This project is co-funded by the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development of the European Union

EU Grant Agreement number: 290529
Project acronym: ANTICORRP
Project title: Anti-Corruption Policies Revisited

Work Package: WP 6 Media and corruption

Title of deliverable: D 6.1 Extensive content analysis study on the coverage of stories on corruption

Human Assisted Content Analysis of the print press coverage of corruption in Romania

Due date of deliverable: 30 June, 2016
Actual submission date: 30 June, 2016

Authors: Natalia Milewski, Valentina Dimulescu (SAR)

Organization name of lead beneficiary for this deliverable: UNIPG, UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PERUGIA

Project co-funded by the European Commission within the Seventh Framework Programme		
Dissemination level		
PU	Public	X
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
Co	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

The information and views set out in this publication are those of the author(s) only and do not reflect any collective opinion of the ANTICORRP consortium, nor do they reflect the official opinion of the European Commission. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the European Commission is responsible for the use which might be made of the following information

CONTENTS

1. Differences among news outlets p. 3

2. Variations over time p. 15

3. Conclusions p. 19

Appendix p. 21

Human Assisted Content Analysis of the print press coverage of corruption in Romania

1. Differences among news outlets

This study analyzes the frequency, diversity, and content of the news articles on corruption in four Romanian national daily newspapers: *Jurnalul Național*, *România Liberă*, *Ziarul Financiar*, and *Libertatea*. The Human Assisted Content Analysis (HACA) focuses on 558 news articles and other journalistic content (editorials, pamphlets, investigations, etc.) randomly selected out of an overall sample of 4,628 news articles published from 2009 to 2013.

One out of every two articles on corruption (259/46.4%) was published in *România Liberă*. This daily is a quality, center-right news outlet oriented mostly towards "hard news" content (politics, economics, and society). A lower number of news articles on corruption (178 or 31.9%) appeared in the daily newspaper *Jurnalul Naţional* (see Table 1). *Jurnalul Național* is considered to be a generalist, center-left daily, offering a diverse content of journalistic materials, mostly news, editorials, and articles on political and social issues. *Ziarul Financiar* and *Libertatea* had the lowest number of news articles focusing on corruption. The economic daily *Ziarul Financiar* published only 8.6% (48) out of the total number of journalistic content examined, whereas in the *Libertatea* tabloid we identified 13.1% (73) news pieces on corruption. Since *Ziarul Financiar* and *Libertatea* are niche publications, they structure the content in accordance with the profiles of their target audience. *Libertatea* mostly focuses on short entertainment oriented articles and news pieces in order to attract an audience with medium level education, whereas *Ziarul Financiar*'s editorial policy is based on economic news stories corroborated with extensive articles targeting a more sophisticated public.

The abovementioned aspects, which define the editorial policy of the four newspapers under scrutiny, habitually determine their interest in the topic of corruption. The low number of news

articles in the two niche dailies (*Ziarul Financiar*, *Libertatea*) correlated with the number published in the general newspapers indicates a restrictive rendering of this phenomenon in the Romanian press. Broadly speaking, niche news outlets have stricter editorial rules and criteria (specialization, audience, impact, conflict, etc.). Consequently, they limit the list of topics considered important because these do not reflect an immediate social need or are not of interest for their target audience. In this respect, corruption is a marginal topic for niche media outlets. However, mainstream dailies (*Jurnalul Naţional*, *România Liberă*) display more interest in the corruption phenomenon. They retrieve information from official/ governmental sources who are also the main generators of news on corruption.

Table 1: Distribution of corruption articles by newspaper from 2009 to 2013

	Frequency	Percent
Ziarul Financiar	48	8.6
Jurnalul Naţional	178	31.9
România Liberă	259	46.4
Libertatea	73	13.1
Total	*558*	*100.0*

The number of news articles exceeded the other genres in all the newspapers in our sample (284/50.9%). Amongst the other journalistic genres, we can list editorials (121/21.7%), short texts (95/17%), journalistic investigations (28/5%), interviews (25/4.5%), satiric articles/pamphlets (2/0.4%), and the verbatim reports from various corruption cases (0.5%/3) (see Table 2). One out of every two corruption-related pieces of information were news articles, both in the general newspapers (*România Liberă* (128/49.4%) and *Jurnalul Naţional* (89/50.0%), and in the niche dailies *Ziarul Financiar* (31/64.6%) and *Libertatea* (36/49.3%) (see Table 3). Editorials ranked second, especially in the case of *Jurnalul Naţional* (47/26.4%) and *România Liberă*, (64/24.7%), in contrast to the *Libertatea* tabloid (26/35.6%) where short texts about corruption outnumbered editorials. The number of journalistic investigations on corruption was quite low as compared to the other genres. *Ziarul Financiar* (6/12.5%), *România Liberă* (15/5.8%), and *Jurnalul Naţional* (7/3.9%) usually take over journalistic investigations published by other newspapers; quite rarely do they publish investigations carried out by their own journalists.

The prevalence of certain journalistic genres in these newspapers is a result of both each publication's specificity (general, niche, of public interest, influenced by the owners' political

and economic interests, etc.), and their level of access to various information on corruption cases. In Romania, judicial institutions that handle corruption cases are the ones that generate major news stories on corruption, while the media merely represents their mouthpiece. From this point of view, news articles are the easiest genre with which to convey official information produced by judicial institutions, whereas editorials are the easiest way to comment on the news. Other genres, such as journalistic investigations would be more difficult to conduct, especially in financial terms. Cases in which journalistic investigations led to penal investigations of individuals involved in various acts of corruption, especially those in high level offices, are quite rare. Probably the most notorious example is the "Gala Bute" case which was featured in the sports newspaper Gazeta Sporturilor (more details will be available in the forthcoming case studies). This particular case, which also involves former minister of Regional Development and Tourism, Elena Udrea, started from a journalistic investigation run by Gazeta Sporturilor's editor in chief, Cătălin Tolontan.

