



## Yerevan Press Club

### REPORT ON TV CHANNEL MONITORING IN ARMENIA

#### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The TV channel monitoring in Armenia was administered in the course of one month, February 1-28, 2005, under the Yerevan Press Club project “Monitoring of Democratic Reforms in Armenia”, supported by the Open Society Institute Human Rights and Governance Grants Program.

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**The purpose of the monitoring was to** determine, by gaining and analyzing quantitative data:

- the attention of the leading TV companies of Armenia to the most significant public and political events in the country and world;
- the correspondence of TV coverage and reporting on the issues to their true relevance and the demand of the audience;
- the degree to which broadcast media perform their mission to meet the need of the society to know;
- the degree to which various viewpoints on the most important public and political problems is presented on TV air.

**The monitoring objects were** the main newscasts, news/analysis programs and current affairs programs of 5 broadcast media of Armenia: *4 national TV companies* - Public Television of Armenia (PTA); “ALM”; “Armenia”; Second Armenian TV Channel (Second Channel) and *1 local TV company* - “Shant”, broadcasting in Yerevan and Gyumri (the monitoring object was the Yerevan program). The main criterion for the TV channel selection was the coverage area of the channel (*see below the list and brief profile of the TV channels and programs studied*).

## **I I. MONITORING METHODOLOGY**

Monitoring methodology differed depending on the type of the programs/shows studied.

### **A. NEWS AND NEWS/ANALYSIS PROGRAMS**

#### ***Methodology of monitoring newscasts and news/analysis programs included:***

- count of the total number of TV pieces (in absolute values) in each main newscast, each issue of news/analysis program of the TV company, except the weather forecast, commercial advertising, including announcements and TV schedule presentations, etc.;
- count of the total duration of the TV pieces (in seconds) of each main newscast, issue of news/analysis program, except the weather forecast, commercial advertising, including announcements and TV schedule presentations, etc.;
- recording the sequence of the TV pieces in the program;
- recording the subject matter of each TV piece;
- recording the duration of each TV piece (in seconds);
- development of unified wording for pieces on general issues (in certain cases the events close by content and significance were grouped together);
- unification of events, having current, chronicle nature and not called by experts as urgent, in common thematic groups (issues of RA economy and finance, current activities of the RA President and his administration; events in RA culture and science , etc.)

#### ***The following was understood to be a TV piece:***

The airtime unit, distinct in its theme, composition and design, i.e.:

- a.** a separate story in the newscast;
- b.** a separate communication, presented by the program host;
- c.** a thematically distinct part (section, story) of the program, touching on different issues/problems;
- d.** a thematically distinct question and answer to it in a TV interview, touching various issues/problems;
- e.** a program or an interview on one issue/problem was not subdivided and was viewed as a single piece;
- f.** introductory announcements of the TV pieces were viewed as a part of the story they referred to;
- g.** the headline/subheadline, the lead, the text of the host introducing the TV piece (report, etc.), were viewed as a part of this piece (report, etc.)

## B. CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMS

### *Methodology for monitoring current affairs programs included:*

- recording the main program participants, specifying the first and last names, the position/occupation of each of the participants;
- recording the sequence of the issues, discussed in the program;
- recording the subject/s of the program.

## III. THE LIST AND BRIEF PROFILE OF THE TV CHANNELS AND PROGRAMS STUDIED

**PUBLIC TELEVISION OF ARMENIA (PTA)** - public TV and radio company, founded in 2001. The governing body is the Council of Public TV and Radio Company. Airtime periodicity is 19 hours per day.

The study objects on PTA were: the main newscast “**Haylur**” and the Sunday news/analysis program “**360 degrees**”; “**5th wheel**” current affairs program.

“**Haylur**” newscast was aired 7 days a week: on Monday-Friday – 8 times a day, on Saturday – 3 times a day, on Sundays – 1 time a day. The monitoring object was the main “Haylur” issue at 21.00, totaling at 24 during the study period. Throughout the monitoring a total of 592 pieces was studied, their overall duration amounting to 58,716 seconds.

“**360 degrees**” news/analysis program was aired once a week on Sundays, at 20.00. During the study period there were 4 issues of “360 degrees”. Throughout the monitoring a total of 26 pieces was studied, their overall duration amounting to 10,825 seconds.

“**5th wheel**” (“guest-in-studio” genre) was aired once a week on Mondays, at 22.00. During the study period there were 4 issues of “5th wheel”.

“**ALM**” – private TV company, founded in 2000 by the President of “ALM-Holding” Tigran Karapetian. Airtime periodicity is 20 hours per day.

The study objects on “ALM” were: “**Day by Day**” main newscast and its Sunday news/analysis issue; “**Position**” and “**Price of the Question**” current affairs program.

“**Day by Day**” newscast was aired 6 days a week (Monday-Saturday), four times a day. The monitoring object was the main issue of “Day by Day” at 20.00. During the study period these were 24. Throughout the monitoring a total of 309 pieces was studied, their total duration amounting to 34,068 seconds.

**Sunday news/analysis issue of “Day by Day”** was aired once a week at 17.00. During the study period there were 4 issues of “Day by Day”. Throughout the monitoring a total of 41 pieces was studied, with a total duration of 6,325 seconds.

**“Price of the Question”** current affairs program (“guest-in-studio” genre) was aired twice a week (on Tuesdays and Saturdays) at 21.30. During the study period there were 8 issues of “Price of the Question”.

**“Position”** current affairs program (“guest-in-studio” genre) was aired once a week (on Thursdays) once a day at 21.30. During the study period there were 4 issues of “Position”.

**“ARMENIA”** – private TV company, founded in 1998. The founders are the Cafesjian Family Fund and “Sargsian Family” Fund. Airtime periodicity is 24 hours per day.

