



Belarusian Association of Journalists

**MEDIA MONITORING
Coverage of the 2010 Presidential Election in the Belarusian Media
(Final Report)**

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**Minsk
December 28, 2010**

1. Introduction

The report sums up the findings of the media monitoring of the presidential election coverage in the Belarusian media from October 11 to December 25, 2010. The monitoring used quantitative and qualitative methods for analysis,¹ basing on the amount of air time and printed space given to election-related issues, as well as assessment of the manner in which various monitored subjects were represented in 18 media, including the national state-owned TV and radio, Internet resources, regional TV and radio stations and both the state-owned and independent press².

The monitoring aimed to:

- *assess the effectiveness and exhaustiveness of coverage of the candidates and their supporters' diverse opinions on social and political matters in the Belarusian media;*
- *draw the attention of the country's journalist community to the fact that it is the duty of the media to provide voters with comprehensive information about the election process, keeping to the internationally recognized professional standards;*

- *contribute to creating a full picture of the presidential election.*

The monitoring included three stages: October 11–30, when potential presidential runners were collecting signatures for their nomination; November 1 – 20, when CEC was checking the signatures and registering candidates; and November 21 – December 18, when campaigning was going on. We also analyzed the period after the voting day, when CEC announced the preliminary and official outcome.

The monitoring was held by the Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ).

2. Summary of Findings

Just like during the previous elections, **the state-owned media** were clearly ideologically engaged, providing information support for the incumbent.

Although this media became more accessible to the candidates, as compared to the previous elections (for further details, see section 3.2), the basic model of the election coverage remained unchanged, which means that the state-owned media

- focused their attention on one candidate, i.e. the incumbent;
- presented subjects that actually performed technical functions, such as regional election commissions or local authorities, as the main actors of the election;
- actively marginalized the opposition candidates and their actions, as well as the opposition parties, both by negative assessment they received and their minimal presence in the country's information space;

¹ For a description of the methodology, see APPENDIX 3.

² For the selection criteria, see the monitoring methods (APPENDIX 3). The list of the monitored media see in APPENDIX 2. It should be mentioned that a vast majority of the monitored media are state-owned, which is an immediate effect of state policy, directed at marginalization and closure of the independent media in Belarus.

- against the background of inadequate representation of the alternative candidates created the impression that there was nobody to choose from or, to be more precise, that the only option was to vote for the incumbent;
 - downgraded the importance of the election by giving it low-key coverage, when sports, the *Junior Eurovision* show and the All-Belarusian National Assembly were featured more prominently than the election;
 - by citing the findings of opinion polls quite often without mentioning the institutions that conducted them, created an impression that the outcome of the voting was predetermined;
 - -- finally, instead of offering a wide range of voters' opinions, aired only opposite assessments, i.e. positive or highly positive of the incumbent, on the one hand, and negative or extremely negative of the alternative candidates, on the other.
- As for the **independent press**, in comparison with the state-owned media, it presented a much wider picture of the election, the presidential runners being featured as its key actors throughout the whole election process. Besides, in terms of the space given to each subjects, not only did the incumbent get as much coverage as the alternative candidates, but he was even a clear leader in some cases. The assessment of the candidates' actions and their agendas was mainly balanced. The independent press, unlike the state-owned media, showed no instances of insulting the candidates or manifestly promoting one of them.
 - After the election the state-owned media highlighted positive assessment of the election and the voting outcome given by the re-elected president. They presented the opinion of the ODIHR OSCE Mission mainly in the version of Head of the CIS Observer Mission Mr. Lebedev, who had recognized the election as transparent and legitimate.
 - The independent papers above all drew their readers' attention to the fact that the ODIHR OSCE Mission had given negative assessment to the election and had not recognized the voting outcome.
 - Compared to the previous elections, this time the state-owned media did not actually publish any triumphant contributions by their journalists. For the most part, they cited positive assessments of the election and its outcome given by the incumbent, the Head of the CIS Observer Mission or CEC representatives.

3. Main findings

The data (figures) given below were obtained from processing and summing up all the air time and printed space given to the election coverage throughout the monitoring period, i.e. from October 11 to December 19, 2010. The summarized data did not reveal any diversions from the earlier outlined tendencies, which were recorded and described in the three interim BAJ reports.

3.1 State-owned media

The chart of the total time given to different election actors in the **Panorama (Panorama)** news program of the 1st National TV Channel shows that the incumbent received 62% of the time given to all the actors. Attention given to the alternative candidates did not exceed 1%. Such an actor as a 'depersonalized candidate' has about 20% of the time in the final chart, which is 16% less than

during the final stage of the monitoring. However, the drop is quite natural, as before the registration the media simply did not refer to this actor.

The chart does not show any changes in the assessment of various actors of the election. Throughout the monitored period, the president's personality and his actions, CEC and the authorities were characterized positively, whereas the alternative candidates and opposition received negative or extremely negative assessments. As for the 'weight' of the election, it remained unchanged in the total chart, as the program allotted twice as little time to the election-related issues as to sports.

Nashi Novosti (Our News) program of ANT also demonstrated its previous trends. Throughout the monitored period, the incumbent remained the dominant media persona, with 66% of all the air time given to all the monitored subjects. Like in the **Panarama**, the alternative candidates received less than 1% of the air time. Both the news programs assessed the candidates in a similar manner. But it should be mentioned that the percentage of the air time given to election-related issues in **Nashi Novosti** was a bit higher as compared to the **Panarama**.

A comparable picture of the election coverage was produced by the **Radyjofakt (Radiofact)** news program of the 1st National Radio Channel.

The total chart shows that the regional TV programs **Pervyi Gorodskoy** (Homiel) and **Naviny Rehijon** (Mahiloŭ) in their coverage of election-related topics featured predominantly the regional and territorial election commissions, local authorities with their actions and NGOs. The programs also referred to a 'depersonalized candidate.'

www.belta.by of the **BelTA** news agency in covering the election mainly focused on CEC and the incumbent president, who received respectively 20% and 18% of the space given to all the election actors. The other candidates were mostly referred to in a depersonalized form (20%).

Like the other state media, the **Sovietskaya Belorussiya (SB)** and **Respublika** papers followed the same pattern in covering the election, i.e. focusing on one candidate only, CEC and the government. Thus, the **SB** gave 50% of all the space allotted to the election subjects to the incumbent. 14% was given to the opposition, which was traditionally characterized in a negative or extremely negative light. CEC received 12% and the government was given 10%. The alternative candidates received more than 1% of the total space given to all the monitored subjects in these periodicals, which was, however, due to the fact that the existing legislative provisions obliged them to publish the candidates' agendas.

The monitored regional papers **Homielskaja Praŭda** and **Mahiloŭskaja Praŭda** in covering the election kept to the general pattern typical of all the state-owned media, even though showing some variations.

3.2 Direct access

Direct access is defined as media presentations of their election agendas by candidates and parties themselves, which cannot be censored by the media that allot them their air time and space. Such presentations can be both free and paid for.

It should be pointed out that compared to the previous elections, access to the state-owned media has improved. For example, it was the first time that the candidates had had an opportunity to appear live on TV and the radio. Secondly, their TV appearances were scheduled close to prime time and broadcast by the 1st National TV Channel. Thirdly, unlike during the 2008 parliamentary election, re-broadcasts of the candidate's addresses had been planned in advance. As a result,

supposedly more voters were able to get an idea of the alternative candidates' agendas. (The incumbent president did not use his TV and radio time.) As they appeared live, the candidates were able to air their views and criticize the current regime free from any censorship or barriers. It was the second time since 1994 that TV debates had taken place. These, however, cannot be considered as full-fledged debates, as the alternative candidates' principal opponent, i.e. the incumbent, refused to take part in them.

As for the National Radio, it is open to doubt whether any tangible audience were able to listen to the candidates, whose radio addresses were on air from 6 to 7 a.m. On December 5 the 1st Belarusian Radio also hosted radio debates between the alternative candidates (some of them did not appear in person but were represented by their proxies.)

The candidates were able to have their agendas published free in the state-owned media. Although formally they were all on equal terms, i.e. each candidate was allotted an equal space, in fact they were presented in very different ways. Thus, the *SB – Belarus Segodnya* and *Respublica* published Alexander Lukashenka's program with a color picture on the front pages of their Saturday/Sunday issues on November 27. The papers began publishing the other candidates' agendas with mostly black-and white pictures on November 30, starting from the third page at best in the *SB – Belarus Segodnya* and the fifth page in the *Respublika*. Jarasiaŭ Ramanjuk's agenda was moved as far as the 20th page.

It should also be mentioned that following the candidates' first TV appearances the state-owned media launched a blatant defamation campaign against the presidential runners instead of analyses and discussions. Thus, to give just one example, on November 28, 2010 *In the Focus of Attention* analytical program of the 1st National TV Channel broadcast 21 minutes and six seconds' item under the title *Campaigning begins in Belarus, including candidates' TV and radio addresses. Experts' opinions and Vox Populi*. It was based on *vox populi* in different Belarusian towns and quotes from the Internet, including the independent media. All the respondents slammed the alternative candidates. Here is journalist Andrej Kryvaľejeŭ's commentary off stage, *'This week the candidates have poured out the first portion of live TV campaigning. Judging by the first seven days, the Belarusian Radio and the 1st TV Channel, who took on the burden of broadcasting, coped with their task successfully. However, it was at the cost of ratings. A lot of Belarusian citizens admitted they had tried to watch the candidates but could not stand that even for half an hour. The election soap opera was boring and looked less verisimilar than foreign ones. The actors made the audience sleepy, their words sounded like delirium, and their staged movements were old hat.'*

Thus, after their radio and TV presentations, which were over on December 5, the alternative candidates for about two weeks had no voice of their own in the state media. At the same time, the presence of the incumbent in these media grew markedly.

3.3 Independent Media

According to the data in the total chart, the **Komsomolskaya Pravda v Belarusi** followed its own path in election coverage, namely writing more about the alternative candidates than the state-owned media, but presenting them in neutral light exclusively. When speaking about the alternative presidential runners, the paper quite often referred to a 'depersonalized candidate', too. At the same time Alexander Lukashenka was presented for the most part positively. The paper did not even once speak critically of him. The attention it gave to the different actors was distributed in the following way: Alexander Lukashenka received 23%, CEC was given 18%, a 'depersonalized candidate' got 17%, while the alternative candidates received from 11% (Jarasiaŭ Ramanjuk) to 0.6% (Dumitry Vus).

www.naviny.by Internet resource offered the widest picture of the election process, compared to all the monitored media. It featured the presidential runners as the chief actors of the election, providing a balanced assessment of the candidates and their agendas.