Table 2: Main type of the articles

	Frequency	**Percent**
News article	284	50.9
Editorial, commentary	121	21.7
Journalistic investigation	28	5.0
Interview	25	4.5
Short text	95	17.0
Satirical articles	2	0.4
Other	3	0.5
Total	*558*	*100.0*

Table 3: Main type of the articles by newspapers (%)

	Ziarul Financiar	**Jurnalul Național**	**România Liberă**	**Libertatea**	**Total**
News article	64.6	50.0	49.4	49.3	50.9
Editorial, commentary	4.2	26.4	24.7	11.0	21.7
Journalistic investigation	12.5	3.9	5.8	-	5.0
Interview	4.2	6.2	3.5	4.1	4.5
Short text	14.6	11.2	16.2	35.6	7.0
Satirical articles	-	0.6	0.4	-	0.4
Other	-	1.7	0.0	-	0.5
Total	*100.0* (48)	*100.0* (178)	*100.0* (259)	*100.0* (73)	*100.0* (558)

Results from content analysis point out that most news articles published in the Romanian daily newspapers under scrutiny have covered the corruption phenomenon at national level (411/73.7%) (see Table 4). Local news constituted just 11.3% (63) of overall published content, and international news amounted to approximately 14% (77). The percentage of national news articles about corruption was almost the same in all monitored newspapers, over 70%, with a slightly higher value in the case of *Libertatea* and *Jurnalul Naţional* (*Libertatea* – 78.1%, *Jurnalul Naţional* – 76.4%, *România Liberă* – 71%, *Ziarul Financiar* – 70.8%) (see Table 5). *Ziarul Financiar* and *România Liberă* published the most articles on international corruption cases. In this respect, Italy, USA, Russia, and China were the countries that were mentioned most often, while the European Union was one of the few international organizations associated with corruption in Romania and in other European countries, primarily because of the measures it imposed to diminish this phenomenon at a political and social level. The large number of national news reports about corruption compared to international ones shows that the Romanian newspapers, as well as other types of media, avoid international issues because of financial shortages that do not allow them to send correspondents abroad, most international news being taken from foreign news agencies' websites.

Table 4: Main event arena

	Frequency	**Percent**
International	35	6.3
Foreign country	42	7.5
National	411	73.7
Local	63	11.3
Other	4	0.7
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	3	0.5
Total	*558*	*100.0*

Table 5: Main event arena by newspapers (%)

	Ziarul Financiar	Jurnalul Național	România Liberă	Libertatea	Total
International	10.4	5.6	6.2	5.5	6.3
Foreign country	12.5	6.7	8.5	2.7	7.5
National	70.8	76.4	71.0	78.1	73.7
Local	6.3	10.7	12.7	11.0	11.3
Other	-	-	1.2	1.4	0,7
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	-	0.6	0.4	1.4	0.5
Total	*100.0* (48)	*100.0* (178)	*100.0* (259)	*100.0* (73)	*100.0* (558)

News reports on European funds associated with corruption were quite few – only 2% (11) of the total number of articles analysed (558). This topic was of particular interest to *România Liberă* and *Ziarul Financiar* which devoted 2.3% (6) and 4.2% (2) of their content to this topic, as compared to approximately 1% in the other cases (see Table 6). Information about European funds was not absent from the media's agenda, yet this topic was not tied to corruption, but rather to the issue of the low level of absorption of European funds. For example, from 2007 and 2013 Romania absorbed 33.47%[1] of the total funds allocated by the European Union for various national development projects. In some news articles, corruption was mentioned as a potential risk to the absorption of EU funds inasmuch as unresolved cases of corruption could lead to a potential reduction of funds allocated by the EU to Romania.

Table 6: News articles about EU funds by newspapers (%)

	Ziarul Financiar	Jurnalul Național	România Liberă	Libertatea	Total
Yes	4.2	1.1	2.3	1.4	2.0
No	52.1	61.8	54.4	69.9	58.6
Not applicable	43.8	37.1	43.2	28.8	39.4
Total	*100.0* (48)	*100.0* (178)	*100.0* (259)	*100.0* (73)	*100.0* (558)

More than half of the articles in the sample reported corruption as a marginal phenomenon. This considerably reduced the number of news articles relevant for the present analysis. 53.6% (299)

[1] Ministry of European Funds (2004). "Balance 2014. Absorption of structural and cohesion funds": http://www.politicaromaneasca.ro/files/documente%20nou/Absorbtiafondurilorstructuralesidecoeziune.pdf, accessed on March 5, 2016.

of the total 558 news articles were excluded from the content analysis because they portrayed corruption as only a marginal phenomenon (the concept was used generically, sometimes as a substitute for terms such as moral and political "depravity" or "immorality") (see Table 7). As such, out of the 259 news articles used in the final stage of the analysis, 64.4% (47) were published in *Libertatea*, 45.9% (119) appeared in *România Liberă*, 42.1% (75) in *Jurnalul Național*, and only 37.5% (18) in *Ziarul Financiar*. (see Table 8).