The research object on “Armenia” TV channel were: **“Zham”** main newscast and **“Express”** news/analysis program; **“Indeed”** current affairs program.

**“Zham”** newscast was aired 7 times a week: six times a day on Monday-Saturday, once a day on Sunday. The monitoring object was the main “Zham” issues at 20.30. During the study period these issues were 28. Throughout the monitoring a total of 267 pieces was studied, their overall duration amounting to 37,909 seconds.

**“Express”** news/analysis program was aired 5 times a week (Monday-Friday) once a day at 22.40. During the study period there were 20 issues of the program. Throughout the monitoring a total of 388 pieces was studied, their overall duration amounting to 29,597 seconds.

**“Indeed”** current affairs program (“guest-in-studio” genre) was aired 5 times a week (Monday-Thursday, Saturday) once a day at 19.30. During the study period there were 20 issues of “Indeed”.

**SECOND ARMENIAN TV CHANNEL (SECOND CHANNEL)** – private TV company, founded in 1998 by private persons. Airtime periodicity is 18 hours per day.

The study object on the Second Channel were: **“Lraber”** main newscast and **“Sunday Lraber”** and **“Saturday Report”** news/analysis programs; **“Right to Tell”** and **“Ojakh”** current affairs programs, as well **“Fourth Studio”** current affairs section.

**“Lraber”** newscast was aired 6 days a week: on Mondays – 3 times a day, on Tuesday-Saturday – 5 times a day. The monitoring object were the “Lraber” issues at 23.00. During the study period these were 24. Throughout the monitoring a total of 434 pieces was studied, their overall duration amounting to 45,403 seconds.

**“Sunday Lraber”** news/analysis program was aired once a week on Sundays at 21.00. During the study period there were 4 issues of “Sunday Lraber”. Throughout the monitoring a total of 24 pieces was studied, their overall duration making 5,713 seconds.

**“Saturday Report”** news/analysis program was aired once a week on Saturdays at 20.40. During the study period there were 4 issues of “Saturday Report”, their overall duration amounting to 3,660 seconds.

**“Right to Tell”** current affairs program (“guest-in-studio” genre )was aired once a week on Saturdays at 21.30. During the study period there were 2 issues of the “Right to Tell”.

“**Ojakh**” current affairs program (“talk-show” genre) was aired once a day at 21.00. During the study period there were 4 issues of “Ojakh”.

“**Fourth Studio**” current affairs section (“guest-in-studio” genre) went on air within “Lraber” and “Sunday Lraber” news programs. During the study period there were 4 issues of “Fourth Studio”.

“**SHANT**” – private TV company, founded in 1994 by Artur Yezekian. The airtime periodicity is 19 hours daily.

The study object on “Shant” were: “**Horizon**” main newscast; “**Perspective**” and “**Second Glance**” current affairs programs.

“**Horizon**” newscast was aired 6 days a week (Monday-Saturday) 8 times a day. The monitoring object were the main issues of “Horizon” at 22.00. During the study period there were 24 issues. Throughout the monitoring a total of 325 pieces was studied, their overall duration amounting to 47,892 seconds.

“**Perspective**” current affairs program (“guest-in-studio” genre) went on air 5 days a week (Monday-Friday) once a day at 22.45. During the study period there were 20 issues of “Perspective”.

“**Second Glance**” current affairs program (“talk show” genre) went on air once a week on Sunday at 23.00. During the study period there were 4 issues of “Second Glance”.

#### **IV. EXPERT SURVEY**

To determine the extent to which in information demands of the society are met by the leading broadcast media, along with the TV channel monitoring, on February 1-28 expert survey among representatives of various areas was administered.

The survey covered 10 people:

Levon Barseghian, chairman of the Board of “Asparez” Journalist’s Club;

Karen Bekarian, head of “European Integration” NGO;

Marina Grigorian, head of Information and Public Relations Department of the RA Human Rights Defender’s Office;

Stepan Grigorian, head of Analytical Center for Globalization and Regional Cooperation;

Nina Kevorkova, dean of Social and Cultural Service and Tourism Department of the Russian-Armenian (Slavic) State University;

Karineh Khodikian, playwright, publicist, RA deputy minister of Culture and Youth Issues;

Ida Martirosian, director of “Political Modeling”, vice-chairman of the Christian-Democratic Union of Armenia;

Ashot Melikian, chairman of the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression;

Artur Sakunts, head of the Vanadzor Branch of Helsinki Citizens Assembly, editor of “Civil Initiative” newspaper;

Isabella Sargsian, co-chair of “Youth for Democracy” NGO.

The selection of people, conventionally classed as “experts”, was made out of those who closely follow the media due to their professional activities and represents mostly the humanitarian and social sphere. These are the representatives of both non-governmental and state sector, who do not have direct relations with the main political players of the country. To a certain extent the gender (5 male and 5 female respondents), age (from 21 to 50) and geographic (cities of Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor) balance was taken into account.

The experts traced the current affairs in the world and in Armenia and on weekly basis answered the question: “***Which three events of the last week do you see as the most important?***”

Event (theme) priority was defined by each expert by assigning a score of 3 to 1. The cumulative data for each of the themes, distinguished by the experts, was the basis for comparing with the event coverage by the TV channels.

To ensure comparability of findings, the definitions of the events/themes, noted by experts as most urgent, were phrased in accordance with the definitions of events/themes, recorded during the TV channel monitoring (in certain cases events, close in content and significance, were grouped into one theme).

## **V. TECHNIQUE FOR TV CHANNEL MONITORING AND EXPERT SURVEY**

In order to obtain comparable data, the findings of the expert survey and the findings of the monitoring of news, news/analysis and current affairs programs of each TV channel were analyzed on weekly basis.

