



Parliamentary elections 2020 KYRGYZSTAN

Social Media Monitoring

Interim report (4 July – 3 October 2020)

**14 October 2020
Bishkek**

This project was supported by the National Endowment for Democracy

INTRODUCTION

Between 4 July and 3 October, Media Law, a Kyrgyz media organization, and MEMO 98, a Slovak non-profit specialist media-monitoring organization, monitored social media in the run-up to the 4 October parliamentary elections. The monitoring included 46 different actors (politicians, political parties, influencers, media outlets and official authorities) with accounts on Facebook and Instagram who produced a total of 11,695 posts on Facebook and 6,623 on Instagram. The posts generated as many 3,163,755 interactions on Facebook and 20,843,505 on Instagram.

The main purpose of the monitoring was to determine the impact of social media on electoral integrity and the extent to which social media provide important information that voters need to in their decision making.¹ While in general, for most people, television remains to be the primary source of information about politics, the growing relevance of social media inspired us to include also Facebook, Instagram into our monitoring.² Such monitoring of Facebook and Instagram has been done for the first time in the context of Kyrgyz elections. We were interested in determining to what extent are social media used in Kyrgyzstan during elections.

The pluralism of the Kyrgyz media is exceptional in Central Asia, but the polarization of Kyrgyz society is reflected both within the media themselves and in the environment for journalists. Although the crackdown on the media that preceded the 2017 presidential election is long over, investigative journalism is still hesitant – hampered by difficulties in accessing information and subjected to a great deal of harassment, including physical violence, cyber-attacks, and interrogations. Revelations about corruption can still be very dangerous for independent journalists and media outlets [..]. Journalists will also continue to lack security until legislative reforms cap damage awards (which have been astronomic), abolish the president’s special protection, and ensure judicial independence. There is still a great deal of self-censorship on such subjects as inter-ethnic relations. Certain kinds of hate speech still go punished, but the fight against “extremism” is sometimes used as grounds for ill-advised prosecutions of social media users.³

The monitoring also focused on topics and issues discussed in the context of elections. When it comes to social media, we have focused on profiles of contesting political parties, individual politicians, as well as influential public figures (influencers), media outlets, journalists and selected official authorities. From a wider perspective, we also wanted to assess the overall role of social media in the elections and their potential impact on election integrity, particularly the level of public trust and confidence in the process.

¹ [2020 World Press Freedom Index](#) from Reporters Without Borders ranks Kyrgyzstan as 82 (out of 179 countries), assessed as country with ‘problematic situation’ (there are two higher and two lower categories).

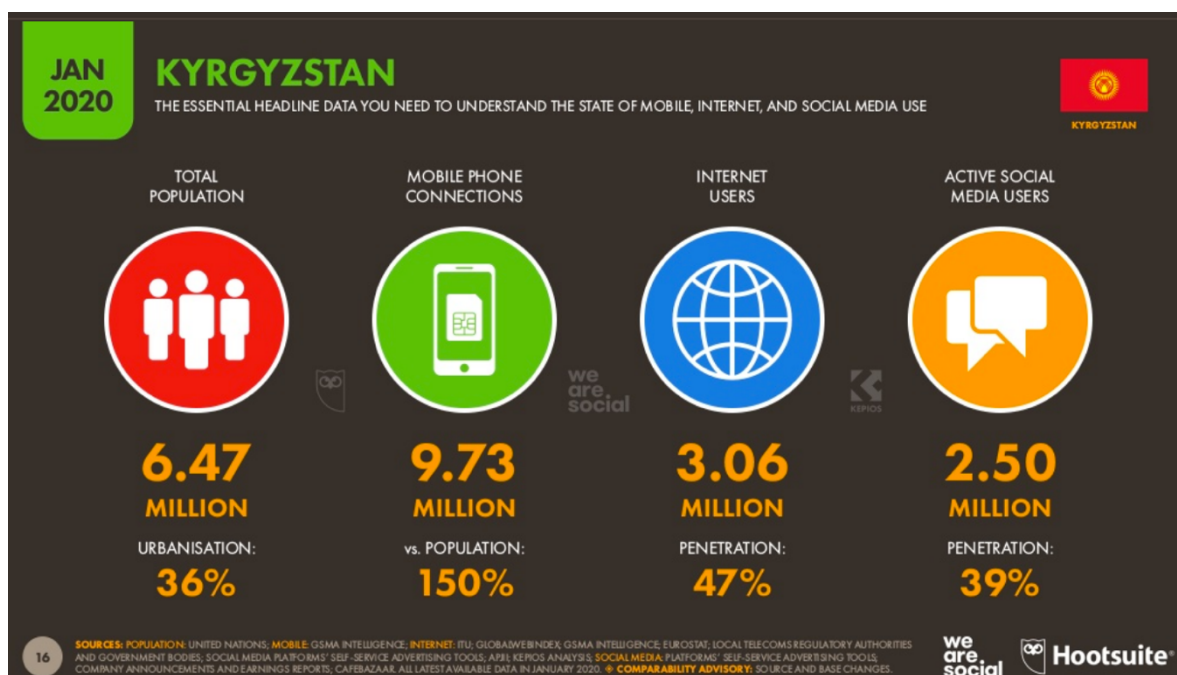
² According to the *Digital 2020 (Kyrgyzstan)*, a research conducted annually by We Are Social and Hootsuite, there is 39 per cent of social media users in the country.

³ Reporters Without Borders, [Kyrgyzstan](#).

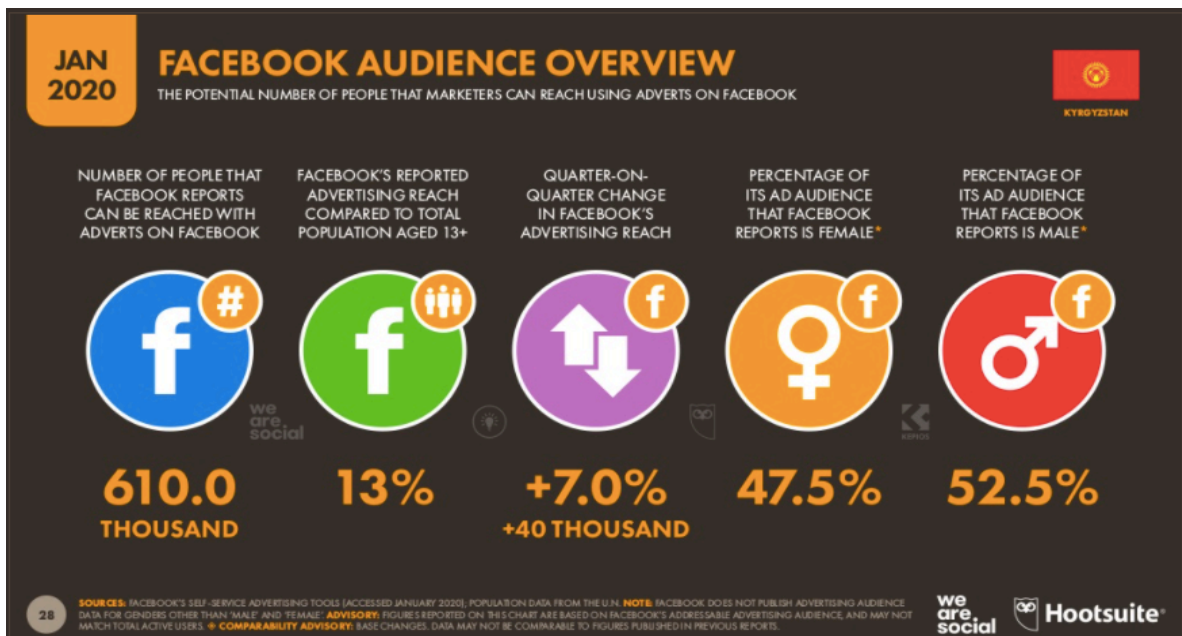
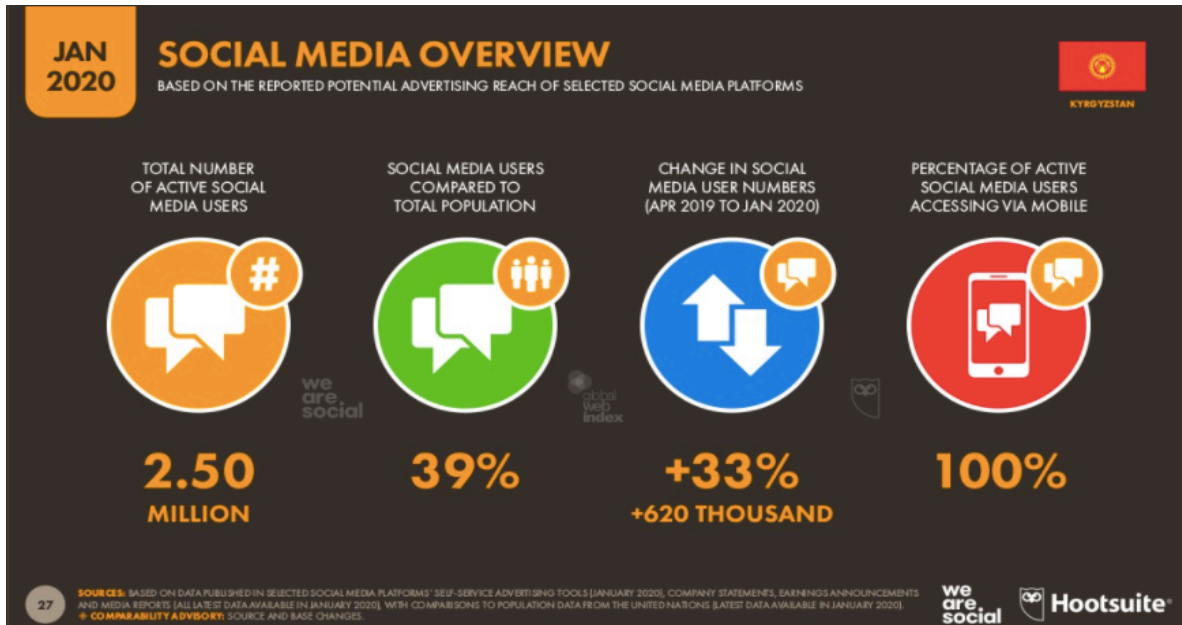
Few weeks after the election day, Media Law and MEMO 98 will issue a final report which will be more comprehensive.

Social media in Kyrgyzstan

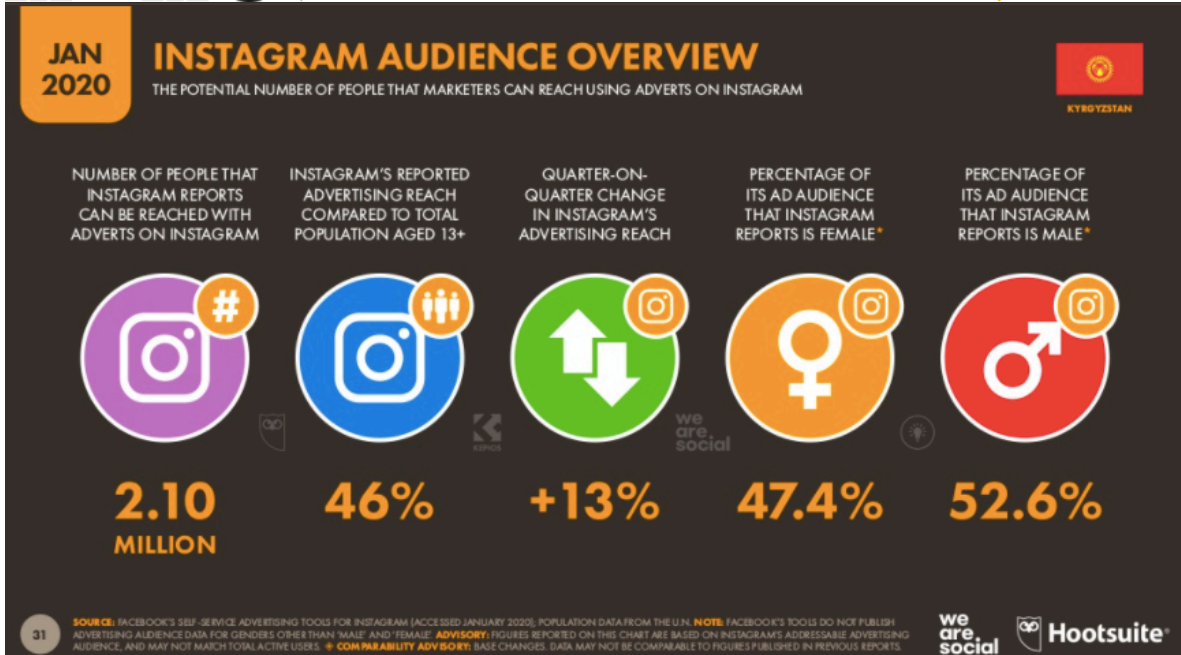
According to Digital media report published by *We are social* and *Hootsuite*, there were 3.06 million internet users in Kyrgyzstan in January 2020. The number of internet users increased by 55 thousand (+1.8%) between 2019 and 2020. The Internet penetration stood at 47% in January 2020.