Table 7: Marginal/Not marginal corruption related cases

	Frequency	**Percent**
Not marginal	259	46.4
Marginal	299	53.6
Total	*558*	*100.0*

Table 8: Marginal/Not marginal corruption related cases by newspapers (%)

	Ziarul Financiar	**Jurnalul Național**	**România Liberă**	**Libertatea**	**Total**
Not marginal	37.5	42.1	45.9	64.4	46.4
Marginal	62.5	57.9	54.1	35.6	53.6
Total	*100.0* (48)	*100.0* (178)	*100.0* (259)	*100.0* (73)	*100.0* (558)

Single corruption cases involving important political, economic, administrative and sports figures were considered relevant events worthy of coverage by the media. Therefore, 93.6% (44) of the total news reports on corruption published by *Libertatea*, 86.6% (103) of the articles in *România Liberă*, 84% (63) of the news articles in *Jurnalul Național* and 72.2% (13) of the journalistic content published in *Ziarul Financiar* presented one or several cases of corruption that generated public interest and ratings (see Table 9). Among these, worth pointing out are the cases involving former Prime Minister Adrian Năstase ("Aunt Tamara" Case, "Zambaccian" Case, "Quality Trophy" case), Romanian MEP Adrian Severin, the "Football Transfers" and the "Suitcase" cases in which several Romanian politicians and businessmen (George Becali, Gică Popescu, Ioan Becali, etc.) were prosecuted, and the case of former Cluj-Napoca mayor, Sorin Apostu.

A lower percentage of news articles presented corruption as a general phenomenon. In *Ziarul Financiar*, 16.7% (13) of the news contained both social representations on corruption, and recommendations from international organizations, especially the European Union, regarding the

phenomenon's eradication. In the other publications, the percentage of news articles on corruption as a general phenomenon was lower, as follows: *Jurnalul Naţional* – 14.7% (11), *România Liberă* – 10.9% (13), *Libertatea* – 4.3% (2) (see Table 9).

Table 9: Main topic by newspapers (%)

	Ziarul Financiar	Jurnalul Naţional	România Liberă	Libertatea	Total
A case (or some cases) of corruption	72.2	84.0	86.6	93.6	86.1
The corruption as a general phenomenon	16.7	14.7	10.9	4.3	11.2
Anticorruption, regulation law or anticorruption national authorities' activities	11.1	1.3	-	-	1.2
Anticorruption activities by citizens, NGO	-	-	0.8	-	0.4
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	-	-	1.7	2.1	1.2
Total	*100.0* (18)	*100.0* (75)	*100.0* (119)	*100.0* (47)	*100.0* (259)

The petty corruption phenomenon was covered by the four news outlets in news articles dealing with public administration in sectors such as the police, customs, universities, hospitals, etc. Their constant presence in these dailies was due to the large number of cases investigated by various state institutions (the National Anticorruption Directorate [DNA], the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police [IGP], the National Integrity Agency [ANI] etc.) that were pushed into the spotlight through press releases and official statements which were displayed partly or entirely by the media. *Libertatea* published the higher percentage of news articles on petty corruption (34,0%), followed by *Jurnalul Naţional* (30,7%), *România Liberă* (22,7%) and *Ziarul Financiar* (16,7%) (see Table 10).

Table 10: Coverage of petty corruption by newspapers (%)

	Ziarul Financiar	Jurnalul National	România Liberă	Libertatea	Total
Yes	16.7	30.7	22.7	34.0	*26.6*
No/Not applicable/Not possible to determine	83.3	69.3	77.3	66.0	*73.4*
Total	*100.0* (18)	*100.0* (75)	*100.0* (119)	*100.0* (47)	*100.0* (259)

Table 11 shows three main types of impetus that characterize Romanian news on corruption: judicial/police investigation, arrest/detention of a person charged with corruption and trial/ lawsuit. As the content analysis findings point out, the DNA, the High Court of Cassation and Justice (ICCJ), the Superior Council of the Magistracy (CSM), and the IGP were the most important sources for gathering such information. Thus, the news provided by them includes data on the arrest or detention of people charged with corruption (73/13.1%), data on court trials (54/9.7%), information concerning the initiation of criminal prosecution or police investigation (49/8.8%), whereas only 4.5% (25) of the cases contained statements of defendants, attorneys, and other legal representatives. The number of journalistic investigations that generated news was quite small, only 2.7% (15) of the total number of corruption articles published (see Table 11). Most investigation-based articles were retrieved from other mass-media sources. These were published in *Jurnalul Național* (5/6.7%) and *România Liberă* (5/4.2%) (see Table 12).

Table 11: News article impetus

	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**
Publication of phone tapping or similar	8	1.4	3.1
Judicial/Police investigation	49	8.8	18.9
Arrest/detention of a person charged with corruption	73	13.1	28.2
Trial/lawsuit	54	9.7	20.8
End of imprisonment for a person judged for corruption	2	0.4	0.8
Statement/interview	25	4.5	9.7
Publication of data/studies/reports about corruption	8	1.4	3.1
Journalistic investigation made by the news outlet	4	0.7	1.5
Journalistic investigation made by another news outlet	11	2.0	4.2
Anti-corruption law	5	0.9	1.9
Anticorruption agencies' activities	6	1.1	2.3
Other	2	0.4	0.8
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	12	2.2	4.6
Total	*259*	*46.4*	*100.0*
Missing	*299*	*53.6*	
Total	*558*	*100.0*	

Table 12: News article impetus by newspapers (%)

	Ziarul Financiar	Jurnalul Național	România Liberă	Libertatea	Total
Publication of phone tapping or similar	-	2.7	3.4	4.3	3.1
Judicial/Police investigation	11.1	21.3	18.5	19.1	18.9
Arrest/detention of a person charged with corruption	27.8	26.7	28.6	29.8	28.2
Trial/lawsuit	27.8	14.7	23.5	21.3	20.8
End of imprisonment for a person on trial for corruption	-	1.3	0.8	-	0.8
Statement/interview	16.7	8.0	8.4	12.8	9.7
Publication of data/surveys/reports on corruption	-	6.7	0.8	4.3	3.1
Journalistic investigation by news outlet	5.6	2.7	0.8	-	1.5
Journalistic investigation by other news outlets	-	6.7	4.2	2.1	4.2
Anti-corruption law	5.6	2.7	1.7	-	1.9
Anticorruption agencies' activities	5.6	2.7	1.7	2.1	2.3
Other	-	1.3	-	2.1	0.8
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	-	2.7	7.6	2.1	4.6
Total	*100.0* (18)	*100.0* (75)	*100.0* (119)	*100.0* (47)	*100.0* (259)

Four types of corruption were prominent in the four newspapers: bribes/kickbacks (146/26.3%), abuse of power (20/3.6%), embezzlement (11/2%), and corruption as a general term (30/5.4%) (see Table 13). Other types of corruption (solicitation, clientelism/nepotism, etc.) did not exceed 2-3% of the overall number of articles under scrutiny.

