

**WHO  
MAKES THE  
NEWS?**



# **BULGARIA**

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## **Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 National Report**



## Acknowledgements



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GMMP 2010 is co-ordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), an international NGO which promotes communication for social change, in collaboration with data analyst, Media Monitoring Africa (MMA), South Africa.

The data for GMMP 2010 was collected through the collective voluntary effort of hundreds of organizations including gender and media activists, grassroots communication groups, academics and students of communication, media professionals, journalists associations, alternative media networks and church groups.



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### Global Context

- 10 November 2009 was an ordinary day at work for newsroom staff around the world. It was however a special day for groups in over 100 countries who gathered to monitor their news media. After months of planning, preparations and training, they brought the Fourth Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) to life.
- The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) is the world's longest-running and most extensive research on gender in the news media. It began in 1995 when volunteers in 71 countries around the world monitored women's presence in their national radio, television and print news. The research revealed that only 17% of news subjects – the people who are interviewed or whom the news is about – were women. It found that gender parity was 'a distant prospect in any region of the world. News [was] more often being presented by women but it [was] still rarely about women.'<sup>1</sup>
- Seventy countries participated in the Second GMMP in 2000. This and all subsequent GMMPs were coordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC). The research found a relatively static picture: only 18% of news subject were women, a statistically insignificant change over the 5-year period.<sup>2</sup>
- The Third GMMP in 2005 attracted the participation of 76 countries. Some progress in women's presence in the news was evident. 21% of news subjects were female. This 3% increase in the preceding five years was statistically significant. However, the overwhelming finding was women's continued near invisibility in the news. Very little news – just under 10% of all stories – focussed specifically on women. Women were rarely central in stories that comprised the bulk of the news agenda. Women were outnumbered by men as newsmakers in every major news topic. Expert opinion was overwhelmingly male with women comprising only 17% of experts who appeared in news stories. As newsmakers, women were under-represented in professional categories. The third GMMP found that the sex of the journalist made a difference in whether or not women made the news: there were more female news subjects in stories reported by female journalists (25%) than in stories reported by male journalists (20%).
- The First GMMP, and as will be seen, the Fourth GMMP reveal that the world reported in the news is mostly male. Overall, news stories were twice as likely to reinforce gender stereotypes rather than challenging them. News stories on gender (in)equality were almost non-existent.

### National context

- Bulgaria is a signatory to the United Nation's conventions on the rights of women including CEDAW, Convention on the Political Rights of Women, Convention against Discrimination in Education, Equal Remuneration Convention. Bulgaria is firmly committed to the principles and goals of the final documents, adopted at the UN World Conferences on Women in Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), Vienna (1993), Cairo (1994), Beijing (1995). In 2002 Bulgaria ratified the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol under this convention, regarding trafficking in human beings, especially women and children. It has also ratified the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court. Both instruments necessitate gender analysis, whether directly or indirectly. Bulgaria has also made a commitment to implement the Millennium Development Goals. The EU accession of

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<sup>1</sup> *Global Media Monitoring Project, Women's participation in the news*. National Watch on Images of Women in the Media (MediaWatch) Inc. 1995

<sup>2</sup> Spears, George and Kasia Seydegart, Erin Research. with additional analysis by Margaret Gallagher. *Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Project*. 2000

Bulgaria in 2007 enforced the introduction of the concept of equality and equal opportunities as developed within the Community, especially the establishment of institutional mechanisms for gender equality and the advancement of women. The *Law on Protection against Discrimination* (in force since January 2004), which governs the protection against all forms of discrimination including gender, aims to transpose a number of EU equality directives. Comprehensive anti-discrimination law oversees the implementation of the equality principle in labour relations, education and training as well as the protection of consumers' rights. Bulgaria has not adopted specific gender equality legislation. The *Bill on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* was prepared in 2001. However, the National Assembly has twice rejected it, both in 2002 and 2003. During 2006 the *new Draft Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* was under discussion in the 40th National Assembly. After the election in 2009 the 41st Bulgarian Parliament has not even opened discussion on the Draft Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

It is important to note that the process of introducing the standards and principles of equality and equal opportunities has its obstacles and above all the entrenched traditional gender stereotypes in Bulgarian society and the existing belief about the "already achieved equality of the two sexes". The equality of women and men and equal opportunities is recognized by the Bulgarian government and the local authorities as a strategy, but there are gaps in its implementation, especially in areas where there is a clear and long-standing discrimination of women and inequality between women and men. The necessary steps for practical achievement of gender equality should be taken by the institutions as soon as possible. The media should play a crucial role in this process. Unfortunately there are conflicting tendencies in building images of women in the Bulgarian media – from openly discriminating texts to publications ascertaining the rights of women in Bulgarian society. However the female role model and success story has been restricted so much that it has become unrecognizable. Lack of gender sensitivity and knowledge in society as a whole, lack of special legislation on equality for women and men, as well as lack of effective gender machinery regenerate gender stereotypes in everyday life and in the media images of women.

