Monitoring of Facebook and Instagram

Parliamentary elections 2020 Slovakia

Interim report
30 January 2020

MEMO98

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The project of media monitoring before the general elections was conducted thanks to the support from the *National Endowment for Democracy* (NED), a fund focusing on increasing of the integrity of election processes in the Central and Eastern Europe as well as by *Civitates* which supports a joint initiative by Democracy Reporting International and MEMO 98 aimed at significantly step up real-time understanding of social media dynamics by providing a toolkit for social media monitoring in elections which is to be offered to observer organisations across the EU and beyond. The toolkit includes providing tools and up-to-date information to monitor the influence of social media during elections, a checklist for systematic monitoring of social media in elections, providing the basis for responsive advocacy and long-term advocacy for better regulation.

To prepare this report, we have used access to the *CrowdTangle*, monitoring platform, which offers access to public pages on Facebook, Instagram, and Reddit.[1]

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[1] CrowdTangle Team (2020). CrowdTangle. Facebook, Menlo Park, California, United States. URL: https://apps.crowdtangle.com/memo98/lists/pages

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Table of contents

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the manner of how people receive political messages have changed profoundly also in relation to the growing impact of social media. These changes also brought with them some negative phenomena, such as a substantial increase in unverified, decontextualized, and manipulative information, which confirms many individuals' prejudices and biases. We increasingly realize that thanks to social media, various stakeholders may take advantage of the existing social divisions in the society either by conducting their activity form behind the borders (as witnessed more noticeably for the first time during the US presidential election in 2016), or being active directly in the country where the elections are held. Experience from several countries suggests that the risk of abuse increases several-fold in a period of intensified political and social engagement, such as elections. Social media, as well as disinformation, are given an increased share of attention as a potential threat to the integrity of elections.

An increase in the influence of social media also brings with it some advantages – the possibility to obtain information directly from the source in the form and volume that the society only learns to accept and reflect in a meaningful way. During an election campaign, this provides the candidates with the possibility of immediate and direct communication with voters or voter mobilization. Social media have become a very important source of political information and messages in general, and all the more during elections – they completely reset the perception of politics, when the filter of traditional media is dropped. These were among the main reasons why we decided to analyze in greater detail during the upcoming Slovak parliamentary elections the manner how various social media networks are used during the campaign: whether to increase and improve voters' awareness, their mobilization or to spread disinformation or even outright lies.

Given our two-decades-long international experience with monitoring media coverage during elections, we decided to work out a methodology of social media monitoring during elections. Our expert participated in a working group led by DRI to design a [methodological concept](#) for social media observation.[2] This concept was tested together with DRI during the monitoring of the recent elections in Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Poland, and Romania.

According to the report titled Digital 2019 – Slovakia[3], there was a total of 2.7 million active users of social media in Slovakia in 2019, while in terms of the potential advertising reach, Facebook (2.6 million) and Instagram (1.1 million) are the most

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[2]   ''Supporting Democracy'' is an [EIDHR](#)–funded technical assistance program working with EU Delegations (EUDs) to strengthen the role of local civil society in advocating and monitoring democratic accountability.

[3]   The whole report (issued in February 2019), elaborated by *We are social* and *Hootsuite* is available at https://www.slideshare.net/DataReportal/digital-2019-slovakia-january-2019-v01

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widespread social media networks.[4] While the TV still continues to be the primary source of information on politics for most people, the relevance and the role of social media has also been growing in Slovakia. This fact, together with the above-mentioned reasons, inspired us to include also Facebook and Instagram in our election monitoring together with TV channels (that have been monitored in Slovakia since 1998).

Our first report analyzes the period starting on the date of the decision on the announcement of the parliamentary elections (5 November 2019) until 26 January 2020 and focuses on Facebook and Instagram. In this report, we monitored the activity (number of posts) as well as interactions (total no. of reactions, comments, and shares) with political parties, their leaders, and top candidates. In the following reports, which we are planning to issue before the elections, we will present the content analysis of topics and specific narratives, which the respective stakeholders will be using during the campaign. We will publish the results of monitoring the national TV channels, online branches of media as well as the above-mentioned social media.

When evaluating the activity of political stakeholders on social media, it should be noted that some parties and candidates boost some of their posts using paid advertising, which has an impact on the post reach, and this may amplify the impression of 'success'. In one of the following reports, we will also analyze paid political advertising on Facebook.

HIGHLIGHTS

- In the monitored period, political parties generated 4013 Facebook posts, which averages at around 300 posts per week. On Instagram, the total reached 1007 posts, which was around 75 posts per week. We registered increased activity on the monitored pages, mainly after the beginning of January.

Facebook
- Among the politicians ranking at the top positions in their candidate lists, Marián Kotleba published the largest number of posts on his official Facebook page (445), followed by Michal Truban and Miroslav Beblavý (both around 300). Other active politicians in terms of the number of published posts also included the chairman of Slovenské hnutie obrody Robert Švec, followed by Jozef Pročko as well as Ľuboš Blaha.

- Ľuboš Blaha had the largest number of interactions with his posts (approx. 800 thousand), and it should be noted that in his case, the trend is rather long-standing. He is followed by the Prime Minister and leader of the slate for SMER-SD, Peter

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Pellegrini, and Michal Truban (both over 300 thousand interactions), Milan Uhrík, and Andrej Kiska.

- The largest number of posts have been published by OĽANO (333) on the official Facebook page of this political movement, followed by SPOLU political party, SME Rodina, MOST–HÍD, Sloboda a solidarita (SaS) and Za ľudí. When it comes to interactions, the highest figure was monitored for OĽANO (around 495 thousand), followed by SMER-SD, SME Rodina, SNS, and SaS.

- As for individual posts, the largest number of interactions was registered for the post by OĽANO "AKTUÁLNE PRED POČIATKOVOU VILOU NA FRANCÚZSKEJ RIVIÉRE" (*Right now outside the villa of ex-minister Počiatek in the French Riviera*), which was boosted by OĽANO on Facebook and Instagram with a budget of approx. €4500. Still looking at individual posts by candidates and parties, the post by Andrej Kiska "AHOJ ROBERT" (*Hi, Robert*) follows. It was also boosted by the Za ľudí party on Facebook with a budget of roughly €400. The third post in terms of the number of interactions was published by SMER–SD under the name "OTVORENÝ LIST KISKOVI - ODPOVEĎ NA JEHO LIST ROBERTOVI FICOVI AHOJ ANDREJ" (*An open letter to Mr. Kiska – an answer to his letter to Robert Fico*) which was boosted by SMER-SD with a budget of up to €6000.