Table 14 presents all types of corruption identified in each of the four publications. In this regard, in *Libertatea* the news on corruption mainly concerns cases of bribery (28/59.6%) in two different fields: sports (11/23.4%) and public administration (16/34.0%) (see Table 15). A large percentage of the total news articles published in *Ziarul Financiar* (5/27.8%) presented corruption as a general phenomenon. The data confirms previous findings according to which this newspaper published more articles reflecting the recommendations present in the CVM reports (Cooperation and Verification Mechanism) and studies on corruption in Romania. In the case of *România Liberă*, 56.4% (66) of articles on corruption present cases of bribery in public administration. Additionally, in this newspaper, cases of embezzlement and abuse of power in various economic areas (construction and real estate activities, financial and insurance activities,

etc.) represented other forms of corruption described by journalists and represented 10.9% (13) of the content. Nonetheless, the highest number of news articles (10/14.7%) on abuse of power was published in the quality newspaper *Jurnalul Naţional*. Most of them concerned Emil Boc's government, who was the Prime Minister of Romania and the president of the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL) from 2008 to 2012. *Jurnalul Naţional* supported the interests of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), PDL's main political opponent.

Table 13: Main type of corruption cases

	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**
Bribery, bribe, kickback, pay off	147	26.3	56.8
Embezzlement	11	2.0	4.2
Illegal financing to political parties	1	0.2	0.4
Solicitation, extortion	2	0.4	0.8
Abuse of discretion, of power, of office	20	3.6	7.7
Collusion, bid rigging, cartel	4	0.7	1.5
Clientelism, cronyism, nepotism, familism	5	0.9	1.9
Conflict of interest	5	0.9	1.9
Fraud	1	0.2	0.4
Corruption in general	30	5.4	11.6
Other	1	0.2	0.4
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	32	5.7	12.4
Total	*259*	*46.4*	*100.0*
Missing	*299*	*53.6*	
Total	*558*	*100.0*	

Table 14: Main type of corruption cases by newspapers (%)

	Ziarul Financiar	Jurnalul Naţional	România Liberă	Libertatea	Total
Bribery, bribe, kickback, pay off	55.6	56.0	56.3	59.6	56.8
Embezzlement	5.6	4.0	5.0	2.1	4.2
Illegal financing to political parties	-	-	0.8	-	0.4
Solicitation, extortion	-	1.3	-	2.1	0.8
Abuse of discretion, of power, of office	5.6	14.7	5.9	2.1	7.7
Collusion, bid rigging, cartel	-	1.3	0.8	4.3	1.5
Clientelism, cronyism, nepotism, familism	-	4.0	0.8	2.1	1.9
Conflict of interest	-	1.3	3.4	-	1.9
Fraud	-	-	-	2.1	0.4
Corruption in general	27.8	9.3	10.9	10.6	11.6
Other	-	-	0.8	-	0.4
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	5.6	8.0	15.1	14.9	12.4
Total	*100.0* (18)	*100.0* (75)	*100.0* (119)	*100.0* (47)	*100.0* (259)

Table 15: Involved sectors in corruption cases by newspapers

	Ziarul Financiar	Jurnalul Naţional	România Liberă	Libertatea	Total
Construction and real estate activities	11.1	12.0	4.2	-	6.2
Sports	-	14.7	2.5	23.4	9.7
Manufacturing	-	2.7	-	2.1	1.2
Electricity and gas supply	-	1.3	1.7	-	1.2
Education	-	4.0	3.4	6.4	3.9
Financial and insurance activities	11.1	-	0.8	-	1.2
Professional, scientific and technical activities	-	-	1.7	-	0.8
Human health and social work activities	-	-	2.5	-	1.2
Information and communication	-	-	0.8	-	0.4
Public administration and defence	44.4	36.0	40.3	34.0	38.2
Parties' political activities	5.6	4.0	1.7	2.1	2.7
Other	5.6	5.3	3.4	6.4	4.6
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	22.2	20.0	37.0	25.5	29.0
Total	*100.0* (18)	*100.0* (75)	*100.0* (119)	*100.0* (47)	*100.0* (259)

One of the aspects examined throughout the present study was the approach chosen by journalists to tackle corruption issues. In this respect, 19.4% (108) of the articles focused on the agent (the person receiving the bribe/bribed) as a primary subject in the news. In 6.3% (35) of the cases, the

client (the person offering bribe/briber) was the main subject, whereas both subjects (agent and client) were only presented in 3.8% (21) of the news articles (see Table 16). Usually, agents offered clients either material assets – 9.5% (53) of the cases – or non-material assets – 10.9% (61) of the cases (see Table 17). In exchange, they mostly received material assets from the clients (14.9% - 82) and very rarely non-material assets (2.9% - 16) (see Table 18). In cases where the types of transactions (one or several) underpinning the corrupt act(s) could be determined, the most frequently exchanged items between agents and clients were licenses, certifications, offices in various public institutions (29/5.2%), public procurement contracts (26/4.7%), and the abatement of negative consequences resulting from unannounced inspections (21/3.8%) (see Table 19).

