**“Fighting Discrimination in Russia through Tolerant and Inclusive Reporting”**

**RESEARCH REPORT**

*This research is part of the project, which aspires to contribute to greater freedom of expression for all viewpoints in Russian society, and to promote equality and fight discrimination, by equipping journalists with the skills to report ethically and inclusively on ethnic and racial diversity. Conducted in the second half of 2013 in four Russian regions, our study was aimed at better understanding if and how regional media is portraying migrants, and ethnic, gender and vulnerable groups. Are media outlets contributing to discriminatory stereotypes and discriminatory discourse or are they efficiently counter-acting? How can reporting be made more inclusive in places where freedom of press is limited, where self-censorship is more than common and where social tensions are growing?*

1. **METHODOLOGY NOTES**

The purpose of this research is to study the media situation in four Russian regions in order to get a fair assessment of the regional media coverage of vulnerable groups (migrants, ethnic groups, minority groups, etc).

Research question:

* Does the media coverage in the four regions project discriminatory stereotypes and create discriminatory discourse when portraying migrants, marginal/vulnerable groups? (If so, how to address this issue?)

The research employed qualitative methods. All monitors received specific training before September 2013.

Each regional monitor chose 10 media outlets (including online media) that reflect the media structure in the region. Additionally they selected a daily regional TV news program shown at prime time.

The field stage of monitoring was conducted between 5th September and 18th of September 2013 simultaneously in all regions initially approved for this project: Dagestan, Stavropol krai, Saratov oblast, Sverdlovsk oblast.

After two weeks of monitoring, the regional experts coded the data (content), and identified major themes and topics where vulnerable and marginal groups were mentioned; they assessed the frequency, style and tone of these articles and analyzed them for hate speech elements.

While interpreting the results, the monitors also conducted 5 semi-structured interviews with thematic experts on the media, discrimination, and vulnerable groups in their regions.

Based on this information, regional reports were compiled. All important data pieces were scanned and passed to the research coordinator. Aggregated data was analyzed for trends, similarities and differences in the four regions, to be found in this report. The report is accompanied by a set of recommendations to stakeholders, and is publicized on the MDI website.

1. **REGIONAL MEDIA PROFILES AND CONTEXTS**

The four regions selected for monitoring represent quite different economic, political and societal modes within Russia (on certain indicators they may not even be fully comparable). This section of the report is provided to help better contextualize regional specifics and explain some of the recent events that might have influenced the regional communities and media.

An obvious example of such an event that had the potential to affect the media’s behavior is the regional and municipal elections held on September 8, 2013.

**Dagestan**

The North Caucasian Republic of Dagestan, with a population close to 3m, is one of the most ethnically diverse and turbulent regions in Russia[[1]](#footnote-1).

This region in many ways stands out from the other three Russian regions studied and also forms a unique informational agenda for the regional and local media[[2]](#footnote-2).

The media outlets in Dagestan are developed, but not too numerous due to both the economic situation and regional specifics.

RGVK Dagestan, a leading regional TV channel (one of two local TV stations), has been around for 10 years. It has received support from Dagestan’s regional budget as has its associate 24/7 radio station “Radio gor” (“Radio of the Mountains”). A few local radio stations are available as well as a number of national state and commercial radio stations. On a par with national and regional papers in Russian, over 40 local (“rayon”) newspapers are published in the 14 indigenous languages spoken in Dagestan. These are mostly funded by the municipalities (the majority are also online thanks to regional administration funding)[[3]](#footnote-3).

According to the North Caucasus Federal District’s head Alexander Khloponin, the republics of North Caucasus receive record subsidies from the local administrations, compared to the rest of Russia. Thus, Ingushetia authorities spend 777 rubles per person annually to this end (around 24 USD), Kabardino-Balkaria – 200 rubles, Dagestan – 190, etc[[4]](#footnote-4).

In 2010, the Glasnost Defense foundation rated Dagestan’s media as relatively free[[5]](#footnote-5), and the media in the region remains more independent than in other North Caucasus regions.

However, the broader socio-economic and political dynamics and the controversy in the region have affected the journalistic community and their work. In July 2012, Akhmednabi Akhmednabiev, deputy chief editor of a leading independent weekly “*Novoe Delo*” was killed, just seven months after the killing of Gadzhimurad Kamalov, founder and publisher of another Dagestani newspaper, *Chernovik*, which was well known for its editorial independence and investigative reporting”[[6]](#footnote-6).

According to the project’s regional expert Elena Denisenko, the local media largely tend to ignore economic and land disputes and allow little coverage of low income groups’ economic grievances. Just a few private media outlets are working independently and present critical views, while the majority ‘goes with the flow’, uncritically reproducing official news and views, and avoiding the most sensitive issues in Dagestan.

For example, the state-controlled media (especially TV channels) do not cover the abductions of civilians - sadly, this issue persists in Dagestan. Little attention is paid to the conditions of the ethnic minorities living in villages of Khrakh-Uba and Ourian-Uba[[7]](#footnote-7). What’s more, migration-related issues and migrant rights are absent from the local media news agenda, though these issues are commonly acknowledged as topical. Given this context, it is very rare for the regional media to engage in coverage of wider diversity issues.

In addition, during the field stage of the research several issues affected regional news making choices:

* regional / gubernatorial elections in Dagestan[[8]](#footnote-8);
* The first day of Unity of the peoples of Dagestan on 16 September (launched in 2013),
* Exhibition of religious objects and memorabilia associated with the Prophet Mohamed,
* Meeting of Dagestan’s head of administration with the Sufi and Salafi communities, the second attempt at a peaceful dialogue between Muslim communities[[9]](#footnote-9).

In terms of broader informational framework such as issues like persisting violence and social insecurity, Moscow’s attention due to the upcoming Sochi Olympics should be also taken into account when assessing local journalism context[[10]](#footnote-10).

**Stavropol**

Stavropol Krai[[11]](#footnote-11) is an ethnically diverse and economically dynamic region with a population of 2,786, and is Russia’s gateway to the North Caucasus[[12]](#footnote-12). Since 2010 Stavropol krai has been part of the newly drawn North Caucasian Federal district, along with Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia etc. Stavropol krai therefore is the only region in the federal district where ethnic Russians[[13]](#footnote-13) comprise the majority.

There are 415 mass media outlets registered in Stavropol krai, including 186 newspapers, 96 radio and 52 TV channels/stations and 3 news agencies[[14]](#footnote-14). **According to ratings by the "Medialogia" agency for autumn 2013, TV channel GTRK “Stavropolye” and newspapers “Vechernyi Stavropol” and “Komsomolskaya Pravda – Stavropol” are the three media brands that are most cited by other media**[[15]](#footnote-15)[[16]](#footnote-16)**.**

During the monitoring period, many processes within inner regional political dynamics were “on hold” due to the expected appointment of the new governor of Stavropol krai[[17]](#footnote-17). On September 27, Vladimir Putin terminated Valery Zarenkov as krai governor and made a new appointment. Vladimir Vladimirov, previously first deputy of the governor of Yamal[[18]](#footnote-18) region, became acting head of the region.

Like most Russian regions, Stavropol held municipal elections on September 8, 2013 (24 municipalities). The election as a news item was largely ignored by the local media - as well as many voters, with voter turn-out ranging from 65.77% to just 8.77%. As the project’s local expert Ella Maiboroda noted, the campaign was quite uneventful so the news about upcoming equipment for Stavropol’s polling stations with ramps became quite big in the media.

September also marks the start of term in Russian educational institutions. For Stavropol krai this period is associated with the potential for increased local conflict due to the influx of new students, often coming from culturally different[[19]](#footnote-19) settings and requiring time to adapt.