The **Narodnaja Vola** paper took quite an active stance in covering the election, showing its critical attitude to the government, represented by both the president and other state institutions. Unlike the other independent media, the paper also published TV and radio addresses as well as agendas of nearly all the contestants, demonstrating not only positive, but also critical assessments of these.

The **Наля Niva** paper presented a reasonably wide picture of the election, writing about all the candidates. Of them the incumbent received the biggest amount of space, namely about 24%. The paper showed critical, neutral and positive attitude to all the actors it featured

The **Belorusy i Rynok** paper in covering the election actors, kept to a predominantly neutral tone, though it criticized the government and the president for their steps. At the same time, focusing attention on the alternative candidates' agendas and actions was not the main characteristic feature of the election coverage on the pages of this independent paper.

4. Media Effects

The notion of media effects refers to instances of distorting and misrepresenting information or giving incomplete or partial coverage or biased assessments in order to influence readers'/voters' opinions. These are the most typical cases.

Processing information in order to favor the current government. On November 4, 2010 www.belta.by published the following contribution (http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/politics/Evrosojuz-otmechaet-bolee-svobodnyj-xarakter-nyneshnej-kampanii-po-vyboram-Prezidenta-Belarusi_i_530196.html):

'The European Union points out that the current presidential election can be characterized as more liberal,' said Mr. Ronald Pofalla, the Bundestag deputy, Head of the Department of the German Federal Chancellor and Federal Minister for Special Missions, to journalists in Minsk, says a BELTA reporter.

'We see the situation in Belarus changing for the better,' he said. 'The limitations that used to exist, particularly in collecting signatures for potential nominees, are non-existent now.'

'Ronald Pofalla pointed out that certain standards, such as absence of various obstacles for the registration of presidential candidates, balanced election commissions and access to international observers, are part of a free and fair election. He also said he would follow the election closely. In his opinion, the today's political climate is absolutely different from that of the past years.'

However, the BELTA Information Agency failed to quote the second part of Mr. Pofalla's statement. It was given the same day by www.naviny.by (http://naviny.by/rubrics/elections/2010/11/04/ic_media_video_623_4894/) in the contribution entitled **Ronald Pofalla: There Are No Normal Principles for Free Election in Belarus:** 'According to the minister, the stage of collecting signatures for the nomination of presidential candidates was more liberal in comparison with the previous elections.

However, he pointed out that the situation in Belarus before the election bore no comparison to other European states. 'If voters do not know who is running for presidency a few weeks before the voting day, it is certainly a big drawback. We see positive trends in Belarus,' said Mr. Pofalla. 'But

we still hold an opinion that there are no normal principles for a free election in the country' (highlighted by the authors of the report).

Indirect campaigning for a candidate before the registration. On November 9, 2010 *Radyjofakt* program of the 1st National Radio Channel presented the following news item called '*Belarusians in Moldova Endorse Lukashenka at Upcoming Election*'. It was nine days before he was officially registered as a presidential candidate. The statement was allegedly made by all Belarusians in Moldova. The same day *Homielskaja Praŭda* (No. 171 (22442)) in its contribution entitled *I Do Care* quoted the following opinion, '*I do care what kind of future my relatives and friends, as well as all the nation are going to have. That is why I back up our President Alexander Lukashenka with all my heart. Мне не безразлично, какое будущее ожидает родных, близких и весь наш народ. Let the angel and God guard him for saving our nation from perestroika. Let his star shine until he is a hundred, let good people follow him and guard our dear Belarus.*'

Focusing attention on one candidate. On November 18, 2010 the quoted above BELTA State Information Agency published a news item called '*Lukashenka Registered as Presidential Candidate*', though nine other candidates had been registered alongside him (however, their names are mentioned in the article).

The state-owned media went on focusing their attention on one candidate by making only the incumbent noticeably present in their programs and on their pages.

Marginalizing and discrediting the alternative candidates. On November 24, 2010 *Nashi Novisti* news program of ANT gave a certain unit of its air time to an individual project by A. Michaliŭanka called *As It Is*. Here is a quotation from it, '*What else can be remembered from the candidates' speeches? Their awkward attempts to speak Belarusian... Looks like their team of TV experts is just as strong. None of them bothered to find out how to behave in front of the camera. Let me make it clear: I mean a TV camera. (In Russian камера can refer both to a camera and a prison cell – translator's note.) After this hint at the prospects the opposition candidate may face, the author went on to say, 'They like repeating that Belarus has bad television. When they appeared on it, it certainly has not become better. There are still a few ruined evenings in front of a TV in working order ahead of us.'* Or here is a typical case of a negative opinion in the state-owned media, while other views are not represented at all. Thus, under the heading *Your Opinion* the *Homielskaja Praŭda* of November 27, 2010, No. 182 (22453) asked the question, 'How do you feel about the speeches of the presidential candidates?' which was answered by Major General of Air Force, a distinguished military airman of the USSR, '*To tell the truth, the very first candidates put me off listening by slamming everything and everyone. They are completely unprepared people, who do not know life or have any experience. What kind of figures are they? For them, running the country is like a game. What sort of contestants are they to our dear Alexander Grigoryevich?*'

Associating the opposition with drug trafficking and alcoholism. Here are two quotes from a piece presented under the title *Young opposition members becoming boozers on a mass basis* (the *Panarama* of November 22, 2010), '*A whole bunch of prominent fighters against dictatorship take drugs,*' and '*Alcohol abuse or something harder is a normal practice among the today's young opposition activists.*'

At the same time there was not a single case recorded of the alternative candidates or opposition activists being given a chance of rebuttal in the state-owned media that gave partial or biased coverage to their actions or the candidates' agendas.

5. After the Election

In assessing the previous elections and their outcome, the state-owned media used highly emotional headlines, like *Completely Unforgettable Day*, *Music Keeps High Spirits* or *High Turnout*. This

time, however, they limited themselves to quoting the incumbent, the Head of the CIS Observer Mission and representatives of CEC. Here is a typical contribution, *'December 20, Minsk /BelTA reporter/. 'Belarus created all the necessary conditions for a fair fight for power and voters' support,' said Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenka, opening his press-conference for the national and international media, a BelTA correspondent reports.*

'The election was so open and transparent,' said the country leader, 'that people were disoriented, unable to tell the election from the Behind the Glass reality show (analogous with Big Brother – translator's note). All the necessary conditions for a fair fight for power and gaining voters' support were created.' (http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/president/V-Belarusi-byli-sozdany-vse-usloviya-dlja-chestnoj-borby-za-vlast-i-simpatii).

Here is a quote, repeated by the **SB** of December 21, 2010, to give just one more example, *'The mission did not find out any facts to question the legitimacy of the election,' said Sergey Lebedev, Head of the CIS Observer Mission.*

As for the ODIHR OSCE assessment of the election, it was presented mainly in Mr. Lebedev's version, *'The OSCE observers admitted that the process was open enough. The western observers were met with the same openness and benevolence by all the governmental institutions. There were no obstacles to their work... But, unfortunately, their assessment changed on December 20.'* (SB, December 22, 2010). Just a few congratulations to the re-elected president did not give an opportunity to publish victorious reports in the state-owned media.

The independent media in the first place drew their readers' attention to the ODIHR OSCE assessment of the election, widely citing the heads of the observer mission. The **Narodnaja Vola** of December 21, 2010 quoted Gert-Heinrich Arens, *'I really hoped that this time we would be able to give a more positive assessment. Unfortunately, it is impossible, in the light of flawed vote count and the government's violent reaction to yesterday's protests.'* The **Наўа Ніва** of December 22, 2010, wrote, in its turn, *'The Belarusian election cannot be recognized as free and democratic, said Tony Lloyd, Head of the ODIHR OSCE short-term observer mission, at his press-conference in Minsk on Monday.*

'He pointed out that 'the arrests of the presidential candidates and civil society members, as well as the brutal dispersion of the rally will make the background against which the election is going to be assessed.'

Naturally, the state-owned media did not notice either the *'flawed vote count,'* or the brutal dispersion of protesters against a ballot count procedure like this.

6. Conclusions

By focusing their attention on one candidate, i.e. the incumbent, and giving him positive coverage while negatively assessing his opponents the state-owned media violated the principle of equal opportunities and equal access to the media.

Giving biased coverage to the alternative candidates' agendas, they did not offer them a chance to rebut. In the same fashion, citing only negative opinions about them and negative assessments of their agendas, the state-owned media in fact censored the public opinion, depriving the alternative candidates' supporters of their voice. Thus, during the election the state-owned media did not reflect the interests of all social groups. In fact, they actively demonstrated their loyalty to the incumbent by acting as an instrument of power and an ideological tool.

Improved direct access to the state-owned media did not make any noticeable changes in the general practices of the election coverage. Moreover, it was actually annulled by the fact that when the alternative candidates' TV and radio addresses were over, they did not have their own voice in the state-owned media for about two weeks before the voting day. The election coverage according to the old model that the state-run media had been widely employing for quite a long time was aimed at counteracting the effect their addresses made.

Just like at the previous elections, by keeping to a low-key approach to the election and marginalizing the contestants of the current regime, the state-owned media contributed to undermining political competition and the contest of ideas. In this way, they actually excluded or at least diverted voters from political competition, which is typical of the so-called phenomenon of 'low-key' elections Belarusian style.

Multiple media effects recorded in the state-run media show that the contributions containing such effects did not meet the professional standards. Nor do the authors of such contributions keep to ethical principles in journalism.

Although the independent press offered a varied picture of the election, their limited circulation prevented them from becoming a competitive information source. For the same reason, they could not efficiently oppose the practice of ignoring the opponents of the government or their negative representation in the state-owned media.