Table 16: Client/agent focus

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
The agent	108	19.4	41.7
The client	35	6.3	13.5
Both	21	3.8	8.1
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	95	17.0	36.7
Total	*259*	*46.4*	*100.0*
Missing	*299*	*53.6*	
Total	*558*	*100.0*	

Table 17: Object of exchange: What does the agent give to the client?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Purely material goods	53	9.5	20.5
Not material goods	61	10.9	23.6
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	145	26.0	56.0
Total	*259*	*46.4*	*100.0*
Missing	*299*	*53.6*	
Total	*558*	*100.0*	

Table 18: Object of exchange: What does the client give to the agent?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Purely material goods	83	14.9	32.0
Not material goods	16	2.9	6.2
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	160	28.7	61.8
Total	*259*	*46.4*	*100.0*
Missing	*299*	*53.6*	
Total	*558*	*100.0*	

Table 19: Type of transaction affected by corruption

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Public procurement	26	4.7	10.0
Licenses, certifications, positions	29	5.2	11.2
Access to service that someone is entitled to	19	3.4	7.3
Inspections, neutralization of negative consequences of inspections	21	3.8	8.1
Other	14	2.5	5.4
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	150	26.9	57.9
Total	*259*	*46.4*	*100.0*
Missing	299	*53.6*	
Total	558	*100.0*	

2. Variations over time

As part of this content analysis, news articles, editorials, pamphlets, journalistic investigations, etc. were selected from the aforementioned four Romanian newspapers from 2009 to 2013. An important temporary change in the publication frequency of such content occurred in 2012, when the number of news articles on corruption decreased as compared to previous years (see Table 20). Other genres, such as investigations, interviews, and short texts balanced the lack of news articles. The case of former Prime Minister, Adrian Năstase was the most covered news event in 2012. Also, in 2012 Romania held parliamentary elections. The Social Liberal Union (USL) – a pre-electoral and parliamentary political alliance created between the centre-right alliance (the National Liberal Party [PNL] and the Conservative Party [PC]) and the Social Democratic Party (PSD), a centre-left party – won the elections with over 68% of the votes. The conviction of former PSD president, Adrian Năstase, did not negatively affect the results of the elections.

Table 20: Main type of the article by years (%)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
News article	51.8	64.0	52.9	37.7	52.7	50.9
Editorial, commentary	20.0	25.8	26.9	16.2	20.9	21.7
Journalistic investigation	1.8	3.4	5.0	7.7	6.4	5.0
Interview	4.5	5.6	2.5	9.2	-	4.5
Short text	21.8	1.1	12.6	26.2	19.1	17.0
Satirical articles	-	-	-	0.8	0.9	0.4
Other	-	-	-	2.3	-	0.5
Total	*100.0* (110)	*100.0* (89)	*100.0* (119)	*100.0* (130)	*100.0* (110)	*100.0* (558)

Most national news articles on corruption were published in 2012, followed by a decrease thereof in 2013 (see Table 21). However, media interest in the corruption matter, including at the international level, increased as of 2013. The findings of the content analysis confirm this hypothesis. As of 2013, international news articles on corruption cases diversified.

Table 21: Main event arena by years (%)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
International	1.8	10.1	10,1	3.1	10.9	7.0
Foreign country	7.3	4.5	5.0	6.9	13.6	7.5
National	77.3	85.4	72.3	75.4	60.0	73.7
Local	13.6	-	12.6	13.8	13.6	11.3
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	-	-	-	0.8	1.8	0.5
Total	*100.0* (110)	*100.0* (89)	*100.0* (119)	*100.0* (130)	*100.0* (110)	*100.0* (558)

Another result of the present analysis also revealed a temporary shift in perception vis-à-vis the framing of the corruption concept as, on the one hand, a recurrent, widespread phenomenon and as a reproachable act/a deviation from correct behaviour on the other hand. Table 22 shows that, in 2009, 11.8% (13) of news articles reflected the first approach – corruption as a general, widespread occurrence, without reference to concrete cases. In contrast, in 2012 (54/41.5%) and in 2013 (51/46.4%) corruption was depicted through specific cases that were presented as deviations from the generally accepted social and behavioural norm. The most plausible explanation for this particular change would be the media's growing appetite for the DNA's activity which started investigating grand corruption cases and successfully providing evidence that led to prosecutions and convictions. For example, in 2013-2014, four ministers, a former

MEP, four Deputies, a Senator, eleven mayors, five judges, and three prosecutors were convicted for corruption[2].

Table 22: Frame of corruption cases by years (%)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
A usual and recurring behavior which is very wide-spread	11.8	1.1	7.6	3.1	1.8	5.2
A specific/special/unusual deviation from an ex-pected and correct behavior	-	-	22.7	41.5	46.4	23.7
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	88.2	98.9	69.7	55.4	51.8	71.1
Total	*100.0* (110)	*100.0* (89)	*100.0* (119)	*100.0* (130)	*100.0* (110)	*100.0* (558)

Our data show that Romanian journalists are not used to follow defendants' stories over several years, from the onset of the criminal investigation up to their potential conviction and release from prison. Therefore, corruption cases were not monitored by the press in a constant manner but only when sensational events occurred, when the defendant(s) was investigated, prosecuted or jailed. The reason for this approach may be the lack of resources, training and specialization in the field of corruption. Consequently, there is a time break in the coverage of corruption cases. Most news articles within our sample, which reported on various grand corruption cases, were published during the year(s) in which the defendant was either investigated or sent to prison. For example, most news articles on petty corruption showed the beginning of an investigation or a final sentence, but never the investigations' progress or details on how a trial was held. The only corruption cases which had a constant temporal dynamic were those referring to the sports field: 2009 – 20,0% (10), 2010 – 7,1% (3), 2011- 3,1% (2), 2012 – 11,3% (7), 2013 – 7.3% (3) (see Table 23).