On September 10, the then governor held a meeting with local law-enforcement agencies. He was quoted as saying: “There are lots of newcomers to the region, including the first-year students who have just started their adaptation to their new situation. I trust <student> hooligans should be expelled from colleges and universities with no indulgence”[[20]](#footnote-20). All the local media paid attention and published the quote and related material.

There were, indeed, a few minor conflicts reported in the local press. However, these were successfully handled and their conflict and violence potential was minimised.

According to 2012-2013 research by Stavropol krai’s regional government unit and SKFU, the North Caucasus Federal University[[21]](#footnote-21), inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions are no longer among the population’s top concerns (compared to 2005-2010). Currently people are mostly preoccupied with the socio-economic situation and corruption (48,5%), taxes and inflation (46,5%), unemployment (38,6%), the rising crime rate (34,9%), and housing and maintenance related issues (32,8%).

Traditionally, ethnicity related issues (and tensions) are more topical, acute and articulated for the region than religious ones[[22]](#footnote-22). Surprisingly, migration gets a low rating in this research, which could be explained by a combination of three factors:

* Changing nature of regional migration (Stavropol is no longer migrants’ final destination, but rather a point of transit);
* Adjustment to the migration levels and the role of migrants in the regional economy,
* Growing disappointment in the failure to fight corruption (disappointments used to be directly translated into xenophobia and anti-migrant sentiment).

Indeed, Stavropol’s strategic geographic position also means that the region is watched closely by the federal center (not just because it is an important agricultural area, but because it provides strategic connections within the region). In the light of the upcoming Olympic games in Sochi one can also expect tightened control of the media and of information flows within the region.

In this regard, let us note that two months after the monitoring, on 21 November 2013 Stavropol krai hosted an all-Caucasus forum “Contemporary media on contemporary Caucasus”[[23]](#footnote-23). Alexander Khloponin, head of the NC Federal District, spoke of Caucasus’ negative image in the broader Russian media and the need for improvement. Khloponin also announced the availability of funding for the media to cover the region’s pressing issues, such as interaction between “the East” and “the West”[[24]](#footnote-24).

**Saratov region**

Saratov region, with a population of 2.5m and as one of the “Volga regions”, is an important crossroads for the European part of Russia[[25]](#footnote-25). Saratov has traditionally been ethnically diverse, active in trade, but politically rather traditionalist.

The Glasnost Defense Foundation experts rate Saratov region’s press as “relatively free” (with no regions in the country where the press is free)[[26]](#footnote-26).

Over 700 mass media outlets are registered in Saratov region, some 200 are actively operating[[27]](#footnote-27). Every third media outlet was founded by the regional or local authorities, the rest are private and corporate media. **Saratov’s oblast three most cited media all operate online. These are the news agencies “Vzglyad-info” and “Versiya-Saratov”, and an internet newspaper “Chetvertaya vlast” (4vsar.ru), according to “Medialogia” rankings**[[28]](#footnote-28)**.**

Our monitoring period coincided with election day - three additional deputies to the regional duma (parliament) were elected in Saratov. The press mainly reported on procedural aspects and the factual side of the election, including criticism of the election committees at polling stations where violations occurred. However, as in the three other regions studied, the election did not trigger any substantive discussion in the media on matters of public interest.

On 12 September 2013 the majority of the regional press reported on a street fight – it was commonly portrayed as a conflict between an informal local anti-migrant group called “Russkie probezhki” (“Russian Runs”) and several men from Caucasus (“migrants”). This event became the central episode for the project’s monitoring in Saratov and a litmus test for the regional media reflecting hate-based violence.

September 11 was a holiday in Saratov, and a crowd, including some activists of the “Russian Runs” (RR), gathered at the city’s Teatralnaya Square to celebrate the occasion. According to media reports, two “men from the Caucasus” verbally assaulted RR members which later led to a street fighting involving dozens of RRs and 30-40 Caucasian youths under 30. Alexey Mokrousov, one of the RR activists, was injured as a result of this incident.

The conflict around the “Russian Runs” provoked an outburst of enmity manifested in heated discussion online (the project’s regional expert Lidia Zlatogorskaya included analysis of the forum comments in her report). Though media outlets were also prone to hate speech rhetoric, it was the forums which demonstrated the harshest reactions, including calls for violence.

Over the next few day Saratov saw a group of young people marching down the central street with anti-Chechen posters. Also, several youths occupied a tram stop and prevented all the “non-Slavic-looking” passengers from boarding the tram. Three of those young men were identified and charged with an administrative offence. Though parties in the conflict met and were eventually reconciled, the online discussion kept evolving.

The media also presented the events of September 11, 2013 as a continuation of the unrest in Pugachev, a town 250 km from Saratov.

The so-called “uprising” in Pugachev drew a lot of attention to Saratov region – both from local and national media. In July 2013, a 20-year-old ethnic Russian Ruslan Marzhanov was killed in Pugachev. Allegedly, the offenders were Chechens. Following Marzhanov’s killing a crowd of locals protested, calling for an investigation[[29]](#footnote-29). They blocked the federal highway, rallied and attempted arson of the café “Halal”[[30]](#footnote-30). The suspects were swiftly arrested and put on trial – three of them were ethnic Chechens residing in the region, one was visiting from Chechnya[[31]](#footnote-31).

The regional authorities insisted that the conflict was not fuelled by ethnic hatred. However, no deep analysis and broad public discussion followed.

**Sverdlovsk region and Yekaterinburg**

Sverdlovsk region (or Sverdlovsk oblast[[32]](#footnote-32)[[33]](#footnote-33), population 4.5m) is a major Russian region in the Urals, highly industrialized, economically vibrant. The region’s capital is Yekaterinburg[[34]](#footnote-34), one of the four biggest cities in Russia along with Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Novosibirsk.

Yekaterinburg is one of the hubs of Russia’s media industry, a thriving media market that produces for regional consumption. There are eight regional TV channels and a number of regional news agencies, as well as staff writers or separate offices for major federal media (such as “Ekho Moskvy - Yekaterinburg”[[35]](#footnote-35), etc). Newspapers are few and compete with multiple online media sites.

**The three most frequently cited media in the region in the autumn of 2013, according to “Medialogia” agency, are online resources: Znak.com**, and the news agencies **URA.ru and Interfax-Urals**[[36]](#footnote-36)[[37]](#footnote-37)**.** Interestingly, Znak.com reached the top of chart just 9 months after its launch.

In 2010, Sverdlovsk region was one of 19 “relatively free” Russian regions out of 83, according to the Glasnost Defense Foundation. Nevertheless, in 2012 the regional administration was criticized for making the accreditation procedures stricter than federal ones[[38]](#footnote-38). In 2013 local education authorities sparked some controversy over their ban of Halloween celebrations in educational institutions[[39]](#footnote-39).

The monitoring period coincided with the final days of the election campaign and the actual election day for the mayor of Yekaterinburg.

The outcome of the election was rather surprising: the mayor’s seat was won by the opposition candidate, Evgeniy Roizman[[40]](#footnote-40) who represented the “Civil Platform” party[[41]](#footnote-41). Recently victories of opposition candidates have been extremely rare in Russia[[42]](#footnote-42).

Roizman has a highly controversial and rich political biography, he is a notable figure in the Urals’ political life. Between 2003-2007 Roizman served a term as an MP[[43]](#footnote-43) in the Russian State Duma, or lower house of parliament. Since then he has been active in the Russian social and political scene as a founder of the “Gorod Bez Narkotikov” foundation (“A City Without Drugs”)[[44]](#footnote-44), a group that has been using dubious methods to treat drug addicts, and lately as a blogger.