There were 2.50 million social media users in January 2020. This number increased by 620 thousand (+33%) between April 2019 and January 2020. The social media penetration stood at 39% in January 2020.



The number of people that can be reached with adverts of Facebook is 610,000 (according to Facebook).



The number of people that can be reached with adverts of Instagram is 2,100,000 (according to Instagram).

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- Approximately every second Kyrgyz has access to internet and some 39 % of citizens are social media users.
- The monitoring was conducted from 4 July until 3 October and focused on 46 public pages of political parties, politicians, institutions, media, and influencers who produced a total of total of 11,695 posts on Facebook and 6,623 on Instagram. These posts generated as many 3,163,755 interactions on Facebook and 20,843,505 on Instagram.
- Of the 16 parties registered for the elections, the monitoring focused on 8 of them. The most active parties on Facebook was the *Birimdik* party (with 376 posts), followed by the *Bir Bol* party (365 posts) and the *Republic* party (353 posts).
- Despite the smaller number of posts compared to some other parties, *Chon Kazat's* activities received by far the highest number of interactions (as many as 128,668) followed by *Republic* party (106,132) and *Ata Maken* party (82,880).
- The monitoring focused on the president and 18 politicians who represented registered political parties. Of them, the most active was the incumbent president Mr. Zheenbekov with 851 posts followed by Ms. Gulkaky Mamasalieva from the *Reforma* party (320 posts) and Mr. Zhapykeev from the *Chon Kazat*

party (with 236 posts). When it comes to interactions, Mr. Zhapykeev recorded as many as 307,173 of them, followed by the president Mr. Zheenbekov (145,422) and Mr. Akaev (74,028).

- The monitoring focused on 13 official pages of traditional media. The online publication *Kaktus Media* was by far the most active (2,816 posts), followed by *24.kg* (1,671 posts) and *Akipress* (1,334 posts). It should be noted that a number of posts on media accounts did not relate to elections – only around 5 per cent percent of all posts of above-mentioned media prior to the campaign (4 July – 3 September) had some kind of connection with elections. The highest rate of election-related posts was identified in *Kloop* (some 20 per cent), *April TV* (some 15 per cent) and *Radio Azattyk* (11 per cent).
- When looking at Kyrgyz institutions, the Mayor of Bishkek Mr. Aziz Surakmatov was the most active Facebook user (over 700 posts), followed by the Government (537 posts) and the Central Election Commission (CEC) that produced almost 400 posts in the respective period.
- The elections took place against the backdrop of growing dissatisfaction with the way how the government has handled the COVID-19 pandemic and disillusionment over problems such as corruption and economy. The actors focused on different topics, in particular on politics, health care, corruption charity and religion. The reason why health care became the second most covered topic can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Out of eight monitored parties, all used advertising on Facebook-owned platforms. Three parties – *Republic*, *Bir Bol* and *Ata Meken* - were the most active in using paid ads, with each of them running over 200 spots. *Republik* party spent more funds compared to other parties - in total over 12,000 USD, followed by *Bir Bol* party (up to 8,000 USD).
- When it comes to most covered issues, Facebook posts (in the pre-election period) focused on international relations, Kyrgyz-EU relations, decadent Western values, US administration, sanctions against Russia, the COVID-19 pandemic situation, Russian disinformation efforts, and traditional Islam values.
- Instagram is still used much less frequently by politicians and political parties for political communication in comparison with Facebook. The frequency of posting is also low. The most active parties on Instagram were *Bir Bol* (333 posts), *Republic* (292 posts) and *Birimdik* (171). As for politicians, it was Mr. Zheenbekov (211), followed by Mr. Akaev (112) and Mr. Zhapykeev (98 posts).
- As for the authorities, the Government was by far the most active on Instagram with a total of 275 posts and *Kaktus Media* was the most active media outlet when considering election-related posting on Instagram (with 64 posts in the two-month summer period).

- The interaction rate on Instagram was remarkably high, in particular in case of politicians and media – Mr. Akaev (112 posts – 432,484 interactions), followed by Mr. Zhapykeev (98 posts – 396,032 interactions) and president Zheenbekov (211 posts formed 362,930 interactions). As for the media, the interaction rate was significantly higher in comparison with other subjects, as a result of the fact that not only election or politics-related issues were covered. *Kaktus Media* dominated with more than 2 million interactions (2,036,180), while *Kyrgyz Today*, *Radio Azattyk* and *SuperInfo* gained each more than 1 million interactions respectively.
- A total of 23 posts by Mayor of Bishkek created 5,974 interactions, 275 Instagram posts by the Government led to 4,370 interactions.
- Given the absence of legal provisions regulating disinformation or hate speech on social media, there were couple of initiatives to eliminate such negative trends. One was initiated by the CEC and the other one by civil society – in both cases, they were signed by almost all registered political parties.
- Notwithstanding these initiatives, the monitoring team identified instances when disinformation campaigns were conducted, particularly in the form of fake accounts.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Background

The elections took place against the backdrop of growing dissatisfaction with the way how the government has handled the COVID-19 pandemic and disillusionment over problems such as corruption and economy.

There are no specific legal provisions regulating disinformation or hate speech on social media (the existing provisions only apply to traditional media). Earlier this year, there was a legal initiative to adopt a new *Law on Manipulating Information* which included provisions to regulate Internet and social media. The draft law passed all three readings in Parliament, but after a negative reaction from the public, the President sent this draft law for revision.

Given the absence of the legislation regulating social media, the CEC initiated the Code of Conduct for fair elections to, among other things, eliminate dis/misinformation and hate speech on social media. It was signed by all 16 parties on 4 September. In another effort initiated by civil society, 15 registered parties signed another non-binding document titled “Agreement on Freedom of Speech” in which they declared their commitment to respect and facilitate the freedom of speech and avoid its undue limitations, including prosecutions for comments on social media and Internet.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned initiatives, the monitoring team identified instances when disinformation campaigns were conducted, particularly in the form of fake accounts which distributed untrue information about political parties or candidates. More information and concrete examples will be included in the final report.

a. Facebook | *Posts*

Political parties

The Central Election Commission registered 16 parties to compete for 120 seats in the unicameral *Jogorku Kenesh* (parliament). The monitoring started on 4 July and ran until 3 October, covering the period of three months prior to the election day. Of the analyzed official Facebook pages of eight parties (we selected those parties with chances to pass the 7 percent threshold), *Birimdik*, *Bir Bol* and *Republic* were the most active parties when it comes to the number of posts generated during the period, with each of them posting more than 350 posts.⁴ The number of posts these parties generated in July and August was notably smaller in comparison with September. During the whole period, the most active party on Facebook was the *Birimdik* party (with 376 posts), followed by the *Bir Bol* party (365 posts) and the *Republic* party (353 posts).

Politicians

The CEC registered 1,912 candidates for the 4 October elections. We focused on Facebook pages of 18 top politicians, representing contesting political parties as well as the president. Among them, and among all the political actors overall, by far, the most active one was the incumbent president Mr. Zheenbekov with over 850 posts during the entire monitored period. Other politicians active on Facebook were Ms. Gulkaky Mamasalieva, the director of the Interbilim Osh NGO who ran as number 10 on the *Reforma* party ticket (320 posts), and Mr. Zhapykeev from the Chon Kazat party (with 236 posts).

Institutions

To get a sense of the type of posts and issues covered by institutions, we decided to include three of them into our monitoring. The Mayor of Bishkek Mr. Aziz Surakmatov was the most active Facebook user (over 700 posts), followed by the Government (537 posts) and the Central Election Commission (CEC) that produced almost 400 posts in the respective period.

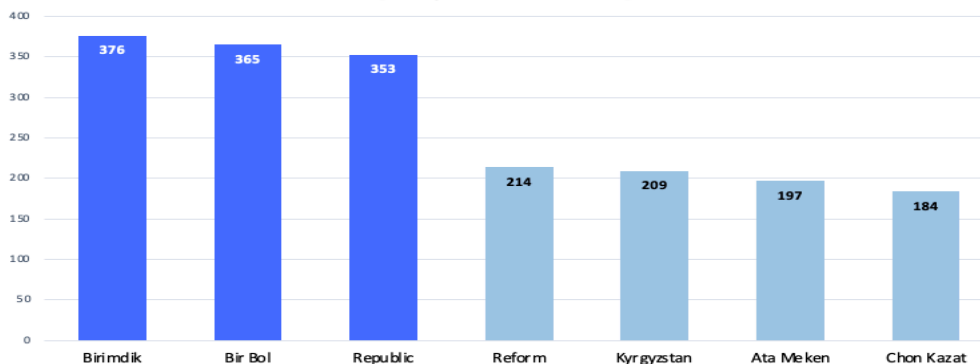
Media

The monitoring focused on 12 official pages of traditional media. The online publication Kaktus Media was by far the most active (2,816 posts), followed by 24.kg (1,671 posts) and Akipress (1,334 posts). It should be noted that a number of posts on these accounts did not relate to elections – the monitoring team evaluated that for the period 4 July – 3 September only around 5 per cent percent of all posts had some kind of connection with elections in the above mentioned media. The highest rate of election-related posts was identified in *Kloop* (some 20 per cent of election-related posts), *April TV* (some 15 per cent) and *Radio Azattyk* (11 per cent).

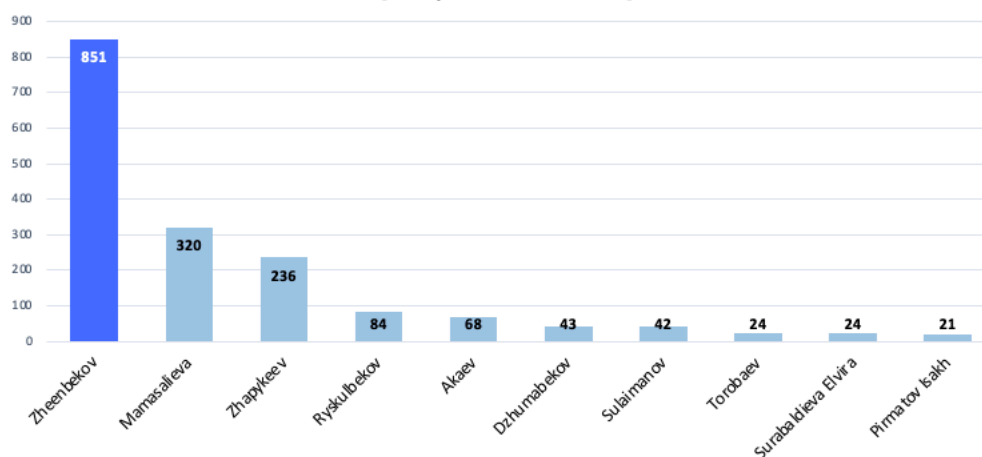
⁴ The outgoing parliamentary majority was led by the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK) together with the *Bir Bol*, *Kyrgyzstan* and *Respublika-Ata Jurt* parties. The main parties in opposition were *Ata Meken* and *Onuguu-Progress*. The ruling party SDPK split into different groups, including those loyal to the former President Almazbek Atambayev and those close to the current President Sooronbai Zheenbekov. The supporters of the former president clashed with the police in 2019 in result of which a number of them suffered injuries and there were also casualties. In result, Mr. Atambayev received a lengthy prison sentence.