- News media remain the major and most influential source of information, ideas and opinion for most people around the world. It is a key element of the public and private space in which people, nations and societies live. A nation or society that does not fully know itself cannot respond to its citizens' aspirations. Who and what appears in the news and how people and events are portrayed matters. Who is left out and what is not covered are equally important. Across the world, the cultural underpinnings of gender inequality and discrimination against women are reinforced through the media.
- Media monitoring of the stereotypes promoted by Bulgarian media when presenting women and girls is not among the obligations of any institutions. There are a very few sporadically initiatives aimed at media monitoring of women's image conducted by NGOs. This provoked us not to lose the opportunity for Bulgaria to be part of GMMP.

## Executive Summary

The main results of GMMP in Bulgaria show that on 10 November 2010 the main topics in the news were politics and government issues. It is because of the anniversary of the collapse of communism. This topic is followed by news stories about crime and violence and the economy. Political and governmental news are reported by men while topics of crime and economy are reported mainly by female reporters. The total percentage of female news subjects is 54% of all stories. All news stories with female subjects are focused on education, birth control, medicine, health and consumer issues. Women are subjects in news also in topics like economic crises and economy. In the light of forthcoming local elections in Bulgaria three stories presented women candidates for local parliaments. Print media presented women as subjects in the news stories in 73%, but in contrast radio presented female stories in 22% and TV in 32%.

Women are subjects in 54% of all stories; 69% of spokespersons are women. But as experts women appeared only in 34%. Women are more often eyewitnesses and victims of crime and violence. News stories are almost three times more likely to reinforce gender stereotypes than to challenge them. 25% of all news stories challenge gender stereotypes, while 69% of news stories reinforce gender stereotypes.

## A DAY IN THE NEWS IN BULGARIA

- On 10 November 2009 Bulgaria celebrated 20 years after the collapse of communism. This historical moment in the latest history of Bulgaria was in the top news in all the mass media and was discussed from historical and political points of view by politicians, artists, academicians, former political leaders, journalists, and citizens. Giving the voice exclusively to men – politicians and governmental officials, the media did not present women's opinion about the historical changes in Bulgaria. In addition, there was no discussion of how the political change 20 years ago influenced women's everyday life and gender equality.
- The collapse of communism 20 years ago was presented on public television by one woman sharing her memories about the lack of foods for babies and small children and the difficulties of being a mother during the period of transition. This woman wasn't presented by her profession; she was presented as a mum of three children who had experienced a very difficult period being the mother of a small baby 20 years ago.

## THE CONTEXT

### Country background:

The Bulgarian public enjoys a rich *print media* (app. 500 newspapers and 800 magazines and bulletins). The two dailies with largest circulation are TRUD /Labour/ and 24 CHASSA /24 Hours/, both owned by one corporation – WAZ. Nowadays, two national institutions regulate the electronic media – Council for Electronic Media and Communications Regulations Commission. They issue radio and TV licenses and register cable and satellite broadcasters. Radio broadcasting in Bulgaria was a state monopoly right from the very beginning of its existence (in 1932) and until 1991 there was only one central broadcasting station and five regional stations. After the political changes (November, 1989) the first private radio stations went on the air. Currently public enjoys more than 600,000 hours of programming, more than twelve times the number of hours broadcast in 1988. The local radio stations had developed a clear-cut public profile. Telecasting in Bulgaria first started in 1959. The first private TV station broadcasting locally was launched in 1994. In 1999 Rupert Murdoch's Balkan News Corporation became the first private TV operator functioning on a national level. Nowadays a total of more than 200 television and more than 150 radio channels were licensed for delivery to the public. The TV market includes 3 national TV channels (BNT, bTV, Nova TV) and 2 national radio stations broadcast on-air (BNR – with 3 different programs, Daric radio)