In 2013 Roizman’s name also regularly came up in connection with the case of Aksana Panova, an editor of the website[[45]](#footnote-45) Znak.com and a head of Roizman’s election campaign. Panova currently faces 15 years in prison on economic charges. Many believe these are in retaliation for Panova’s criticism of corruption under the current governor, Evgeniy Kuivashev.

According to the project’s regional monitor Nurzida Bensgiyer[[46]](#footnote-46), there was almost no debate on the election’s political component, despite an unusual outcome. However, all the tensions seem to have been projected onto migration-related issues (characteristic for this campaign nation-wide).

The Urals region has traditionally been ethnically diverse (indigenous peoples, Turkic groups, etc.). In recent years, being an economically active area, it has experienced a lot of migration. Thus, issues of migration, migrants’ adaptation (and – implicitly and explicitly) xenophobia towards migrants have become central to the region’s social and political agenda[[47]](#footnote-47).

Anti-migrant sentiment in the region is strong and common[[48]](#footnote-48). In 2011-2012 the region saw a few major conflicts that were generally viewed as inter-ethnic and gained nation-wide attention (mass disturbances in the village of Sagra[[49]](#footnote-49), fighting between a group of Azeris and locals in the village of Makhnevo, the severe beating of 16 people in “Khalva” café). Media coverage of those events in many instances was partial and imbalanced. Afterwards, the regional administration and NGOs initiated several training courses for journalists on ethnicity and conflict.

1. **MEDIA MONITORED IN FOUR REGIONS**

Over the course of the monitoring 29 regional newspapers, 10 websites (news agencies, online media sources) and 4 TV prime time daily news programmes were studied. Altogether 19 out of 39 newspapers and websites are daily, 17 are weeklies, 4 follow a different cycle (bi-weekly, 4 times a week, etc). Ten out of 39 media outlets work under the supervision of the regional or municipal authorities, 21 are independent, 8 are regional supplements of the national newspapers (these can be also affiliated with the state-run holdings).The newspapers’ circulation varies from 2,501 to 70,000 copies (with a mean circulation of 14,175 and total one-time circulation of 411,805 copies). All the TV news programmes observed were produced by regional TV channels that are part of state-run TV corporations.

Total number of entries analyzed during the monitoring: 300 per four regions.

**Dagestan**

In Dagestan the sample of media monitored included 8 newspapers, 2 websites, 1 TV programme:

* “Chernovik” newspaper[[50]](#footnote-50) / «Черновик» (weekly, independent outlet, circ. 13,423),
* “Novoe delo” newspaper / «Новое дело» (weekly, independent, circ. 20,202),
* “Мolodezh Dagestana” newspaper /«Молодёжь Дагестана» (weekly, government funded, circ. 3,516),
* “Nastoyastchee vremya” newspaper / Настоящее время» (weekly, independent, circ. 4,590),
* “Svobodnaya respublika” newspaper / «Свободная республика», (weekly, independent, circ. 2,501)
* “Dagestanskaya Pravda” /«Дагестанская правда» (daily on weekdays, government funded, circ.7,384),
* “Moskovsky Komsomolets v Dagestane”, also known as MK / «Московский комсомолец в Дагестане» (weekly, regional supplement to a national tabloid, circ. 8,200),
* “Delovoi Kizlyar” newspaper / «Деловой Кизляр» (weekly, independent, circ. 4,217)
* “Caucasian Knot” website / «Кавказский Узел» (independent resource with a strong human rights agenda),
* “AiF in Dagestan” website/ «АИФ в Дагестане» (regional section of national daily tabloid),
* RGVK television news / телеканал РГВК (government funded).

**Stavropol**

The media outlets monitored within the framework of this project:

* “Stavropolskaya Pravda” («Ставропольская правда», regional government’s weekly; circ. 10, 094).
* “Stavropolskie Gubernskie Vedomosti” («Ставропольские губернские ведомости», regional weekly; circ. 10,000).
* “Vecherniy Stavropol” («Вечерний Ставропроль», regional daily; circ. 11,385).
* “Otkrytaya. Dlya vsekh I kazhdogo” («Открытая. Для всех и каждого», “Otkrytaya”, an independent local weekly; circ. 13,000).
* “Stavropolskiy Reporter” («Ставропольские репортер», independent local weekly; circ. 4,000).
* “Pyatigorskaya Pravda” («Пятигорская правда», owned by the city government of Pyatigorsk; circ. 10,000).
* “Moskovskyi Komsomolets –Kavkaz” («Московский комсомолец – Кавказ», or MK, national daily issued with regional supplement / weekly; circ. 15,000).
* “Argumenty I Fakty – North Caucasus” («Аргументы и факты - Северный Кавказ», or AiF, national daily issued with regional supplement / weekly; circ. 46,179).
* “Komsomolskaya Pravda – North Caucasus” («Комсомольская правда – Северный Кавказ», or KP, national daily issued with regional supplement / weekly; circ. 7,682).
* News website “1777”.
* TV: GTRK “Stavropolye” (ГТРК «Ставрополье», state owned TV channel).

**Saratov region**

Media outlets monitored in the region within the project:

* Newspaper “Komsomolskaya Pravda – Saratov” («КП в Саратове», or KP, daily supplement to national tabloid, circ. 30,085, available at <http://saratov.kp.ru/gazeta/>).
* Newspaper “Reporter” («Репортер», independent weekly, circ. 10,000).
* Newspaper “Saratovskaya oblastnaya gazeta” («Саратовская областная газета», a weekly, founded by the regional authorities, circ. 22,000, available online <http://www.gazeta64.ru/>).
* Newspaper “Gazeta nedeli”(«Газета недели», oppositional independent weekly, circ. 5,030 экземпляров, available online <http://fn-volga.ru/>).
* Newspaper “Gazeta nasha versiya” («Газета наша версия», oppositional independent weekly, circ. 7,000 экземпляров, available online <http://nversia.ru/article>).
* Newspaper ”Glas naroda” («Глас народа», the regional Public Chamber’s paper, circ. 4,600 экземпляров, available online <http://glasnarod.ru/>).
* Online news agency “Vzglyad-info” («Взгляд-инфо», weekly number of unique visitors 88,211, URL http://www.vzsar.ru).
* Online news agency ”The fourth estate” («Четвертая власть», 246,948 weekly unique visits, http://www.vzsar.r).
* Online news agency “Obstchestvennoe mnenie” («Общественное мнение» <http://www.om-saratov.ru/>, 35,000 unique weekly visits).
* Newspaper «Novoe Zavolzhye” (“Новое Заволжье”, municipal bi-weekly paper, circ. 7,140, available online <http://www.novoezavolzhe.ru/>).
* “Teleob’yektiv” news on TNT television («Телеобъектив», regional news bulletin, available online <http://www.teleobektiv.tv/>).

**Sverdlovsk region and Yekaterinburg**

The media outlets monitored within the framework of this project:

* ”Vecherniy Yekaterinburg” (газета «Вечерний Екатеринбург», private, the only city daily since 1957, distributed within Yekaterinburg, circ. 20,000).
* “Uralskiy Rabochiy” (газета «Уральский рабочий», private, daily, distributed within the region, circ. 20,000).
* “Oblastnaya Gazeta” (газета «Областная газета», state-owned, circ. 70,000 – the biggest circulation within the region).
* “Komsomolskaya Pravda – Urals” (газета «Комсомольская правда - Урал», private, regional edition of the federal daily tabloid, circ. 23,000, Friday’s issue – 41,500)
* “Kommersant – Urals” (газета «Коммерсант- Урал», private, regional edition of the federal daily broadsheet, circ. 6,000).
* “Vecherniy Krasnoturyinsk” (газета «Вечерний Краснотурьинск», local private weekly, circ. 9,000).
* News agency “URA.ru” (агентство «УРА.ру», private, specializes in the Urals region, 93,777 unique users per day).
* News agency “Novyi region – Urals” (агентство «Новый регион – Урал», private, 87,000 unique users per day).
* News agency “Just Media” (агентство «Джаст медиа», private city news portal, 6,300 unique users per day).
* News agency API – Yekaterinburg News (агентство API - Екатеринбург, private, 6,284 unique users per day).
* News TV show “VESTI – Urals” (телепрограмма «Вести – Урал», private, potential audience – 5m people, Yekaterinburg’s leading news programme).

