

## BELARUSIAN ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS

### The 2008 Parliamentary Election Coverage in the Belarusian Media Bulletin 3

(August 1–15 2008)

The monitoring aims to find out how exhaustively the Belarusian media have covered the election and the work of the subjects involved (both individuals and institutions), as well as the degree to which media contributions meet the key principles of journalistic ethics and professional standards of covering elections.

The present analysis refers to the period when representatives to work at polling stations have been nominated and polling station boards have been formed. The monitoring covers 20 media: *Nashi Novosti* (ONT), *Panorama Nedeli* (the 1<sup>st</sup> National Channel), *Naviny Rehijona* (Homiel), *Novosti-Reghion* (Mahilou regional TV); *Radiofact* (the 1<sup>st</sup> National Radio Channel), *Naviny* (Homiel Regional Radio 101.3 FM) and *Naviny* (Mahilou Regional Radio) TV and radio programmes; *Sovetskaya Belorussiya: Belarus Segodnya*, *Respublika*, *Belorusy i Rynok*, *Narodnaja Vola*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda v Belarusi*, *Brestskiy Kuryer*, *Homielskaja Prauda*, *Mogilyovskaya Pravda* and *Dneprovskaya Nedelya* papers, as well as [www.belta.by](http://www.belta.by), [www.naviny.by](http://www.naviny.by) and [www.tut.by](http://www.tut.by) on-line media and [www.euroradio.fm](http://www.euroradio.fm), the on-line version of the European Radio for Belarus.

#### **Main Findings and Some Conclusions**

The period which is being analysed has not seen any considerable changes in terms of the state-owned media's coverage of the election process and its actors. The president, the CEC and lower-level election commissions are still being featured as its main figures.

The regional e-media, such as *Naviny Rehijona* (Homiel), *Novosti-Reghion* (Mahilou regional TV), *Naviny* (Homiel Regional Radio 101.3 FM) and *Naviny* (Mahilou Regional Radio) have given the election even less coverage. Thus, Homiel Regional Radio 101.3 FM has allotted 12 times as much time to the weather as to the election. *Novosti-Reghion* (Mahilou regional TV) has given the election just a few seconds, in which constituency election commissions and the electorate were mentioned only once.

The *Homielskaja Prauda*, *Mogilyovskaya Pravda* and *Dneprovskaya Nedelya* state-owned regional papers have shown the same trend.

[www.belta.by](http://www.belta.by), [www.naviny.by](http://www.naviny.by) and [www.tut.by](http://www.tut.by) on-line media have been giving the election about the same amount of coverage as they did during the previous period. However, as compared to the state-run [www.belta.by](http://www.belta.by), which has allotted most of its space (measured in symbols) to two actors only, namely the president and the CEC, [www.naviny.by](http://www.naviny.by) and [www.tut.by](http://www.tut.by) have begun to feature other actors more prominently. For example, [www.naviny.by](http://www.naviny.by) gave 37 per cent of its space (measured in symbols) to the president and the CEC, whereas the other actors received the

remaining 63 per cent. On [www.tut.by](http://www.tut.by) the proportion was 46 and 44 per cent, respectively.

It should be mentioned that the independent online media have also presented many more actors in the election process than the state-run ones. Thus, [www.tut.by](http://www.tut.by) has covered or mentioned 25 actors, [www.naviny.by](http://www.naviny.by) has presented 24 of them, whereas on [www.belta.by](http://www.belta.by) this number is 17 only.

The state-owned printed media have given the actors in the election process (with the exception of the president and the CEC) even less attention. Thus, *Sovetskaya Belorussiya* has spoken of 6 actors only, giving 90 per cent of its space to the president and the CEC and 10 per cent to the remaining 4 actors. *Homielskaja Prawda* has allotted 0.18 per cent of its space to the western and CIS observers, giving the remaining 99.82 per cent to the president and the CEC.

So it is evident that the state-owned media in their election coverage stick to a very simplistic approach, giving hardly any attention to any actors except for the CEC and the president. In this way, they fail to inform the voters about other actors, both actual and potential.