Instagram
- The largest number of Instagram posts in the monitored period was posted by Andrej Danko (130), followed by Miroslav Beblavý (109) and Andrej Kiska (79).

- We observed the largest number of interactions (the total of likes and comments) for Andrej Kiska (more than 122 thousand), followed by Peter Pellegrini, while Boris Kollár came third, each with approximately half the number of interactions by A. Kiska. When it comes to the popularity of the respective posts defined by the total number of *likes*, Andrej Kiska dominated in this respect.

- The largest number of Instagram posts where published by the SNS party (168), followed by SME Rodina, Za ľudí, Slovenské hnutie obrody, and SPOLU. When it comes to interactions, the highest number was registered for Za ľudí (almost 29 thousand), followed by OĽANO, SME Rodina, Progresívne Slovensko and SPOLU.

- When looking at the ranking of Instagram posts that obtained the largest number of interactions, the posts by A. Kiska or his political party Za ľudí dominated quite clearly. As many as four posts in the top five were actually posted by A. Kiska. The former president has five posts in the top 10, while two posts were published by Prime Minister P. Pellegrini and M. Truban, B. Kollár, and OĽANO posted one each.

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FACEBOOK

POLITICAL PARTIES AND MOVEMENTS

Almost three months have passed since the official beginning of the election campaign, and based on our analysis, we have observed a trend of gradual increase in the number of posts on the official pages of the monitored political parties. While we found a declining activity during the second half of December (Christmas season) across all subjects, from the early January, one can easily see that political parties and movements launched the final stage of the campaign also based on the activity of the monitored pages.

Chart no. 1
TOTAL NUMBER OF POSTS BY PARTIES AND THEIR STRUCTURE
(5.11.2019 - 26.1.2020)
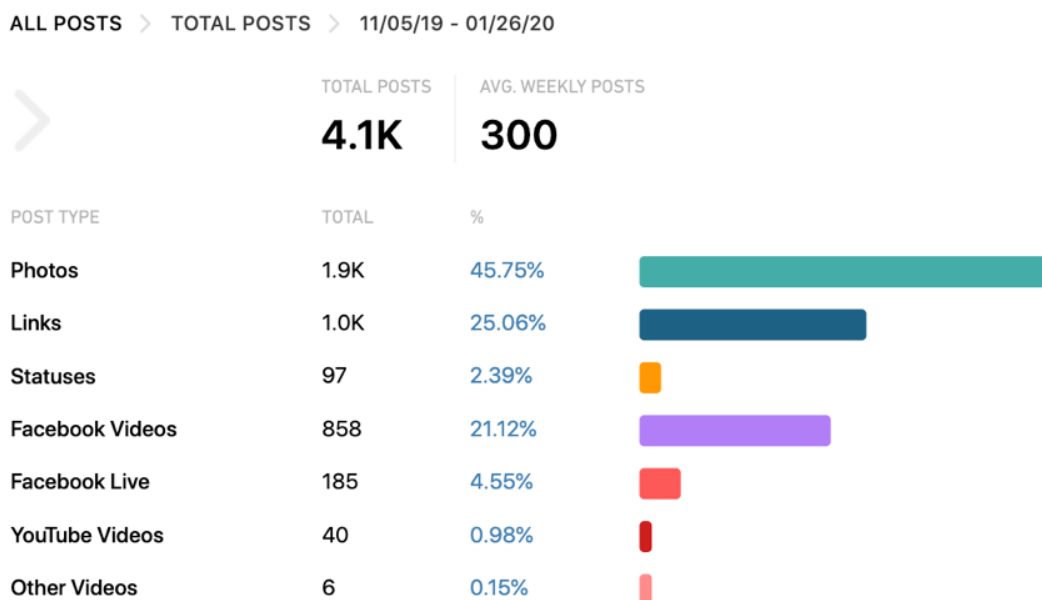
In the period mentioned above, the monitored political parties generated a total of 4013 posts, which averages at 300 posts per week. When it comes to the structure of posts, the largest number of posts featured photos (45.8%), followed by posts with links (25.1%), Facebook videos (21.1%), Facebook Live (4.6 %) and then text-only posts (only text – 2.4%).

Chart no. 2
TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS WITH VARIOUS TYPES OF POSTS BY PARTIES

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ALL POSTS > TOTAL INTERACTIONS > 11/05/19 - 01/26/20

	TOTAL INTERACTIONS	AVG. WEEKLY INTERACTIONS	WEEKLY INTERACTION %
	1.79M	132.2K	1.79%

POST TYPE	TOTAL	%	
Photos	752.8K	42.00%	
Links	192.6K	10.74%	
Statuses	12.3K	0.68%	
Facebook Videos	618.4K	34.50%	
Facebook Live	209.2K	11.67%	
YouTube Videos	6.5K	0.36%	
Other Videos	879	0.05%	
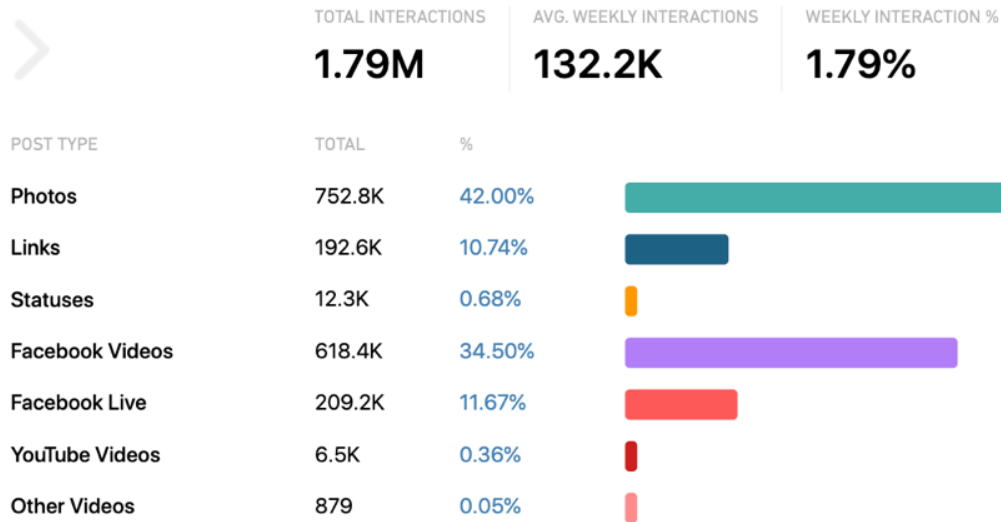
In our analysis, we also monitored interactions with the posts, in other words how much engagement they generated on the given platform - how many reactions (emoticons), shares, or comments. In the monitored period, we registered a total of 1 795 410 interactions, with the following breakdown in terms of different types of posts: interactions with photos (42 %), Facebook videos (34.5 %), Facebook Live (11.67 %) and posts with links (10.74 %).