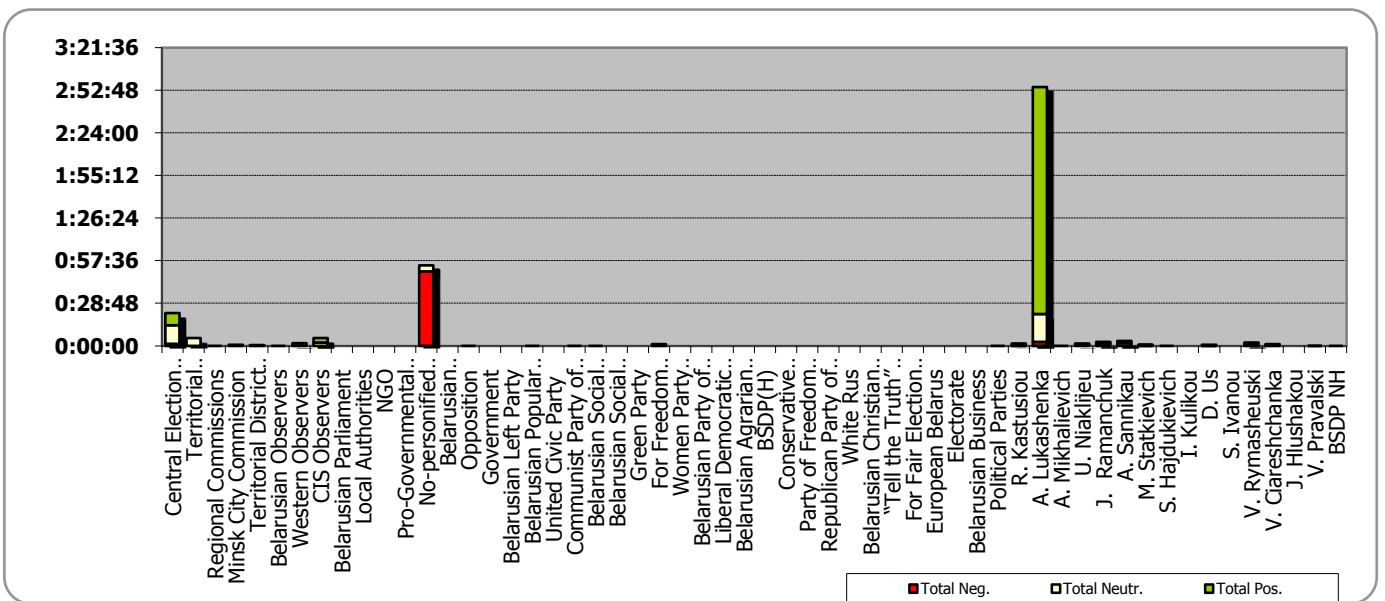
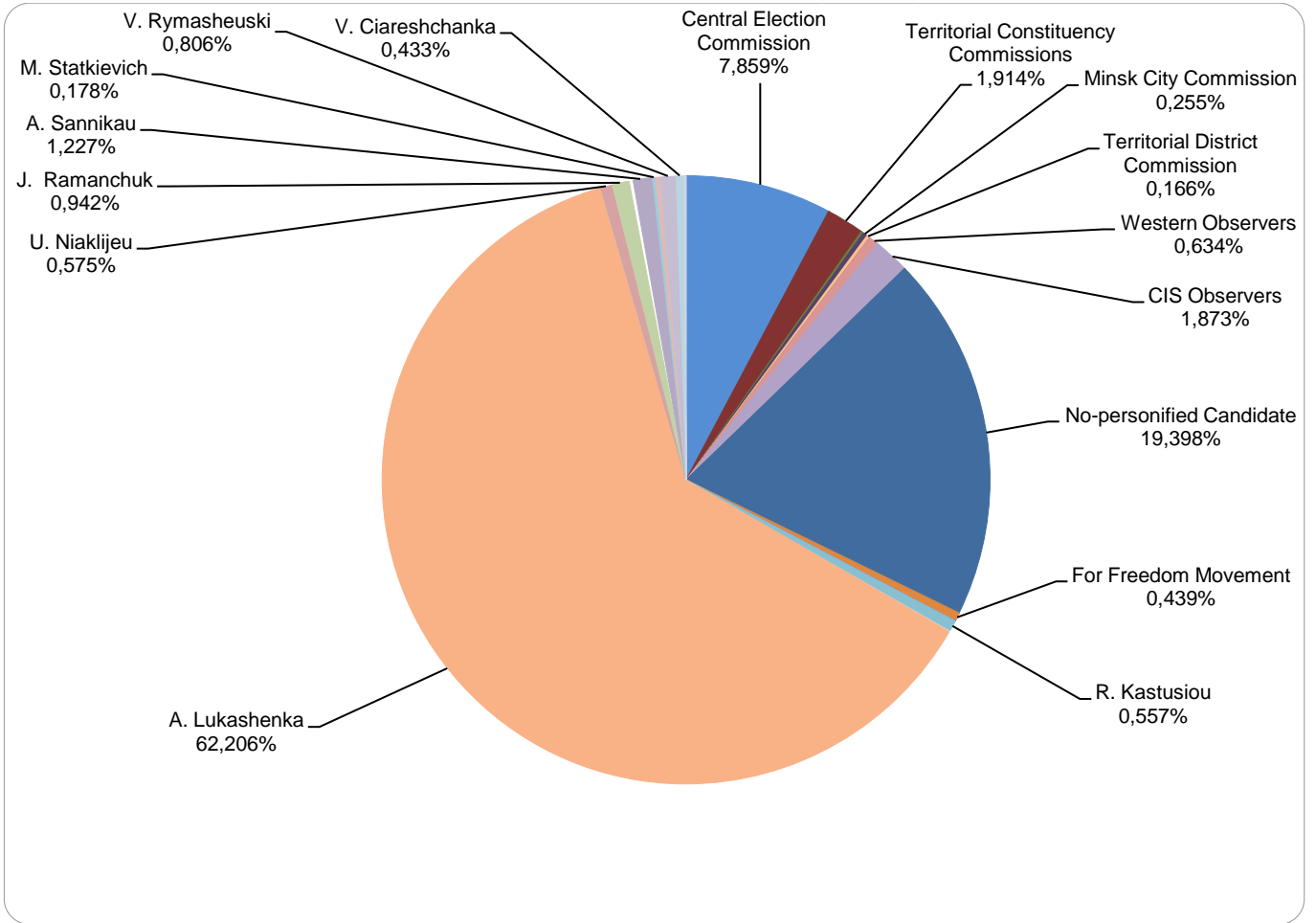


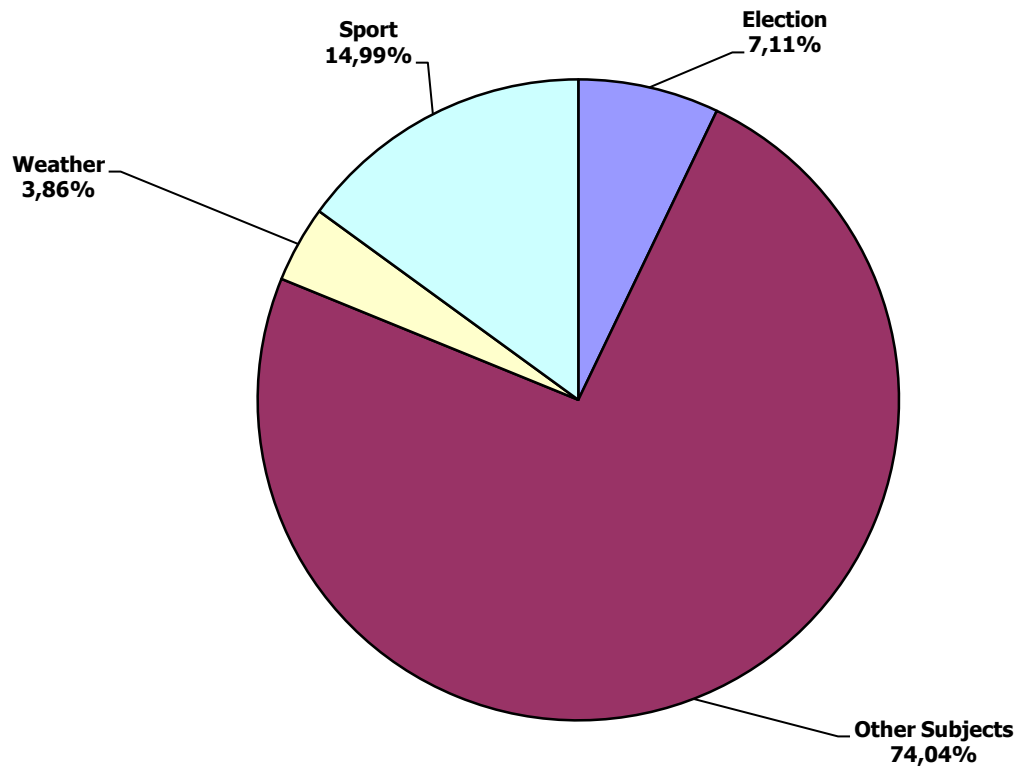
BELARUSIAN PRESIDENT ELECTIONS 2010

BT/PANARAMA

25.09.2010 – 19.12.2010

Measured in hours, minutes, seconds (0:02:45)