[2] Statement of Laura Codruta Kövesi, head prosecutor of the National Anti-Corruption Directorate in Romania: http://jurnaltv.md/ro/news/2014/5/19/lectie-pentru-procurorii-moldoveni-10028663/, accessed on March 6, 2016.

Table 23: Involved sectors in corruption cases by years (%)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Construction and real estate activities	16.0	2.4	3.1	6.5	2.4	6.2
Sport	20.0	7.1	3.1	11.3	7.3	9.7
Manufacturing	-	7.1	-	-	-	1.2
Electricity and gas supply	2.0	-	-	1.6	2.4	1.2
Education	6.0	11.9	-	-	4.9	3.9
Financial and insurance activities	-	7.1	-	-	-	1.2
Professional, scientific and technical activities	-	2.4	1.6	-	-	0.8
Human health and social work activities	2.0	-	-	1.6	2.4	1.2
Information and communication	-		-	1.6	-	0.4
Public administration and defense	38.0	52.4	53.1	27.4	17.1	38.2
Parties' political activities	6.0	2.4	3.1	-	2.4	2.7
Other	4.0	-	10.9	3.2	2.4	4.6
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	6.0	7.1	25.0	46.8	58.5	29.0
Total	*100.0* (50)	*100.0* (42)	*100.0* (64)	*100.0* (62)	*100.0* (41)	*100.0* (259)

The year when most articles on bribery and kickbacks were published was 2010 (see Table 24). During that period, the Adrian Severin (the MEP put on trial for bribery and influence peddling) and Sorin Apostu (mayor of Cluj-Napoca City, convicted for bribery) cases received most of the media's attention. Conversely, the number of cases of abuse of power dropped. If in 2009, 16% (8) of the news articles reported such cases, in 2013 they accounted for only 2.4% (1) of the total.

Table 24. Main type of corruption cases by years (%)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Bribery, bribe, kickback, pay off	60.0	64.3	64.1	38.7	61.0	56.8
Embezzlement	8.0	-	4.7	6.5	-	4.2
Illegal financing to political parties	-	-	-	-	2.4	0.4
Solicitation, extortion	4.0	-	-	-	-	0.8
Abuse of discretion, of power, of office	16.0	7.1	3.1	9,7	2.4	7.7
Collusion, bid rigging, cartel	-	-	1.6	3.2	2.4	1.5
Clientelism, cronyism, nepotism, familism	4.0	4.8	-	1.6	-	1.9
Conflict of interest	-	2.4	1.6	4.8	-	1.9
Fraud	-	-	-	1.6	-	0.4
Corruption in general	-	11.9	6.3	24.2	14.6	11.6
Other	-	-	1.6	-	-	0.4
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	8.0	9.5	17.2	9.7	17.1	12.4
Total	*100.0* (50)	*100.0* (42)	*100.0* (64)	*100.0* (62)	*100.0* (41)	*100.0* (259)

The coverage of petty corruption registered the same decreasing trend. Most news articles on administrative corruption were published in 2009 (28/56.0%) and 2010 (26/61.9%) in contrast to 2012 and 2013, when no articles on petty corruption were published (Table 25).

Table 25: Coverage of petty corruption by years (%)

	2009	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**Total**
Yes	56.0	61.9	23.4	-	-	26.6
No/Not applicable/Not possible to determine	44.0	38.1	76.6	100.0	100.0	73.4
Total	*100.0* (50)	*100.0* (42)	*100.0* (64)	*100.0* (62)	*100.0* (41)	*100.0* (259)

3. Conclusions

Within the human assisted content analysis, a sample of 558 news articles was selected from four national dailies (*România Liberă*, *Jurnalul Național*, *Ziarul Financiar* and *Libertatea*), during the time period 2009-2013. Every second news article on corruption was published in *România Liberă*, while the lowest number of news articles appeared in *Ziarul Financiar*. In contrast to the mainstream dailies, niche outlets treated corruption as a marginal topic.

The news articles outnumbered other journalistic genres in all media outlets examined. Other genres used by journalists were editorials, short texts, interviews, satiric articles/pamphlets, and the verbatim reports from various corruption files. The number of journalistic investigations on corruption was quite low as compared to the other genres since these are more difficult to conduct, especially from a financial point of view.

Most news focused on corruption at the national level. Corruption cases involving officials from the political, public administration and sports fields were considered important media events, worthy of coverage. The most popular national news articles on corruption referred to the cases involving former Prime Minister Adrian Năstase, Romanian MEP Adrian Severin, former Cluj-Napoca mayor Sorin Apostu, former Romanian MEP and businessman George Becali, former football player and businessman Gică Popescu.

Ziarul Financiar and *România Liberă* were the two newspapers that reported the most on international corruption cases. Italy, USA, Russia and China were most often mentioned in international news articles on corruption. The European Union was one of the few international organizations associated with corruption in Romania and in other European countries, primarily

because of the measures it imposed to diminish this phenomenon at a political and social level. However, the number of news articles on corruption related to European funds management was quite low are were not directly tied to acts of corruption, but rather to the low absorption level of these funds aimed at increasing the overall level of development.

The petty corruption phenomenon was reflected in news articles dealing with public administration in sectors such as the police, customs, universities, hospitals, etc. Their constant presence in the newspapers was the result of the large number of cases investigated by various state institutions. The DNA, the ICCJ, the CSM and the IGP were the main generators of news on corruption since information put forward by these institutions contained data on police investigations, arrests or detention and trials/lawsuits.