## **VI. WEEKLY FINDINGS OF TV CHANNEL MONITORING AND THE EXPERT SURVEY**

Herein the comparative analysis of the expert survey and each TV channel on weekly basis is presented.

## **FEBRUARY 1-6, 2005**

### **EXPERT SURVEY**

On February 1-6 the experts noted a total of 17 events, of which the following were the leading five:

1. Decease of Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania and the subsequent events (25 points).
2. OSCE fact finding mission at the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, surrounding Mountainous Karabagh (7 points).
3. Parliamentary elections in Iraq and the post-election situation (5 points).
4. Report on Mountainous Karabagh by PACE Rapporteur David Atkinson and the response to it (3 points).
5. Statement of the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that the US does not intend to attack Iran (3 points).

Other events mentioned by experts as priority scored from 2 to 1 points.

### **PUBLIC TELEVISION OF ARMENIA**

In the main issues of "Haylur" newscast and "360 degrees" news/analysis program on February 1-6 the greatest attention was paid to the subject, named as priority by the experts – "Decease of Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania and the subsequent events".

The themes of the week rated as second and third by the experts - "OSCE fact finding mission at the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, surrounding Mountainous Karabagh" and "Parliamentary elections in Iraq and the post-election situation" - on the news air of PTA studied were 17th (258 sec.) and the 50th (28 sec.), respectively. In other words, the elections in Iraq received less than half a minute of coverage, which is obviously insufficient to inform the audience. While the reporting on other events in Iraq received 132 seconds, these were short reports on terrorist attacks in the country, out of the post-election context, most probably resulting in complicating the viewers' perception of the situation in Iraq.

"Report on Mountainous Karabagh by PACE Rapporteur David Atkinson and the response to it", scoring the 4th and 5th rates in the expert survey, was the 7th on the news air of PTA (634 seconds). Besides, other pieces on Karabagh conflict resolution received 439 seconds of coverage.

"Statement of the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that the US does not intend to attack Iran" – the subject that shared the 4th-5th places with the one above – was not stressed in the PTA news programs. The same is true for other international news that attracted the attention of experts, in particular, "Shamil Basaev's interview to British Channel 4" and "Early payment of most of the Russian debt to Paris Club".

The theme of "Return of opposition parliament factions to the RA National Assembly", singled out by one expert as being the second important, was in the 10 most covered subjects of the week, being the 6th (779 seconds).

“Proposal of the Speaker of the National Assembly of France Jean-Louis Debre on the researching into the Armenian Genocide problem by the experts of UN, NATO, Council of Europe and independent Swiss experts, made during his visit to Turkey” was covered by the PTA, although it was defined by the experts to be a priority the next week (February 7-13). In other words, the referral of the PTA to this event to a certain extent forestalled the public interest to it.

In general, the news coverage on PTA is characterized by particular attention to the official communications, the event chronicles in Armenia and the world with a small emphasis on the subjects of primary interest.

The absence of a such accent on the key issues in the main newscasts is particularly felt as the urgent issues of the week, the month are seldom a subject for discussion in the commenting programs. The latter ones, in particular, the weekly “5th Wheel” current affairs program, in accordance with its specialization, addresses mostly general issues, with no linkage to the hot events.

### **“ALM”**

The greatest attention in “Day by Day” newscast and its Sunday news/analysis issue on February 1-6 was paid to the trips of the TV company owner Tigran Karapetian in the regions of Armenia (1,142 sec.)

The next two places were taken by subjects, reflecting current affairs: issues of RA economy and finance (1,093 sec.); chronicle, the situation in Armenian regions (697 seconds).

The subjects, defined by experts to be most significant for the given period - “Decease of Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania and the subsequent events”; “OSCE fact finding mission at the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, surrounding Mountainous Karabagh” – were on the 10th (348 seconds) and 19th (135 seconds) places, respectively.

“Report on Mountainous Karabagh by PACE Rapporteur David Atkinson and the response to it”, named the fourth by the experts, was rated the 4th in the news coverage of “ALM” (646 sec.). The pieces on the Karabagh conflict resolution were on the 8th place (423 sec.)

The situation with the parliamentary elections in Iraq and the statement of the US Secretary of State on Iran were completely out of the “Day by Day” issues during the first week of February. The same is true for another event, pointed out by experts – of Pope John Paul II”.

Of other themes, singled out by experts, “Return of opposition parliament factions to the RA National Assembly” was the fifth of the subjects covered, receiving 612 sec.

Herein it should be noted that the international affairs are mostly covered by “Planet Pulse” program, aired after “Day by Day” issues and was not monitored. This probably accounts for the lack of attention of “Day by Day” to events abroad.

The current affairs programs of “ALM”, “Price of the Question” and “Position” have a wide variety of issues discussed, including some subjects named by the experts. Yet, this failed to compensate significantly for the lack of attention to these issues in the newscasts.



## **“ARMENIA”**

In the main issues of “Zham” newscast on February 1-6 of the subjects, classed by experts in the first five, only two gained the top lines in the news coverage: “Decease of Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania and the subsequent events” - 4th place (473 seconds) and “Report on Mountainous Karabagh by PACE Rapporteur David Atkinson and the response to it” - 7th place (435 seconds). “OSCE fact finding mission at the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, surrounding Mountainous Karabagh” was 26th (108 sec), followed by “Parliamentary elections in Iraq and the post-election situation”, the 27th (107 sec.)

Ahead of all these subjects mentioned was “Return of opposition parliament factions to the RA National Assembly”, also distinguished by the expert survey and taking the 3rd place on the air of “Zham” (493 sec). The greatest coverage was given to the subjects, reflecting current events: the issues of RA economy and finance (763 sec.), and the chronicle of the life of the capital (591 seconds).