As compared to the state-owned printed media, the independent papers have presented a much wider range of participants in the election. For example, *Narodnaja Vola* has mentioned 17 actors and *Belorusy i Rynok* has written about 15 ones.

As for the manner of presentation, some state-owned media have still continued showing the opponents of the regime in a negative light, even if they have lost some of their earlier zeal. For example, Dz. Krat and N. Pravalinskaja in their contributions to *Sovetskaya Belorussiya* (12/08/2008) gave all the gory details of conflicts within the opposition in what can be called ‘village gossip’ style. At the same time it is noteworthy that CEC Chairperson Lidzija Jarmosyna made quite a fair remark during her online conference, ‘*I can say that 165 applications to register initiative groups for candidate nomination had been submitted by Tuesday. There are a number of today’s parliamentarians among them. And there are some quite well-known figures who call themselves opposition activists. However, we would like to refrain from giving their names, as we consider that if the CEC did so, it would be engaged in campaigning.*’ (<http://news.belta.by/ru/news/conference?id=13>). So, judging by Ms Jarmosyna’s criteria, such state-owned media as *Sovetskaya Belorussiya* have already begun campaigning against the opposition parties and their potential candidates.

In addition, the independent media have offered a more comprehensive picture of the election process and exercised a more balanced approach to its actors. In the first place, it refers to *Belorusy i Rynok*.

