreyashov, correspondent Postfactum Newsagency, Ufa; Rafael Iskhakov Lutfullovitch, Professor of Journalism Department, Yekaterinburg; Vladimir Spiridonov, regional coordinator RAPIC, Vladivostok.

1.2 Methodology

The mission commenced on 19 November 1995 and concluded on the day of the elections - Sunday 17 December 1995. The monitoring team was based in Moscow, and assessed whether there was free and fair coverage of the parliamentary elections in the press, radio and television. The analysis included a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the media coverage of the elections, as well as an assessment of the legal framework for the broadcast and print media in the electoral campaign.

Additionally, the monitoring team acted more pro-actively and visibly compared to previous missions. It briefed various domestic and international organisations, co-produced two independent publications (*Control over Elections; Choice of the Regions*) with information for these organisations and the general public, and cooperated closely with like-minded organisations.

The monitoring team analysed daily all election related material in eleven daily and weekly Moscow-based newspapers, four federal and two Moscow-based television channels and five radio stations. The local assistants from the Mass Media Research Centre in Moscow followed a methodology developed by the Institute by putting the details of each programme and article into tabular form. The material analysed included both editorial matter - i.e. that material which appeared as a result of the editor's decision - and the promotional material of candidates.

The monitors conducted interviews with relevant personalities from the media, political and regulatory fields. They devoted particular attention to areas of concern such as the impartiality of the coverage, the ease of access to the media for all political parties, balance in the presentation of various political perspectives, and the ability of the media themselves to report freely and fairly.

1.3 Background of the mission

The European Institute for the Media is a non-governmental policy-orientated independent research body operating in the field of European media development. It has significant previous experience in the field of media monitoring, and since 1992 has monitored elections in Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Moldova, Ukraine (both parliamentary and presidential elections), Belarus (*idem*), Hungary, Macedonia, Estonia, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

The findings in this report are those of the Western monitors alone. The report contains only a part of the material and information gathered by the monitoring team in the process of arranging and completing the mission. Anyone who wishes to have further information or to examine the original materials in greater detail is invited to contact the Institute in Düsseldorf.

1.4 Acknowledgements

Thanks for the successful accomplishment of the mission must go to the following: the staff of the Mass Media Research Centre in Moscow; the correspondents from the regions; the staff of RAPIC; the staff of the Tacis Democracy Programme in Brussels; and the members of the EIM staff who were involved in the project. The monitoring team would also like to thank all those interviewed during the course of the mission for their cooperation.

Bernd-Peter Lange

Düsseldorf, February 1996

2 The 1995 parliamentary elections

On 17 December 1995, over one hundred million Russian voters were entitled to elect 450 members to the State Duma (Lower House) of the Federal Assembly.

Half of the deputies were elected by majority votes in single mandate constituencies. The remaining 225 seats were divided proportionally on the basis of nation-wide lists of candidates proposed by electoral associations (parties/blocs). Only parties which received at least five per cent of the votes in the proportional system were to be allocated seats in the Duma.

To be included on the ballot sheets in the constituencies, candidates had to gather signatures from one per cent of the voters in his or her district- To participate in the proportional system, a party had to submit 200,000 signatures, no more than seven per cent of which could be from any one of the 89 constituencies of the Russian Federation.

In the end, 43 political parties were allowed to compete, in some cases only after recourse to the Supreme Court. Additionally, about 2,700 individuals, including over 1,000 independent, registered as candidates for the single-mandate districts; an average of 12 per constituency. Seven political parties together put forward over 700 candidates. The LDPR (Zhirinovskiy) had 187 single-mandate candidates; the CPRF 131; Our Home is Russia 108; the Congress of Russian Communities 90; the Agrarian Party 90; Democratic Choice of Russia 75; and Yabloko 71.

Consequently, each voter had two votes: one for a candidate in his or her local district, and one for a party on the national party-list ballot. For the elections to be valid, at least 25 per cent of the population had to participate.

2.1 The political parties/blocs

A record 43 political parties, movements and associations participated in the parliamentary elections. The Russian voter was thus forced to choose from a large and fragmented ballot paper. Each of the seven or eight major parties was surrounded by a cluster of smaller groups, targeting more or less the same part of the electorate. The tables below show the list of parties which participated in the elections and a list with election results for ten political groups which received significant support.

2.1.1 Central Election Commission Order of Parties on the ballot paper

1. Women of Russia
2. Derzhava
3. Duma- 96
4. Transformation of the Fatherland
5. Bloc Tikhonov-Tupolev-Tikhonov
6. Russian All-National Movement
7. Muslim Movement NUR (Light)
8. Federal Democratic Movement
9. Electoral bloc comprised of the party for the defence of children (Peace, Good and Happiness); "Russian Women" for orthodoxy (Faith, Hope and Love); the Popular Christian-monarchist party; for the unity of Slavic people, for agricultural workers "motherland"; for the defence of the invalids; "for those who have suffered from the authorities and who have been cheated".
10. Inter-ethnic Union
11. Stable Russia
12. Generation of the Frontier
13. My Fatherland

14. For the Motherland
15. Common Cause
16. Bloc of Independents
17. Our Home is Russia
18. Bloc "Pamfilova-Gurov-Vladimir Lysenko"
19. Yabloko
20. Forward, Russia!
21. Bloc "89"
22. Ecological Party "Cedar"
23. Russia's Democratic Choice- United Democrats
24. Party of Russian Unity and Concord
25. Communist Party of the Russian Federation
26. Bloc of Stanislav Govorukhin
27. Association of Lawyers of Russia
28. National Republican Party of Russia
29. Bloc of Social Democrats
30. Power to the People
31. Congress of Russian Communities
32. Trade Unions and Industrialists-Union of Labour
33. Liberal Democratic Party of Russia
34. Electoral bloc comprised of the parties for the defence of pensioners and veterans; for the eradication of crime; for the defence of health, education, science, and culture; for the defence of youth; for free trade unions; for justice; for the protection for nature.
35. Party of Workers Self Government
36. Communists-Workers Russia for the Soviet Union
37. Beer Lovers Party
38. Bloc of Ivan Rybkin
39. Party of Economic Freedom
40. People's Union
41. Agrarian Party of Russia
42. Christian Democratic Union- Christians of Russia
43. Union of the workers of housing and communal services

2.2 The political landscape

The peculiarities of Russian politics require a cautious approach. Firstly, the usual western political concepts, such as liberal, conservative, left- or right-wing, can be misleading when applied to the Russian political scene. Secondly, with the exception of the CPRF and maybe the Agrarian Party, Russian political parties lack solid structures, particularly in the regions. Thirdly, strong lobbies (oil and gas industries, defence-, agricultural- and finance-sector), rather than political parties, play a leading role. Fourthly, many parties are centred around one or two prominent politicians and only serve as political platforms for the promotion of these leaders. Consequently, chieftains can be more important than programmes. These factors explain the constant and quick changing landscape of Russian politics. Moreover, they illustrate why "labels" should be used very cautiously. The heading "nationalists" for instance applied to virtually all parties participating in the elections. Sergei Glasiev and Boris Fedorov were both part of the team of reformers connected to Gaidar. Glasiev joined the Congress of Russian Communities, which is commonly referred to as "nationalist", whereas Fedorov, with Forward Russia, is currently considered "reformist". Nevertheless, the political pronouncements of Fedorov sound at times by far more nationalistic and populist than those of the leaders of CRC. Despite this observation, the labels are familiar and are used below for matters of convenience.

2.2.1 Nationalists

The political organisations under this heading base their political ideology on nationalism and populism. They envisage a large and powerful Russian state, which should encompass or at least dominate most of the former Soviet Union.

Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR)

Liberalno-demokraticheskaya partiya Rossii

Leader: Vladimir Zhirinovsky

The LDPR is the most extreme and most well-known nationalistic movement. The main tenets of its ideology seem to be that Russia should turn back to its Eurasian roots and liberate itself from negative western ideas such as capitalism, individualism and democracy. Anti-semitism and animosity towards non-Russian ethnic groups belong to the party propaganda. The popularity of the LDPR is based almost entirely on the personality of its leader, Vladimir Zhirinovsky. Other Duma representatives for the LDPR are rather unknown, which explains the discrepancy between the election results for the party list and the single mandate districts. The LDPR appears to be well-financed.

The Congress of Russian Communities (CRC)

Kongress russkikh obshchin (KRO)

Leaders: Yurii Skokov, Alexandr Lebed and Sergie Glasiev

Until recently this was a low-profile movement committed to the defence of the rights of the ethnically Russian population living in the former Soviet republics. An influx of well-known politicians, e.g. general Lebed, former commander of the 14th army deployed in Transdniestria, boosted the profile and turned the CRC into a stronger political force. The party strives for a strong state which will protect the interests of Russians at home and in the former Soviet republics. During the campaign, the CRC promised a war on crime and corruption, and the restoration of law and order.

Derzhava

Leader: Alexandr Rutskoi

At its founding congress in April 1995, Derzhava nominated former vice-president Alexandr Rutskoi as president and announced plans to campaign for representation in the Duma. It seeks support among anti-communist and patriotic voters, who feel that Zyuganov's CPRF is too orthodox and Zhirinovsky is too extreme.

Also under the header of national-patriotic parties are the Democratic Party of Russia; the party of the People's Power, led by former Soviet Prime Minister Ryzhkov; and the Union of Patriots, comprised of some of the instigators of the August 1991 coup. Finally, a few other parties with revealing names like My Fatherland, National Republican Party of Russia, Union of Patriots and For the Motherland (which includes a sizeable number of former high soviet military officers) also fall in this category.

2.2.2 Communists and Agrarians

Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF)

Kommunisticheskaya partiya Rossiiskoi Federatsii

Leader: Gennadii Zyuganov

Taking into account its large membership and its solid and well-spread organisation, the CPRF was one of the strongest contenders in the elections. Its political platform includes the voluntary restoration of the USSR and establishing a mixed economy with a strong and dominating state sector. Moreover, the CPRF pleaded for constitutional reform aimed at reducing the power of the president, and at a crackdown on crime. The communists have also strongly opposed the Chechen war. In its latest version of the party programme, Zyuganov was careful to distance himself from the rhetoric of extreme Russian patriotism advocated by the more radical

communists, which formed a separate electoral bloc. The CPRF sometimes tried to portray itself as a social-democratic party.

Zyuganov's supporters are to be found mainly in declining industrial areas, among pensioners and low salary workers. In an attempt to enlarge its social base and attract more intellectuals, the party has added the symbol of a book to its traditional hammer and sickle.

Communists - Working Russia - For the Soviet Union

Kommunisty - Trudovaya Rossiya za Sovetskii Soyuz

Viktor Tulkin, Anatolii Kruchkov and Victor Anpilov

Communist sympathisers also had recourse to the more radical and bellicose bloc Communist - Working Russia - for the Soviet Union. The programme called for the restoration of every aspect of the Soviet Union - including the reintegration of all former Soviet republics, the restoration of the Soviet political system and the recreation of the command economy. The programme called for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the formation of a classless society. The bloc openly espouse violent, confrontational methods, including strikes, demonstrations and eventually the armed seizure of the state.¹

Agrarian Party of Russia (APR)

Agrarnyaya partiya Rossii

Leader: Mikhael Lapshin

Ideologically close to the CPRF and supported by a similarly solid organisation, the APR has operated mainly as a lobby for the state and collective farm sector. The APR voted against the sale of land, voucher privatisation of agricultural enterprises and private ownership of land. The party has a specific and fairly stable electorate in the collective and state farms and in small villages where the chairmen of the *kolkhoz* wields large power.

2.2.3 Centrists

Our Home is Russia (OHR)

Nash Dom - Rossiya

Leader : Victor Chernomyrdin

Our Home is Russia was created in May 1995, together with the bloc headed by Duma speaker Ivan Rybkin. President Yeltsin initiated the founding of both parties, to create a parliamentary majority and fill the void in the political centre. The idea was probably to move to a two-party system in Russia, where Rybkin's role was the "loyal and constructive opposition". However, Rybkin was able to establish only a rudimentary left-centre alliance, and could not secure the participation of the Agrarian Party of Russia, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions, or the Russian United Industrial Party, which were planned to form the basis of his bloc.

Our Home is Russia forms the centre. Its slogan is a stable economic policy. It proposes to carry on with reforms, but avoid radicalism. The strength of Chernomyrdin's party stems mainly from its interweaving with financial and state structures. The Union of Oil Producers, the Association of Russian Banks, and the gas monopoly Gazprom (which Chernomyrdin led from 1989 to 1992) are all connected to OHR. Moreover, Boris Berezovskii, Chernomyrdin's unofficial chief financial executive, heads the All-Russian Automobile Alliance, and is also co-chairman of the board of Russian Public Television, ORT.

Many supporters from the regions deserted Chernomyrdin. "The party of power", as the OHR was often described, faced a strong anti-government and anti-bureaucratic sentiment in society. Chernomyrdin, however, retained the support of a significant part of the regional leaders.

¹ Michael McFaul and Nikolai Petrov. *Previewing Russia's 1995 elections*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1995.

Women of Russia

Zhenshchiny Rossii

Leaders: Yekaterina Lakhova and Alevtina Fedulova

Following its founding in 1993, Women of Russia won an unexpected 8 percent of the vote in the parliamentary elections of that year. The movement advocates, like the Communists and the Agrarians, slower economic reforms and improved social-welfare, but represents particular women's interests such as improving the social status of women or promoting anti-discriminatory employment measures. Finally, Women of Russia strongly criticised the military campaign in Chechnya.

Other centrist blocs include the Party of Russian Unity and Concord (PRUC, led by acting deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai), the Trade Union and Industrialists of Russia-Union of Labour and Stanislav Govorukhin's bloc. These three parties all won one seat in the constituency vote.

2.2.4 Reformist

Yabloko

Leader: Grigori Yavlinsky

Yabloko was founded in 1993 by economist Grigori Yavlinsky, former Chief State Inspector Yuri Boldyrev and former Ambassador to the United States and Chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs Vladimir Lukin. Yabloko is the principal reform-oriented alternative to the present authorities and has, with Yavlinsky, a prominent and gifted leader. Yabloko nevertheless lacks a solid structure in the provinces.

The party advocates democracy, market economy and strong economic ties with the former Soviet republics. The party rejects the policy of voucher privatisation, criticising monopolies and corruption in particular. Yabloko thereby dissociates itself from important parts of the economic policy pursued by the government. Consequently, Yavlinsky refused to cooperate with Russia's Democratic Choice (Gaidar) or with Our Home is Russia. In fact, a strong rivalry has long existed between Gaidar and Yavlinsky for leadership of the democratic camp.

Russia's Democratic Choice (RDC)

Demokraticeskii vybor Rossii (DVR)

Leader: Yegor Gaidar

Russia's Democratic Choice was founded in June 1994 as the successor of Russia's Choice. The party advocates a reduced role for the state in the economy, cuts in military spending, lower taxes, and further market reforms in the agricultural sector. Unlike Yabloko, which opposes the president's policy on most issues, RDC regularly supports the government. However, RDC strongly rejected Yeltsin's Chechen policy and consequently relinquished its status as a party of power. Moreover, it lost the support of state and some financial structures which were decisive factors in its 1993 electoral performance. The creation of Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin's Our Home is Russia, further decreased the status of Gaidar's party.

Since an alliance with Yabloko proved impossible and forming one with Our Home is Russia was regarded undesirable, Gaidar formed a united democratic electoral bloc in June 1995. The bloc was comprised of RDC and five small parties: Yuri Chernichenko's Peasant Party, Alexandr Yakovlev's Russian Party of Social Democracy, the Congress of National Organisations, Women for Solidarity and Soldiers for Democracy.

Forward, Russia!
Vpered, Rossiya!
Leader: Boris Fedorov

Forward, Russia! was founded in 1995 by the former Finance Minister Boris Fedorov. The party programme combines a liberal and monetarist economic policy (including rapid economic reform) with elements of nationalism and populism. Fedorov calls for "law and order" and "strengthening an indivisible Russia". Unlike other leading democratic politicians, Fedorov backed the use of force to stop the secession of Chechnya, although he criticised the way the military campaign was conducted.

Fedorov expressed interest in cooperating with other democratic parties, particularly with Yabloko. However, Yavlinsky showed no willingness to coordinate campaign plans. Relations with Gaidar, Fedorov's former cabinet colleague, have seriously deteriorated.

Party of Workers' Self-Government (PWSG)
Svyatitslav Fyodorov

The Party of Workers' Self-Government is centred around the famous eye-surgeon Svyatitslav Fyodorov. He has been an advocate of market reform, and the party's programme called for a new tax system, investment in high technology and the participation of employees in management decision making.

Additionally, there are a number of smaller reform-oriented parties, some of which managed to obtain a seat in the Duma via the majority system. Among those participating in the elections were the Common Cause, Party of Economic Freedom and Pamfilova/Gurov/Lysenko bloc.

2.3 The results of the elections

Of the 106 million eligible voters, 69,1 million (65 per cent, considered a high turnout) took part in the elections. Nevertheless, a high percentage of votes (49,5 per cent) was "lost", due to the five per cent threshold. Several parties were close, but failed to pass it: Women of Russia (4,61 per cent), Communists - Working Russia - For the Soviet Union (4,53 per cent), Congress of Russia Communities (4,31 per cent), Party of Workers self government (4,01 per cent), Russia's Democratic Choice (3,90 per cent) and the Agrarian Party (3,78 per cent). Hence, 24,36 per cent of the votes went to other parties. The four parties that did clear the hurdle therefore doubled in size.

Party	Percentage	Proportional representation	Single mandate	Total
Communist PRF	22,30%	99	58	157
Our Home Russia	10,13%	45	10	55
LDPR	11,18%	50	1	51
Yabloko	6,89%	31	14	45
Independent candidates			77	77
Agrarian Party of Russia			20	20
Russia's Democratic Choice			9	9
Power to the People			9	9
CRC			5	5
Forward, Russia!			3	3
Women of Russia			3	3
Ivan Rybkin's bloc			3	3
Pamfilova/Gurov/ Lysenko			2	2
PSWG			1	1
My Fatherland			1	1
PRES (Shakhrai)			1	1
Stanislav Govorukhin's bloc			1	1
Transf. of the Fatherland			1	1
Common Cause			1	1
Bloc '89			1	1
Bloc of Independents			1	1
Party of Economic Freedom			1	1
Communist Workers			1	1
Union of Labour			1	1
Total	50,5%	225	225	450

Source: Rossiiskaya Gazeta 6 January 1996

The five per cent threshold had its consequences. Considering the turnout (65 per cent) the 225 proportionally divided seats in the new Duma were actually allocated according 32,8 per cent of those eligible to vote.

The table also shows that the Communist Party of the Russian Federation tops the list of aligned deputies from the constituencies. However, the diversity of individual candidates is high, and in fact 77 are independent. The rightmost column shows the division of seats in the new Duma, combining both the party list and single mandate deputies.

3 The regulatory framework for media coverage

Compared to 1993, when the regulatory framework suffered from the brevity of the preparatory period, the rules governing the Russian media and the coverage of the elections in 1995 were more elaborate and in greater detail.

Three hierarchically structured levels of regulation and control oversaw the conduct of the media. Firstly, the constitution. Article 29 of the constitution adopted on 12 December 1993 guarantees the right to seek, receive, transmit, produce and distribute information and prohibits censorship. The constitution is enforced by the highest judicial authority, the constitutional court, yet no matters regarding the media or the media coverage were considered by this body.²

Secondly, the media law of the Russian Federation (currently under review) guides the general framework within which the Russian media operate. It lays down precise rules regarding the overall functioning of the media in the federation, yet does not specifically deal with elections. Some of the articles can, of course, gain relevance in the course of an election campaign; such as the inadmissibility of censorship, the right to obtain official information, the right of reply, etc. The Supreme Court of the Russian Federation is the apt judicial authority responsible for decisions concerning matters related to the general law on the mass media.

Thirdly, on 20 September 1995 the Central Election Commission (CEC) approved a document entitled *On the Procedure for granting airtime on channels of State TV and Radio companies to electoral associations, electoral blocs, candidates for deputy of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and publication of election campaign materials in periodicals with government participation*. Hereafter, the document will be referred to as CEC guidelines for the media.

On 17 October 1995 the Union of Student's Councils of Russia filed a complaint in the Supreme Court challenging the guidelines. It claimed that 75 per cent of the 54 articles of the guidelines contradicted the Civic Code of the Russian Federation and the Law on Mass Media, and demanded that the document be repealed. In its decision of 25 October 1995 the Supreme Court found the complaint unjustified and left the guidelines in force. The team noted an active involvement of the judicial branch in the resolution of disputes arising in relation to the election.

In the course of the campaign, the CEC was responsible for the adherence to these regulations and also the fitting body for all disputes concerned. Additionally, the CEC and the Regional Election Commissions were partially responsible for the implementation of the regulations (e.g. the free time/space). An advisory function concerning the role and conduct of the media during the campaign was fulfilled by the *All Russian Judicial Chamber on Information Disputes under the President of the Russian Federation*.

To illustrate the detailed nature and to enable a discussion of the implementation of the election guidelines for the media, several relevant sections/topics are referred to below.

Article 1.4 stipulated the media outlets which fell under the instructions:

- national and regional TV and radio companies (co)founded by the state.
- publications (co)founded by the state which are fully or partially (minimum 25 per cent) financed from the state or local budget.

It was explicitly mentioned that non-governmental media outlets were not subject to any obligations or expectations. Although seemingly clear, several newspapers in the region and one TV channel in Moscow were unsure whether the guidelines applied to them, and consequently did not (intend to) place the free advertising required.

² The court did deal with the question concerning the 5% threshold, yet did not reach a decision before the election day.

The outlets to which the regulations did apply were to **abstain from any form of bias** in their news coverage, as mentioned in article 1.3 and 2.30 (...shall not give preference to a particular electoral association, electoral bloc or candidate for deputy). Additionally, rules for the organisation of debates and round tables were well-defined.

The eligible outlets also had to grant equal **free airtime/space** to all registered political parties and candidates. Between 15 November and 15 December, the national TV and radio channels (e.g. ORT, RTR and St. Petersburg Channel 5) had to provide one hour free time daily to the 43 electoral association participating in the proportional elections. The schedules for the allocation of airtime to individual candidates were made separately by the Regional Election Commissions concerned. In general, the candidates were granted about 10 to 20 minutes free airtime in the whole campaign. In both cases, lots had to be drawn to determine the schedules.

Parties and candidates were also eligible for free space in newspapers, in much the same manner: electoral associations received equal free space with a similar degree of prominence in the federal press, constituency candidates were allocated space in the regional papers. The amount of space (or words) was not stipulated.

On top of the free time/space, parties and candidates were allowed to **purchase additional media exposure**, both in the (partially) state-owned and in the independent outlets. Without pretending to observe a causal relation, the monitoring team was pleased to note that some of its 1993 recommendations for the regulations governing paid advertising were included in the current law.

Quite importantly, the CEC limited the allowed campaign expenditure. The Central Election Commission instructed that all funds were to flow through special temporary accounts in Russia's Sberbank. Political associations could spend 10,9 billion rubbles (\$2,4 million) on their campaign, candidates for deputy were confined to 437 million rubbles (\$95,000). Also, donations from the candidate's and parties' to their own electoral funds, as well as contributions from individuals and legal entities were restricted by the election law to certain limits³. Furthermore, the Central Election Commission gave each party 80 million rubbles (\$18,000) for its campaign. Regional Election Commissions contributed to the campaigns of individual candidates. The law prohibited contributions from foreigners, local governments, state enterprises, military units, institutions, or charity and religious organisations.

Besides the maximum expenditure, parties and candidates could not buy more airtime on state-owned TV and radio channels than was provided free of charge. These two stipulations - general spending limit and maximum paid time equals free time on state-owned channel - were to set the boundaries for purchasing advertising in the media.

