



# **MEDIA MONITORING**

## **Parliamentary Elections in Albania 2005**

**Monitoring Period**  
**11 - 24 June 2005**

**Third Report**

**Tirana, 1 July 2005**

# **CONTENTS**

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Methodology and Terminology</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>General Information</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Monitoring Organizations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Monitoring Structure</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Monitoring List and Period</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TELEVISION</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>ELECTORAL SPOTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>RADIO</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>NEWSPAPER</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Women politicians in the media during the electoral campaign</b>	<b>32</b>

## **EXUCUTIVE SUMMARY**

- Almost all visual media shifted to a more balanced method of reporting during this monitoring period, based on recommendations from the ACAC.
- Most of the media reduced their coverage of the government during the electoral campaign, also a recommendation from the ACAC.
- Positive changes have been noted for public television station TVSH, which shifted from clear support for the SP and the government to more balanced reporting and also including coverage for the DP and its leader.
- Most of the media rarely broadcast negative or critical information on political parties.
- Newspapers increased the amount of space dedicated to the DP and the SP (namely Ballkan, Korrieri, Gazeta Shqiptare), leaving less coverage for smaller parties.
- Two radio stations continue not to broadcast politician soundbites: Radio Rash and Radio +2.
- Public radio decreased the amount of time dedicated to the government, but continued to report on it in a mainly positive context. Reporting on the two main parties was mostly balanced, but still leaving room for criticism.
- Newspaper and radio stations increased their coverage of women in politics slightly from the previous monitoring period. However, there was no coverage of women's campaign on television at all.
- As noted in the first report, no women candidates were among the top ten politicians in terms of soundbite opportunities.

*This project was made possible through support provided by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs through the Democracy and Governance in Albania project which is supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under Cooperative Agreement No. 182-A-00-04-00104-00. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID.*

*At the same time this project was made possible through the support of British Embassy. The ACAC is very pleased to be working together with the British Embassy on this worthwhile initiative and welcomes the British Embassy's firm support for our efforts to encourage an independent and impartial media environment within Albania.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

While it is impossible to have democracy in a country without genuine elections, the democratic process extends well beyond Election Day. Democratic governance requires an active and informed citizenry. The media is often referred to as the Fourth Estate, indicating its important role in society. In a democracy, we look to the press to act as a watchdog of events and decisions, to help citizens stay informed about what is going on. But this role can only be fulfilled if media coverage follows key principles and practices.

Media monitoring is a tool that can help journalists report in a more accurate, precise, and balanced way. Media monitoring is a tool that promotes trust of citizens in media reporting. Wherever the media exists, it is useful to follow their work and then to analyze media's relationship with different subjects. Media monitoring is a research discipline that includes analytical elements. Its aim is to help media in creating balance while reporting and to reflect professional mistakes. During the observation period the assignment of monitoring team is to gain data that reflect the real feelings of citizens who watch, listen or read targeted media.

The following report is based on media monitoring that took place in Albania from June 11 to June 24, 2005.

### **Principles of good journalism**

There are key principles that are widely accepted as to what constitutes "good journalism." Among them are:

- Respect good journalistic ethics
- Balance reporting in terms of time/space, and context of information
- Differentiated between government and ruling party officials
- Avoid using Government as promotional tool for candidates and policy alternatives
- Avoid allocating excessive time to government activities to the exclusion of other political actors
- Provide access to alternative sides to respond to criticism or attacks
- Guide politicians to respond to what is important for citizens
- Never promote hate speech
- Behave as a public watchdog

Biased and unprofessional reporting will not influence decided voters. It can potentially influence undecided voters because poor reporting distorts perception and that distortion of truth is all that citizens have on which to base decisions. Rather than imposing decisions on citizens, the media's role is to inform citizens about relevant events so that they can make an informed choice.

This reporting is balanced, precise, correct and fair. It offers equal opportunities for all parties to express opinions and ideas. Government has an important role not to impede the media in fulfilling these functions and in facilitating media pluralism in order to expose the public to the widest variety of sources of information.

## **METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY**

Media monitoring uses two sets of criteria—qualitative and quantitative. Both sets of criteria are highly relevant to present a comprehensive picture of media reporting in an election campaign.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

In qualitative research the main elements are context and presentation.

**Context** is the timing and setting of the information itself. For example, if political party A speaks in a positive context about itself or in a negative context about some other subject, a medium is not partial just because it broadcasts the information. What matters is whether a medium broadcasts information with positive or negative context on confrontational subjects in a selective manner over a period of time so that a distinct pattern develops.

**Presentation** is the extent to which events are reported factually (i.e. “X” happened) versus the amount of editorial comment or influence on those events.<sup>1</sup> For example, the words used to describe the event can be positive or negative. The tone of a journalist during news coverage can also influence perception. Finally, facial expression and body language (for television journalists) influence the way information is perceived.

### **Quantitative Analysis**

Quantitative analysis assesses the time or space in which a political party or politician is mentioned, spoken of, quoted, or appears in a particular medium.

**Total Time/Space:** the amount of time that broadcast media (television and radio) devote to reporting on a certain political subject, or print media (newspapers and journals) devote to political parties or Government activity.

**Quotation** is the time or space given to a journalist to retell someone else’s words.

**Sound bite** (or **printed remark** for print media): the amount of time or space that media give political parties for expressing their own political opinions and represents part of the total time. This category covers interviews and announcements directly from political parties or political subjects.

**Object Time:** time when subject X is speaking about politician Y, so that politician Y is the “object” of the content. This covers cases in which journalists mention political subjects in their articles or when others talk about political subjects.

**Source:** where media get information, such as news agencies, other media, as well as various press statements, reports and other announcements.

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<sup>1</sup> Presentation is not analyzed for each media outlet monitored in this report. However, in the instances where it had a particularly strong effect on the coverage, this is noted.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Monitoring organizations**

The ACAC media monitoring is being conducted by four organizations:

#### **Albanian Coalition Against Corruption (ACAC)**

ACAC was created in 2001 to reduce corruption by strengthening the role of civil society and working in coordination with government. Its aims are to increase the awareness of the causes and costs of corruption and to transform that awareness into advocacy for reforms to reduce and combat corruption.

#### **Institute for Polls and Opinions (ISO)**

Founded in 2000, the Institute for Polls and Opinions is an independent survey research center that provides services to private and public sector organizations. ISO periodically measures electronic media rating and legibility of print media in Albania. In addition to the permanent staff, ISO employs 25 external experts and has a panel of 4000 people across 36 districts.

#### **Institute for Development Research and Alternatives (IDRA)**

IDRA Research is the social and marketing research survey unit of Institute for Development Research and Alternatives (IDRA). It offers research for institutional and private clients. They have a network of more than 150 interviewers covering all the regions of Albania and Kosovo.

#### **Center for Transparency and Free Information (CTFI)**

The Center's aim is to increase public awareness for the need for a continuous democratization of Albanian life as well as the enforcement of national policies in the fight against corruption. Some of the projects conducted by the Center include: 2003 May-December: "Media for Transparency".

### **Monitoring Structure**

The overall project is being conducted under the umbrella of the ACAC. The project is headed by a Steering Committee composed of all four organizations which first defined the precise list of media to be monitored in this project. Media were chosen according to the findings of a short research on the media influence in Albania.

There are 23 monitors involved in the project, apart from three coordinators, one main coordinator and other staff - technicians, finance and IT managers. The staff was selected carefully and screened for any potential political bias. Monitors rotate regularly within each of the three groups (television, radio, and newspapers), in order to get as diverse opinions as possible.

#### **List of monitored media**

**Television** – Monitoring conducted by ISO. TVSH, Top Channel, Klan, Koha, TVA, Vizion +, News 24, Alsat, Teuta, Egnatia

**Radio** – Monitoring conducted by IDRA. Radio Tirana, Top Albania Radio, Radio RASH, Radio +2

**Newspaper** – Monitoring conducted by CTFI. Shekulli, Panorama, Koha Jone, Gazeta Shqiptare, Ballkan, Korrieri

## **Monitoring Periods**

**Television** - 15:00 to 24:00. In that period of time, only **news** and **political advertisement** were monitored.

**Radio** - 07:00 to 10:00 and 15:00 to 18:00. Only **news** and **political advertising** were monitored.

**Newspapers** - all of the political items were monitored without any limits.

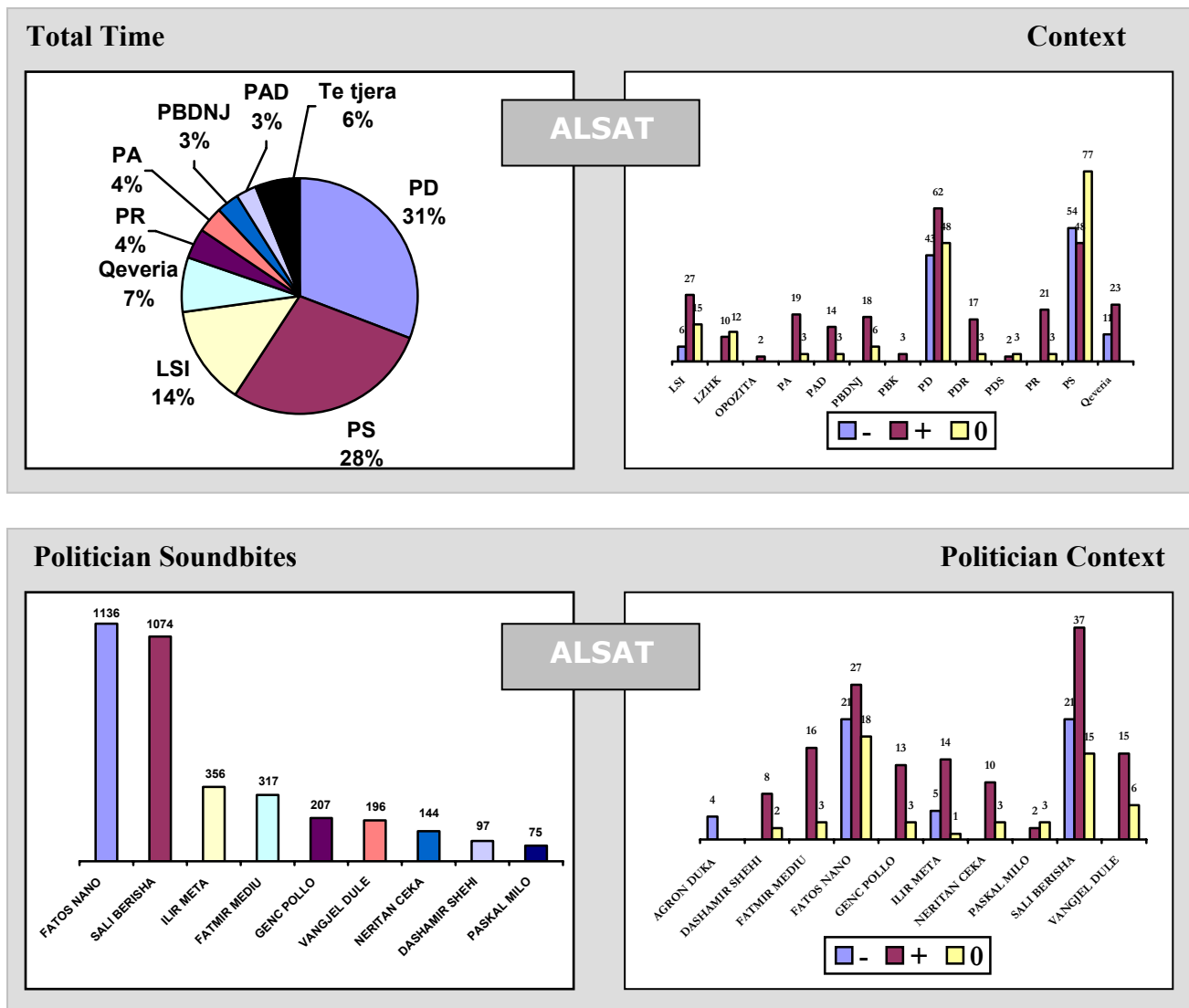
The aim of this media monitoring project is to provide an overall view of the Albanian media during the election period. This is the third report to be followed by the final one after the elections on July 3 2005.

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) provided two media experts from the Young Journalists Association of Montenegro to assist in the monitors' training and in report preparation.

# TELEVISION

## ALSAT

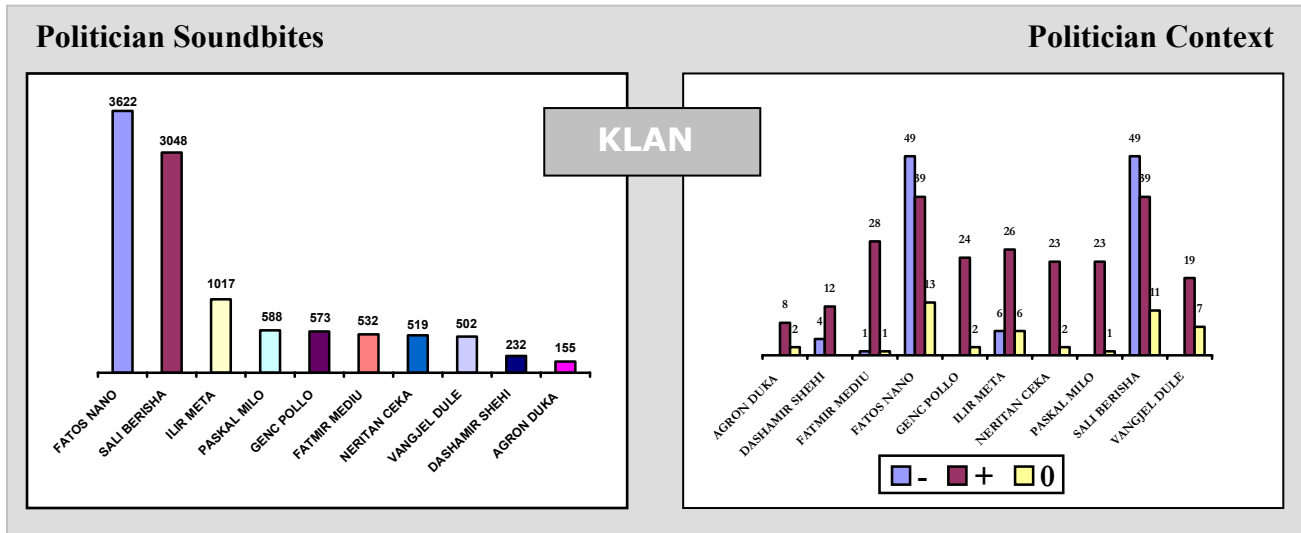
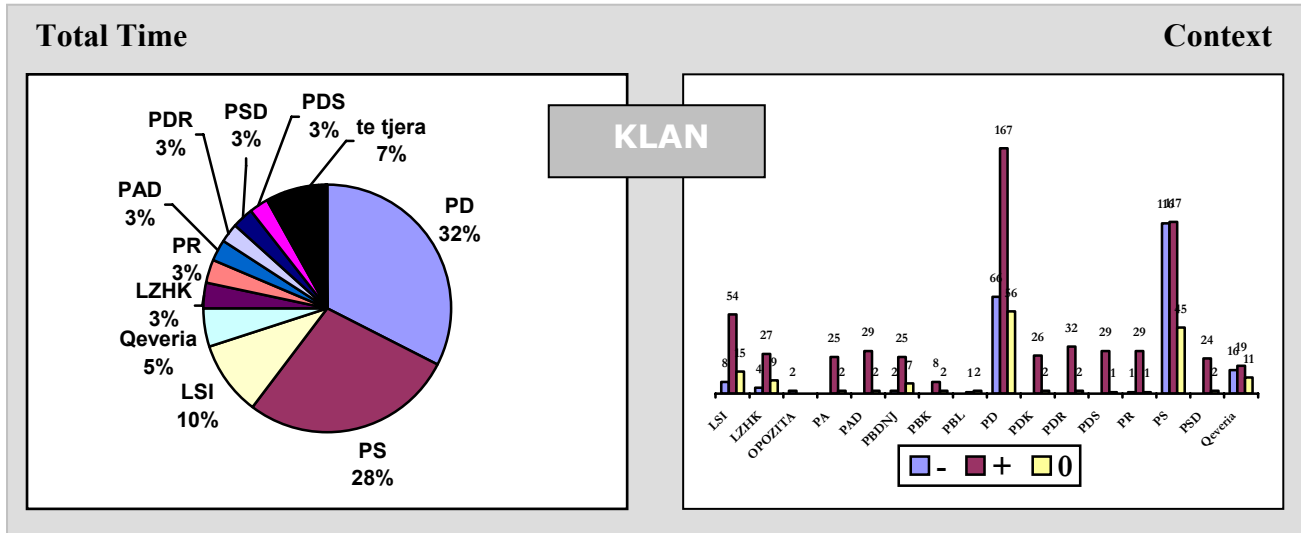
Alsat television continues to support the DP slightly more than the SP. Alsat dedicated 31% of the total time to DP, mainly in a positive context. The context for the SP and the Government is almost balanced, but SP was shown in a slightly more negative context. During this period SMI was better positioned in this media outlet, and the time for this party increased from 10% to 14%. As for politician soundbites, Fatos Nano had more time compared to Sali Berisha, but the difference is slight in time and clear in context. Berisha is under more positive context than Nano.