Of the subjects, named important by experts, “Zham”, similarly to other news programs studied, did not pay attention to the statement of the US Secretary of State on Iran, Shamil Basaev’s interview to British Channel 4 and the payment of the Russian debt. Similarly, to “ALM”, in the main newscast of “Armenia”, there were no pieces on the ailing of Pope John Paul II, - subject, named by the experts. Thus, it cannot be inferred that the TV program gave sufficient information to the viewed on the most urgent events. At the same time, the little difference in the airtime amount allocated by “Zham” to various subjects is noteworthy.

To a certain, yet insufficient extent, the absence of due attention to the urgent themes by “Zham” program was compensated by another program of the TV channel, “Express”, which combines news and comment. During the period of February 1-6 it, particular, covered the interview of Shamil Basaev to British Channel 4, the early payment of most of the Russian debt to Paris Club, the ailing of Pope John Paul II, the process of resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict, i.e., the subjects noted by experts as important and omitted from the direct coverage by “Zham”.

“Indeed” current affairs program, as a rule, addresses the issues of public importance, but not always related to the hot events.

## **SECOND ARMENIAN TV CHANNEL**

The subject of “Decease of Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania and the subsequent events”, leading in the expert survey with huge distance, was the 8th in the issues of “Lraber” newscast and “Sunday Lraber” news/analysis program on February 1-6 (307 sec). And the second significant subject, singled out by experts, “OSCE fact finding mission at the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, surrounding Mountainous Karabagh”, was the 7th in the news programs mentioned (318 sec). Another subject, “Report on Mountainous Karabagh by PACE Rapporteur David Atkinson and the response to it”, rated the 4th by experts, received 244 seconds of airtime, being on the 10th place.

The situation on parliamentary elections in Iraq, rated the third by experts, was in no way emphasized on the news air of the Second Armenian TV Channel studied. Neither were some

other subjects noted by experts as priority. At the same time, similarly to PTA, the Second Channel informed about the proposal by the Speaker of the NA of France Jean-Louis Debre to research the Armenian genocide by international specialists, thus, “jumping ahead” of experts, who specified the theme in the next week survey. And vice versa, the statement of the US secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that US do not intend to strike Iran, was directly covered by the Second Channel only during the second week of the research.

Of the first six subjects in “Lraber” and “Sunday Lraber” programs the greatest advantage was given to the issues of RA economy and finance (710 sec.), current activities of the RA National Assembly (509 sec), international programs and activities of international organizations in RA (506 sec), chronicle of events in the regions of Armenia (465 sec.), current affairs of the RA President and its administration (389 sec). In other words, the focus of attention was on events of current, chronicle nature. The news programs did not accentuate any specific event, separate from those singled out by experts. Rather, in case of rather a broad coverage of events there is no focus on the subjects of greatest current interest.

The commenting programs of the Second Channel, while touching mainly issues of public interest, insufficiently contribute to the adequate perception of the main up-to-date events by the audience.

#### **“SHANT”**

On February 1-6 in “Horizon” program the first place in terms of attention (874 sec.) was taken by the subject, rated the most important by the experts – “Decease of Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania and the subsequent events”.

The second subject rated as the most important by experts, “OSCE fact finding mission at the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, surrounding Mountainous Karabagh”, came at the end of the ten the most actively covered (335 seconds). other pieces on Karabagh resolution, as well as the report by the PACE Rapporteur David Atkinson on Mountainous Karabagh and the response to it (also named by experts as one of the most important ones) were the 3rd (482 sec.) and 8th (373 sec.) All this is sign of adequate attention of the news program to this given subject matter.

Two other subjects, specified by experts – “Parliamentary elections in Iraq and the post-election situation” and “Statement of the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that the US does not intend to attack Iran” – also found reflection in “Horizon” issues. Yet, if the first subject mentioned got sufficient attention (6th place - 417 sec.), the second was addressed by the program only once throughout the week, receiving 105 seconds (32nd place).

Of the other subjects, noted by experts as priorities, “Horizon” did not pay attention, in particular, to the early payment of most of the Russian debt to Paris Club, cases of bribery at the US Consulate in RA. The latter got direct coverage on the news air of all the TV channels studied, but for “Shant”. The subject of “Shamil Basaev’s interview to British Channel 4” got direct coverage in “Horizon” only during the next studied period (February 7-13).

Finally, “Shant” was another TV company (along with PTA and the Second Channel), the news air of which gave floor to the proposal of the Speaker of the NA of France Jean-Louis

Debre on the research of Armenian Genocide – the subject noted by experts in the survey for the subsequent period.

The commenting current affairs programs of “Shant”, “Perspective” and “Second Glance”, during the study period paid most of the attention to David Atkinson and PACE resolution on Mountainous Karabagh. Another subject of “Perspective” issue was the return of opposition parliamentary factions to the RA National Assembly, seen by experts as urgent.

## **FEBRUARY 7-13, 2005**

### **EXPERT SURVEY**

During the period of February 7-13 experts were not so distinct in selecting the main themes. Out of the 21 events mentioned the following three subjects were most frequently mentioned:

1. Nuclear weapons development in North Korea and Iran (12 points).
2. Israel-Palestine conflict resolution process (8 points).
3. Bloodful fire exchange in the vicinity of Yerevan Thermal Power Plant (5 points).

The remaining themes scored from 3 to 1 points.

