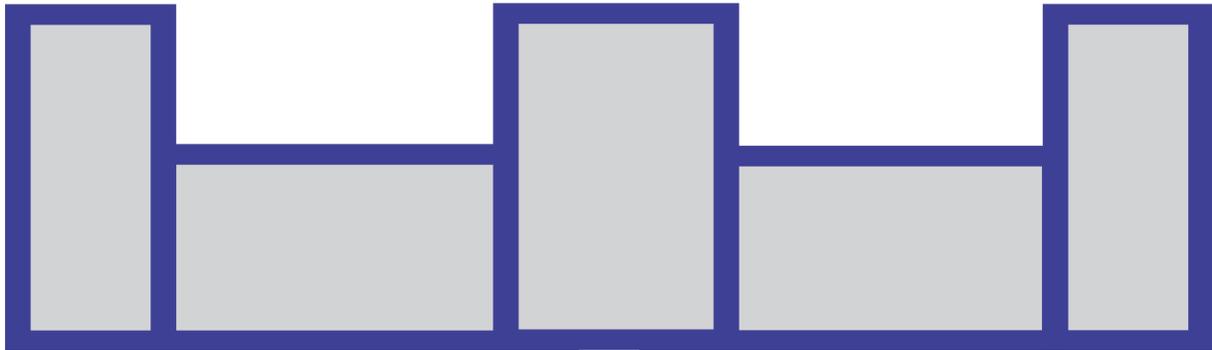




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SECOND REPORT ON MONITORING OF MEDIA  
REPORTING ON THE WORK OF THE  
PARLIAMENT

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**PARLIAMENT WATCH**

**Strengthening Political Debate  
and Deliberative Discourse**

OCTOBER 2014



## **Second report on monitoring of media reporting on the work of the Parliament (OCTOBER)**

The Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis” – Skopje (IDSCS) and the Institute for Central-Eastern Europe and the Balkans (IECOB) are monitoring the quality of the debates in the Assembly since June 2014. The monitoring is part of the project “Parliament Watch! Strengthening the political debate and deliberative discourse”, and it is financially supported by the European Union. During the monitoring, 10 monthly reports on media monitoring will be published.

The present report is the second concerning the media coverage of the work of the Assembly in the period from 1 until 31 October 2014.

The main goal of the monitoring is to reach empirical conclusions concerning the participation of the media in deliberation in the public policy making process and their role in informing the public about the content of the arguments brought about by MPs during parliamentary sessions.

In the following months, IDSCS and IECOB will produce regular reports with the basic finding from the media monitoring.

### **A. Summary**

In the period 1 – 31 October, newspapers and televisions dominantly mentioned the Assembly in the context of broader political events, the termination of the boycott by members of the Parliament from the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), and the ongoing boycott of the Assembly by the coalition led by the Social-Democratic Union for Macedonia (SDSM). The media also reported about the Assembly in the context of the beginning of the parliamentary procedure to revoke the mandates of the MPs who belong to the opposition. On the other hand, the media informed considerably less about the content of debates and the arguments brought about by MPs during plenary sessions and sessions of the parliamentary committees.

Therefore, the public was rarely informed about the events in the Assembly, topics on the agenda and the arguments brought about by the MPs in the discussion on the legislation.

In general, newspapers more than televisions published information referring to the Assembly.

The most frequent sources of information published in the media about the Assembly originated from the MPs. It is noticeable that, in October, in most of cases media information contained statements and standpoints of just one political option. In addition, the majority of pieces of information originated from active or elected MPs who belong to the opposition. In fewer cases the sources of information originated from MPs who belong to the majority.



## B. Research methodology

The monitoring of the media includes monitoring of published information that concern the work of the Assembly and its MPs in 10 media outlets with national coverage or distribution. Six of them are daily newspapers, of which four are published in Macedonian and two are published in Albanian language. The remaining four media are televisions from which two broadcast in Macedonian language and two in Albanian language. The monitoring includes the following media:

### *Newspapers*

- Dnevnik
- Utrinski Vesnik
- Vecer
- Sloboden Pecat
- Koha
- Lajm

### *Televisions*

- Sitel
- Telma
- Alsat-M
- Macedonian Radio-Television 2, Program on Albanian language.