Charts 1-4 | Facebook – Posts by Parties, Politicians, Media and Authorities

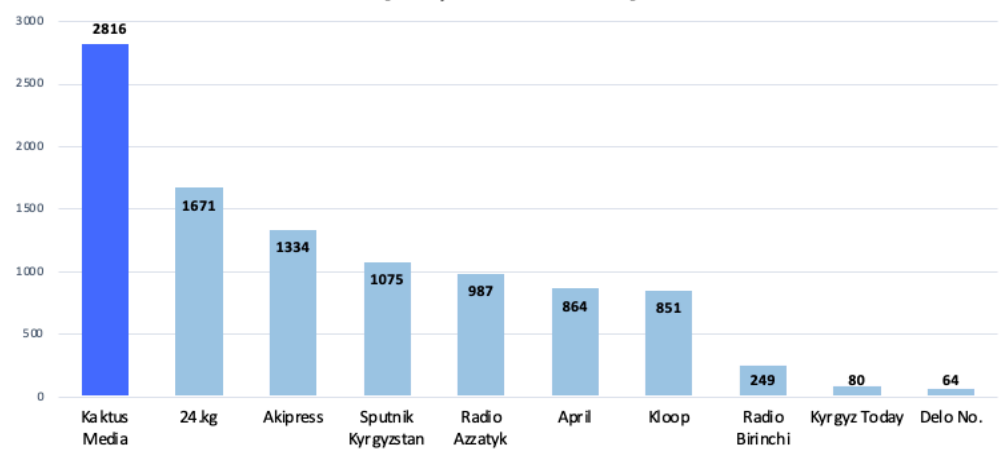
FACEBOOK Posts | Political parties
[4 July - 3 October 2020]

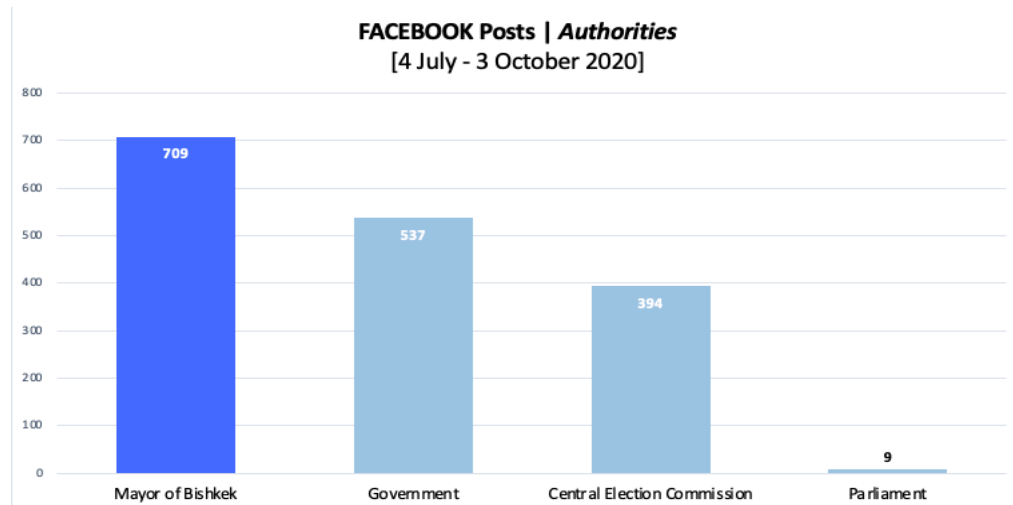


FACEBOOK Posts | Politicians
[4 July - 3 October 2020]



FACEBOOK Posts | Media
[4 July - 3 October 2020]

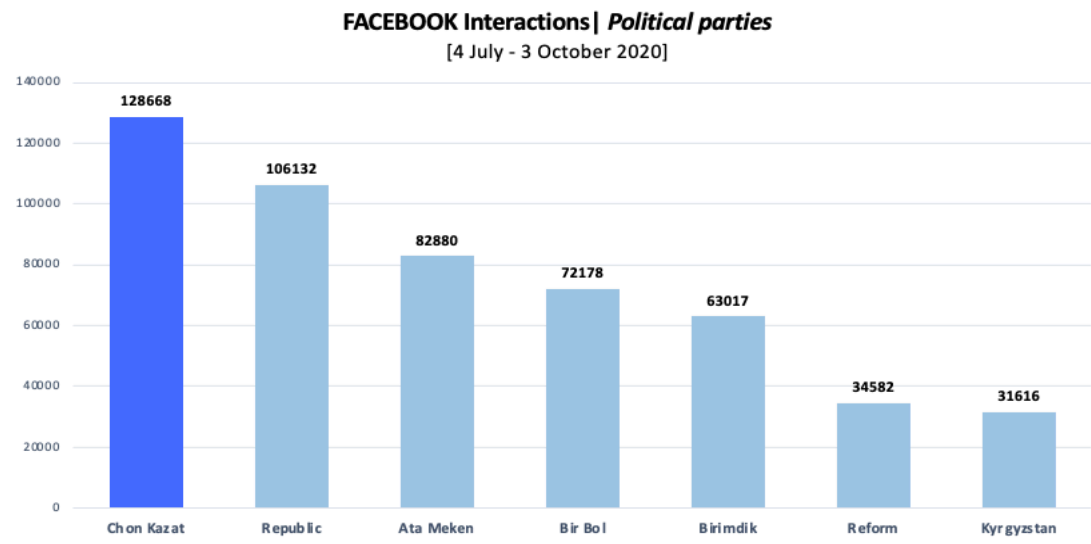




b. Facebook | Interactions

When it comes to the interactions related to the posts, from among the parties, the *Chon Kazat's* activities on Facebook received by far the highest number of them (as many as 128,668) despite the smaller number of posts compared to some other parties. Posts of the *Republic* party received 106,132 interactions, followed by *Ata Meken* with 82,880 of interactions.

Chart 5 | Facebook – Interactions by Parties



Facebook | *TOP posts by interactions (Parties)*

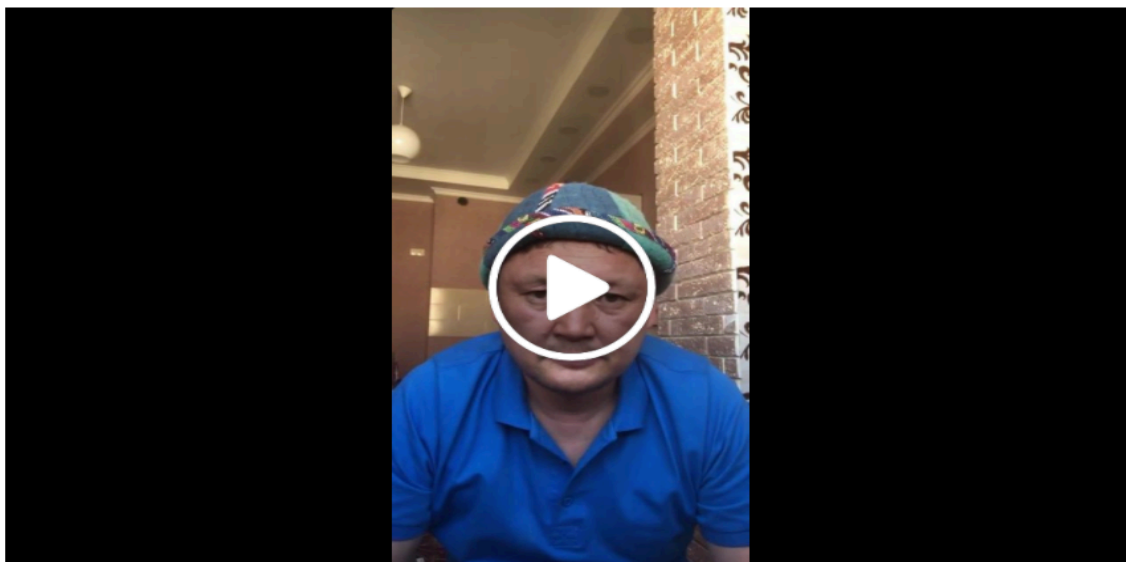
Post #1 | The Chon Kazat



Чон Казат posted a [video](#).

3 months ago · 15:00

Чубак ажынын жаткан жери жайлуу болсун.




43.1K Post Views

82.4K Total Views


2,746 396 569

On 11 July, Chon Kazat published a post in which its leader Sylmyk Zhapykeev addresses supporters of the party, talking of the current situation with C-19 as well as other topics. This posts at the time of the data scrapping received 2,746 interactions, 396 comments and 569 shares.






Post #2 | The Chon Kazat

 **Чон Казат** posted a [video](#).
2 weeks ago · 28:02

Элдик кыймыл. Элдик партия Чон Казат номер 16.



36.1K Post Views 109.2K Total Views

   2,174  462  856

In a post published on 24 September, the Chon Kazat leader Sylmyk Zhapykeev spoke about different topics and issues, declaring a war on corruption (as the entire system of state is corrupt), economy, education culture, sports and other topics. The post received 2,174 interactions, 462 comments and was shared 856 times.

Post #3 | The Chon Kazat



Чон Казат posted a [video](#).

2 weeks ago · 9:06

Чон Казат. Сыймык Жапыкеев соз менен дагы жарды!



38.3K Post Views

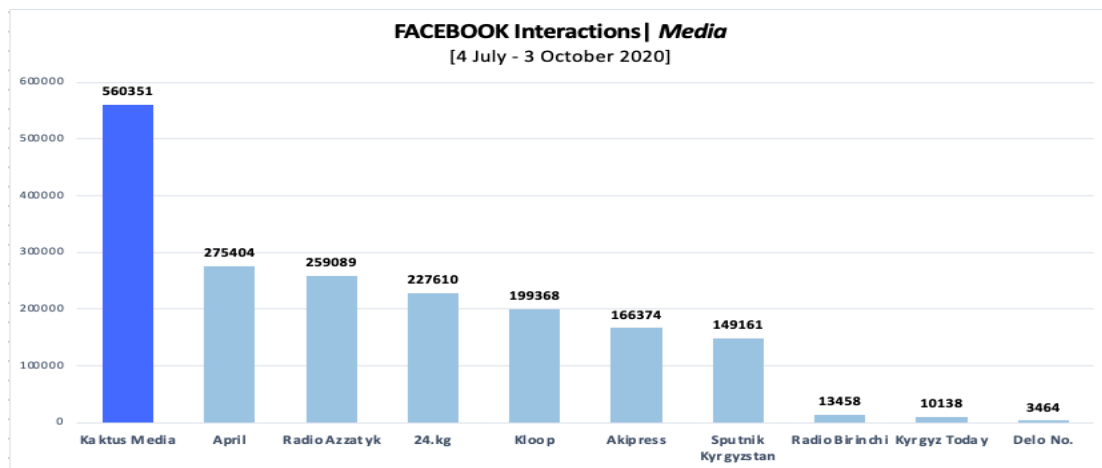
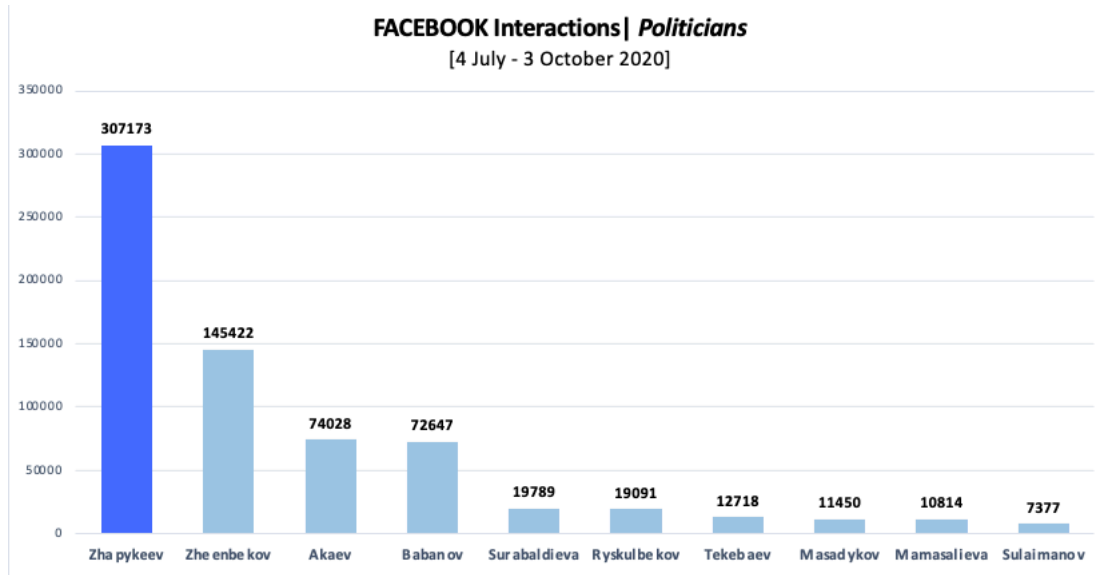
67.7K Total Views