Chart no. 3
TOP 20 POLITICAL PARTIES IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF POSTS

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NAME	TOTAL	%	
Sme rodina	240	6.71%	
Starostovia a ne...	99	2.77%	
Vlasť	154	4.30%	
OBYČAJNÍ ĽUDIA a...	333	9.31%	
Dobrá voľba	143	4.00%	
SMER - SD	135	3.77%	
Összefogás	144	4.02%	
ĽS Naše Slovensk...	126	3.52%	
Most-Híd (Híd-Mo...	234	6.54%	
Máme toho dosť	117	3.27%	
KDH	184	5.14%	
Slovenská národn...	191	5.34%	
SPOLU - občiansk...	303	8.47%	
Sloboda a Solida...	218	6.09%	
Za ľudí	215	6.01%	
Socialisti	120	3.35%	
Magyar Fórum - M...	130	3.63%	
Demokratická str...	203	5.67%	
Hlas pravice	128	3.58%	
Magyar Közösség ...	161	4.50%	

In the monitored period, the political movement titled *Obyčajní ľudia a nezávislé osobnosti* (OĽANO) published the highest number of posts on its official Facebook page (333 posts), followed by *SPOLU* (303), *SME Rodina* (240), *MOST–HÍD* (234), *Sloboda a solidarita* (218) and *Za ľudí* (215). Looking at the political parties from the current government coalition, *MOST-HÍD* and *SNS* both published 191 posts, followed by *SMER-SD* with 135 posts.

Chart no. 4
TOP 20 POLITICAL PARTIES WITH REGARDS TO THE NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS

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NAME	TOTAL	REACTIONS	COMMENTS	SHARES	
Sme rodina	213.8K	164.4K	25.4K	24.0K	
Vlasť	91.7K	68.5K	13.2K	10.0K	
OBYČAJNÍ ĽUDIA a...	494.3K	344.3K	69.3K	80.7K	
Dobrá voľba	47.8K	34.4K	9.6K	3.7K	
SMER - SD	249.9K	171.9K	43.6K	34.4K	
Összefogás	31.3K	23.9K	3.5K	3.9K	
ĽS Naše Slovensk...	36.5K	22.6K	3.9K	10.0K	
Most-Híd (Híd-Mo...	18.0K	14.4K	1.5K	2.1K	
Máme toho dosť	27.3K	17.0K	2.0K	8.3K	
KDH	19.6K	15.5K	1.9K	2.3K	
Slovenská národn...	172.8K	126.8K	35.6K	10.4K	
SPOLU - občiansk...	40.6K	31.8K	5.8K	2.9K	
Sloboda a Solida...	110.1K	79.2K	19.6K	11.3K	
Za ľudí	42.9K	32.9K	7.1K	2.8K	
Progresívne Slov...	28.2K	20.1K	7.0K	985	
Socialisti	25.0K	18.6K	1.5K	5.0K	
Demokratická str...	47.8K	34.3K	6.3K	7.3K	
Hlas pravice	11.1K	5.6K	2.1K	3.4K	
SOLIDARITA – Hnu...	21.3K	12.0K	5.2K	4.0K	
Magyar Közösség ...	17.0K	13.7K	1.1K	2.2K	

When it comes to interactions (the total of reactions, comments and shares), the highest number was achieved by *OĽANO* (494 300), followed by *SMER-SD* (249 900), *SME Rodina* (213 800), *SNS* (172 800), and *SaS* (110 098).

If we take a closer look at the reactions to posts, the highest number was again acquired by *OĽANO* (344 300), *SMER-SD* (171 924) came second and *SME Rodina* (164,400) came third. *OĽANO* also enjoyed the largest number of shares (80 700) and comments (69 294).

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THE POST BY OĽANO TITLED "AKTUÁLNE PRED POČIATKOVOU VILOU NA FRANCÚZSKEJ RIVIÉRE" (*Right now outside the villa of ex-minister Počiatek in the French Riviera)* SOURCE: FACEBOOK PAGE OF OĽANO

Among, the individual posts, the largest number of interactions was acquired by the post from OĽANO "AKTUÁLNE PRED POČIATKOVOU VILOU NA FRANCÚZSKEJ RIVIÉRE", which was published on 20 January and boosted on Facebook and Instagram with a budget of approx. €4500. By the time this report was written (30 January 2020), the post had had more than 1.5 million views, over 30 thousand reactions, and more than 6 thousand comments with almost 21 thousand shares.

THE POST BY THE ZA ĽUDÍ PARTY TITLED "AHOJ ROBERT" (*Hi Robert*) SOURCE: FACEBOOK PAGE OF ZA ĽUDÍ

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Looking at all the posts by candidates and political parties, the second most successful was the post by A. Kiska (AHOJ ROBERT) published on 15 January (boosted by the *Za ľudí* party on Facebook with a budget of approx. €400). By the time of writing this report, this particular post had acquired almost 28 thousand reactions, around 4 thousand comments and 6 thousand shares.

THE POST BY THE SMER-SD PARTY TITLED "OTVORENÝ LIST KISKOVI - ODPOVEĎ NA JEHO LIST ROBERTOVI FICOVI AHOJ ANDREJ" ("*An open letter to Mr. Kiska – the answer to his letter to Robert Fico*"), SOURCE: FACEBOOK PAGE OF SMER-SD

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The third post with the highest number of interactions was the answer by the chairman of SMER-SD, Robert Fico to the letter by Andrej Kiska, titled "OTVORENÝ LIST KISKOVI - ODPOVEĎ NA JEHO LIST ROBERTOVI FICOVI AHOJ ANDREJ", which was also published don 15 January (boosted on Facebook with a budget of up to €6000). At the time of writing this report, this particular post had around 18 thousand reactions, roughly 6 thousand comments, and 5 thousand shares.

TOP 10+ POLITICIANS ON THE POLITICAL PARTIES' LIST OF CANDIDATES

In this section, we monitored the public pages of the top ten candidates of all parties participating in the elections (provided they have a public Facebook page – moreover, we added also other candidates who had 10 000 or more followers at the time of monitoring as well as Slovak MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) who meet the above condition on the number of followers.

Just like in the case of pages of political parties, also when monitoring the pages of selected politicians, we observed how many posts they generated during the first monitoring period. A total of 148 Facebook pages of monitored politicians published 9 533 posts during the relevant period, which represents an average of around 705 posts per week. When it comes to the structure of posts, photos dominated (54%), followed by links (21%), Facebook videos (17.5%), and text-only posts (4.5%).