Four types of acts of corruption were highlighted in these dailies: bribery, abuse of power, embezzlement and corruption as a general phenomenon. *Libertatea*'s news articles on corruption mainly concerned cases of bribery in two different fields: sports and public administration. In comparison, *Ziarul Financiar* presented corruption more as a general phenomenon. In the case of *România Liberă*, most articles on corruption present cases referring to bribery in public administration, embezzlement and abuse of power in various economic sectors. Nonetheless, the highest number of news articles on abuse of power in public administration was published in the quality newspaper *Jurnalul Naţional*.

Most national news articles on corruption were published in 2012. However, media interest in the corruption matter, including at the international level, increased as of 2013. In 2009, most of the news articles reflected corruption as a general, widespread occurrence, without reference to concrete cases. In contrast, in 2012 and in 2013 corruption was depicted through specific cases that were presented as deviations from the generally accepted social and behavioural norm. Most articles on bribery and kickbacks were published in the pre-electoral year 2011. Most news articles on administrative corruption were published in 2009 and 2010 in contrast to 2012 and 2013, when no articles on petty corruption were published.

Appendix:

frequency tables for the analysed variables

2. Name of the newspaper

	Frequency	Percent
Ziarul Financiar	48	8,6
Jurnalul National	178	31,9
Romania libera	259	46,4
Libertatea	73	13,1
Total	558	100,0

4. Type of news article

	Frequency	Percent
News article	284	50,9
Editorial, commentary...	121	21,7
Journalistic investigation	28	5,0
Interview	25	4,5
Short text, ...	95	17,0
Satirical articles	2	,4
Other	3	,5
Total	558	100,0

5. Main event arena

	Frequency	Percent
International	39	7,0
Foreign country	42	7,5
National	411	73,7
Local	63	11,3
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	3	0,5
Total	558	100,0

5c. EU funds

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	11	2,0
No/Not applicable/Not possible to determine	547	98,0
Total	558	100,0

7. Frame: Corruption (the case of corruption) is framed as:

	Frequency	Percent
A usual and recurring behavior which is very widespread	29	5,2
A specific/special/unusual deviation from an expected and correct behaviour	132	23,7
Not applicable/Not possible to determine	397	71,1
Totale	558	100,0

8. Filter question: In the article, the "corruption-related issue" is:

	Frequency	Percent
Not marginal	259	46,4
Marginal	299	53,6
Totale	558	100,0

8b. Other main topic: In the article where the "corruption" is not the central topic, the main topic is:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Politics	121	21,7	40,5
	Economy	26	4,7	8,7
	Foreign affairs, diplomacy	6	1,1	2,0
	Health	12	2,2	4,0
	Education	6	1,1	2,0
	Judicial, police activities	44	7,9	14,7
	Sport	14	2,5	4,7
	Environment, energy	2	0,4	0,7
	Welfare, social protection	1	0,2	0,3
	Travel (holidays)	1	0,2	0,3
	Public administration	5	0,9	1,7
	Other	61	10,9	20,4
	Total	299	53,6	100,0
Missing	---	259	46,4	
Total		558	100,0	

9. Main topic: The article is mainly about:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A case (or some cases) of corruption	223	40,0	86,1
	The corruption as a general phenomenon	29	5,2	11,2
	Anticorruption, regulation law or anticorruption national authorities' activities	3	0,5	1,2
	Anticorruption activities by citizens, NGO....	1	0,2	0,4
	Not applicable/Not possible to determine	3	0,5	1,2
	Total	259	46,4	100,0
Missing	---	299	53,6	
Total		558	100,0	

11. News article impetus (aggregated data)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Publication of phone tapping or similar	8	1,4	3,1
	Judicial activities	176	31,5	68,0
	End of imprisonment for a person judged for corruption	2	0,4	0,8
	Statement/interview	25	4,5	9,7
	Publication of data/studies/reports about corruption	8	1,4	3,1
	Journalistic investigation	15	2,7	5,8
	Anti-corruption law	5	0,9	1,9
	Anticorruption agencies' activities	6	1,1	2,3
	Other	2	0,4	0,8
	Not applicable/Not possible to determine	12	2,2	4,6
	Total	259	46,4	100,0
Missing	---	299	53,6	
Total		558	100,0	

11b. If the article impetus is a statement/interview, who gives the statement/interview?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A political figure	8	1,4	32,0
	Another figure	17	3,0	68,0
	Total	25	4,5	100,0
Missing	---	533	95,5	
Total		558	100,0	

12. Main type of corruption

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Bribery, bribe, kickback, pay off	147	26,3	56,8
	Embezzlement	11	2,0	4,2
	Illegal financing to political parties	1	0,2	0,4
	Solicitation, extortion	2	0,4	0,8
	Abuse of discretion, of power, of office	20	3,6	7,7
	Collusion, bid rigging, cartel	4	0,7	1,5
	Clientelism, cronyism, nepotism, familism,...	5	0,9	1,9
	Conflict of interest	5	0,9	1,9
	Fraud	1	0,2	0,4
	Corruption in general	30	5,4	11,6
	Other	1	0,2	0,4
	Not applicable/Not possible to determine	32	5,7	12,4
	Total	259	46,4	100,0
Missing	---	299	53,6	
Total		558	100,0	

13. Petty corruption

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	69	12,4	26,6
	No/Not applicable/Not possible to determine	190	34,1	73,4
	Total	259	46,4	100,0
Missing	---	299	53,6	
Total		558	100,0	

14. Sector

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Construction and real estate activities	16	2,9	6,2
	Sport	25	4,5	9,7
	Manufacturing	3	0,5	1,2
	Electricity and gas supply	3	,5	1,2
	Education	10	1,8	3,9
	Financial and insurance activities	3	0,5	1,2
	Professional, scientific and technical activities	2	0,4	0,8
	Human health and social work activities	3	0,5	1,2
	Information and communication	1	0,2	0,4
	Public administration and defence	99	17,7	38,2
	Parties' political activities	7	1,3	2,7
	Other	12	2,2	4,6
	Not applicable/Not possible to determine	75	13,4	29,0
	Total	259	46,4	100,0
Missing	---	299	53,6	
Total		558	100,0	