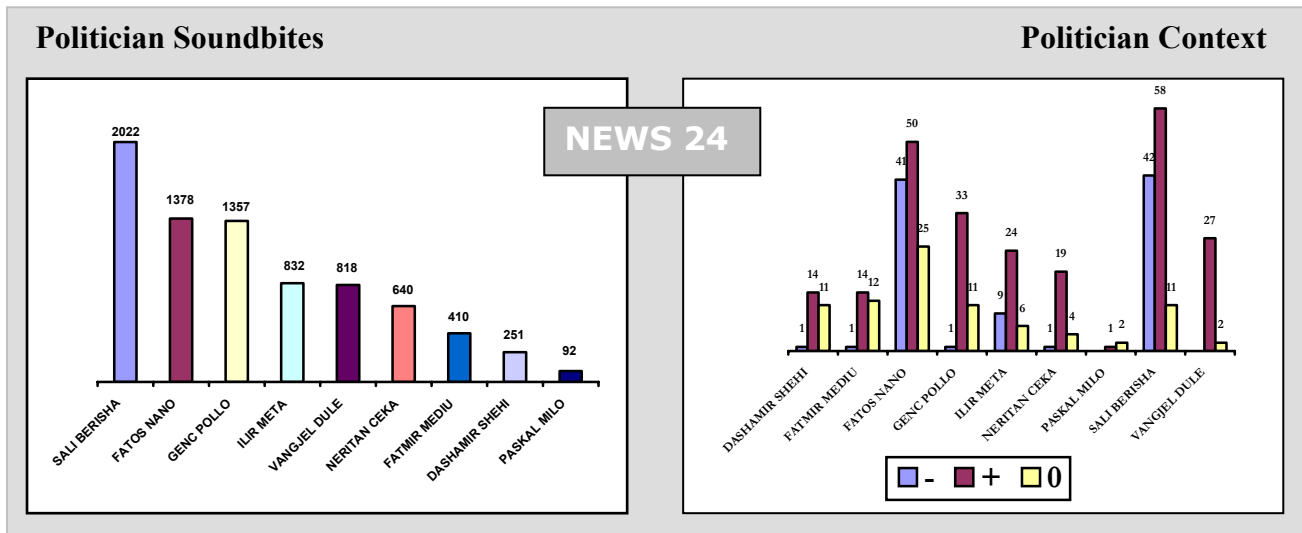
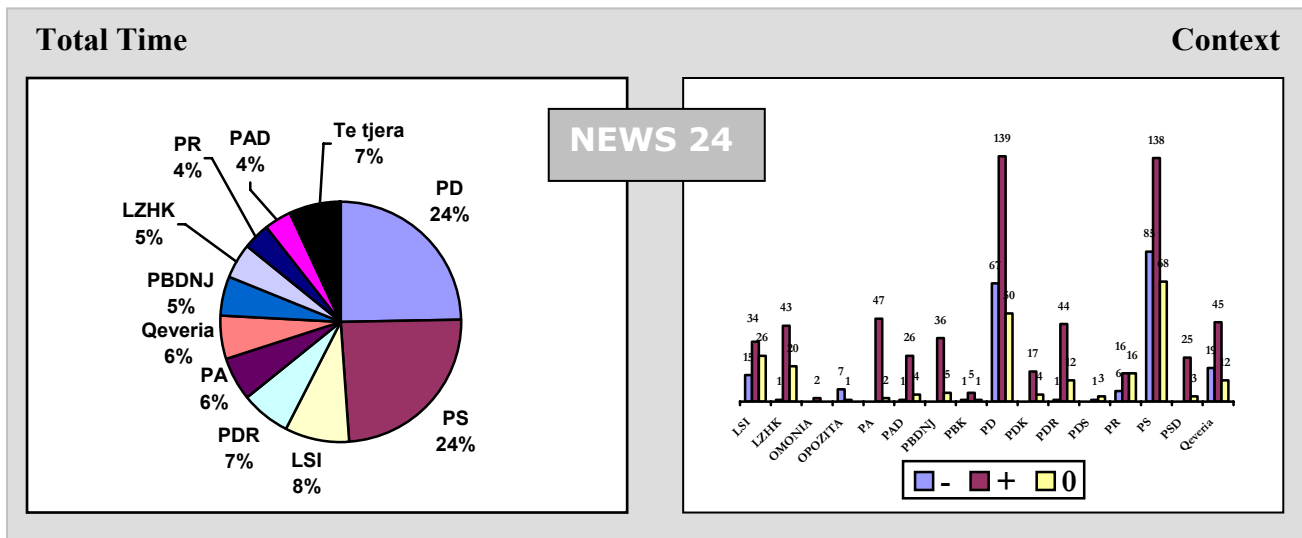
# KLAN

While in the previous monitoring period, Klan TV favored the SP slightly over the DP, during this third monitoring period the opposite tendency was noted – slightly more support for the DP. SMI received even less time than before (10 %) though in a mainly positive context. Among politicians, Fatos Nano and Sali Berisha received the most coverage, though both appeared in the same negative context.



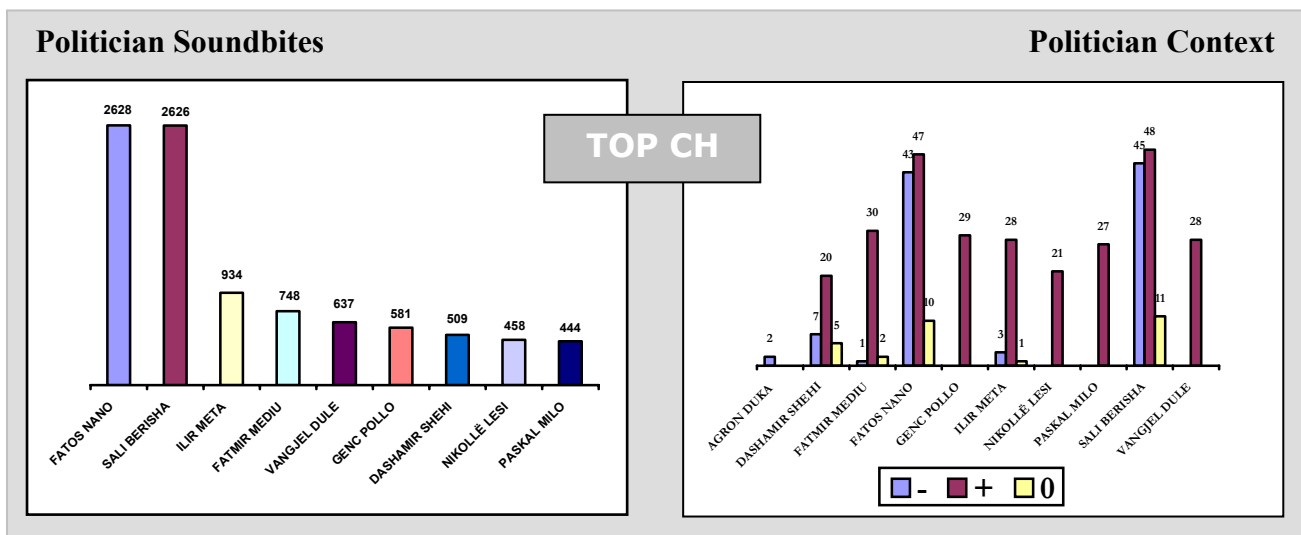
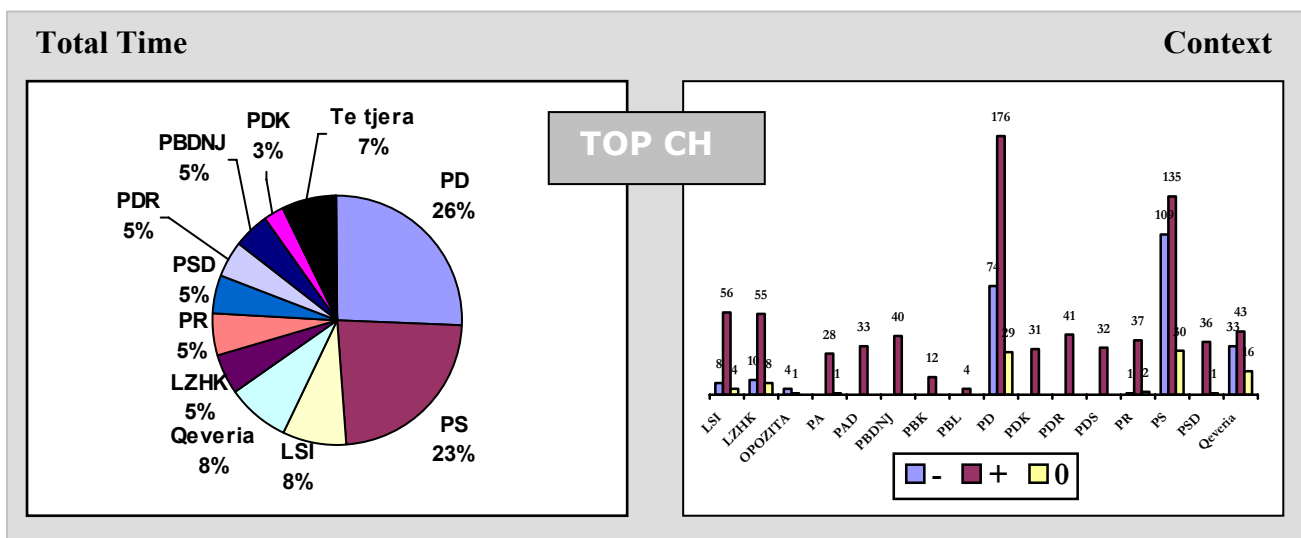
# NEWS 24

News 24 had an almost balanced report during this monitoring period for the two main political subjects, the SP and the DP. Reporting on the Government was significantly reduced from 18% to 6%, as well as the time for SP from 30% to 24%. The reporting on the Government and the SP was in a mainly positive context. Coverage time for the DP has also decreased by 3%, remaining mainly under positive light. Smaller parties received more time than in previous monitoring periods. Among the politicians, Fatos Nano has a lower percentage of soundbites than the percentage for Berisha.



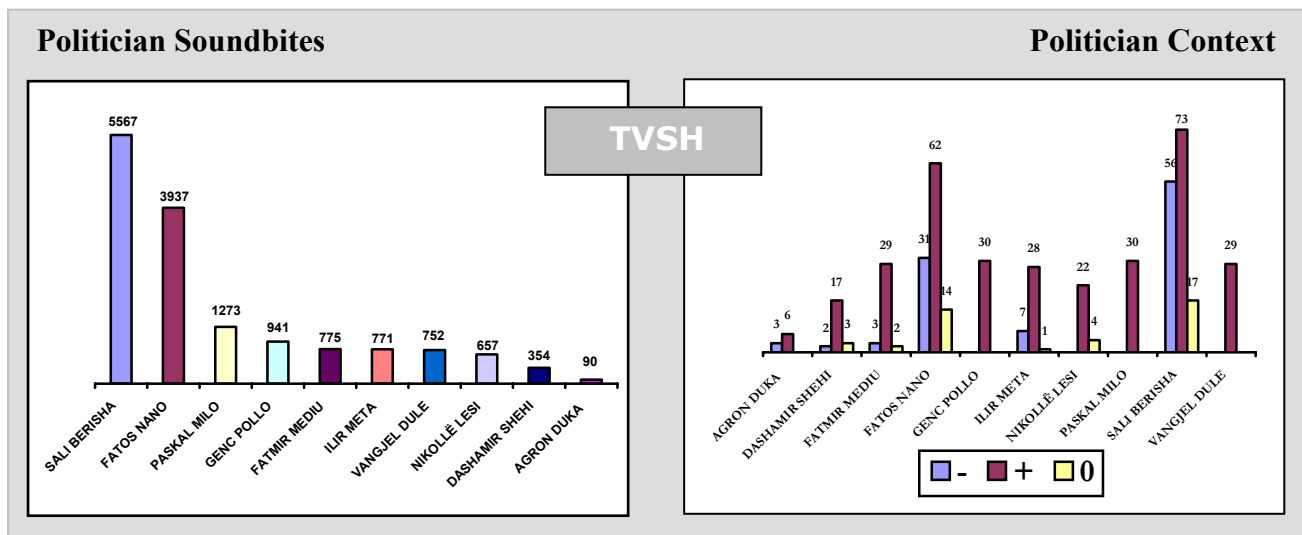
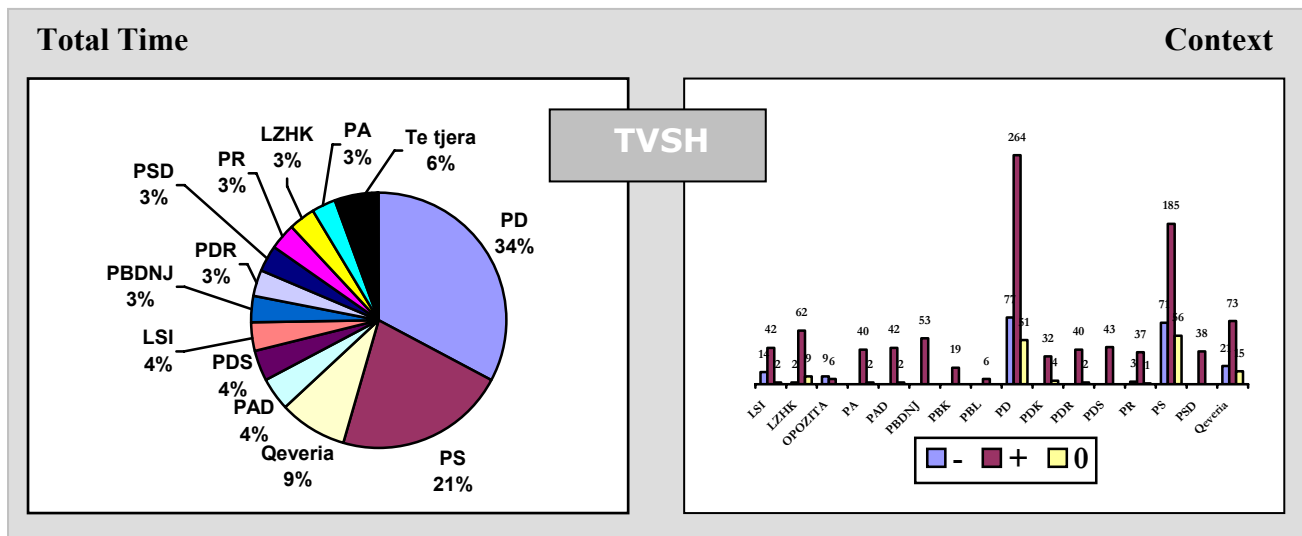
## TOP CHANNEL