To monitor the expenditure, the CEC announced in article 55 of the election law that an "auditing service" would be established. The service would "exercise control over (...) sources, correctness of accounting of the election funds and spending thereof"⁴ by candidates to deputy, electoral associations and electoral blocs". To facilitate the work of the auditing service, article 2.22, 3.10 and 4.3 of the election regulations for media coverage mentioned that TV and radio companies, as well as newspapers, were obliged to keep track of the provided airtime/space, and submit this to the commission concerned within three days upon request.

The CEC added two more commendable stipulations regarding paid advertising. Firstly, the TV and radio companies had to give out - prior to the start of the campaign - their rates for airtime. The rates were to be universal; ergo, they applied equally to all parties and candidates. Moreover, the conditions (e.g. time, degree of prominence) were to be uniform as well. This

³ A candidate could contribute 43,7 million rubbles (\$9,500) to his own campaign; a party could donate 66 million rubbles (14,300 dollars) to one of its candidates and 4,3 billion rubbles (\$950,000) to its own campaign fund; a person was allowed to donate 864,000 rubbles (\$188) to an individual candidate and 1,3 million rubbles (\$282) to a party; a legal entity (organisations, corporations, etc.) could grant 8,64 million rubbles (\$1,880) to a candidate and 86,4 million (\$18,800) to a party.

⁴ Originally not in italics (ed.)

regulation intended to prevent discriminatory treatment of parties and candidates by media outlets.

Secondly, paid advertising had to be easily identified and distinguished from editorial time/space, and clearly identify the party or candidate in who's interested it was disseminated. The monitoring team considered this a laudable effort at curtailing hidden advertising.

Though seemingly extensive, the regulations did contain one minor flaw. Parties and candidates were obliged to apply for free airtime/space within three days following their registration. This frequently appeared insufficient, especially in the regions. Several Regional Election Commissions decided to extend the period, yet others were less considerate and flexible. Consequently, some candidates were deprived of the free advertising due.

It would, however, be rather trivial to overvalue this one minor deficiency, considering the laws governing the media coverage of the elections were well thought out, well-formulated and detailed, and attempted to prevent bias, provide access and promote voters-enlightenment. This, of course, does not say anything about the implementation and adherence to the regulations.

3.1 Implementation and adherence

The regulatory framework for the media touched upon three types of coverage which will be regarded below: free access, paid advertising and editorial reporting.

During previous monitoring missions - also the 1993 Russian elections - it was regularly concluded that the number of parties participating, combined with the laudable decision to grant equal time to all parties, resulted in an overload of free advertising time on television. The acceptable one hour airtime daily per channel can therefore be considered an improvement compared to two years ago. However, two years ago it was also noted that St. Petersburg Channel 5 was obliged to provide free time both for the federal list and for the constituency candidates (being a federal and a regional channel at the same time). Unfortunately, this situation had not altered, and again Channel 5 was overburdened with free airtime (over 2,5 hours daily).

Nevertheless, the free time was, according to the best of our assessment, allocated fairly and in accordance to the regulations, both in the federal media and in the regions. There were a few minor complaints from the regions (for example a candidate not granted airtime, a paper not allowed to allot free space), yet these cannot trivialise the overall conclusion.

As regards paid advertising, it appears that, in contrast to 1993, the rates charged by the federal broadcasting media were, according to the regulations, uniform indeed. Whether most outlets in the regions also levied equal rates is difficult to tell, although a number of our correspondents reported the stated costs for advertising. This may lead to the assumption that the obligation to publish costs and use them in a non-discriminatory manner was well observed.

In the report on the 1993 elections, the EIM recommended a law to ensure that paid material be identified. As stated above, the CEC did indeed govern this. Nevertheless, the question whether the political advertisements were always distinguishable from editorial time/space cannot be answered unequivocally. As for the federal broadcast media, the answer is a clear "yes". However, the monitored print media, the monitored regions and the reports from the correspondents indicate that hidden advertising in the print media and on some regional channels was unfortunately commonplace. The possibility that the audience confused paid presentations of parties and candidates with editorial opinions remains a concern.

Although the media cannot be held accountable for it, the issue of campaign expenditure needs to be addressed. The monitoring team conducted quantitative analysis of the paid time on the federal broadcast channels. Combined with the stated costs for advertisements per minute on these channels, *it may be concluded that some parties exceeded the spending limit for election*

*campaigning set by the Central Election Commission.*⁵ This observation is made against the legal framework adopted by the Russian institutions concerned. It should be noted that similarly strict rules are not always applied in Western countries.

The auditing service of the CEC was supposed to monitor the expenditure. It could use two sources: the reports from the media outlets and the electoral funds in the dedicated Sberbank accounts. There are three possibilities why the formal regulations concerning campaign expenditure described above may have had limited practical relevance.

Firstly, the laxity of the financing rules. Many private Russian companies are conglomerates or groups which sometimes consist of dozens of juridical entities, and rules for individual donations could be circumvented by using proxies.

Secondly, some donations may not have been accounted for. Considering some parties did overspend, and presuming this did not show on their Sberbank account, it appears likely that some campaigning was financed directly.

Thirdly, the auditing service, if it existed, kept a remarkably low profile. It could have involved itself in demanding reports from all media outlets, checking and calculating. It appears, however, that the CEC lacked (human and financial) resources to do so.

Bias in editorial coverage on state-owned broadcasting channels was more difficult to oversee or enforce for the CEC. Both our monitoring team's quantitative and qualitative analysis of editorial time on ORT indicate a slant towards Our Home is Russia and (to a lesser extent) Russia's Democratic Choice. It appeared to the team that some of the covered events did not merit the attention they received. Moreover, editorial bias against some opposition parties was observed.

As for the regional, state-owned, broadcasting channels, the reports from the correspondents indicate that the coverage was particularly biased in those regions where gubernatorial elections were held.

It is regrettable that the recommendation from the CEC to organise round table discussions and election debates was not implemented. This was, however, due to the reluctance to participate on the part of politicians, rather than lack of effort or unwillingness from journalists / media executives.

Finally, the functioning of the *Judicial Chamber on Information Disputes* deserves to be assessed. In the course of the campaign, the Chamber dealt with several cases of different nature, which were outlined by Anatoly Vengerov, president of the Chamber, during an interview with the monitoring team.

Firstly, a dispute arose involving Moscow TV station MTK. The channel was included in the list of companies with state-participation, and therefore obliged by law to provide free airtime to candidates. MTK disagreed, and a hearing followed. The Chamber validated the decision of the relevant Regional Election Commission and MTK consequently provided the free access due.

Secondly, the Chamber attempted to prevent the usage of free access for broadcasts which had no relation to the election campaign. The Beer Lovers Party, for instance, used their time to promote beer drinking.

Thirdly, the Chamber tried to counteract politically and ethnically defamatory spots. This was, however, initiated by the broadcasting channels, who refused advertising which breached ethical or legal norms and referred those cases to the Chamber. The Party of Economic Freedom, for instance, used degrading and vulgar lyrics in a popular rhyme. After a hearing in the Chamber, the song was altered somewhat. The second case considered by the Chamber was the misuse of images of Peter the Great, Kutuzov and Andrei Sacharov in some LDPR spots.

⁵ See section 6.1.2 on quantitative analysis of paid time in the chapter on broadcasting.

Finally, the option to bomb some regions in the Caucasus with napalm, an idea put forward for consideration by Vladimir Zhirinovski, was not regarded particularly appropriate by the Chamber. The leader of the LDPR was warned that inciting hatred could lead to a proposal to the CEC to revoke the LDPR registration.

The question which of course pertains concerns the ability of the Chamber to enforce its recommendations. In the EIM report on the 1993 elections, it was concluded that:

"Yet although its existence must be regarded as a good thing, its ability and its desire to act decisively are questionable. The powers they had were shadowy, their capacity to enforce the recommendations they issued undefined, and the practical consequences of their decisions (beyond their publication) difficult to confirm or substantiate".

If anything, the situation in 1995 had not improved. Although given the obligation to ensure political plurality, equal access and monitor defamatory statements, the Chamber could merely "propose to the CEC [disputes over information] for consideration". Equal to 1993, it can therefore be concluded that the Chamber undoubtedly showed an awareness of the problems that existed and a determination to bring violations to light, yet their authority was limited to highlighting transgressions.

3.2 Conclusions

The legal and regulatory framework of the election campaign was thorough, well-formulated and detailed, and attempted to prevent bias, provide access and promote voters-enlightenment. The allocation of free time, the limitations on campaign expenditure, the obligation to distinguish between paid and editorial material, the non-discriminatory application of costs for advertisements and the attempt at ensuring fairness on state-owned channels were all laudable stipulations issued by the CEC.

The monitoring team nevertheless concluded that the adherence to these regulations left much to be desired. The rather clear transgression of allowed expenditure by several parties was not effectively controlled by the CEC. Moreover, ORT and various local channels did not show a particularly great interest in the obligation to provide balanced reporting, neither did many printed outlets refrain from hidden advertising. Finally, the Judicial Chamber on Information Disputes did not have the ability to effectuate its own recommendations.

Having said this, two final remarks should put these conclusions into perspective. Firstly, the rules, as stipulated by the CEC, are difficult to control. The autonomy of (independent) media outlets is large, agreements between outlets and parties/candidates can easily circumvent the Election Commission, and genuinely overseeing all the regulations requires significant time and resources. Secondly, the incapacity to enforce the regulations should not prevent their inclusion in the election law.

4 The broadcast media in Moscow

On the eve of the elections Russia had no law on broadcasting. In spring 1994, the Duma adopted a bill concerning electronic media, but it was not yet endorsed by the Upper House nor signed by the president. A number of presidential decrees have, however, introduced radical changes in the state-owned electronic media.

The most important structural development in 1995, as regards the electronic media, was the reorganisation of Ostankino and the creation of ORT, which is described in length below.

Another consequential development was the profound financial problems for the state-owned media. This ran parallel to the increased commercial interest of various financial groups in the media and the political weight attached to the control over the media. The high stakes, the structurally weak position of media outlets and the money involved caused the monitoring team to make the following observation in its preliminary report: *An interrelation between new financial powers, political powers and the media emerged both in Moscow, St Petersburg and in Russia's regions. This development, which has not yet stabilised, ranges from the involvement of the Most bank Group in several major independent media outlets or the links between ORT, OHR and Gazprom, to the stakes of local business people and politicians in the regional media.*

The current situation illuminated another specific feature of the Russian media landscape. The principal material basis for the electronic media (studio, transmitters, printing facilities) are often owned or commanded by the federal or local authorities, yet the intellectual assets have to a large extent been privatised and disengaged from government control. This provided for a fair administrative, organisational and creative independence (in particular for private media outlets), whilst retaining some structural and economic reliance on the authorities. Media outlets which refrained from or were deprived of state resources, required support from private sources, since few outlets can survive without sponsors. These conditions, and the necessity to attract advertisers prompted the Director-General of RTR to say: "Television networks no longer have new ideas or new programmes, only new sponsors".

Russia has five major television networks. Three are state-controlled: ORT, which broadcasts on Channel 1; Russian Television Channel 2 (RTR); and St Petersburg Channel Five. The two others, NTV and TV-6, are private. The team also monitored the Moscow Channel MTK.

4.1 State-owned channels

The transformation from the old Ostankino to **ORT** is a fairly long and complicated story, with many political and financial strings attached to it.

Ostankino TV, the successor to the official central Soviet television, traditionally enjoyed the highest ratings in the country. The channel reached approximately 200 million people in Russia and most former Soviet republics. Nevertheless, Ostankino faced problems, largely due to unprofessional management and inadequate use of commercial possibilities. In November 1994, a controversial presidential decree transferred the assets of Ostankino TV to the new 51 percent state-owned company ORT. The stated goal was to create an efficiently managed channel, still controlled by the authorities.

On December 5 1994, a council of the new joint-stock company ORT was installed. It included, among others, president Yeltsin (chairmen), Ivan Rybkin (deputy chairmen), Victor Shumeiko, Anatoli Chubais, V. Ignatenko (director Itar-Tass) and K Ignatiev (chairmen State Duma subcommittee radio and TV). The shares were distributed as follows:

State owned/controlled	Per cent	Private	Per cent
State information Committee	36	National Kredit joint stock bank	5%
Ostankino	9	LogoVAZ - joint stock company	8%
Television technical centre	3	United bank	8%
Itar-Tass news agency	3	Menatep bank	5%
		Association of Independent TV and radio companies	3%
		Stolichny joint stock bank	5%
		Gazprom joint stock company	3%
		Alfa bank commercial investment	5%
		Russian National Foundation for Development of Sports	2%
		Microdin Trading Company	5%
Total	51	Total	49%

In early January, Vladislav Listyev was appointed Director-General of ORT. At the end of February, Listyev decided to temporarily banish advertising from ORT. The decision followed problems with advertising income and was an attempt to cut out middle-men related to organised crime. The advertising companies, which skim off approximately 50 per cent of the revenue, were to lose millions of dollars. Listyev was murdered on 1 March 1995.

What followed is a complex and hectic period of resignations, appointments, criticism and allegations, which illustrates the financial and political significance connected to ORT. The then chairman of Ostankino's board, Alexander Yakovlev, submitted his resignation and complained that the network was crippled by greedy incompetents engrossed in political fighting. "These people do not want fair competition. All they want is to divide up state funds and make fortunes on commercials".

Sergei Blagovolin was eventually appointed Chairmen of ORT. He is connected to OHR, Russia's Democratic Choice, Yakovlev and the then Chief of Information Service Yevgenii Primakov. The shift in the composition of the board linked ORT primarily to Our Home is Russia. More specifically, ORT became connected to the axis Chernomyrdin-Chubais, the oil and gas business and the Moscow entrepreneurial elite. This was quite strongly criticised by opposition parties such as the CPRF and the LDPR, which feared that a most powerful weapon would fall into the hands of opponents.

Russian Television Channel 2 (RTR), created in 1990, is fully state-owned and reaches about 140 million viewers throughout Russia. RTR operates two TV channels - the national TV channel "Rossiya" and the educational TV channel "Russian Universities". It is financed principally by advertising and sponsoring as the state subsidies only cover around 30 per cent of the costs.

In October 1995 president Yeltsin issued a decree enabling St Petersburg's main station, **Channel Five**, to broadcast to 70 million viewers from Northwest Russia to the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk. The decree forbade local authorities from blocking Channel Five in favour of regional broadcasters. The channel was subsequently turned into a joint stock company with 51 per cent of the shares held by the federal government and the remaining shares held by private investors (similar to ORT).

The Moscow Channel **MTK** is partially state-owned and operates on the same frequency as channel 2x2. It reaches some 30 million people in the Moscow region.

In addition to these six networks, Russia has state-run TV and radio companies in every region. They broadcast for several hours a day, and are in most cases financed by local commercial groups, the regional authorities and advertising.

4.2 Private channels

NTV began broadcasting in January 1994 and currently is Russia's largest private network. It claims to reach approximately 100 million viewers, but broadcasts only six hours per day in the evening. It is financed by the Most bank group, various other share-holders and advertising revenue.

The commercial network TV-6 was founded by journalist Eduard Sagalaev in 1993 as a Moscow city channel and now reaches some 70 million viewers in European Russia. TV-6 had a two-year (1992-94) partnership with Ted Turner's TBS. Its funding comes from sponsors and advertising and the current financial situation is fairly sound.

Private regional broadcasting is also growing. Russia has at least 400 privately owned city or regional television stations. Most cities with a population over 50,000 have one independent television company. Nearly every city with more than one million inhabitants has two or more private stations. A majority of these stations now produce their own news broadcasts with local events dominating the coverage. The most advanced independent regional stations, like in Yekaterinburg, Novosibirsk, and Nizhnii Novgorod, raise a large part of their revenue by advertising.⁶

In general, a clear trend towards better organised private broadcasting companies can be observed. The American funded non-profit organisation Internews contributed to the cooperation between independent regional broadcasters by creating the Independent Broadcasting System in 1994. It currently comprises more than fifty stations in Russia alone, which share entertainment and news programmes. In August 1995, several independent television companies founded the National Association of TV Broadcasters. The association is headed by Eduard Sagalaev (founder of TV-6) and also includes NTV.

4.3 Radio

Russia has three major radio networks: Russian Radio, Radio Mayak and Radio 1. Additionally, there are numerous state-owned and private radio channels in every region.

President Yeltsin's November 1995 decree disbanding Ostankino also provided for the partial privatisation of Radio Mayak, Yunost and Radio 1. Equal to ORT, state retains at least 51 per cent of the shares.

Though hard to judge, certainly on a national scale, one large poll conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation in September 1995 can give an indication of the popularity of the different radio stations. Radio Mayak appears to be listened to most, closely followed by Europa Plus, Radio 1 and Radio Russia. Slightly less popular are the channels Nostalgie, Maximum, Yunost and Eckho Moskv. Considering their relevance, the latter two (of which Eckho Moskv is a local station) were nevertheless monitored.

4.4 The pre-election situation

Some significant incidents which were widely described as political interference or censorship took place in the months preceding the elections. In late September 1995, two regular programmes on ORT were cancelled in a move that critics described as "pure politics". The first programme featured Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, a prominent critic of Boris Yeltsin. The second was the news magazine *Versii* hosted by Sergei Dorenko. The Director-General of ORT, Blagavolin, gave two reasons: poor ratings and, as regards, *Versii*, very high costs. "Political censorship on ORT does not exist" he said.

⁶ Laura Belin (1995). *Wrestling Political and Financial Repression*. Transition Vol. 1, No. 18. OMRI, Prague.

Nevertheless, Dorenko claimed *Versii* was previewed by a specially appointed official before going on the air. Moreover, he stated that pivotal executives from ORT approached him with warnings that his programme - including critical coverage of the war in Chechnya and favourable screen time for certain politicians - was unacceptable. As regards Solzhenytsin's programme, poor ratings were undoubtedly of influence, yet political reasons were most likely an important factor in the decision to cancel the programme.

RTR carried a daily evening news programme *Vesti*. In the early phase of the Chechnya war, the news programme was obliged to follow the official line and read out government dispatches. Rumours spread that the Director-General, Oleg Poptsov, was threatened to be dismissed in case his channel would not fully endorse the efforts of the Russian military. The pressure on Poptsov received wide publicity and his position was strengthened by the public outcry and the support from leading media professionals in Europe. As a result, the channel acted more independently and *Vesti* started to broadcast footage which contradicted the government's version of events. Nevertheless, this freedom to operate independently did not last very long, since, as is described in more detail in the section on post-election developments, Poptsov was sacked on 15 February 1996.

The private network NTV's (highly popular) evening news programme *Sevodnya* and the weekly current-affairs show *Itogi* provided a critical picture of the situation in Chechnya. Partly for that reason, the network was a frequent target of the authorities since December 1994. On several occasions the government announced that it had considered to revoke NTV's license. Again, public protest prevented interference from the government.

In July 1995, the Procurator General commenced a criminal investigation against NTV journalist Yelena Masyuk. She had interviewed Chechen field commander Basayev, who led the June raid on the southern Russian city of Budennovsk. If convicted, Masyuk faced up to five years in prison. However, this did not deter Masyuk from interviewing Basayev again. No further charges against her were filed. Also in July, procurators started a case against the satirical NTV show *Kukly* (Puppets), for allegedly insulting the honour and dignity of high government officials. Additionally, procurators filed charges concerning tax-evasion and illegal currency dealings against the producer of *Kukly*. NTV responded defiantly to the charges and continued to broadcast the show.

In August 1995, after heavy pressure from media executives, the Central Election Commission had to drop its proposal to ban political advertising on private television, radio and ORT during the election campaign. The executives feared it would harm their income and considered it a gross violation of their rights. Opposition parties were afraid it would limit their access to the media.

Although mild attempts at interference, these examples indicate that some private television stations and some powerful media professionals had the possibility to challenge governmental influence on programming. Nevertheless, NTV, unlike Russia's other private television companies, has a national profile and is financially solvent. Poptsov is a high profile media executive with good contacts. It is not quite sure whether less renowned and notable media outlets or professionals - particularly on a regional level - would have similar success in deflecting governmental interference.

5 The central press

The notion of the *central press* dates back to the Communist times. It applied to "organs" of the central authorities (CPSU Central Committee - *Pravda*, USSR Supreme Soviet and Council of Ministers - *Izvestiya*, Young Communists League - *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, Central Council of Trade Unions - *Trud*, etc.) which were published in Moscow and distributed all over the country.

Following the collapse of the communist regime, this particular notion of the central press ceased to exist. The term currently refers to three categories of publications: (a) official organs of the new authorities (e.g. *Rosсыiskaya Gazeta* published by the government, *Rosсыiskie Vesti*, published by the State Duma); (b) traditional central newspapers which retain Russian-wide distribution; and (c) newly created publications like *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* or *Segodnya* which attempt to provide national and international news coverage, and are read primarily in Moscow. Some Moscow newspapers, like *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, due to their proximity to the seat of power and aggressive coverage of the federal authorities, may have political impact beyond their metropolitan status.

The period after the 1993 parliamentary elections saw a decline of the importance of the central press. As concerns the influence on voting behaviour of the population, the central press is currently rated by some analysts not only behind television but also behind local press and local broadcast media. There are two main reasons for the dwindling importance of the central press.

Firstly, the economic situation, low purchasing power of the population and forbiddingly high costs of nation-wide distribution led to a reduction in the circulation of the central press, as is revealed in the following table.

Title	1993	1995
<i>Izvestiya</i>	700,000	604,000
<i>Pravda</i>	610,000	174,000
<i>Rossiiskaya Gazeta</i>	1,030,000	500,000
<i>Argumenty i Fakty</i>	6,100,000	3,310,000
<i>Segodnya</i>	100,000	100,000
<i>Obschaya Gazeta</i>	100,000	100,000
<i>Moskovskie Novosti</i>	319,000	160,000
<i>Sovetskaya Rossiya</i>	750,000	250,000
<i>Moskovskiy Komsomolets</i>	1,425,000	1,022,000
<i>Nezavisimaya Gazeta</i>	100,000	58,000
<i>Kommersant-daily</i>	112,000	115,000

It should be noted that the decline was not a new phenomenon but rather a continuation of a trend which started in the Soviet times. *Trud*, for instance, currently has a circulation of 2,5 million, yet it printed 20 million copies in 1990. According to statistical data, only 25,7 per cent of the residents in large cities subscribe to one newspaper, an additional 17,8 per cent subscribe to two (these are primarily local papers).

The situation can be considered even more dramatic, when it is borne in mind that the circulation figures provided by the papers themselves are normally exaggerated for the sake of attracting advertisers. The genuine figures appear to be one of the most closely guarded secrets of Russian journalism.

The second reason for the decreased influence (in the traditional sense of the word) of the central press is somewhat more speculative. The central press has developed a habit of reporting cases of abuse of power by authorities. Nevertheless, the accused officials have learnt to disregard the allegations, which are not followed up by the judicial authorities. Moreover, critical editorials in the press on burning issues such as the war in Chechnya did not lead to

major social movements or civil campaigns. In other words, the coverage in the press did not usually result in change. Instead, it may have added to the general disillusionment and cynicism of the population.

Despite these two observations, the central press should still be regarded rather relevant to the Russian media scene. Various "opinion-leaders" and influential political commentators are employed by the central press, and this ensures a certain influence on Russian politics. Moreover, the central press regularly functions as an agenda-setter for other Russian media. Therefore, each of the three new notions of the central press has occupied a certain niche in which they remain quite instrumental.

The official press, like *Rosyiskaya Gazeta*, remains an important source of information regarding positions of the federal government. The paper publishes laws, decrees, official statements etc., but is also known to be used for disseminating "trial balloons" ("leaked" accusations or proposals, which are subsequently easily attributed to particular politicians by insiders, yet are never confirmed).