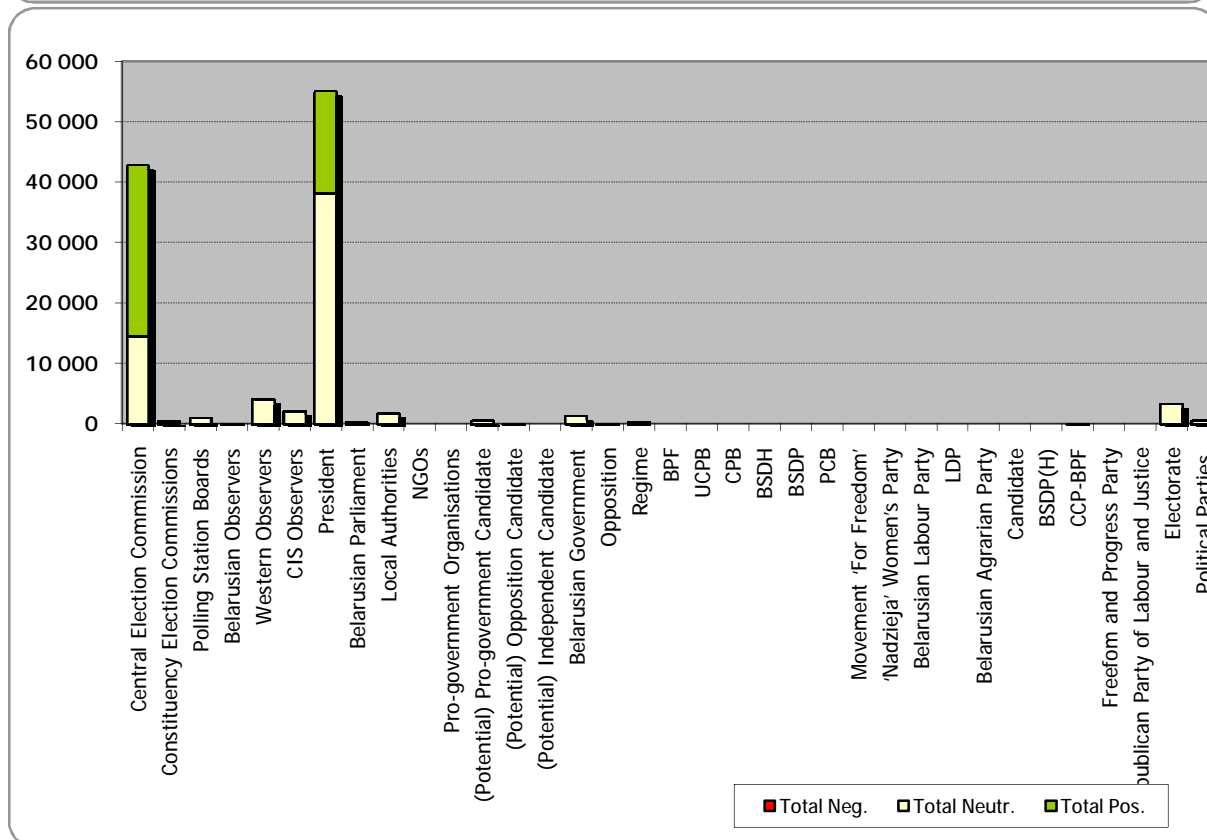
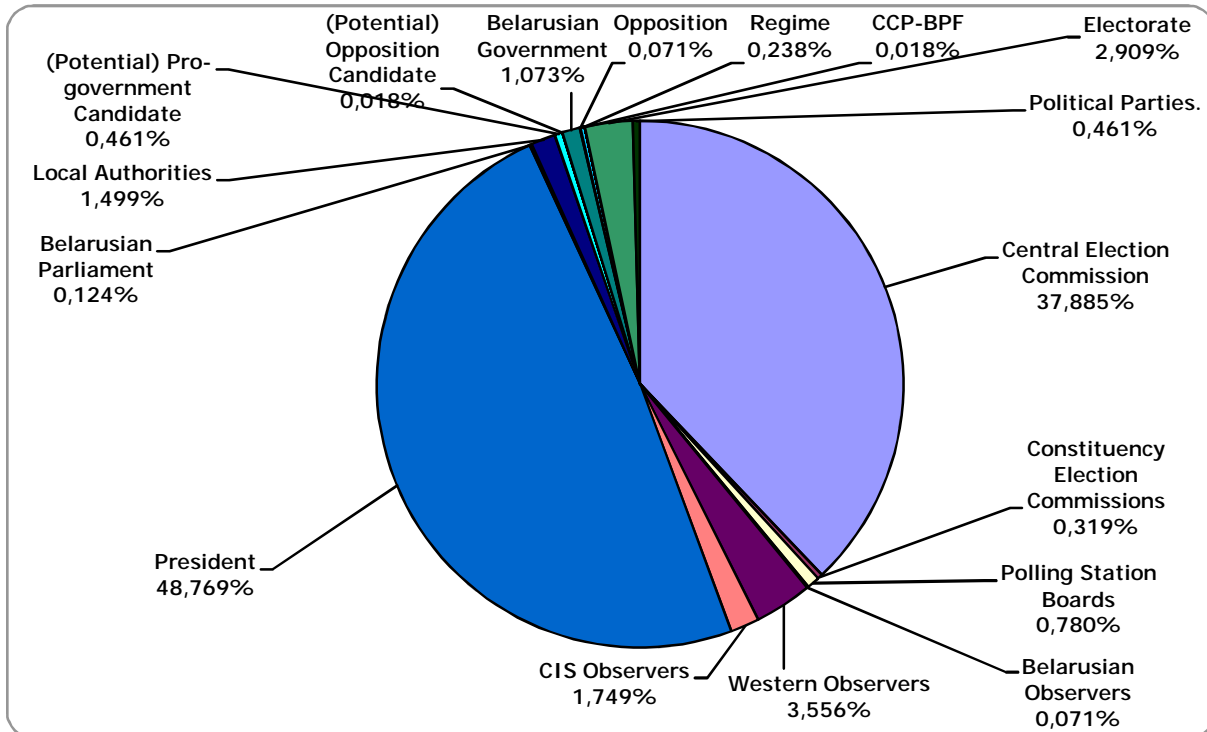
*Narodnaja Vola*, while showing a negative attitude to the current regime, has presented the other actors, including the opposition and the CIS observers, in a neutral way. *Brestskiy Kuryer* has given the election and its actors a completely neutral coverage.



# BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

01.08-15.08.2008

Measured in symbols



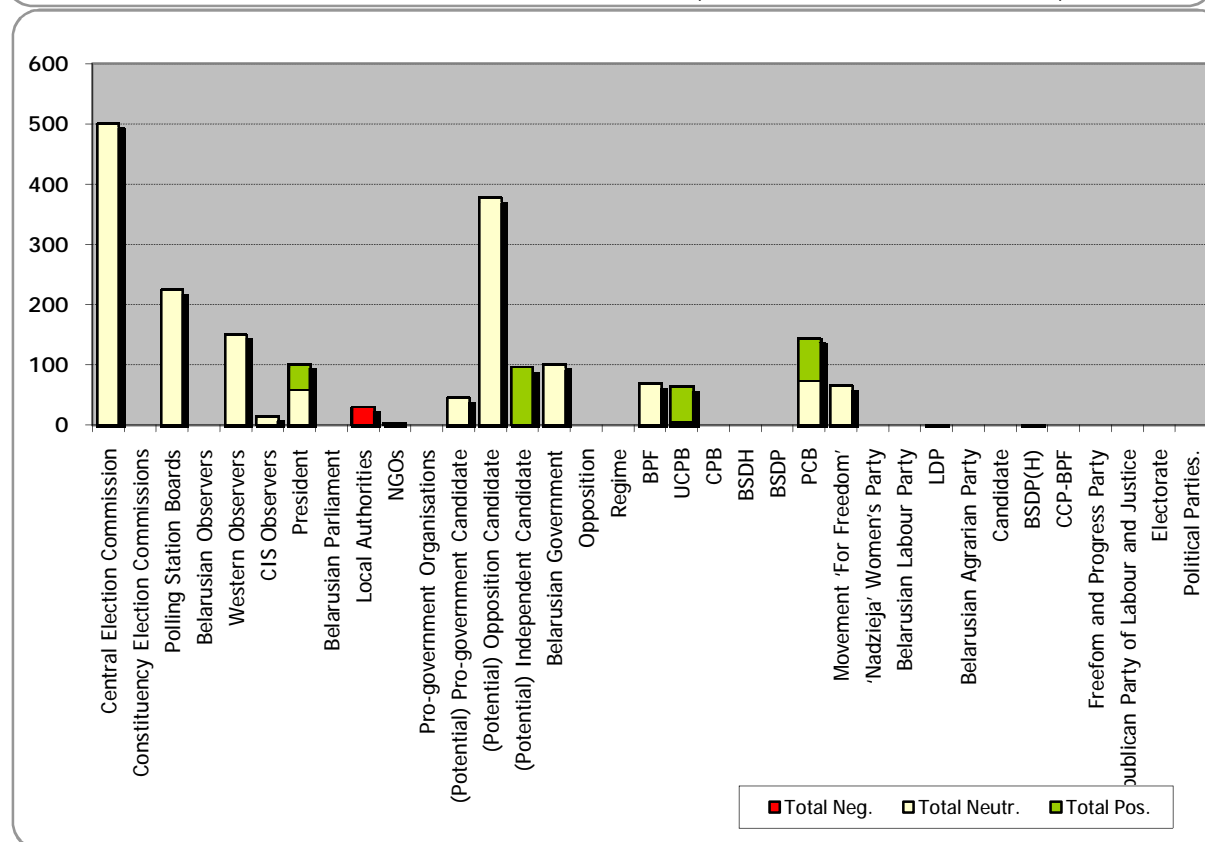
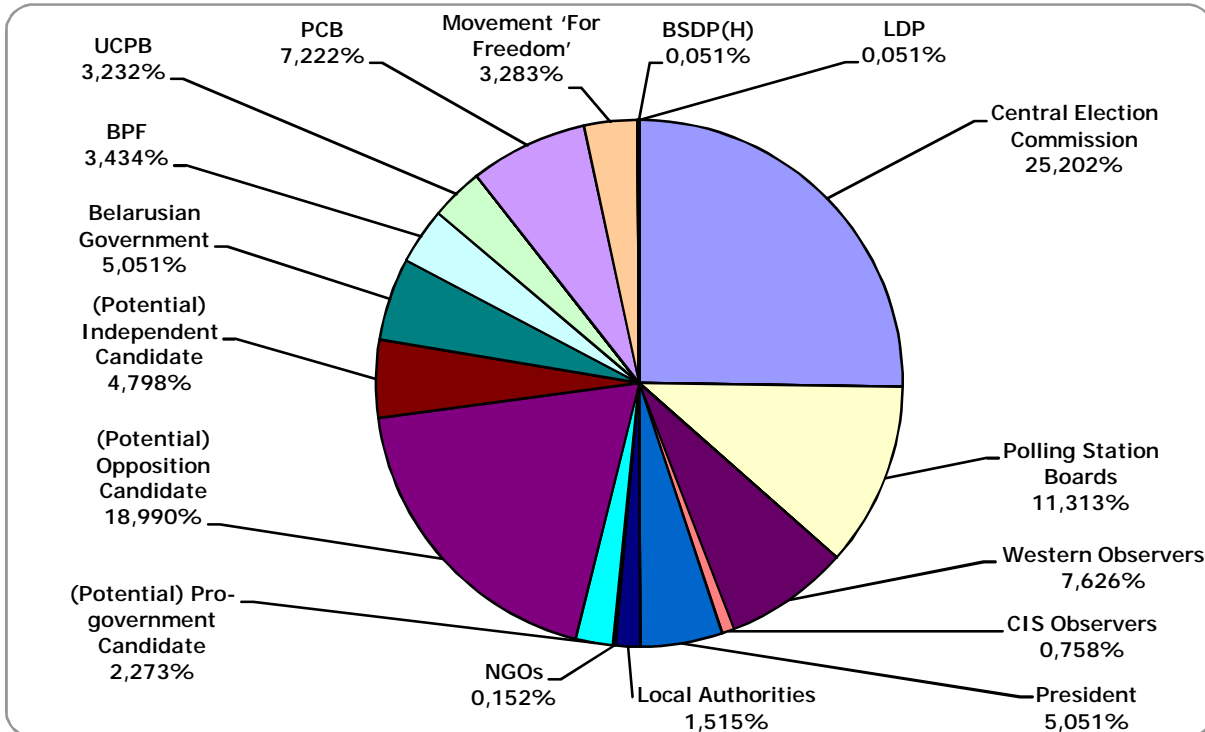


# BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

Belorusy i Rynok

01.08-15.08.2008

Measured in cm<sup>2</sup>



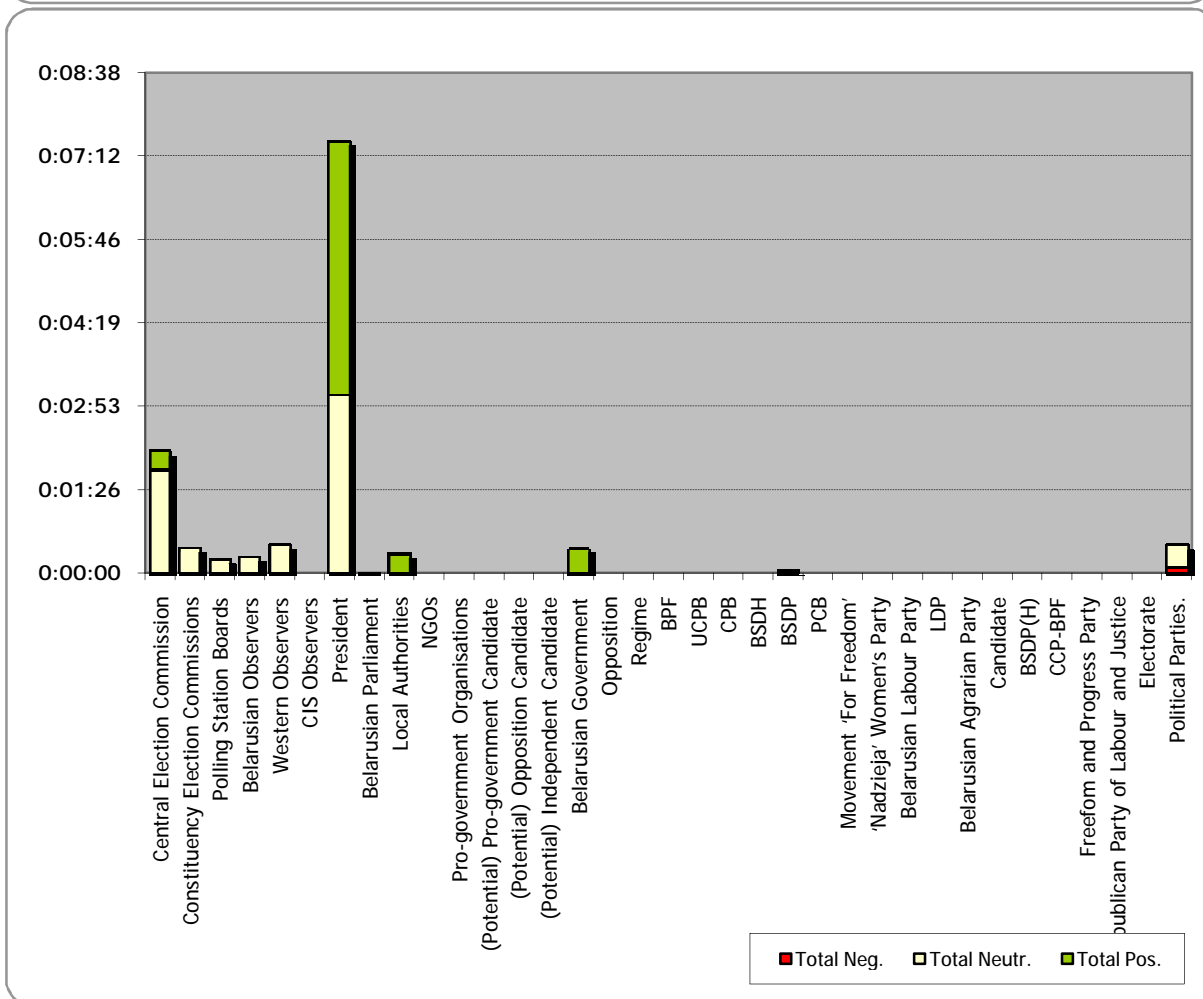
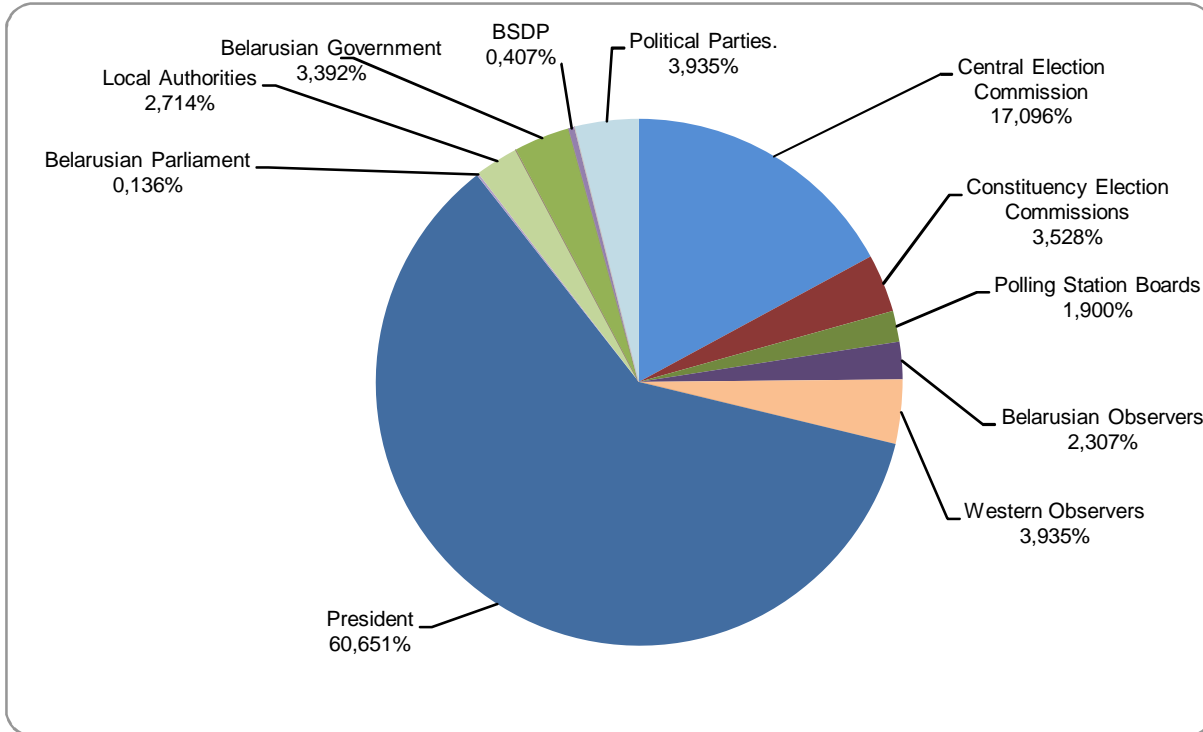


# BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

Panorama Nedeli (the 1st National Channel)

01.08-15.08.2008

Measured in hours, minutes, seconds (0:02:45)



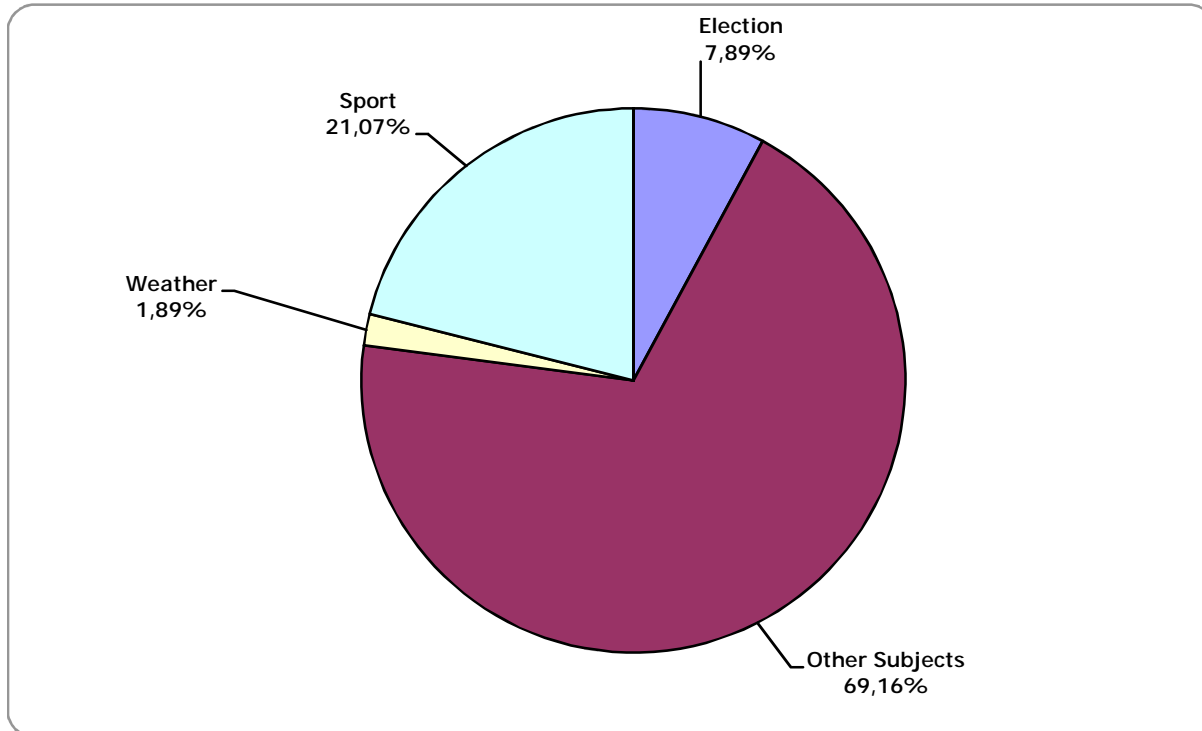


## BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

Panorama Nedeli (the 1st National Channel)