1. **TRENDS**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Dagestan** | **Stavropol krai** | **Saratov region** | **Sverdlovsk region** |
| ***Elections coverage*** | Predominantly covering official views and information, procedural aspects of elections. | | | |
| ***Positive Stereotypes/***  ***Portrayal*** | Regional governor | Cossacks  Russian Orthodox church |  |  |
| ***Negative Stereotypes/***  ***Portrayal*** | Salafi Muslims  (+Police, law enforcement agencies) | Chechens  Muslims | Chechens  Caucasians  Migrants | Migrants  Caucasians  Muslims |
| ***Hate speech patterns*** | Soft (neutralizing) | Soft (neutralizing) | Soft to Hard (sensational headlines) | Soft (neutralizing/ euphemisms) |
| ***Migrants*** | No debate  Little coverage | Negative tone. No substantive discussion. Sensationalism in headlines. | Clear, aggressive anti-migrant rhetoric.  ‘Illegal’ migrants discourse. | Biased, negative, one-sided portrayal. ‘Illegal’ migrants discourse. Sensationalism in headlines. |
| ***Women/ gender-related*** | No substantive discussion. Portrayal is based on traditional models and roles. | | | |
| ***LGBTQ*** | No coverage | No coverage locally  (few sensational pieces from the national press) | No coverage | No coverage locally  (few sensational pieces online and from the national press) |

There are a few trends common among the media outlets in the four regions that we have observed in this study:

* Trend 1: Use of ‘soft’ forms of hate speech;
* Trend 2: Strong and constant anti-migrant discourse;
* Trend 3: Biased ethnic groups portrayal: ‘Us-and-Them’ logic
* Trend 4: Little diversity and stepping out of the traditional coverage of certain groups;
* Trend 5: Generally weak independent voice in election coverage;
* Trend 6: Avoiding controversial topics and self-censorship.

**Trend 1.**

*Soft hate speech*

The use of soft hate speech is quite often confused with journalists’ ‘inevitable subjectivity’ and mistaken for an ‘individual interpretation’ of events.

In the past, Russian mainstream media[[51]](#footnote-51) has successfully managed to identify ‘hard’ forms of hate speech and prevent those from appearing in the press. On the next level, the press (starting from the so-called “quality segment”) of the spectrum is oriented on “softening” hate speech, using more implicit forms of it (including all sorts of euphemisms, etc.).

On the one hand, this can be welcomed as a sign that the problem of hate speech and xenophobia is recognized. On the other, it can be legitimately criticized as an insufficient remedy. Soft forms are effectively conveying discriminatory messages (especially if they are linked to people associated with authority).

Soft forms of hate speech were present in the press of all four regions monitored.

For instance, in Dagestan a few examples of hate speech in the monitoring came from writings on ethnic Russian Muslims. In September the “Nastoyastchee Vremya” newspaper published an interview with an academic Abas Kebedov titled: “Russians are turning into Muslims, I wouldn’t necessarily welcome that“[[52]](#footnote-52). This topic is echoed by Dagestan’s TV news on RGVK channel: parents of an ethnic Russian who converted to Islam and joined the insurgents plead with him to come home and return to his profession.

Irina Przhilenskaya, one of the project’s experts in Stavropol, offered an interesting explanation of the phenomenon of soft hate speech: “Lately the official media have been doing their best to avoid hate speech as such. There is a sensible call to have the regional community pacified, and unprovoked, and to keep quiet even at the level of media work”.

It is worth noting that the trend is clearly visible at the federal level within both state-owned and independent media (with the exception of a few quality media outlets).

In many cases - as with Sverdlovsk region’s supplement to the federal tabloid ‘Komsomolskaya Pravda’ or local online news agencies “Novyi Region” and “Just Media” - low to medium intensity hate speech is commonly used, especially when reporting crimes. This is a wide-spread case of journalists’ and editors’ failure to identify hate speech in police reports and their tendency to reproduce discriminatory stereotypes.

**Trend 2.**

*Strong and constant anti-migrant discourse*

The nature of this trend is, in fact, composite since ‘anti-migrant’ discourse in the Russian media and public sphere technically replaced all other kinds of hate speech. Calling someone a migrant has become a comfortable and generalized way of drawing a line between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

This division comes out even stronger if the media speak of ‘illegal migrants’ or ‘gastarbeiters’ as papers often do in at least three of the four regions – Stavropol krai, Saratov, and Sverdlovsk region[[53]](#footnote-53). Sensational headlines are the most frequent way to manifest a xenophobic message.

Another common feature in the regions observed: there are almost no analytical writings on migrants and migration. A significant share of all news pieces on migrants in the media originates in police reports or in interviews with officials who mention ‘migrant’s adaptation’.

Largely, the portrayal of everyday life is confined to stories of the personal hardship of migrants (that might also reinforce negative stereotypes rather than compassion). No examples of positive personal narratives were spotted within this monitoring - nor do they exist in abundance in the regional press. Thus, the portrayal of migrants and migration tends to be one-sided and often hostile.

As Saratov’s example shows, whenever there are social tensions, they are likely to be reported and seen through ‘anti-migrant’ (i.e. ’ethnic’) terms and trigger a raft of allegations against ‘migrants’. In Saratov’s case this mechanism was evident from the online discussions following the news of the clash: users’ comments gradually became more aggressive while online editors clearly failed to provide adequate moderation.

In general, the intensity of hate speech differs depending in the type of mass media – it is less visible on TV and more popular with the online media[[54]](#footnote-54).

According to Sverdlovsk regional expert-monitor, coverage of migrants in the regional press over the two weeks of monitoring might have been additionally biased due to the electoral campaign – which was centered around migration issues. However, the latter is rather additional proof of the sensitivity and complexity of the issue, as well as the current mainstream place of ‘anti-migrant’ rhetoric in today’s Russia.

