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Roma and Muslims living in Lithuania are absent from the country's media. Alongside a very low representation, the media tend to strengthen stereotypes by offering a one-sided portrayal of Roma as criminals, and Muslims as terrorists. This is often combined with derogatory terms, especially about Romani people who are rarely or never interviewed in the Lithuanian media.

These are the findings of the research conducted by the [National Institute of Social Integration](#) (NISI) within the project “

[Address of Human Rights – Journalism](#)

”. The study analysed the news pieces published and broadcast from June 2013 to July 2014 in national and regional media. The research, which focused on three specific ethnic and religious groups reveals that the members of Jewish community generally can be seen and heard in the news.

The results of the media monitoring were presented by Neringa Jurčiukonytė, director of the National Institute of Social Integration at the conference “From 9/11 to Charlie Hebdo: what is the power of stereotypes in the media?”. The conference held in on 19 January attended the Media Diversity Institute representative Giulia Dessi.

Božena Karvelienė, director of Roma Integration Home, said that the image of Roma offered by the media has a negative impact in our daily life. It contributes in preventing adults in finding a job and children in getting along with classmates at school. “Pupils, who repeat what they hear at home, verbally abuse their Roma classmates on a daily basis. Do not be surprised if children who have to study in this unpleasant environment sooner or later decide to quit school,” said Ms Karvelienė.

Media monitoring results also showed that the Jewish community is widely represented in the media, if compared with the other groups, and their points of view are usually included. However, researchers pointed out that the striking dominance of pieces on Holocaust compensations and demands to reclaim buildings belonging to their persecuted ancestors, might strengthen old stereotypes.

Muslims do not make the news very often in Lithuania. This might due to the low presence of Muslims in the country. However, the few articles registered by the media monitoring have been judged poorly researched and written. Not only they tend to present Arab and Muslim as synonym, but also to depict them as terrorists.

The conference in Vilnius also focused on the media aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks. As MDI representative Giulia Dessi highlighted, there are things that the world media could do and could have done differently in the [coverage of the Charlie Hebdo killings](#) and the events that have followed.

“Usually the media give us the impression that all Muslims in the world think alike just because they believe in the same god. Reality is much more complex than this: there are deep cultural and historical differences from country to country that are not taken in account by the media” said Dessi.

“After Charlie Hebdo, Muslims are asked their opinion on the situation and are generally seen in the media, however I am afraid that when the situation calms down, Muslims will again be forgotten. Our task is to ensure that ethnic and religion minorities’ opinion would be equally reverberated not only when the situation is dire,” said Ralph du Long, representative of UNITED for Intercultural Action and Europe-Russia forum.

The media monitoring results presented by NISI had a great echo in the press. “In the weeks following the conference, we saw some positive change in the media. This response gives us hope for the future,” said Ms Jurčiukonytė.

The media monitoring was part of the two-year transeuropean project “ [Address of Human rights - Journalism](#) ”, led by the National Institute for Social Integration (NISI, Lithuania) in partnership with NGOs in in Spain, Italy, Latvia, and Bulgaria. The initiative, partly funded by the European Commission, aimed at countering racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism by changing the way media portray socially vulnerable groups.

The project sided with [Media4Change](#) , a media community that has organised journalism training around human rights issues since 2009. Media4Change is open to human rights experts and journalists willing to draw attention to the human rights abuses and tell the stories of communities. To join, you can apply [here](#) .



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