The indirect influence of the traditional central press - *Argumenty i Fakty*, *Izvestya*, *Trud*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Pravda*, *Sovetskaya Rossiya* and others - remains considerable for three reasons. Firstly, their circulation is still high, even by Western standards. Secondly, these papers are usually well-connected to pivotal political forces. Thirdly, their current readership is country-wide, and often comprises the so-called attentive public and opinion leaders in the regions.

The relatively new papers *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, *Segodnya*, *Obshaya Gazeta* weekly and *Kommersant-Daily* can probably be compared to the *Washington Post*. While hardly read outside Moscow, these papers are important to the political elite. The articles or editorials may be picked up by television, or provoke a reaction from official authorities and other opinion leaders in Moscow. *Izvestya* is the only paper in the category of the traditional press which performs similar functions.

The economic situation of the central press differs somewhat from the circumstances for the rest of the Russian print media and can therefore be considered another defining characteristic. On the one hand, the central press suffers from similar economic hardships as the rest of the print media: soaring prices of production and distribution, dwindling circulation and low advertising revenues (some sources report that advertising regularly contributes a mere 20 per cent to the production costs). On the other hand, the central papers are published in Moscow where allegedly up to 80 per cent of Russian assets are concentrated. Moreover, the capital and the seat of the government, is filled with lobbyists prone to receive beneficial coverage.

These observations, combined with the central press' proximity to power, high circulation, influential readers and established reputation, makes the leading newspapers attractive for (or vulnerable to) political investment of capital, both overt and concealed.

As regards overt investments, it suffices to mention that Most bank owns *Segodnya* and supports *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* and *Obshaya Gazeta*; Stolichny Savings bank finances *Kommersant-Daily*, the *Moscow News* and (partly) *Izvestya*; the LogoVaz group recently started to support the bankrupt *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* and has a stake in *Izvestya*. Finally, *Pravda* is financed by Mr Yannakis, a procommunist Greek businessman.

Hidden advertising occurs largely in two ways. Firstly, journalists may take the "individual initiative" to write a favourable article regarding a certain political association or individual and have it published in their newspaper. If discovered, the journalist concerned may be disciplined by the editorial board, unless a silent agreement exists that accepting money for articles is a legitimate way to increase income.

Secondly, and probably more common, custom-made articles concerning "clients" are published with knowledge and consent of the editorial board. The payment is therefore made to the paper rather than to the journalist. Some editors indicated that they consider this legitimate practice, although the income most likely does not appear in the accounting books prepared for tax inspection. Tax evasion (or "not feeding the government", to use a common Russian phrase) appears to be considered fairly normal. The authorities, in their turn, are probably aware of these practices, yet do not seem to consider curtailing it a priority.

In short, the incapacity to generate sufficient revenues from sales and advertising, the agenda-setting position, the readiness of capital invested for purposes other than extracting profit and the tacit complicity of authorities with the "black economy" conduct, places the central press in a complex web of interdependencies where undemocratic (in)direct influence of sponsors or authorities on the editorial content is most likely to flourish.

5.1 The pre-election situation

Hardly any incidents could be attributed directly to the elections. The two most notable events in the months preceding the start of the campaign was the suspended publication (in May 1995) of *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, due to a lack of finance. The paper resumed publication in September after receiving sponsorship from LogoVaz. In 1995, Ms. Natalya Polezhaeva, editor of *Rosyiskaya Gazeta*, was dismissed, but this did not seem to have a connection to the election campaign either.

The most significant development was probably adoption of the laws "On Economic Support to District (City) Newspapers" and "On State Support for the Mass Media and Book Publishing in the Russian Federation" by the State Duma, on 13 July and 18 October 1995 respectively. The regulations institutionalised a range of taxation, foreign currency retention and customs privileges for mass media outlets. Interestingly, both laws were approved by the Council of Federation on 15 November. The news that the president would sign the laws shortly was announced by prime-minister Chernomyrdin at a meeting with senior executives of Russian media outlets on 16 November, just on the eve of the campaign. The timing clearly indicated political manoeuvring attempted at fostering goodwill.

6 Coverage in the broadcast media

Media played an important part in the power struggle between the parties and the candidates. Television has become the main way to reach the voters in the vast country: 90-95 per cent of the households in Russia now have access to television. In the 90's the circulation of the printed media has suffered a dramatic decline, whereas the nation-wide TV-channels particularly outside the big cities, currently dominate federal politics.

Compared to 1993, the possibilities for the principal TV-and radio stations to present news and comments independently, objectively and professionally have improved reasonably. In 1993, the elections took place in a highly charged and dramatic political atmosphere, which influenced the coverage. Russian media nowadays express a wide variety of political views, though are still vulnerable to both financial and political pressure.

Practice between different TV-channels varied considerably. Very generally, privately financed stations performed better, while the government-controlled media, and in particular ORT, still to a large extent reflected official positions and the interests of the power-holders. On most channels, the majority of the journalists appeared to sympathise with the centrist and reform-oriented parties, while treating the communists and extreme nationalists less favourably. It was, however, commonly perceived that critical programmes sometimes backfired, and increased rather than decreased the popularity of the discredited politician.

6.1 Quantitative analysis

The analysis of federal radio and television revealed differences between outlets. Three types of broadcasting need to be examined: free time, paid time and editorial programming.

6.1.1 Free time

The free time allocated to the 43 parties was available on federal channels as stipulated in the regulation. All parties therefore had an equal chance to address the voters. Between 15 November and 15 December, one hour every day was provided on both ORT and RTR (30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the evening) and divided between the 43 parties, allotting each about 1 1/2 hour free. Compared to the 1993 elections - when the number of political blocs was considerably lower (13) and each party received four hours of free time - the parties received somewhat less free time in 1995. However, compared to western practice, the fringe parties benefited from the equal division of free airtime and were granted relatively long time slots.

Free time broadcasting continued until two days before the elections. Some of the slots were unfortunately scheduled: either very early or very late. However, the allocation was done by lot and not subject to criticism.

It was reported that one party (LDPR) tried to buy better free time slots, but was rebuffed by the TV channel in question. The Judicial Chamber on Information Disputes was also informed that the Moscow channel MTK refused to grant free air time, though it is partly state-owned.

The parties could choose three formats for their election broadcasts: (a) replies to questions, (b) monologues or (c) ready-prepared video material. In most cases the broadcasts were highly personalised and focused on the party leader rather than the party programme. Professional journalists harshly criticised these practices which were justifiably considered sheer propaganda and hardly informative. However, as long as parties observed basic legal and ethical standards, they were entirely free to formulate their messages.

6.1.2 Paid time

Additionally, political parties could buy airtime on the regional and federal channels. According to the quantitative analysis of the major outlets in Moscow, about 25 parties availed themselves of this opportunity. They were, however, limited by (a) the maximum expenditure for election propaganda, and (b) as regards governmental media, the paid time could not exceed the free time.

Nevertheless, one of the most significant features of the election campaign was the abundance of paid political advertising, both on the private and the governmental broadcast channels. Although the monitoring results are presented with all due reservations, it can be concluded that (a) some parties bought a most considerable amount of advertising, and (b) MTK, RTR, TV-6 and NTV sold most airtime to political parties. The following summary table presents some of the findings.

Party	Minutes	Per cent
APR	3	0,1%
CPRF	10	0,5%
CRC	215	11,6%
Forward, Russia!	32	1,7%
Ivan Rybkin's bloc	151	8,5%
LDPR	176	9,5%
My Fatherland	137	7,4%
OHR	431	23,5%
Pam/Gur/Lys bloc	24	1,3%
Power to the People	3	0,1%
PWSG	22	1,3%
RDC	103	5,5%
Trade Unions	35	1,9%
Women of Russia	36	2,0%
Yabloko	43	2,3%
Total	1421	77,2%
Total for all parties	1840	100,0%

Paid time on ORT, RTR, NTV, MTK and TV-6 by parties

The table indicates that Our Home is Russia bought most, followed by the Congress of Russian Communities, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Ivan Rybkin's bloc, My Fatherland and Russia's Democratic Choice. Other parties, also major ones like the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the Agrarian Party of Russia or Yabloko, bought significantly less.

As regards the expenditure, it should be remarked that advertising on MTK and TV-6 was considerably cheaper than on RTR, ORT or NTV. Compared to 1993, the prices for advertising on the latter three channels had gone up substantially (\$10,000-30,000 per minute depending on the channel and the time of the day). Buying airtime therefore presupposed ample financial resources, which benefited the large and well-financed blocs.

Clearly, Our Home is Russia had the capital. The party bought over seven hours of advertising on the five channels combined. The Congress of Russian Communities appeared to have spent much as well, yet it should be noted that 60 per cent of the advertising was on MTK. The same applies, to some extent, to the LDPR. Ivan Rybkin's bloc, on the other hand, purchased 47 minutes prime time on NTV, Russia's Democratic Choice even bought 70 minutes on the private channel (which alone must have cost about \$1,7 million).

In the section on the regulatory framework, it was stated that *some parties exceeded the spending limit for election campaigning set by the Central Election Commission*. For the sake of clarity, an example is provided. Our Home is Russia bought 144 minutes on RTR, NTV and ORT

combined. When the average rate of \$20,000 per minute is applied, this amounts to \$2.88 million. Additionally, the party bought another 287 minutes on TV-6 and MTK. Altogether, the advertising on the five television channels in Moscow alone must therefore have cost OHR over \$4 million. This more than exceeds the limit of \$2.4 million set by the CEC.

Especially when considering that this calculation does not take into account the costs for supporting individual candidates related to the party, costs of production, advertising in central and regional newspapers, advertising on regional broadcast media, billboards and other costs, it can quite safely be concluded that several parties have spent more money than allowed for in the legal framework of the campaign. Moreover, Our Home is Russia appeared to have breached one more regulation: according to our analysis, the party bought nearly an hour of airtime on RTR, which is more than the free time allocated. This was, it should be remembered, not allowed.

Most parties used short spot advertisements for their propaganda, ranging from 5 to 45 seconds. The LDPR and My Fatherland were most visible with five second spots, OHR often had 30 or 45 seconds. It was striking that the CPRF which emerged as the biggest party used no TV commercials and instead relied upon grass-roots propaganda and its well-established and fairly efficient organisation around the country. The Agrarian Party also largely refrained from active electronic media presentations, and relied on a stable electorate and local organisation.

The parties themselves decided on the content and form. The channels in some instances refused advertising which breached ethical or legal norms and referred those cases to the Judicial Chamber on Information Disputes. Eventually, only two cases were considered by the Chamber: Borovoi's Party of Economic Freedom used vulgar language and the LDPR misused images of Russian heroes Peter the Great, Mikhail Kutuzov and Andrei Sakharov.

In contrast to 1993, the presentation of the paid time programming cannot be criticised. It was easy to distinguish paid time and editorial time. One reservation should nevertheless be made. A mini-series consisting of short clips featuring actors included Nikita Michalkov, number two on OHR's party list. The clips were broadcast in prime-time and it appeared to the team that they were actually commercials for OHR.

The significant presence of paid advertising and the high prices for time-slots not only indicate that money played a crucial role during the election campaign, it also raises doubts about the adherence to the regulations and the equality of opportunities for all parties to present their case to the public. It should, however, be noted that similar remarks could be made regarding some Western democracies.

6.1.3 Editorial time

In the monitored period, 19 November to 16 December 1995, about half of the airtime related to the elections was labelled editorial, rather than free or paid, time. MTK devoted about 13 hours to editorial material, TV-6 ten hours, RTR eight hours and 40 minutes, ORT seven hours and 20 minutes and NTV five hours and 15 minutes. Most of the editorial time on MTK, ORT and RTR was newscoverage, whereas NTV organised several debates between candidates.

The 43 parties participating in the campaign could obviously not expect parity. It is therefore more reasonable to question whether the somewhat more renowned parties received approximately equal editorial coverage. The following table presents the average figures for the five television channels in Moscow.

Party	Minutes	Per cent
APR	20	0,7%
CPRF	160	5,9%
CRC	109	4,0%
Forward, Russia!	137	5,0%
Govorukhin' bloc	90	3,3%
Ivan Rybkin's bloc	199	7,3%
LDPR	200	7,3%
My Fatherland	34	1,2%
OHR	670	24,7%
Pam/Gur/Lys bloc	11	0,4%
Power to the People	18	0,6%
PWSG	60	2,2%
RDC	346	12,8%
Trade Unions	131	4,8%
Women of Russia	63	2,4%
Yabloko	88	3,2%
Total	2336	85,8%
Total for all parties	2722	100,0%

Editorial time on ORT, RTR, NTV, MTK and TV-6 by parties

Especially when compared to their main opponents, Our Home is Russia, and to a lesser extent Russia's Democratic Choice, where overexposed. This may have been due partially to the advantages the incumbent candidate enjoyed. Nevertheless, this explanation is not likely to be relevant in the voters' minds during an election campaign.

The bulge of editorial time on **ORT** was devoted to Our Home is Russia (30 per cent) and Russia's Democratic Choice (26 per cent). The CPRF received 15 per cent, Ivan Rybkin's bloc six per cent, the LDPR four per cent and Yabloko only one per cent.

The editorial time on **RTR** was more equally divided among the parties. Nevertheless, Our Home is Russia still received 19 per cent, Russia's Democratic Choice 13 per cent and Ivan Rybkin's bloc 12 per cent. The share for other major parties ranged between eight per cent (Yabloko) and 2 per cent (Forward Russia).

MTK consacrated 30 per cent of the editorial time to OHR, and about 11 per cent to Ivan Rybkin's bloc. Forward Russia, the LDPR and the Trade Unions all received approximately nine per cent, whereas Russia's Democratic Choice and Yabloko got a mere two per cent.

The democratic parties dominated somewhat on **NTV**, which granted 19 per cent of the editorial time to Russia's Democratic Choice and 13 per cent to Yabloko. Our Home is Russia received about ten per cent, and the remaining time was divided relatively equal among the other main parties.

Finally, on **TV-6**, Our Home is Russia was again the most visible party (25 per cent), followed by Russia's Democratic Choice (15 per cent), the LDPR (ten per cent), the CRC (seven per cent), the CPRF (four per cent) and Yabloko (three per cent).

A roughly similar division can be found on the **five monitored radio stations**. The tables indicate that on the five monitored channels - Russian Radio, Eckho Moskv, Radio Mayak, Yunost and Radio 1 - Our Home is Russia and Russia's Democratic Choice were the dominant parties. Slightly more than 25 per cent of the editorial coverage (on average) was devoted to OHR, and 23,8 per cent to RDC. The two parties combined therefore received nearly 50 per cent of all editorial radio coverage.

In comparison, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation got a mere 2,7 per cent average, the LDPR 4,4 per cent. In general, the radio stations devoted a few minutes to the most important parties, yet gave generously to OHR and RDC. A policy of balanced reporting can therefore not be detected on any of the radio stations.

The lion share of editorial time was taken up by news broadcasts in the form of short items. Debates and analysis were infrequent, as will be discussed in more detail in the section on qualitative analysis.

It should be noted that criteria for apportioning time between different parties are necessarily somewhat arbitrary and the above findings therefore need to be discussed. The dominance of Our Home is Russia was to a large extent due to the fact that many of its members received coverage as government officials. Such practice is common and should be considered with care. Some advantage for incumbents is unavoidable. However, two questions pertain: (a) was the amount of coverage remarkably unequal, and (b) was it unduly positive (for instance when clearly staged events were nevertheless covered in length)?

Overall, news reporting on the six TV channels seemed to be reasonably fair, although there was a distinct tendency on the part of ORT to give more time to the government. ORT also had a considerably more positive coverage of the government's actions and policies than the other main channels. The government did indeed take a number of budgetary decisions in the month preceding the elections, with the clear intention of generating good-will and boasting support for Our Home is Russia. These decisions were widely covered indeed, though it is difficult to assess whether the practice would have been different if elections were not pending.

Smaller "special interest groups" were almost entirely neglected, though such fringe parties cannot expect parity. However, also potentially large parties, e.g. the Communists, the LDPR and the CRC, received few news coverage. Furthermore, as regards the former two, the short time devoted was mostly negative. It probably did not hamper the Communists or the Nationalists. However, the situation might have worked to the detriment of some medium-sized parties which attempted, yet just failed, to clear the five per cent threshold. Women of Russia, the CRC, the Agrarian Party of Russia or the Communist workers of Russia all received nearly or over four per cent of the votes, yet hardly featured on radio or television- Generally more balanced coverage, with more attention devoted to these parties, could possibly have enabled them to pass the five per cent hurdle.

6.2 Qualitative analysis

The 1995 elections were the first parliamentary elections held in Russia which took place in political normalcy. However, dismal economic conditions for the majority of the population and the war in Chechnya added to a mood of distaste for politics and frustration with politicians. This was particularly apparent among young people. Moreover, there was a general feeling that the Duma played a fairly minor role, whereas the presidential elections, in June 1996, were considered genuinely crucial. The plethora of political parties (43) and the ample free time given to all of them in the electronic media created a certain confusion which was compounded by the similarity of political messages, most of which were of very general nature. Journalists seemed to share this general mood. Moreover, one could get the impression that, particularly for electronic media, the election campaign was above all considered as an important financial source. A positive point, compared to 1993 and mentioned by many, were the calmer debates and less prevalent recriminations.

The above helps to explain, yet is not an excuse for, the clear absence of journalistic political analysis, debating programmes, and in-depth interviews with the main candidates. Nevertheless, two additional explanations and some notable exceptions deserve to be mentioned. Firstly, media representatives explained that the quantity of political advertising, free and paid, had saturated the TV/radio audience and any additional promotion would have attracted a limited audience. Secondly, all channels mentioned that they had invited leaders of the main political

parties to participate in debates, yet most of them declined. ORT publicly announced its intention to organise such debates. Only Yegor Gaidar, Boris Fyodorov, Grigori Yavlinsky and a few others accepted, but since they were all from the same political spectrum the debates were of limited interest.

Some opportunities to televise the few important debates that did take place - e.g. a two hour discussion between Yavlinsky and Zyuganov in the premises of the newspaper "Argumenti i Fakti" were not fully exploited for practical reasons. NTV, however, arranged election debates in the final week on the popular programme *Geroi dnya* (The hero the day). Prime Minister Chernomyrdin was pressured to participate (also by prominent party leaders such as Yavlinsky, Gaidar and Volsky), yet he declined.

A few other noteworthy exceptions to the generally limited political analysis/interviews should be mentioned.

- On ORT, the weekly programmes *Voskresenie*, *Press Klub* and *Vsglyad*.
- On RTR, the daily short but intense programme *Podrobnosti*.
- On TV-6, *Te Kto*, interviews with decision-makers and politicians; *Vyberi menya*, a daily morning 40 minute broadcast with interviews.
- On NTV, *Itogi*, a weekly hour-long analytical programme, with considerable influence on the political debate; *Geroi dnya*, a daily in-depth interview with decision makers, *Versii*, features political items; the satirical puppet show *Kukly* on weekends.

These programmes contained analysis, but some were unfortunately scheduled and therefore probably attracted only a small intellectual audience.

In comparison with 1993, NTV was the big difference. The channel added considerably to the quality, variety and quantity of political coverage. In fact, a most useful document was distributed to all NTV journalists, explaining in a clear, funny and straightforward manner that bias and personal opinions should be avoided. The document is annexed to this report. As for radio, Mayak (with the biggest audience ratings), Radio Russia, Yunost (all largely state-owned), and Europa Plus had limited analytical programmes but gave considerable amount of straightforward information regarding political events. Eckho Moskvyy, limited to the Moscow area and now owned by Most bank, has a notable tradition of incisive reporting and interviews. The station tried to live up to this but had problems with the political parties cooperation.

Despite these explanations and noteworthy exceptions, it should still be concluded that, as a general rule, the electronic media did not analyse the political parties or clarify their programmes. The electorate was not provided with attractive and exploratory background material. Particularly prime-time viewers were not given requisite information on the effect of proposed policies, coalition possibilities after elections etc. Debates might have been difficult to organise, but other party representatives could have been invited to contrast different views and thus elucidate the electorate. Viewers in the regions, who did not have the possibility of receiving NTV nor to read central newspapers and therefore depended on information regarding federal politics on RTR and ORT, were especially deprived of clarifying programmes.

6.3 Bias in the electronic media - a survey of different networks

In general, the majority of journalists appeared to side with centrist and reform-oriented parties, while the treatment of communists and extreme nationalists was sometimes slanted in a negative direction. In this sense media had a natural tendency to favour values also espoused by the government. Nevertheless, a few programmes, for instance on Moscow channel MTK, clearly had a pro-communist bias. Considering the diversity between channels, the question of qualitative bias will be discussed per channel.

During the election campaign, the direct links between Chernomyrdin's Our Home is Russia and ORT were illustrated. In general, ORT was charged with reporting primarily good news, in favour of the president and the government. This was especially visible in the evening news programme *Vremya*. The background of this connection is occasionally visible. The co-chairman

of ORT's board, B. Berezovskii, was the unofficial "chief financial officer" of OHR and widely seen as a decisive force within ORT. Moreover, the financially powerful joint stock company Gazprom, of which Chernomyrdin used to be the Director-General, holds a share in ORT.

Its representatives clearly stated that ORT is still an "official" channel, with an obligation to its audience to promote stability and order. The government party was favoured in different ways.

- ORT reflected government positions and mostly refrained from critical comments concerning government policies.
- Communists and nationalists, if at all shown, were mostly treated negatively, except when they supported government proposals in the Duma. Nevertheless, compared to 1993, the CPRF was dealt with more leniently.
- In analytical programmes such as the above-mentioned Voskresenie, communists and KRO were given the possibility to express their views but critical comments about their programmes were made afterwards.
- Although nationalistic and patriotic sentiments played a part for most parties, extreme nationalism received limited and negative treatment.
- Parties propagating more swift reforms were usually considered with benign neglect.

RTR covered the news reasonably objectively. Additional editorial time could be qualified likewise. Criticism concerns the amount and timing of political analysis, rather than bias in the presentation. RTR removed two programmes of political nature since it feared that a surplus of election material would alienate viewers. The Director-General, Poptsov, has a pro-reform and democratic record and has helped to maintain independent positions. The channel has an obligation to report on government activities but does not experience this as a major problem.

NTV, largely owned by the Most bank group, claimed complete editorial independence. This might be the case in issues not related to the owner's interest. The channel had undoubtedly been able to recruit a team of excellent journalists, who can rely on substantial technical and financial resources. The relatively high salaries paid to these journalists also help to avoid corruptive practices. The political linkages which were said to exist between Most and Yavlinsky as well as the Moscow mayor Luzhkov were hardly noticeable in the pre-election editorial coverage. In general, fair editorial coverage was given to political parties, though a certain bias in favour of reform, market-economy oriented parties seems to be a natural reflection of both ownership and journalistic predisposition. The channel made the most systematic and successful effort to arrange proper debates between the principal parties during the week preceding the elections.

TV 6, though concentrated on films and entertainment, introduced two discussion programmes during the election campaign, featuring candidates from different parties. However, Sagalaev (founder, main owner and Director-General of TV-6) has clearly reform-oriented credentials, and this was to some extent visible in the network's general attitude and in some of the programming.

MTK has a large local audience. In its editorial coverage it took a pro-government stance, though a fairly large part of the electoral programmes were supportive of communist and nationalistic parties (Podmoskovye).

6.4 Financial aspects

The 1995 election campaign was heavily influenced by the considerable financial resources available to political parties. Since TV was the main propaganda vehicle for most parties, and the only efficient way to reach the whole Russian Federation, money poured into this medium from different directions.

The background to the paid political advertising was described at length above. What remains to be discussed, however, are the observations made in the introduction to this chapter. It was noted that interrelations between new financial powers, political powers and the media are

emerging. Moreover, it was observed that in some areas a structural and economic reliance on the authorities pertains, and that several independent outlets require support from private sources, since few outlets can survive without sponsors.