Some examples of how the press can translate the ‘migranto-phobic’ message:

1. *Citizenship denial.* This variation of hate speech was spotted in publications in Stavropol krai. The essence of it is that ‘anti-migrant’ discourse, commonly addressed towards labour migrants from the former USSR republics, starts being used towards Russian citizens from other regions (especially towards fellow countrymen from the North Caucasus).
2. *Offensive headlines.* In Sverdlovsk hate speech mainly manifests itself through sensational headlines and quotes without any editorial comment. In general every second sensational headline (‘Uzbeks raped a female pensioner’, ‘Illegal Tajik migrant killed his partner’) will be followed by a story told in a neutral and factual way.
3. *‘Illegal migration claim’.* Roughly, half the publications in our monitoring were using the term “illegal migrants”.
4. *‘Ethnic crimes’* are another carefully cultivated myth. In many regions the press keeps emphasizing the number or percentage of crimes committed by migrants, without providing reasonable references or context. For example, in Sverdlovsk oblast, only 72 crimes were committed by migrants in the first 6 months of 2013[[55]](#footnote-55) - compared to up to 150 crimes occurring in the region daily.[[56]](#footnote-56) Though experts note improvements in journalists’ coverage of those issues, this problem is far from resolved.
5. *Dubious quote with no editorial comment.* “Komsomolskaya Pravda - Ural” was the only newspaper to quote the candidate (and current mayor of Yekaterinburg) Evgeniy Roizman using hate speech during his campaign. Here is Roizman’s comment after winning the election: “Some areas <in the city> have turned into ghettos. No newcomers have the right to wrong/ oppress the locals”.
6. *Retranslating stereotypes.* “Oblastnaya Gazeta” (Yekaterinburg) writes about a migrant working as a street seller (“One can hardly know what infections can travel <here> with those foreign street sellers”[[57]](#footnote-57)) or publishes a vox pop on migration with no editorial comment (voices from vox pop: “Their kids will live in Russia in the future, not ours”, etc). Notably, often anti-migrant pieces are to be found in the op-ed section.
7. *Media illiteracy in combination with hostile context.* On September 11, “Otkrytaya” newspaper (Stavropol) re-published a piece[[58]](#footnote-58) from the federal “Novaya gazeta”[[59]](#footnote-59) which happened to be near-explosive and led to a big polemic. The author produced a political satire where he used all the most common ethnic stereotypes in their most common form to eventually disprove them altogether. However, such a satirical way of conveying this most convincing message (it is not “them” making our life unsatisfying, but “us”) hasn’t really worked well for quite socially and politically polarized Stavropol krai… Lots of people failed to see a satirical component and reacted rather belligerently.
8. *Hostile environment.* News agency API – Yekaterinburghas written about “yet another scandal around migrants”. Or the TV news “VESTI – Urals” (which was by and large neutral to or ignored vulnerable groups’ issues) has shown the traffic police announcing their plans to introduce rigorous checks on drivers[[60]](#footnote-60) of private taxicabs, or *marshrutkas (*implying the latter were “illegal migrants”), etc.

**Trend 3.**

*Biased portrayal of ethnic groups: ‘Us-and-Them’ logic*

Despite all the ‘neutralization’ techniques over the years, stereotypes and clichés of ethnic groups are still a part of regional journalism.

The federal papers (MK, KP, AiF) frequently write about Chechens as an ethnic group, however, the tone in most cases is neutral (a Chechen mosque, a Chechen singer, a Chechen female, a rescuer from the Ministry of Emergencies) However, as we have seen with ‘migrants’, seemingly neutral definitions tend to change semantics.

For example, in Stavropol several media outlets being monitored used the technically neutral, but essentially negative formula “the youths of the North Caucasus republics” as a substitute for “aggressive and rather culturally non-integrated young men of ethnic backgrounds”. This is a clear example of discriminatory ethnic-based language disguised and reflected in social terms.

‘Neutralizing’ does not really help to neutralize the roots of anti-Caucasian sentiments and the ‘us-and-them’ mentality. (‘Us-and-them’ logic remains intact when we analyze the press in Dagestan/ North Caucasus. Though, of course, the context changes and Salafi Muslims become the most visible and most vulnerable ethnic/ religious group within republic.

In Saratov the monitoring actually allowed us to observe the whole mechanism of constructing/ reinforcing a negative image of a group.

Examples of the press work.

On 5 September, 2013 an online agency in Saratov returns to the story of the killing of Ruslan Marzhanov. Since the suspects are Chechens, the outlet quoted the words of Marzhanov’s mother: «A killing committed by a group of them… is like a baptism [by fire] for them». Then the author concludes: “Such [killing] for the Chechen community might be just a cultural tradition or an initiation of a young man into adulthood”. Needless to say, this text produced a flood of replies supportive of the views expressed.

Later on Oksana Mikhalkina, a lawyer working on Marzhanov’s case, said to a journalist: “I am sure that these people – If released – would not give a second thought to taking out a knife and slaughtering Russian people again on the streets of Russian cities“. This quote was enough to provoke readers into giving hateful feedback, including calls for violence.

In one of the regions we also came across an interesting case of a positive portrayal of an ethnic group.

According to the Stavropol monitor, Cossacks[[61]](#footnote-61) are the most frequently mentioned ethnic/ identity group in the regional and local papers. This is a brand new trend for the region and a likely outcome of one of the distinctive policy lines of ex-Governor Zarenkov’s term in office: namely, the promotion of Stavropol krai as a Cossack/ Orthodox Christian outpost in the South of Russia. Unsurprisingly, coverage of religious issues and interactions in the region also remains essentially “neutralized”, though the Russian Orthodox image is overwhelmingly positive.

**Trend 4.**

*Little diversity and stepping out of the traditional coverage of certain groups*

In all four regions observed certain issues almost never come up in the regional press or are framed in a traditional way – as, for example, the portrayal of women, gender issues, the disabled, and LGBT communities (if being mentioned at all which is not the case for the Dagestan’s press), etc.

Thus, quite a few groups remain “voiceless” in the local media. Unfortunately, these groups might be statistically and demographically quite large – which obviously prevents the media audience from getting a more nuanced and accurate image of their community.

For instance, gender discussions mainly exist within the federal press, but the framework is nevertheless pretty safe and traditional. A rights-based approach and a quality discussion of the state of affairs, first and second generation gender-based discrimination, women leadership and concerns are nowhere to be found. Largely all that gets published are stories of women achievers, heroines, etc.

Representation in the national news in no way, of course, guarantees the absence of bias in reporting. For example, Stavropol and Sverdlovsk regions[[62]](#footnote-62) were the only ones where we found LGBTQ mentioned in the monitored outlets[[63]](#footnote-63). However, the attitudes shown towards this group were ranging from reserved to critical and hateful.

**Trend 5.**

*Generally weak independent voice / election coverage*

On a national scale the gubernatorial / regional elections in Russia on 8 September, 2013 were quite unusual. First of all, they were the first to be held after the 2005 electoral law stipulated the direct appointment of the head of the regions by the Russian President. The electoral legislation was amended as a result of massive post-election protests of 2011-2012.

Moreover, at this election both in Moscow and Yekaterinburg the opposition candidates got an unexpectedly large share of the vote. Meanwhile, the elections, in the big cities at least, attracted a lot of independent citizen observers.

However, the monitored media largely abstained from substantive discussion on the election and its outcomes. In all four regions the press was duly reporting on the procedural aspects of the election and factual side of it, including criticism of the work of some election committees.

**Trend 6.**

*Self-censorship and avoiding controversy*

Another generally observed similarity in all four regions: ownership of media outlets seems to correlate with their handling of content about diversity and vulnerable groups. And the state-controlled media is more likely to be following the regional authorities’ rhetoric towards ethnic and other vulnerable groups.

For example, in Stavropol - except for two outlets that position themselves as independent (“Otkrytaya” and “Stavropolskaya pravda”) - the mass media in the region tend to follow the official position on any controversial topics, especially if they might translate into any sort of “destabilisation”. Overall, the official discourse is predominantly conservative/ traditionalist, defensive[[64]](#footnote-64), and politically correct, based on the neutralization of controversial material and limiting discussion.

In line with these principles of news making, the “<state-owned> papers endlessly report on all sorts of official events and statements… so the weather forecast looks the most aggressive of all news”, as the project’s Stavropol expert Ella Maiboroda put it.

Ownership matters: this statement also holds for other regions. One need note here that private owners also tend to influence editorial policies and content. So the owner’s economic and political affiliations matter too.

What is the journalists’ response to this? Self-censorship is the most likely answer.