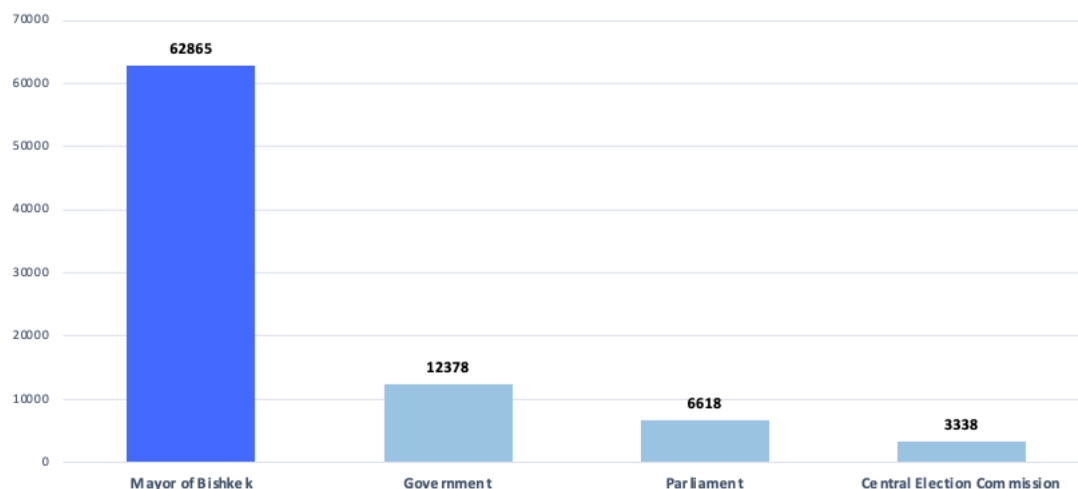
2,403 359 665

In yet another post, Sylmyk Zhapykeev again talked of corruption, blaming oligarchs for robbing the country and saying that his party Chon Kazat is not a fight against corruption but rather a war against it. He accused the state of being corrupt and of not being prepared to deal with the pandemic. The post received 2,403 interactions, 359 comments and was shared 665 times.

Among the politicians, Mr. Zhapykeev (leader of the *Chon Kazat* party) recorded as many as 307,173 interactions, followed by the president Mr. Zheenbekov (145,422) and Mr. Akaev (74,028). As for the authorities, the Mayor of Bishkek gained the highest number of them (62,865), followed by the Government (12,378), whereas the CEC's 394 posts produced only some 3,338 interactions. Among the media outlets, in the whole period, posts of *Kaktus Media* on Facebook dominated with more than 560 thousand interactions. April and Radio *Azattyk* gained each more than 250 thousand interactions.

Charts 6-8 | Facebook – Interactions Politicians, Media and Authorities



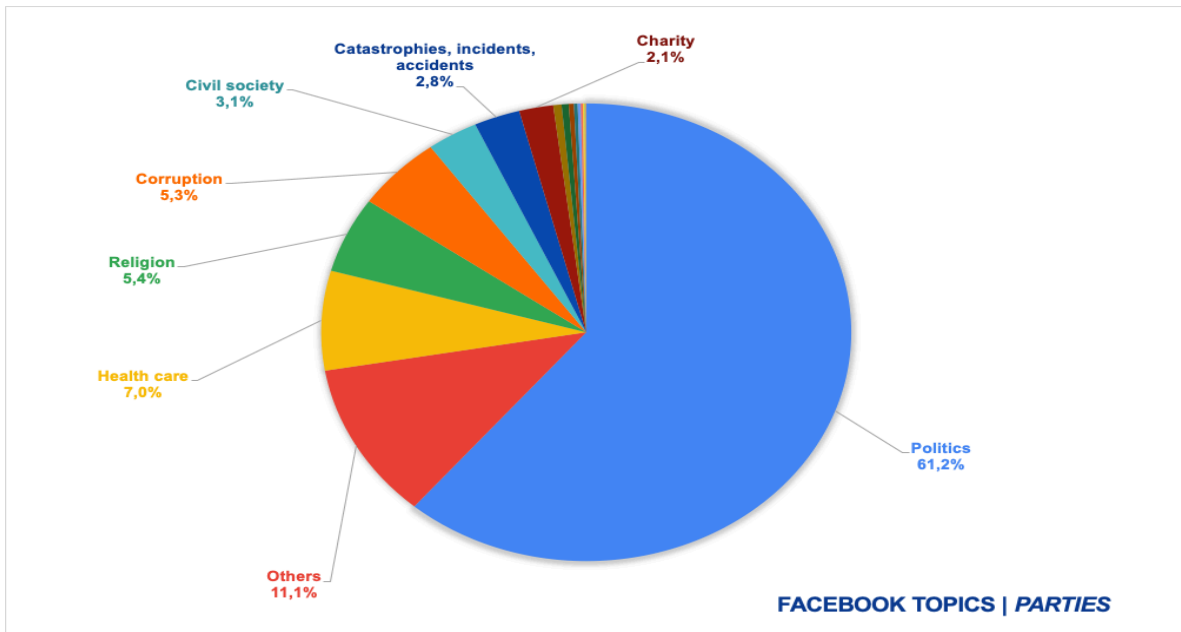
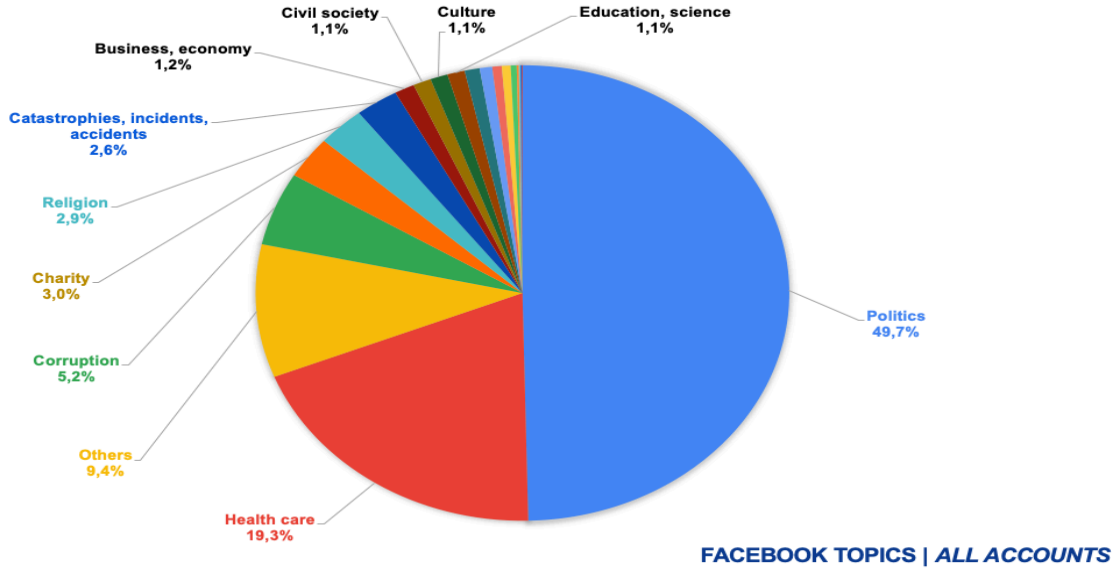
FACEBOOK Interactions | Authorities
 [4 July - 3 October 2020]

c. Facebook | Topics (4 July – 3 September)

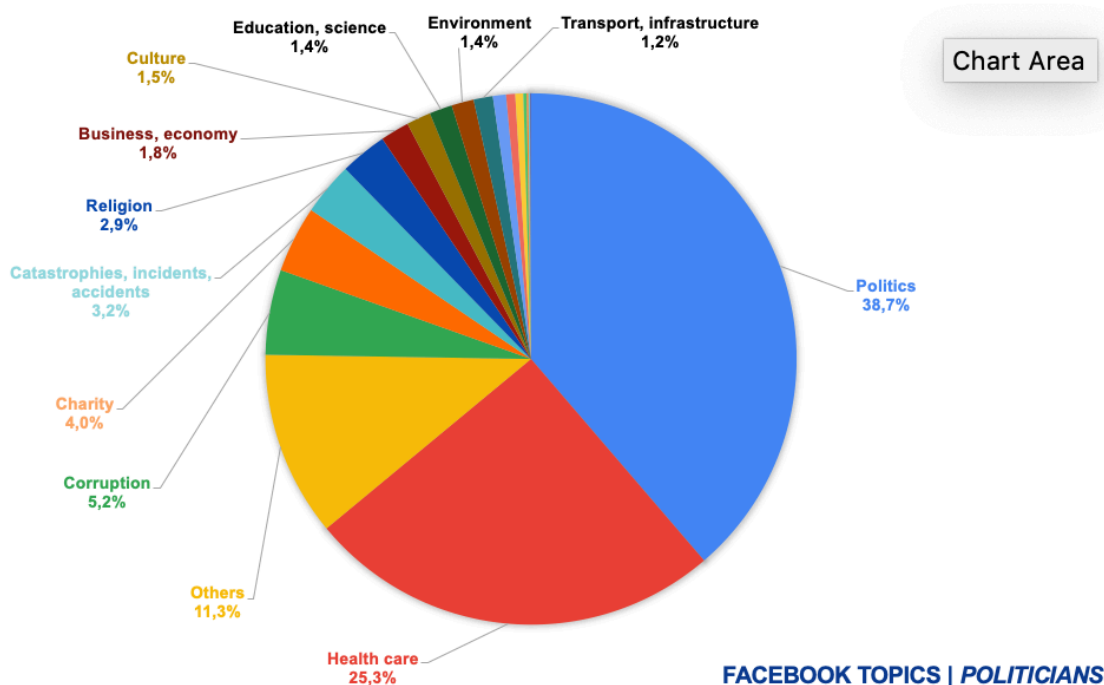
In the pre-campaign period, overall, *Politics* clearly dominated the social communication among the relevant actors (selected political parties, politicians, media, and influencers), with almost 50 per cent of all the Facebook posts dedicated to this topic. When it comes to the more concrete topics and issues, a number of parties, in their campaign materials and TV appearances, listed health care reforms among their priorities. This was confirmed by our monitoring as - *Health care* - amounted for almost 20 per cent of the Facebook posts of relevant actors. *Corruption* was presented in more than 5 per cent of posts - also a relatively frequently presented theme. The topics such as *Charity* and *Religion* were each featured at around 3 per cent of posts, overall.

When looking at the posts of political parties specifically, we noted a tendency to clearly focus on *Politics* (more than 60 per cent of all posts by political parties). This dominant topic was followed by *Health care* (7 per cent) and further also *Religion* and *Corruption*, each of which amounted to more than 5 per cent of Facebook posts.

Politics as a topic was also present in posts of politicians, but less frequently compared to other actors (with less than 39 per cent of posts allocated to this topic). *Health care* was very visible with every fourth post (more than 25 per cent of Facebook posts) dedicated to this theme. *Corruption* (5 per cent) was also strongly present as a theme in politicians' Facebook posts, followed by *Charity* with 4 per cent.