It appears that not only financial motives underly the investments in the media. In various cases, companies and individuals seem to consider the sponsoring of an outlet as buying influence; the possibility to disseminate their message and perhaps even gain political support. This obviously applies to the political candidates in the regions who used their outlets for campaigning purposes. It, however, also appears to apply to several outlets in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Nevertheless, it is problematic to ascertain the direct political impact of these new relations. Every situation should be studied separately, taking into consideration the character of the financial group, the share in the media outlet, the editorial independence of the outlet, etc. General conclusions cannot be drawn now, and will be difficult to draw in the future. It is hard to judge whether the content of an outlet is determined by the editorial staff or the owner.

In general, though, one could consider the influx of money from non-political sources positively. It could enhance the political independence of media outlets, make them financially solvent and increase the plurality of the media landscape. However, when strings are attached and investments are not paid back in cash, but rather in editorial content, the development becomes questionable.

As regards *editorial time on television*, evidence was provided by several sources that airtime was sometimes sold to enrich the TV company or editors/journalists. The extent of such practices is impossible to evaluate - reports varied widely between different sources. The situation might have been accurately described by the well-known journalist Dorenko: "Good journalists are difficult to buy and bad journalists are of no great use to anybody". It is indeed likely that badly paid journalists, a majority in the profession, had greater propensity to accept money. It can be assumed that financial offers were made frequently, but that the response varied considerably between different channels. In general, the poorer the channel and the less collegiate and homogenous the atmosphere, the more likely corrupt practices were.

Nevertheless, the electronic media, due to their very nature, are constantly under close scrutiny. The public, editors, other journalists or competing politicians were likely to observe whether specific candidates or parties got undue favourable treatment. In some outlets the problem was organisationally treated; the director checked the format and content of political broadcasts beforehand. Finally, some channels (e.g. Echo Moskv, NTV) claimed a code of ethics, which had been elaborated and signed by a number of prominent journalist, hence this code had a positive effect.

7 Coverage in the central press

7.1 Free access

Of all the monitored newspapers, only *Rosyiskaya Gazeta* was obliged to follow the CEC guidelines for the media during the campaign. In addition, *Rosyiskaya Gazeta* had to publish election material for all parties/blocs free of charge. Since the paper had limited space, the obligation collided with another official duty: publishing lists of electoral blocs. Eventually the conflict was resolved in favour of the lists. They filled the newspaper's pages for the whole period of the campaign, yet still not all were published before the day of elections. Two parties did get the opportunity to present themselves free of charge: Ivan Rybkin's bloc (120 sq. cm on 25 November 1995) and Our Home is Russia (1,976 sq.cm on 7 December 1995). Whatever space was left for editorial coverage, was mainly used to promote Our Home is Russia.

7.2 Editorial coverage

Other papers enjoyed an independent status (from the government) and were under no formal constraints to provide free space. The political alignment of most outlets was known and quite openly stated. Thus, quantitative analysis revealed little that was not already known.

The observations in this section therefore draw mainly on the qualitative aspect of the media coverage in the various monitored papers.

While in 1993 a number of communist newspapers were suspended for political or financial reasons, in 1995 the full spectrum of opinions - from various degrees of communist ideology to democratic to right-wing nationalists - were represented in the media. The pluralistic nature of the central press can be considered a positive development.

Nevertheless, an unspoken consensus appeared to exist between all these outlets concerning the coverage of the extreme nationalist LDPR; virtually the whole spectrum displayed a negative attitude towards Zhirinovsky. Neither the advertisements, nor any positive analysis of the party's programme were published by liberal or communist media. Instead, their pages were full of critical analysis and denunciations of the LDPR.

While the journalistic style of the central press has become more varied, ranging from overtly propagandistic to more factual reporting. Despite this, mixing news with opinion remains a common feature of the Russian printed press. This, though, does not necessarily reflect lack of professionalism, as is often implied by Western analysts of Russian media, but rather traditions of Russian journalism dating back to times well before the Communist revolution in 1917.

Pravda and *Sovetskaya Rossiya* are openly pro-communist newspapers supporting above all the CPRF. *Pravda*, for instance, published a special supplement *Pravda Rossii* devoted almost entirely to this party. The supplement was edited by the future speaker of the new Duma Gennady Seleznev. *Pravda*, in general, attempted to reflect a broader left-wing part of the political spectrum and gave some attention to, for instance, Ivan Rybkin's bloc. *Sovetskaya Rossiya* covered the spectrum of communist organisations more widely. In style, both newspapers used the language of the communist period and severely attacked Our Home is Russia, and other centrist and reform-oriented parties. On 16 December, the day of electoral silence, *Sovetskaya Rossiya* carried a lot of communist election-related material, for which the paper was fined after the elections.

Another group of newspapers, including the dailies *Izvestiya* and *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* and the weeklies *Moscow News* and *Obshaya Gazeta*, were quite pronounced in their support for the reform-oriented forces and were overtly critical towards the communists. Even *Izvestiya*,

boasting the reputation of the most respectable Russian newspaper, did not hesitate to practice opinionated newsreporting together with strong wording ("Communists in Oryol in their second ascent are a cruel and revengeful force" Izvestia, 8 December 1995).

Nevertheless, despite the evident slant in their coverage, this group of newspapers did provide a fairly wide spectrum of political opinions, including those critically approached.

The third group of newspapers (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, *Segodnya*, *Kommersant-Daily*, *Argumenty i F акты*) can be compared to the previous group, considering they made a fair attempt at covering the whole spectrum of political parties. The major difference was that these four papers, as a general rule, abstained from value judgements. Nevertheless, sympathy for the centrist and reform-oriented parties was rather evident from the tone of coverage.

In summary, it can be concluded that the central press is quite pluralistic. There are rather professional and balanced papers and also some papers with a clear political alignment. However, it should be remarked that the LDPR was not, or negatively, covered and that, on the whole, the central press showed a tendency of supporting the centrist and reform-oriented parties.

7.3 Political advertising

The table below shows which blocks were most actively engaged in promotion via paid advertising as well as the newspapers which carried most of these ads.

Parties/Papers	Pravda	Sov.Rossiia	Izvestiya	Trud	Koms.Pr.	Obshaya Gaz
WR	910			4,272	954	490
CPRF	4,353	10,476				
CRC			2,906	3,340	2,321	2,874
OHR				5,387	888	
PRUC			1,162	1,968		63
RDC				450		
Yabloko			921			980
Ivan Rybkin				138	117	
Stable Russia				3,713	1,832	

Paid advertising (in cm²) of various parties in a selection of papers - © European Institute for the Media 1996

The provided table is by no means comprehensive. It is based upon a sample of the monitored issues and does not include *Argumenty i F акты*, *Segodnya*, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* or *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, which also printed a lot of advertisements. Nonetheless, some trends are visible.

- Although the CPRF seems to be among the most active advertisers, they did this through "their" newspapers, *Sovetskaya Rossiia* and *Pravda*. Other parties, with some minor exceptions, apparently did not consider it useful to advertise in these two, fairly large-circulation, newspapers.
- Women of Russia advertised in the broadest spectrum of newspapers, ranging from communist (*Pravda*) to "democratic" papers (*Obshaya Gazeta* and *AiF*, not featured in the table).
- *Trud* appeared attractive to the highest variety of parties; some parties (NUR, Cedar Social Democratic Union, PWSG) not included in the table also advertised in the newspaper. This may be explained by its large circulation and perhaps as well by the image of an unsophisticated newspaper for common people without a clear political position. Apparently the relatively neutral stance paid off.

- The Congress of Russian Communities appears to have advertised in the press most actively. In addition to what is shown in the table, their advertisements were dominant in *Argumenty i Fauty*, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* and *Segodnya*.

A final and brief remark regarding hidden advertising should be made. Reliable sources indicated to the monitoring team that accepting money for favourable coverage was fairly common practice. Some indicated specific instances of concealed advertising and pointed to newspapers which were most actively engaged in the practice. Considering the confidential character of these remarks, the monitoring prefers not to provide specific examples.

8 St. Petersburg

St. Petersburg is often regarded as the second political, economic and cultural capital of the Russian Federation. The town has 4,9 million inhabitants and is, of course due to its geographical location, an important transfer point for commodities. Over 25 per cent of Russia's imports, and 32 per cent of its exports are via the harbour of St. Petersburg.

The standard of living is somewhat higher compared to the rest of the Federation. Infant mortality and unemployment are well below the national average, there are twice as many students per 10,000 residents and in a recent publication, the Bank of Austria praised St. Petersburg for its financial stability and strong banking position.

Nevertheless, problems exist as well. Galina Osinskaya, candidate for Women of Russia, mentioned three issues vital in her campaign. Firstly, a major difficulty is the shortage of houses, which is not likely to disappear in the near future. Secondly, the reorganisation of the military-industrial complex, which used to build warships, appeared unsuccessful. Thirdly, a part of the educated population has become disillusioned. For instance, the Unemployment Commission can sometimes offer qualified engineers nothing other than making stuffed rabbits out of fur.

St. Petersburg considers itself the democratic capital of Russia. The politically tolerant and progressive climate was confirmed by the election results which differ substantially from Russia's average. Yabloko, the most prominent reform-oriented party, received 16 per cent of the votes on the party list, compared to 6,9 per cent for the whole Federation. Our Home is Russia also performed better in St. Petersburg: 12,8 per cent (10,1 per cent nationally). On the other hand, the CPRF and the LDPR got stuck at 13,2 per cent and 3,4 per cent respectively, compared to 22,3 per cent and 11,2 per cent overall. Moreover, all 8 deputies from St. Petersburg constituencies who were elected to the state Duma were aligned with centrist or reform-oriented parties.

The media reflected this attitude. In general, both the familiar state-owned outlets and the new commercial enterprises cautiously yet unequivocally supported the reform-oriented parties.

8.1 The campaign

The political campaign started well before the official date. The commendatory portrayal of candidates, some of whom bought media exposure, commenced early. During all the twenty lengthy interviews conducted with representatives of the media, the high stakes and ample financial resources involved were repeatedly referred to. Financial institutions have emerged as forces to reckon with, if not dominant. They both competed with and re-enforced traditional political powers.

The pivotal position of money is explained by the changes in the St. Petersburg media landscape. In 1993, most editors said they had faith in the stable financial position, based on a gradually growing advertising market. Nevertheless, a lull in the economic development, rising prices of paper and the multiplied cost of printing - tenfold in two years - brought many of them on the brink of bankruptcy. Consequently, all papers in St. Petersburg sought financial support and established joint ventures with banks and other financial institutions.

Over the same period, seven commercial TV stations and even more private radio stations were founded. These private outlets are, however, less influential than the state-owned Channel 5. It remains by far the market leader in the north west of Russia and reaches 80 million people. Like ORT, Channel 5 is partly privatised.

Nevertheless, being largely state-owned, Channel 5 had to grant equal airtime to 152 candidates and the 43 political blocs. This resulted in 45 hours of free access over a period of twenty days, ergo 2,5 hours daily. This unfortunate overload was due to the fact that Channel 5 is considered both a regional and a federal station. Consequently, in accord with the CEC guidelines on media coverage of elections, Channel 5, as the only channel in the Federation, had to carry advertising for parties *and* candidates.

The constituency candidates were reluctant to exchange the eligible free time for discussion programmes hosted by professional journalists. According to several editors, this was not surprising, since their political views did not differ much. The free ads were occasionally refined video-clips, but most candidates made straight into the camera statements. The broadcasts were therefore not particularly exciting.

Although candidates and parties could buy additional airtime (up to the amount received for free), Channel 5 carried a moderate amount of paid advertising. The price, \$3,000 per minute, may have made the difference. Our Home is Russia, for instance, which actively used billboards in St. Petersburg as well, was seen most frequently.

Violations concerning the media were marginal. The chairmen of the Regional Election Commission, Alexander Garusov, informed the monitor about ten minor cases of which were brought to his attention; for instance the publication of an anonymous pamphlet with offending language about one of the candidates.

8.2 The broadcast media

8.2.1 St. Petersburg Channel 5

Two statements, from two different members of staff, illustrate the lack of political coverage on Channel 5:

- "We do not cover the campaign at all".
- "We are less interested in politics, as the interest with the audience has decreased".

The monitoring confirmed the lack of election-related, political coverage on Channel 5 and the news programmes did not indicate an outspoken political preference. During the first two weeks of December, Chernomyrdin was briefly featured seven times, yet these items were more or less related to his duties as prime minister. There were no programmes in which particular candidates or parties were promoted. Quite a change compared to 1993, when the channel actively supported Yeltsin and the adoption of the constitution.

Channel 5 in fact appeared less interested in politics than in finding money to finance more attractive programming. The deputy-editor of the news programme Inform TV, Anatoliy Morgunov, informed the monitor that he seeks resources to subscribe to international news agencies. Nevertheless, he considers his station "clean", meaning no hidden money or financial levers. He confided that there was pressure and attempts of bribing by advertising agencies on behalf of parties or politicians, though not quite as profuse as in Moscow, where more money is available. The station sold quite some advertising. Most time went to Ivan Rybkin's bloc, which bought over one hour in total.

Channel 5 has been more or less "depoliticised" after Bella Kurkova was forced to leave the station in June 1995. Bella Kurkova can be considered the "first lady" of television in St. Petersburg. She belonged to the inner circles of Yeltsin, was president of Channel 5, political commentator and interviewer of prominent politicians. She, however, got caught in political turbulence, after she accused Yeltsin of betraying his people, and had to leave. "Otherwise they would have strangled me".

The only executive who survived the commotion was deputy director Valentin Gorbach. During an interview with the monitor, he confined himself to the following statement: "a conflict between Bella Kurkova and circles around Yeltsin had arisen, concerning the financial possibilities of the station".

All newspapers in St. Petersburg reported about alleged misdemeanour regarding \$2,5 million. The money, from Channel 5, was supposedly invested in a new commercial station: Channel 3. The new station is presided over by Kurkova, former president of Channel 5. The case is one of "sub justice" and lies with the prosecutor.

8.2.2 The new Channel 3

Insiders informed the monitor regarding the division of shares of the new Channel 3. Fifty per cent is owned by a London-based firm, International Network Television; five percent by the Mayor of St. Petersburg's office; ten percent by the State (RTR) and another fifteen percent by local investors. The structure illustrates the complex interrelation between political and financial powers.

Channel 3 started broadcasting just before the elections. The deputy director of the channel, Victor Pravduk, stood as his constituency candidate for the Duma and consequently used the channel to his own advantage. He could be seen daily. Bella Kurkova herself remains politically involved, which added to the slant in the coverage of Channel 3. She presented the weekly programme "On The Political Olympus", on which she interviewed opponents to the current government. Several well-known politicians, like Yegor Gaidar, accepted the invitation.

The question of how new commercial stations survive remains, considering they only receive advertising revenues. The answer was given by Bella Kurkova, who, with a long career in broadcasting and inside knowledge, was able to put the relation between media, money and politics in clear light. She predicted more private stations will be launched in the near future. They do not need advertising money. They will be founded and financed for political purposes. The financial supporters do not require to be reimbursed swiftly.

8.2.3 Channel 11

These new connections between money, media and politics could also be observed at the private Channel 11. The station is related to the Russian State Company Russkoye Video and was politically rather active during the campaign. It granted all constituency candidates equal time, and sold additional airtime as well.

Interestingly, one of the best clients was their own chairman, political candidate Dmitry Rozhdestvensky. He bought a considerable amount of time daily on his own channel. This may sound implausible, though during an interview with the monitor and in the presence of his board, the candidate declared he had paid for all airtime himself.

Two other indications of the peculiarities of this transition period could be observed as regards Channel 11. Firstly, Lev Konstantinov, president of the pyramid bank and independent candidate, featured almost daily on channel 11. He analysed social and political issues, and frequently quoted the quite obscure paper *Leningradetz*. This actually appeared to be his own, very local, paper. He obviously paid for the airtime.

The second example of the complex relations between financial and political structures concerns the seed money of Channel 11. The station has a license, yet the Director-General of the mother-company Russkoye Video is appointed by the government. Bella Kurkova, is alleged to have transferred money from Channel 5 to the new Channel 3, she herself declared the starting capital of Channel 11 was old party money.

8.3 Radio

The state-owned St. Petersburg radio channel broadcasts to all households, due to the old cable-system. The station provided equal time to all candidates, yet devoted more editorial time to the elections than TV channel 5. During the election related broadcasts, a similar non-partisan attitude could be heard, though the CPRF and the LDPR were underexposed.

Irena Pavlova is the popular anchor-woman of a weekly political programme. She, without any hesitation, stated she favoured the reform-oriented forces in the country. Her programme was open for criticism, in which she featured several "man-in-the-street" items, and provided the public with an opportunity to express their views. Her programme also brought together several experts, who commented on the current problems.

8.4 The print media

The president of the Union of Journalists, which has 1500 members out of 3000 practising journalists, illuminated the ties with the local authorities. Although, according to him, St. Petersburg is a positive exception and any overt interference in the policy of newspapers would be considered indecent, despite some obvious connection with the mayor's office.

Three out of five daily papers are partially owned by the local government, and all papers are printed in the state-owned printing house. This situation of course creates dependency, especially when financial difficulties arise. The pressure exerted is, however, according to the president of the Union, not particularly aggressive, and probably not comparably to the control exerted by other local authorities over "their" media outlets.

Five daily newspapers are published in St. Petersburg, together with some 400 other periodicals. *St. Petersburgskie Vedemosti* has a circulation of 170,000 copies and is by far the largest and most important paper. It is owned by the local government, and the editor-in-chief Oleg Kuzin claims that in one more year his paper will have a larger circulation than all the other daily's in St. Petersburg combined.

St. Petersburgskie Vedemosti was obliged to provide equal space for advertising to all candidates. Additional paid space could be obtained, though it was separated from the editorial material. In fact, Oleg Kuzin accused several independent papers of printing full pages regarding particular candidates, without informing the readers that these articles were actually paid for.

The paper is considered more critical towards federal authorities than towards the local government. It is no secret that the circulation of the paper is enlarged by the collective subscription of institutions related to the local government. Nevertheless, Mr. Kuzin convincingly claimed independence from the Mayors' Office. He admitted that some pressure in "the corridors of power" exists, yet considered his paper certainly not less independent than other local papers, in which financial institutions have a majority of the shares. Mr. Kuzin's account confirmed the information from the president of the journalists' union.

Nevskoye Vremya is a local paper traditionally aimed at intellectuals. The paper claims the average daily circulation is still 86,000 copies daily. The costs for distribution, paper and printing - all monopolies - have multiplied, only 25 percent of the real price of the paper is paid by the subscribers, and consequently sixty percent of the shares were recently sold to the Industrial and Building Bank of St. Petersburg.

The deputy-editor in chief, Vladimir Gronskey, claimed the new situation did not influence the editorial policy. Nevertheless, the paper published an eye-catching interview with political candidate Phillipov, who is also the president of the council of the bank which holds sixty per cent of the shares. "His political ideas are similar to our editorial policy", Mr. Gronskey stated.

Nevskoye Vremya accepted advertising in the form of articles from all parties, except those which are considered fascists or encourage violence. This concealed advertising was also defended by the deputy-editor. "Our readers are intelligent enough to make up their mind".

8.5 Conclusions

The main television network in St. Petersburg, Channel 5, did not cover the elections very thoroughly. It should, however, be realised that residents of St. Petersburg also receive ORT, RTR and NTV. Overall, the coverage tended to favour the centrist and reform-oriented parties, while devoting less attention to the communists and extreme nationalists. The new commercial stations also generally encouraged the reform-oriented parties, though they usually pursued their own political goals as well.

The press in St. Petersburg expressed, similar to 1993, a wide variety of political views in the editorial sections and in the advertisements. The "new money" did not harm the pluriformity, yet provides special privileges to sponsors.

The media landscape in St. Petersburg is rapidly changing. New initiatives are being implemented, and of the twenty media professionals interviewed in December 1993, merely two held the same position in December 1995.

Although Channel 5 is still the main station, there is a gradual increase of commercial media. This process will continue, certainly when the economy improves. New financial institutions will create new possibilities, though not always with the intention of creating a strong and independent printing and broadcasting industry. Outlets are created and supported for political purposes, the craving for power to influence is comparable to the communist party in the old days.

The current circumstances do not yet allow for a transformation to a situation in which the self-responsibility for the media is respected.

9 Irkutsk

Located in the Southern part of East Siberia, the Irkutsk region has a population of 2,8 million spread over 767.900 sq. km (1,4 times the size of France). The area is rich in natural resources - coal, petroleum, gas, gold - and one of the leading producers of hydropower. The capital Irkutsk, with 626,000 inhabitants, lies in the South of the region, approximately 50 km from the unique lake Baikal.

The current governor, Yuri Nozhikov, was appointed in 1991, elected in 1993, and did not have to stand again in 1995. The election campaign therefore focused on the deputies to the State Duma and the federal party lists.

One of the main issues in the campaign was the redistribution of wealth between Irkutsk and the federal government. Several incumbent candidates indeed stressed this in their campaign, ensuring voters that the regional economic interests would be best protected by voting for powerful and experienced candidates.

On the whole, the media in Irkutsk devoted quite a lot of time and space to the election campaign. Nevertheless, the usual complaints regarding a lack of analysis and in-depth clarifying information were voiced in Irkutsk as well. In particular, journalists were concerned about the absence of debates. Several attempts to organise round-table discussions failed, since candidates refused to take part.

Various interviewees noted that the numerous articles and programmes concerning the blocs and candidates were due to an inclination to make money, rather than professional journalistic convictions. The elections were generally considered a good possibility to improve the financial situation of the media outlet. Indeed, a most distinct feature in the campaign was the significant presence of hidden advertising, as was confided to the monitoring team by several journalists.

The Regional Election Commission was supposed to monitor the financing of the election campaign. Candidates were allowed to spend money from a dedicated account and all donations were to be made to the same account. Parties and blocs for the federal list received money from the centre. Insufficient resources and personnel, however, prevented the Regional Election Commission from genuinely controlling the money. Nevertheless, the Commission voiced its concern: candidates paid for airtime in cash, whilst it should be done from their bank-account and several candidates and blocs were considered overly noticeable in the course of the campaign.

The Regional Election Commission allocated ten free minutes to all candidates. Initially, not all candidates managed to apply for the free access within the three days following their registration, which was the limit set by the Central Election Commission. It was nevertheless decided by the Regional Election Commission to also grant time to those who were late. This flexible attitude prevented the undue exclusion of some candidates. Unfortunately, Election Commissions in other regions have not been so adaptable and sensitive.

9.1 The Broadcast media

Although far from Moscow, residents of Irkutsk still receive ORT, RTR and even TV-6. Additionally, the Irkutsk State Radio and Television company (ISRT) broadcasts on one channel, which is operated by the local authorities. The main private television companies are Aist and Baikal TV, the latter even operates two channels. Finally, residents of Irkutsk enjoy the possibility of receiving Asiasat-1 via satellite and several district channels via cable.

The *Irkutsk State Radio and Television* company has the most powerful transmitter and manages to reach most people in the region. The channel granted equal airtime to all candidates

and blocs. The free access amounted to 30 minutes daily for the federal list parties/blocs and 20-30 minutes for the candidates participating in the single-mandate constituencies. The chairperson of the company, Ivan Ivanov, complained that the costs for providing the free airtime would far exceed the income from paid advertising. The company would therefore lose money as a result of the campaign. He also alleged that he was offered an illicit payment for advertising, in order to circumvent the spending limit.

According to the media professionals interviewed, the Irkutsk State Radio and Television company has covered the elections rather fairly. Nevertheless, the administration is known to intervene subtly. For instance, when it wanted to promote the coverage of Russia's Democratic Choice, it reminded the channel that Yegor Gaidar is very shy. The only genuine complaint was the absence of debates between candidates. The remark was, however, also made by one of the key-journalists of the channel itself. She claimed she even had to chase candidates to get them on air, yet most refused. Considering the same story was told to the team by several interviewees, the reluctance on the part of candidates to enter debates (both for TV and newspapers) appears to be a serious barrier for sound coverage.