This phenomenon is harder to spot with the methodology we used in this study, but there are enough indicators to conclude that self-censorship is present in all the regions and is, in fact, wide-spread if not ubiquitous.

Sometimes when reading the regional press one feels that the most important news is ignored.

One example from Dagestan. In the observed period it was only the independent “Novoe Delo” which extensively covered a second attempt at a dialogue between Sufi and Salafi communities, facilitated by governor Ramazan Abdulatipov[[65]](#footnote-65). This restoration of the dialogue process is, perhaps, the most important political event for the region. However, since the issue is complex and very sensitive, other media outlets preferred either to take the “right” (official) point of view or to ignore the matter.

1. **FINDINGS IN FOUR REGIONS**

**Dagestan**

* There is variation in how the media handles the news in Dagestan, depending on economic and political affiliations. In general private ones - “Novoe Delo”, “Chernovik”, “Nastoyastchee Vremya”, the Caucasian Knot - tend to represent the diversity of regional socio-political issues in a more inclusive way. The state controlled outlets, such as “Dagestanskaya pravda” and “Molodezh Dagestana”, tend to adopt the official agenda[[66]](#footnote-66).
* “Soft” hate speech prevails: messages with discriminating content are delivered in a less straightforward way - unless it is a direct quote from a high-ranked official.
* Only “MK in Dagestan” mentioned the elections outside Dagestan. In contrast, regional elections - predictably won by the incumbent Ramazan Abdulatipov – were covered in abundant detail. In general, Abdulatipov appears to be the sole newsmaker for the region.
* Seemingly most important news remains left out by the media. For example, the independent “Novoe Delo” newspaper extensively covered a second attempt at a dialogue between Sufi and Salafi communities, facilitated by Abdulatipov (see above).
* Ethnic and/or religious groups were the most visible in this monitoring (notably, Salafi Muslims, a group that is currently most vulnerable in Dagestan). A few examples of hate speech in the monitoring concern ethnic Russian Muslims.

**Stavropol**

* In covering vulnerable groups, the state-controlled media largely follow the patterns and rhetoric of the regional authorities, which are predominantly conservative and defensive. Except for two independent media outlets (“Otkrytaya” and “Stavropolskaya pravda”) the media tend to reproduce the official position on any controversy, especially if it might translate into any sort of “destabilisation”. At the same time Stavropol media was clearly writing more on various social groups than the media in other regions.
* The “quality” press is oriented on “softening” hate speech, using euphemisms, etc. This corresponds to a broader federal tendency of avoidance, “re-formatting”, and “neutralizing” hate speech. Also both the regional and local press are highly selective in terms of themes and topics.
* Cossacks[[67]](#footnote-67) are the most frequently mentioned ethnic/ identity group in the regional and local papers. This is a likely outcome of one of the distinctive policies of the ex-Governor Zarenkov’s term in office of promoting Stavropol krai as a Cossack stronghold. Positive press attitudes when covering Cossacks and Orthodox Christians are clearly shown in the Stavropol profile.

* For migrant issues, the common genre is an interview with an official on the social and psychological adaptation of migrants. There are almost no analytical writings on migration. Largely, the portrayal of migrants is confined to stories of personal hardships.

**Sverdlovsk oblast and Yekaterinburg**

* The portrayal of migrants and migration in the regional press tends to be rather negativist, hostile and one-sided. The term ‘illegal migration’ is widely used, and a great deal of media stories on migrants originate from police reports.
* Experts note that for the news agencies the three main negatively depicted groups are: ‘illegal migrants’, ‘Chechen/ Caucasian organized criminal groups’, and ‘Islamic extremists’. The newspapers’ negativism is largely focused on ‘illegal migrants’.
* The intensity of hate speech differs depending in the type of mass media – it is less visible on TV and more so online. “Negative messaging” is rarely straightforward, but rather clear from the context. All sensational headlines tend to contain a negative stereotype (‘illegal migrant’, ‘gastarbeiter’, ‘rapist’, ‘road-hog’, etc).
* A very telling fact about the regional press: the unexpected victory of an opposition candidate Evgeniy Roizman in the mayoral election did not generate much coverage and debate.

**Saratov**

* A large part of the printed press in Saratov region is out weekly – so the news is delivered by other types of media. The online media gathers impressive audiences in the region.
* Sensational headlines and the term ‘illegal migration’ are widely used. At the same time diasporas complain about the lack of representation in the media.
* Despite obvious attempts to “control” the message, hard hate speech patterns were easily triggered by a single street fight in Saratov (the clash between Caucasians and nationalists is visible from the profile) and both the media and their audience reacted in a xenophobic way. Online discussions following the news have reinforced unfriendly, aggressive discourse and web-editors failed to provide adequate moderation.
* The newspapers and journalists “voluntarily censor themselves and give up producing journalistic investigations and analytical overviews which reflect the full range of expert opinion on particular situations”. The majority dread being sued for breaking the anti-extremism laws and are cautious when covering migration, diversity, ethnic groups and other sensitive issues.

1. **CONCLUSIONS**

The findings of this study do not contradict the general trends of the media’s development in Russia. They provide an insight into the situations in four regions, however, they do not aspire to represent all-Russia media dynamics regarding the coverage of ethnic diversity, migrants, minority groups, etc.

***Use of hate speech***

* Soft forms of hate speech were present in the press of all four regions. Soft forms are preferable to hard ones, however, they are effective enough to convey discriminatory messages about vulnerable groups (people from Central Asia, Caucasus, Roma, etc.).
* The ‘quality’ press is oriented on “softening” hate speech, using more implicit forms of it (including all sorts of euphemisms, etc.). This is likely to be a part of broader/ federal tendency of avoidance, “re-formatting”, and “neutralizing” hate speech.
* Two cases in which journalists and editors seem to fail in recognizing hate speech: (1) “recycling” police reports and reproducing their language and often discriminatory stereotypes; (2) providing adequate monitoring and moderating of online discussions (for example, following the news about potential ethnic tension).
* The intensity of hate speech differs depending in the type of mass media – it is less visible on TV and more popular with the online media.

***‘Migranto-phobia’***

* Migration is, indeed, a complex and highly sensitive issue. In three regions the media seems to produce a rather one-sided and even hostile portrayal of migrants and migration, while in Dagestan these issues do not even adequately reach the press.
* No examples of positive personal narratives were spotted within this monitoring. Largely, the portrayal of everyday life is confined to stories of migrants’ personal hardship (that might also reinforce negative stereotypes rather than compassion).
* Some examples of how the press can translate a ‘migranto-phobic’ message: through citizenship denial; offensive headlines; use of expressions such as ‘illegal migration’; through the accusing of ethnic crimes; publishing dubious quotes without any editorial comment; uncritically retranslating stereotypes; through interpreting conflicts in ethnic terms. (All these are to be found in the monitoring).

***‘Us-and-Them’ logic***

* Despite all the ‘neutralization’ techniques used over years, stereotypes and clichés of ethnic groups as well as xenophobic connotations are a part of regional journalism. The Chechens, people from Caucasus, Muslims and Salafi Muslims are the ‘anti-heroes’ for the press and society. Taking into account the tendency to co-relate the terms ‘migrants’, ‘Caucasians’, ‘Muslims’, etc. in the public discourse, the press draws a clear line between “us” and “them” (see graphs below).
* Conversly, the authorities in some regions are trying to construct and promote ‘positive stereotypes’ and favor particular groups (Cossacks) which is against the principle of proportionality.

***Traditionalism vs diversity***

* The press in all four regions observed seems to be on a ‘traditionalist’ track as far as the portrayal of women, gender issues, the disabled and LGBT communities is concerned. Thus, quite a few groups remain “voiceless” in the local media. For instance, gender discussions mainly exist within the federal press, but the framework is nevertheless ‘safe and traditional’. LGBTQ issues are covered in an unfriendly or openly hostile way.