It should be noted here that the “Israel-Palestine conflict resolution process” rated as second was already mentioned by experts among the priority themes during the first week of study. Another subject – “OSCE fact finding mission at the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, surrounding Mountainous Karabagh” also “recurred” in the expert survey. Another subject that can be classed as “continuing to raise attention” was “Visit of Condoleezza Rice to the countries of Europe and Middle East”. Besides, if on February 1-6 the “Bloodful fire exchange in the vicinity of Yerevan Thermal Power Plant” was mentioned by only one expert, on February 7-13 it was among the leading three. Among the “adjacent” themes the experts mentioned also “Assassination of the President of “Armenia-Lada” Company Rafael Shakhmuradian in Toliatti” and “Intensification of criminal situation in Armenia”, by which primarily the crimes above were meant.

As to the top themes of early February, the decease of Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania and subsequent events, while not being mentioned by experts for the week, all the TV companies studied continued referring to it, although less actively. This is particularly true for “Shant”, in the news coverage of which this subject was among the top ones (the 3rd most actively covered).

### **PUBLIC TELEVISION OF ARMENIA**

“Haylur” newscast and “360 Degrees” news/analysis program also focused on February 7-13 on current events, chronicles of various spheres: mostly on the events in culture and science (2,272 sec.) and RA NA activities (1,658 sec.)

Of the subjects named by the experts the greatest coverage was provided by the PTA newscasts to “70th anniversary of writer Hrant Matevosian and the events on the date” (622 sec.), “OSCE fact finding mission at the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, surrounding Mountainous Karabagh” (390 sec.) and “Israel-Palestine conflict resolution process” (378 sec.)

Overall, of the 21 themes, noted by experts, 10 received direct coverage on the news air of PTA, including all the three subjects leading in the expert survey for the period: Arab-Israeli conflict as mentioned above, as well as “Nuclear weapons development in North Korea and Iran” (264 sec.) and “Bloodful fire exchange in the vicinity of Yerevan Thermal Power Plant “ (106 sec.)

At the same time “Haylur” covered the litigation against writer Orhan Pamuk in Turkey (362 sec.), the destruction of Armenian tombstones at Our Lady Church in Tbilisi (37 sec.) and addressed the referendum in Spain on adoption of the Constitution of European Union (35 sec.). Thus, the TV company raised the subjects, mentioned by experts in the survey for the next period, February 14-20, forestalling the public attention towards them.

### **“ALM”**

The greatest attention in the main issues of “Day by Day” newscast and its Sunday news and analysis issue on February 7-13 was placed on the current events. In particular, the current activities of the RA NA received 1,679 sec., news from Armenian regions - 1,019 sec. and the chronicle of inner political life - 973 sec.

Of the subjects, mentioned by experts as most urgent for the week, the greatest direct coverage was given to “Failure to start the spring session of RA NA” (557 sec.), “70th anniversary of writer Hrant Matevosian and the events on the date” (307 sec.), of criminal situation in Armenia” (186 sec.) and “Assassination of the President of “Armenia-Lada” Company Rafael Shakhmuradian in Toliatti” (147 sec.)

Of the 21 subject, mentioned by experts, “Day by Day” only covered 6, and of the three subjects deemed as priority for the period by the experts (development of nuclear technologies in Iran and North Korea, process of Arab-Israeli conflict resolution and the course of investigation of the fire exchange in the vicinity of Yerevan TPP), none got direct coverage.

At the same time, “Day by Day” addressed the issue of destruction of Armenian tombstones at Our Lady Church in Tbilisi (43 sec.) and the upcoming visit of the RF Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Armenia (92 sec.) – subjects, covered by experts as priorities in the next study period.

The commenting programs of “ALM” studied on February 7-13 did not directly address the subjects, mentioned by experts, either.

### **“ARMENIA”**

“Zham” program was the only of the news programs studied, where the biggest attention of February 7-13 was paid not to current news, but to a specific subject – “Failure to start the spring session of RA NA” (913 sec.), also mentioned in the expert survey for the period. The current activities of the Parliament were not omitted from “Zham” camera, either, taking the second place (805 sec.) besides, the news program continued addressing the “Return of opposition parliament factions to the RA National Assembly” (238 sec.)

Of the three themes, taking the first lines in the expert survey, direct coverage was only given to the investigation of the fire exchange in the vicinity of Yerevan TPP (55 sec., rated 33rd). Much more attention was paid to the murder of the President of “Armenia-Lada” company Rafael Shakhmuradian in Toliatti (254 sec., rated 13th).

Only two subjects of the 21, named by experts, got direct coverage in “Zham”: “70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of writer Hrant Matevosian and the events on the date” (235 sec.) and “Visit of Condoleezza Rice to the countries of Europe and Middle East” (35 sec.)

The last subject was three times addressed by “Express” commenting program. Three times a reference to resolution of Arab-Israeli conflict was made and once – to the nuclear weapon development in North Korea and Iran. Thus, “Express” to a certain extent compensated for the lack of attention of “Zham” newscast to the urgent issues of the period. The other commenting program of “Armenia TV channel, “Indeed” also touched upon a number of urgent themes, yet failing to address any of those, omitted by “Zham”.

## **SECOND ARMENIAN TV CHANNEL**

In “Lraber” and “Sunday Lraber” news programs on February 7-13, similarly to the previous period, the current events and chronicles of various areas of public life were predominant. The most active coverage was given to the events of culture and science (1,940 sec.), social issues (1,198 sec.), issues of economy and finance (1,074 sec.) and news from regions of Armenia (1,012 sec.)

Out of the 21 subjects, mentioned by experts throughout the period, direct coverage on the news air of the Second Channel was given to 9, also two of the three leading in the expert surveys. These are the resolution of Arab-Israeli conflict (319 sec.) and the problem of nuclear technologies development in Iran and North Korea (211 sec.)

Greatest attention of all the subjects singled out by experts was paid to the “Forecast of the McKinsey international consulting company on the prospects of tourism development in Armenia” (439 sec.) and “70th anniversary of writer Hrant Matevosian and the events on the date” (349 sec.)