Aist (Alternative Irkutsk) was created by the city council, as an alternative to the regional channel. It currently operates more independently, and has links with Internews. The channel broadcasts mostly films and entertainment programmes and has become somewhat more sensational after the former director left to become director of the Irkutsk State Radio and Television. The daily political programme does not indicate a particular political preference.

Baikal TV is a good example of independent television in Russia's regions. The channel operates independently from the local authorities and has its own transmitter. It is not quite clear which economical structures are behind *Baikal TV*, but considering the channel rebroadcasts material from NTV and TV-6, it is widely suspected that *Baikal TV* is supported from Moscow. Like most independent television channels, *Baikal TV* mostly broadcasts films, soaps and entertainment.

During the election campaign, however, *Baikal TV* carried quite a significant amount of political advertising. The channel also produced clips and programmes for candidates and political parties, which were broadcasted regularly and during news-programmes. Additionally, the channel carried advertising produced by candidates and parties themselves. Although the editor stated that they attempted to be objective in the coverage of the campaign, others mentioned that the channel tends to favour those who advertise.

9.2 The print media

Four types of newspapers exist in Irkutsk. Firstly, the most influential socio-political regional papers, of which *Vostochno-Sibirskaya Pravda* (Truth of Eastern Siberia) and *Sovetskaya Molodyozh* (Soviet Youth) are the prime examples with the highest circulation. Secondly, a few small circulation, fiercely partisan papers, such as *Zemlya* (Land) and *Russki Vostok* (Russia East). Thirdly, various purely commercial tabloids which print advertisements and some local human interest stories. Finally, some of the national papers are for sale in Irkutsk, most notably *Argumenti i Facti*, *Trud* and *Izvestiya*. However, similar to other regions, the circulation of the national papers has decreased dramatically in Irkutsk as well.

Both *Vostochno-Sibirskaya Pravda* and *Sovetskaya Molodyozh* are official papers turned independent. The circulation of both papers has plummeted during the past years. *Vostochno-Sibirskaya Pravda* used to print 155,000 copies daily, currently the circulation is 53,000. *Molodyozh* saw an even sharper decrease: from 165,000 to 43,000. Nevertheless, the papers are considered influential among opinion leaders. Both papers receive income from advertising and sales, but remain dependent on subsidies from the local authorities.

Vostochno-Sibirskaya Pravda is a rather pluralistic newspaper, though somewhat aligned with the authorities. The editorial board is comprised of journalists with different political convictions,

which ensures some internal diversity. Nevertheless, the editor-in-chief makes no secret about the fact that he supports the current local authorities and that his paper would strongly back the governor in case he stands for re-election. The paper occasionally publishes unedited official material and during the campaign it printed an article by the governor, encouraging people to vote for incumbent candidates.

During the election campaign, *Vostochno-Sibirskaya Pravda* published some material for free. However, only those candidates supported by the editorial board received significant free coverage. Most candidates, on the other hand, paid for articles which concerned them. When requested to publish an article regarding a specific candidate, the editorial staff would pick a journalist with corresponding political ideas to write the piece. The obviously positive material could not be distinguished from other editorial contributions. Additionally, *Vostochno-Sibirskaya Pravda* dedicated a special page to political advertising. This material was clearly recognisable and properly separated from the normal text.

Hidden advertising was more reportedly abundant in *Sovetskaya Molodyozh*. When the editor-in-chief was asked to indicate to the monitoring team all the paid material, it turned out that in fact nearly every article was sponsored. Contrary to *Vostochno-Sibirskaya Pravda*, *Sovetskaya Molodyozh* does have a clear-cut ideology. During the campaign, the paper supported the democratic/reform oriented parties and candidates, whilst refusing to cover or accept (hidden) advertising from the CPRF and the LDPR.

The editor-in-chief of *Sovetskaya Molodyozh* was quite frank when he clarified the policy of his paper:

"We support the centrist and democratic parties and candidates, and we publish articles about them for free. We do not cover or accept advertising from the extremist parties since we do not agree with their position. If we would write something about them, it would most likely be negative.

"We prefer paid journalistic material over straightforward advertisements since we want the material to have impact. Nobody pays attention to normal advertisements, articles are more effective."

Sovetskaya Molodyozh is nevertheless a well-respected quality daily in the region. Although supportive of the democratically oriented parties and candidates, financially it certainly functions independently. In fact, neither *Vostochno Sibirskaya Pravda* nor *Sovetskaya Molodyozh* can be considered genuine mouthpieces of the authorities. The position of both papers is due to the convictions of the editorial board and the journalists, rather than financial input from sponsors or pressure from the authorities. They do publish critical articles (although rather mild) and do not feel restricted. Prior censorship or direct interference from the authorities in the policies of these papers is totally absent. In fact, both papers have few to fear and even self-censorship is usually limited by normal decency rather than fear of repression.

The newspaper *Zemlya* presents a rather different case. The paper is fiercely oppositional and strongly supported CPRF candidate A. Romanov during the election campaign. *Zemlya* also accused various top-officials and some candidates of corruption. A large critical article was, for instance, devoted to deputy candidate Yuri Ten, alleging he used his position for personal financial gain. *Zemlya* ran into trouble with the state-printing house, which threatened to sue the paper and suspend printing.

Another strongly aligned paper is *Russki Vostok* (Russia East). The editor-in-chief is a member of the Congress of Russian Communities, and most articles either promoted the ideas of the party or sharply criticised candidates aligned with OHR or Yabloko. The circulation of *Zemlya* and *Russki Vostok* is, however, rather insignificant.

One new trend, particularly noticeable in Irkutsk, deserves to be mentioned. Though liberated from interference by the power structures, media outlets have faced new methods to limit their freedom of expression. A significant number of law-suits have been filed against newspapers

and broadcasters in recent years, mainly by officials and private individuals. *Sovetskaya Molodyozh* alone has been sued almost 100 times during the past three years, which has cost a considerable amount of time and especially money. The fear of being taken to Court has obviously led to self-censorship.

Finally, it should be remarked that an overall look at the coverage of the elections in the Irkutsk media indicated the importance of finance. Some candidates received probably more coverage - paid or unpaid, this is difficult to judge - than could be expected on the basis of their popularity, whilst others advertised significantly. It was mentioned on various occasions to the monitoring team that candidates without sufficient financial backing had problems accessing the media. This once more indicates the links between money, media and politics.

9.3 Conclusions

The election campaign coverage for deputies was fairly intense in Irkutsk. More attention was given to the single mandate candidates and the question which candidate could best protect the economic interests of the region of major concern. Nevertheless few analytical material was published or broadcasted and policies or proposals were hardly discussed. This may, however, be due to the candidates rather than the journalists.

Two factors greatly influenced the election coverage: political ideology and money. Firstly, candidates from the CPRF and the LDPR were strictly confined to their own media, and basically ignored in the more popular broadcast and printed outlets. Candidates from the centre and reform-oriented parties dominated. Secondly, a considerable amount of the material in the Irkutsk media was either covert or overt advertising, probably giving an undue advantage to candidates with ample financial backing.

10 Khabarovsk

The far eastern Khabarovsk krai (province) has a population of approximately 1.6 million and stretches 1800 km from the north to south on a territory of 788,600 sq. km (2,2 times Germany). The southern part is most densely inhabited, and the city of Khabarovsk (population 615,000) is a hub as regards traffic. The Trans-Siberian and the Baikal-Amur railway both cross the town, as do all major roads and the river Amur.

The past years have shown a rather steep increase of the unemployment rate in the region. Not only were many *kolkhoz* dissolved, also the region traditionally housed the military industry, machine factories and metal industry; all have suffered from the reforms. Consequently, some 400,000 people have left the area, in search of better living conditions elsewhere.

This, combined with the general decrease of spending power, the sense that Moscow candidates for the federal lists are not particularly concerned with Khabarovsk and the absence of genuine power of Khabarovsk deputies in the State Duma appear to have created profound apathy towards politics among the general population. This was reflected in the campaign.

The problems in the region have, in fact, created closer ties between the media and the power structures, rather than alienating the two from each other. The local authorities have prepared the Dalnii Vostok (Far East) programme, which contains plans for improving the economic situation and living standards in the region. This programme has been quite widely discussed by all media, and was a crucial issue in the campaign. Other relevant issues were the regulation of taxes and the lack of contact and cooperation with developed countries.

The inhabitants of Khabarovsk krai did not yet have to vote for a new governor. The current governor, Victor Ishayev, was appointed by Yeltsin almost four years ago. Although neighbouring Primorski krai (Vladivostok) did vote for a new governor, Ishayev will only have to stand for re-election next year. This may very well be another reason for the rather tame election campaign in the media. The governor is in practice perceived to be far more influential, especially considering the vast geographical distance between Moscow and Khabarovsk. The elections for governor are therefore predicted to attract more debate and media coverage.

The elections for the party lists and the majority districts have attracted equally little attention. Neither is perceived more important than the other.

10.1 The broadcast media

Khabarovsk krai receives ORT and RTR. In addition, the regional Far East Radio and Television (FERT) company operates one channel, which is controlled by the local authorities. Finally, several private television channels are operative, among which TV Amur, SET and Integral are the most well known. Narodnaya Kompaniya is a new private channel, and therefore little is known about the content.

The FERT company has broadcast election material free for all the candidates contesting the two available Duma seats. Although this has not been monitored meticulously, the team has been assured during various interviews that free time has been granted equally to all candidates. However, most of the broadcasts were fairly uninspiring direct-to-the-camera monologues, and candidates have been criticised for not clarifying how their promises would be fulfilled.

Additionally, the programme „Panorama“ has provided information about the elections. According to the media professionals interviewed, this has been done in a fair and balanced manner, due to the relative independence and probably also due to the fact that the governor is not involved in the elections. Two interviewees stated that next year, Ishayev will most likely use the channel to promote himself.

FERT has also organised debates between candidates, which have been perceived as informative. No complaints about the moderator favouring one of the participant were received.

Nevertheless, two cases of less professional coverage by FERT deserve to be mentioned. Firstly, the image of V. Mantulov, candidate for the Duma, was significantly harmed in a programme which enumerated all the allegations and Court cases against him. Secondly, the company allowed the former wife of candidate V. Danilyuk to discredit her husband in a sensational interview. The candidates were not allowed a right of reply.

Both SET and TV Amur have been launched nearly four years ago and broadcast mainly music and films. However, both channels also have a news programme, which allegedly support some candidates (in particular the ones that pay for this airtime). However, since the monitoring team had no opportunity to meet representatives from the channels, this is not confirmed.

Whilst SET and TV Amur operate independently, Integral is a rather different story. This channel is owned by the wealthy Valentin Tsoi, a candidate for the CPRF. In addition, he owns the radio channel Prospect. Quite openly, Tsoi used these channels to promote his candidature. The channels carried an abundance of pro-Tsoi advertising and the (very well paid) journalists obediently reported about him throughout the campaign. When Tsoi was criticised by other media outlets shortly before polling, both Integral and Prospect insulted the journalists concerned and accused them of slander. This type of mini-Berlusconi mingling of media ownership and political aspirations of course raises doubts about the fairness and the equality of opportunities.

10.2 The print media

In fact merely two genuine regional newspapers exist, namely *Tikookeanskaya Zvezda* (Pacific Ocean Star) and *Priamurskie Vedomosti*. The former has been founded in 1920, is financed by the local authorities and has the largest circulation (over 100,000). The paper regularly carries material regarding Ishayev and can quite safely be considered to be within his sphere of influence. The governor pays for the newsprint, the editorial office is located in state premises and the paper is printed in the state printing house. *Zvezda* carried free political advertising, allocating 120 lines to each candidate. Additionally, candidates could buy space, of which they could determine the appearance themselves (either as an advertisement or an article).

During the election campaign, *Tikookeanskaya Zvezda* has been involved in two cases which merit attention. Firstly, the paper quite understandably refused to print a 24-page long article submitted by the then deputy to the Duma Vladimir Baryshev. The paper suggested to publish a shortened version, but the deputy refused and threatened to sue the editorial board. Secondly, *Tikookeanskaya Zvezda* published on 15 December a highly critical article concerning Valentin Tsoi. The candidate was accused of evading taxes and using particularly illicit methods for being elected.

The other regional newspaper, *Priamurskie Vedomosti* operates more independently. The newspaper survives on advertising and sales and has established its own printing house, only occasionally renting equipment from the local authorities. The paper may therefore, and according to its content, be considered as genuinely independent.

A slightly similar case is the *Khabarovsk Express* (weekly), although the content of this tabloid is less serious and objective. The paper has been launched in October 1993 as the first „city paper“, and has been fairly successful, perhaps due to the popular format, the attractive lay-out, the human-interest approach, the appealing topics and the lack of political information. The *Khabarovsk Express* can, to some extent, be compared to a Western-European tabloid like the *Daily Mail* (it is not quite as superficial as the *Sun*), although it is doubtful whether any Western paper would be so blunt to compare Zhirinovskiy with Hitler, by calling him „Führer“ in one of the headlines. This may illustrate the opinionated editorial content, which is by no means separated

from the news coverage. The editor-in-chief, Stanislav Gluchov, said that: „This is my paper, we follow our own line, and if I want to voice my opinion, comment or criticise, I do so“. However condemnable this may sound, the *Khabarovsk Express* functions independently, get their income from advertising, have their own printing facilities and occasionally criticise the local authorities (especially the mayor). The editorial staff does practice some form of self-censorship though, partly because offices are located in a building that belongs to the city council.

Besides the three newspapers mentioned above, inhabitant of Khabarovsk enjoy the possibility of reading very low circulation district papers. These papers are usually 4 pages A3, have a circulation of maximum 10,000 and carry *only* local news. *Nashe Vremya*, *Dalnevostoyche* and *Amurskii Komsomolsk* are among the most well known. In addition, three Moscow (or national) papers are available in Khabarovsk: *Trud*, *Izvestiya* and *Argumenty i Fauty*. Occasionally, one can buy Pravda. It should be mentioned, however, that the circulation of Moscow papers has declined tremendously over the past years. Before, people used to read two papers. Faced with a choice, for financial reasons, most people prefer to read the regional paper, and rely for the national news on ORT and RTR.

10.3 Conclusions

Most of the features of the media and the coverage of the elections in Khabarovsk are not unique. The lack of in-depth analysis, the overexposure of incumbent politicians and well-known candidates, the lack of media exposure of candidates without sufficient money to buy time or space and the general low level of interest on the part of the audience can be observed in other regions as well. The structural difficulties, especially financial, for individual outlets is neither very particular, nor is the existence of hidden advertising and the importance of money in the campaign.

11 Nizhnii Novgorod

Situated approximately 400 km East from Moscow, the province Nizhnii Novgorod has a population of 3,7 million, located on a relatively small area of 76,900 sq. km (twice the size of the Netherlands). Over a third of the inhabitants (1,4 million) live in the old and historically interesting capital Nizhnii Novgorod.

The region is fairly impecunious. The average and minimum salary are below the Russian Federation average, which may be due to the relatively old composition of the population.

Besides voting for deputies to the State Duma and parties for the federal list, voters in Nizhnii Novgorod had to cast ballots for a governor. Citizens of the capital even had to vote four times, since they had to choose a mayor additionally. The elections for the governor's seat overshadowed the other elections in terms of coverage and consequences for the conduct of the media during the campaign.

The incumbent governor Boris Nemtsov was appointed in 1991 and dominated the campaign in the media. He gained a significant, yet undue, advantage from his position. In his wake, the incumbent mayor, Ivan Sklyarov, also received a considerable amount of coverage. Both candidates featured in numerous spots, news-programmes, advertisements and newspaper articles. Their coverage prompted one correspondent to remark:

"The main violation of the law on elections was the permanent presence of Boris Nemtsov on television. Nobody would want to compare the actual costs for Nemtsov's campaign with the spending limit set by the Central Election Commission".

Aside from purchasing significant amounts of advertising, both Nemtsov and Sklyarov gained advantage from their many appearances in news and entertainment programmes. The television channels devoted time to every activity of the governor, following him throughout his whole campaign through the region, reporting on every speech, meeting or newly opened house for the disabled. The contrast between the coverage of Nemtsov and Sklyarov and other candidates for the post of governor or mayor was particularly sharp. For instance, Sklyarov's major rival, Dmitri Bednyakov, was granted only a total of 20 minutes of airtime, and a few marginal articles in the press.

Additionally, both candidates could be seen during more informal programmes. The mayor, for instance, answered personal questions in a 45 minute interview on the programme entitled "Without a neck-tie". To finally illustrate the dominance of these incumbents: on the last day of the election campaign a prime-time 45 minute live broadcast was devoted to both men.

Another significant feature of the campaign was the presence of advertising, both overt and concealed. This had two major implications. Firstly, the prices for advertising on television and in the press doubled during the course of the campaign, and reached a peak in the week preceding the elections. Prices for hidden advertising approached those for normal. Generally, the elections were regarded by the local media outlets as an excellent opportunity to improve the financial situation.

Secondly, the high prices for advertising had a discriminating effect. Prices for one minute airtime on the main regional channels ranged from \$255,- at the end of November to \$680,- shortly before the elections. It was clear that only some candidates or parties could afford such substantial sums. For instance, Nadir Khafisov, a candidate for the 122 constituency and director of the SPC Ek-Oil Company, bought considerable amounts of advertising daily. He did not confine himself to spot advertisements, appearing regularly in 5 to 15 minutes long publicity programmes on various channels. Only one other candidate in this district purchased advertising as well, though marginally compared to Khafisov.

A similar slant towards candidates with money was observed in the printed press. Two major papers, for instance, published favourable, clearly paid, articles regarding Nadir Khafisov (again) and Yuri Sedov, the director of the Upper Volga Oil Pipeline Company and a candidate for Our Home is Russia. Overall, out of the 19 candidates in the region, a mere seven advertised in the media.

Advertisements by or information concerning federal list parties was far more irregular. Nevertheless, it can be noted that the parties which did buy airtime on the regional channels coincided with those that purchased most spots on the federal channels (ORT/RTR). The LDPR, OHR, Yabloko and Russia's Democratic Choice, for instance, were the most prominent advertisers on the regional channels in Nizhnii Novgorod as well. One particular case deserves to be mentioned: the bloc of Ivan Rybkin, which bought a most significant amount of advertising in the federal media, acquired a 50 minute programme on Set' Nizhnii Novgorod (NN) during the final phase of the campaign.

The Regional Election Commission made, to the best of our knowledge, no attempts to monitor or control the tendencies described above.

11.1 The broadcast media

Residents of Nizhnii Novgorod oblast receive ORT, RTR and TV-6. Additionally, people can watch four state-owned and two private channels, which together comprise a most complicated schedule. The Federal Television and Radio Company (FTRC) broadcasts 25,5 hours a week and shares channel three with Nizhnii Novgorod Provincial TV Company (NNTV) and Nizhegorodsky Meridian, which broadcasts 24 hours and 2,5 hours weekly respectively. FTRC and NNTV broadcast every other day, Meridian only twice a week.

The commercial channel Volga broadcasts from 8.00 to 10.00 and from 24.00 to 3.00 on channel seven, which is occupied by Dzerzhninsk Television Company (DTV) from 10.00 to 24.00. Finally, the privately owned Set' Nizhnii Novgorod broadcasts on channel 3 every weekday from 6.00 to 9.00 and over 12 hours on Sunday. Residents of the area allegedly got used to this scheme⁷.

The state-owned channels FTRC, NNTV, Meridian and DTV are subsidised by the local authorities. This dependency may have triggered the clear and successful cooperation between these companies and Boris Nemtsov. The governor further encouraged the positive coverage by granting financial rewards to TV channels which featured him with a large degree of prominence. The chairmen of the FTRC, for instance, received a bonus of 500 thousand Rubbles (\$107,-).

Of these four channels, FTRC and NNTV are the most important, in terms of broadcasting hours and audience share. The governor frequently featured on both channels. His main rival, V. Rasteryaev, supported by the CPRF, the APR and Dershava, appeared on TV for the first time during the regulated free access. Nevertheless, during the final week of the campaign, a meeting of Rasteryaev with his supporters was briefly covered once on FTRC and NNTV, and the candidate managed to buy some additional airtime.

Direct pressure on the TV companies was absent, yet unnecessary. The understanding between the local authorities and the outlets - exchanging financial support for coverage - worked satisfactorily for both sides. Additionally, the companies sold advertising time to candidates for deputy and to federal political parties.

In general, the state-owned TV companies, and especially FTRC and NNTV, work fairly professionally⁸. Children, sports and cultural programmes alternate with news and current affairs programmes. Several broadcasts, in particular those dealing with culture, are interesting and

⁷ Glasnost Defense Foundation (December 1994). *Journalists and Journalism of the Russian Province. A Survey.*

⁸ Ibid

well-made. The private TV companies, Volga and Set' NN, produce less material themselves and are not quite so professional. Bountiful bad-quality American films, a selection from Western news programmes, and abundant advertising constitute most of the broadcasting hours. Nevertheless, some programmes on the commercial channels are valuable.

Perhaps unfortunately the private TV companies could or did not balance the deficiencies of the state-owned channels. Volga devoted most time to the governor, while Set' NN did not play an important role in the campaign. It should be noted that even the commercial channels depend on the authorities, since they require a licence to broadcast on their frequencies.

On the whole, television coverage of the campaign lacked comparative analysis and debates. This may be due to political and economic dependency, scarcity of resources or (quite likely) an uncooperative attitude on the part of politicians. The latter problem was illustrated on several occasions. For instance, FTRC had organised a prime-time live debate between the four candidates running for mayor. A mere one showed up, two sent a videoclip and one was simply absent without prior notification.

11.2 The print media

Since Nizhnii Novgorod is not far from Moscow, most national newspapers are on sale. *Argumenti i Facti*, *Izvestiya*, *Trud* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* are transmitted directly by photo-telegraph, but most others are delivered in hard-copy. Nevertheless, interest in the federal papers has fallen sharply.

Nizhnii Novgorod has four main regional papers. *Nizhegorodski Novosti* (NN news), *Nizhegorodski Rabochii* (NN Worker) and *Zemlya Nizhegorodskaya* (NN Land) are subsidised by the local authorities. The former two are general interest papers, which backed the governor and the mayor during the election campaign. *Zemlya* is supported by the Agricultural department and has a good reputation in the rural areas. *Nizhegorodskaya Pravda* is subsidised by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and supported the party.

Additionally, several smaller circulation papers are published. Most relevant to the campaign are *Muzhiki* (Men) and *Delo* (Cause). Both opposed the incumbent governor during the campaign. *Muzhiki* understandably supported Nemtsov's opponent Rasteryaev, since the paper is owned by the latter candidate. Finally, several business weeklies (*Birzha*/Stock Exchange, *Nizhegorodskaya Yarmarka*/NN Fair) and some general interest magazines are published in the region. These, however, did not play a role during the campaign.

The circulation of the regional newspapers has dwindled over the past two years, as is revealed by the following table.

Title	Circulation 1993	Circulation 1995
<i>Nizhegorodskaya Pravda</i>	48,000	35,000
<i>Nizhegorodskiye Novosti</i>	38,000	23,000
<i>Zemlya Nizhegorodskaya</i>	60,000	35,000
<i>Nizhegorodsky Rabochy</i>	35,000	25,000
<i>Delo</i>	20,000	20,000

Approaching the end of the campaign, the printed media landscape polarised. *Muzhiki*, *Nizhegorodskaya Pravda* and *Delo* reported negatively about Boris Nemtsov, while applauding the CPRF, the CRC and the APR. On the other hand, *Nizhegorodsky Rabochy* and *Nizhegorodskiye Novosti* supported the governor, the mayor and the democratic/reform oriented parties. When *Pravda* published a call from the women's council to vote for Rasteryaev, *Novosti* responded by printing a recommendation from other women to elect Nemtsov.