Subject of the analysis was published information in which the Assembly, MPs, the legislation or the legislative procedure were mentioned. The analysis also includes MPs of the opposition parties who won mandates on the last elections but refused to accept them and took the decision to boycott the Assembly. Each article was analyzed with the intent to point at its genre, focus and priority of the information, and the type, number, side, and publicity of sources.

## C. Political context

According to the Constitution, the Assembly holds the legislative power and is consisted of 123 seats. The Members of the Parliament (MPs) are directly elected through proportional electoral system with a mandate of 4 years. At the last early parliamentary elections conducted in April 2014, VMRO – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity- won 61 mandates and formed a coalition government with DUI - Democratic Union for Integration- that won 19 seats. Citizens Option for Macedonia (GROM) and the National Democratic Rebirth (NDP) obtained 1 seat each. Social-Democratic Union for Macedonia (SDSM) won 34 mandates and leads the coalition in opposition in the government.

Since the beginning of the monitoring until the publication of this report most of the MPs from the main opposition coalition led by the party Social-Democratic Union for Macedonia (SDSM) that won 34 mandates on the elections boycotted the work of the Assembly. Following the incident at the

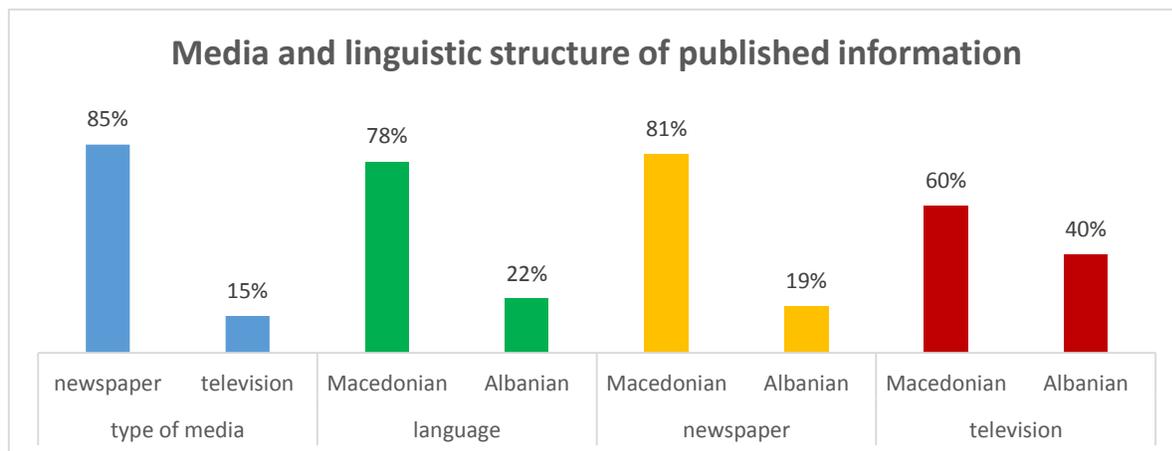


session of the Finances and budget committee on 26 August, seven MPs from the DPA also decided to boycott the work of the Assembly. However, on 18 October, DPA party authorities decided to terminate the boycott. From 20 October the DPA MPs resumed their presence and work in the Assembly. In the period from 1 to 20 October the main opposition on parliamentary session only consisted of three MPs from the opposition coalition led by SDSM who decided not to boycott the Assembly.

## D. Findings from the monitoring (1- 31 October)

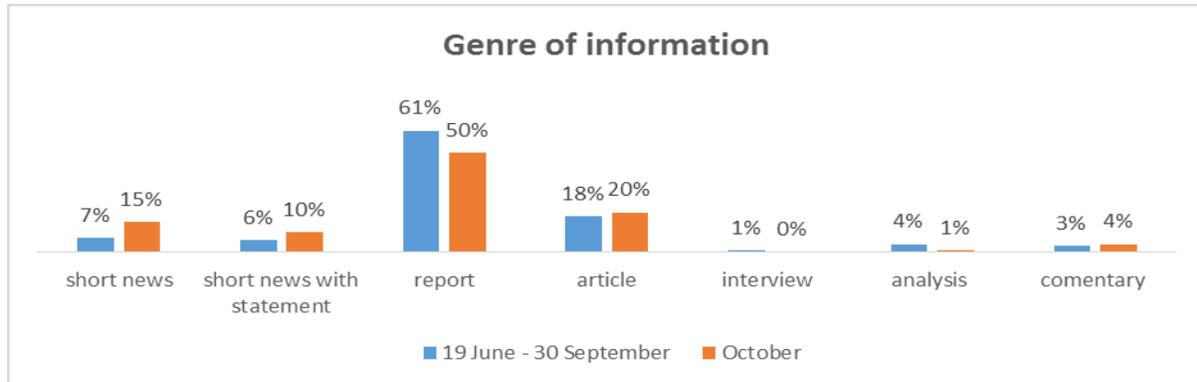
This Report covers published information in the media in the period from 1 to 31 October. A total of 103 pieces of information including articles published in national newspapers and news broadcasted by national televisions were subject of the analysis. Monitored materials can be further specified in the following way:

- According to the type of media: 85% - newspaper articles; 15% - television programs;
- Language: 78% of all information concerning the Assembly was published in Macedonian language; 22% published in Albanian language;
- Of the articles published in newspapers, 81% were newspapers in Macedonian language; 19% - published in newspapers issued in Albanian language.
- News broadcasted in televisions, 60% - broadcasted in Macedonian and 40% - broadcasted in Albanian language.



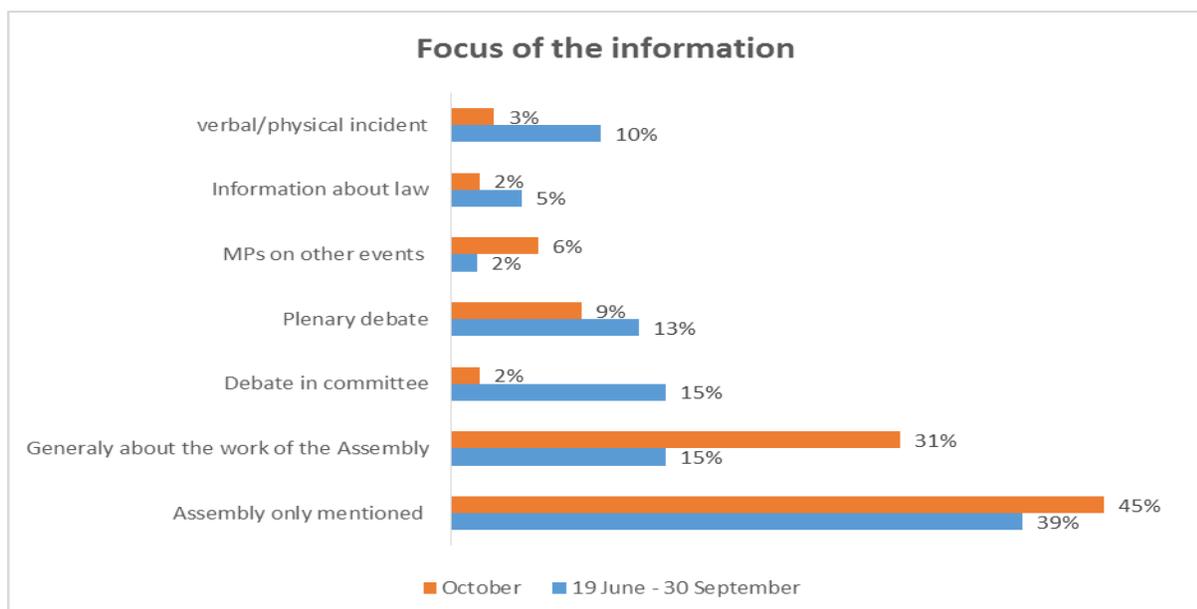
### I. Genre of information

Looking at the genre of information published in the monitored media, 50% were structured as reports and they just informed about events concerning the Assembly; 20% were informative articles and also contained analytical elements; 25% were short basic news; and 5% were analysis and comments about the events. Compared to the previous monitored period (19 June – September) this shows a decrease in the frequency of reports and increase in the frequency of short news with basic information about the events.



