

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN TELEVISION - 2ND ROUND

MEMO 98 has a long history of exploring the coverage of political subjects and their representatives in the media, both in Slovakia as well as abroad. This report analyses the presentation of the candidates running for president of the Slovak Republic in the period following the publishing of the results of the first round of the elections between 17 and 25 March. The report simultaneously brings an analysis of media coverage of political parties and coalitions as well as some other political subjects (president of the Slovak Republic, the government of the Slovak Republic). The monitoring covered the main news programs of the nationwide TV channels - RTVS, TA3, TV Joj, and TV Markíza.

The monitored criteria included airtime that the media dedicated to the presidential contenders and other subjects within the scope of politically relevant information as well as the manner (positive/neutral/negative) in which the candidates and other stakeholders were presented.

Highlights

Zuzana Čaputová and Maroš Šefčovič received comparable airtime on nationwide TV channels before the second round of elections, while being presented mostly neutrally. They enjoyed most airtime on TV Joj and the least in TA3.

All in all, the TA3 news channel dedicated only a little less than 3 minutes to both candidates, while it was the only channel where the most covered contender was one of those who failed to advance to the second round of the elections (Š. Harabin in particular). While both advancing candidates were significantly criticized, Mr. Harabin's presentation was mostly neutral.

Besides information about the actual elections, other nationwide topics resonated on TV channels, such as financial aid from the US to modernize the Slovak military and the investigation of Marián Kočner, while Brexit clearly dominated among foreign themes.

When it comes to the respective aspects of the presidential campaign before the second round of the elections, most information was dedicated to the general organizational aspect of the elections, the campaign itself, the topics and messages, as well as pre-election opinion polls.

The government of the Slovak Republic has had long-standing dominant airtime in the key news programs of Slovak TV channels, especially in RTVS and TA3. In the currently monitored period, the said channels provided more than one half of their total airtime dedicated to political subjects to information about the government. When presenting the government, neutral information dominated across all the monitored TV channels.

Smer-SD was the most heavily covered political party on 3 TV channels (except for RTVS) - all in all, 17% (most on TA3 - 22%). While the news coverage of SNS, another government coalition member reached 10%, the opposition parties OĽaNO and SaS got much more limited airtime - only 5 and 4% overall respectively (the least in TA3 - 3% each).

The full version of the report can be found here [memo-98-report](#)