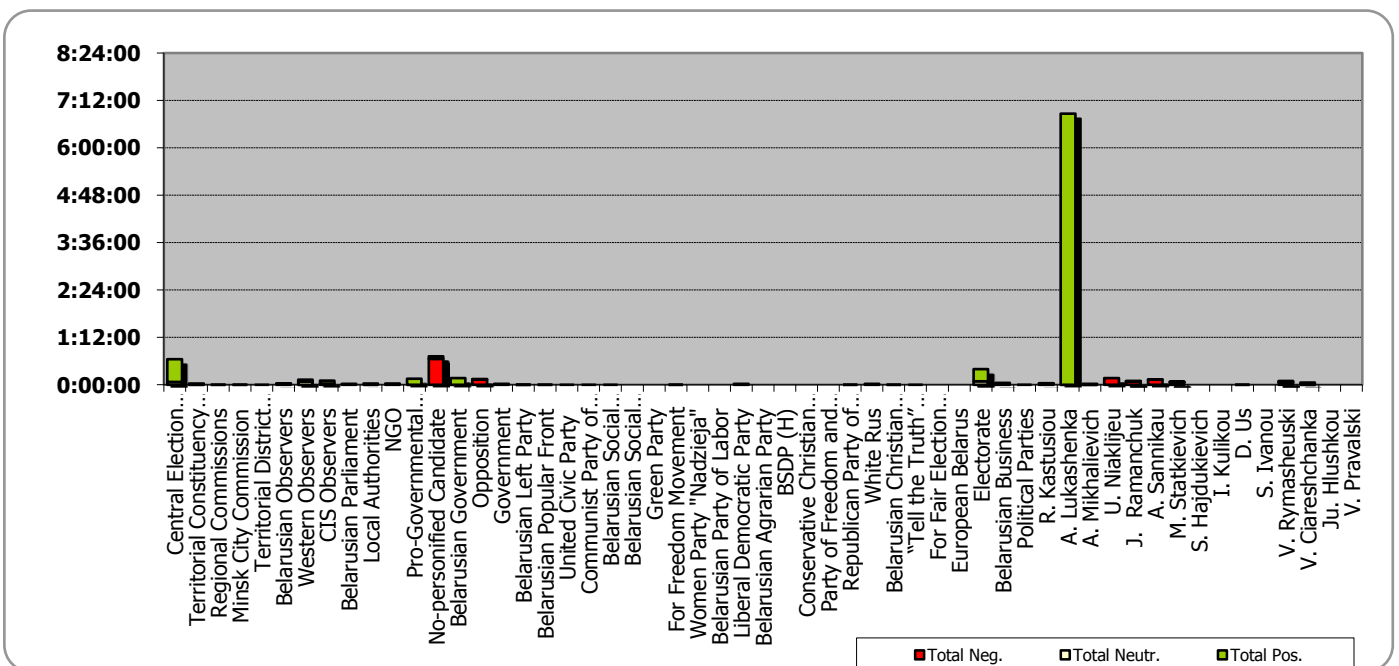
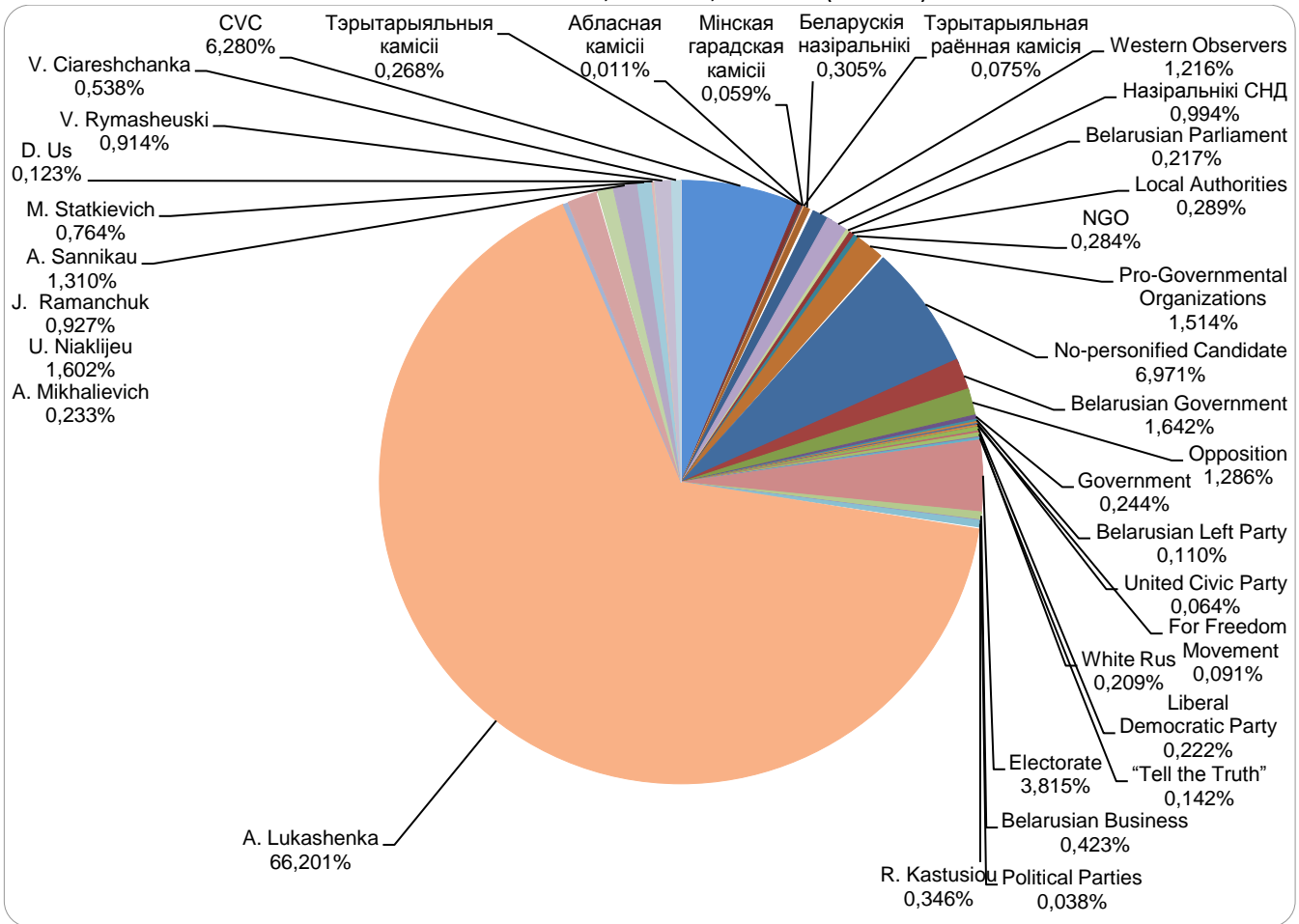


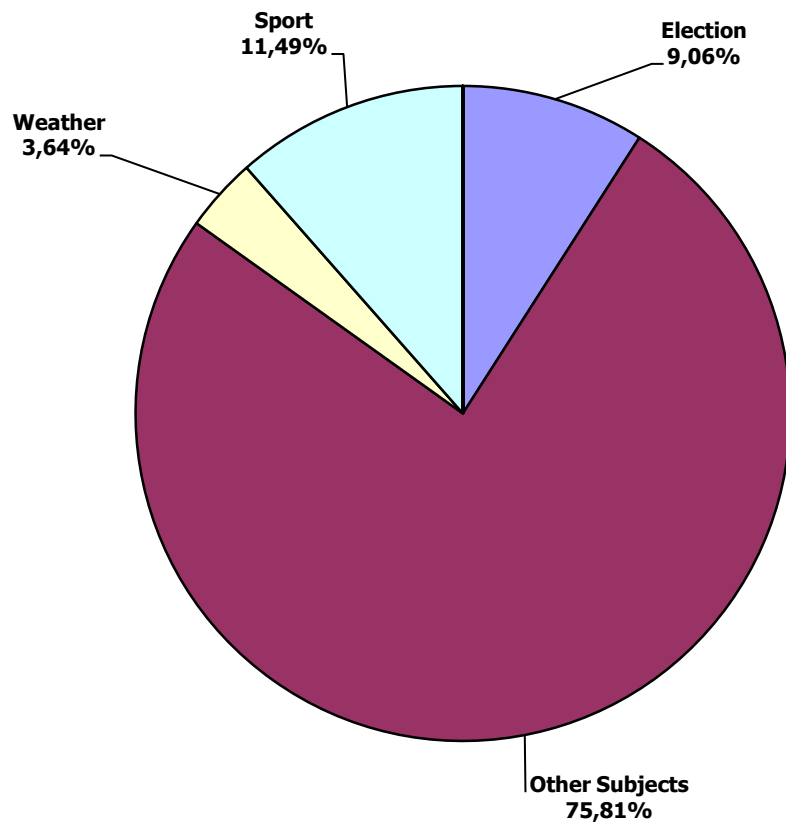
BELARUSIAN PRESIDENT ELECTIONS 2010

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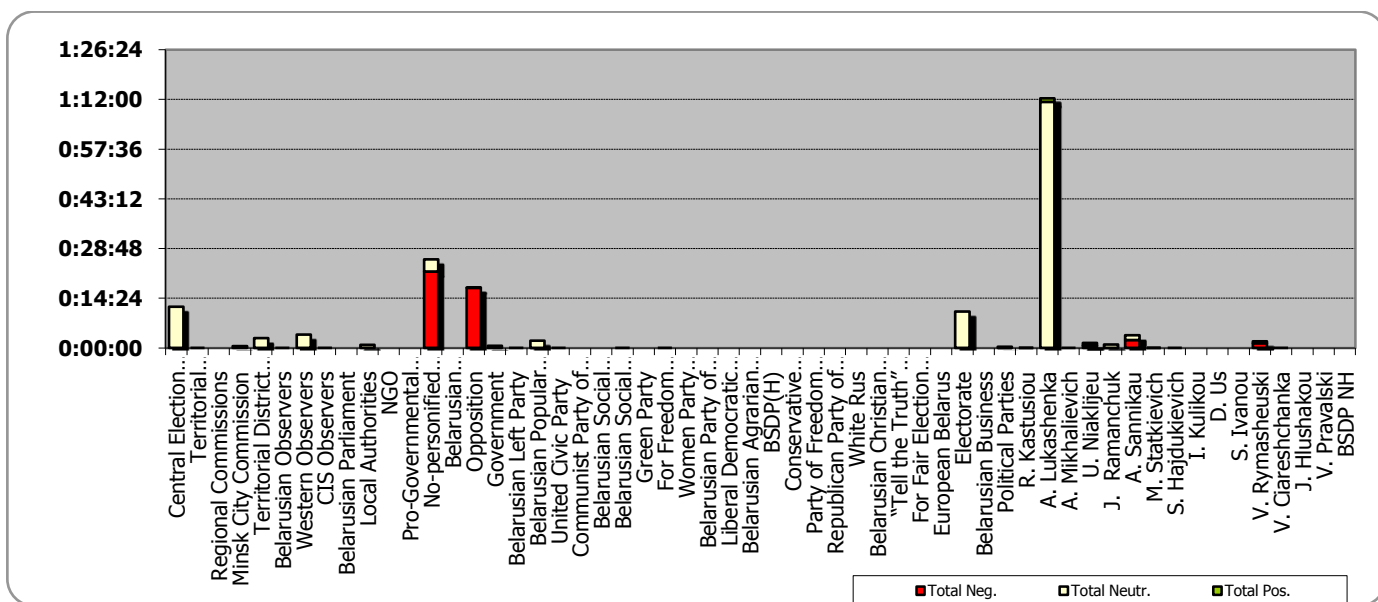
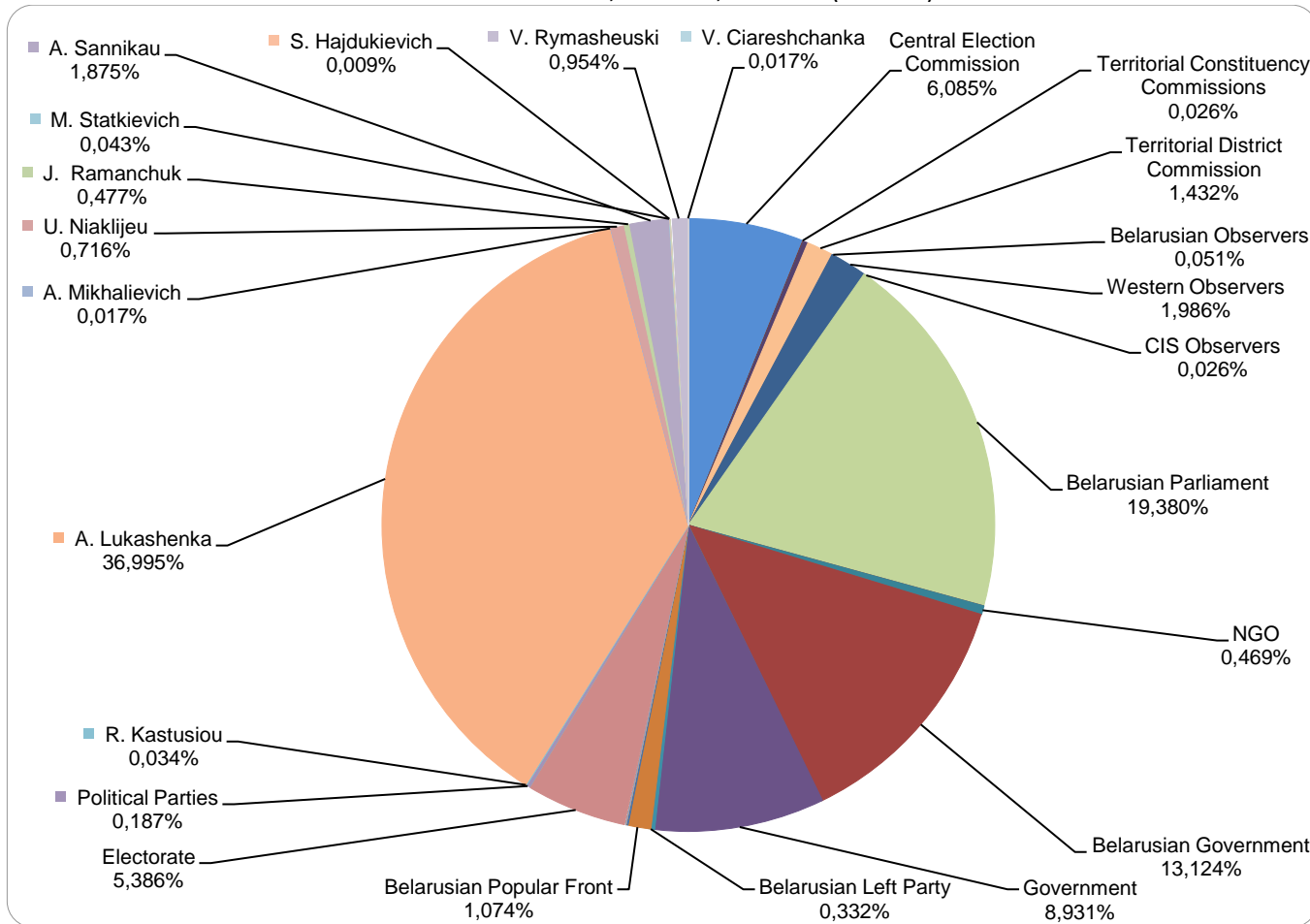


