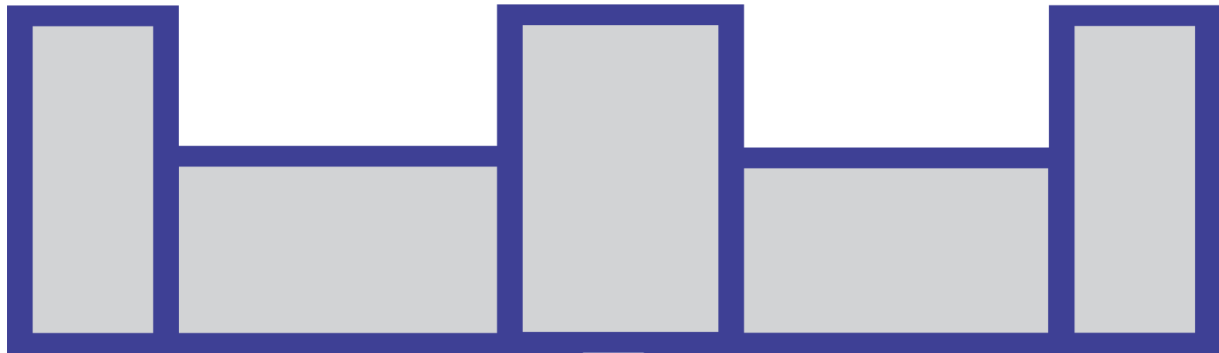




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THIRD REPORT ON MONITORING OF MEDIA  
REPORTING ON THE WORK OF THE  
PARLIAMENT

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**PARLIAMENT WATCH**

**Strengthening Political Debate  
and Deliberative Discourse**

NOVEMBER 2014



## **Third report on monitoring of media reporting on the work of the Parliament (NOVEMBER)**

The Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis” – Skopje (IDSCS) and the Institute for Central-Eastern Europe and the Balkans (IECOB) are monitoring the quality of the debates in the Assembly since June 2014. The monitoring is part of the project “Parliament Watch! Strengthening the political debate and deliberative discourse” that is financially supported by the European Union. During the monitoring, 10 monthly reports on media are also produced.

The present report is the second concerning the media coverage of the work of the Assembly in the period from 1 until 30 November 2014.

The main goal of the monitoring is to reach empirical conclusions concerning the participation of the media in deliberation in the public policy making process and their role in informing the public about the content of the arguments brought about by MPs during parliamentary sessions.

In the following months, IDSCS and IECOB will produce regular monthly reports with the basic finding from the media monitoring.

### **A. Summary**

Sources for most of the published information recorded in the third report of monitoring of media’s coverage in the period from 1 to 30 November were MPs from only one political party. Information comes most of times from active and elected MPs from the opposition who did not accept the mandates, compared to MPs from the leading coalition. The percentage of information where sources were both from the majority and the opposition reduced by half compared to the previous monitoring periods.

In November, newspapers and televisions once again mentioned the Assembly primarily in the context of the broader political situation in the country, the boycott of the Assembly by the coalition at the opposition led by SDSM and the procedure for revoking the mandates of elected MPs from the opposition. The media informed considerably less about the content of debates and the arguments brought by MPs during plenary sessions and sessions of the parliamentary committees.

Therefore, the public was rarely informed about the events in the Assembly, topics on the agenda and the arguments brought about by the MPs in discussing pending legislations.

The most frequent sources of information published in the media about the Assembly originated from the MPs. But, this percent decreased compared to the two previous monitoring period (19 June - 30 September and October). In November, the media increasingly named as sources of information on the work of the Assembly representatives of the Government and foreign experts who commented on the Parliament’s work.



Newspapers presented many more pieces of information regarding the Assembly than televisions.