Chart no. 5
THE TOTAL NUMBER OF POSTS: TOP 10+ POLITICIANS AND THE RELATED STRUCTURE OF POSTS

ALL POSTS > TOTAL POSTS > 11/05/19 - 01/26/20

	TOTAL POSTS	AVG. WEEKLY POSTS
	9.5K	705
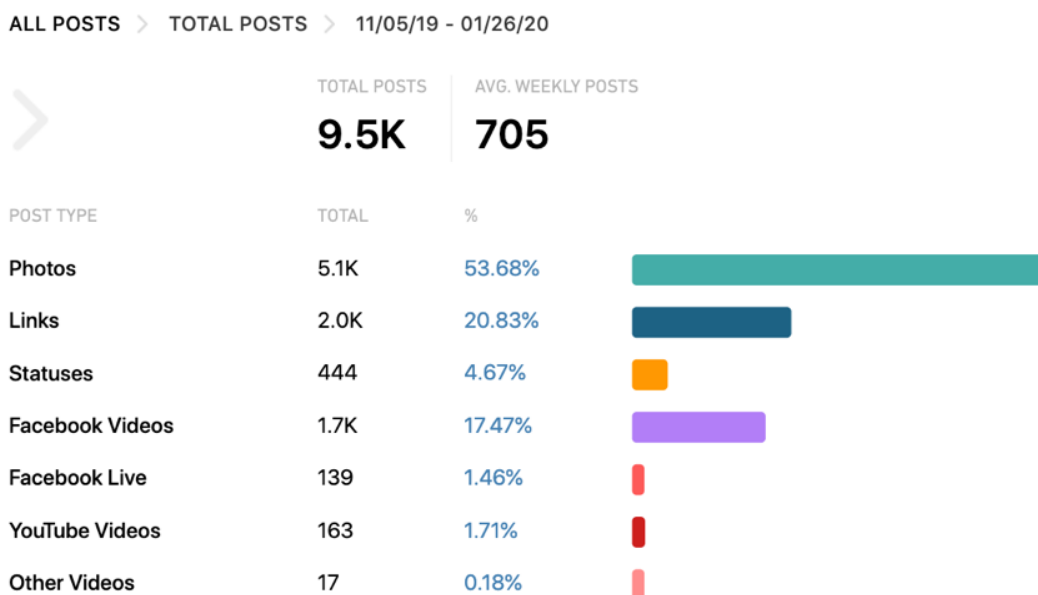
POST TYPE	TOTAL	%
Photos	5.1K	53.68%
Links	2.0K	20.83%
Statuses	444	4.67%
Facebook Videos	1.7K	17.47%
Facebook Live	139	1.46%
YouTube Videos	163	1.71%
Other Videos	17	0.18%

Chart no. 6
TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS WITH THE POSTS B TOP 10+ POLITICIANS

ALL POSTS > TOTAL INTERACTIONS > 11/05/19 - 01/26/20

	TOTAL INTERACTIONS	AVG. WEEKLY INTERACTIONS	WEEKLY INTERACTION %
	5.49M	407.0K	4.31%

POST TYPE	TOTAL	%	
Photos	2.90M	52.85%	
Links	488.2K	8.89%	
Statuses	514.2K	9.36%	
Facebook Videos	1.39M	25.32%	
Facebook Live	133.1K	2.42%	
YouTube Videos	50.7K	0.92%	
Other Videos	12.4K	0.23%	
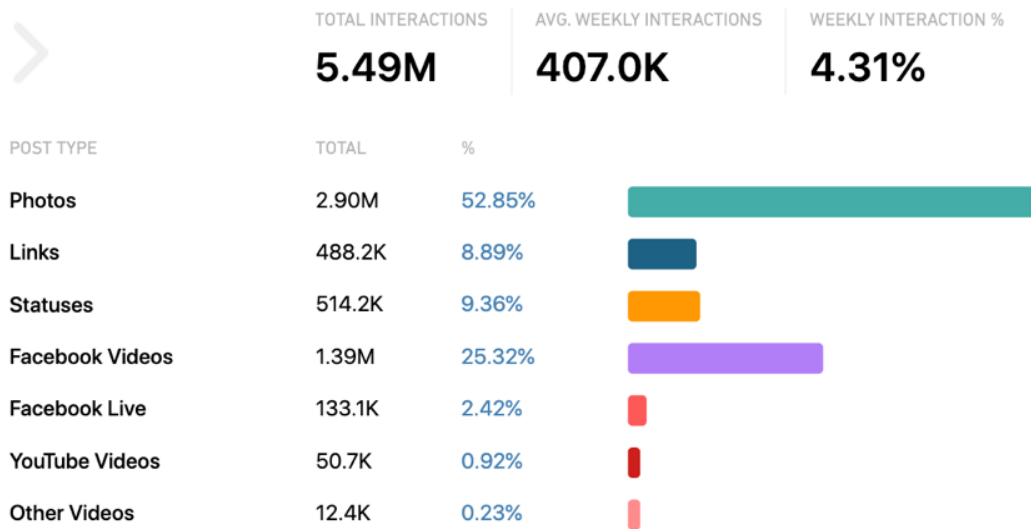
Similar to political parties, also in the category of selected politicians, we monitored interactions with their posts, in other words what engagement they generated on this platform and how many reactions, shares, or comments they had. In the monitored period, we registered a total of 5 496 244 interactions, while people most often interacted with photos (53%), followed by Facebook videos (25.5%), and text-only posts (9.5%).

Chart no. 7
TOP 20 POLITICIANS (from the TOP 10+ category) IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF POSTS

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| NAME	TOTAL	%	
Andrej Danko - p...	141	3.58%	
Martin Dubéci • ...	157	3.98%	
Adriana Pčolinsk...	180	4.56%	
Ivan ŠTEFANEC	182	4.61%	
Peter Pellegrini	139	3.52%	
Katarína Macháčk...	136	3.45%	
Richard Sulik	128	3.25%	
Jaro Naď - OĽANO	185	4.69%	
Miroslav Beblavý	295	7.48%	
Alojz Hlina	185	4.69%	
Štefan Harabin	152	3.85%	
Richard Raši	150	3.80%	
Michal Truban	301	7.63%	
Ábel Ravasz	138	3.50%	
Ľuboš Blaha	189	4.79%	
Eduard Chmelár	141	3.58%	
Jožo Pročko - st...	270	6.85%	
Marian Kotleba -...	445	11.28%	
Daňové a odvodov...	153	3.88%	
Róbert Švec	277	7.02%	

Marián Kotleba, the chairman of *ĽS Naše Slovensko* (ĽSNS) published the highest number of posts in the monitored period: he published a total of 445 posts on his official Facebook page. Leaders of the *PS/SPOLU* coalition, Michal Truban (301 posts), and Miroslav Beblavý (295) came second and third. Other active politicians in terms of the number of posts also included chairman of *Slovenské hnutie obrody*, Robert Švec (277), candidate for *OĽANO*, Jozef Pročko (270) as well as Ľuboš Blaha running on the list of *SMER-SD* (189).