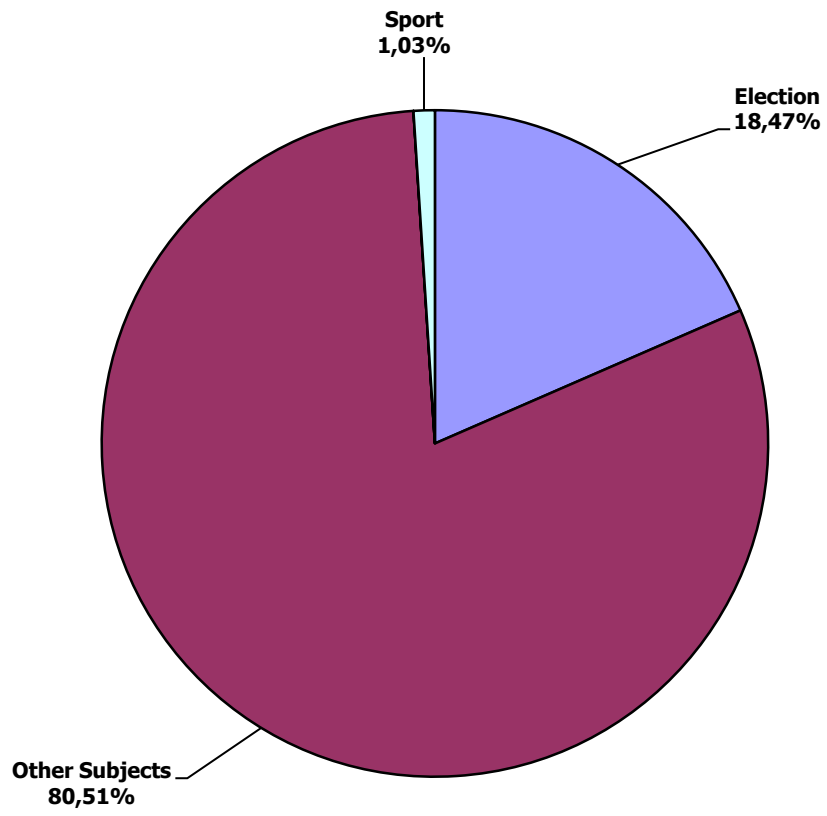
BELARUSIAN PRESIDENT ELECTIONS 2010

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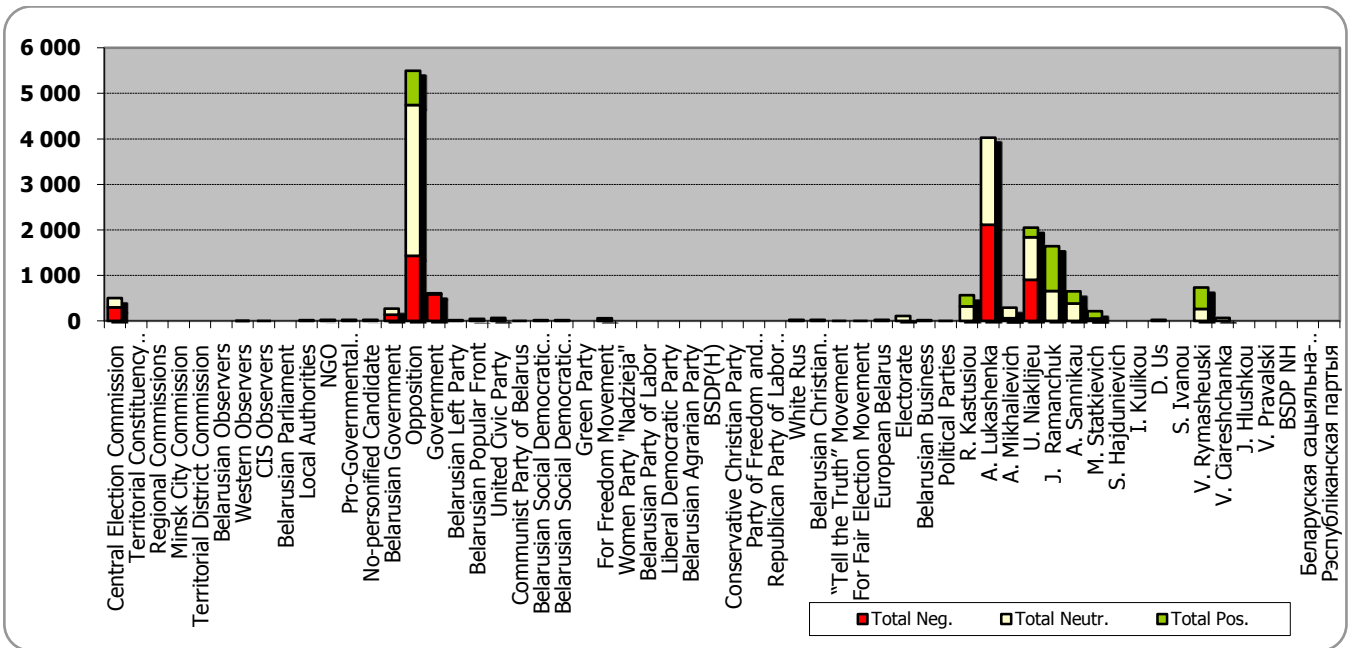
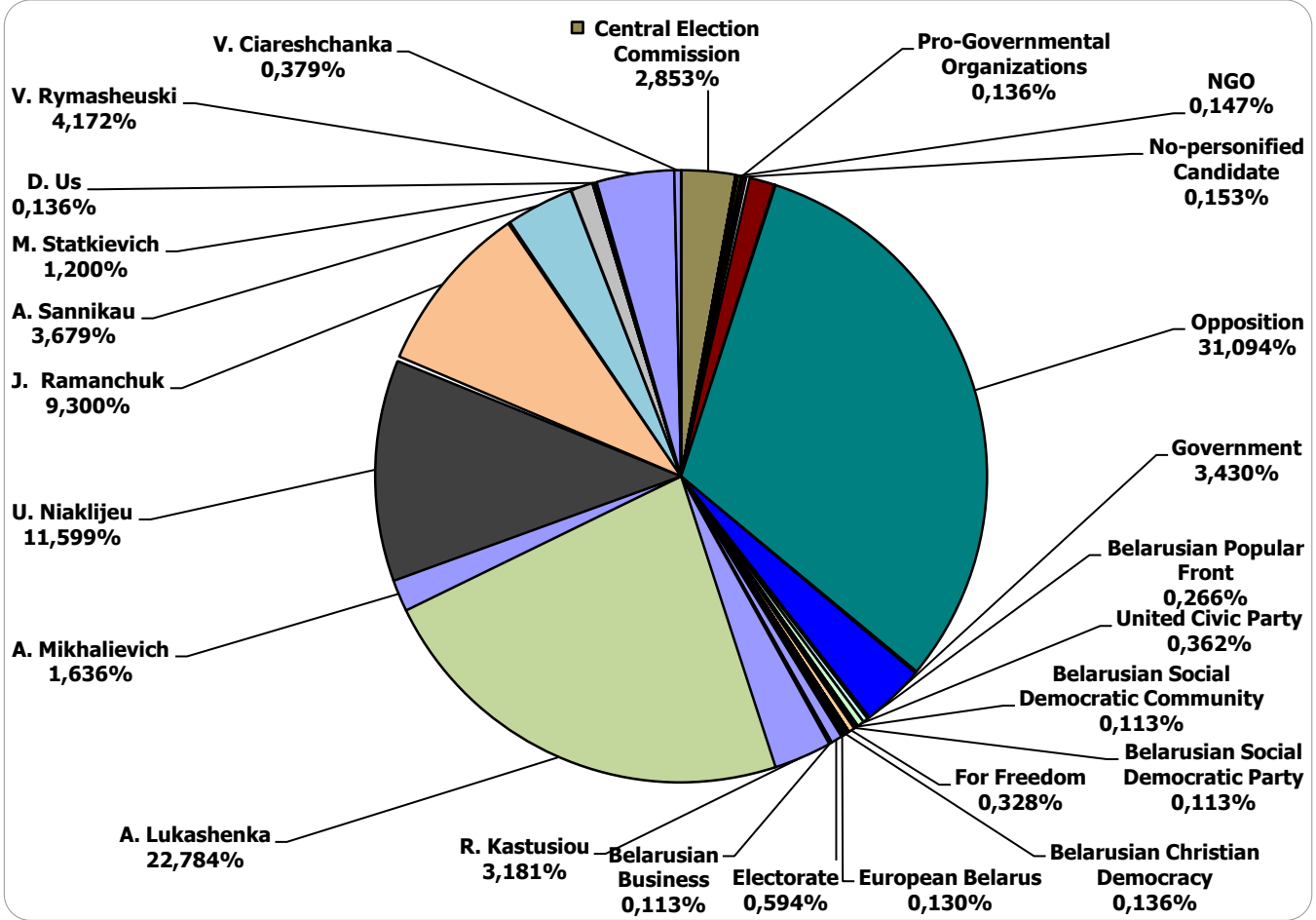