## **B. Research methodology**

The monitoring of the media includes monitoring of published information that concerns the work of the Assembly and its MPs in 10 media outlets with national coverage or distribution. Six of them are daily newspapers, of which four are published in Macedonian and two are published in Albanian language. The remaining four media are televisions from which two broadcast in Macedonian language and two in Albanian language. The monitoring includes the following media:

### ***Newspapers***

- Dnevnik
- Utrinski Vesnik
- Vecer
- Sloboden Pecat
- Koha
- Lajm

### ***Televisions***

- Sitel
- Telma
- Alsat-M
- Macedonian Radio-Television 2, Program on Albanian language.

Subject of the analysis are published information in which the Assembly, MPs, the legislation or the legislative procedure are mentioned. The analysis also includes MPs of the opposition parties who won mandates on the last elections in April 2014 but refused to accept them and took the decision to boycott the Assembly. Each article is analyzed with the intent to point at its genre, focus and priority of the information, and the type, number, side, and publicity of sources.

## **C. Political context**

According to the Constitution, the Assembly holds the legislative power and is consisted of 123 seats. The Members of the Parliament (MPs) are directly elected through proportional electoral system with a mandate of 4 years. At the last early parliamentary elections conducted in April 2014, VMRO – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity- won 61 mandates and formed a coalition government with DUI - Democratic Union for Integration- that won 19 seats. Citizens Option for Macedonia (GROM) and the National Democratic Rebirth (NDP) obtained 1 seat each. Social-Democratic Union for Macedonia (SDSM) won 34 mandates and leads the coalition in opposition in the government.

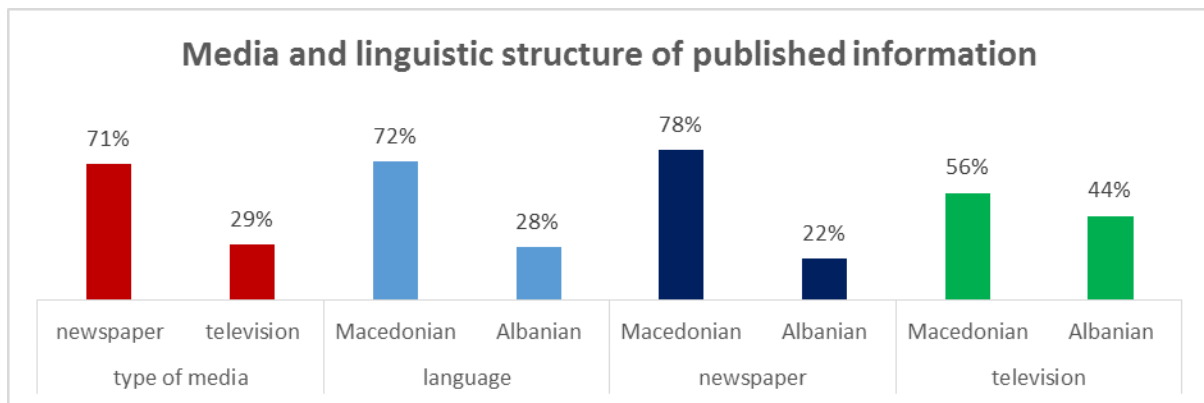


Since the beginning of the monitoring until the publication of this report most of the MPs from the main opposition coalition led by the party Social -Democratic Union for Macedonia (SDSM) that won 34 mandates on the elections boycotted the work of the Assembly. In November the main opposition on parliamentary session consisted of seven MPs from the Democratic party of Albanians (DPA) and three MPs from the opposition coalition led by SDSM who decided not to boycott the Assembly. In November, the majority began the procedure for revoking the mandates of 31 opposition MPs who boycott the work of the Parliament. The procedure continued in December and have not finished until the publication of this report.