***Self-censorship***

* There is variation in how the media handles the news, depending on the ownership, and/or economic and political affiliations of the owner/ business. In general, private media outlets tend to cover regional socio-political issues in a more inclusive way. The state-controlled outlets tend to represent the official agenda (at times becoming mouthpieces of the regional government). Even in regions where the media operate in a freer environment, they are still largely susceptible to the owners’ perspectives.
* Overall, the official discourse of the publications in the regional press is predominantly conservative/ traditionalist, defensive and ‘politically correct’.
* In turn, quite often official regional policies are molded after old Soviet policies emphasizing “<undisturbed> peace”, “<inter-ethnic> friendship”, “unity”, etc.
* There are enough indicators to conclude that self-censorship is present in all regions and is, in fact, wide-spread, if not ubiquitous. As one of the experts put it, ‘the newspapers and journalists… voluntarily censor themselves and have given up producing journalistic investigations and analytical overviews which reflect the full range of expert opinion’. Working in a situation where press freedom is limited, the majority dread being sued for breaking the anti-extremism laws and prefer not to go into depth when covering sensitive issues.
* The ultimate demonstration of self-censorship in action: the coverage of the 8 September elections. The press reported on the procedural aspects of the election and the factual side of it, without sparking any sort of substantive public discussion.
* The journalistic and editorial position is rarely significantly different from the actual publication (only in Stavropol media was such a difference observed). This can be interpreted, again, as a sign of self-censorship in revealing this position or a lack of alternative voices in the media.

Thus, going back to our research question, we may conclude that the media coverage in the four regions contributes to discriminatory discourse towards migrants and vulnerable groups.

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

We believe that the values of media freedom and the observance of the international human rights commitments, including the European Convention of Human Rights, and the same principles enshrined in the Russian Constitution should be paramount.

In light of these provisions it is important that Russian state and non-state agencies as well as the international community work together to ensure three levels of action[[68]](#footnote-68):

(1) improving the environment of the press operation in Russia and Russian regions;

(2) improving self-regulation procedures within the Russian media community;

(3) providing capacity-building and training courses for the regional media, journalists and students of journalism:

* Supporting long-term coaching of individuals or journalistic teams;
* Supporting training programmes (online or offline) that give access to Russian- and non-Russian speaking experts working on diversity issues;
* Providing quality material (manuals, visuals, etc) on reporting on gender issues, migration, discrimination, etc.
* Providing training on covering conflicts;
* Sensitizing the journalistic community to migration, vulnerable groups and diversity issues,
* Working with editors and publishers on these topics, sensitizing them;
* Running specific training courses on online editing; adopting specific policies towards online content and forums, etc.

Specific recommendations include the following.

**In Russia**

*Ministries and agencies of Russian Federation:*

* Fully implement the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (Article 10, etc).
* Decriminalize libel.
* Urgently investigate and prosecute the killings and harassment of journalists, and crimes related to journalistic professional duties.
* Adopt a fair and constructive policy and agenda on the inclusion of migrants, and openly and consistently endorse it on the state level.
* Adopt a clear and constructive policy guaranteeing unhindered access to information, freedom of media and the Internet operation. This would include repealing provisions of the anti-extremism law as well as rejecting draft legislation on the status of “foreign agents” for the media as well as simplified procedure of blocking websites, etc.
* Review the migration policies in order to make them more transparent.
* React quickly and unambiguously to manifestations of hatred and hate speech in statements made by the public officials, and consistently penalize such actions.

*Media owners*

* Make a clear division between the commercial and editorial agenda of their media outlets. Discontinue the practice of intervening in editorial policies.

*Editors and editorial policies*

* Analyze existing coverage of vulnerable groups and elaborate codes of conduct on non-discriminatory reporting for staff.
* Ensure staff writers are aware of non-discrimination principles and follow these in their work.
* Encourage diversity of voices and non-stereotypical coverage as well as ensure the accuracy and balanced nature of reporting.
* Encourage staff’s continuous education and self-reflection on diversity coverage and quality reporting.
* Be supportive – professionally as well as institutionally - of writers willing to work on diversity topics.
* Recognize self-censorship issues and tackle them persistently.

*Journalists*

* Familiarize yourselves with the specifics of reporting on vulnerable groups, adhere to the principles of quality reporting, seek and demand additional professional training and support from employers and professional circles.
* Be keen to recognize self-censorship in your practices and seek the advice of colleagues.
* Join solidarity networks and campaigns, show solidarity with colleagues in crisis situations and while performing their professional duties.

*Media associations*

* Comment and act on all instances of pressure, intimidation, and limitation of freedom of expression,
* Maintain an independent standing and promote the highest attainable standards for the journalistic profession,
* Support and act on behalf of journalists in need/ crisis,
* Make special efforts to consolidate the journalistic community and elaborate the norms of professional behavior shared by the community,
* Promote and support infrastructure work for building self-regulatory bodies among journalists and self-regulated conflict resolution mechanisms.

NGOs

* Provide assistance in news gathering to journalists if they write on issues of NGO work, seek dialogue with the media on topics of your specialization or interest.
* Play an active role in commenting on issues of diversity, provide constructive feedback to media publications and authors.

**Outside Russia**

International community, international state and non-state actors

* Watch the situation with media freedom and freedom of expression in Russia closely.
* Make the violation of press freedom and freedom of expression as well as other fundamental freedoms a prominent part of the dialogue with Russia.
* Support the Russian media community in terms of capacity building and personal emergency situations associated with professional duties.
* Share best practices of journalistic work on diversity coverage and inclusion in the newsrooms.

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Independent consultant

29 December 2013

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1. See Wikipedia entry for general reference http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dagestan) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This report only covers Russian-speaking media outlets. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.etnosmi.ru/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.riadagestan.ru/news/president/ramazan_abdulatipov_zadacha_smi_idti_vperedi_prosveshchat/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See, Glasnost Defense Foundation map, <http://www.gdf.ru/map/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See <http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/09/russia-journalist-killed> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. After the breakdown of the USSR the borderline of what was formerly Soviet republics of Dagestan and Azerbaijan became state border and these two villages formally got temporary status of Russian enclaves in Azerbaijan. Under state agreements, this issue should have been resolved by 2004 and villagers should have been repatriated to Dagestan in 2012. However, there has been little progress on this issue. In the meantime, villagers are denied citizens’ rights in Azerbaijan. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See the “Moscow Times” reporting <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/olympic_coverage/article/ahead-of-games-dagestan-leader-faces-pressure-to-quell-violence/486230.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. “Russia’s North Caucasus region is the center of an Islamist insurgency, which has been most intense in Dagestan.