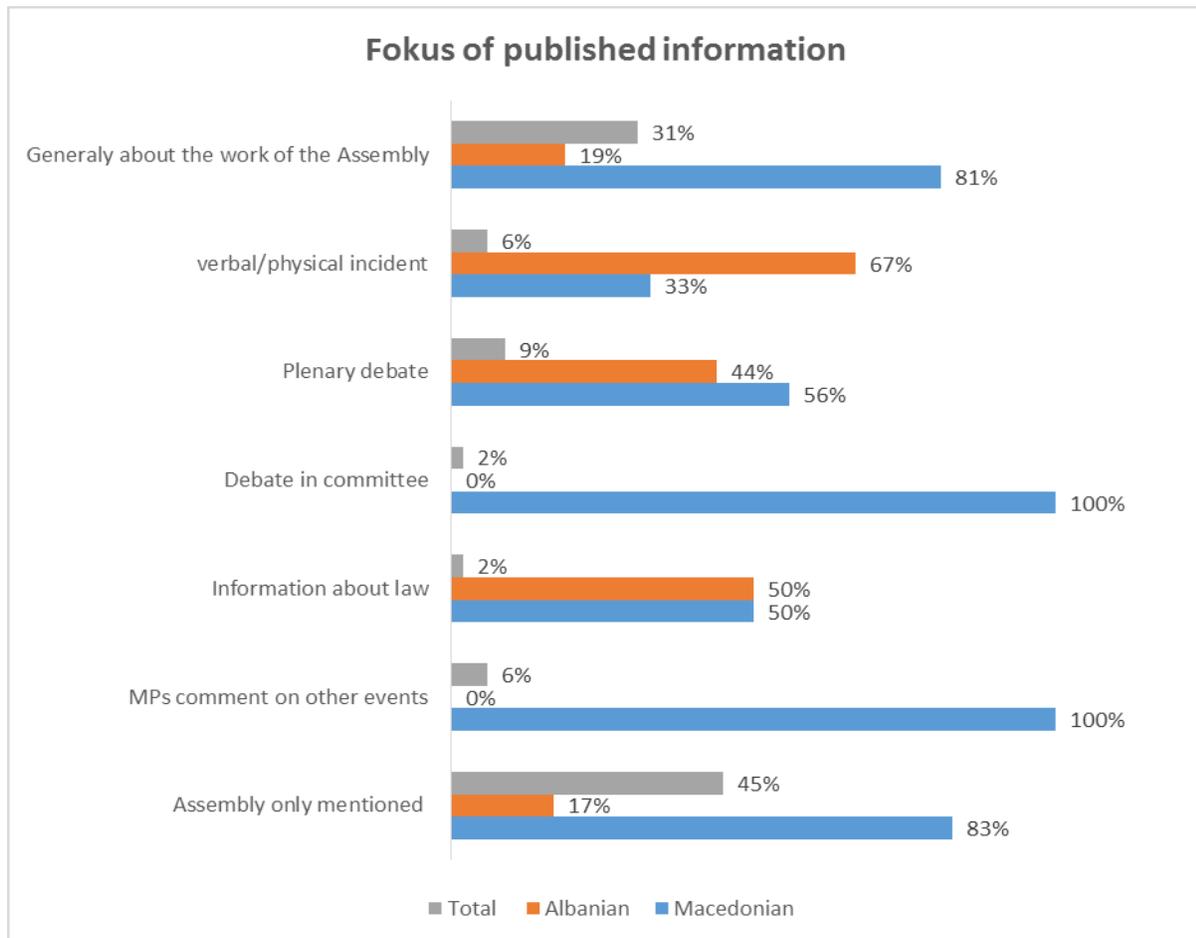
## II. Focus of the information

The monitoring of the media in October shows that, in 45% of the monitored materials, the Assembly was just mentioned and the content does not refer to any events in the Parliament, or to the work of the MPs. That is 6% more than the previous monitoring period. On second place by frequency with 31% of monitored materials were the information that recalled the work of the Assembly in general, without addressing to specific debates or arguments. That is 16% more than the previous period. On the other side, the percent of media publications that recall arguments and debates on plenary sessions and sessions of parliamentary committees declined. Such were 11% compared to 28% in the previous monitoring period. The monitoring showed that in October the media mentioned the Assembly most frequently in the context of the boycott from the opposition, and the beginning of the parliamentary procedure for revoking the mandates of the opposition MPs who have been elected but are absent.