### D. Findings from the monitoring (1 – 31 November)

This Report covers published information in the media in the period from 1 to 30 November. And total of 106 pieces of information including articles published in national newspapers and news broadcasted by national televisions were subject of the analysis. Monitored materials can be further specified in the following way:

- According to the type of media: 71% - newspaper articles; 29% - television programs;
- Language: 72% off all information concerning the Assembly was published in Macedonian language; 28% published in Albanian language;
- Of the articles published in newspapers, 78% were newspapers in Macedonian language; 22% - published in newspapers issued in Albanian language.
- News broadcasted in televisions, 56% - broadcasted in Macedonian and 44% - broadcasted in Albanian language.

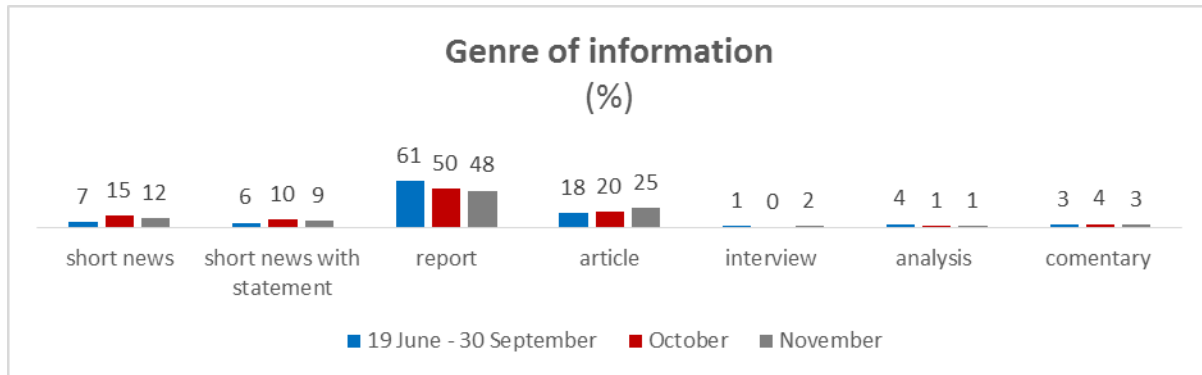


### I. Genre of information

Looking at the genre of information published in the monitored media, 48% were structured as reports and they just informed about events concerning the Assembly. That is similar to October, but 13% less compared to the first monitoring period (19 June -30 September). Of the monitored information, 25% were articles with informative and analytical elements, which is 5% more than in



October and 7% more than in 19 June -30 September period. From the published information, 21% were short basic news which gave small information about the events, and 4% were analysis and commentaries.