Top Channel's reporting during this monitoring period was slightly more balanced than in the previous one. There was a reduction in the time dedicated to the Government (from 12% to 8%) and the SP, as well as a slight increase for DP time (5%) and smaller parties. The difference between negative and positive context for DP reporting increased. A change noted is the context for SP: previously it was more negative than positive, now it has changed to more positive than negative. Top Channel continues to give more information on smaller parties, mainly in a positive light. During this period, the main portion of soundbites have been from Fatos Nano and Sali Berisha. The context for these two politicians is mainly balanced, which is different from the previous period when Fatos Nano was mainly in negative light.



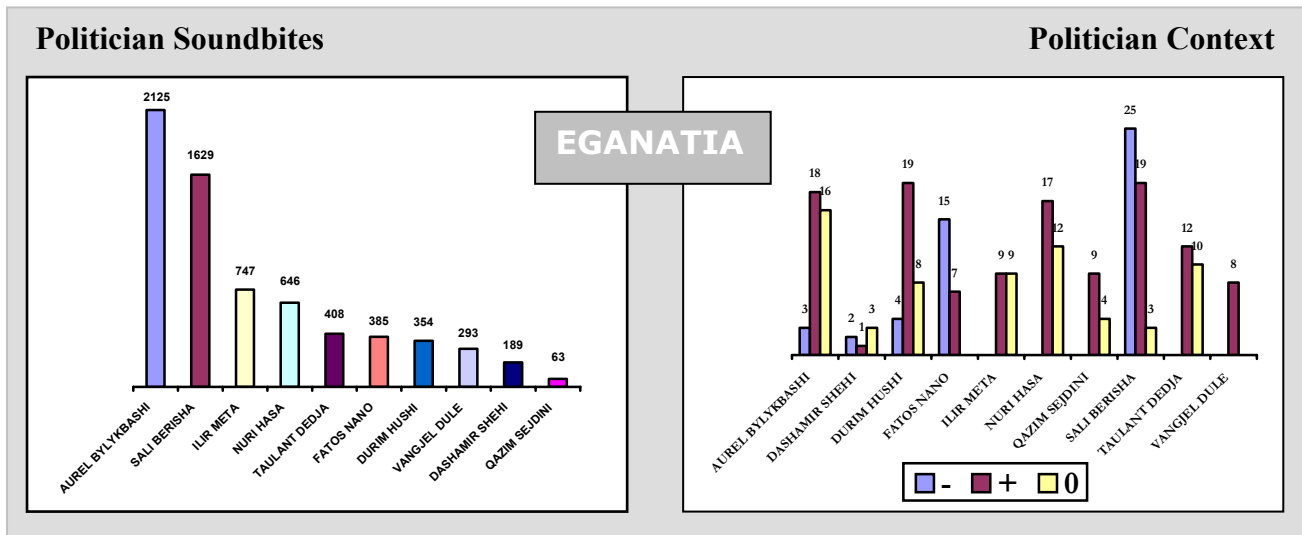
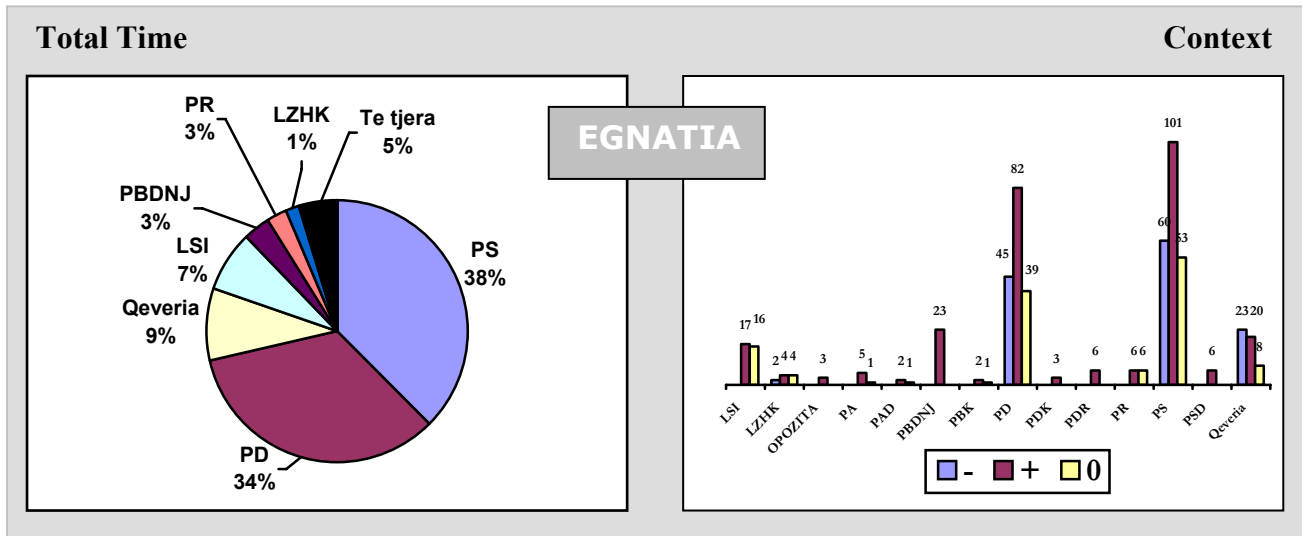
# TVSH

TVSH's coverage has changed significantly compared to the previous monitoring periods, as the station increased the time and positive context for DP (with 10%) and at the same time reduced the time for SP (11%) and Government (6%). If we compare the context for DP and SP we will see a clear advantage for DP. For the first time in this station's coverage, the opposition leader, Sali Berisha, received more time in soundbites than Fatos Nano. If we bear in mind that in the two previous reports, SP and Government were clearly at an advantage, now we can say that in this period there has been a change towards more balance. Reporting on the smaller parties and their leaders was almost entirely positive without any critical approach, which cannot be considered balanced.



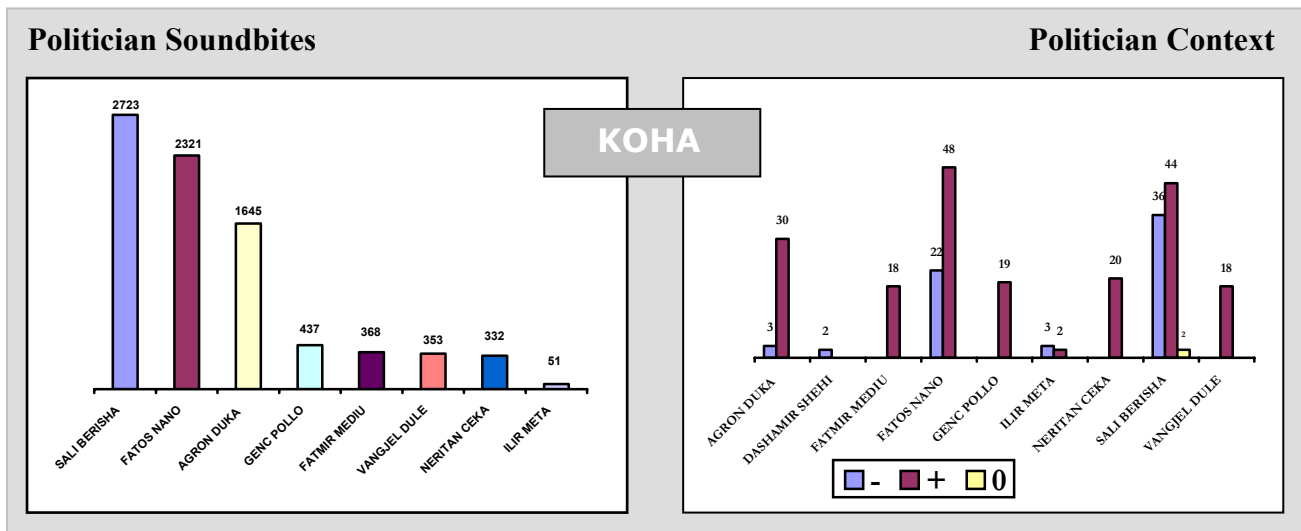
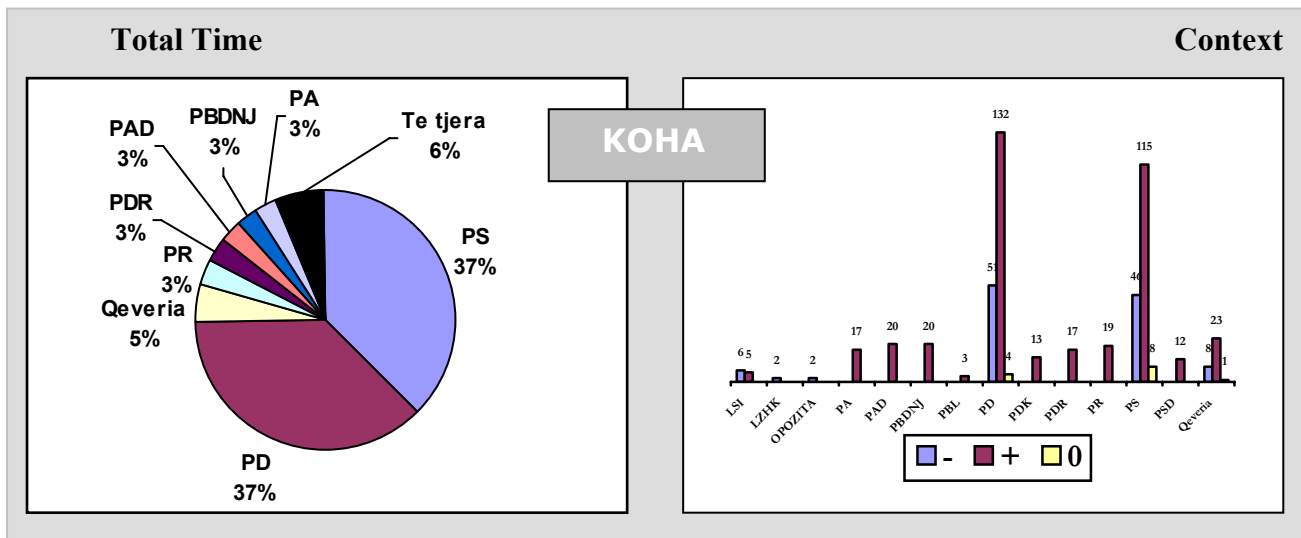
# EGNATIA

Egnatia television broadcasted a more balanced reporting than in the previous monitoring period, giving SP 38% of total time and with a mainly positive context. DP took 7% more time than in the previous period, mainly in a positive context. Since Egnatia is a local television it is understandable that its information was focused on the local candidates, which explains why they have received the biggest portion of soundbites. Thus Aurel Bylykbashi had a good portion of time for soundbites, followed by Sali Berisha; Fatos Nano is in the sixth place in the table of soundbites.