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Chart no. 8

TOP 20 POLITICIANS (from the TOP 10+ category) IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS

	Page Name	Total Interactions	Interaction Rate	Avg. Posts Per Day	Views on Owned Videos	Page Likes
	Average Total	36,608.49	4.665%	0.77	300,955.94	13,442.90
1	Ľuboš Blaha ✓	792,853	9.187%	2.3	1.37M	47,449
2	Peter Pellegrini ✓	355,250	3.022%	1.7	3.79M	86,124
3	Michal Truban ✓	321,106	3.005%	3.67	3.45M	38,559
4	Milan Uhrík – europoslanec	282,526	7.87%	1.07	2.43M	44,070
5	Andrej Kiska ✓	279,186	1.049%	1.24	2.50M	261,365
6	Jožo Pročko - stránka	253,183	1.741%	3.29	2.67M	57,545
7	Štefan Harabin	250,989	3.275%	1.85	3.07M	53,587
8	Robert Fico ✓	232,830	12.037%	0.67	6.08M	36,725
9	Marian Kotleba – kandidát na prezidenta Slovenskej republiky	229,443	2.536%	5.43	—	22,712
10	Miroslav Beblavý ✓	200,433	1.918%	3.6	2.32M	43,165

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11		Milan Mazurek - poslanec NR SR	195,114	4.548%	1.52	3.54M	37,944
12		Richard Sulik ✓	143,734	1.31%	1.56	1.54M	85,748
13		Eduard Chmelár	133,437	2.484%	1.72	184,578	38,411
14		Andrej Danko - predseda SNS	127,655	1.464%	1.72	834,720	62,291
15		Alojz Hlina	110,829	3.695%	2.26	949,171	17,051
16		Erik Tomáš	94,213	10.091%	0.7	418,958	16,371
17		Jaro Naď - OĽANO	91,663	6.355%	2.26	410,740	10,111
18		Veronika Remišová ✓	87,071	2.307%	1.01	39,871	45,703
19		Boris Kollar	84,409	0.639%	1.27	1.45M	127,616
20		Denisa Saková - Ministerka vnútra SR ✓	78,101	4.645%	1.05	1.13M	20,895

Ľuboš Blaha from *SMER-SD* acquired the largest number of interactions (792 853), and it should be noted that in his case, we observe a long-standing trend of generating a large number of interactions. Prime Minister and leader of *SMER-SD,* Peter Pellegrini, came second behind his fellow party member, as his posts generated less than half the number of Mr. Blaha's interactions (355 250).

Other politicians with a major number of interactions in this monitored period also included Michal Truban (321 106), Milan Uhrík (282 526), Andrej Kiska (279 186), Jozef Pročko (253 183) and Štefan Harabin (250 989).

It is of interest that the former Prime Minister and the current chairman of *SMER-SD* published only 55 posts on his official page that generated as many as 232 830 interactions.

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INSTAGRAM

POLITICAL SUBJECTS

Similar to Facebook, also when analyzing Instagram, we observed the trend of gradual increase in the number of posts on the official Instagram pages of the monitored political parties, while also witnessing decreasing activity during the second half of December and a rebound in the number of posts starting in early January.
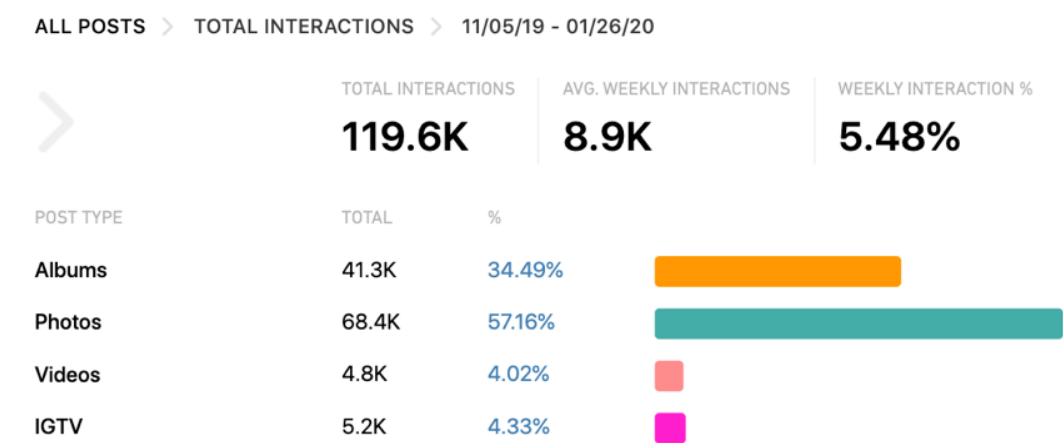
Chart no. 9
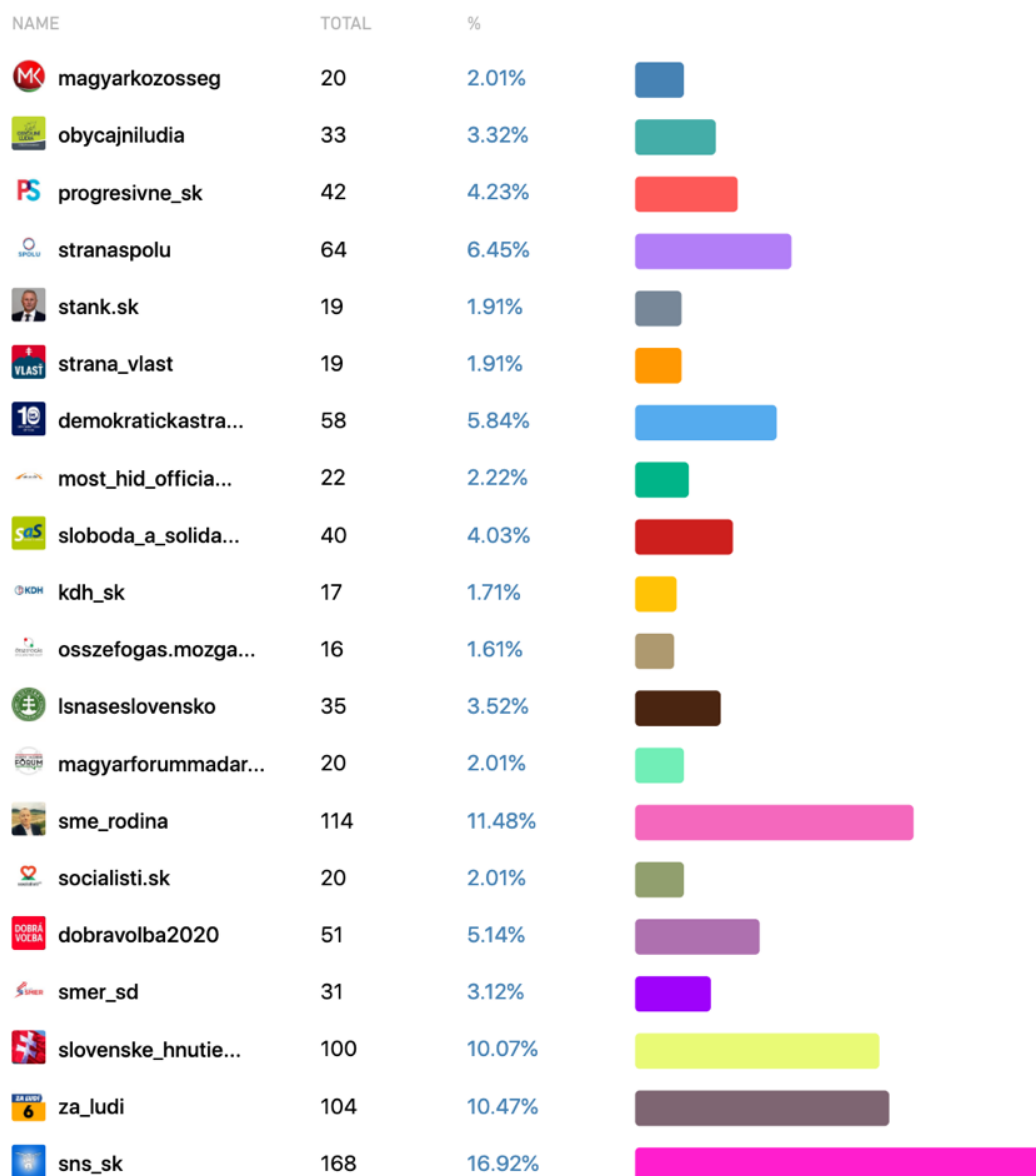TOTAL NUMBER OF POSTS BY POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR STRUCTURE
(5.11.2019 - 26.1.2020)