Besides, the Second Channel continued addressing the “Return of opposition parliament factions to the RA National Assembly”, that was the 7th (699 sec.) most actively covered news themes of the TV company.

“Lraber” covered the destruction of Armenian tombstones in the Our Lady Church in Tbilisi (35 sec.) and the upcoming visit of RF Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Armenia (33 sec.) – subjects, mentioned by experts as priorities in the subsequent period of study.

The commenting programs of the Second Channel studied did not address any of the themes, noted by experts, thus failing to compensate the lack of attention of the news programs to the most urgent issues of the period.

## **“SHANT”**

The absence of dominating public interest on February 7-13 towards certain events, as noted above, affected the news coverage of “Shant” too. While its priorities on February 1-6 mainly

coincided with expert assessments, this time the TV company concentrated on current events and chronicles in different spheres. In particular, the greatest attention in “Horizon” news program was paid to social (1,093 sec.) and inner political (849 sec.) questions,

Of the 21 themes, mentioned in the survey by experts, nine were directly covered in “Horizon” airtime. All three main subjects, defined by experts, were reflected in “Horizon” issues: the resolution of Israel-Palestine conflict (498 sec.), the problem of nuclear technology development in Iran and North Korea (288 sec.) and the course of investigation of the fire exchange in the vicinity of Yerevan TPP (188 sec.)

The greatest interest of the themes mentioned by expert was paid by “Horizon” to the failed start of the spring session at the Parliament (614 sec.)

The somewhat late reference of “Horizon to the subject mentioned by experts in early February, “Shamil Basaev’s interview to British Channel 4” (278 sec.), is smoothed out by the fact that Armenian media in general paid little attention to it. Besides, ” was the only news program who informed about the Grammy Award Ceremony to be held on February 13 (287 sec.) This subject was named by one of the experts during the period and was covered during the subsequent week, yet only by the news programs of two TV companies, “Shant” and “PTA”.

“Second Glance” weekly current affairs program referred this week to the intensification of the criminal situation in Armenia, which was justified by the public interest. At the same time, the other commenting program, “Perspective”, in its five issues, except for this subject and the failure of the start of the spring session of the Parliament, did not refer to any of the 21 events, mentioned by experts.

## **FEBRUARY 14-20, 2005**

### **EXPERT SURVEY**

On February 14-20 the experts noted 15 events overall, of which the following were rated as the leading five:

1. Assassination of former Prime Minister of Lebanon Rafik Hariri (18 points)
2. Enforcement of Kyoto Protocol (7 points)
3. Referendum on the Constitution of European Union in Spain (6 points)
4. Visit of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Armenia (6 points )
5. Visit of RF Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to the countries of South Caucasus (4 points)

The remaining subjects mentioned by experts scored from 3 to 1. Among them the results of elections in Iraq and the visit of US State Secretary Condoleezza Rice were named as priorities again.

### **PUBLIC TELEVISION OF ARMENIA**

Of the 15 themes, named by experts as most important for the period of February 14-20, 8 were reflected in the main issues of “Haylur” newscast and “360 Degrees” news/analysis

program. In this, the significant part of other events covered by these programs was named in the previous expert surveys that can be considered a good indicator under this study.

At the same time, the PTA news programs, similarly to the previous period, focused on current events and chronicle of various spheres of public life. The first five places among themes that received the greatest attention is given to the chronicle and events, with the following subjects leading: sport (1,564 sec.); international programs and the activities of international organizations in RA (1,256 sec.); issues of RA economy and finance (998 sec.); current activities of the RA Government (996 sec.); current activities of the RA President and his administration (971 sec.)

The broadest coverage of the themes defined by the experts on the PTA news air was given to the main, in the opinion of experts, event of the period – the assassination of Lebanon former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and the subsequent political developments in the country (629 sec.) The enforcement of Kyoto Protocol (rated as the second most important event by the experts) received 157 sec. Much more attention was paid to the two subjects at the bottom of the experts' leading five: the visits of the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Armenia (444 sec.) and to the countries of South Caucasus (84 sec.)

Besides, similarly to the previous period, on PTA news air, subjects, singled out by experts the next week (February 21-28), were raised. These were: "Agreement between Russia and Iran on exporting nuclear waste" and "Statements of the US Ambassador in Armenia John Evans during the meetings with Armenian Diaspora in California".

### **"ALM"**

Along with the current activities of the RA President and his administration (673 sec.) and the issues of RA economy and finance (636 sec.), one of three subjects, most extensively covered by "Day by Day" newscast and its Sunday news/analysis issue on February 14-20 was the visit of RF Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Armenia (619 sec.), named by the experts to be one of the most important events.

Of the two events, viewed by the experts to be of utmost interest (assassination of Lebanon former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and the political developments in the country, the enforcement of Kyoto Protocol), the former received 46 seconds of coverage and the other was completely out of attention focus. Besides these two themes, only two of those named by the experts were reflected on the air of "Day by Day" program: the refusal of a broadcast license to "MS Explorer" radio company, one of the founder of which is "A1+" TV company (185 sec.) and the presentation of encyclopedia "Karabagh Liberation War. 1988-94" in Yerevan (131 sec.) Along with this, on the news air of the TV company continued coverage was given to certain subjects, singled out by experts during the previous surveys.

The commenting programs of "ALM" did not add anything substantial to the coverage of current and urgent events.

### **"ARMENIA"**

The "airtime leaders" in the main newscasts of "Zham" during the period of February 14-20 were two subjects reflecting current events and chronicle (the current activities of the RA

President and his administration - 889 sec., and RA economy and finance issues - 779 sec.), as well as the anniversary of the murder of Armenian officer Gurgen Margarian in Budapest by Azerbaijani officer Ramil Safarov and the litigation on the case (816 sec.)