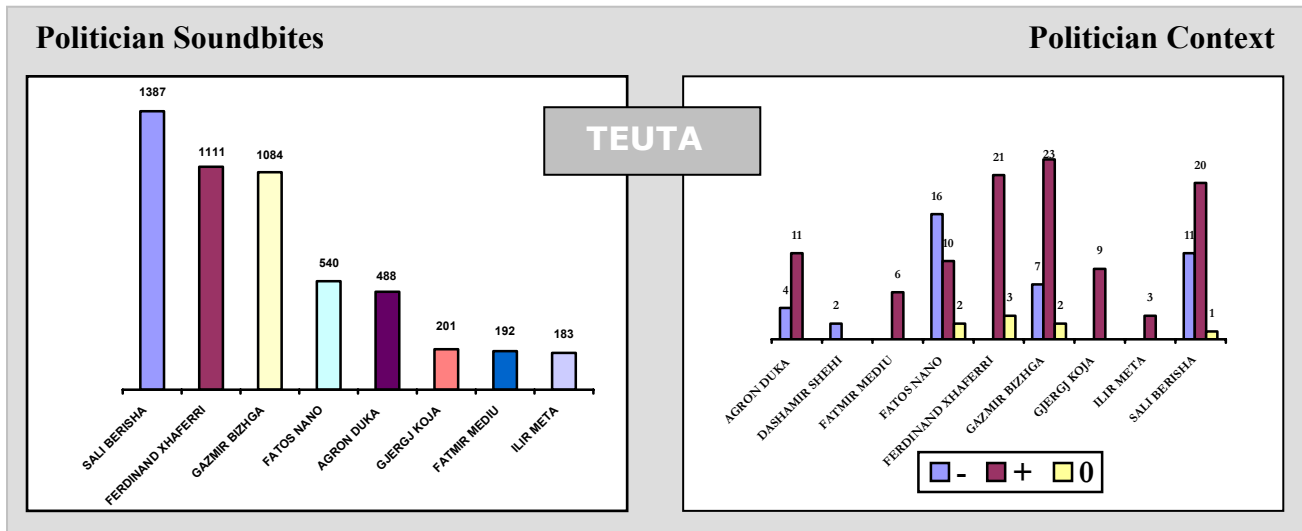
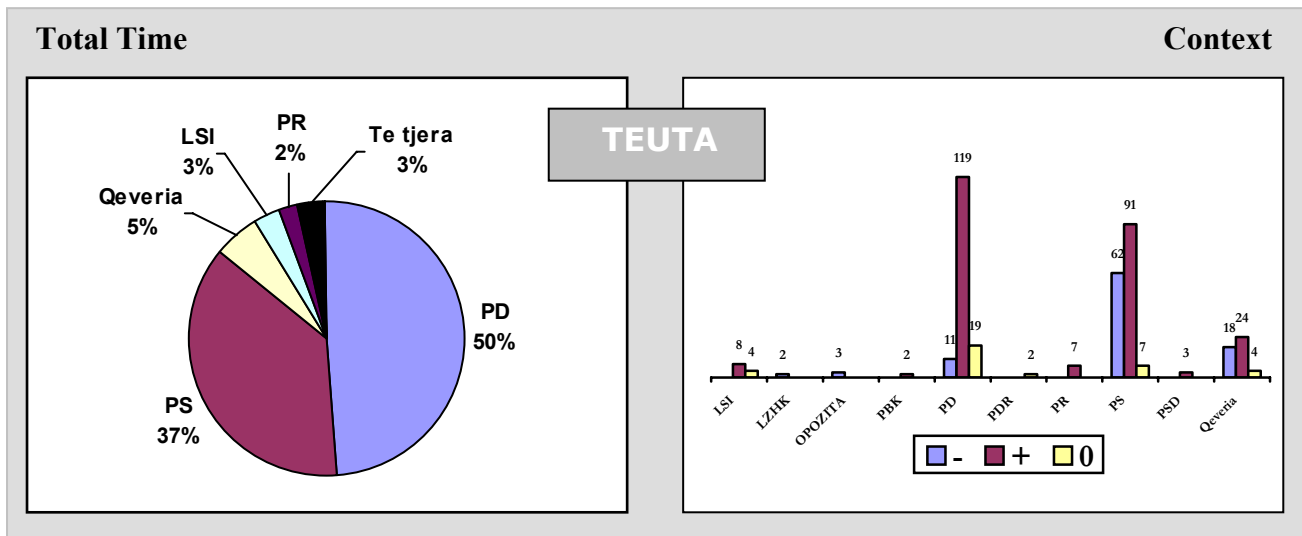
## KOHA TV

Koha TV significantly reduced the amount of time dedicated to Government reporting from 15% to 5%, as well as the time for the SP from 41% to 37%, covering for both subjects in a mainly positive context. As a result of this change, the reporting for these two is more balanced. At the same time, this television increased the time dedicated to the DP to 8%, reporting mainly under positive light. While in the first report, Fatos Nano had an advantage in soundbites, in this period it is Sali Berisha that has an advantage in soundbites. However, looking at the coverage of politicians in context, Fatos Nano has more positive than negative context when compared to Berisha. One characteristic of Koha TV is the lack of time dedicated to SMI and an almost daily report on Agron Duka (SP).



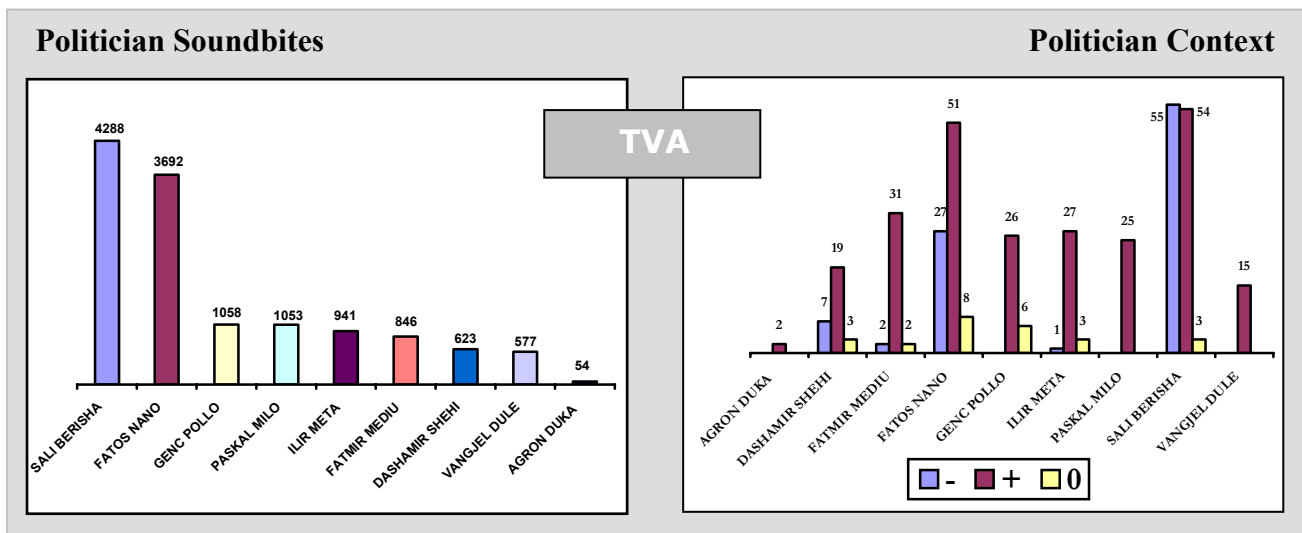
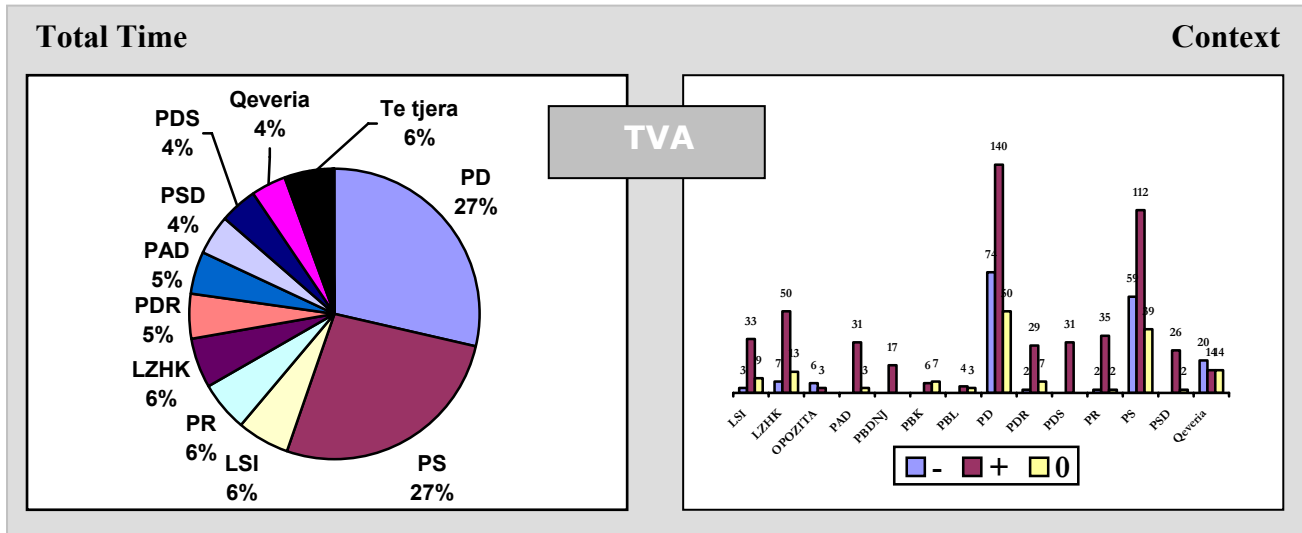
# TEUTA

The most visible characteristic for Teuta TV is the fact that 87% of the total time is dedicated to the DP and SP. However, Teuta continues to support DP, with 50% of the total time almost all in a positive context. Reporting for the SP is somewhat more positive than negative. As in the previous report, Sali Berisha continues to have the biggest proportion of soundbites. A good proportion of soundbites was dedicated to the candidates running in Durres, Ferdinand Xhaferri and Gazmir Bizhga. These two politicians were mainly reported in a positive light.



# TVA

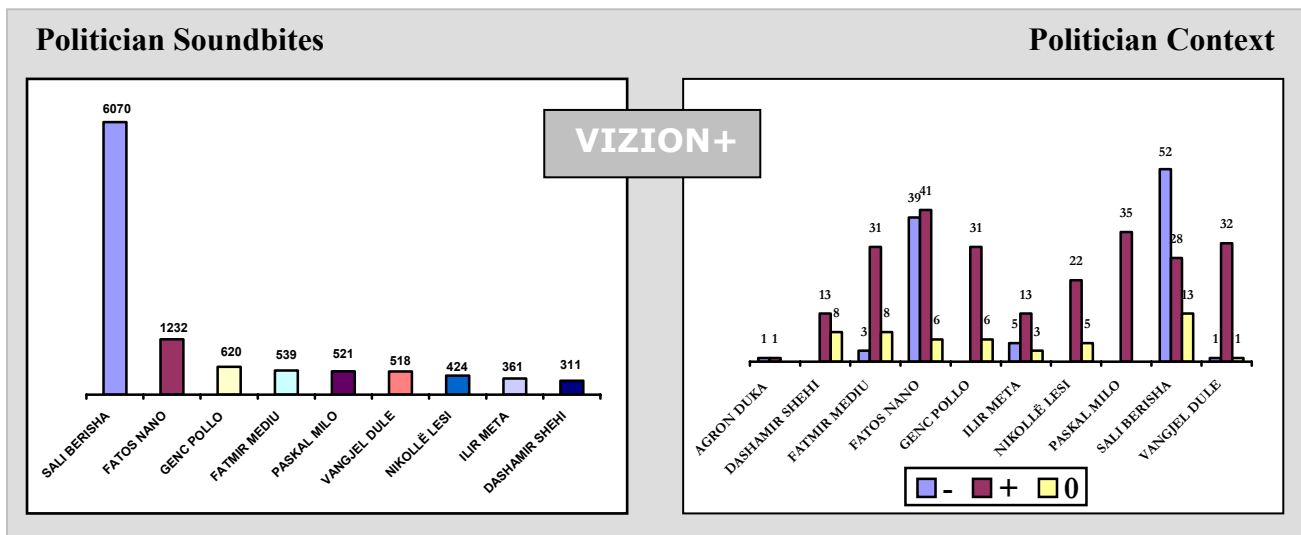
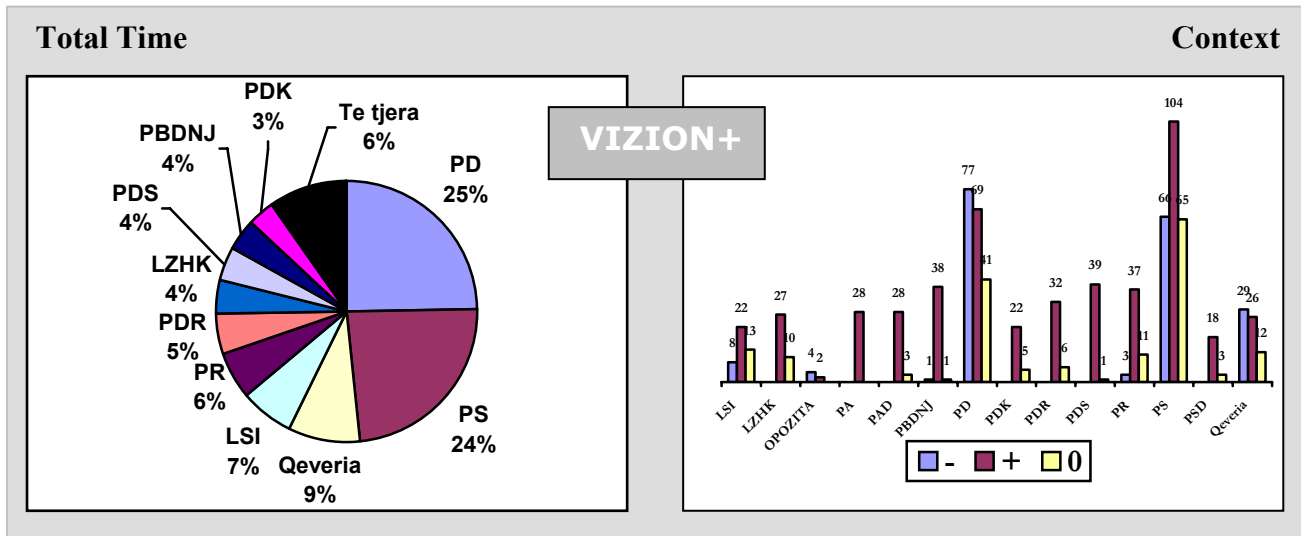
TVA kept a good balance between SP and DP, improving the percentage dedicated in total time to these two political subjects. Reporting on Government events was reduced by almost half compared to the previous reporting period. The context for these subjects is almost the same as previously, mostly under positive light. The time in soundbites has not changed; Sali Berisha and Fatos Nano have the biggest proportion of soundbites. This report notes the negative context of Sali Berisha against the positive one for Fatos Nano.