ALL POSTS > TOTAL POSTS > 11/05/19 - 01/26/20			
	TOTAL POSTS	AVG. WEEKLY POSTS	
	1.0K	75	
POST TYPE	TOTAL	%	
Albums	289	28.70%	
Photos	594	58.99%	
Videos	61	6.06%	
IGTV	63	6.26%	
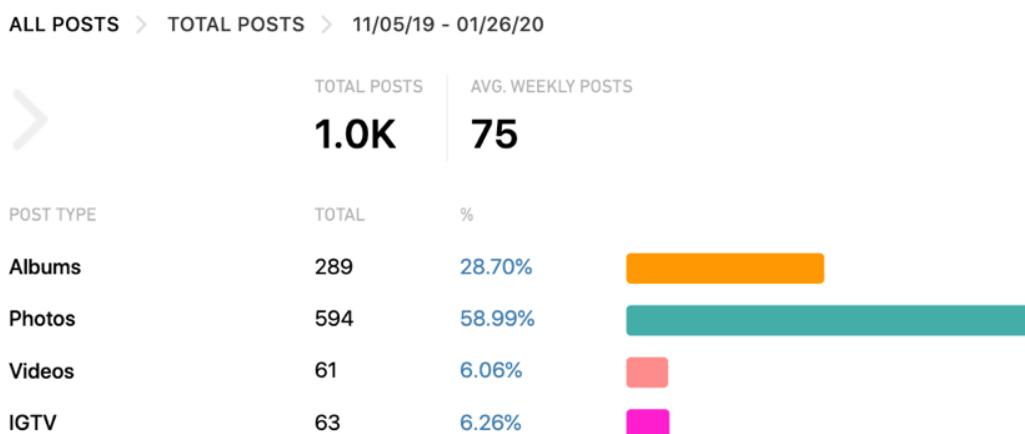
Looking at the monitoring period, political parties generated a total of 1007 posts, which represents an average of 75 posts per week. When it comes to the structure of posts, most of them were generated in the form of a photo (59%), followed by photo albums (29%), Instagram TV (6.5%), and video posts (6%).

Just like in the case of Facebook, also on Instagram, we monitored the number of interactions with the posts. For Instagram, this represents the total of *likes* (thumbs up) and comments. In the monitored period, we registered 119 600 interactions, while the users reacted primarily to photos (57%), photo albums (34.5%), Instagram TV (4,5%), and video (4%).

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Chart no. 10
TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS WITH VARIOUS TYPES OF POSTS BY POLITICAL PARTIES

ALL POSTS > TOTAL INTERACTIONS > 11/05/19 - 01/26/20

	TOTAL INTERACTIONS	AVG. WEEKLY INTERACTIONS	WEEKLY INTERACTION %
	119.6K	**8.9K**	**5.48%**

POST TYPE	TOTAL	%	
Albums	41.3K	34.49%	
Photos	68.4K	57.16%	
Videos	4.8K	4.02%	
IGTV	5.2K	4.33%	

Chart no. 11
TOP 20 POLITICAL PARTIES IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF POSTS

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NAME	TOTAL	%	
magyarkozosseg	20	2.01%	
obycajniludia	33	3.32%	
progresivne_sk	42	4.23%	
stranaspolu	64	6.45%	
stank.sk	19	1.91%	
strana_vlast	19	1.91%	
demokratickastra...	58	5.84%	
most_hid_officia...	22	2.22%	
sloboda_a_solida...	40	4.03%	
kdh_sk	17	1.71%	
osszefogas.mozga...	16	1.61%	
lsnaseslovensko	35	3.52%	
magyarforummadar...	20	2.01%	
sme_rodina	114	11.48%	
socialisti.sk	20	2.01%	
dobravolba2020	51	5.14%	
smer_sd	31	3.12%	
slovenske_hnutie...	100	10.07%	
za_ludi	104	10.47%	
sns_sk	168	16.92%	

In the monitored period, *SNS* generated the largest number of posts on its official Instagram page (168 posts), followed by *SME Rodina* (114), *Za ľudí* (104), *Slovenské hnutie obrody* (100) and *SPOLU* (64). Looking at the parties of the incumbent ruling coalition, except for *SNS* mentioned above, *SMER-SD* published 31 posts while *Most-Híd* generated 22.