- **Media monitored:**

#### NEWSPAPERS:

*National* - TRUD, 24 HOURS, SEGA, ATAKA

*Regional* - STRUMA

**TV:** bTV, EVROPA

**RADIO:** BNR – HORIZONT PROGRAM, BNR – HRISTO BOTEV PROGRAM, DARIC radio

- **The monitors:**

4 people monitored 112 news stories

## TOPICS IN THE NEWS

- **Topics in the news:**

The main topics in the news were Politics and government which linked to 20 years anniversary of the collapse of communism /80% of all TV news, 40% of Radio and 18% of printed media/. Crime and violence topic was in second place - 30% in print and 20% of radio stations. A topic on economy had 20% in TV and 13% in radio and print mass media. Social and legal topic had 27% and science and health topic 20%. There was no news on the girl-child.

Topics on Economy and Crime and violence have been reported by females - 100%. Female reporters on social and legal topic are 80% and 75% are female reporters on Celebrity, Arts and Media, and Sport. 52% are female reporters on politics and government and 50% are female reporters on science and health.

- **Overall presence of women and men in the news in Bulgaria as news subjects, reporters and presenters:** In 69% women are the subjects in crime and violence news. 69% of political and governmental news have men as subjects. In 73% women are subjects of news focused on economy, science and health, and social and legal issue.
- **Presence of female and male news subjects by medium:**  
**Print** – 73% of all news in print have female news subjects and 27% (or 18 of total number of news) presence of male stories.  
 In contrast Radio and TV present another picture of female and male news subjects in Bulgaria:  
**Radio** - 71% male and 22% female stories, and **TV** – 68% male and 32% female.
- **News Sources:** The total percentages of female news subjects is 54% of all stories. They are distributed as follow: 58% - local, 51% - national, 61% - national an other, and 65% - international. The total number of male news subjects is 52 or 46%: local – 42%, national – 49%, national and other – 39%, and 35% international news.

In 100% the female news subjects are in stories focused on education, birth control, medicine, health and consumer issues. Women are subjects in news also in topics like economic crises and economy. In the light of the forthcoming local elections in Bulgaria, three stories presented women candidates for local parliaments.

- **Who are the newsmakers?**

While men are mainly presented as police or military representatives (100%), or governmental officials (58%), sportspersons or players (100%), media professionals and journalists (100%), women are mainly presented as office or service workers (100%), labourers (100%), retired persons/pensioners (100%) or artists/singers (58%). In 67% women are villagers or residents engaged in unspecified occupations.

- **Function of female and male news subjects:**

Women are subjects in 54% of all stories, and 69% of spokespersons are women. But as experts women appeared in 34% and mainly women appeared as eyewitnesses giving testimony (67%).

- **Constructing ‘victims’ in the news**

Women are portrayed as victims in 72% of the stories. They are in the position of victims of domestic violence by husbands/partners in 80% and in 100% women are presented as victims of robbery or murder.

- **Identity and family status in the news:**

In 30% of all cases women are identified by family status while men are identified by family status in 6% of stories.

In all cases of identification by family status the reporting was done by female reporters/ announcers.

- **Images in the news:** Female news subjects appeared in 33% while men were in 39% of all photographs.

## WHO DELIVERS THE NEWS?

- **Overall Presenters.** Presenters in broadcasting are 72% female and 28% male. Compared with the European rate it is almost the same.
- **Age of presenters and reporters:** The overall age of female TV announcers / reporters is 35 – 49, followed by announcers in ages 50 – 64.
- **Announcers:** Female news announcers in radio are 60% and 75% are women announcers on TV. Respectively men announcers are 40% in radio and 25% on TV.
- 67% of all stories are announced by female. 75% of stories on television were announced by women and 60% of stories on radio.

- Local and national stories are announced by women (100% for local and 64% for national stories), but 100% of international stories are announced by men.
- In most of the major stories about economy, social and legal topics, as well as on the topic of crime and violence TV and radio announcers are women (100%). Topics about politics and government are announced in 55% by men.
- **Reporters.**
- Women reporters are more (74%) than men reporters. Female radio reporters are 83%, in print media and TV women reporters are 72% and 71%.
- Local and national stories are presented by female reporters in 78 and 72%. Female reporters for foreign stories are 75%
- Major story topics reported by female reporters are economy, crime and violence, celebrity and arts. While men reporters reported mainly about politics and government.
- News stories by female reporters have considerably more female news subjects than stories by male reporters. 93% of news subjects in stories by female reporters are female, compared to 65% of news subjects in stories by male reporters

## GENDER AND THE NEWS

- **Sex of reporters in stories with women as a central focus:** 100% of stories with women as central focus are reported by female reporters.
- Main topics of stories with women as a central focus are on women electoral candidates, judicial system, gender roles and relations and beauty contest, fashion and models. In second place are stories on women about births and marriages, arts and entertainment and on the last position with 6% are stories on domestic politics and local news.
- **Stories that highlight issues of gender equality or inequality issues:** There is no news stories highlight issues of gender equality/inequality. Even in stories about women candidates for elections there is no hint about equality or information/analysis about women's participation at political/governmental level.