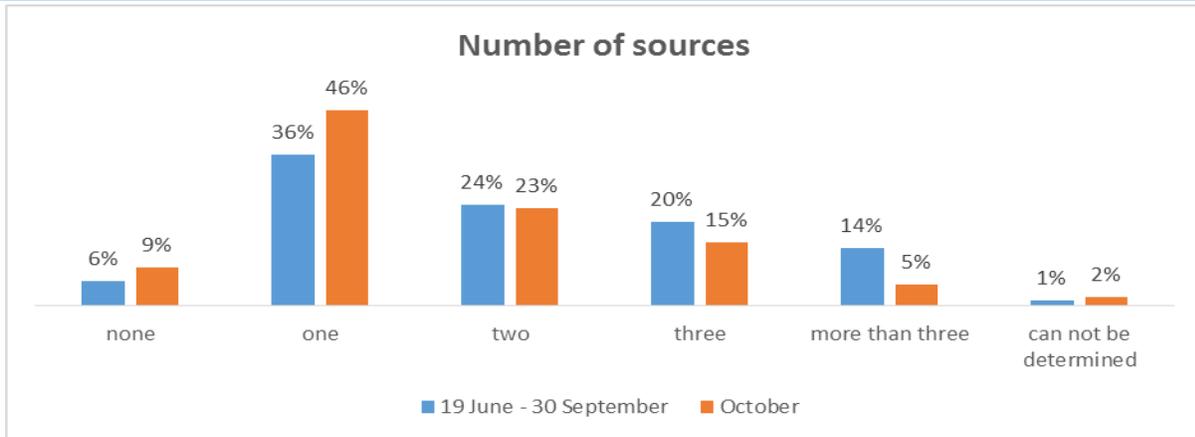
The media that publish in Macedonian language in this period published more information where the Assembly was just mentioned and information that recalled the work of the Assembly in general. Media publishing in Albanian language more frequently published information referring to the violent incident in the Assembly that happened on 26 August<sup>1</sup>.



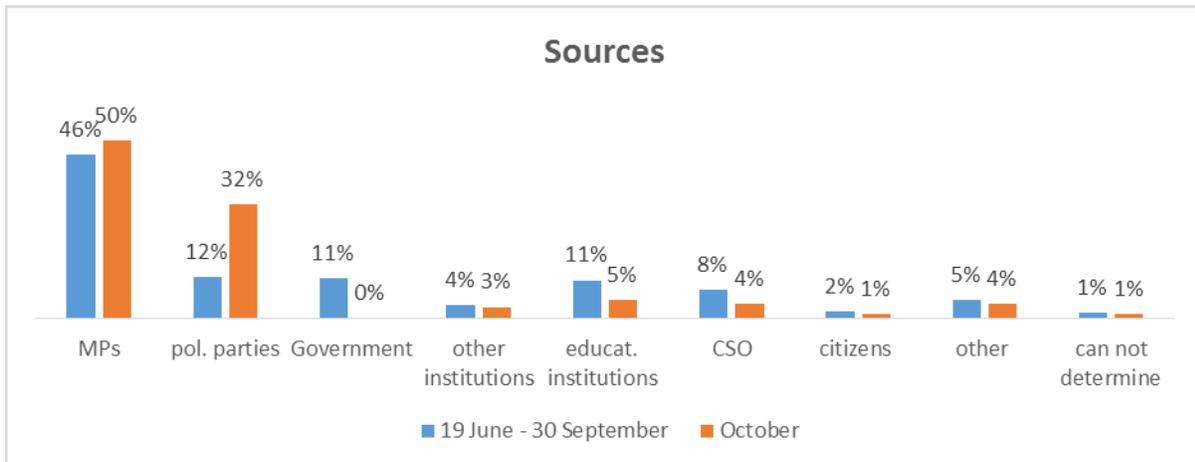
### III. Number and side of sources

The number of quoted or consulted sources varies in the monitored materials: in 46% of the cases only one source was mentioned; in 23% two sources; in 15% three sources, and in 5% more than three sources. Nine percent of published information on the Assembly did not have any quoted, consulted or named sources.