15. Client/agent focus: The article is focused on:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	The agent	108	19,4	41,7
	The client	35	6,3	13,5
	Both	21	3,8	8,1
	Not applicable/Not possible to determine	95	17,0	36,7
	Total	259	46,4	100,0
Missing	---	299	53,6	
Total		558	100,0	

16. Type of agent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A single actor or several actors acting independently	124	22,2	47,9
	A group or network of actors	9	1,6	3,5
	An institution, company, association, political party	9	1,6	3,5
	Not applicable/Not possible to determine	117	21,0	45,2
	Total	259	46,4	100,0
Missing	---	299	53,6	
Total		558	100,0	

17a. Agent1_position

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Government or state high representative	42	7,5	16,2
	Public official, manager, consultant	28	5,0	10,8
	Public relation officer, press officer, spokesman	1	0,2	0,4
	Politician	4	0,7	1,5
	Mayor, local administrators	16	2,9	6,2
	Businessman, CEO, chairman	5	0,9	1,9
	Citizen	1	0,2	0,4
	Judge, Prosecutor, Inspector, Detective	11	2,0	4,2
	Policeman	13	2,3	5,0
	Lawyer, legal adviser	3	0,5	1,2
	Medical doctor, nurse	4	0,7	1,5
	Professor, teacher, Principal	7	1,3	2,7
	Banker	1	0,2	0,4
	Sport actor	11	2,0	4,2
	Religious figure	3	0,5	1,2
	Other	2	0,4	0,8
	Not applicable/Not possible to determine	107	19,2	41,3
	Total	259	46,4	100,0
Missing	---	299	53,6	
Total		558	100,0	

20. Type of client

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	A single actor or several actors acting independently	88	15,8	34,0
	A group or network of actors	8	1,4	3,1
	An institution, company, association, political party	10	1,8	3,9
	Not applicable/Not possible to determine	153	27,4	59,1
	Total	259	46,4	100,0
Missing	---	299	53,6	
Total		558	100,0	

21a. Client1_position

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Government or state high representative	11	2,0	4,2
	Public official, manager, consultant	5	0,9	1,9
	Public relation officer, press officer, spokesman	1	0,2	0,4
	Politician	2	0,4	0,8
	Mayor, local administrators	3	0,5	1,2
	Businessman, CEO, chairman	52	9,3	20,1
	Citizen	8	1,4	3,1
	Judge, Prosecutor, Inspector, Detective	1	0,2	0,4
	Policeman	2	0,4	0,8
	Lawyer, legal adviser	1	0,2	0,4
	Journalist, Editor, media man	1	0,2	0,4
	Medical doctor, nurse	1	0,2	0,4
	Sport actor	8	1,4	3,1
	Trade-unionist	1	0,2	0,4
	Member of the organized crime	1	0,2	0,4
	Other	1	0,2	0,4
	Not applicable/Not possible to determine	160	28,7	61,8
	Total	259	46,4	100,0
Missing	---	299	53,6	
Total		558	100,0	

24a. Object of exchange1: What does the agent give to the client? What kind of goods does the embezzler appropriates?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Purely material goods	53	9,5	20,5
	Not material goods	61	10,9	23,6
	Not applicable/Not possible to determine	145	26,0	56,0
	Total	259	46,4	100,0
Missing	---	299	53,6	
Total		558	100,0	

24b. Object of exchange2: What does the client give to the agent?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Purely material goods	83	14,9	32,0
	Not material goods	16	2,9	6,2
	Not applicable/Not possible to determine	160	28,7	61,8
	Total	259	46,4	100,0
Missing	---	299	53,6	
Total		558	100,0	

25. What was the base/original transaction that was affected by corruption?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Public procurement	26	4,7	10,0
	Licences, certifications, positions	29	5,2	11,2
	Access to service that someone is entitled to	19	3,4	7,3
	Inspections, neutralization of negative consequences of inspections	21	3,8	8,1
	Other	14	2,5	5,4
	Not applicable/Not possible to determine	150	26,9	57,9
	Total	259	46,4	100,0
Missing	---	299	53,6	
Total		558	100,0	

26. Type of transaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	One-off transaction	70	12,5	27,0
	Repeated transactions	44	7,9	17,0
	Not applicable/Not possible to determine	145	26,0	56,0
	Total	259	46,4	100,0
Missing	---	299	53,6	
Total		558	100,0	

This project is co-funded by the
Seventh Framework Programme for
Research and Technological
Development of the European Union

Project profile

ANTICORRP is a large-scale research project funded by the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme. The full name of the project is "Anti-corruption Policies Revisited: Global Trends and European Responses to the Challenge of Corruption". The project started in March 2012 and will last for five years. The research is conducted by 20 research groups in fifteen countries.

The fundamental purpose of ANTICORRP is to investigate and explain the factors that promote or hinder the development of effective anti-corruption policies and impartial government institutions. A central issue is how policy responses can be tailored to deal effectively with various forms of corruption. Through this approach ANTICORRP seeks to advance the knowledge on how corruption can be curbed in Europe and elsewhere. Special emphasis is laid on the agency of different state and non-state actors to contribute to building good governance.

Project acronym: ANTICORRP
Project full title: Anti-corruption Policies Revisited: Global Trends and European Responses to the Challenge of Corruption
Project duration: March 2012 – February 2017
EU funding: Approx. 8 million Euros
Theme: FP7-SSH.2011.5.1-1
Grant agreement number: 290529
Project website: http://anticorrp.eu/