BELARUSIAN PRESIDENT ELECTIONS 2010

NASHA NIVA

25.09.2010 – 19.12.2010

Measured in cm2



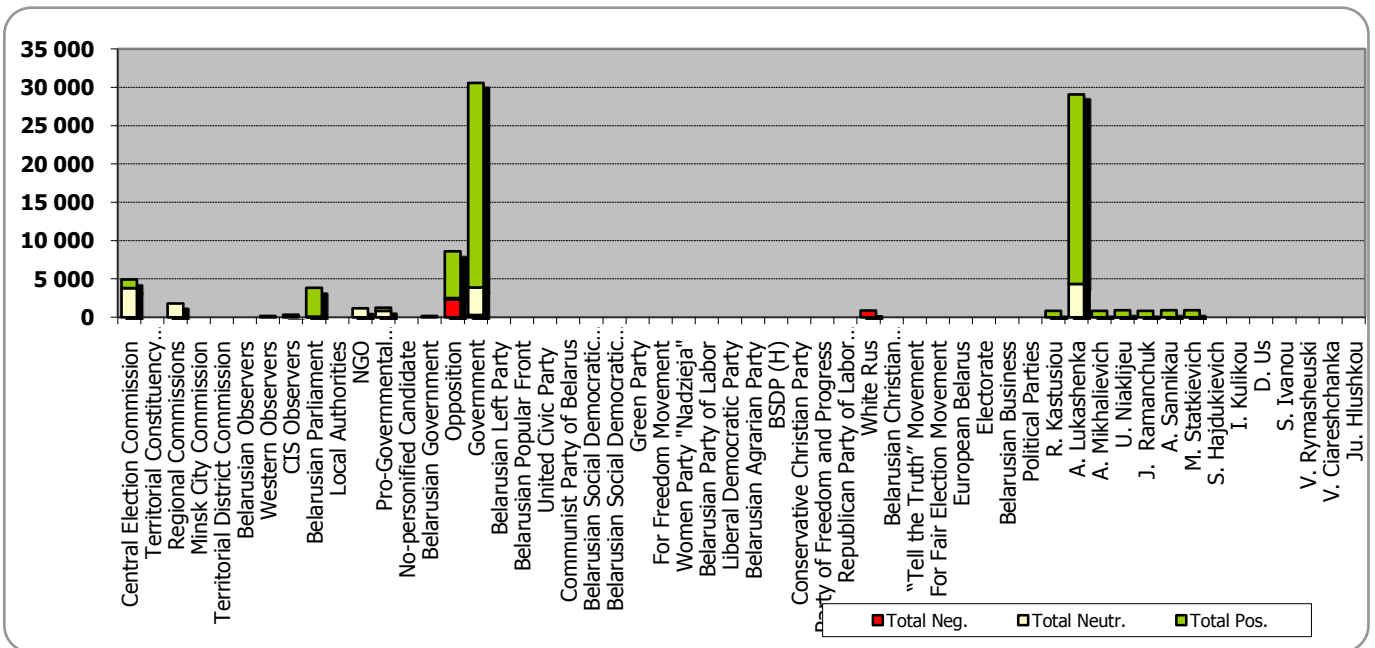
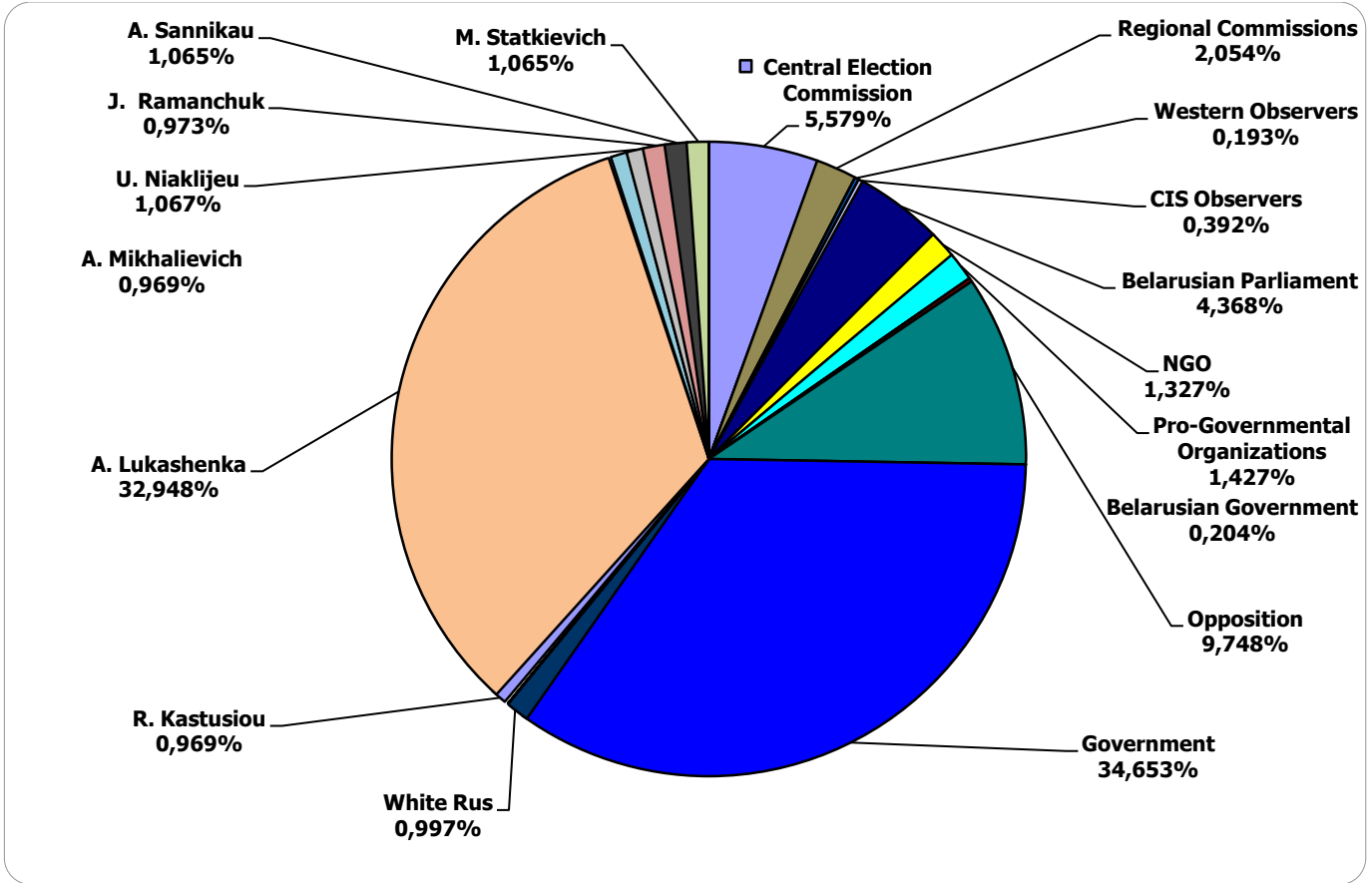