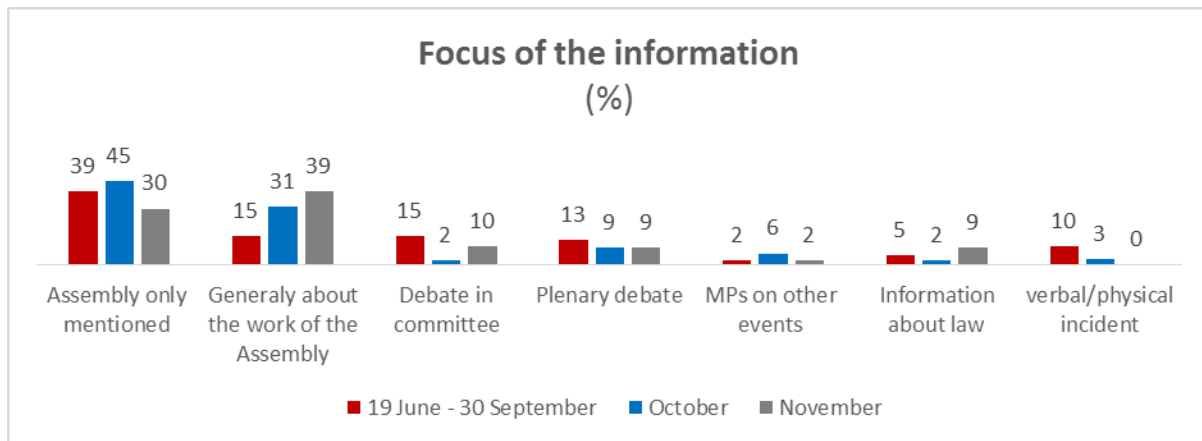


## II. Focus of the information

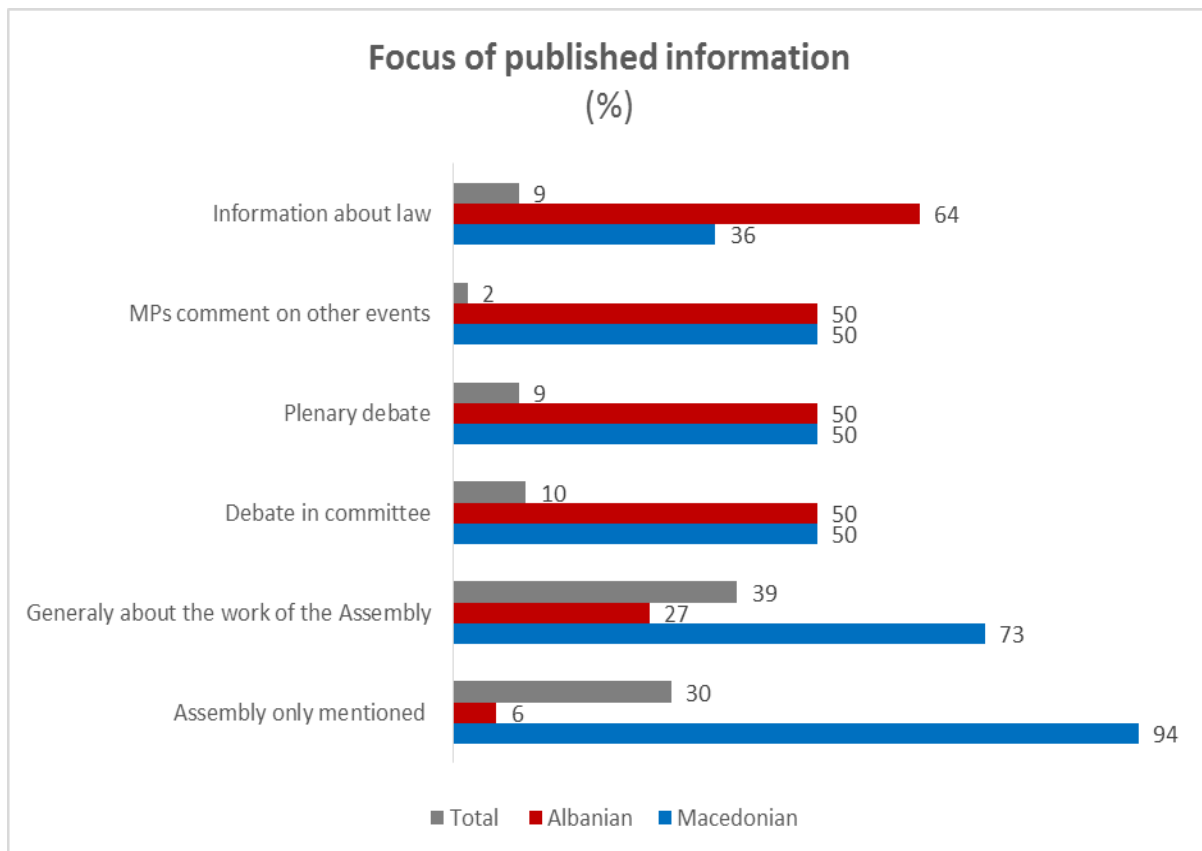
In November, the monitoring of the media shows a decline in the number of information in which the Assembly is just mentioned and the content does not refer to any events in the Parliament, or the work of the MPs (for 15% compared with October and 9% compared to 19 June – 30 September). On the other hand, media published more information regarding the general work of the Assembly and the relationships in it. The percentage of such information was 39% in November compared with 31% in October and 15% in the period 19 June - 30 September.