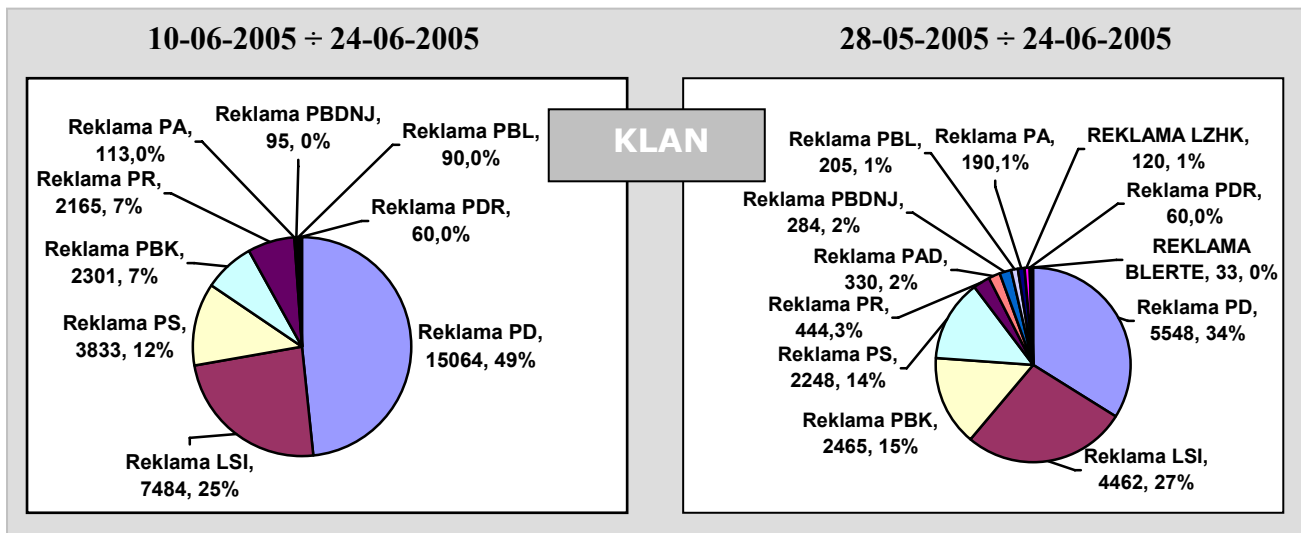
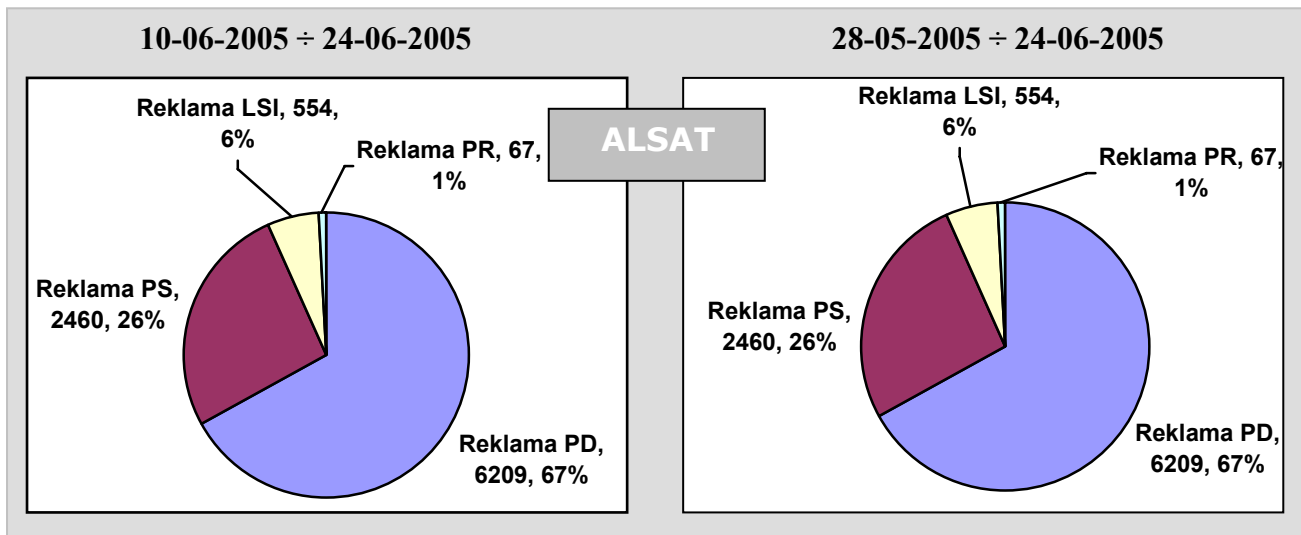
## VIZION +

During this period, Vizion + reporting was not balanced in terms of context for the two main parties and their leaders, speaking more positively for SP and Nano than for DP and Berisha. During this period the biggest change has been in the slight reduction of time for SP (5%). Vizion + increased the negative information for DP and Berisha this time compared to the last monitoring period. Sali Berisha dominates in soundbites time (five times more) than Fatos Nano. Berisha was presented under more negative light than Fatos Nano. This makes this television positioned more towards left than previously. Smaller parties were presented mainly under positive light.



## ELECTORAL SPOTS

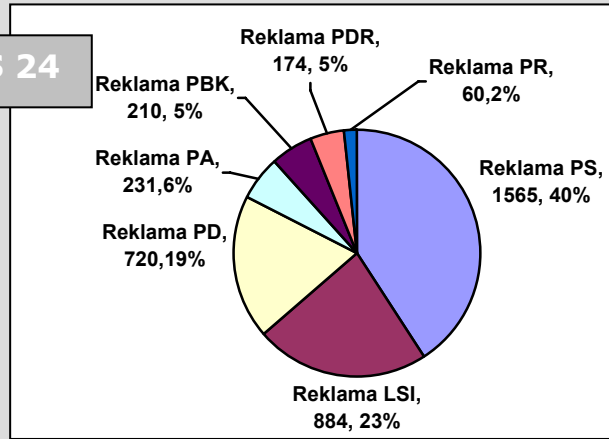
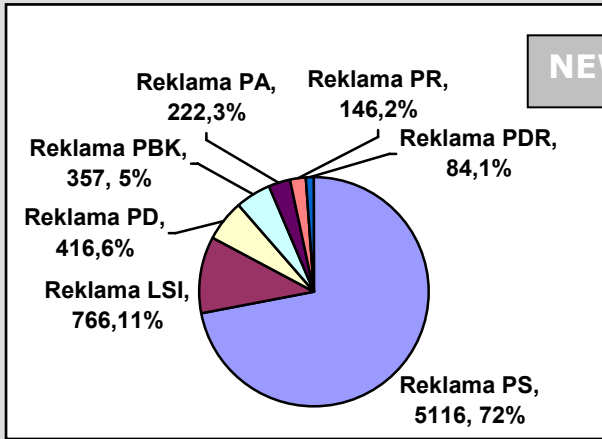
This section contains information on electoral spots broadcasted from each of the televisions for different political parties from 15.00 to 24.00 in two periods from June 10 to June 24, and from May 28 to June 24. This does not show the television stand towards any political party, because the parties broadcast their spots on the television station of their choice. The reason for two graphs is that during the previous two weeks of electoral campaign DP broadcasted no spot.



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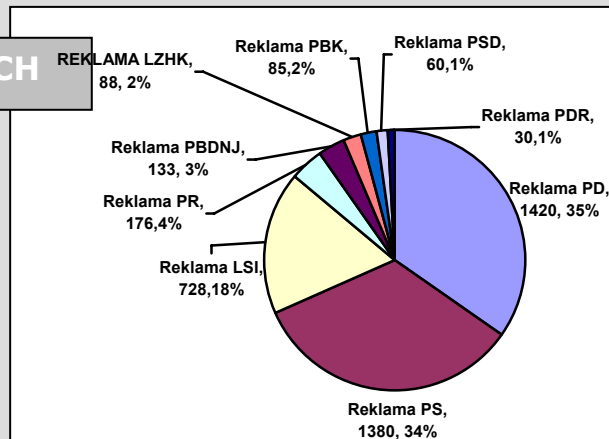
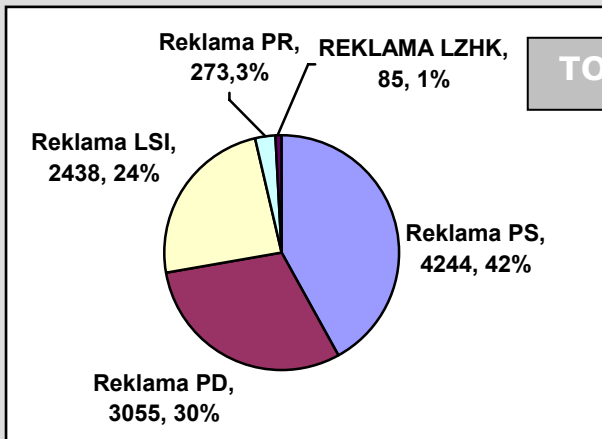
**NEWS 24**



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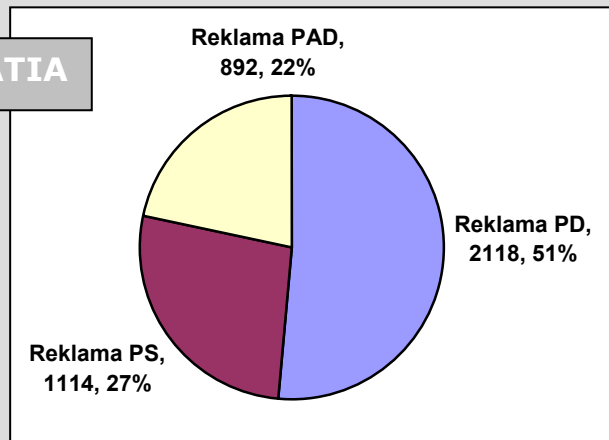
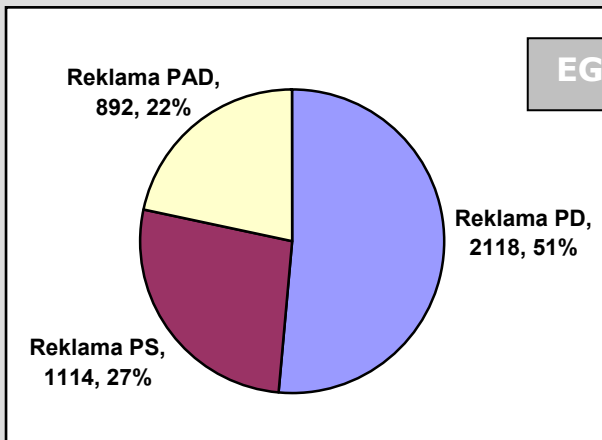
**TOP CH**



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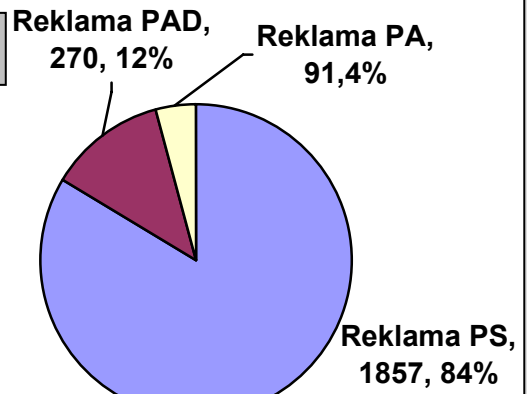
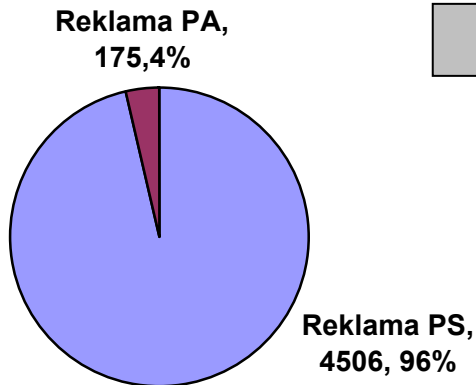
**EGNATIA**



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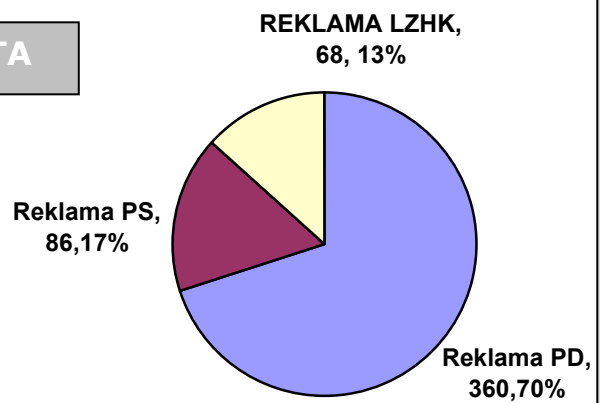
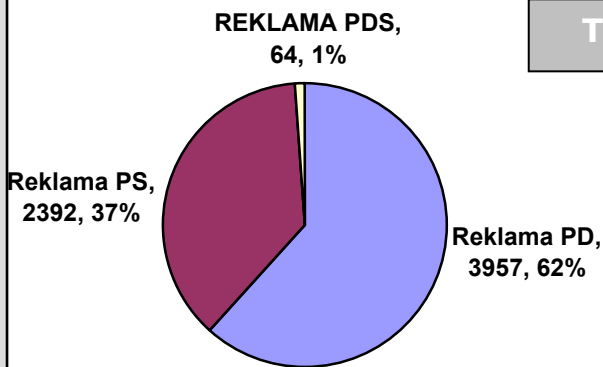
**KOHA**



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28-05-2005 ÷ 24-06-2005

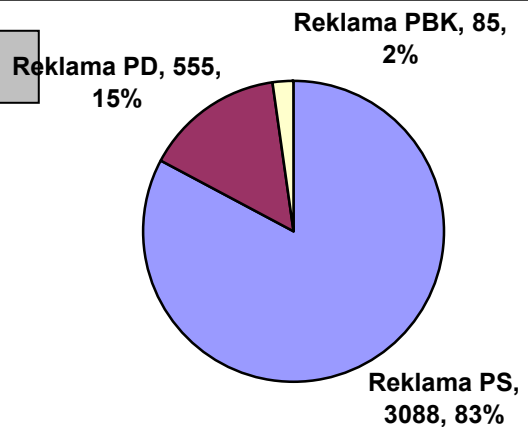
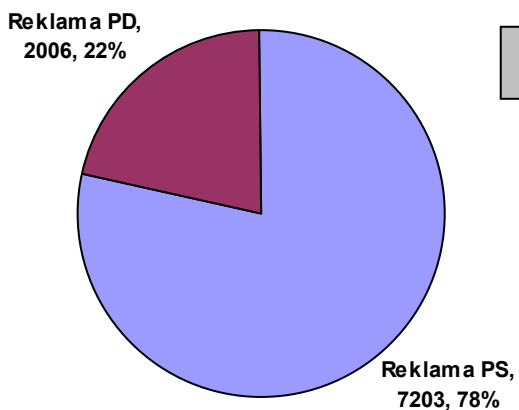
**TEUTA**



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28-05-2005 ÷ 24-06-2005

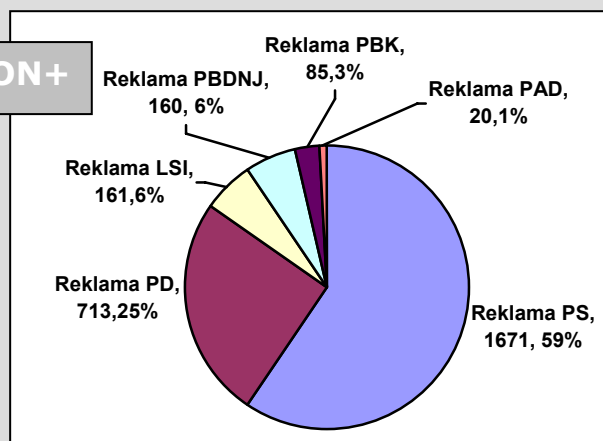
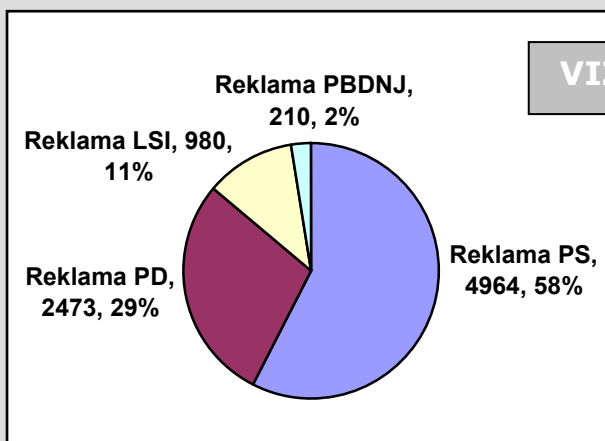
**TVA**