Chart no. 12
TOP 20 POLITICAL PARTIES IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS

	Account Name	Total Interactions	Interaction Rate	Avg. Posts Per Day	Video Views	Account Followers
	Average Total	4,984.33	3.703%	0.51	3,978.38	2,638.58
1	za_ludi	28,873	2.762%	1.27	14,644	11,036
2	obycajniludia ✔	21,220	9.001%	0.4	21,204	8,168
3	sme_rodina	17,113	1.553%	1.39	8,132	10,094
4	progresivne_sk	16,452	3.489%	0.51	18,729	12,417
5	stranaspolu ✔	9,076	2.478%	0.78	7,371	5,691
6	sns_sk	6,334	2.611%	2.05	4,357	1,484
7	sloboda_a_solidarita	5,719	1.994%	0.49	6,761	7,406
8	lsnaseslovensko	3,021	9.954%	0.43	3,615	864
9	slovenske_hnutie_obrody	2,322	5.852%	1.22	198	397
10	demokratickastrana	2,245	2.752%	0.71	—	1,381

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![MEMO98 logo]

11		smer_sd	2,196	7.4%	0.38	2,672	1,157
12		dobravolba2020	1,633	7.425%	0.62	3,954	431
13		kdh_sk	725	—	0.21	1,346	—
14		strana_vlast	636	17.46%	0.23	152	189
15		osszefogas.mozgalom	615	—	0.2	—	—
16		most_hid_official ✔	414	2.647%	0.27	1,121	680
17		magyarkozosseg	325	—	0.24	100	—
18		socialisti.sk	260	11.504%	0.24	174	113
19		stank.sk	238	—	0.23	60	—
20		hlaspravice	122	—	0.17	258	—

When it comes to interactions, the largest number was acquired by *Za ľudí* (28 873), *OĽANO* (21 220), *SME Rodina* (17 113), *Progresívne Slovensko* (16 452) and *SPOLU* (9 076).

In the ranking of Instagram posts with the highest number of interactions, posts by A. Kiska dominated (combined with the posts by his party *Za ľudí*). The top five posts feature as many as four posts by A. Kiska (that includes the first and second positions). The top ten posts featured five posts by the former president (A. Kiska), two by P. Pellegrini and M. Truban, B. Kollár, and OĽANO had one each.

Leaders of political parties and movements

In this category, we monitored the public pages of leaders of parties and party chairs (if not leaders of the candidate lists) of contestants running in the elections (provided that they have a public Instagram page), which represents a total of 28 pages. Just like in the case of pages of political parties, also on the pages of selected politicians, we monitored the number of posts generated during the first monitoring period. On 28 Instagram pages of the monitored politicians, we registered a total of 758 posts, which means an average of 56 posts per week. When it comes to the structure of the posts, photos (58.5%) and photo albums (27.70 %) dominated while Instagram TV and videos were falling behind substantially (each category with 7%).

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Chart no. 13
TOTAL NUMBER OF POSTS BY POLITICAL LEADERS AND THEIR STRUCTURE

ALL POSTS > TOTAL POSTS > 11/05/19 - 01/26/20

	TOTAL POSTS	AVG. WEEKLY POSTS
>	758	56

POST TYPE	TOTAL	%	
Albums	210	27.70%	
Photos	443	58.44%	
Videos	52	6.86%	
IGTV	53	6.99%	
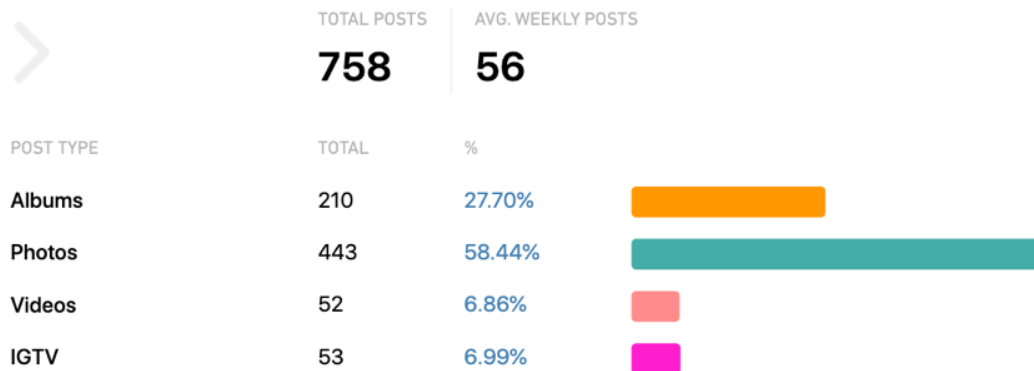
Chart no. 14
TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS WITH POSTS BY PARTY LEADERS

ALL POSTS > TOTAL INTERACTIONS > 11/05/19 - 01/26/20

	TOTAL INTERACTIONS	AVG. WEEKLY INTERACTIONS	WEEKLY INTERACTION %
>	359.4K	26.7K	7.18%

POST TYPE	TOTAL	%	
Albums	104.3K	29.03%	
Photos	218.5K	60.79%	
Videos	20.9K	5.81%	
IGTV	15.7K	4.36%	
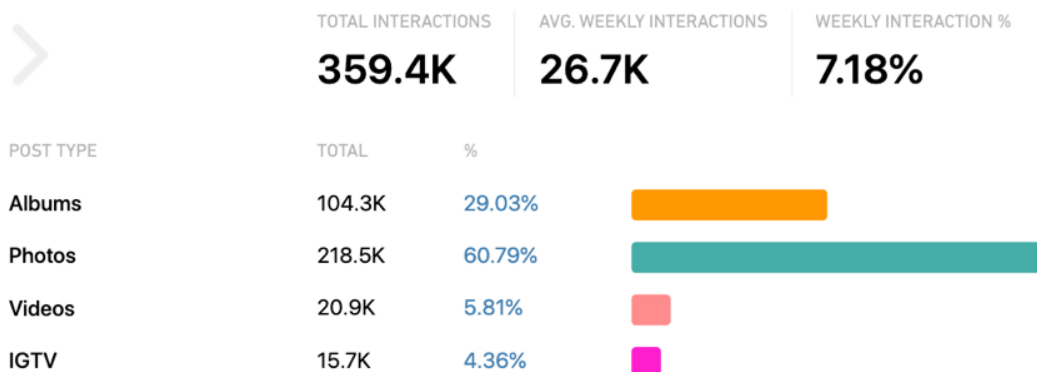
Similar to political parties, also the leaders were monitored for the number of interactions with their posts, in other words the engagement they generated on this platform. In the monitored period, we registered 359 400 interactions, with the structure similar to that of interactions with political parties: photos clearly dominated (61%) followed by photo albums (29%), while video (6%) and Instagram TV (4,5%) were used to a much more limited degree.