Chart 9-11 | Facebook - Topics in All accounts, by Parties and Politicians

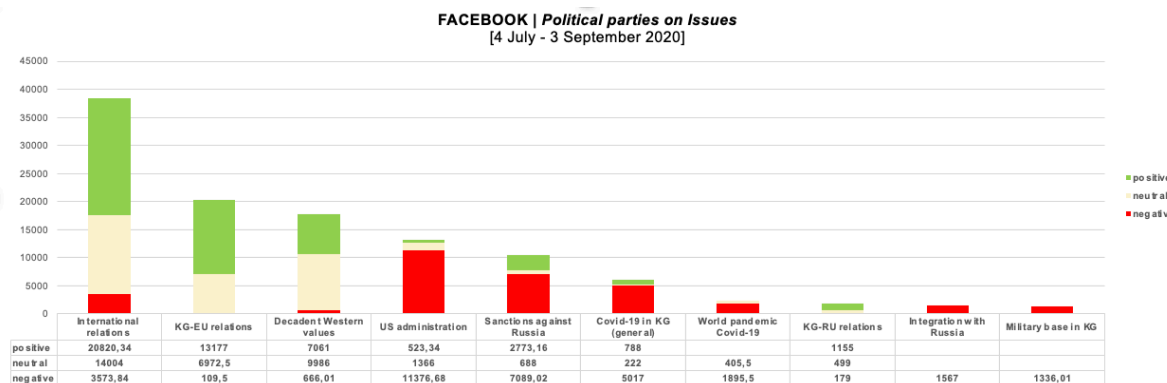




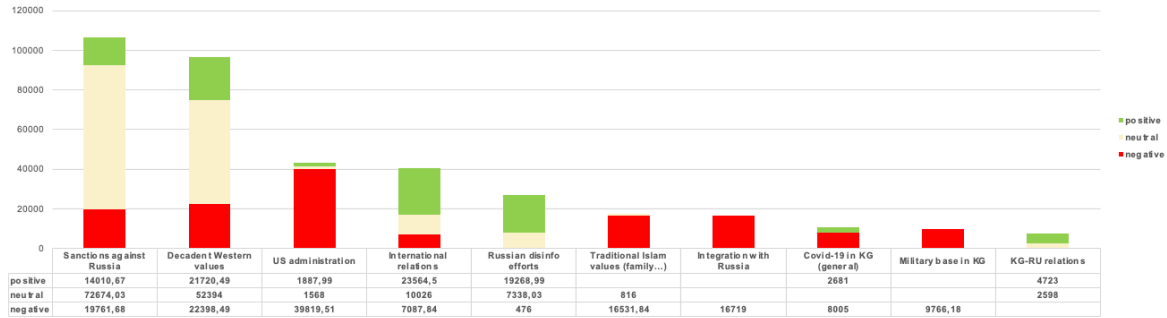
d. Facebook | Top Issues (4 July – 3 September)

A handful of foreign-affairs-related issues dominated the Facebook posts of relevant actors – the most frequently present ones were as follows: *International relations, Kyrgyz-EU relations, Decadent Western values, US administration, and Sanctions against Russia*. While other topics like the *COVID-19 pandemic situation* (both global situation as well as domestic context), *Russian disinformation efforts*, or *Traditional Islam values* were also featured, these issues were notably less frequently presented, overall. While these stories were presented from various angles and in a diverse way, the US administration was portrayed rather negatively by almost all actors monitored.

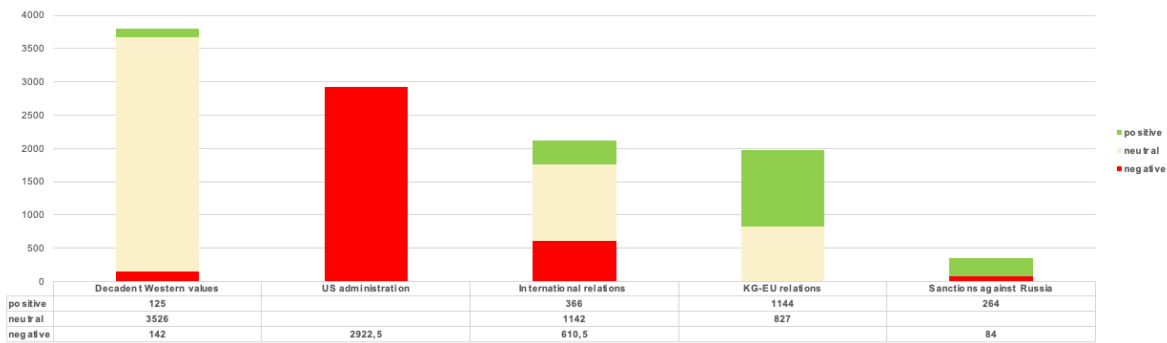
Chart 12-15 | Facebook – Top Issues by Parties, Politicians, Influencers, Media



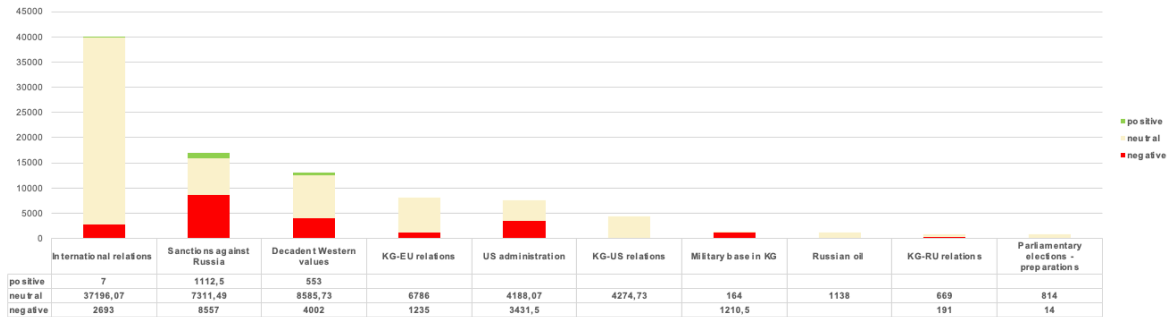
FACEBOOK | Politicians on Issues
[4 July - 3 September 2020]



FACEBOOK | Influencers on Issues
[4 July - 3 September 2020]




FACEBOOK | Media on Issues
[4 July - 3 September 2020]



Ad Library

The ad library provides advertising transparency by offering a comprehensive, searchable collection of all ads currently running from across Facebook apps and services, including Instagram.



Search Ads

Choose a category to start your search.

Issues, Elections or Politics
Search all

Search ads from candidates for public office, as well as ads about any election, ballot initiative or social issue.

🔍

🔍

More ways to search and filter ads about social issues, elections or politics

📊 Report

Explore, filter and download data for ads about social issues, elections or politics. Also find the spending tracker and spending totals by advertiser and location.

</> API

Perform customized keyword searches of active and inactive ads about social issues, elections or politics.

The Facebook's Ad library that offers data about ads on Facebook-owned platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Audience Network and Messenger) was operational in Kyrgyzstan for these elections.

According to the Ad library, all ads on social issues, elections or politics (so not only election related) since August 2020 until the beginning of October amounted to 3,555 ads; total amount spent on these ads was 62,692 USD.

Out of eight parties whose activities on social media were monitored, all appeared to use advertising on the Facebook-owned platforms. Also, some individual candidates used the opportunity to advertise their social media posts on Facebook platforms. Three parties – *Republic*, *Bir Bol* and *Ata Meken* were the most active in using paid ads; each of them ran over 200 spots (collectively on all the Facebook-owned platforms). *Mekenim Kyrgyzstan* also placed up to 200 spots. Furthermore, the *Reform* party ran up to 100 ads in total, followed by *Betun Kyrgyzstan* (almost 80 ads), *Birimdik* (more than 15) and *Chon Kazat* (less than 10 ads).

The exact costs are not always available, but the Ad library offers at least a range of prices. *Respublika* party appeared to spend more funds compared to other parties - in total over 12,000 USD, followed by *Bir Bol* party (up to 8,000 USD). When considering estimated cost of ads as listed by Ad library, we can see that vast majority of ads were purchased for amounts ranging between 0,1 and 100 usd, although *Respublika* and *Bir Bol* spent up to 500 USD on some ads. By

comparison, the *Reforma* party, for example, spent around 2,200 USD for as many as 96 spots USD.

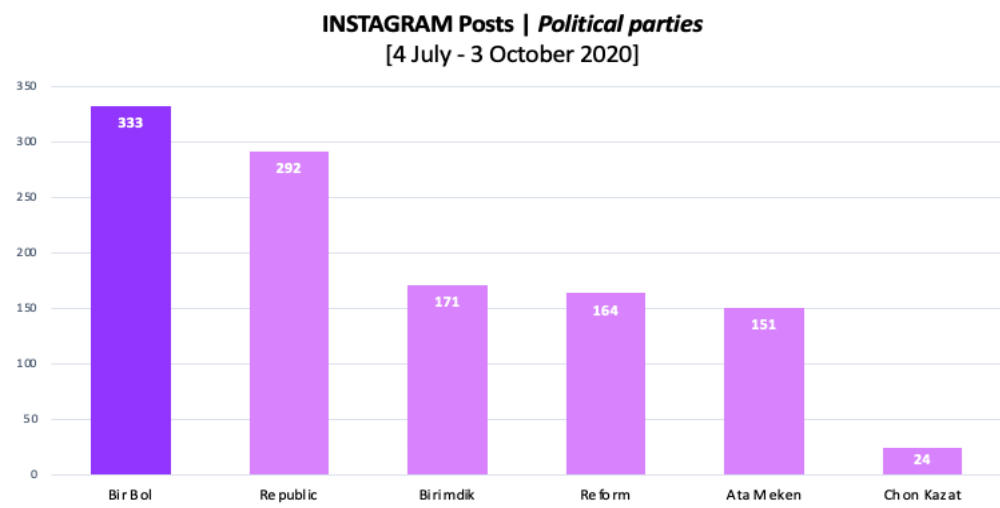
f. Instagram | Posts

In general, Instagram is still used much less frequently by politicians and political parties for political communication in comparison with Facebook. As such, many relevant actors who use Facebook do not have an official Instagram account, which means that the volume of information is significantly smaller compared to the one gathered on Facebook. Even among those who use Instagram, the frequency of posting was rather low, although it must be noted that there was a significant increase of posts during the campaign period.

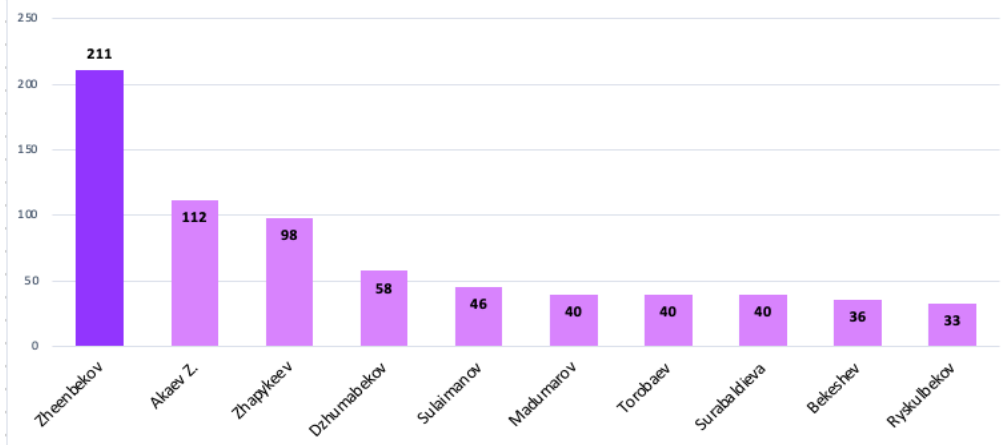
When analyzing activities of few parties that have an account on Instagram, the most active overall in the monitored period were Bir Bol (333 posts), Republic (292 posts) and Birimdik (171).

Among politicians, on Instagram like on Facebook, Mr. Zheenbekov produced by far the highest number of posts (211), followed by Mr. Akaev (112) and Mr. Zhapykeev (98 posts). Mr. Matraimov was also among most active ones. As for the authorities, the Government was by far the most active on Instagram with a total of 275 posts per the entire period of monitoring. Kaktus media was the most active media outlet when considering election-related posting on Instagram (with 64 posts in the two-month summer period).