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28-05-2005 ÷ 24-06-2005

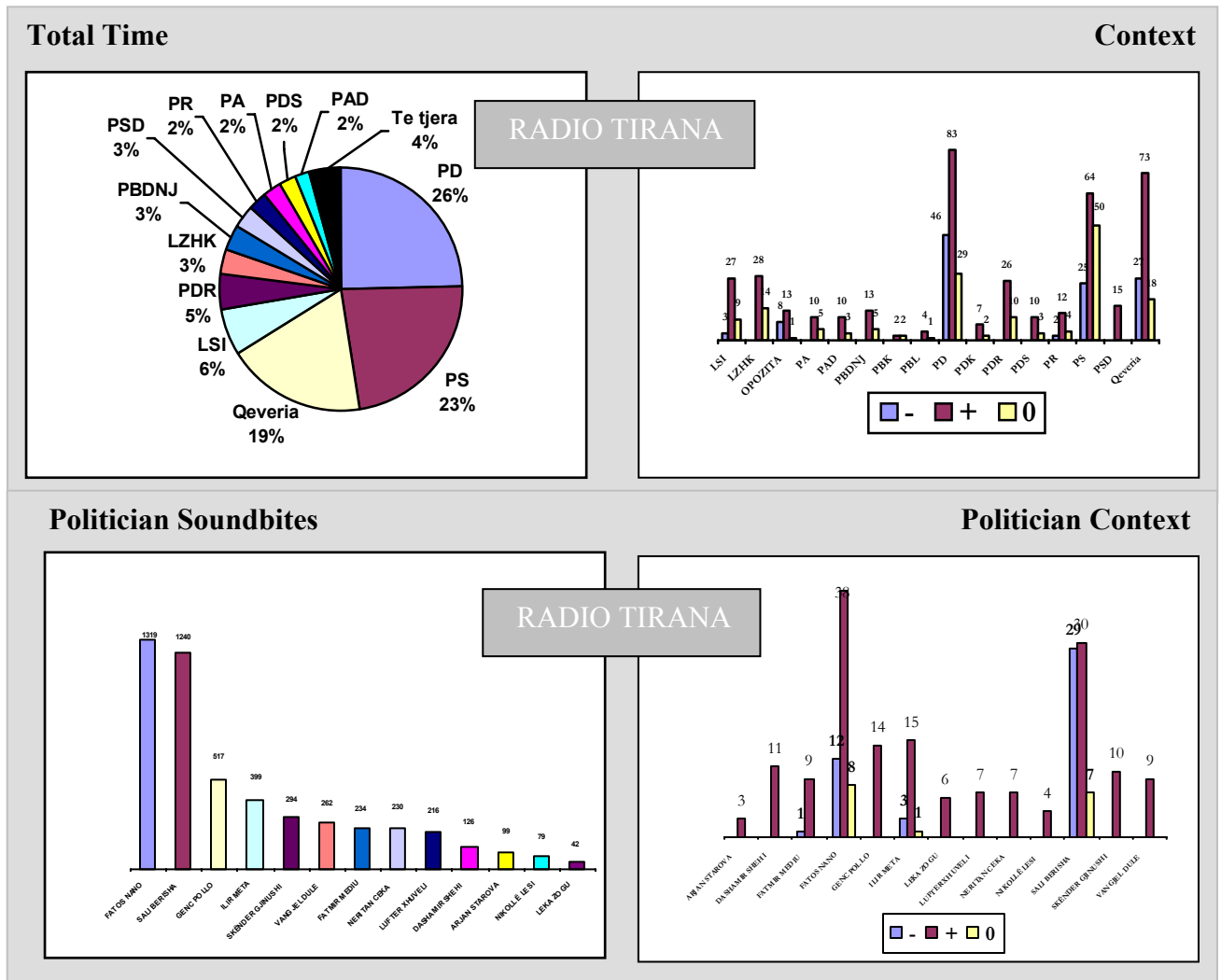
VIZION+



# RADIO

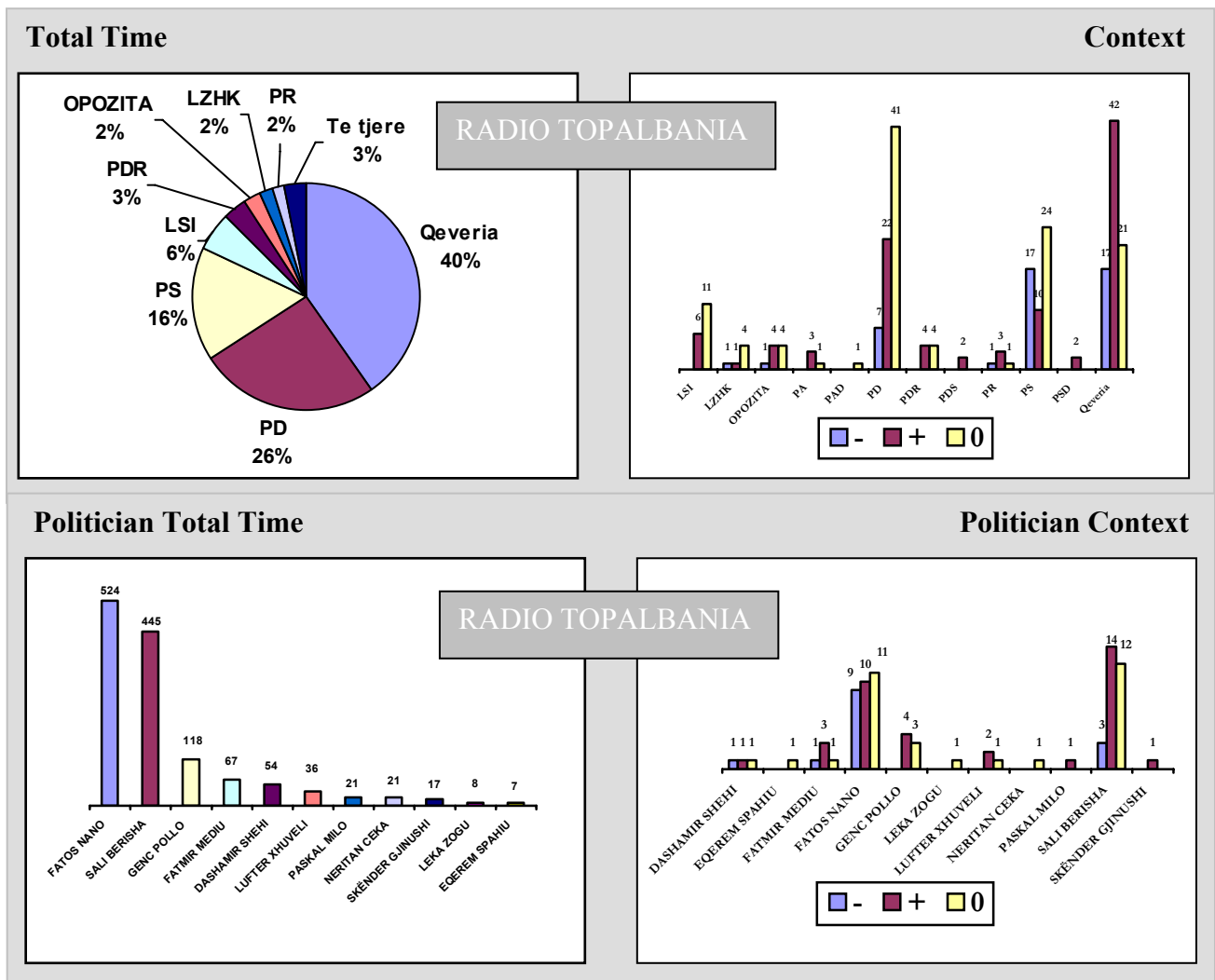
## RADIO TIRANA

Radio Tirana's coverage was more balanced during this monitoring period than in the previous ones. However the SP and the Government continue to have advantage regarding the information presented for them under positive context. This time DP has an increase in time presented in a mainly positive context (almost 15%). Radio Tirana dedicated less space to SP and Government this period with 18% less (from 60% to 42%). SP and DP time was more balanced, while the percentage of time that this radio dedicated to SMI and NDM increased by 3% and 2% respectively, making their total percentages 6% and 3%. Radio Tirana allocated more time to smaller parties, increasing their number in news editions. Different from previously, Sali Berisha and Fatos Nano had the almost the same time in the direct use of microphone of Radio Tirana, while Fatos Nano was more under positive light and the context for Sali Berisha was almost balanced.



# TOPALBANIA RADIO

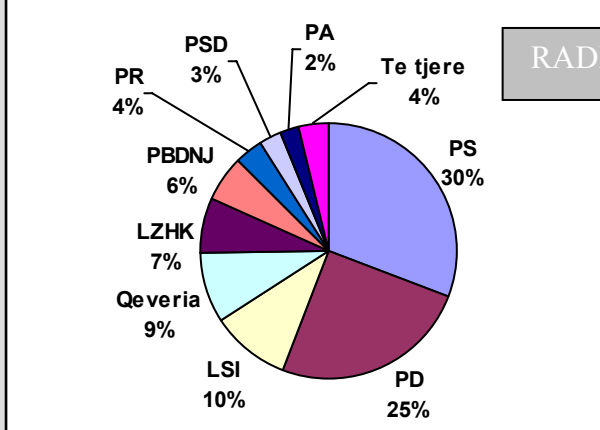
During this period, TopAlbania radio dedicated more time to reporting on the Government in a mainly positive context than before. The SP had 10% less time than DP but with more negative context in the information provided for it, while DP has three times more positive contexts than negative ones. In a change from previous reporting periods, we note a decrease of 16% for SP time. This came as a result of the increase in the time dedicated to the Government, which increased by 20%. In total the time for SP and Government changed from the previous phases. Time for DP is almost the same as in the previous periods. Among politicians, Nano continues to earn more time than Berisha, almost 15% more, but the context for Nano is balanced, while the context for Berisha is clearly positive.



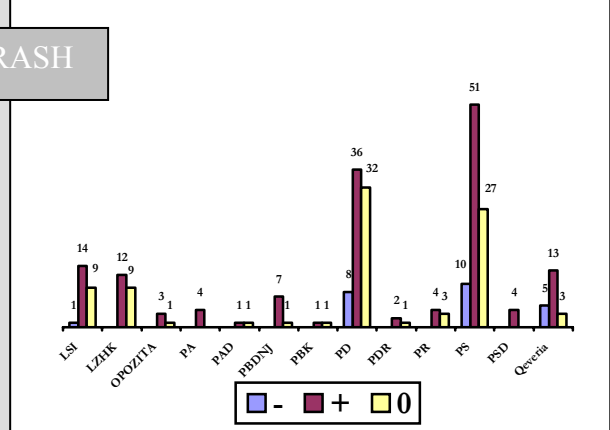
# RADIO RASH

Radio Rash dedicated less time to the Government and a good proportion of time to smaller parties. Amount of coverage for the Government continued to decline, reaching 9% (the time dedicated to Government coverage was 28% and 16% during the previous two monitoring periods). This can be considered as positive for this electoral campaign. SP and DP continue to have the biggest proportion of time under positive light, but SP has advantage compared to DP speaking about positive context. Time dedicated to SP increased from 26% to 30%, while time for DP decreased from 30% to 25% of the total time. This radio continues not to broadcast politician soundbites. This radio broadcasted no electoral spots during this period, except for the spot for the independent candidate Elisabeta Dosti. This candidate's 38-second spot was broadcasted 34 times for a total of 1,292 seconds (per spot).