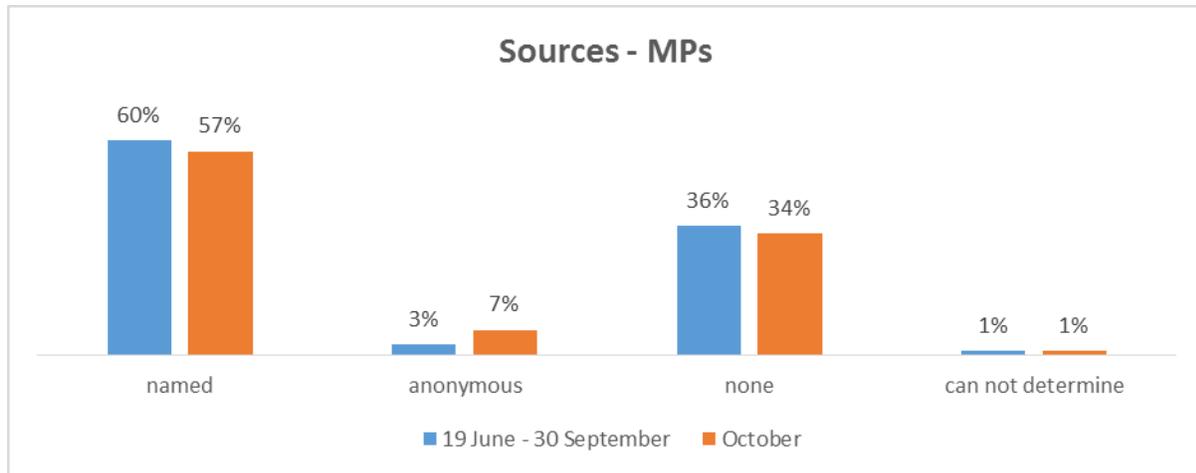
<sup>1</sup> More information about the incident in the Second monitoring report of the quality of debate in the Parliament (August-September) [http://www.idscs.org.mk/images/parliament-watchdog/Second\\_Report\\_DQI\\_ParliamentENG.pdf](http://www.idscs.org.mk/images/parliament-watchdog/Second_Report_DQI_ParliamentENG.pdf)



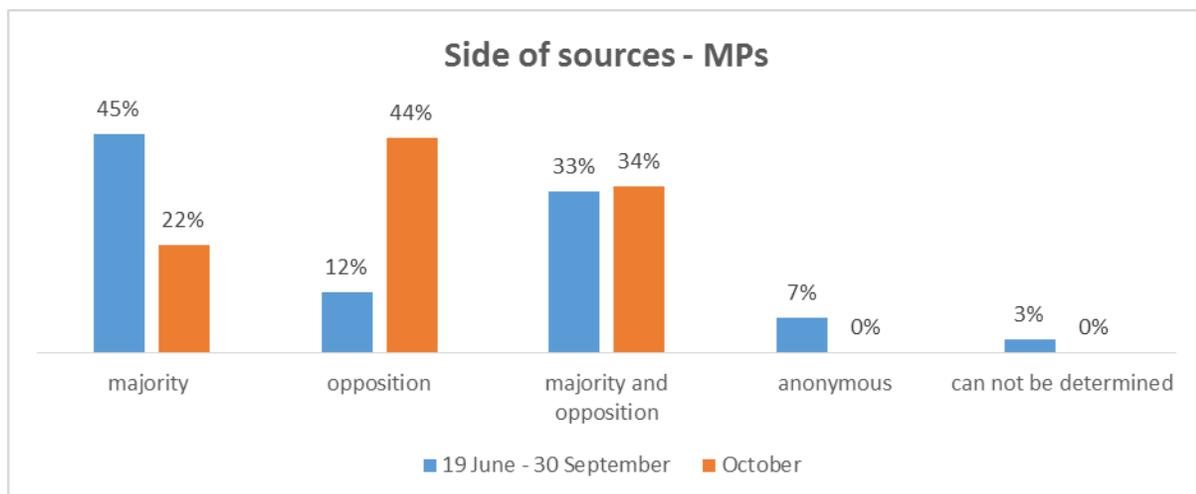
It is noticeable that the MPs are the most common used sources of information for the media concerning the Assembly (50% of the cases). It should be noticed that the monitoring considered all MPs, including those members of the opposition parties that won mandates but refused to enter the Parliament due to the decision to boycott the Assembly. On second place with 32% the sources were the political parties or their members who are not MPs or elected MPs. That is 20% more than in the previous monitoring period. Also, the monitoring showed change in the participation of Government sources in information that refer to the Assembly. In the previous monitoring period 11% of the sources were member of the Government, but in October there was not a single case. In this period also sources from educational institutions and civil society organizations were consulted much less than previously.



In 57% of published content in the media that refer to the Assembly the MPs sources were named. In October the percent of information where it was noted that the sources were MPs but their identity remained unknown increased for 4 percent.