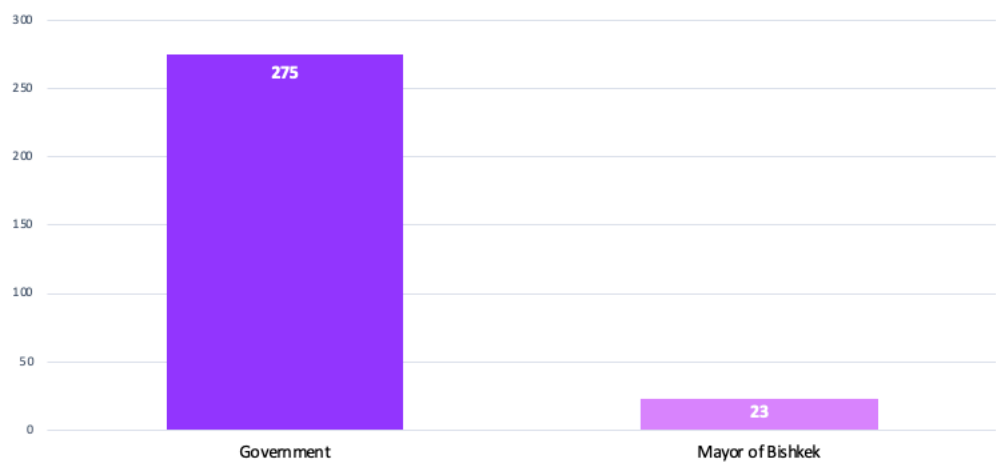
Charts 16-19 | Instagram – Posts by Parties, Politicians, Authorities and Media



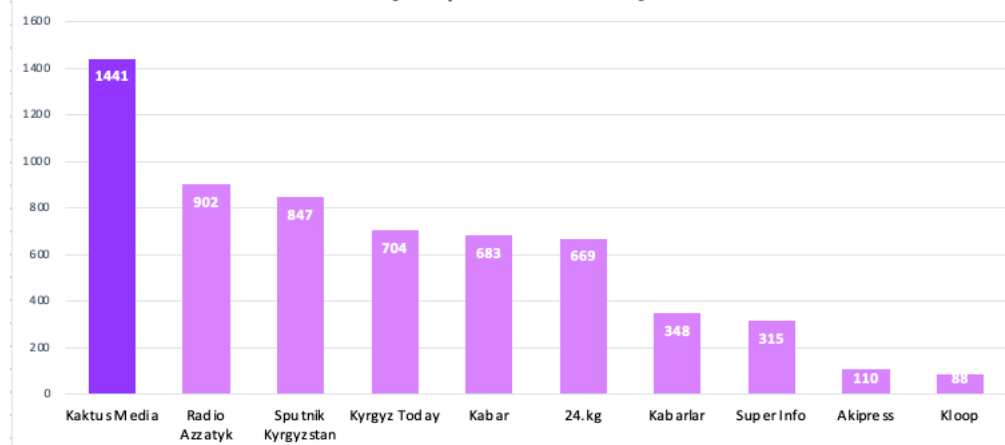
INSTAGRAM Posts | Politicians
[4 July - 3 October 2020]



INSTAGRAM Posts | Authorities
[4 July - 3 October 2020]



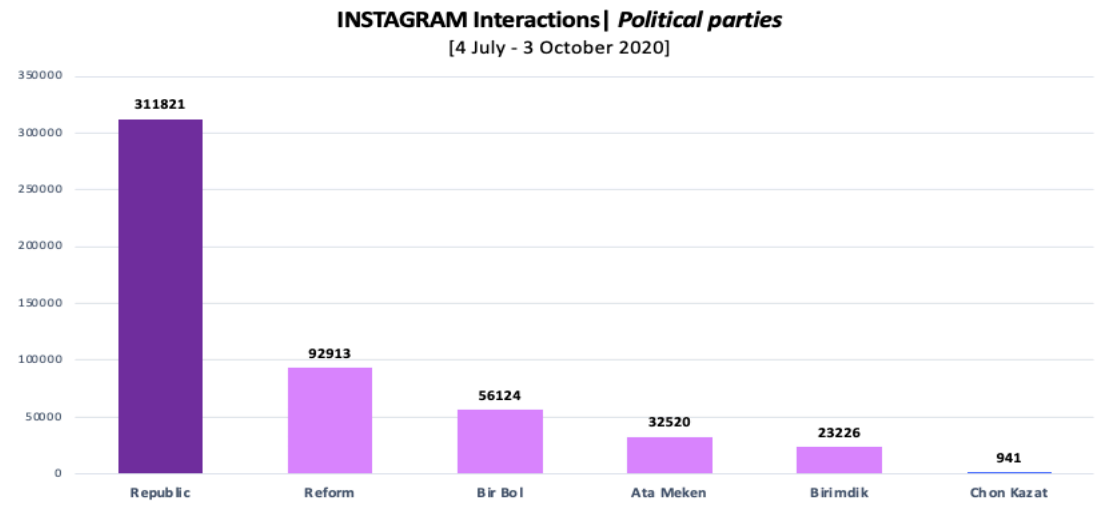
INSTAGRAM Posts | Media
[4 July - 3 October 2020]



g. Instagram | *Interactions*

Among the parties, Republic's 292 posts led to the highest number of interactions (311,821). The second highest number of interactions (92 913) gained Reform's 164 Instagram posts. Bir Bol party got 56,124 interactions related to its 333 posts.

Chart 20 | Instagram – *Interactions by Parties*



Post #1 | The Republic Party



republika_official

РЕСПУБЛИКА · 2 weeks ago

Go to Album



Биздин багыт – Алдыга жол! Кош келдиңиз Өмүрбек Токтогулович! Наш путь – Путь вперёд! Добро пожаловать Омурбек Токтогулович!

8,897 333

In this post published on 28 September, there are pictures of two members of the Republic party, Ruslan Kazakbayev and the ex-leader Omurbek Babanov. The post received 8,897 likes and 333 comments.

Post #2 | The Republic Party



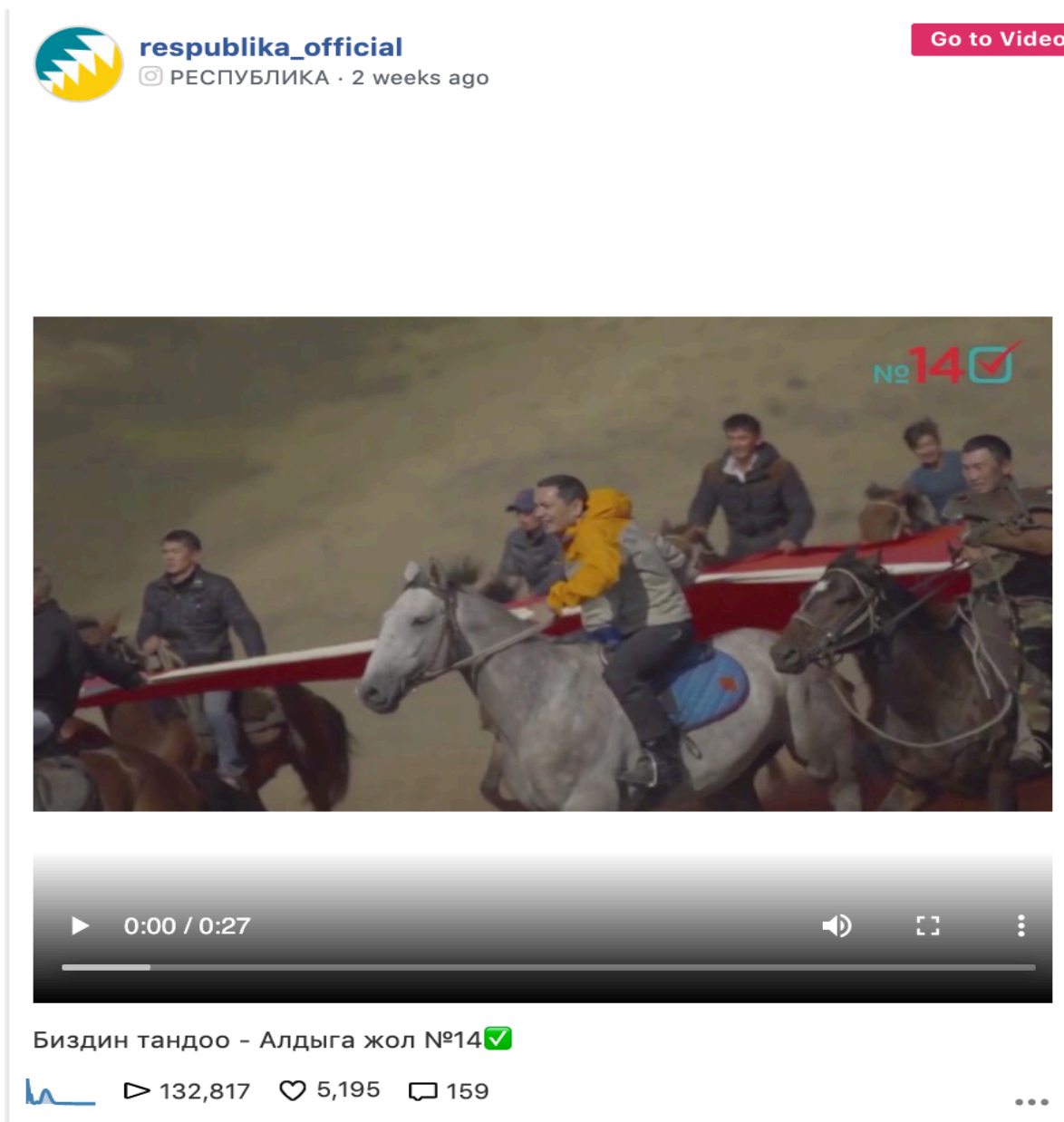
В случае прохода в парламент партия "Республика" выдвинет Бабанова на пост премьер-министра. Экс-политик Омурбек Бабанов может вновь занять пост премьер-министра. Об этом стало известно во время дебатов на КТРК между лидерами партий. Лидер партии "Республика" Мирлан Жеенчороев заявил, что в случае прохода их партии в парламент они представят кандидатуру Омурбека Бабанова в качестве премьер-министра. "В нашей программе все четко сказано, нам нужно небольшое, но хорошо и слаженно работающее правительство. Мы сократим количество ведомств и органов. Чем больше чиновников, тем больше коррупции. Мы обеспечим народ соответствующими услугами. Мы представим в качестве премьера Бабанова Омурбека Токтогуловича. Согласно последним опросам, именно он лидирует на эту позицию", - заявил Мирлан Жеенчороев. Источник: @kaktus__media

8,598 254



In the post published by on 1 October, the Republic party announced that once elected to the parliament, they will nominate Mr. Babanov for the prime minister post. The post received 8,598 likes and 254 comments.

Post #3 | The Republic Party



respublika_official
РЕСПУБЛИКА · 2 weeks ago

Go to Video

Биздин тандоо - Алдыга жол №14 ✓

132,817 5,195 159

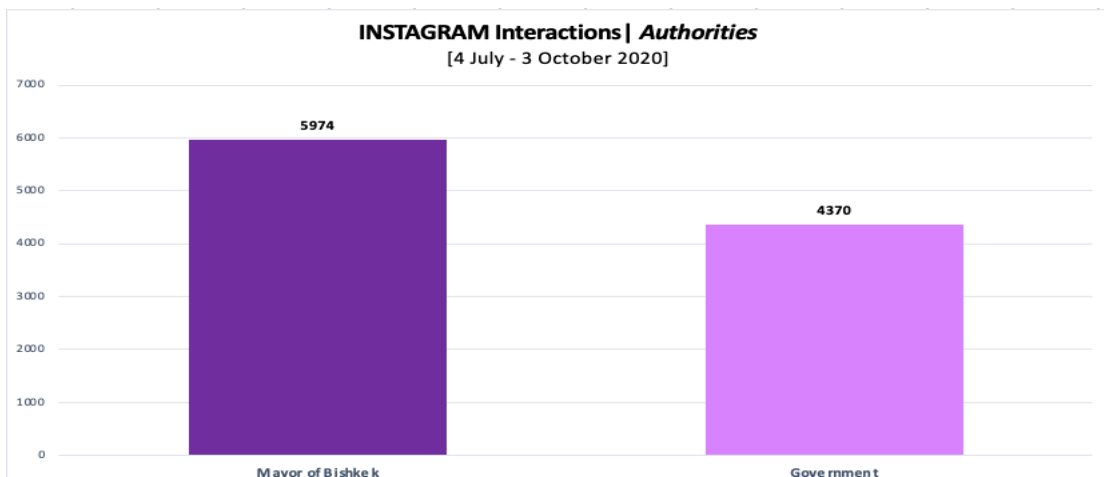
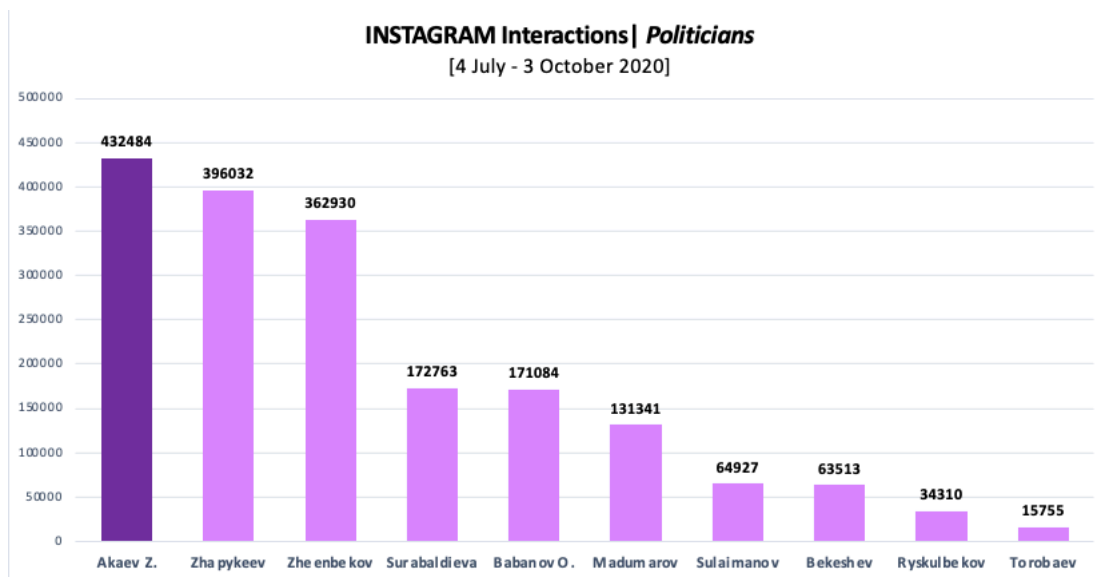
In a post published on 28 September, Omurbek Babanov, the ex-leader of the Republic Party, declared the tasks and the way forward. The post received 5,195 likes and 159 comments.