19% of collected information recalls arguments and debates on parliamentary discussions, which is 8% more than in October, but 9% less than in the period 19 June - 30 September. Media published more information regarding new legislations or amendments to existing laws and regulations compared to previous periods.

Data from the monitoring indicates that in November, as well as in October, the Assembly usually was mentioned in the context of the actual relations between the major political parties in the country, specifically in the context of the boycott from the opposition and the continuation of proceedings for revoking the mandates of elected opposition MPs who did not accept their mandates. The increase of information from parliamentary sessions is mainly due to the media interest for the discussion during the parliamentary procedures for revoking the mandates of elected MPs from the opposition in the Committee on rules of procedure and mandatory-immunity issues.



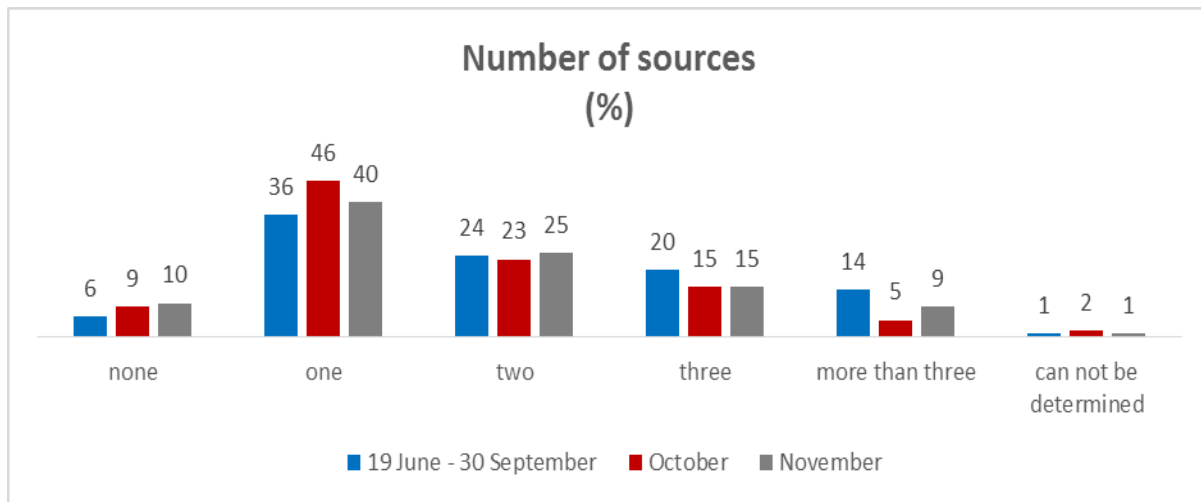
In this monitoring period, media written in Macedonian language published more pieces of information in which the Assembly is just mentioned and that generally refer to the work of the Assembly. Media written in Albanian language more frequently published information on new legislation or amendments to existing laws.