BELARUSIAN PRESIDENT ELECTIONS 2010

RESPUBLIKA

25.09.2010 – 19.12.2010

Measured in cm2



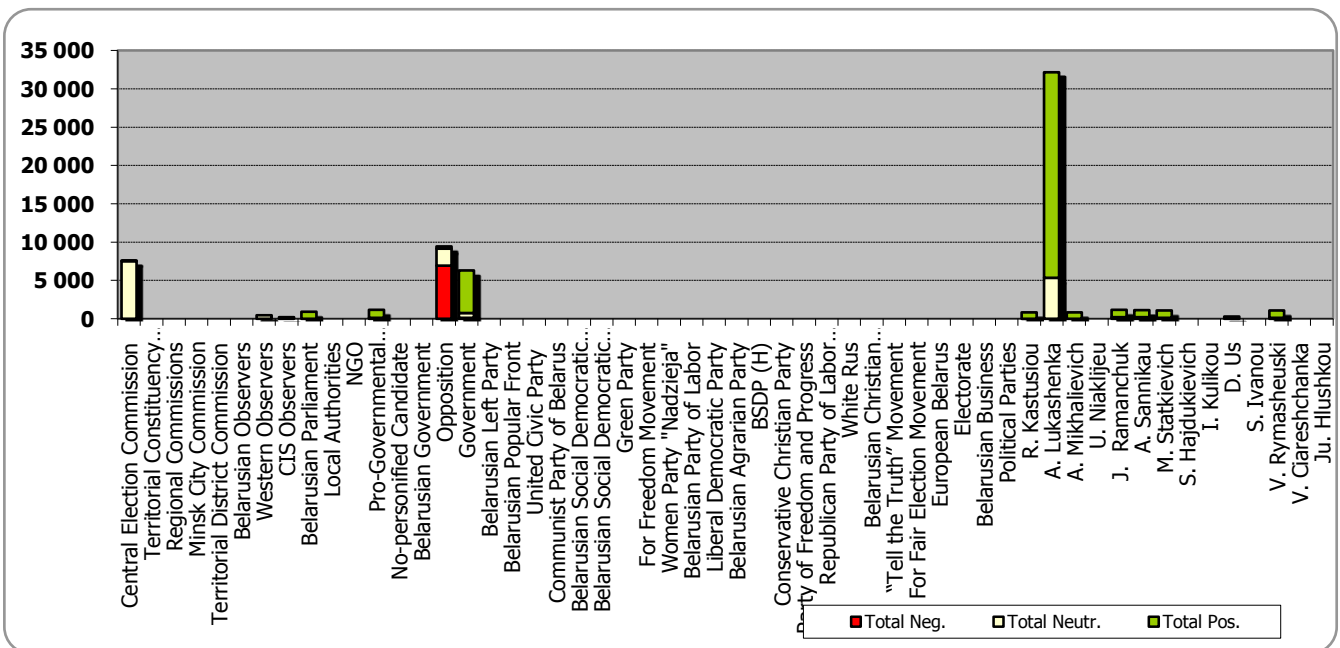
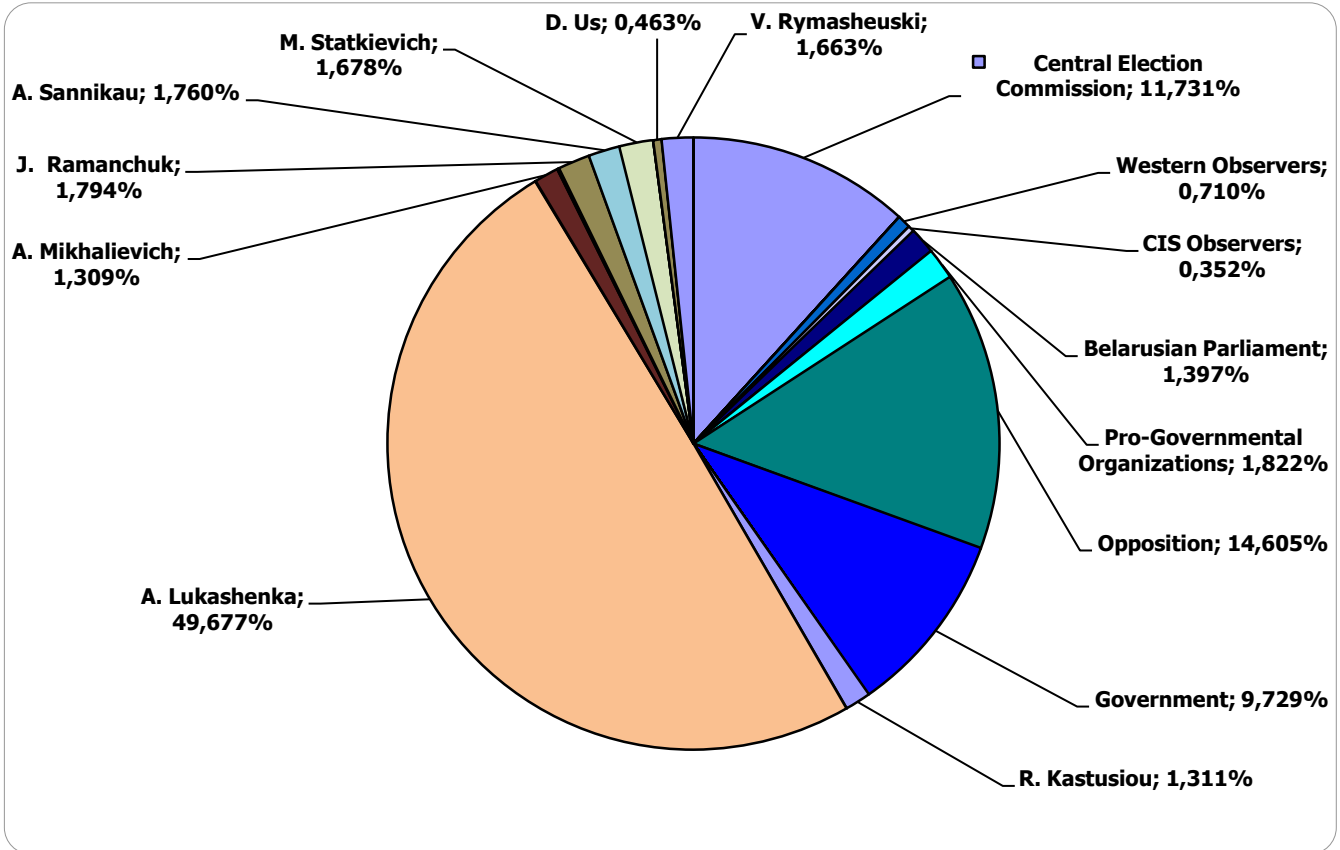


BELARUSIAN PRESIDENT ELECTIONS 2010

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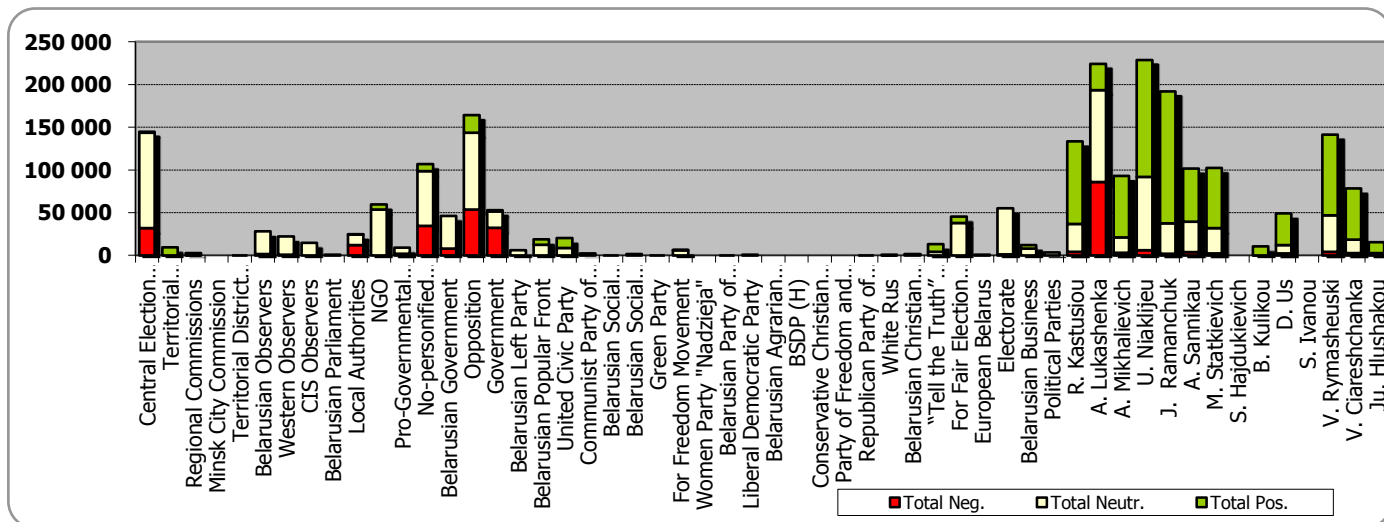
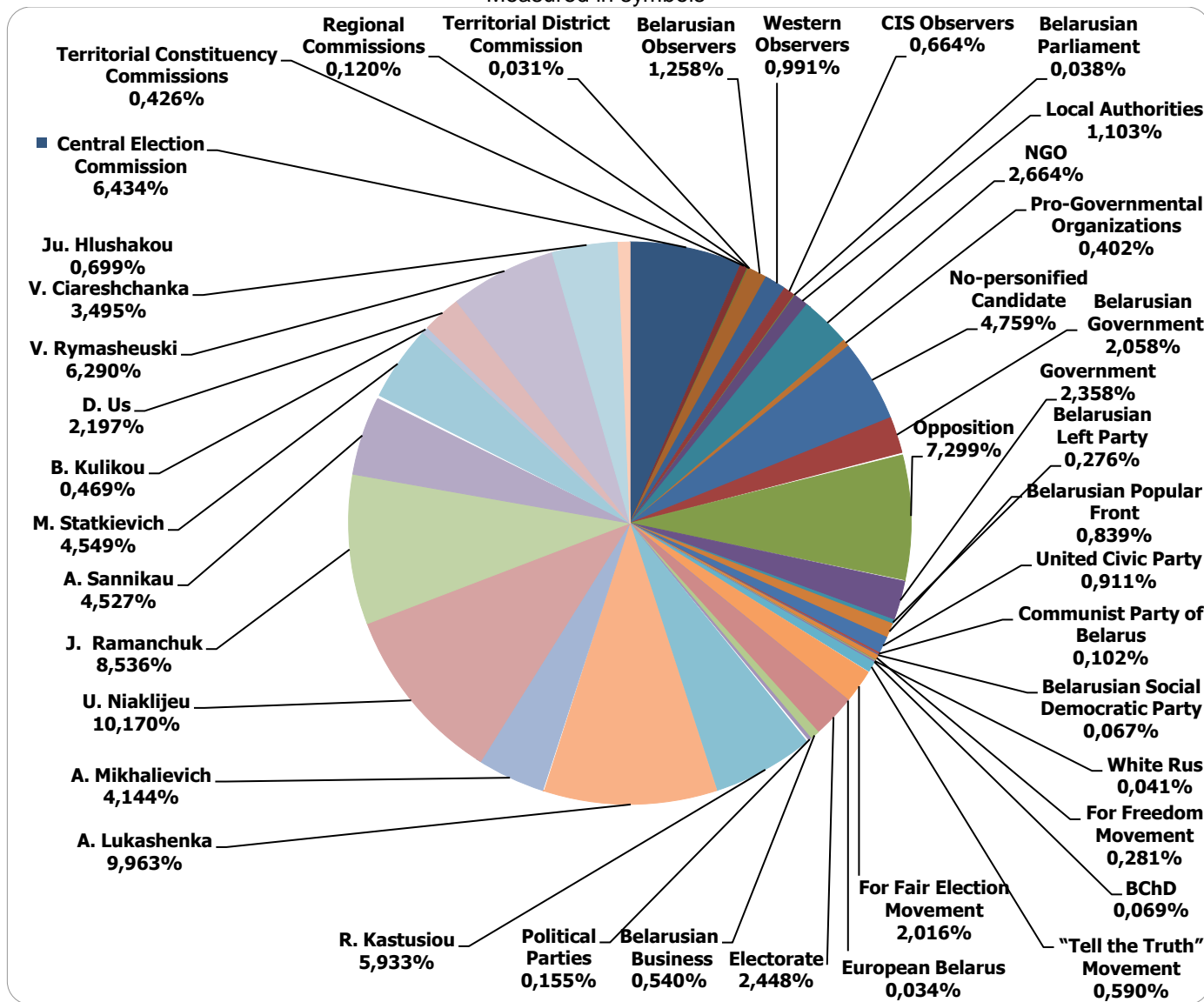


BELARUSIAN PRESIDENT ELECTIONS 2010

NAVINY.BY

01.11.2010 – 20. 11.2010

Measured in symbols



Monitored Media:

E-media

1. *The 1st National Channel (Panorama news program);*
2. *ANT (Nashi Novisti news program);*
3. *The 1st National Channel (In the Focus of Attention weekly analytical program);*
4. *The 1st Channel of the National Radio (Radyjofakt program);*
5. *The First City Channel , Homiel TV;*
6. *Express 101,3 FM (Homiel);*
7. *Naviny Rehijon (Mahiloŭ);*
8. *Regional Radio (Mahiloŭ)*

Internet Resources

1. www.naviny.by
2. www.belta.by

Printed Media

1. *Sovietskaya Belorussiya (Belarus Segodnya),*
1. *2.Narodnaja Vola,*
2. *Respublika,*
3. *Belorusy i Rynok,*
4. *5.Naša Niva,*
5. *Komsomolskaya Pravda v Belorussii,*
6. *Homielskaja Praŭda,*
7. *Mogilyovskaya Pravda.*

MONITORING METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The used monitoring methodology was developed by MEMO98, Slovak NGO based in Bratislava. To adapt it to the Belarusian situation some changes were made. And some methodological tools were further developed. It was used practically for monitoring parliamentary election and referendum coverage by the Belarusian media in 2005.