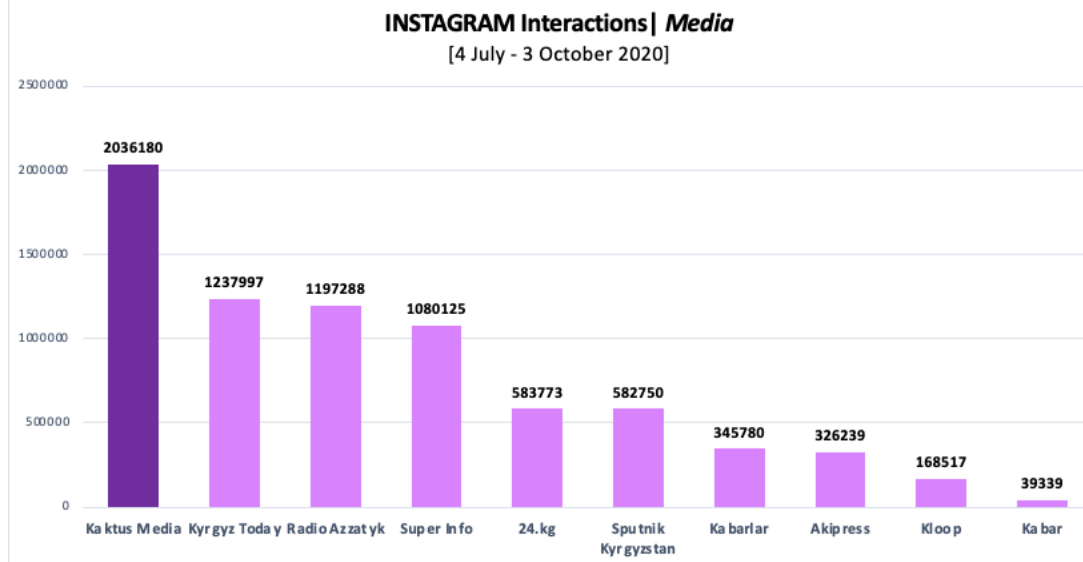
As far as activities of politicians are concerned, the highest number of interactions was devoted to Mr. Akaev (112 posts – 432,484 interactions), followed by Mr. Zhapykeev (98 posts – 396,032

interactions) and president Zheenbekov (211 posts formed 362,930 interactions). A total of 23 posts by Mayor of Bishkek created 5,974 interactions, 275 Instagram posts by the Government led to 4,370 interactions.

As for the media, the interaction rate was significantly higher in comparison with other subjects, as a result of the fact that not only election or politics-related issues were covered. *Kaktus Media* which has some 372 thousand followers on Instagram, dominated with more than 2 million interactions (2,036,180), while *Kyrgyz Today*, *Radio Azattyk* and *SuperInfo* gained each more than 1 million interactions respectively.

Charts 21-23 | Instagram – Interactions by Parties, Politicians, Authorities and Media





h. Instagram – Topics (4 July – 3 September)

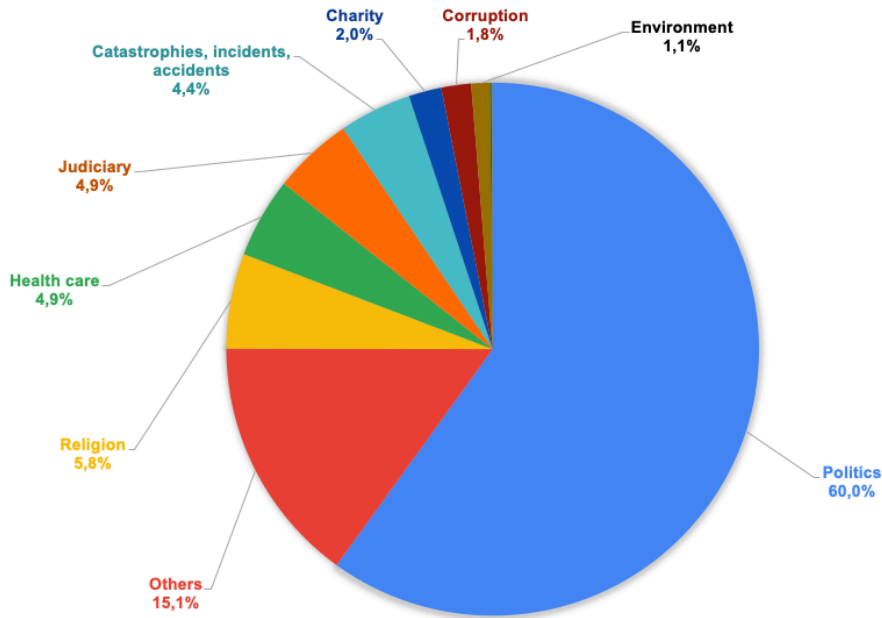
Only a few relevant actors appear to use Instagram, therefore the range of data available for the analyses is smaller compared to data gathered from Facebook accounts, however, the thematic analyses showed similarities between these two platforms.

Same as on Facebook, also on Instagram, in the summer period (July and August), by far the most dominant topic overall was *Politics* (60 per cent), followed by *Religion* (almost 6 per cent), *Health care* and *Judiciary* (each up to 5 per cent). *Catastrophes, incidents & accidents* were featured in more than 4 per cent of posts.

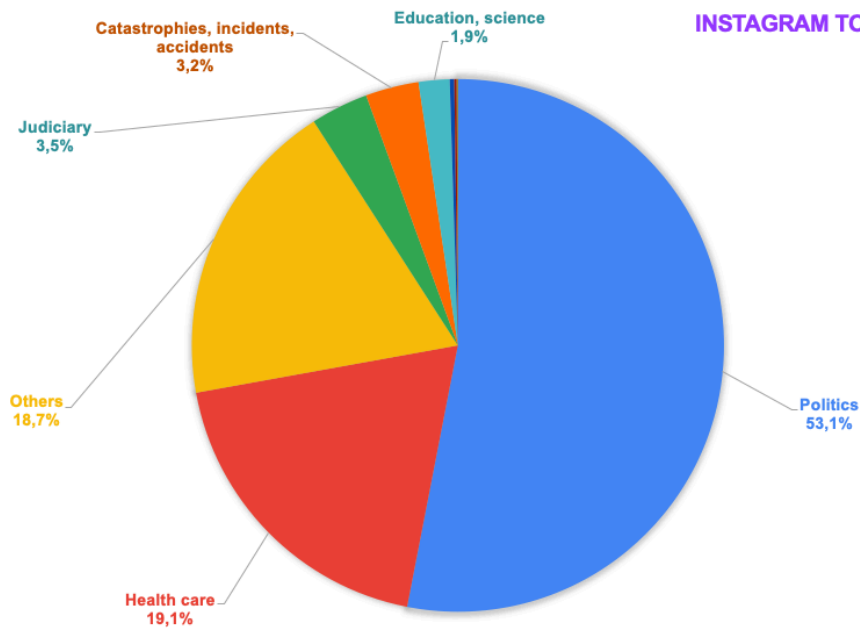
Looking at Instagram posts of parties, *Politics* was the prevalent topic (53 per cent), followed by *Health care* (19 per cent). A range of *Other* issues followed. For posts of politicians, the picture was somewhat specific. Like on Facebook, *Politics* was the most presented topic (33 per cent), but it was much less present compared to other actors. A range of *Other* topics⁵ that amounted to 32,5 per cent was followed by *Religion* (15 per cent) and three other topics – *Health care*, *Corruption*, and *Judiciary*, each of them with up to 5 per cent.

⁵ For example, the other topics included congratulating the population with national holidays (in the run-up to elections, there were two national holidays – *Kurman Ait* and *the Independence Day of Kyrgyzstan*), or expressing condolences in case someone famous died.

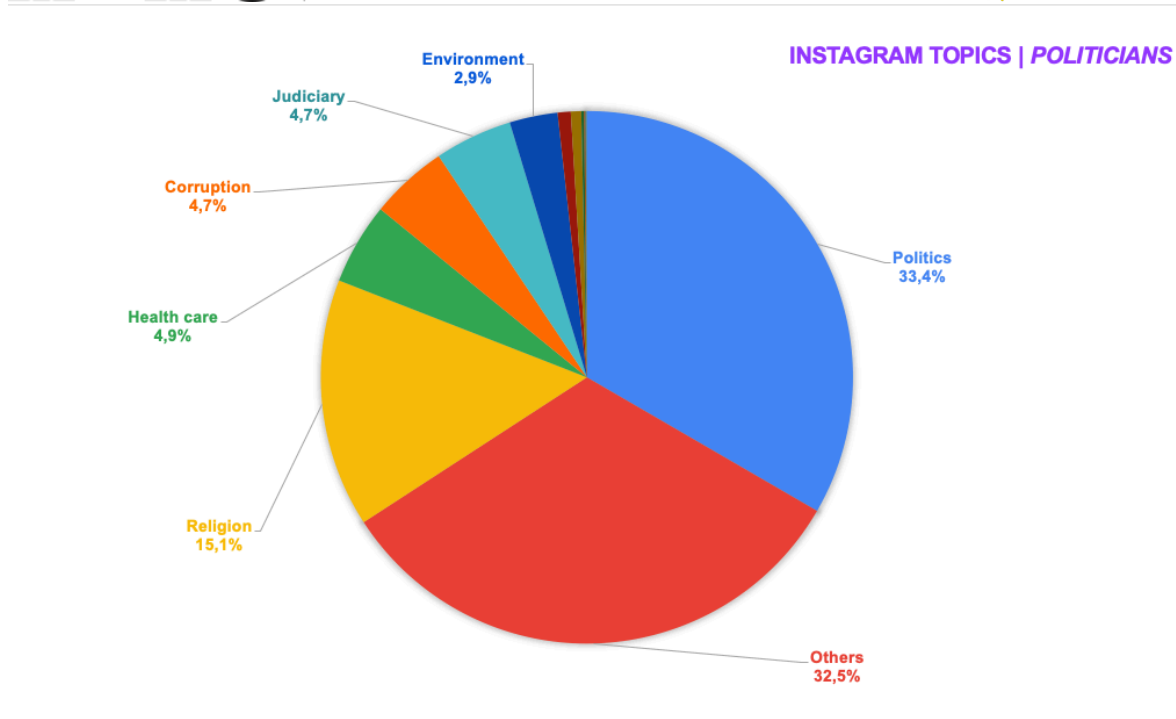
Chart 24-26 | Instagram - Topics in All accounts, by Parties and Politicians