Looking at political affiliation of the MPs who were consulted as sources of information, 66% of collected information originated from just one political option. Of this percentage, 44% were active or elected MPs from the opposition in the Parliament and 12% from the opposition. 34% of media information consulted or quoted MPs from both the majority and the opposition. In 7% of the cases MPs remained anonymous. In October the situation was reversed compared to the previous monitoring period (June-September). The media more frequently published information in which the sources were active or elected MPs from the opposition than from the majority. Besides, there was no case in which it was not clear to which political option belong the source - MP (compared with 7% in the last period).

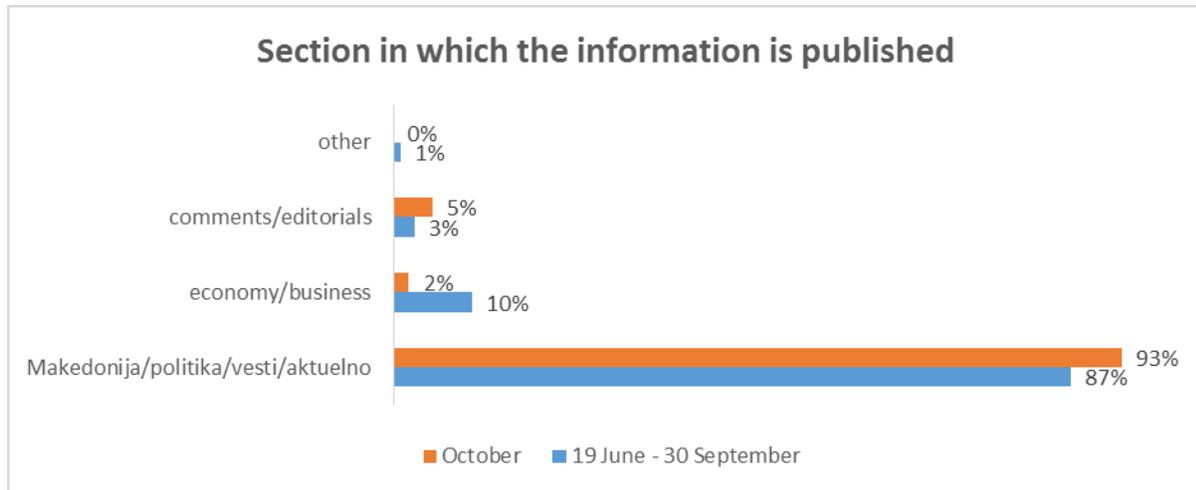


#### IV. Section in which the information is published

According to the monitoring data, 39% of published information by the media referring to the Assembly were announced on the front pages of the newspapers or in the general introduction of the



TV journals. In 61% that was not the case. Regarding to the sections where information was published, in 93% that was on the leading pages and the first parts of the TV journals in the sections “Makedonija” (Macedonia), “Politika” (Politics) , “Aktuelno” (Actuality), “Vesti” (News) etc. Information referring to the Assembly was rarely published in the business or economy sections - 2% compared to 10% in the previous period. 5% of the information was published in the comments and editorials sections of the monitored newspapers or TV journals.



Of the total number of monitored published information, 73% were signed by author, while in 27% of the cases the author was anonymous. That is 9% more than in the previous period, when 18% of information was without named author.

## E. Conclusions

- The media in October 2014 insufficiently or in just 11% of the published information referring to the Assembly reported about parliamentary debates and the arguments brought by MPs on parliamentary sessions.
- The Assembly was most frequently mentioned against the background of the wider political situation in the country, relations between the largest political parties, the opposition boycott, and the termination of the boycott by the MPs of DPA
- Media in Macedonian language published information about the Assembly more often than media in Albanian language. Again, newspapers published far more often information that refers to the Assembly than televisions.
- MPs are sources of information for most of published materials concerning the Assembly. However, they are most often from only one political option. In fewer cases sources from both the majority and the opposition appeared in the published articles.
- In the published content that had sources from only one political party, more often the sources were elected or active MPs from political parties which are part of the opposition



- Information concerning the Assembly was published in most of the cases in the form of informative reports, and to a much lesser extent in forms that contained analytical elements.
- The media consulted citizens or civil society organizations when informing on topics connected with the work of the Assembly even more rarely than in the previous monitoring period.

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