Nevertheless, *Novosti* remained fairly professional and objective. The paper published an informative and balanced article about Zyuganov's (CPRF) visit and even briefly presented the party programme of Skokov (CRC).

11.3 Conclusions

The state Duma elections were overshadowed by the elections for governor in Nizhnii Novgorod. Boris Nemtsov, the incumbent governor, received an undue advantage from his position, and dominated the media coverage of the elections on TV, and to a lesser extent in the press.

Advertising played a significant role during the campaign. The increased and relatively high prices did, however, have a discriminating effect. Some candidates bought substantial amounts of advertising, while others could not buy their access to the media.

12 Bashkortostan Republic

The autonomous republic of Bashkortostan (Bashkiriya) covers 143,600 sq. km (slightly smaller than Tunisia) and has a population of over four million, about one million of whom live in the capital, Ufa. The population is divided in different ethnic groups: 39,3 per cent Russian, 28,4 per cent Tatar, 21,9 per cent Bashkir and 10,4 per cent others. The ethnic division creates some tension, especially between Tatars and Bashkirs. The latter are considered a "minority in power", since they occupy about 60 per cent of the governing positions.

Autonomous republics are entitled to elect a president - in contrast to the regions (oblasts, krais or okrugs), which have a head of administration. Moreover, republics have the right to adopt their own constitution and can introduce legislation.

The president of Bashkiriya, Murtaza Rakhimov, was elected in 1993. He has, according to our correspondent, developed a strong centralised system of local authority, which exerts influence on all aspects of social life in the republic. The consequences of his rule for the media and the coverage of the campaign are outlined in detail below.

Quite importantly, a republic-wide referendum was held in conjunction with the 17 December State Duma elections. The public had to vote on two questions:

- Should the agricultural land of Bashkiriya be subject to unlimited sale?
- Do you believe that the policy of developing Bashkiriya's economic independence within a renewed Russia should be based on the republic's constitution and the treaty between the Russian Federation and the republic of Bashkortostan dated 3 August 1994?

The first question hardly requires clarification as it concerns agricultural privatisation. The second question is more complicated, yet it suffices to mention that a "yes" vote would help the president to ensure increased sovereignty.

According to our correspondents, the media in the Bashkortostan republic are constantly pressured and were used as instruments of propaganda by the president and his apparatus, both with regard to the referendum and the parliamentary elections.

12.1 Pressure

Foremost, it should be remarked that virtually all media outlets in the republic depend (to some extent) on donations from the local government. This applies to broadcast media as well as to print media. The dependency on state donations ensured loyalty. Criticising the local authorities seemed out of the question. All outlets appeared to realise that non-compliance would end financial support, or worse still, lead to the prohibition of distribution.

The control over the media is coordinated by Secretary of State Mansur Ayupov, at the same time the chief political advisor to the president, and known for the statement: "We will back everybody who will help to increase the sovereignty of Bashkortostan". The Ministry of Press and Information issued guidelines for the implementation of the desired editorial policy, controls the adherence and distributes the subsidies. The State Inspection for Protecting Freedom of the Press is supposed to deal with complaints, yet these are rarely submitted. Moreover, the body has practically no influence and depends on the Ministry of Press and Information.

Besides exercising strict control over the output of state-supported media, the government also impeded the functioning of the few independent outlets. Each outlet that opposed Rakhimov's craving for more sovereignty could expect trouble. In fact, nearly all opposition papers have either been forced out, closed down or could no longer make ends meet.

The publication *Ekonomika i My* (Economy and Us), for instance, was published by the Vostok bank, the chairman of which, Rafis Kadyrov, was Rakhimov's main rival during the gubernatorial elections and an opposition candidate in the 1995 elections. *Ekonomika i My* enjoyed the highest circulation in 1993, yet was refused access to the local printing facilities in 1994. The state distribution system could neither be used, and consequently circulation dropped, overhead burgeoned and the paper folded.

Radio Titan presents another interesting example of the pressure exerted on opposition media by the authorities. The station is independent, gets its income from advertising revenue and supports the Party of Russian Unity and Accord (Sergei Shakhrai). Titan used to be critical towards the republic's government and the audience grew steadily. Subsequently, the station was threatened with closure, could not broadcast on the dedicated, republic-controlled, frequency for several months and was forced to moderate its political stance.

Finally, the case of *Vechernyaya Ufa* (Evening Ufa) is most illustrative for the climate in Bashkortostan. In 1994, the municipal paper openly criticised the local authorities and gained wide recognition for it. Financial independence, ensured by much advertising, gave the editors the courage to challenge Rakhimov and his apparatus. In early 1995, however, several key-journalists were removed from the staff by the local authorities and *Vechernyaya Ufa* was forced to revise its editorial line. The paper ceased to address the painful and controversial issues it would have covered before, and can currently be listed with the other "loyal" papers.

12.2 The media during the campaign

For the sake of clarity, the way in which the media supported the authorities is divided into four sections, in accordance with the four votes the public was supposed to cast: federal party list; constituency candidate; and the two questions in the referendum.

The campaign gained particular momentum during the two weeks prior to the elections and the referendum.

12.2.1 Support for Our Home is Russia

Victor Chernomyrdin's bloc was backed by Rakhimov for a simple and overtly declared reason: the president believed that in return for votes, Chernomyrdin would promote large scale investments in the republic. Considering the prime minister's powerful position and his former occupation, he was regarded by far the most fitting person to stimulate the local petrochemical industry.

Consequently, Our Home is Russia was grossly overexposed. Remarks from politicians connected to Our Home is Russia received most considerable coverage. The media reported extensively about meetings with voters, placed long monologues (in the press) or featured lengthy interviews (on television). The discrepancy between Our Home is Russia and several other parties was striking. Although the visits of some other party leaders to Ufa was noticed and reported, the coverage was by no means comparable to what OHR candidates could expect.

The message that there was "no alternative to Our Home is Russia" was repeatedly emphasised in long background articles from prominent scholars and in collective letters from labourers. Moreover, regional OHR leaders, and some of its candidates, started to appear in media outlets about two weeks prior to the elections for no particular reason. For instance, the main republic wide newspaper had a "hot line" to several candidates, which allowed them to comment regularly on the situation and boost their own profile.

12.2.2 Defamation of opposition candidates

The republic is comprised of five constituencies. In three of these single mandate districts, the candidate supported by the local authorities hardly faced opposition. In the other two constituencies, the Our Home is Russia candidates were seriously challenged by candidates from the Party for Russian Unity and Accord.

The candidates from this party emerged as "enemies number one", according to our correspondent. Rakhimov stated that the Party for Russian Unity and Accord wanted to divide Russia in provinces. In return, the chairman of the party, Sergei Shakhrai, accused the Bashkortostan government of training soldiers for Dudayev! Shakhrai was attacked quite fiercely by the local media.

The single mandate candidates were defamed in a fairly effective manner. The local press printed negative letters to the editor and published compromising material. Alternatively, the media did not report about opposition candidates at all. The two, allegedly quite popular, Party for Russian Unity and Accord candidates, for instance, were hardly included in the general news coverage. Rafis Kadyrov, aligned with Stanislav Govorukhin's bloc and former rival of Rakhimov in the race for the presidency, was simply ignored, though he was one of the most prominent contestants.

12.2.3 Promoting Bashkirian sovereignty

The regional media were clearly instructed to encourage a "yes" vote on this question in the referendum, since it would empower the republic's autonomy and Rakhimov's leadership. Two weeks prior to the referendum, all outlets published a series of articles commending the considerable accomplishments of the republic. In fact, all articles and reportage's concerned with the topic were significantly biased and eulogised the government and all its achievements.

One so called attempt at balanced reporting was a debate between an advocate and an opponent of increased sovereignty. Unfortunately, the latter was a retired labourer, while the former was a high ranking academic, who sounded far more authoritative and convincing.

12.2.4 Preventing privatisation of agricultural land

The state and collective farms have remained in place in Bashkortostan. Interestingly, the media launched a campaign against private property of land a few months before the government announced its plans to put the question to a referendum.

In the final week preceding the elections, this issue was most extensively covered. All republic-wide papers published an interview with president Rakhimov, in which he stated: "We have already sold out everything. Soon we will remain without any property". Moreover, both the broadcast and print media regularly featured advocates of the collective farm system. For instance, interviews with *kolkhozniks*, articles written by economists who oppose market-oriented reforms, labourers opinions, etc. Our correspondent reported not having seen one article promoting agricultural market reform.

12.3 The broadcast media

Virtually all electronic media in the region are subservient to the government. The State Television and Radio Company Bashkortostan (STRB) operates two TV channels and one radio station, which are on air for about four hours daily. They reach 98% of the population, depend fully on state subsidies and cover mainly social and political topics.

The "commercial" TV channels Tolpar and Shark share the third frequency. Though private in name, Tolpar is actually a branch of STRB and Shark is owned by the Ufa city administration. The two companies mainly broadcast entertainment. Shark also operates a radio station, which survives on advertising income, airs music and entertainment and is not politically engaged.

The most notable exception (already discussed above) is radio Titan, owned by Altaf Galayev, candidate for the Party of Russian Unity and Accord. The station supported him, yet it was not quite as outspoken as before. Radio Titan for instance allowed Galayev on air regularly, but it did not defame the authorities.

12.4 The print media

Over 200 newspapers are registered in the republic, yet few are regularly published and have some significance. Moscow papers are readily available, yet the overall circulation dropped from 496,00 in 1993 to 476,000 in 1995. In contrast, the subscription to regional and district papers increased over the same period by 1.4 and 1.1 times respectively.

The four most relevant regional papers are:

- *Sovietskaya Bashkiriya* circulation 67,000, published daily.
- *Izvestiya Bashkortostana* circulation 33,000, published daily.
- *Bashkortostan* Bashkir language paper, circulation 35,000, published daily.
- *Kyzyl Tan* Bashkir language paper, circulation 64,000, published daily.

All are located in the House of Press, are not financially solvent and depend on subsidies. Economic or political independence appears to be a distant goal.

Advertising income cannot ameliorate the situation, since (a) the revenues from advertising are insignificant; and (b) the strict control prevented the papers from pursuing an independent policy and from selling their space.

The only genuine opposition paper is *Otechestvo* (Fatherland), which is sponsored by the Party for Russian Unity and Accord and published outside the republic, in Chelyabinsk. However, it appears irregular (due to financial difficulties) and has an insignificant circulation. It therefore has a marginal impact on the political atmosphere in the republic.

12.5 Conclusions

If anything, the circumstances for the media in Bashkortostan are worst, compared to the other regions discussed in this report.

The state-supported outlets in the republic are financially and politically dependent on a government which seemed to determine large chunks of the content and strictly controlled the rest. The few opposition outlets which challenged Rakhimov ran into problems; most were forced to fold or revise their political stance.

The campaign appeared a continuous flow of uniform pre-agreed material. In accordance with the presidential opinion, the media supported Our Home is Russia, defamed opposition candidates, encouraged a "yes" vote for more sovereignty of the republic and disapproved the idea of privatisation of agricultural land.

13 Tatarstan

Tatarstan is an autonomous republic which created a precedent by its stand-off with the federal authorities over its sovereignty, following the republic's declaration of sovereignty in 1992. The population of the autonomy is 3,754,800, of which 48,5 per cent are ethnic Tatars, 43,3 per cent are Russians and 3,7 per cent are Chuvashs. A little over 1 million people live in the capital Kazan.

35 candidates competed for 5 seats to the State Duma. Both the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and the more fundamental Communists - Working Russia - For the Soviet Union conducted a well-organised and vigorous campaign in Tatarstan. The centrist and reform-oriented blocs had certain difficulties in positioning their candidates.

A specific feature of the campaign was the issue of non-participation in the elections. A number of the nationalist-oriented parties and public organisations (a regional branch of the Ittifik party, the Tatar Public Centre, the Sovereignty Committee) called upon the public to boycott the elections, which they considered elections of a neighbouring-state and, therefore, in contravention to the republic's constitution and declaration of sovereignty.

The media, both in Tatar and Russian languages, provided space for the debate on ethnic Tatars' participation in the polls. The opinions ranged from the greatest possible involvement, with the goal of forming a Moslem-Tatar faction in the Duma, to boycotting the elections. On the whole, the journalists' coverage of the issue was neutral and rather balanced.

Another prominent feature of the campaign was a divergence of political attitudes between Kazan and the provinces, which was enlarged by the attitudes of media outlets. The republic's government did not exert any direct political influence on the regional media outlets situated in Kazan. The local (rayon, etc.) media outlets, on the other hand, were generally dependent on city or district administrations. Although declining further every year, subsidies from the republic's budget were still the main leverage of governmental policies, which was of particular importance to the Tatar-language publications. After all, subsidies helped to retain the balance between Russian-language and Tatar-language publications. The latter appear to lose the battle for advertisers.

Of the recent media-related scandals, the most prominent was the close-down of the republic's first private newspaper *Kazanski Telegraph*. The newspaper was closed in 1994 following a quote from a Moscow publication in one of the articles which had offended president Minitmer Shaimiyev. Characteristically, no official proceedings were instituted.

On the other hand, a reporter from the *Arsky* district newspaper, who was fired under the pressure of the head of the district administration, was reinstated with support of the regional Union of Journalists and the court.

The campaign in Tatarstan was less energetic than in 'mainland' Russia. Local branches of parties and blocs were less active in cooperation with the regional media, due to (among other reasons) lack of funding. Moreover, some of the blocs and parties preferred to use their party-affiliated media outlets.

The prevailing attitude of voters was disinterest. *Vechernyaya Kazan* quoted an opinion poll conducted by Russia's Democratic Choice, which indicated that only two weeks prior to the polling date, few of the respondents could name their constituency candidates or a political party.

The media shared the attitude of scepticism towards and alienation from the federal authorities. Outlets provided rather ironic coverage of visiting candidates, published topical cartoons and similar material which underlined oddities in the campaign.

13.1 The broadcast media

The republic's State Council and the Cabinet of Ministers supervise the state television and radio channels which are considered to be the mouthpiece of the local authorities. In accordance with the CEC guidelines, the Tatarstan TV channel and the Tatarstan radio channel provided 5 minutes of free access to each candidate.

On December 11 the Tatarstan television channel aired an unscheduled interview with the president of the republic, M. Shaimiyev. Although repeatedly described as a private voter, seated against the background of the autonomy's state flag, the president urged the people to participate in the elections and declared his support for Our Home is Russia. Shaimiyev said that "only the presidential status prevents me from joining the bloc."

During the week preceding the elections, the share of paid advertising on state television increased considerably, including local and federal candidates.

As concerns the commercial broadcast outlets, TV Efir consistently covered the elections, in news programmes and interviews with federal candidates.

13.2 The print media

Two rather influential newspapers have been published since the Soviet regime. *Vechernyaya Kazan* and *Izvestya Tatarstana* were quite critical concerning the government and loyal to the views of the low-income population. Compared to other media outlets, the publications provided the most timely and detailed coverage of the campaign.

Vechernyaya Kazan published material which did not correspond to its editorial stance separately under the heading 'Advertising'. On November 28, the paper published a sarcastic review of the candidates' televised monologues under the title 'Be Careful - Talking Heads', which was mildly critical regarding Our Home Is Russia.

Izvestya Tatarstana, on the other hand, published since October 1995 a weekly supplement entitled *Reform and Society*, which consisted mainly of political advertising for Our Home is Russia. The contract with Teleradiopressa news agency (Moscow), which produced the adverts, was allegedly worth 40 million rubbles (\$8,600).

As concerns other well-established newspapers, the Kazan-based *Respublika Tatarstan*, which is orientated at a regional audience, was somewhat critical towards the authorities. Mr Morozov, a deputy to the previous Duma who was also running for a second term, is on the editorial board. As a candidate Morozov was officially not allowed to cover the elections. Despite this, he published several articles which focused on the Duma's collusion. On one occasion, Morozov circumvented the regulation by substituting the word "elections" with the letter Y.

The policies of the newly-found newspapers varied. *Chris* did not cover the elections, whereas *Kazanski Kuriyer* backed Russia's Democratic Choice - United Democrats. The latter is edited by V. Mikhailov, a Duma deputy running for a second term. Interestingly, five out of six *Kazanski Kuriyer* issues published in the course of six months prior to the elections were distributed free of charge. *Pochtovy Kuriyer* not only published articles by Morozov but also openly supported him.

The indifference of the Tatar-speaking population towards the elections was reflected in the local Tatar-language media. Most papers published minimal information on the political platforms and programmes, complemented reports from the Regional Election Commission. Some editors stated that their paper only included information on the elections in case there was no genuine possibility to refrain.

One paper, however, was rather active. The radical Ittifak-founded *Altyn Urda* singled out the NUR Moslem movement and urged expatriate Tatars to vote for it, while being critical towards other Moslem- or Tatar-orientated blocs and parties. In the final week of the campaign, the newspaper demonstrated a peculiar editorial flexibility and carried information concerning the local Russian millionaire S. Shashurin, sentenced for scheming with KaMAZ trucks. He was praised as a defendant of justice.

The elections were a source of additional income for the media outlets. *Respublika Tatarstan* charged 20,000 rubbles (\$4,3) for each square centimetre of advertising. Prior to 11 December, the 1 type-written page in the *Vechernyaya Kazan* cost three million rubbles (\$645), in the final week it increased to five million rubbles (\$1,075). According to Ivan Rybkin's bloc associate in Kazan, *Vechernyaya Kazan* was considered overpriced at the Moscow headquarters of the bloc and it refrained from advertising there. Consequently, some parties directly mailed their publications to the voters. An increased number of advertising spreadsheets distributed free of charge were widely used for canvassing, especially in the last week of the campaign.

It should be noted that the regional press did not cover the candidates evenly, and sometimes in contravention to professional standards and the election law. The state-run *Molodyozh Tatarstana* gave an inadequate coverage of Nikolai Ryzhkov's visit to Kazan under the heading "The Weeping Bolshevik? It's too boring". The editor of the state-run *Tatarstan Yashlyare* newspaper refused to provide space for the candidates' election platforms, arguing it would discourage readers from subscribing. A candidate of the Ivan Rybkin's bloc had to pay 25 million roubles (\$5,400) for a half-page of A-3 format. All the above mentioned facts went unnoticed by the public supervisory commission established at the Tatarstan Regional Election Commission.

14 Perm

Located in the Western Urals, the Perm province has a total population of about 3 million people, and covers 160,600 sq. km. The homonymous capital Perm has 1 million inhabitants. About 50% of the population are employed in production; mining, chemical- and machine-industry are most vital to the region. However, both the agricultural and the industrial output has decreased in recent years, while the unemployment rate soared.

Although the whole election campaign had a relatively calm and sober character, some issues rose to the surface. The necessity to halt the decline of the agricultural and industrial production, the growing criminality and corruption and the competence of some (opposition) leaders were key-topics in the month preceding the elections.

Governor Boris Kuznetsov was appointed in 1991 and did not have to stand for election. He was, however, candidate for the State Duma on Our Home is Russia's list. The Chair of the Legislative Assembly, Yevgenii Sapiro, should be introduced here as an important politician in the region who played a particular role in the election campaign. In general, it can be noted that the regional administration is aligned to the political centre, or, more specifically, to Our Home is Russia and Russia's Democratic Choice.

Before illustrating the consequences this had for the media coverage of the elections, the generally tolerant attitude of the local government towards the media should be discussed. In 1991, following the adoption of the federal law on mass media, the local authorities "abandoned" the media. However, besides the control and influence, also the subsidies to outlets ceased. Several state-owned district and regional newspapers re-registered as "independent", yet still faced rising costs for printing, paper, distribution and taxes. The circulation declined and the financial situation for many outlets became particularly problematic.

The regional branch of the Union of Journalists, in conjunction with several editors in chief, attempted to ameliorate the situation by requesting the local authorities to resume the subsidies. Amenable to the problems of the media outlets, the authorities lowered the income tax for editorial boards and printing houses and provided grants to local and district papers. This, of course, created some dependence, although most editors-in-chief appeared pleased with the new situation. Some papers and electronic outlets remained entirely independent, and were to survive solely on sales, advertising and donations.

Although seemingly distanced from any interference in the content of the media, the local authorities did (mildly) attempt to prejudice the results in their favour (OHR, RDC). Since it remains difficult to determine to what extent the policy of newspapers and TV channels was due to editorial decisions rather than influence from the authorities, a cautious approach is taken, and only some examples are mentioned below.

Firstly, an appeal to vote for Our Home is Russia from several scientists and well-known public figures was published in one of the main regional newspapers (*Permskie Novosti*). The list of signatures included Yevgenii Sapiro.

Secondly, the chairmen of Perm State TV Company (T7), Grigorii Volchek, is very closely aligned with Yevgenii Sapiro and is a member of Russia's Democratic Choice. Not surprisingly, the channel overtly supported Our Home is Russia and Russia's Democratic Choice. For instance, T7 twice aired an "exclusive interview" with prime minister Victor Chernomyrdin. The programme was, however, not quite as exclusive as it was presented, since it actually was comprised of excerpts from a press conference with journalists from various regions.

T7 also refused to broadcast a live programme regarding the local trade union. The programme had been pre-paid, and concerned the protest of the trade union against the failure of the local authorities to pay the wages of labourers. At the last instance, the broadcast was cancelled by

Volchek, who argued the content was too politicised and could be considered biased pre-election propaganda. Boris Pozharsky, chairman of the trade union, on the other hand, alleged that the local administration itself was responsible for the revocation.

The third example is of a somewhat different nature. Rather than influencing the content of an existing outlet, Kuznetsov suddenly distributed 650,000 copies of a normally very insignificant paper. It contained information about the governor.

Finally, Kuznetsov organised a meeting with all the editors-in-chief of the various newspapers, during which he emphasised his support for Our Home is Russia and promised financial aid to the media.

The Regional Election Commission monitored the implementation and adherence to the regulations governing the election campaign. A special committee, headed by Itar-Tass correspondent Leonid Bagdatyev, was set up and was very active prior and the campaign. The newspaper *Zvezda*, for instance, was fined 1 million rubbles (\$215) for promoting the CRC prior to its registration. The newspaper *Gubernskiye Vesti* received a rap over the knuckles for issuing a calendar with a scantily clad girl holding a photo of a candidate.

The monitoring team regarded the considerate and diligent involvement of the committee in the campaign as most commendable.

14.1 The broadcast media

The province receives ORT and RTR. The regional state TV company T7 broadcasts 2½ to 4½ hours daily, and receives its income from the regional budget and advertising.

The political orientation of T7 and the conduct of the channel in the course of the campaign have been described above. Two other examples of the rather unbalanced reporting deserve to be mentioned. On 13 December, the representative of the president, Sergei Kalyagin, spoke out in favour of OHR: "My whole family has decided to vote for Our Home is Russia". T7 also granted a lot of airtime to Nikolai Mikhalkov, one of the prominent OHR leaders.

The most professional private channel, Vetta, was founded in 1993. The channel broadcasts movies, detective series and some information programmes. Election coverage was, however, virtually completely absent. Two other private channels have been launched recently: Rifei TV and TV Maxima. Neither participated in the campaign, due to lack of political involvement. Moreover, both broadcast for only a few hours each day, and the majority of this time consists of video-clips.

Both did not participate in the campaign, since they broadcast few hours, mainly video-clips and are not politically engaged.

Additionally, six rather insignificant district channels are operated and financed by the district authorities. The TV stations broadcast two hours twice a week. The channel in Perm itself reflected the official positions, yet the coverage on other channels cannot be assessed.

The radio landscape is remarkable similar to that of TV. Grigorii Volchek also chairs T7 radio, which had similar consequences for the political orientation of the station. The private radio channels Avtoradio, Radio Maximum and Music Radio broadcast music and entertainment, and were not engaged in political coverage. The 18 district radio companies are, like the district TV companies, financed by the authorities.