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Chart no. 15
TOP 20 LEADERS IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF POSTS

NAME	TOTAL	LIKES	COMMENTS	
truban	42.8K	41.7K	1.2K	
andrej_danko_off...	14.1K	13.6K	559	
richard_sulik	17.6K	17.1K	435	
alojz_hlina	2.2K	2.2K	30	
andrejkiska	122.5K	119.9K	2.6K	
beblavy_spolu	13.2K	13.0K	270	
stefanharabin	11.6K	11.0K	657	
kollarboris	61.2K	59.5K	1.6K	
eduardchmelar	2.3K	2.2K	67	
simkovicovamarti...	813	792	21	
mozes.szabolcs	54	53	1	
druckertomas	910	865	45	
jozsefmenyhart	780	776	4	
peter_pellegrini	63.8K	62.3K	1.5K	
jozef_rajtar	366	359	7	
bugar_bela	658	638	20	
robert.fico	4.9K	4.6K	294	
janbudaj1989	21	19	2	

Andrej Danko, the chairman of *SNS*, published the largest number of posts in the monitored period - he posted 130 times on his official page. Then followed the chairman of *SPOLU*, Miroslav Beblavý (109 posts), and chairman of *Za ľudí* party, Andrej Kiska (79 posts).

Chart no. 16
TOP 20 LEADERS IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS

11		Milan Mazurek – poslanec NR SR	195,114	4.548%	1.52	3.54M	37,944
12		Richard Sulik ✔	143,734	1.31%	1.56	1.54M	85,748
13		Eduard Chmelár	133,437	2.484%	1.72	184,578	38,411
14		Andrej Danko – predseda SNS	127,655	1.464%	1.72	834,720	62,291
15		Alojz Hlina	110,829	3.695%	2.26	949,171	17,051
16		Erik Tomáš	94,213	10.091%	0.7	418,958	16,371
17		Jaro Naď – OĽANO	91,663	6.355%	2.26	410,740	10,111
18		Veronika Remišová ✔	87,071	2.307%	1.01	39,871	45,703
19		Boris Kollar	84,409	0.639%	1.27	1.45M	127,616
20		Denisa Saková – Ministerka vnútra SR ✔	78,101	4.645%	1.05	1.13M	20,895

Andrej Kiska, the former president, acquired the largest number of interactions (122 500). Peter Pellegrini from *SMER-SD* came second (63 800), while Boris Kollár from *SME Rodina* ended up third (61 200).

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METHODOLOGY

MEMO 98 has been actively involved in monitoring the media coverage of elections in Slovakia as well as internationally on a long-term basis, most recently during the 2019 presidential election.[5]

This report comes as the first one in the series of analyses of media activity and coverage of candidates, political parties and movements running in the elections, their leaders, as well as selected politicians in the campaign for the upcoming parliamentary elections. By the decision of Andrej Danko, the Speaker of the Slovak National Council, the date of general elections 2020 was announced on 4 November 2019, and the election campaign started officially on 5 November 2019. This report covers the period of 12 weeks, in other words almost three months **between 5 November 2019 and 26 January 2019**, one month before the campaign will finish (on 27 February, the 48-hour election campaign silence begins).

The report reflects the activity of the political parties and candidates running in the elections focusing on the two most popular social media networks in Slovakia, Facebook, and Instagram. The following categories were subject to the analysis:

Facebook ('public pages ')[6]:
  o *Parties*
    Parties running in the elections (26) and simultaneously the parties that are a part of some coalitions running in the elections (OĽaNO and Kresťanská únia, NOVA, Zmena zdola, as well as the respective parties in the Magyar Közösségi Összefogás - Maďarská komunitná spolupatričnosť party, which comprises Strana maďarskej komunity - Magyar Közösség Pártja, Összefogás – Spolupatričnosť and Magyar Fórum - Maďarské fórum). Thirty out of the total of thirty one political parties and movements running in the elections have their own public pages;
  o *Candidates*
    The top 10 candidates from each list, as well as other candidates who have at least 10 thousand followers on their public page and simultaneously Slovak MEPs, who meet the condition on 10 thousand followers. In total, 148 public pages of candidates have been analyzed;

Instagram (Instagram accounts accessible to the public):
  o *Parties*
    Parties running in the elections (26) and simultaneously and simultaneously the parties that are a part of some coalitions running in the elections (OĽaNO and Kresťanská únia, NOVA, Zmena zdola, as well as the respective parties in the

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[5]   During the campaign, two monitoring reports were issued on 13 March 2019 and 27 March 2019; these reports were simultaneously a part of a broader non-governmental activity in cooperation with GLOBSEC, SSPI, and STRATPOL.

[6]   Public pages which were inactive from the start of 2019 were disregarded.

Magyar Közösségi Összefogás - Maďarská komunitná spolupatričnosť party, which comprises Strana maďarskej komunity - Magyar Közösség Pártja, Összefogás – Spolupatričnosť and Magyar Fórum - Maďarské fórum). Twenty four out of the total of 31 political parties and movements running in the elections have their own public accounts;

- o *Leaders*
  Leaders of the candidate lists as well as chairs of the parties running in the elections, if they are included on the lists. 26 out of the total of 36 leaders and chairs have public Instagram accounts; in total, 28 accounts were subject to the analysis[7];

A *post[8]* and an *interaction[9]* represented the monitored units. To ensure consistency, the data was collected and evaluated 3 days after the end of the monitored period by way of [Crowdtangle](#).[10]

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[7]   František Gögh and Marian Kotleba have two public accounts.
[8]   A *post* on Facebook is defined as every individual status, link, photo, or a video (FB video, FB Live, YouTube video, or another video). A *post* on Instagram is defined as an individual photo, photo album, video, or an IGTV video.
[9]   An *interaction* on Facebook is defined as every individual reaction (an emoticon - like, love, ha-ha, wow, sad, angry), comment and share. An *interaction* on Instagram is defined as every individual like, or comment.
[10] "This data cited is sourced from CrowdTangle, a social media analytics tool owned by Facebook. CrowdTangle 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 pages 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."

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