There is a news story about a woman who killed her newborn baby. The story provides information about the age of the mother; about her family status (married) and that she is unemployed. The reporter also mentioned the eventual mental problems of that woman and her responsibility for carrying a baby. But there is no any word about the responsibility of the father of the baby; he is not mentioned in the story.

- **Challenging or reinforcing stereotypes?** News stories are almost three times more likely to reinforce gender stereotypes than to challenge them. One fourth (25%) of all news stories challenge gender stereotypes, while 69% of news stories reinforce gender stereotypes.
- In 44% of stories that challenge stereotypes reporters are women. Men reporters presenting such stories are 37%.

## GENDER AND JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE

N/A

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The main results of GMMP show that although there are high percentages of female announcers/reporters, Bulgarian mass media present women mainly in relation to everyday life and personal life and in relation to the family. In 69% of the news stereotypes are promoted about women and men. When the woman is presented as an object of any policy or strategy at national/local level it is always in relation to her family and children, but not to her professional life. Presentation of women candidates for local elections always begins with her marital status, the number of children she has and her age, followed eventually by information about her profession, abilities and the political program she presents. Very often, especially in the cases of female singers the presentation starts with her position as the mistress of someone who is very famous or very rich. Very rarely is the professional success of a woman celebrated. Even publications related to specific women popular in the public domain actually stress their beauty, friends, partners, femininity.

## NEXT FIVE YEARS

For the first time Bulgaria took part in GMMP and results of the national media monitoring give a picture about gender sensitivity and gender awareness of Bulgarian mass media. It is clear that the media need to change their way of presenting women and men and to be more sensitive and more knowledgeable about gender issues. Media organizations have to adopt and implement policies aimed at achieving gender balance in news stories. One of the first steps Bulgarian mass media have to take is to conduct monitoring of how many women and men appear in the news and how women and men are portrayed in the stories. Civil society, universities and other institutions could play a crucial role in this process of changing stereotypes. Organization of public discussions on the topic of gender equality will contribute to the elimination of gender-stereotypical reporting and to the transformation desired. Representation by civil society in institutions that regulate media is necessary. The regulatory institutions have to conduct daily gender monitoring of news and to present the results to the media and the public.



## Annex 1. Methodology

Each participating country was assigned a specific number of newspapers, and radio and television newscasts to monitor based on the national media density. This was done to ensure that global results would reliably reflect the distribution of the world's news media, while respecting the need to balance results from smaller countries with those of larger countries. The number and selection of media outlets monitored in each country reflects the density and diversity – audience, ownership, language – of media in each country.

Efforts were made to ensure a uniform understanding and application of the methodology across the world. Clear instructions on how to code were provided. Some regional and national coordinators benefited from face-to-face or virtual training while others and the broader global teams of volunteers developed skills in monitoring through online self-administered tutorials. In one region, national coordinators were trained by the regional coordinator via teleconference. In some countries, national coordinators provided advance training to volunteer monitoring groups.

In each country monitors coded the most important television and radio newscasts of the day in their entirety. For newspapers, 12 to 14 stories appearing on the main news pages – defined as the pages devoted to national, international and, in some cases, regional news – were coded. Internet news was included for the first time in the global monitoring on a pilot basis in a few countries selected on the basis of the importance of the Internet as a news source for local news consumers.

The quantitative research captured statistical data on news topics, women and men in the news, the types of news stories in which they appeared, and their function in the news. Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) in South Africa was responsible for the quantitative analysis.

An in-depth and more nuanced analysis of selected news stories examined the means, themes and patterns of gender in the news. This qualitative analysis took into account the role of story angle, language and visual representations in constructing and sustaining or challenging gender stereotypes.

A full discussion of the methodology, including considerations on reliability, accuracy and limitations, is contained in the global report *Who Makes the News? The Global Media Monitoring Project 2010*.

## **Annex 2. List of Monitors**

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