Key concepts to this methodology are **subjects**¹ of the election process and **rubrics**, according to which the content of electronic media outlets is monitored. Another important concept is an object of monitoring, which is just a media outlet that a team of monitors choose to make quantitative and qualitative analysis of its content based on **professional standards** and principles of **journalist ethics**.

While conducting monitoring it is important to be aware of different stages of the election campaign, which, as it is the case of Belarus, are determined by the Central Election and Referendums Commission.

Quantitative and qualitative approaches

Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches the monitoring methodology aims to produce the most objective evaluation possible of how the election is being covered in the media. Three basic parameters are taken into account to evaluate the character of media election coverage:

- Time (in broadcast media) and space (in print media) given to different subjects, their representatives or actors in the election process;
- The manner in which different subjects, their representatives or actors are presented in different media outlets;
- Instances of unprofessional or unbalanced election coverage, including distorted information, libel and defamation concerning candidates, their programmes, conduct, etc.

The first or quantitative parameter presupposes measuring **time and space** given by the media to different subjects. The second (qualitative) monitoring parameter is the **manner in which the subjects are presented** in the media. It presupposes assessment of news items in the broadcast media and contributions to the print media in terms of favouring particular subjects in each news item or article. And the third parameter, which is also a qualitative one, is based on revealing to what degree news items and articles correspond to **professional standards in journalism** (i.e. separating facts from commentaries, many-sided presentation, impartiality, etc.). It is also based on revealing how news items and articles correlate with **ethics in journalism** (i.e. equal opportunities for opponents, the opponent's right to respond in the same media outlet that has distorted information or presented the subject in a negative light, etc.). It goes without saying that quantitative approach has its peculiarity while monitoring electronic and printed media. The qualitative approach to both cases is however the same.

Monitoring Broadcast Media

TV programmes are monitored with a focus on picture and sound information. Radio programmes monitoring is focused on sound information solely. Monitoring centres primarily on the election as

¹ See at the end.

its subject matter, then the subjects participating in the election process and the parameters monitored. All other news items that do not refer to either the election or its subjects are not to be covered by the monitors.

The first step in monitoring is to **select** TV or radio news items that cover or refer to the election.

Measuring Time

The second step is to measure the time given to each of the subjects monitored. **The time is measured in seconds.** All the selected news items are to be monitored; each of them is monitored separately.

The time given to **each subject/actor** is measured, when:

- The subject (actor) is only in the shot;
- The subject is in the shot, speaking directly into the camera or microphone;
- The subject is spoken about by a media representative, which on the radio means that the subject is quoted by a journalist and on TV that the subject appeared in the shot, with a commentary provided by a journalist;
- A third actor, e.g. another political figure, a journalist or a voter speaks about the subject.

An instance when a subject is not given any measurable time but is mentioned is called a reference. Each reference is recorded in the form too and one reference is allocated 1 second.

Monitoring Printed Media

Printed media monitoring is focused on textual information and pictures (i.e. photos, cartoons, logos, images of party banners, etc.) in each issue of the paper taken separately. Just like in monitoring TV and radio programmes, print media monitoring centres on the election as its subject matter, the subjects participating in the election and the parameters monitored. All other contributions that do not refer to either the election or its subjects are not to be covered by the monitors.

The first step in monitoring media outlets is to **select** articles that cover or refer to the election.

Measuring Space

The second step is to measure the space allotted to each subject in the selected contributions. The space is measured in square centimetres. All the selected contributions are to be monitored, each of them taken separately. One checklist is used to assess one paper only. The articles are scanned page by page in the paper, with special attention on the front page, as it is the one that the largest number of people read. An article on the front page is often continued on some other pages. Then the article is analysed as a whole and the continuation pages are recorded. Its whole space and that of each extract on each page are to be measured.

In measuring the space it is important to determine which subject in the story is the main one or if the story presents one main and some auxiliary subjects. If the article brings information on one main subject, this subject is allotted the whole of the article space. If there are any other subjects mentioned, these references are treated as remarks and allotted 1 square centimetre of space. Each of them is assessed in terms of the manner of presentation parameter.

If the article has two subjects (i.e. it gives a more or less professional comparison of two candidates' programmes) and the comparison can eventually favour one of them, the article space is

equally divided between the two actors. Each of them gets their evaluation mark in terms of the manner of presentation.

If a neutral factual article has several actors, none of them being a dominant subject, all the actors get a reference with a neutral grade.

Assessing the Manner in Which the Subjects Are Presented

The manner of presentation is assessed in the same way both for the broadcast and the print media. Assessment criteria are rooted in professional standards and principles of journalist ethics such as impartiality, balanced approach, fairness, lack of prejudice and others. Deviations from these principles are subject to either positive or negative evaluation of a subject's portrayal.

The manner in which the subjects are presented is evaluated on the scale of **1 to 5**.

1=(+) Highly positive	2=(+) Positive	3=(0) Neutral	4=(-) Negative	5=(-) Highly negative
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The grade 2 (positive) means that the information on a subject had a character of praise. The grade 1 (highly positive) conveys an extreme praise or admiration connected with some success or rather attribution of success. Expressed in a very emotional way or through an extolled comparison with a well-known historic figure or context such kind of presentation should be qualified as highly positive.

The grade 4 (negative) means that a subject is viewed in a disfavoring way. And the grade 5 conveys an extremely disfavoring or hostile portrayal of a subject. Quite often the effect is strengthened by systematic positive presentation of one and the same actors and by negative presentation of others.

On TV the manner of presentation is determined by the use of picture and sound effects, the anchorman's intonation and the style of the text itself.

In the press the manner of presentation is determined by explicit or implicit judgements about the actor, references to positive or negative contexts, historic figures, the style, etc.

Media Effects

Media effects should be viewed the cases of serious deviations from the professional standards in covering any publicly important issue, topic or figure. As a result of these deviations the overwhelming majority of highly positive and highly negative presentations of political subjects during the election campaign fall into the category of media effects. The quantity of such cases conveys to what extent media are involved or not involved into the manipulation of public opinion in favour of the Government, this or that political block, party or candidate. At the same time it shows to what degree different media are independent and to what degree the freedom of expression is a respected value in a society.

Monitoring Checklists (Forms)

The monitoring results are put into the forms. Paper forms are compulsory. There are three different forms for monitoring **the broadcast media**.

Form 1 is meant to capture the number of news items on the programme in general, the overall time of the programme, the numeric order of relevant news items, a brief description of the relevant news items (i.e. subject-matter, message, time span).

Form 2 captures the time given and the manner in which the subjects monitored are presented in news items selected by the monitor as relevant or on a programme, for example, featuring the opposition.

Form 3 is designed to record instances of distorted information, blocking election-relevant subjects and issues, cases of defamation, libel, etc.

There is **only one form** for monitoring **the print media**, in which the page, the headline, etc. are recorded.

While filling in the forms, the monitors use abbreviations referring to the objects to be monitored and subjects participating in the election. The names of people representing the given subjects are recorded in full. Every monitor enters either his or her name and personal number or the personal number only in the form for monitoring the print media.

The forms filled in are electronically processed.

Monitored Subjects:

1. ЦВК – Цэнтральная выбарчая камісія РБ – Central Election Commission
2. ТК – Тэрытарыяльныя камісіі – Territorial Commissions
3. ТКА – Абласныя камісіі – Regional Commissions
4. ТКМГ – Мінская гарадская камісія Minsk City Commission
5. ТРК – Тэрытарыяльная раённая камісія – Territorial District Commission
6. БН – Беларускія назіральнікі – Belarusian Observers
7. ЗН – Заходнія назіральнікі – Western Observers
8. НСНД – Назіральнікі з краін СНД – CIS Observers
9. БП – Беларускі парламент – Belarusian Parliament
10. МУ – Мясцовыя ўлады – Local Authorities
11. НДА – Недзяржаўныя арганізацыі – NGOs
12. ПРА – Праўрадавыя арганізацыі – Pro-Governmental Organizations
13. НПК – Неперсаніфікаваны кандыдат – Depersonalized Candidate
14. БУ – Беларускі ўрад – Belarusian Government
15. АП – Апазіцыя – Opposition
16. УЛ – Улада – Authorities
17. БНФ – Belarusian Popular Front
18. АГП – United Civil Party
19. КПБ – Communist Party of Belarus
20. БСДП НГ – Belarusian Social Democratic Community
21. БСДП – Belarusian Social Democratic Party
22. ПЗ – Партыя Зялёных – Green Party
23. РС – Рух за “Свабоду” – Movement *For Freedom*
24. ЖПН – Жаночая партыя “Надзея” – *Nadzieja Women’s Party*
25. БПП – Беларуская партыя працы – Belarusian Labor Party
26. ЛДП – Liberal Democratic Party
27. БАП – Беларуская аграрная партыя – Belarusian Agrarian Party
28. КХП-БНФ – Conservative Christian Party-BPF
29. БПЛ “СС” – “Справядлівы свет” – Belarusian Left Party *A Just World*
30. ПСП – Партыя свабоды і прагрэса – Party of Freedom and Progress
31. РППС – Рэспубліканская партыя працы і справядлівасці – Republican Party of Labor and Justice
32. БР – Белая Русь – White Rus
33. БХД – Беларуская Хрысціянская Дэмакратыя – Belarusian Christian Democracy
34. ГП – Гавары Праўду – “Tell the Truth” Movement

35. ЗСВ – За справедливые выборы – *Movement For Fair Election*
36. КЕБ – Еўрапейская Беларусь – *European Belarus Coalition*
37. ЭЛ – Электарат – *Electorate*
38. ББЗ – Беларускі бізнэс – *Belarusian Business*
39. ПП – Палітычныя партыі – *Political Parties*
40. РК – Р. Кастусёў – *Ryhor Kastusioŭ*
41. АЛ – А. Лукашэнка – *Alexander Lukashenka*
42. АМ – А. Міхалевіч – *Aleś Michalevič*
43. УН – Ул. Някляеў – *Uładzimir Niaklajeŭ*
44. ЯР – Я. Раманчук – *Jaraslau Ramančuk*
45. АС – А. Саннікаў – *Andrej Sańnikaŭ*
46. МС – М. Статкевіч – *Mikola Statkievič*
47. ДУ – Дзмітры Ус – *Dźmitry Vus*
48. ВЦ – Віктар Цярэшчанка – *Viktar Ciareščanka*
49. ВР – В. Рымашэўскі – *Vital Rymašeŭski*