Only after these does one of the subjects mentioned by experts as to be important for the period come: the visit to the RF Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Armenia (783 sec.) The visit of the head of the Russian foreign office to the countries of South Caucasus was given 211 seconds of news coverage.

Overall, of the 15 issues mentioned by experts, 6 found their place on the air of "Zham". The hottest theme of the week, as seen by experts (assassination of former Prime Minister of Lebanon Rafik Hariri and the subsequent political developments in the country) was the 12th in the main issues of "Zham" newscast (292 sec.). The themes rated as 2nd and 3rd most important ones by experts – the enforcement of Kyoto Protocol and the referendum in Spain on EU Constitution were not reflected in the program at all.

The two of the last three themes mentioned were compensated for the lack of attention in the news program by the active coverage of "Express" commenting program.

## **SECOND ARMENIAN TV CHANNEL**

10 of 15 themes, (including 4 priority ones), mentioned by experts to be most important for February 14-20, were reflected in the main issues of "Lraber" news program and "Sunday Lraber" news/analysis program. The visit of RF Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Armenia was the 4th most actively covered event (855 sec.) The three leaders of the news air are the subjects, uniting current events and chronicle of various public life spheres: RA economy and finance (1,893 sec.); current activities of the RA president and his administration (968 sec.); current activities of the RA Government (932 sec.)

Besides, the news programs of the TV company continued to cover a number of themes, defined by experts in the previous surveys. Also, forestalling the public interest, there was information on the visit of US President George Bush to Europe and on Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation. These subjects were mentioned by experts as urgent during the subsequent period (February 21-28).

The commenting programs of the Second Channel did not add anything substantial to the coverage of current and urgent events.

## **"SHANT"**

During the period of February 14-20 the greatest coverage in "Horizon" newscast was given to the visit of RF Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Georgia (863 sec.), that occurred during his visit to the countries of South Caucasus (an event, rated the 5th by the experts). The third most covered subject on the air of "Horizon" was Lavrov's official visit to Armenia (742 sec.)

Two more themes, named by experts as being most urgent during the period, were among the seven leaders of the news air of "Shant". The event, rated by experts as the top news, the assassination for former Prime Minister of Lebanon Rafik Hariri and the subsequent political developments in the country, was the fifth in "Horizon" (622 sec.) The post-election situation



in Iraq, that shared the 6th-8th places with the experts, was the 7th (436 sec.)

Besides, the main newscasts of the TV channel continued the coverage of many themes, mentioned by experts during the previous surveys. One of them, the issue nuclear development in North Korea and Iran, even became one of the leaders on the news air of ", becoming the fourth and getting 682 seconds of coverage.

The commenting programs of "Shant" TV channel, namely, the "Position" and "Second Glance", did not address the problems seen as most important by experts.

## **FEBRUARY 21-28, 2005**

### **EXPERT SURVEY**

On February 21-28 the exported noted a total of 19 events, of which the following 6 were most frequently mentioned:

1. Meeting of Presidents of the USA and Russia George Bush and Vladimir Putin in Bratislava (18 points);
2. Visit of the US President George Bush to Europe (5 points);
3. Securing of the suit of Chechnya residents versus Russia by the European Court of Human Rights (5 points);
4. Visit of the NATO Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Robert Simmons to Armenia (5 points);
5. Statements of the US Ambassador in Armenia John Evans during the meetings with Armenian Diaspora in California (4 points);
6. Tension between "Orinats Yerkir" party and Republic Party of Armenia, making up the ruling coalition (4 points).

The remaining subjects mentioned by experts scored from 3 to 1.

### **PUBLIC TELEVISION OF ARMENIA**

13 of 18 themes, named by experts on February 21-28 as most important ones, were covered in the main issues of "Haylur" newscast and "360 Degrees" news/analysis program for the period. Yet, they failed to be present among the air leaders: the biggest coverage was given to events commemorating the anniversary of Armenian pogroms in Sumgait, also named by experts, scoring the 7th place (598 sec.) The greatest attention was paid to current events and chronicle in various public life spheres: sport (1,882 sec.); events in RA culture and science (1,642 sec.); current activities of the RA President and his administration (1,316 sec.); international programs and activities of international organizations in Armenia (1,166 sec.)

A number of subjects, named by experts at the previous stages of the research, remained at focus of the PTA news programs, yet being at low level of coverage, too.

The PTA commenting program, "5th Wheel", similarly to the previous researcher stages, did not address the subjects seen as most important by experts.

## **“ALM”**

The biggest coverage in the main issues of “Day by Day” news program and its Sunday news/analysis issue was given to the trips of the owner of “ALM” TV company Tigran Karapetian in the regions of Armenia (1,406 sec.) Of the 12 themes, leading on the air of “Day by Day”, 10 were devoted to current events and chronicle of various spheres, including the inner politics (1,098 sec.) and current activities of the RA President and his administration (622 sec.)

Of the subjects, mentioned by experts as most urgent ones, the greatest coverage was given to the working meeting of the RA President Robert Kocharian with the members of the Government on the issue of capital construction (497 sec.)

The leader of the expert survey, “Meeting of Presidents of the USA and Russia George Bush and Vladimir Putin in Bratislava”, was the 26th in “Day by Day” (150 sec.), and the next two subjects, singled out as priorities by the experts (“Visit of the US President George Bush to Europe” and “Securing of the suit of Chechnya residents versus Russia by the European Court of Human Rights”), were not covered directly by the program at all.

The visit of the NATO Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Robert Simmons to Armenia received much more coverage (350 sec.), than the other theme, also mentioned by experts as most urgent – the statements of the US Ambassador to Armenia John Evans during the meetings with Armenian Diaspora in California (89 sec.)