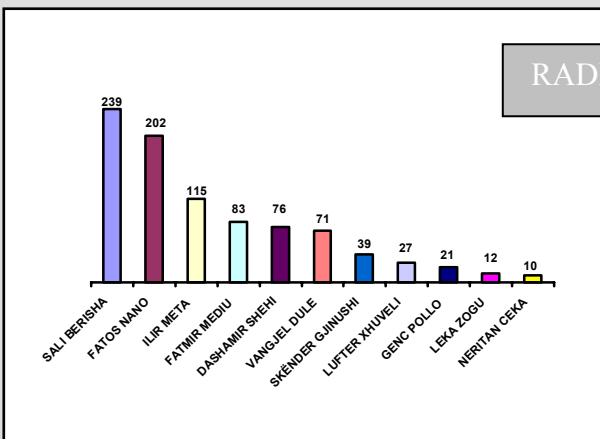
**Total Time**



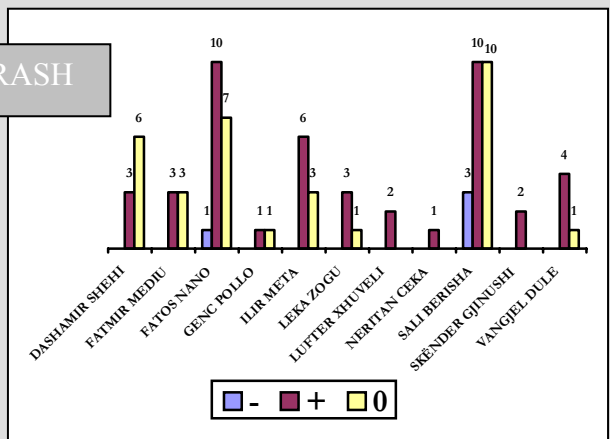
**Context**



**Politicians Total Time**



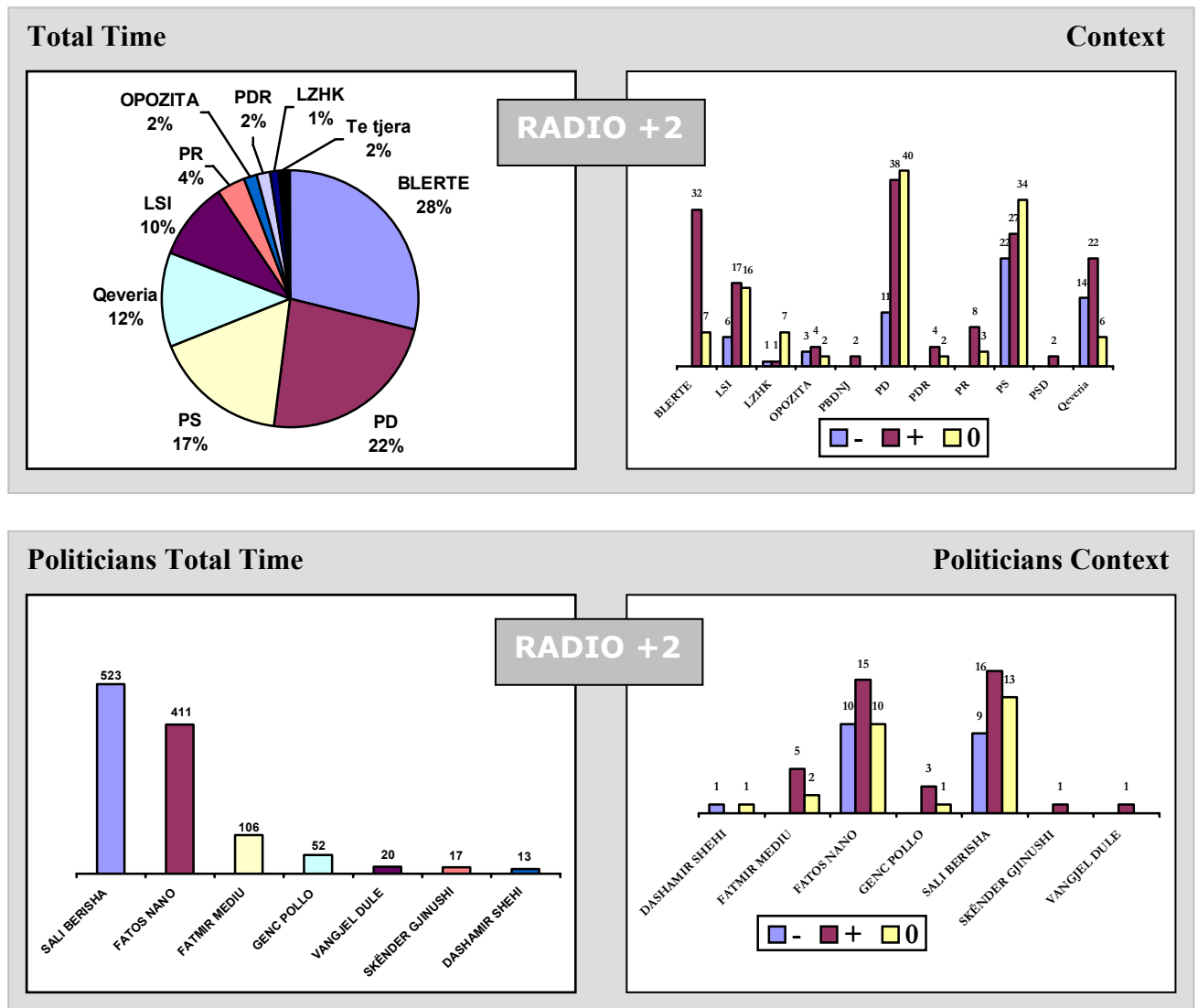
**Politicians Context**





## RADIO +2

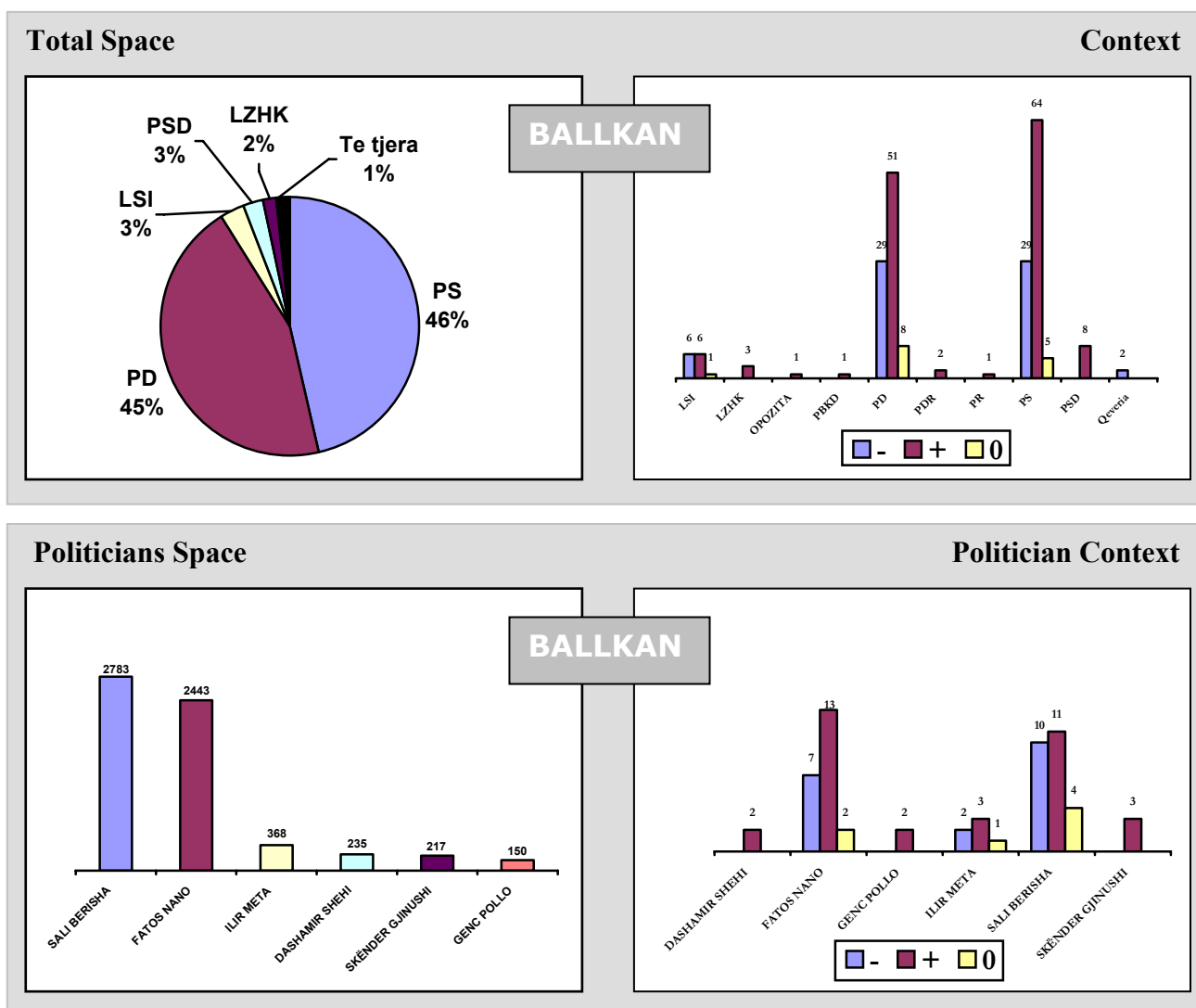
Radio +2's time dedicated to the Government decreased by 22% compared to 34% being in the previous monitoring period. Coverage time for the DP was 22%, increasing with 5% compared to the second monitoring period. During this period the Green Party received 30% of the total time, increasing with 11% from the previous period. The political forces are mainly in a positive context, while the Government has more negative sequences than positive and more than in the second period. The Green Party continues not to have any negative sequence in this radio. In total time, Sali Berisha differently from previously has a slight advantage compared to Fatos Nano (during the second period Fatos Nano had three times more time than Sali Berisha). Regarding the context of these politicians, they are almost under the same positive context, same levels. This radio continues not to broadcast politician soundbites. The only case has been that of the Green Party chairwoman, Brixhida Kokedhima.



# NEWSPAPER

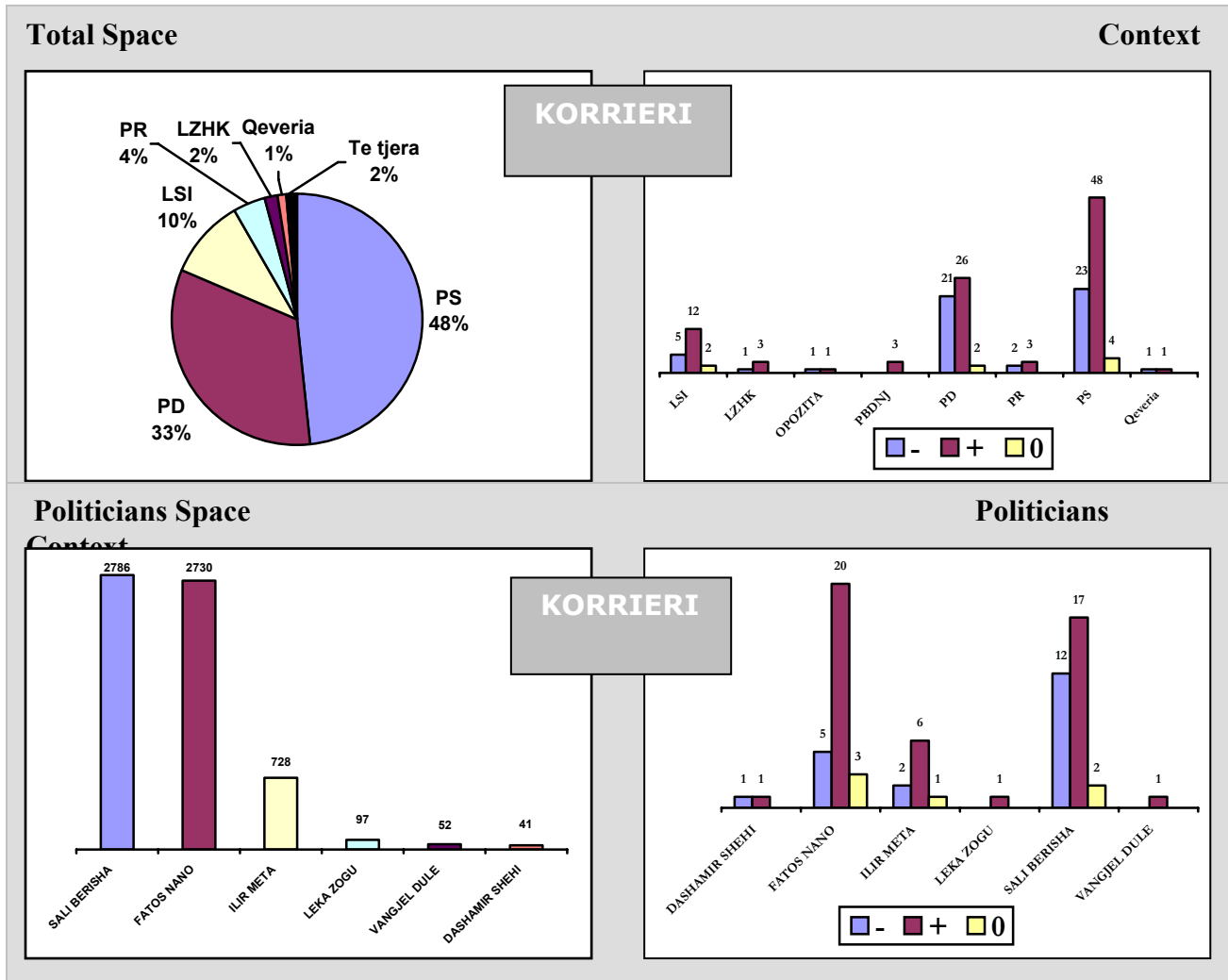
## BALLKAN

Ballkan increased the space for the two main parties up to 91% of the total space for political parties. This paper appears balanced in the space given to main parties and main politicians and in terms of context as well. This paper dedicated no space to Government activities different from the two previous periods, when SP and Nano had the main place mainly under positive context. SMI and SDP are placed equally in this paper, while the context for them is the same level negative and positive. SDP chair, Skënder Gjinushi is not positioned same as last monitoring period, but still is the fourth politician in the pages of this paper. SMI and Ilir Meta have less space in Ballkan than in other papers.



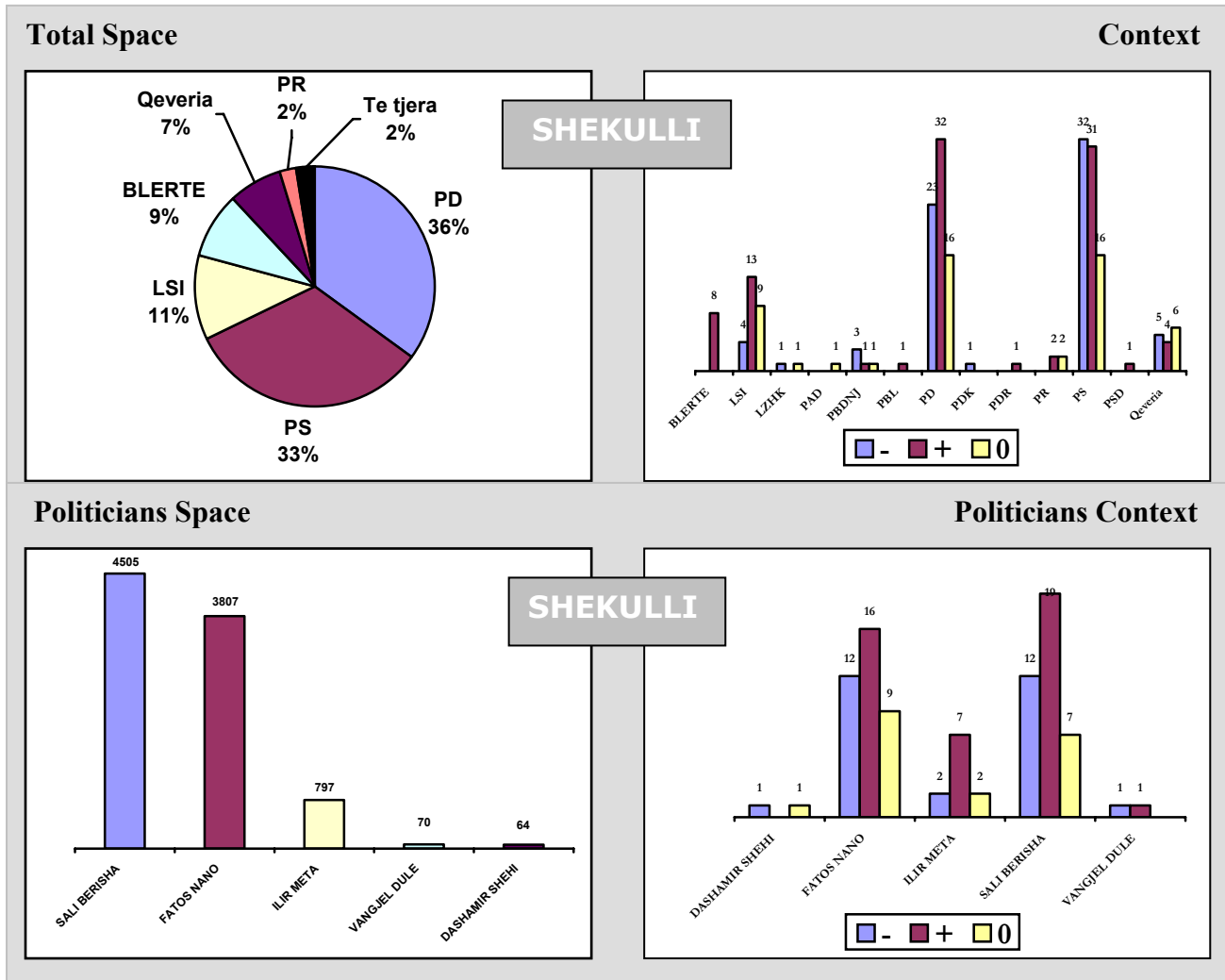
# KORRIERI

Korrieri provides more coverage of the SP and Nano, dedicating 48% space to SP mainly under positive context. Coverage of SMI has decreased. DP has 33% of the space mainly under balanced context. Nano appeared largely under positive context, in contrast with Berisha that has more negative context than that for Nano. Space dedicated to Ilir Meta decreased as well, while the fourth position among parties shifted from NDM to RP.