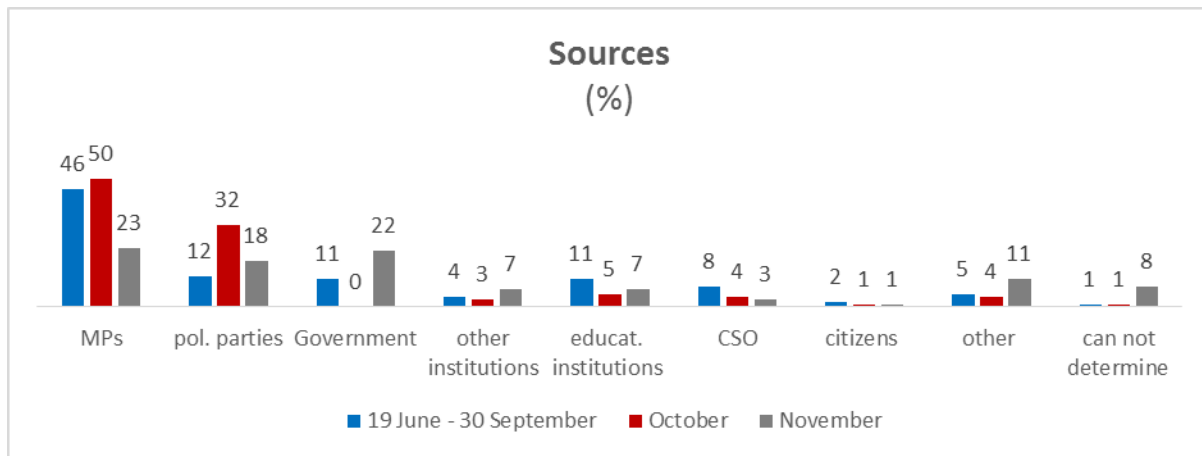
### III. Number and side of sources

The number of quoted sources varied in the monitored materials: in 40% of the cases only one source was mentioned. That is 6% less than in October, and by 4% more than in the period 19 June - 30 September. In 25% of information there were two sources; in 15% three sources, and in 5% more than three sources. 10% of published information referring to the Assembly did not have any quoted, consulted or named sources.

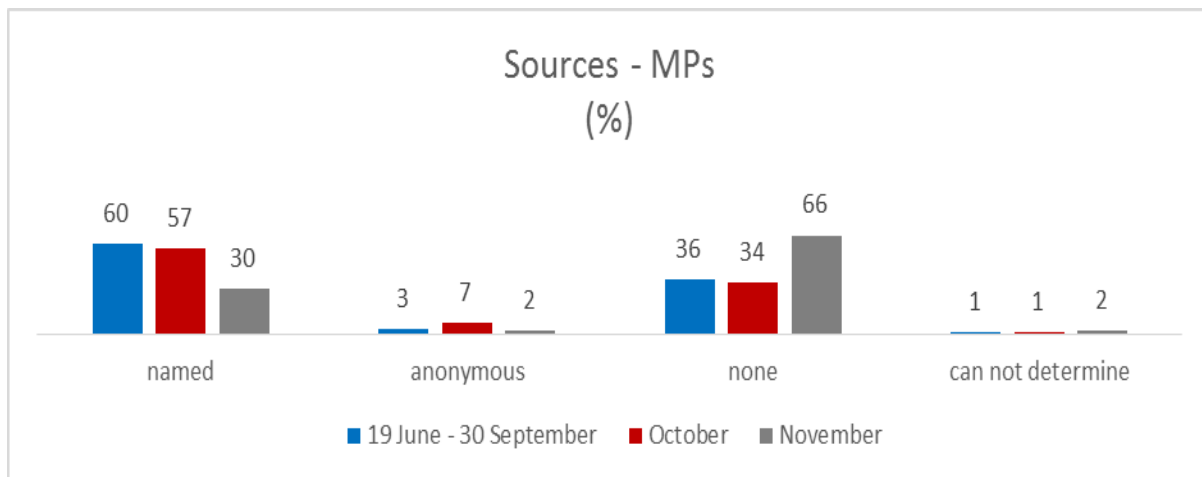


Unlike the previous monitoring period when the most common sources of information concerning the Assembly were MPs, in November, they were almost equal to the sources from the government. In 23% of cases information sources are the MPs, while in 22% of cases, members of the government. This represents a decrease of 27% regarding MPs as a source, and an increase of 22% of the sources from government compared to October. Third sources by the percentage were sources from political parties – i.e. party members who are not elected MPs. The percentage of this sources (political parties) compared to the previous monitoring period in October decreased by 14%.

In November, the media more frequently used sources from other state institutions compared to previous two monitoring periods (19 June – 30 September and October). Besides, more often than before, in the information appear “others” sources - 11% compared to 4% in October and 5% in 19 June – 30 September. This category includes sources such as foreign representatives, ambassadors, representatives of international organizations, politicians, parliamentarians from other countries who commented referring to the work or the relations in the Assembly.