Of the 18 themes, mentioned by experts as the most important ones, only five were covered in “Day by Day”.

The commenting program of “ALM” studied did not touch on the themes, named by experts as most urgent in the given period.

## **“ARMENIA”**

The first 10 places among the subjects, receiving the greatest coverage in the main issues of “Zham” program on February 21-28, were taken by those on current events and chronicles of various public life spheres. In particular, the leaders of the news air were the official visits of the Armenian leadership (810 sec.), the chronicle of events in Yerevan (787 sec.) and the current activities of the RA President and its administration (732 sec.)

The second ten are opened by the subject, named as most important by the experts – “Statements of the US Ambassador in Armenia John Evans during the meetings with Armenian Diaspora in California” (356 sec.) The leader of the expert survey, “Meeting of Presidents of the USA and Russia George Bush and Vladimir Putin in Bratislava”, was the 23rd (175 sec.) The visit of NATO Special Representative in the Caucasus and Central Asia Robert Simmons received 286 sec.

Overall, 7 of the 18 themes mentioned by experts to be most urgent were covered by “Zham”.

The commenting program “Indeed” addressed two themes specified by experts in great detail. These were – the visit of Robert Simmons to Armenia and statements of the US Ambassador in RA John Evans.

9 events, named as important by the experts on February 21-28, were covered by the commenting "Express" program: events commemorating the anniversary of pogroms in Sumgait (6 times); meetings of US and Russian Presidents in Bratislava (6 times); visit of the US President to Europe (3 times); tension between "Orinats Yerkir" and Republican Party of Armenia, making up the ruling coalition (3 times); political consequences of the murder of Lebanon Prime Minister Rafik Hariri (3 times); the visit of the NATO Special Representative to Armenia (2 times); Oscar Award Ceremony (2 times); earthquake in Iran (2 times); terrorist attack in Iraqi El-Hilla town (1 time). Besides, "Express" continued addressing some of the subjects, mentioned by experts before.

## **SECOND ARMENIAN TV CHANNEL**

The greatest attention in the main issues of "Lraber" newscast and "Sunday Lraber" news/analysis program on February 21-28 was given to the current events in various public life spheres, in particular: international programs and activities of international organizations in RA (1,371 sec.); current activities of the RA President and its administration (1,294 sec.); social issues (1,105 sec.)

The event number one in the eyes of experts, the meeting of US and RF Presidents in Bratislava received 394 seconds on the news air of the Second Channel. Yet the visit of the US President George Bush to Europe (rated as second by experts) was the fourth in the list of subjects covered the most (941 sec.)

Of the subjects, sharing the 3rd-4th places by urgency in the opinion of experts ("Visit of the NATO Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Robert Simmons to Armenia" and "Securing of the suit of Chechnya residents versus Russia by the European Court of Human Rights") the former was covered (361 sec.), and the second – not.

Overall, of the 18 themes named by experts to be most important, the news programs of the Second Channel covered 13. Besides, a number of themes, specified by experts at previous research stages, remained at focus of newscasts.

The commenting programs "Right to Tell" and "Fourth Studio" several times referred to the events that were mentioned as most important by experts and were related to Karabagh conflict (in particular, the anniversary of Armenian pogroms in Sumgait).

## **"SHANT"**

The undisputed leader among the themes, singled out by experts as the most important ones on February 21-28, the meeting of the US and Russian presidents in Bratislava, was the second covered in the main issues of "Horizon" program (1,004 sec.) Ahead of it was the theme "Demands of Azerbaijan to recognize the Khojalu events to be genocide" (1,073 sec.), not specified by experts at all.

Of the 18 themes, mentioned by experts, 11 were covered on the air of "Horizon". These included events, commemorating the anniversary of Armenian pogroms in Sumgait, being the fourth most covered subject (637 sec.)

Of the themes, sharing 2nd-4th places in the expert survey only "Securing of the suit of Chechnya residents versus Russia by the European Court of Human Rights" was omitted.

“Visit of the US President George Bush to Europe” received 330 seconds of coverage and “Visit of the NATO Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Robert Simmons to Armenia” - 174 sec. “Statements of the US Ambassador in Armenia John Evans during the meetings with Armenian Diaspora in California”, another priority theme for the experts, received 341 seconds of news coverage.

Besides, “Horizon” continued to address a number of events, specified by experts during the previous stages of the study.

The commenting “Perspective” program devoted 3 of its 6 issues to themes mentioned by experts in various stages of the study: history and process of resolution of Karabagh conflict (twice) and the failure to start the spring session at the RA NA in the context of the next session (once).

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

1. The major Armenian TV channels, deemed to be the main information sources for the population of the country by surveys and other tools for studying public opinion, do not cover a significant part of urgent issues, thus restricting the right of the audience to be informed and neglecting its demands and needs.
2. Unlike the periods, decisive for the political future of the country (elections of various levels, referenda), when, according to the previous studies, the main TV channels displayed an obvious slant in favor of the incumbent authorities, this study did not record any prevalence of any political stance on TV air.
3. At the same time, the certain passive behavior of the TV companies in terms of presenting the opinions of political and public figures on a whole range of issues was noted. Thus, the contribution of media in shaping the public policy culture in the country is unsatisfactory.
4. The commenting programs of most TV channels studied are not sufficiently contributing to the audience finding its way through information flow.
5. In particular, the international and social problems, which, according to the all public opinion polls of the past years, are of utmost interest to the audience, are not a priority in the programming policy of the media studied.
6. At the same time, the TV channels pay much attention to the routine, day-to-day activities of the state structures, the leadership of the country, the political figures and businessmen who have certain levers of affecting the given TV company. Yet, this information is not much of demand with the society.

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