14.2 The print media

Over the past two years, the circulation of some regional papers plummeted dramatically, whereas other papers increased their circulation. The table below provides the figures concerning the most important regional newspapers.

Title	1993	1995
<i>Zvezda</i>	180,000	30,000
<i>Vechernaya Perm</i>	32,000	12,800
<i>Molodaya Gvargiya</i>	60,000	12,000
<i>Permskii Novosti</i>	?	20,000
<i>Mestnoye Vremya</i>	10,000	36,000
<i>Profsoyuzni Kuryer</i>	12,500	25,000
<i>Dossier 02</i>	10,000	30,000

Zvezda was founded in 1917 as a party paper, and traditionally enjoyed the highest circulation and authority. In 1991, it re-registered as an independent paper. As indicated above, the circulation dropped significantly, although the Saturday edition still sells 71,000 copies. *Zvezda* does not receive any subsidies and survives largely on subscription (83% of the circulation) and advertising.

The paper has a centrist political orientation, considering the candidates it supported in the course of the campaign. It should, however, be noted that these (independent) candidates were among the most notable and therefore most eligible for significant coverage.

Permskii Novosti was founded in 1990, to counterbalance the then aligned *Zvezda*. Currently, the political orientation of the paper is rather close to the local authorities: *Permskie Novosti* agreed to publish official documents. Nevertheless, the conduct during the campaign was cautious. The paper supported OHR and RDC, yet also covered several independent candidates.

Mestnoye Vremya was founded in 1991 by a conglomerate of banks and major companies. The co-owner of the paper is also the editor-in-chief, yet the paper is not politically aligned ("none of our founders is running"). *Mestnoye Vremya* enjoys a growing circulation.

Three more or less aligned papers played a minor role in the campaign. *Profsoyuzni Kuryer* is published weekly and supports the trade union; *Dossier 02* is a rather rapidly growing weekly, which is supported by the regional department of internal affairs. Finally, *Mercury* has a circulation of some 12,000 copies and is backed by the foreign trade association.

Additionally, 38 city and district newspapers are printed in small circulation, yet with a combined circulation of 210,000 copies. These papers are subsidised from the regional budget and appeared to be controlled by the authorities concerned.

14.3 Conclusions

Albeit a generally calm campaign, the media in Perm supported the centrist and reform-oriented parties. Governor Kuznetsov was a candidate for Our Home is Russia, the Chair of the Legislative Assembly, Yevgenii Sapiro, a member of Russia's Democratic Choice, and his close ally, Grigorii Volchek, the Director of the regional TV channel. Although most newspapers supported these parties and their candidates, this cannot with certainty be attributed to interference from the authorities.

The wide variety of newspapers in Perm operate without serious interference or pressure from the local authorities. Nevertheless, the problematic financial circumstances force newspapers to look for sponsors, which prevents a genuinely independent press landscape.

15 Tula

The region of Tula occupies 25,700 sq. km, and is therefore somewhat smaller than Belgium. It is located approximately 150 km south of Moscow and has a population of 1.9 million. The historic city of Tula is the capital, and has about 580,000 inhabitants. The region is fairly industrialised, yet average salaries are low and 29 per cent of the population lives under the subsistence level.

The region is divided into three constituencies: Tulskey (the capital), Shchekinsky and Novomoskovsky. 11 candidates per region participated in the first-past-the-post elections. The most renowned contestant in Tulskey certainly was General Alexandr Lebed, second front-runner of the Congress of Russian Communities. Though the CRC did not secure the required five per cent of the proportional vote, Lebed himself was voted in the Duma by winning the majority elections in his constituency.

Quite logically, the CRC was one of the most actively campaigning parties in Tula. The Communist Party of the Russian Federation relied on its publication and relatively stable support, while the LDPR, Dershava, Yabloko and Women of Russia also canvassed diligently. Most notable, however, was Our Home is Russia. The incumbent governor of Tula oblast, Nikolai Sevryugin, chairs the regional branch of the party, and on several occasions before and during the campaign, this was quite perceptible.

Firstly, OHR established, as the only political party and grass-root organisation in each regional and municipal district of Tula. Secondly, and more related to the media, the local authorities used financial and political levers to influence the political orientation of the state-supported papers. Considering a mere two significant publications do not (partially) depend on state-support, this had quite an impact. Thirdly, free subscription to the pro-local authorities paper *Tulskiy Izvestiya* (Tula News) was provided for 1,500 veterans. Finally, the regional administration fully sponsored a monthly supplement to the newspaper *Tulsky Torgovy Dom* and temporarily doubled the circulation. The supplements cover the activities of Our Home is Russia, both nationally and in Tula, and contain interviews, statements, reports and information about the local branch of the party.

15.1 The broadcast media

Due to the proximity of Moscow, residents of Tula enjoy the possibility of watching ORT, RTR, NTV and St. Petersburg Channel 5. Additionally, the regional and district television landscape is changing rapidly. According to our correspondent, 28 TV companies have registered in Tula; 13 broadcast terrestrially, 15 via cable.

However, merely 17 out of the 28 stations are currently operative. Moreover, even the ones which do actually broadcast appear rather obscure. Tulskey Panorama is the main regional channel, yet it is said to be rather unpopular. This may be illustrated by the low prices charged for advertising. Throughout the whole campaign period, Tulskey Panorama charged 300,000 rubbles (\$64,-) per minute.

The channel did devote time to the elections, and aired news, round tables and some background information. The political orientation is said to be centrist, close to the local authorities, where the main funding is also derived from. Free time was provided to all candidates on Tulskey Panorama, interestingly in the form of interviews rather than solo appearances.

The new TV stations broadcast predominantly shows and imported movies, occasionally supplemented with some regional news. Unfortunately, the monitoring team received no information regarding the political coverage of the elections on these channels. Whether this is simply due to the insignificant nature of the regional channels, or to other reasons, is not known.

15.2 The print media

Due to the proximity most Moscow papers are on sale in Tula as well. However, similar to other regions in the federation, the circulation of the central papers decreased. Our correspondent remarked that the TV schedules printed in the local papers might have a decisive influence on the decision to buy a local rather than a central paper. Nevertheless, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* still sells 24,000 copies in Tula and *Argumenti i Facti* about 20,000. *Trud*, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, *Izvestiya* and some others are also reasonably well read in the region.

Besides several advertising weeklies and several magazines sponsored by regional industries, there are six publications which deserve to be discussed below. Most played a relatively active role in the course of the campaign, yet several were clearly influenced by their financial and political dependency on the local authorities. The most notable exception, and the largest daily in the region, was *Molodoi Kommunar* (Young "Kommunar").

Molodoi Kommunar has a circulation of 45,000 and is published four times per week. The political orientation can be defined to some extent: the paper did not support the communists or the extreme nationalists. It is difficult to be more specific, *Molodoi Kommunar* gingerly backed several candidates (among others General Lebed regionally and Yegor Gaidar nationally) rather than certain parties. Nevertheless, the paper definitely opposed the current local authorities. The reason is rooted in the past and explained below.

Throughout 1994, *Molodoi Kommunar* was subject to eight inspection visits and three full scale investigations. The close scrutiny was initiated by the local administration as a result of several articles in *Molodoi Kommunar* which accused the authorities of having breached the law. When no incriminating evidence against the paper was found and the prosecutor had to drop the case, the local administration froze the paper's bank account. Only when the dispute received nation-wide attention, the authorities stood their loss and a "cold war" commenced.

This, however, did not prevent *Molodoi Kommunar* from covering the elections thoroughly. Following the registration of the parties for the federal list, the paper published adequate background material concerning 19 major parties, without a noticeable slant in the selection of the parties covered. Moreover, the paper published professional weekly updates on the regional campaign. These reports included programmes of candidates, statements, opinion polls, comments and forecasts from experts, etc. Finally, the paper invited readers to send letters voicing their opinion about candidates and their programmes. The mere negative point is that on one occasion, readers were asked to send anonymous letters with compromising information about candidates. All in all, this can, however, not trivialise the laudable effort *Molodoi Kommunar* made to inform the audience.

The second influential daily is *Tulskiye Izvestiya* (Tula News). The paper has a circulation of 26,000 and was founded in 1991 by the regional authorities. It remains largely funded by the regional budget and the press committee and supported Our Home is Russia (governor Sevryugin chairs the council, it should be recalled) during the campaign. *Tulskiye Izvestiya* also published several articles written by the mayor of Tula and candidate for constituency no 176, Nicolai Tyaglivy. Finally, the paper initiated a small scandal, since it accused opposition candidate Vasili Starodubtsev of favouring his own company, which is a subsidiary of a larger company he chairs.

Two other papers played a moderate role in the course of the campaign: the daily *Tula Vechernyaya* (Evening Tula) and the weekly *Kommunar*. The former has a circulation of 15,000 and continues to receive marginal support as it has done ever since it was founded by the regional authorities in 1990. *Tula Vechernyaya* did not indicate a clear particular political preference during the campaign although it printed a full page article about the working day of mayor Tyaglivy. *Kommunar* has a circulation of 10,000 and is entirely independent from the authorities, though supported by the Tula Coop Social Commercial Bank. The paper is said to be moderately conservative, mainly since the editor-in-chief represents the Party of Tax Reduction Champions in the region.

Finally, two strongly aligned opposition papers are published in Tula. *Positsiya* (Position) was founded in 1993 by the regional Trade Union, and has a circulation of 8,000. The paper printed several positive articles about the Trade Unions and Industrialists - Union of Labour election bloc. *Za Yedinstvo* (For Unity) has a circulation of 5,000, was founded in 1993 by the society Za Yedinstvo and showed strong support for the CPRF during the campaign.

16 Tyumen

Tyumen *oblast* in fact comprises three regional governments: the agricultural region around the capital Tyumen, the oil-rich Khanty-Mansiysk district and the gas-winning Yamalo-Nenets district. The total territory occupies 1,4 million sq. km (2,5 times France) and is inhabited by nearly 3,2 million people. The capital Tyumen has a population of around 500,000.

The southern part of the region, around the capital, is economically most impecunious. The northern sections, having the gas and oil industry, are somewhat better off. The question of how to retain the money in the region was important during the campaign. What exactly had to be done to ensure this, was however hardly touched upon.

In fact, the whole campaign was very tame. The papers carried few election-related material. During the first week of December, there was not a single article regarding the elections in the regional papers. Apparently, the 65th anniversary of Khanty-Mansiysk was considered more important.

The incumbent governor Leonid Roketsky was appointed in 1993, and there were no gubernatorial elections in Tyumen oblast in 1995. This may partially explain the lack of interest for the elections in the media.

Nevertheless, some parties attempted to campaign actively in Tyumen. Among the most notable were the LDPR, Our Home is Russia and the Communists. The democratic and reform-oriented parties (Russia's Democratic Choice, Yabloko) lacked renowned candidates in the region and were consequently not particularly visible during the campaign.

Pressure on the media during the elections was not reported. In general, no restrictions from the authorities were felt.

16.1 The broadcast media

Besides ORT and RTR, three regional TV channels can be received in Tyumen:

- The regional state-owned TV and Radio company.
- The cooperative TRTR, which cooperates with TV 6 from Moscow.
- The private Parallax TV company, owned by M. N. Metelsky's "Tyumen" joined stock company.

Additionally, there are numerous local and district TV stations, particularly in the two autonomous districts. These channels mainly broadcast music, entertainment, advertising and birthday greetings. Political coverage is of limited nature.

The state-owned channel had a rather dual approach to the elections, according to our correspondent. On the one hand, some programmes reflected the opinion of the makers. On the other hand, the channel as a whole did not indicate a particular political preference.

There are four main radio stations in Tyumen oblast. Equal to the TV channels, they mostly broadcast entertainment (music), advertising and some information. The main station is the state-owned Region Tyumen Radio. Secondly, Dipol Patrol Radio is owned by the same cooperative which operates TRTR. Thirdly, Europa Plus Germes, which is owned by Mr Bogomolov, who recently announced that he would launch two new radio stations in the near future. Finally, Radio 7, which used to belong to Europa Plus Germes, but broke away and continued as a separate channel.

16.2 The print media

A high variety of newspapers exist in Tyumen oblast. The most influential socio-political regional papers *Tyumenskaya Pravda* (Tyumen Truth), *Tyumenskiye Izvestiya* (Tyumen News), *Tyumenskiye Kuryer* (Tyumen Courier) and *Nashe Vremya* (Our Time) will be discussed below.

Secondly, several small circulation, partisan newspapers are published. *Tyumen Trudovaya* (Tyumen Labour; slogan: for our Soviet fatherland!) and *Pozisia* (Position, trade union paper) are the best known, though the circulation does not exceed 5,000.

Thirdly, quite a number of tabloids are printed in Tyumen. *Tyumenskiye Vedomosti* (Tyumen News) is the most popular. The stories are rather frivolous, the language sometimes blunt. The paper is widely read among a relatively young audience, though the circulation dropped from around 100,000 to 41,000. Some other, mainly advertising, weeklies are *Semeiny Byudzhet* (Family Budget), *Gostiny Dvor* (Merchant Area), *Blitz* (Blitz) and *Kto-Gde-Pochem* (What-Where-How Much); all launched during the last three years, circulation ranging from 20,000 to 50,000.

Finally, some central newspapers are available in Tyumen, though they are not as popular as the regional press. The exception is *Argumenty i Fakti*. Nevertheless, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Rossiskaya Gazeta* and *Izvestiya* still manage to sell around 10,000 copies in Tyumen. The difference between the circulation of the central and regional press is, however, increasing in Tyumen as well.

Tyumenskaya Pravda is a daily, has a circulation of 46,000 and is the former organ of the CPSU regional committee. The paper retained the political orientation somewhat, since it modestly supported the communists during the campaign. Gaidar and Yavlinski were criticised, yet Chernomyrdin was covered leniently.

In the week preceding the elections, *Tyumenskaya Pravda* published a full page regarding Aleksandr Repetov, candidate for the Congress of Russian Communities. Since the paper announced it would not print advertising for free, one can safely assume this article was paid for (especially since the content merely lauded the candidate).

Tyumenskiye Izvestiya is the semi-official paper in the region. The paper was founded in 1990, has a circulation of 14,000, receives funding from the local authorities, and was deliberately launched to counterbalance *Tyumenskaya Pravda*, which was considered to support the communists too strongly. The political orientation is comprehensibly close to the authorities (ergo, centrist/democratic).

The *Tyumenskiye Kuryer* is a rather new socio-political paper. It was launched in October 1993 and has acquired a circulation of 12,000. The founders are the city council and the private company Gream, support for the running costs is provided through advertising, sales and by the city council. The paper takes a neutral stance, avoids radical political views (such as the LDPR) and considers itself non-aligned.⁹

Nashe Vremya was called *Tyumensky Komsomolets* until 1991. Though the masthead still bears the symbol of the press ministry, the paper does not receive any funding from the ministry, nor from the youth movement. Consequently, the paper is in serious financial trouble, which is exacerbated by two lost and several pending law suits.

Though the paper does not have a particular political preference, the economic difficulties may explain the occasional influence of the LDPR or other well-funded parties; publicity material for Vladimir Zhirinovskiy featured regularly on the front page, and a whole page was devoted to My Fatherland.

⁹ The paragraph regarding *Tyumenskiye Kuryer* should be read with some reservation, since the correspondent from Tyumen is related to the paper.

In fact, *Nashe Vremya* is not the only paper to be sued. The new trend of taking newspapers to court was visible in Tyumen as well. Nearly all socio-political papers were affected by legal matters. *Tyumenskaya Pravda* and *Tyumenskiye Izvestiya* both have a case against them pending, and the *Tyumenskiye Kuryer* was involved in a legal battle with the Tyumenskii Kredit Bank. Most cases concerned honour, dignity and business reputation.

17 Vladivostok

Primorsky krai, the most Eastern Province of Russia, is an area of 165,900 sq. km (1,8 times Hungary) along the Japanese sea, with a population of 2,2 million. The capital Vladivostok has 632,000 inhabitants and is an important harbour for Eastern Siberia.

Governor Yevgenii Nazdratenko, appointed in 1993, faced gubernatorial elections. The media coverage of these elections clearly overshadowed the reporting regarding the state and local Duma elections. This was particularly noticable after the nomination of the candidates for governor. While the media had initially given some attention to the candidates and parties for the lower houses, subsequent to the nominations, the focus shifted to the gubernatorial elections.

The incumbent Yevgenii Nazdratenko benefitted in particular. He was supported by the main regional newspaper and the state-owned regional television channel. Throughout the entire campaign, articles and programmes contained implicit or overt publicity for Nazdratenko.

Additionally, the regional governmental press centre was very active in disseminating favourable information about the governor to the media. Interestingly, this concealed advertising could be distinguished from editorial material, since Nazdratenko was consequently addressed as "the governor". According to the letter of the law, Nazdratenko was actually outgoing, and merely a candidate during the campaign.

Concerning the dependency of media outlets, one correspondent made the following remark:

"The media and some journalists are taken hostage by politicians. It is not their fault. It is not their political ideology or partisanship. The reason is more profound. Media outlets and journalists need protection, both morally and financially. The law cannot guard them, neither can the increasingly reprehensible Journalists Union. Influential politicians filled the void, making media outlets depended on their support."

The Regional Election Commission reportedly neglected to monitor the situation or act correctively. It took the position that "without a written complaint, there are no problems". Even when the free airtime of candidate for governor Igor Lebedinets was interrupted and not granted in the requested form (which right the candidate has), the Regional Election Commission remained silent. When asked about the widespread problem of hidden advertising, the chairmen of the REC answered "no court will consider the cases, since they are too difficult to prove".

17.1 The broadcast media

Residents of Primorsky Krai receive ORT and RTR. Furthermore, the regional state-owned TV channel is most important. The three private TV companies are commonly perceived as "channel three", since they share the same frequency. Finally, Asiasat-1 can be received by satellite and several small district channels are disseminated by cable.

The regional state-owned TV channels actively supported Nazdratenko in the course of the campaign. Programmes like *Mestnoya Vremya* (Local Time), and in particular *Gubernatorsky Chas* (Governor's Hour) and *Nash Vybor* (Our Elections) were, according to our correspondents, biased. The channel, for instance, aired 20 accounts about the campaign in one week; 18 concerned the governor, all depicted him positively.

The privately owned channels (PKTV, RVK and Vostok) generally took a commercial, rather than political, approach to the campaign. Nevertheless, none of the channels accepted advertising or devoted attention to strongly nationalistic parties or candidates. Besides this, not much information concerning the conduct of these channels during the campaign reached the

monitoring team in Moscow, perhaps due to the commercial channels' focus on entertainment rather than hard news.

Finally, one laudable observation was made concerning the independent radio station Radio Vladivostok. It ranks second in popularity and aired a considerable amount of balanced political and economic information.

17.2 The print media

The geographically remote position of Primorsky Krai aggravated some of the problems faced by most regional newspapers throughout Russia. Prices of newsprint are even higher (due to transportation costs) than in the rest of the country, and so are communications costs.

Additionally, the modern printing house Dalpress currently enjoys a de facto monopoly. It prints most local and central (Moscow) papers and appeared to have misused its position. Dalpress has arbitrarily set prices and rebutted complaints by saying they were "ready to stop printing the paper tomorrow". However, the newspaper *Krasnoye Znamya* intends to start its own printing plant. The new plant shall have a high output, effectively disrupting the monopoly of Dalpress and reducing the printing costs for local papers.

The principal paper in the region is *Vladivostokskaya Gazeta*, which has a circulation of 160,000 copies daily. Twenty journalists and nine correspondents in the region contribute news and background information. Additionally, the paper exchanges information with papers in China, Japan and South-Korea. *Vladivostokskaya Gazeta* is probably the sole regional paper with a sound financial base. It is profitable and owned by various private companies. The paper regarded the elections as a purely commercial operation and supported Yevgenii Nazdratenko in his attempt to be re-elected as governor.

Krasnoye Znamya (Red Banner) has a circulation of merely 12,000, but can nevertheless be considered an influential paper, especially among elderly and retired readers. The paper was formerly the organ of the local branch of the CPSU and has had difficulties in recent years. Currently, however, the paper is a point of assembly for most opposition voices. Says the editor-in-chief:

"*Krasnoye Znamya* is destined to criticise the authorities in Primorsky Krai, whoever will come to power in the region."

Utro Rossii (Morning of Russia) claims a circulation of 20,000. The paper originally backed the then mayor of Vladivostok, Victor Cherepkov. However, after the dismissal of the mayor by governor Nazdratenko in 1994, *Utro Rossii* substituted the editor-in-chief and remained politically rather changeable and unpredictable ever since.

Additionally, several smaller circulation and less influential papers are available in the region. *Vladivostokskoye Vremya* (Vladivostok Time) was launched in 1994. The first issues sold out quickly, but currently the paper battles with economic problems and the future is uncertain. *Zavtra Rosii* (Russia's Tomorrow) is a weekly which was created in 1994 by the former editor-in-chief of *Utro Rossii*. He left, but the conservative tone of the paper remained. *Novosti* (News) is a rather popular paper produced by young journalists and has a circulation of 20,000.

Finally, three military papers are published. *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star) has the highest circulation, *Boyevaya Vakhra* (Pacific Fleet) and *Pogranichnik na Tikhom Okeane* (Borderguard of the Pacific Ocean) are rather small. Nevertheless, a small disagreement emerged between the latter two. Considering the papers are subsidised from the state budget, both intended to publish free ads for all candidates, according to the regulations. This was, however, prohibited by the Regional Election Commission, which referred to an article in the election law which excludes military papers from providing free access.

17.3 Conclusions

The gubernatorial elections overshadowed the elections for local and state Duma. Incumbent governor Yengeni Nazdratenko gained an advantage in the media coverage, which was particularly undue since according to the law he did not fulfil his official position.

The media in Primorsky krai remain dependent on external resources, often politicians or political parties, and generally regarded the elections as a means of improving the financial situation.

18 The regions - a bird's eye view

The reports from the regions indicate differences between regions, yet similarities prevail. As concerns the comparison with Moscow, the differences probably outweigh the resemblances. Taking into account these two observations, a few general features of the media and the coverage of the campaign in the regions will be outlined below.

Firstly, two structural changes in the regional media landscape can be noted, of which the emergence of local commercial broadcasting is probably the most important. All the regions included in this report had two or more private television stations. However, most did not cover the elections very thoroughly, since they usually broadcast entertainment rather than extensive news coverage.

Another notable development was that the dwindling circulation of local papers seems to have halted. Several interviewees hoped that rock bottom had been reached and that the situation would improve in the near future.

As concerns **editorial freedom**, the situation differed quite substantially. In some regions, local media enjoyed relative freedom, while in others they faced political pressure. It depended largely on the governor, his apparatus and, quite importantly, whether gubernatorial elections were held or not. It was observed clearly that the state-owned media strongly favoured the incumbent candidate if such was the case. Moreover, most outlets related to the local authorities confided to the monitoring team that in case gubernatorial elections were held, they would support the incumbent governor. The question which pertains is, of course, whether this is due to pressure, money or editorial motivations.

In general, it can be concluded that although local authorities did exercise some undue control over (partially) state-owned outlets, independent media could usually operate rather unhampered. The only genuine exception was the autonomous republic Bashkortostan, where the government strictly controlled the media and forced independent outlets to fold or revise their political stance.

Some outlets were faced with another form of pressure: the threat of being taken to Court. For instance, the three main papers in Tyumen were all involved in court cases, and the Irkutsk-based *Sovetskaya Molodyozh* was sued repeatedly during the past two years. The extra costs involved in such litigation are particularly unwelcome, considering the problematic financial position of many papers.