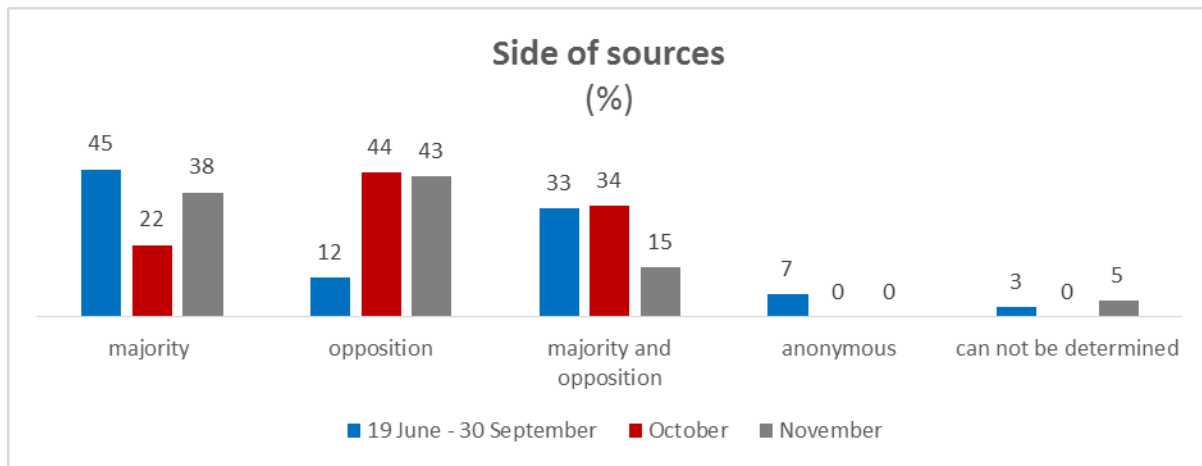


In November, MPs were mentioned in 30% of published information that referred to the Assembly. That is the lowest percent since the beginning of the monitoring in June 2014. This percent in October 2014 was 57% and in the period 19 June – 30 September, 60%. Sources that generally indicated MPs without revealing his/her identity amount to 2%.



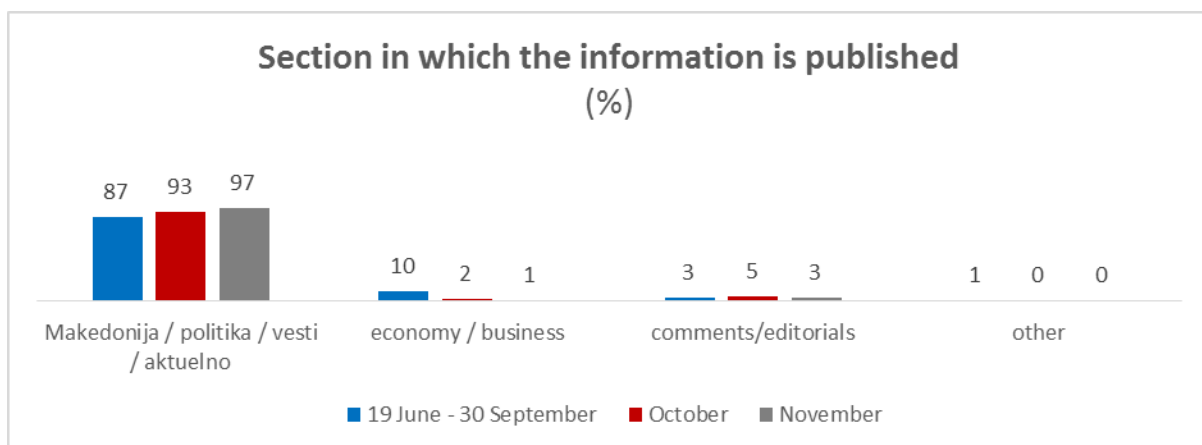
Looking at political affiliation of the MPs who were consulted as sources of information, 81% of collected information originated from just one political party. Of this percentage, 43% were active or elected MPs from the opposition in the Parliament and 38% from the majority. Only 15% of media information consulted or quoted MPs from both the majority and the opposition.