   Said Afandi al-Chirkavi (Atsaev), 74, who was killed in August 2012 in an apparent suicide bombing, was widely recognized as the most prominent Sufi sheikh in the region and, earlier in 2012, one of the leaders of the dialogue between Sufi and Salafi communities (see more at <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/08/29/russia-strictly-respect-rights-dagestan-killing-inquiry>). In April 2012, in an unprecedented move, the two groups signed a resolution for cooperation. This is the first attempt of renewing the dialogue since Said Afandi’s death. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Please, for more detail see the International Crisis Group chronicle on important events in the North Caucasus region, as of September 2013 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/crisiswatch/crisiswatch-database.aspx?CountryIDs=%7b310F665F-6B77-420F-923C-BEBE09309AB1%7d#results> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Not to be confused with the regional capital Stavropol. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Please, see wiki <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stavropol_Krai> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Census 2010 data. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. News and recreational media have roughly equal shares of the regional market. The majority of the media are private (309 out of 415), though the ones with greater circulation and resources are owned by the authorities (4 media outlets are state owned, 56 owned by the regional government, 46 – by local governments). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. <http://www.mlg.ru/ratings/regional_media/2622/0/0/0/> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. In our monitoring, 7 out of 11 media outlets are also at “Medialogia” top 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. In fact, this is the fourth appointment in five years. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Yamalo-Nenetskiy autonomous region is one of the key oil- and gas-producing regions in Siberia. Such move (installing someone who is not from the region) might potentially cause some tension or a significant administration reshuffle. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Very traditional cultural settings, perhaps, from religious Islamic families of other republics of the North Caucasus. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Please, see “Stavropolskaya Pravda” reporting (<http://www.stapravda.ru/20130911/gubernator_zerenkov_potreboval_otchislyat_studentovkhuliganov_be_71004.html>), in Russian. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See the ministry’s website on federal universities: <http://eng.mon.gov.ru/pro/pnpo/fed/> [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. In terms of inter-religion interactions, large part of conflicts is between the new denominations’ disputes with representatives of the four core religions “established” in the Russian law – Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Buddhist and Jewish – or disputes around secular and religious interests. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. <http://www.riadagestan.ru/news/president/ramazan_abdulatipov_zadacha_smi_idti_vperedi_prosveshchat/> [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Federal news channels and mass media may add to the discussion on sensitive topics. For example, on 19 May 2013 federal channel “Rossiya” aired a story “Aggressive Islam: Stavropol krai has cleaved into ‘locals’ and ‘outsiders’. The General Prosecutor’s office in North Caucasus started investigation into this issue. A similar episode – on May 26, 2013 Russia’s “Pervyi” (First) channel at prime time run a video on fighting terrorism. One of the experts in that video mentioned that “strongest vahabi centers exist in a number of Russian regions”, including Saratov oblast. Saratov mufti voiced his protest and called for an investigation into this issue (as allegedly inciting hatred). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Please, see an overview on the region <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saratov_Oblast> [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. As regional media experts explain, this freedom is relative: certain newspapers can be very critical of the authorities, but never comment on parties or political groups they support themselves. Several media outlets publish quality analytical articles – as news agency “SarBS”, news agency “Chetvertaya Vlast” (“The fourth estate”). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. The majority of the printed press in Saratov region is out weekly - which means that the actual news are delivered to consumers by other types of media. Therefore online media gathers impressive audiences in the region. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. <http://www.mlg.ru/ratings/regional_media/2690/0/0/0/> [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. See the “Sova-Center” take on this story: <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/xenophobia/news-releases/2013/07/d27501/> [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See the Moscow Times story on Pugachev “uprising”: <http://themoscownews.com/russia/20130711/191758305/After-fatal-brawl-Russias-ethnic-tensions-hard-to-cool.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Ramzan Kadyrov, head of Chechnya Republic, called this incident “a real tragedy” <http://chechnyatoday.com/en/content/view/2682/314/> [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Please, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sverdlovsk_Oblast> [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. For Sverdlovsk region’s profile, see: <http://www.kommersant.com/tree.asp?rubric=5&node=414&doc_id=-70> [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. During the Soviet years the city was called Sverdlovsk. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. A bureau of the best known liberal radio station. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. <http://www.mlg.ru/ratings/regional_media/2693/0/0/0/> [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Three of them among those monitored by the project in this region. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. <http://www.nr2.ru/ekb/415953.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. <http://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/community-media/against-sects/2013/11/d28340/> [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Please, see the Moscow Times piece <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/roizman-stirs-up-yekaterinburg-elections/485424.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. “Civil Platform” is a recent political undertaking under the leadership of Russian tycoon Mikhail Prokhorov - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Prokhorov>. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. See Human Rights Watch’s 2013 chapter on Russia from the World Report: <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/russia>. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See Roizman’s bio in English <http://rt.com/politics/russia-roizman-rehab-elections-301/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/03/world/europe/03russia.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0> [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See <http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-06-19/world/40057640_1_putin-s-alexei-venediktov-moscow> [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Her NGO runs a website Ethnoinfo.ru and specializes in monitoring of diversity coverage. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. According to World Bank, Russia is the world’s second largest country receiving migrants after the USA. Today Russia’s migrants predominantly come from the Central Asian states (former Soviet) republics. Please, see Human Rights Watch’s report on 2009 on exploitation of migrant workers in construction, some of the research conducted in Yekaterinburg <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2009/02/09/are-you-happy-cheat-us>. For your reference, there is a report on 2013 situation with migrants in the light of upcoming Sochi Olympic Games: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2013/02/06/race-bottom>. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. For general trends on hate speech and hate crimes in Russia, please, see the SOVA Center reporting: <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/xenophobia/conference-papers/2013/03/d26691/>, <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/xenophobia/conference-papers/2013/09/d27983/>, <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/xenophobia/conference-papers/2013/09/d27984/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. See <http://en.new.itar-tass.com/old-all-news/689883> and unofficial version of the story at <http://www.agoodtreaty.com/2011/07/14/russia-after-sagra/> [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. * “Chernovik”, or The Draft, best known regional newspaper.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. We are not considering the radical media outlets in this research. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. «Русские становятся мусульманами, я бы не стал приветствовать это обеими руками» [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Absence of Dagestan in this list can be explained due to differences between the observed regions. In the first place a region that is faces outward migration flow. Secondly, the region is multilingual and ethnically very diverse so it is harder to capture ‘anti-migrants’ discourse in the media. Thirdly, ‘migrants’ in the Dagestani press are simply even less represented than in other three regions, the are rather in a ‘voiceless’ category. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. This observation, however, can be interpreted in terms of the general freedom of the press patterns: the electronic media in Russia is tightly controlled by the state or owners and scrupulously monitored. The online media is largely free (and monitored a bit more loosely). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. На Среднем Урале мигранты стали чаще совершать преступления, в том числе сексуального характера - http://nr2.ru/ekb/453387.html [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. См. ежедневные пресс-релизы ГУ МВД по Свердловской области <http://66.mvd.ru/> [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. «Остаётся только гадать, какие заболевания могут привезти продавцы-иностранцы из-за границы». [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Valeriy Zelenogorsky, “Lagernyi vopros”“Лагерный вопрос», see <http://www.novayagazeta.ru/comments/59565.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. “Novaya gazeta” is, perhaps, the most liberal printed outlet available in Russia today. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Taxicabs, or marshrutkas (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshrutka>), are ubiquitous all over Russia – the constitute a faster and cheaper alternative to traditional public transportation. This is a poorly paid job and drivers are often found among labour migrants originating from Central Asia or Caucasus. Until November 2013 they were allowed to use their national drivers’ licenses to qualify for the job. The news bulletin was in fact announcing forthcoming change to that rule so only licenses issued by the Russian authorities would be accepted. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Please, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cossacks> [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Where the media is operating in a freer environment than in many regions of Russia, but still is largely susceptible to the owners’ perspectives and prone to self-censorship. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. In the national papers and online news agencies. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. The basic tone of the media in Stavropol krai is projecting ideas of “<undisturbed, unobstructed> peace”, “<inter-ethnic> friendship”, “unity”, etc. These ideas are exact repetition of the Soviet policies in terms of covering “interethnic relations”. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. See «Мирный диалог. Вторая попытка». [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. For example, a state-run newspaper runs overtly anti-American, anti-Western remarks while discussing Syria. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Please, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cossacks> [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Within the scope of the project we are only elaborating on capacity building component. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)