Editorial freedom does not always ensure **professional coverage**. There was a profound lack of proper (comparative) analysis in the regional media, too much editorial material in the local press was actually paid for, the independent television stations in general devoted few time to politics. Though partly due to a lack of professionalism and a particular perception of their role and responsibility on the part of journalists, these deficiencies were also caused by an uncooperative attitude on the part of politicians, a widespread lack of resources and, consequently, profound political and economic dependency.

As a result of the two lattermost points, many outlets openly considered the elections a good opportunity to **ameliorate** their **liquidity situation**. This observation is underlined by: (1) the amount of advertising in the media; (2) the increased prices for advertising (about twice the normal price at the end of the campaign); and (3) remarks to the monitoring team on various occasions (see the reports on Irkutsk, Nizhnii Novgorod and Vladivostok).

Another quite clear similarity between the regions, which resembled the situation in Moscow, was the **focus** of most media outlets on the centrist and reform-oriented parties/candidates. Virtually all outlets - state-owned and independent, press and broadcasting - devoted most attention to this section of the political spectrum. Several editors-in-chief mentioned they would not cover the communists or the extreme nationalists, simply because they did not support their ideas.

The communists and the LDPR used different methods to countervail the situation. The LDPR was a rather active advertiser (although some outlets did not accept advertisements from the extreme nationalists). The CPRF used the small circulation, strongly aligned, communist papers, which were available in nearly every region. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that the communists were not very visible in the media during the campaign, neither in editorial material nor in advertisements.

With some positivism, a trend towards more independent outlets, professionalism and increased editorial freedom can be observed in the regions. Nevertheless, the problems - professionally, financially and politically - for individual media outlets in the regions are more profound than in Moscow.

19 Conclusions

The findings in this report can be regarded in two manners. Firstly, in comparison with the media coverage of the 1993 elections and within the framework of a development towards democracy and market economy. Secondly, in the light of normative rather than relative criteria. Ergo, not regarding the specific features of the Russian (media) situation, but rather the assessment of the conformity of the media coverage to universally accepted democratic standards.

The approach, of course, predestines the conclusions. When compared to the situation in 1993, the Russian media have made progress. Independent outlets were established, the legal framework was more detailed, the advantage of incumbent politicians was not as profound and the financial and organisational dependence on the government decreased somewhat in some areas of previous concern. If, however, democratic standards are taken as a benchmark, the situation of the Russian media and the coverage of the elections leaves a lot to be desired.

Though understanding and recognising the circumstances, the monitoring team has chosen the second approach as its point of departure. Some of the flaws pointed out below can also be found in established democracies, yet they still need to be pointed out. Suggestions for efforts to erase these flaws should be made, especially considering Russia's transitional period and its admittance to the Council of Europe.

As should have become clear from the report, there are significant differences between outlets amongst themselves and between the situation in Moscow and in the regions. It should therefore be stressed that exceptions to the conclusions exist; e.g. some outlets performed better than others, some are less dependent than others, some regional authorities exercised stronger influence than others. It should also be noted that the conclusions are not quite as unequivocal as two years ago.

Similar to the previous report, the conclusions will be approached from three inter-related levels: firstly, the quality of the regulations governing the media coverage and the application of these regulations; secondly, the structural background to media coverage; and thirdly, the nature of editorial coverage.

The legal and regulatory framework to the election campaign was thoughtful, well-formulated and detailed, and attempted to prevent bias, provide access and promote voters-enlightenment. The allocation of free time, the limitations on campaign expenditure, the obligation to distinguish between paid and editorial material, the non-discriminatory application of costs for advertisements and the attempt at ensuring fairness on state-owned channels were all laudable stipulations issued by the CEC.

The monitoring team nevertheless concluded that the adherence to these regulations left much to be desired. The rather clear transgression of allowed expenditure by several parties was not effectively controlled by the CEC in the course of the campaign. Moreover, ORT and various local channels did not show a particularly great interest in the obligation to provide balanced reporting, neither did many printed outlets refrain from hidden advertising. Finally, the Judicial Chamber on Information Disputes did not have the ability to genuinely effectuate its own recommendations.

Having said this, two final remarks should put these conclusions into perspective. Firstly, the rules, as stipulated by the CEC, are difficult to control. The autonomy of (independent) media outlets is large, agreements between outlets and parties/candidates can easily circumvent the Election Commission, and genuinely overseeing all the regulations requires significant time and resources. Secondly, the incapacity to enforce the regulations should not prevent their inclusion in the election law.

The conclusions concerning the **structural background** to media coverage contain a similar duality.

- Interference by the authorities in independent outlets has largely disappeared, yet the (local) administration continues to exercise an undue influence on various state-owned outlets.
- Political independence has been obtained by many outlets, yet few are financially independent.

The first point can be illustrated with four simple observations from the report. Firstly, direct interference in the media by federal or local authorities was not an issue during the campaign. Secondly, independent media outlets could generally operate freely and without limitations others than those set by the normal boundaries of decency. Thirdly, state-owned outlets, or outlets supported partially by the (local) authorities, did favour the incumbent politicians, which was illustrated especially in the regions, but also in the Moscow-based papers *Rossiiskiy Vesti* and *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* and to some extent on ORT. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the dismissal of Oleg Poptsov as Director of the state owned federal channel RTR on 15 February 1996 illustrated a perception of the media as subordinate to the needs and wishes of the government and of the pressure placed upon state-owned media by the government.¹⁰

However important these observations are, the second point is genuinely crucial. Few outlets can survive without sponsors, and this very fact had profound consequences. Money played a pivotal role on all levels in the course of the whole campaign.

Firstly, both on a micro, meso and macro level, money from parties and candidates poured into the media. Individual journalists accepted money from politicians, outlets received financial support in exchange for favourable coverage and the overt political advertising enriched nearly every outlet with some significance.

Secondly, the participation of new financial powers in the media, as was observed in section 6.4, is often due to the importance attached to media ownership and access to the media, rather than to ordinary investment considerations. To put it bluntly: sponsors expect something in return, and this is felt by the executives in the outlets concerned.

The influx of money from non-political sources could, in general, be judged positively. It enhances the political independence of media outlets, makes them financially solvent and increases the plurality of the media landscape. However, when strings are attached and investments are not paid back in cash, but rather in editorial content, the development becomes questionable.

Political advertising is a debatable concept in itself. The concealed advertising and the abundance of paid material for some parties (and some candidates in the regions) can, however, be considered negative without dispute. The hidden advertising may very well have confused the public, and eroded the credibility of journalism. Moreover, the structural differences between the amount of disseminated advertising raised doubts about the equality of opportunities.

As was noted above, the **nature of editorial coverage** varied considerably between different channels and papers. The findings below are therefore presented with due reservations.

Overall, the conduct of journalists fell below the required standards; active and critical reporting was rather absent. Firstly, The overall lack of sound background information and analysis remained a concern. Crucial issues - such as the economy, privatisation, Chechnya, future coalitions - were seldom discussed. This may, however, have been due to the fact that journalists appeared to feel that the audience was not particularly interested. Secondly, journalists mixed news coverage with personal comment too regularly; according to the role perceived: old habits die hard. Thirdly, debates and round table discussions were held infrequently, though this can be attributed to politicians who refused to participate. Nevertheless,

¹⁰ See for a more elaborate comment section 21 on post-election developments.

it should be noted that some papers and some channels did make a genuine effort to provide imaginative and informative coverage.

As for independent broadcasting outlets, NTV stood out and created a niche of credibility for itself. The channel, however, was an exception. Some independent central newspapers covered the elections rather professionally and well balanced, yet a slant towards the centrist and reform oriented parties was noticeable. Local commercial broadcasters carried few political news programmes, and the reports from the correspondents did not convey a particularly positive picture. The local press was influenced by the advertising and the dependency. Yet it can be considered pluriform, developing and in some cases even very professional.

As concerns balanced coverage per regional channel or per paper, it should be questioned whether this can or should be expected. Political alignment of individual outlets is not always reprehensible. However, ORT and RTR do have a responsibility. After all, in the regions, people read mainly local papers and rely on the above channels for news regarding federal politics. The rather unbalanced coverage on ORT is therefore regretted by the team.

Summarising the coverage, it can be concluded that the media devoted more, and more positive, time/space to the incumbent, centrist and reform-oriented parties and candidates, while treating the communists and extreme nationalists more scarcely and more negatively. One could remark that, considering the communists won the elections, this does not matter after all. The monitoring team however does not agree with this for one simple reason. Whatever the outcome, voters in a democratic society may expect sound and balanced coverage, to enable them to make an informed choice.

The findings above are indicative for the changing mood and circumstances in the Russian media. The structural dependencies and the craving for money, rather than unwillingness or incapability, hamper sound political coverage. Once income from advertising increases and the perceived responsibility develops accordingly, only then the complicated political situation in Russia will receive the coverage due.

20 Recommendations

The recommendations below, presented with due care, relate to the previous conclusions and may suggest areas for improvement.

As concerns the media and the government

- The team would consider it an improvement if ORT would transform into a genuine public broadcaster, in which the (appointing of the) management of the channel is more clearly separated from the government.
- Future regulations concerning the coverage of the election campaign could stipulate a better distinction between the presentations of editorial and paid material, particularly in the press. This guideline may also be applicable to the independent outlets.
- The campaign expenditure could be controlled more effectively and in the course of the campaign.
- The Judicial Chamber on Information Disputes under the president of the Russian Federation could have more power to effectuate its own recommendations and could be distanced from the authorities.

As concerns the structural dependencies of the Russian media

- Independent outlets could establish an editorial statute which provides more autonomy for the editorial board.
- The European Union could contemplate providing assistance in the form of elevating some of the structural difficulties of independent media outlets. Particularly independent printing houses, technical equipment and paper could facilitate the independent status of media outlets.

As concerns the Russian media and the campaign coverage

- The independent analysis of the proposed policies of candidates and political parties could be improved. The training of journalists (in the regions) could serve as a useful function.
- An electoral campaign code of ethics could be drawn up by journalists and media managers themselves, prior to the June 1996 presidential elections.
- Further debates could be organised, even when some politicians refuse to participate. This is particularly relevant to the 1996 presidential campaign.

21 Post-election developments

On 15 February 1996, a few hours after Yeltsin announced his candidacy for a second term, the Director of RTR, Oleg Poptsov, was dismissed. In a decree, Yeltsin accused RTR of "lying", focusing on atrocities in Chechnya and exaggerating economic hardships. The president later said that he would "send film crews to the best enterprises and show the progress in production".

The dismissal of Poptsov was particularly striking for two reasons. Firstly, during the speech in which Yeltsin stated he would run for president, he made the following remark:

"Press freedom has become a fact. Currently, everyone can insult the president, often without any reason. I do not want to follow the American example and file law suits. It would cost me my savings. Which I do not even have."

Secondly, the analogy with the post election developments in 1993 are most remarkable. On 12 December 1993, four days after the elections, Vyacheslav Bragin was dismissed as Chairman of Ostankino Russian State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company. Bragin was accused of "short-sighted policy in managing the company [which] triggered catastrophic results in a most crucial period for Russia". This obviously hinged directly on the election results. Interestingly, both Bragin and Poptsov have strong democratic credentials, and both were replaced by media managers with similar political convictions, Alexander Yakovlev and Eduard Sagalaev respectively. The latter may now have difficulties to divide his time, since he holds several key-positions in the Russian media: he is chairman of the International Conference of Journalists' Unions, chairman of the Moscow Independent Broadcasting Corporation, as well as chairman of the board of TV-6.

The dismissal of Oleg Poptsov illustrates vividly that pressures placed upon state-owned media by the government pertain and that the Russian authorities (or, for that matter, Boris Yeltsin) continue to perceive the media as subordinate to their needs and wishes and are, apparently, not yet capable of distinguishing between the government and the media.

Annex 1 Television monitoring

Out of the 43 parties/blocs participating in the elections, 17 are included in the tables regarding television monitoring. The parties that were selected (only after the monitoring) are those that cleared the five per cent threshold, the other 12 parties which had at least one deputy elected to the Duma, and the Social Democrats, which was led by a number of prominent Russian politicians. When less than 17 parties are mentioned for a particular channel, this implies that the omitted party received or bought a very insignificant amount of time.

As for radio, some other parties (like Transformation of the Fatherland) occasionally feature, since they received or bought over a few per cent of the airtime.

The following abbreviations are used in the tables:

APR	Agrarian Party of Russia
CDU	Christian Democratic Union - Christians of Russia
CPRF	Communist Party of the Russian Federation
CRC	Congress of Russian Communities
LDPR	Liberal Democratic Party of Russia
NRP	National Republican Party
OHR	Our Home is Russia
Pam/Gur/Lys bloc	Pamfilova-Gurov-Lysenko's bloc
PRUC	Party of Russian Unity and Accord
PWSG	Party of Workers' Self Government
RDC	Russia's Democratic Choice - United Democrats
TF	Transformation of the Fatherland
Trade Unions	Trade Unions and Industrialists - Union of Labour

MTK

Party	Editorial	Per cent	Paid	Per cent
CPRF	25	3,2%	--	--
CRC	11	1,4%	130	12,7%
Forward, Russia!	66	8,3%	2	0,1%
Govorukhin' bloc	56	7,1%	3	0,2%
Ivan Rybkin's bloc	88	11,2%	73	7,1%
LDPR	70	8,9%	120	11,6%
My Fatherland	6	0,7%	91	8,9%
OHR	238	30,5%	217	21,2%
PWSG	5	0,6%	13	1,3%
RDC	11	1,4%	12	1,1%
Social Democrats	17	2,0%	--	--
Trade Unions	77	9,8%	21	2%
Women of Russia	45	5,8%	15	1,4%
Yabloko	19	2,4%	10	0,1%
Total	734	93,3%	707	67,7%
Total for all parties	787	100%	1044	100%

Time (in minutes) devoted to election-related material by parties - © European Institute for the Media 1996

ORT

Party	Editorial	Per cent	Paid ¹¹
APR	3	0,5%	1
CPRF	67	15,2%	10
CRC	10	2,2%	--
Forward, Russia!	4	0,6%	4
Govorukhin' bloc	--	--	--
Ivan Rybkin's bloc	27	6,3%	4
LDPR	16	3,6%	9
My Fatherland	1	0,2%	2
OHR	134	30,4%	20
Pam/Gur/Lys bloc	5	1,1%	--
PWSG	1	0,2%	--
RDC	114	25,9%	2
Trade Unions	--	--	10
Women of Russia	1	0,2%	3
Yabloko	5	1,1%	--
Total	326	87,5%	65
Total for all parties	372	100,0%	

Time (in minutes) devoted to election-related material by parties - © European Institute for the Media 1996

RTR

Party	Editorial	Per cent	Paid	Per cent
APR	15	2,8%	2	1,3%
CPRF	30	5,7%	--	--
CRC	31	5,8%	12	7,7%
Forward, Russia!	12	2,3%	1	0,7%
Govorukhin' bloc	24	4,6%	--	--
Ivan Rybkin's bloc	61	11,7%	5	3,2%
LDPR	27	5,1%	2	1,3%
My Fatherland	--	--	16	9,8%
OHR	101	19,4%	58	37,5%
Pam/Gur/Lys bloc	3	0,6%	14	9,0%
Power to the People	--	--	3	1,9%
PWSG	16	3,1%	1	0,7%
RDC	67	12,8%	4	2,5%
Trade Unions	2	0,3%	5	2,8%
Women of Russia	12	2,2%	3	1,9%
Yabloko	40	7,6%	3	1,9%
Total	441	84,0%	129	82,2%
Total for all parties	525	100,0%	157	100,0%

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¹¹ Since the total is relatively low, percentages would give a distorted picture and are not provided

NTV

Party	Editorial	Per cent	Paid	Per cent
CPRF	16	5,0%	--	--
CRC	14	4,1%	22	7,0%
Forward, Russia!	17	5,3%	17	5,3%
Govorukhin' bloc	10	3,1%	--	--
Ivan Rybkin's bloc	20	6%	47	15,1%
LDPR	24	7,6%	15	5,0%
My Fatherland	1	0,3%	11	3,6%
OHR	33	10,4%	66	21,6%
Power to the People	17	5,4%	--	--
PWSG	12	3,6%	--	--
RDC	60	18,7%	70	23,3%
Social Democrats	10	3,0%	--	--
Trade Unions	25	7,9%	--	--
Women of Russia	15	4,6%	9	3,1%
Yabloko	40	12,1%	21	7,0%
Total	314	97,1%	278	91,0%
Total for all parties	323	100,0%	306	100,0%

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TV-6

Party	Editorial	Per cent	Paid	Per cent
APR	3	0,5%		
CPRF	22	3,3%	--	--
CRC	43	6,6%	49	16,3%
Forward, Russia!	39	5,9%	8	2,6%
Govorukhin' bloc	--	--	--	--
Ivan Rybkin's bloc	4	0,5%	22	7,3%
LDPR	62	9,5%	30	10,0%
My Fatherland	26	3,8%	17	5,7%
OHR	165	25,2%	70	23,3%
Pam/Gur/Lys bloc	3	0,5%	6	1,9%
PWSG	26	4,0%	7	2,3%
RDC	94	14,4%	15	4,8%
Trade Unions	--	--	--	--
Women of Russia	--	--	6	1,9%
Yabloko	20	3,0%	9	2,8%
Total	507	77,2%	239	78,9%
Total for all parties	657	100,0%	303	100,0%

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Annex 2 Radio Monitoring

Radio 1

Party	Editorial	Per cent	Paid	Per cent
ARP	2	0,4%	--	--
Bloc '89	5	1,0%	7	5,4%
Common Cause	--	--	15	11,6%
CPRF	7	1,5%	--	--
CRC	16	3,4%	--	--
Dershava	6	1,3%	--	--
Ecological Party	35	7,5%	4	3,1%
Forward, Russia!	7	1,5%	--	--
Inter-Ethnic Union	18	3,9%	--	--
Ivan Rybkin's bloc	13	2,8%	--	--
LDPR	2	0,4%	4	3,1%
My Fatherland	88	18,9%	4	3,1%
OHR	163	35,0%	21	16,3%
PEF	--	--	12	9,3%
PRUC	--	--	16	12,4%
PWSG	--	--	5	3,9%
RDC	88	18,9%	15	11,6%
TF	3	0,6%	--	--
Trade Unions	--	--	13	10,1%
Women of Russia	6	1,3%	13	10,1%
Yabloko	6	1,3%	--	--
Total	465	99,7%	129	100%

Time (in minutes) devoted to election-related material by parties - © European Institute for the Media 1996

Radio Mayak

Party	Editorial	Per cent	Paid	Per cent
ARP	10	2,2%	--	--
CDU	4	0,9%	--	--
Common Cause	3	0,7%	--	--
CPRF	4	0,9%	--	--
CRC	40	8,8%	8	7,8%
Dershava	4	0,9%	4	3,9%
Ecological Party	4	0,9%	5	4,9%
Forward, Russia!	19	4,2%	--	--
Govorukhin	4	0,9%	--	--
Inter-Ethnic Union	3	0,7%	2	2,0%
Ivan Rybkin's bloc	14	3,1%	3	2,9%
LDPR	36	7,9%	20	19,6%
My Fatherland	34	7,5%	--	--
OHR	144	31,8%	18	17,6%
People's Union	3	0,7%	4	3,9%
RDC	103	22,7%	10	9,8%
Trade Unions	7	1,5%	10	9,8%
TF	6	1,3%	--	--
Women of Russia	9	2,0%	18	17,6%
Yabloko	2	0,4%	--	--
Total	453	100,0%	102	99,8%

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Radio Russia

Party	Editorial	Per cent
Bloc of Independents	4	1,8%
CDU	7	3,1%
Common Cause	19	8,5%
CPRF	11	4,9%
CRC	5	2,2%
Ecological Party	13	5,8%
Forward, Russia!	6	2,7%
Ivan Rybkin's bloc	40	17,9%
LDPR	7	3,1%
My Fatherland	4	1,8%
OHR	38	17,0%
PWSG	4	1,8%
RDC	47	21,0%
TF	15	6,7%
Women of Russia	4	1,8%
Total	224	100,1%

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N.B. No figures for paid time were given, since advertising on Russian radio appeared insignificant, according to our monitoring tables. It should, however, be remarked, that several 30 minute programmes concerning some parties have not been taken into consideration, since it could not possibly be determined whether it was paid or editorial material.

Eckho Moskv

Party	Editorial	Per cent	Paid	Per cent
ARP	5	0,9%	--	--
CDU	11	1,9%	2	2,3%
CPRF	15	2,6%	--	--
CRC	14	2,4%	8	9,4%
Dershava	8	1,4%	--	--
Ecological Party	6	1,0%	--	--
Forward, Russia!	3	0,5%	--	--
Govorukhin's bloc	21	3,6%	--	--
Ivan Rybkin's bloc	15	2,6%	--	--
LDPR	26	4,5%	--	--
My Fatherland	5	0,9%	--	--
NRP	8	1,4%	--	--
OHR	108	18,5%	18	21,2%
Power to the People	15	2,6%	--	--
RDC	249	42,7%	57	67,1%
Trade Unions	21	3,6%	--	--
TF	27	4,6%	--	--
Women of Russia	7	1,2%	--	--
Yabloko	19	3,3%	--	--
Total	583	100,2%	83	100,0%

Time (in minutes) devoted to election-related material by parties - © European Institute for the Media 1996

Radio Yunost

Party	Editorial	Per cent	Paid	Per cent
Beer Lovers Party	6	11,8%	4	2,2%
Bloc Independents	1	2,0%	28	15,4%
CDU	6	11,8%	--	--
Common Cause	2	3,9%	--	--
CPRF	2	3,9%	--	--
CRC	10	19,6%	--	--
Dershava	--	--	4	2,2%
Forward, Russia!	--	--	33	18,1%
Ivan Rybkin's bloc	--	--	9	4,9%
LDPR	3	5,9%	62	34,1%
OHR	12	23,5%	37	20,3%
RDC	7	13,7%	--	--
TF	2	3,9%	--	--
Women of Russia	--	--	3	1,6
Yabloko	--	--	2	1,1
Total	51	100,0%	182	99,9%

Time (in minutes) devoted to election-related material by parties - © European Institute for the Media 1996

Annex 3 Instructions to NTV journalists

In the course of the elections, journalists should not only keep in mind the *do's* of the profession, but also the *do not's*. For example, they should not take the side of any party, faction of candidate, or in any way express their personal political likes and dislikes; make statements and draw conclusions that go beyond reporting on the event being covered, or that impose their own understanding on the event; use inaccurate information that would either harm a specific candidate or party, or, on the contrary, give them an undue advantage; use off-the-cuff, accidental remarks regarding candidates, which do not convey any substantial, new information about their positions; use archival materials without labelling them as such, or use video clips in such a way as to convey a political message (for example, do not report on the activities of a candidate using a cemetery for a background shot;) misuse quotations expressing the views of individual voters, whether for or against a specific candidate or party; accept the opinions of experts uncritically, many of whom actively support candidates or parties; abandon the principal of presumption of innocence and represent a person, a priori, as hypocritical or greedy; pay too much attention to secondary, if colourful, details at the expense of more important information, or to encourage sensational actions or statements designed to attract media attention - above all, the attempts of candidates to "get personal" and insult each other; make one candidate look good by engaging in negative reporting about his opponent ("compared to Ivanov, Sidorov is an honest man") use biased definitions, ideological labels or insulting remarks ("the odious, stupid extremist Imyarek.") report on aspects of a candidates private life that are not relevant to his public role ("the wife of candidate Imyarek called him a jerk") draw a connection between a candidates ethnic background and his political or moral attributes ("Imyarek, with his nationalistic knack for trickiness...").

Conclusions

Remember that the audience is counting on you for full, unbiased information, on the basis of which it will make its decision on how to vote. Our opinions are much less interesting to the audience, which, in any case, should understand where facts end and opinions begin. If you feel that, for whatever reason, you cannot curtail your bias, or are fed up when given another election story to write, do the honest thing and ask your superior to re-assign you somewhere else.