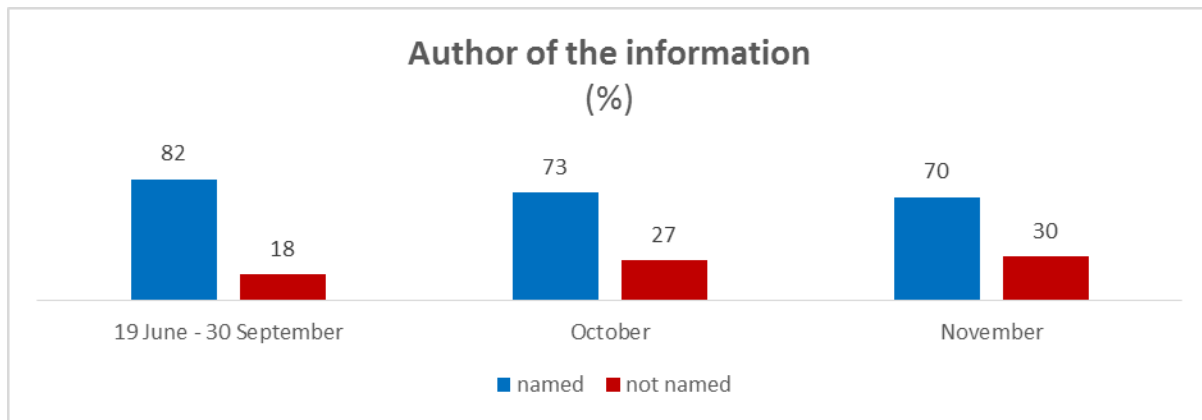


#### IV. Section in which the information is published

According to the monitoring data, in November, 35% of published information by the media referring to the Assembly were announced on the front pages of the newspapers or in the general introduction of TV journals. This is however not true in 65% of cases. Regarding to the sections in which information was published, in 97% of cases, they appeared on leading pages and the first parts of the TV journals in the sections “Makedonija”, “Politika”, “Aktuelno”, “Vesti” etc. Information referring to the Assembly was rarely published in the business or economy sections – less than 1%. In 3% of cases information was published in the comments and editorials sections of the monitored newspapers or TV journals.



Of the total number of monitored published information, 70% were signed by author, while in 30% of the cases the author remained anonymous.



## E. Conclusions

- In the monitoring period from 1 to 30 November the percentage of information in which sources were from only one political option increased. The percentage of information with sources from both sides, majority and opposition, decreased for more than a half, compared to previous months.
- MPs or elected MPs that did not accepted the mandate from political parties and are part of the opposition appear more often as sources in those cases in which the only source is one political party..
- Media consulted more often sources from the Government than MPs and political parties, compared to October and the period 19 June – 30 September.
- The media dedicated more attention to the arguments and the content of the debates on parliamentary sessions compared to the previous month, but generally insufficient to inform the public about developments in the Assembly, issues and arguments presented by the MPs.
- The Assembly was most frequently mentioned against the background of the wider political situation in the country and the relations of the largest political parties, the boycott from the opposition and the procedure for revoking the mandates of 31 opposition MPs that are boycotting.
- Media in Macedonian language published information about the Assembly more often than media in Albanian language. Again, newspapers published far more often information that refers to the Assembly than televisions.
- Media in Macedonian language published more information where the Assembly is just mentioned and information that refers in general on the work of the Assembly without entering into details. Media in Albanian more often published information that refer on introducing new laws or changes into the legislation.



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