INSTAGRAM TOPICS | ALL ACCOUNTS



INSTAGRAM TOPICS | PARTIES

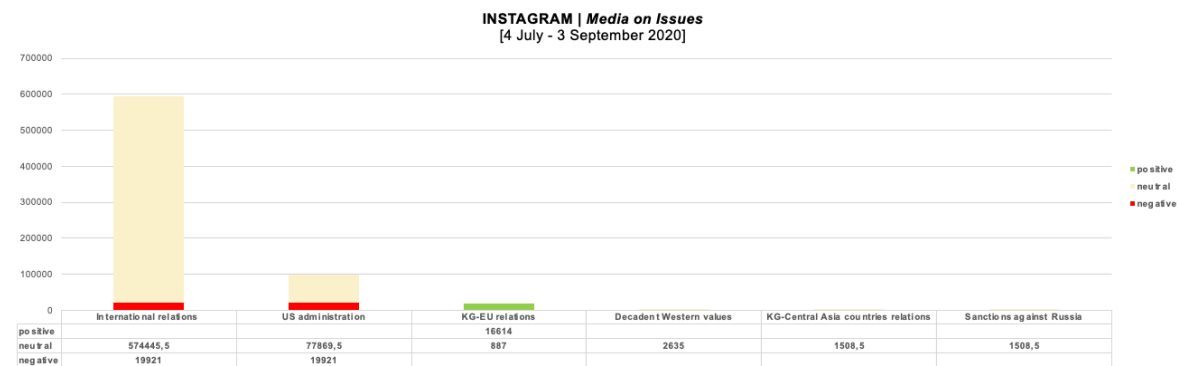
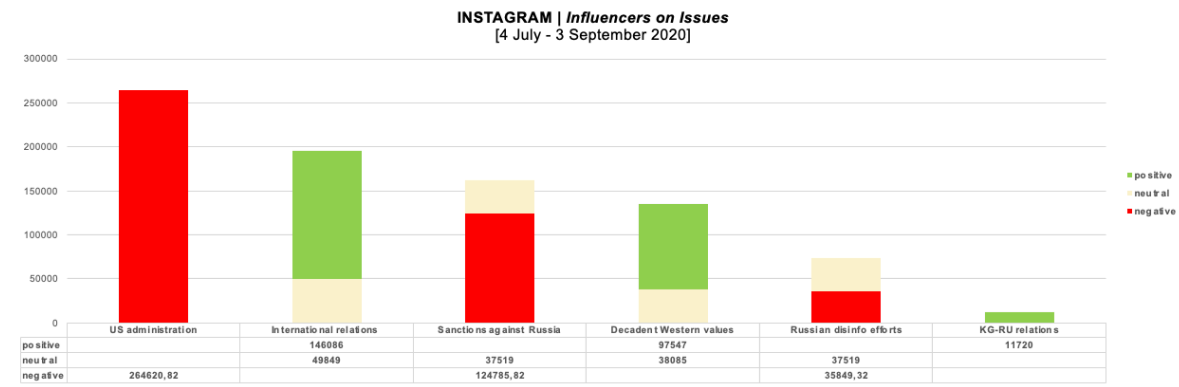
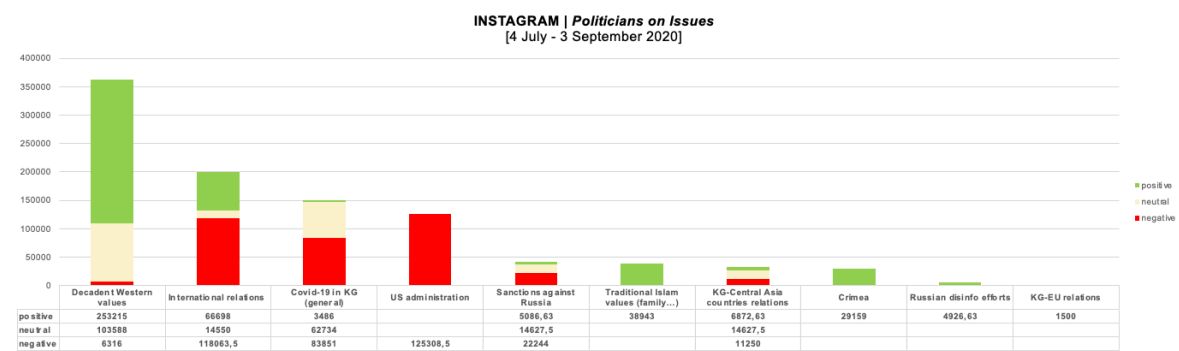
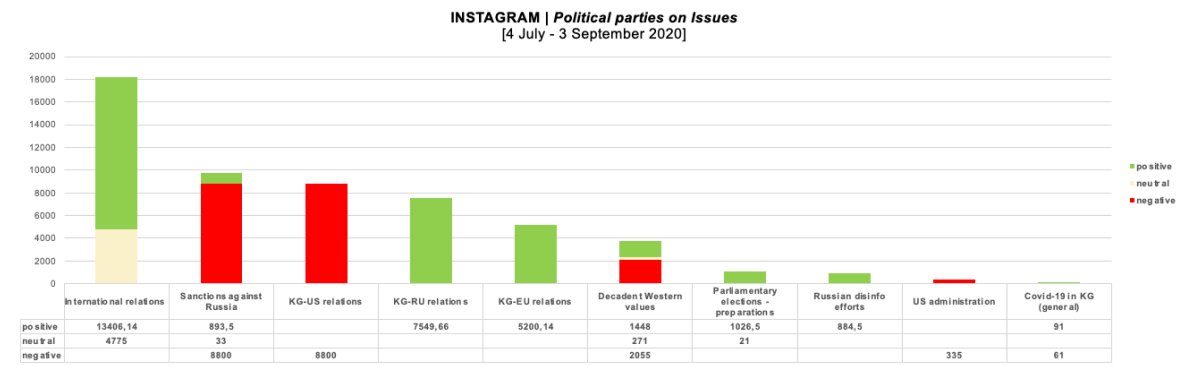


i. Instagram | *Top Issues* (4 July – 3 September)

The prevalence of stories in Instagram posts was rather specific for each group of actors compared to stories on Facebook posts, which were rather consistent across the different groups of actors. Yet, *International relations* was a story that consistently featured very prominently in Instagram posts of all relevant actors included in the monitoring sample.

For posts of political parties, in addition to *International relations*, other key stories included *Sanctions against Russia* (presented by actors in a negative way) and *Kyrgyz-US relations* (also presented in a negative light) followed by *Kyrgyz-EU relations* (positively presented). For politicians, *Decadent Western values* were the dominant issue, followed by *International relations* and the *COVID-19 situation in Kyrgyzstan*. *US administration* was another frequently presented issue. Media on Instagram clearly focused on *International relations*. *US administration*, *International relations*, *Sanctions against Russia*, and *Decadent Western Values* were the key issues for Influencers.

Chart 27-30 | Instagram – Top Issues by Parties, Politicians, Influencers, Media



The applied methodology consists of quantitative and qualitative analysis of the selected media content.

The quantitative analysis focuses on the amount of posts generated by political actors (parties as well as politicians, with the assistance of [CrowdTangle](#)⁶) or other monitored entities and the tone of the coverage in which they pursue selected stories and issues. In case they promote them, we track it as positive; in case they criticize them, we track it as negative. In case they only introduce these issues or stories without stating their positions, we track it as neutral. The monitoring also focused on the thematic structure of the posts.

Social media **post** served as a reference and monitoring unit. As such, in order to preserve the total amount of posts, in instances with various topics or issues contained in one posts, these posts were divided by number of topics or issues.

List of monitored parameters

Political subjects

Political parties (8)

- Ata Meken
- Birimdik
- Bir Bol
- Chon Kazat
- Kyrgyzstan
- Mekenim Kyrgyzstan and 4 its regional branches (Facebook)
- Republic
- Reforma

Politicians (18)

- Akaev Zhanar
- Babanov Omurbek
- Bekeshev Dastan (Instagram)
- Dzumabekov Dastan
- Isaev Kanatbek
- Kasymalieva A (Instagram)
- Madumarov Adakhan
- Mamasalieva Gulgakhly (Facebook)
- Masadykov Taalatbek

⁶ CrowdTangle (a social media analytics tool owned by Facebook) “tracks public posts on Facebook, Instagram and Reddit, made by public accounts or groups. The tool does not track every public account and does not track private profiles or groups, so this data is not representative of performance across the entire platform. The numbers shown here reflect public interactions (likes, reactions, comments, shares, upvotes and three second views), but do not include reach or referral traffic. It does not include paid ads unless those ads began as organic, non-paid posts that were subsequently “boosted” using Facebook’s advertising tools. Because the system doesn’t distinguish this type of paid content, note that some high-performing content may have had paid distribution. CrowdTangle also does not track posts made visible only to specific groups of followers.”

Pirmatov Iskhak
 Ryskulbekov Erkin (Facebook)
 Sooronkulova Klara (Instagram)
 Sulaimanov Altynbek
 Surabaldieva Elvira
 Tekebaev Omurbek
 Torobaev Bakyt
 Zhapykeev Syimykh (Facebook)
 Zheenbekov Sooronbai

Influencers (4)

Aitbekova Nazira (Instagram)
 Kairatova Anzhelika (Instagram)
 Karimova Samara (Instagram)
 Karypbekov Ilim (Instagram)

Media (13)

Akipress
 April (Facebook)
 Delo Nomer (Facebook)
 Kabar
 Kabarlar
 Kaktus Media
 Kloop News
 Kyrgyz Today
 Radio Azattyk
 Radio Birinchi
 Sputnik Kyrgyzstan
 Super Info
 24.kg

Authorities (3)

Central Election Commission (Facebook)
 Government
 The Mayor of Bishkek

Topics

Agriculture
 Army/military
 Business, economy
 Culture
 Catastrophes, incidents, accidents
 Charity
 Corruption
 Crime
 Civil society
 Education, science
 Environment
 Foreign Affairs (no relevance to Belarus)
 Foreign Affairs (related to Belarus)



Health care
IT, digitalisation
Judiciary
Media
Minorities
Politics
Religion
Social issues (Unemployment, Poverty and Social Inequality)
Sport
Transport, infrastructure
Others

Top issues

World pandemic Covid-19
Covid-19 in Kyrgyzstan – general
Covid-19 in Kyrgyzstan – adopted measures
Covid-19 in Kyrgyzstan – failure to adopt measures
Covid-19 in Kyrgyzstan – health, social implications
Migration policy of Kyrgyzstan
Migrants in Central Asia
Migrants to Europe
Gender (LGBTI rights, same sex marriages, related)
International relations
Kyrgyzstan-EU relations
Kyrgyzstan-Russia relations
Kyrgyzstan-USA relations
Kyrgyzstan-Central Asian countries relations
Parliamentary elections – preparations
Parliamentary elections – candidates, parties
Parliamentary elections – campaign
Kyrgyz economy (domestic dimension)
Kyrgyz healthcare system
Kyrgyz education
Chinese Silk Road initiative
US administration
US elections 2020
Military base in Kyrgyzstan
Russian constitutional reform
War in Ukraine
Crimea
Kyrgyzstan as non-existent country, part of ‘Russian’ family
Sanctions against Russia
Russian disinformation efforts during elections
Russian oil
Integration with Russia
Traditional Islam values
Decadent Western values
George Soros and his activities in Europe and Central Asia
Crisis of liberalism and global capitalism

Crisis of democracy
Crisis of European Union
Crisis of NATO
Freedom of the media
Biased media
Rise of fascism
Climate change
Political repression/intimidation



ABOUT

Media Development Center

The public foundation Center for Media Development is a non-profit organization established in 2002 with the aim of promoting freedom of speech and expression in Kyrgyzstan, as well as to help build the capacity of the media and journalists by encouraging best practices in journalism, promoting professional ethics, institutionalizing dialogue between the state, media and civil society, as well as the promotion of media networks in Kyrgyzstan. Since 2010, the Center for Media Development has been monitoring the media during the parliamentary and presidential elections in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Center for Media Development is one of the first organizations in the Kyrgyz Republic that monitors social media platforms during the election period.

MEMO 98

An internationally recognized, independent, and non-profit specialist media institution with 22 year-long experience of conducting media monitoring and research and assisting civil society groups. Using tested and approved methodologies and tools, we provide media analysis and media monitoring with tangible results, in particular during election periods. Having participated in more than 120 election observation missions and about 150 media & election-related projects and training in more than 55 countries (in the Commonwealth of the Independent States and the Balkan countries, but also in Africa, Asia, South America, and Middle East), our experts provide assistance on media & electoral and other democratic arrangements.

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