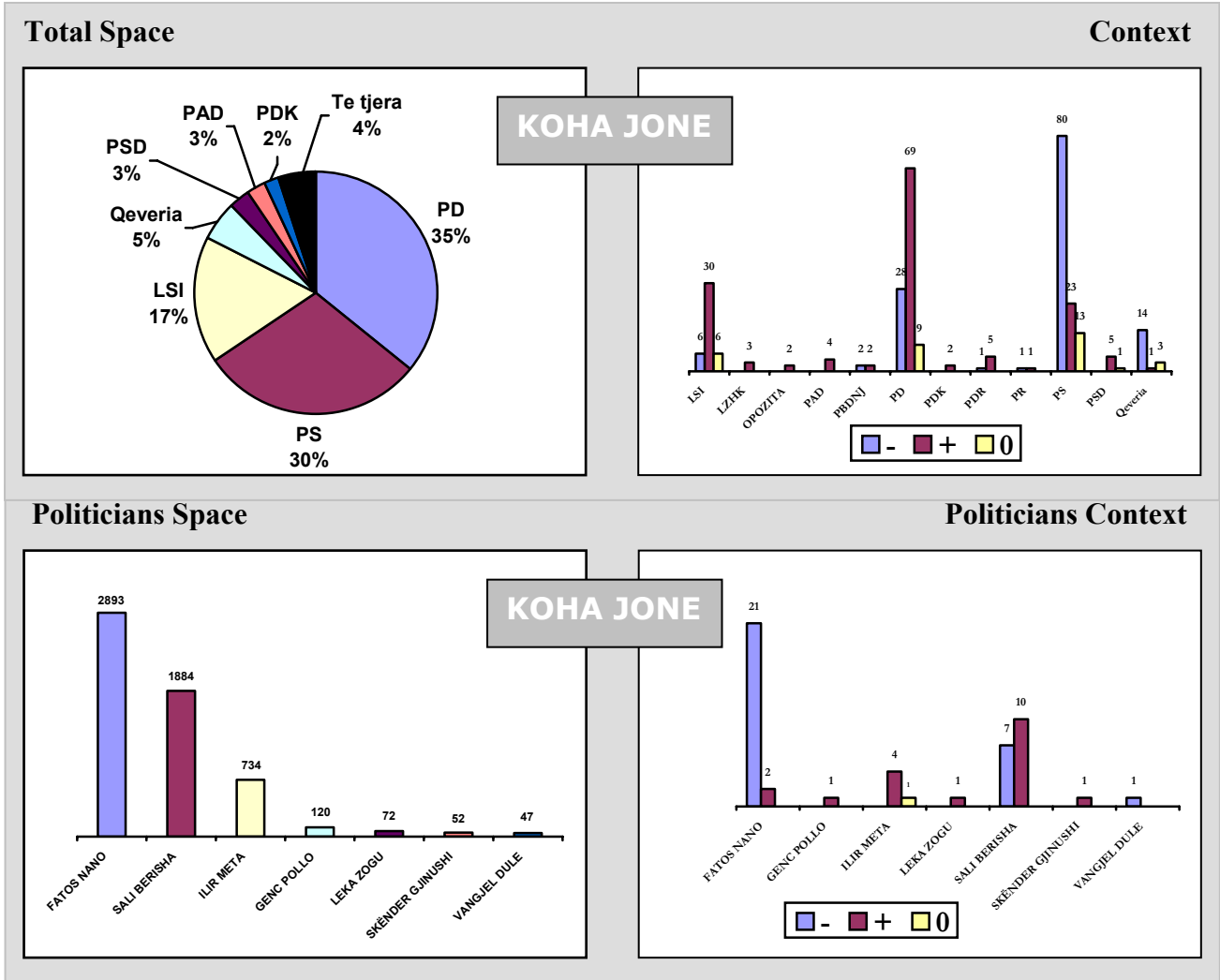
# SHEKULLI

Shekulli has tended to balance its coverage of the two main parties. SP and DP have almost the same percentage of space, although DP is first treated mainly under positive context, while SP mainly under balanced context. SMI is in the third place and Green Party in the fourth. There is acceptable space for Government reporting mainly under balanced context. This paper is mostly balanced towards main politicians, Nano and Berisha.



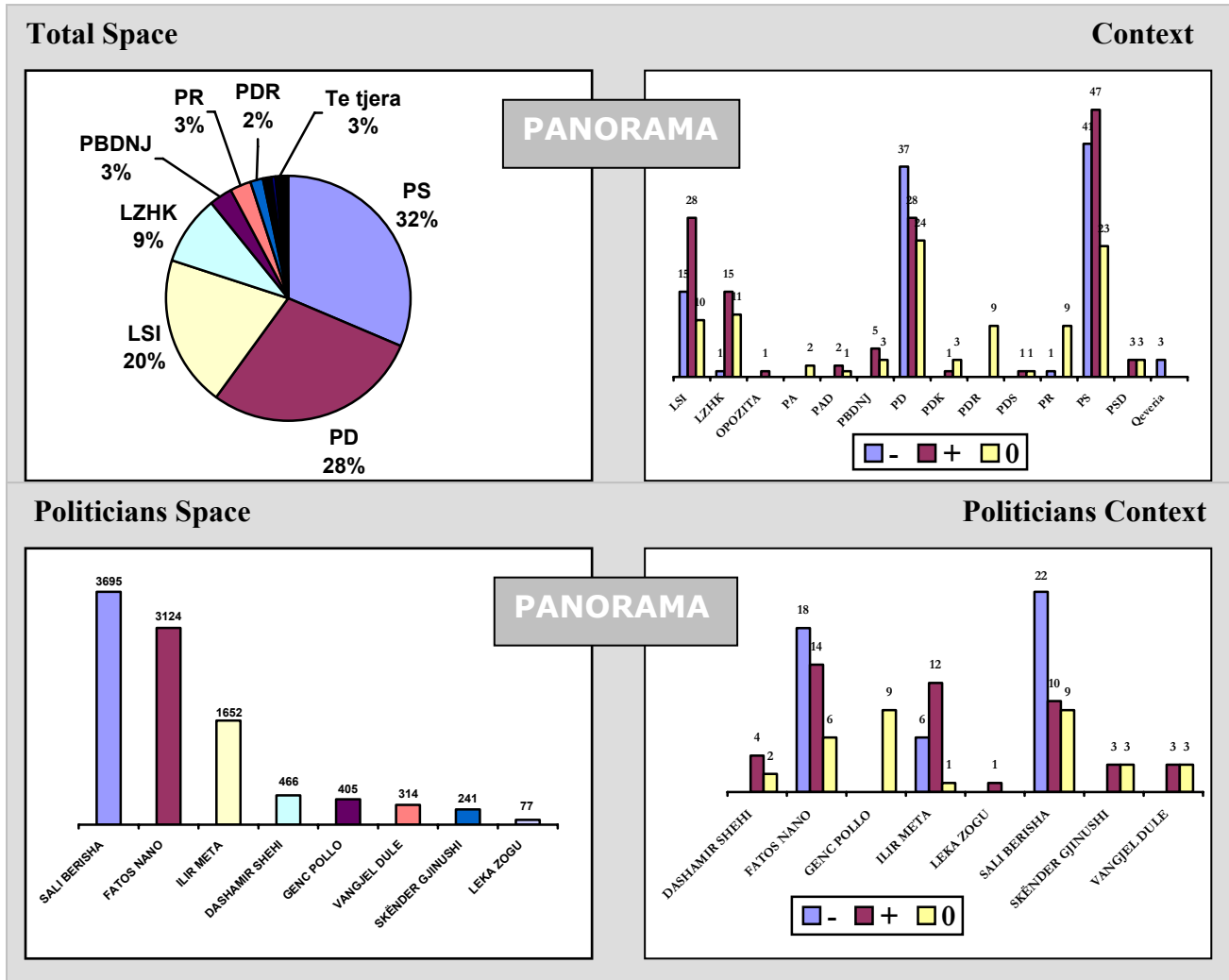
# KOHA JONË

Koha Jone continues to support the opposition and DP, giving them more space and mainly positive context. SP has 30% of the total space in a negative context. This paper focused its articles in mostly criticizing Fatos Nano in 50% of the space. Berisha has 32% of the space slightly under positive context. SMI is in the third place and amongst politicians Meta has the same position under positive context. Government received half of the space that had in the previous monitoring period and mainly under negative context.



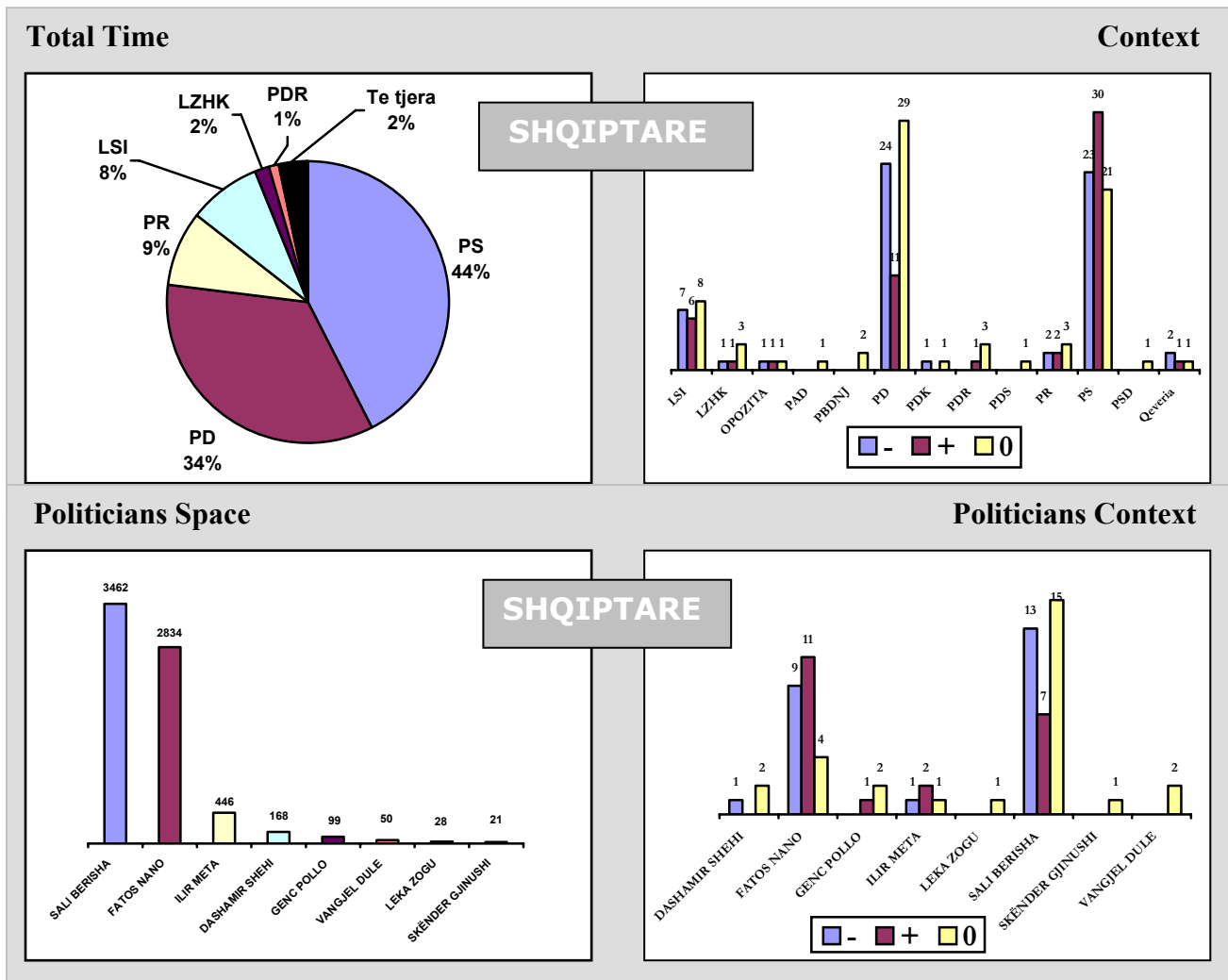
# PANORAMA

Panorama is mainly balanced towards the two main politicians, Nano and Berisha, in the given space; there is slightly more positive context for SP. DP is slightly positioned under negative context. SMI remains the third party in space and context just as in the previous monitoring periods (mainly positive), as well as Ilir Meta among the politicians, but still with less space compared to the previous monitoring periods.



# GAZETA SHQIPTARE

Gazeta Shqiptare still offers more positive coverage of SP than any other party. The space provided for this party is 44% and 34% for DP. Amongst politicians though, Berisha has more space than Nano but mainly under negative context and Nano under positive context. Differently from the previous periods when RP did not have any space at all, this time this party gained 9% of the total space positioning itself as the third party in this paper and shifting SMI in the fourth place. The same situation is amongst politicians, RP chair, Fatmir Mediu is in the third place and Ilir Meta, SMI chair is in the fourth place. There is no other substantial change from the previous monitoring periods.



## MEDIA COVERAGE OF WOMEN POLITICIANS IN THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

This section shows the relationship between the list of five men and women that got most significant time in television, radio, and newspapers as separate categories. We chose this method because if we would present all men and women in graphs and then compare them, result would be influenced by number of men in politics and in candidates list and it would not show the impact of media reporting about women opinions. Even now this is not only resulting of media behavior but mixed, about women positions and importance in political parties also.

An imbalance is still visible in all media. There is an improvement in the coverage of women politicians in the electoral campaign in newspapers and radio, while in television the percentage is the same as in previous report. The total time for women politicians in newspapers increased from 5% to 6%, and in radio from 5% to 7%. Television stations are still keeping covering women at the rate of 2%. As in the previous report, not even one woman is among list of first 10 politicians that got time to directly speak.