01.08-15.08.2008

Measured in hours, minutes, seconds (0:02:45)



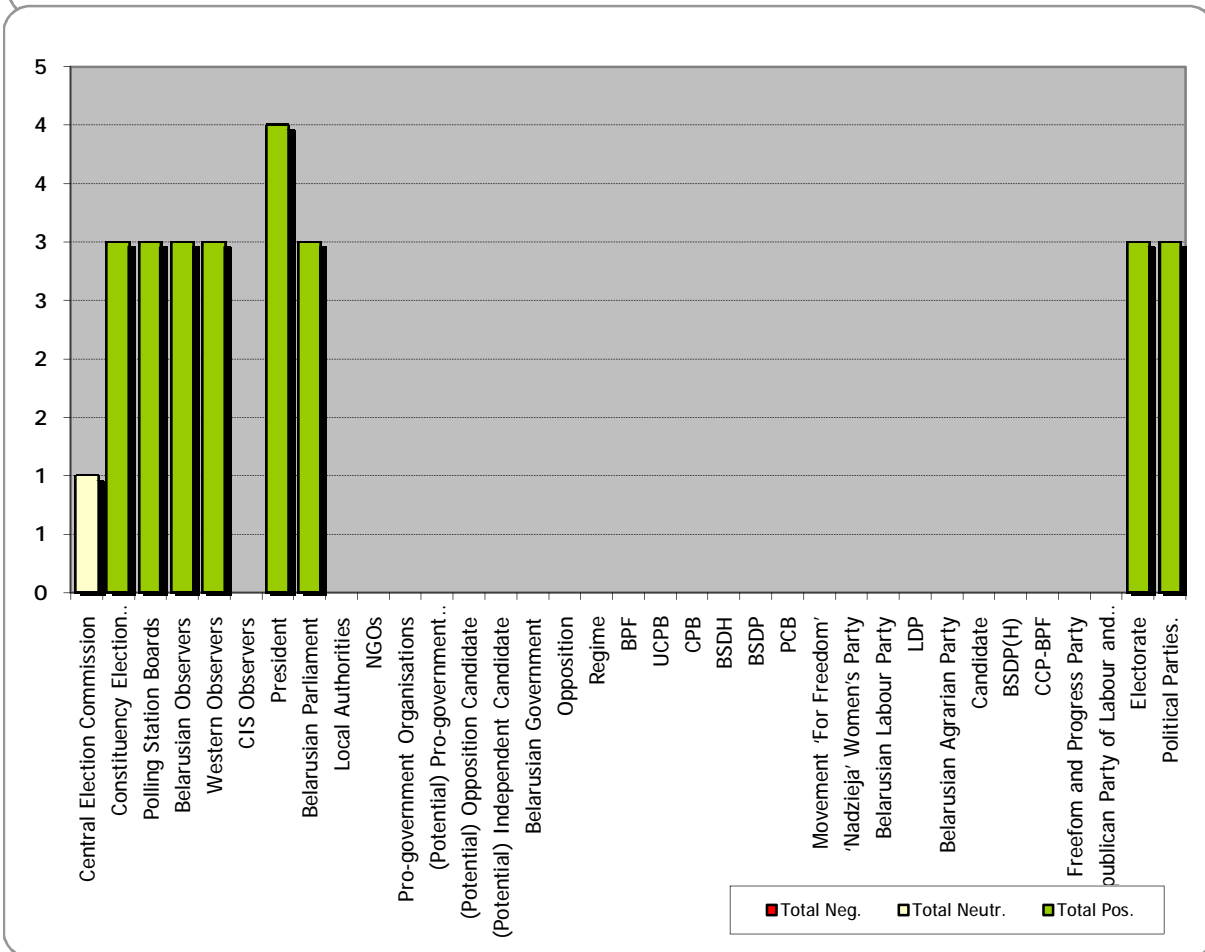
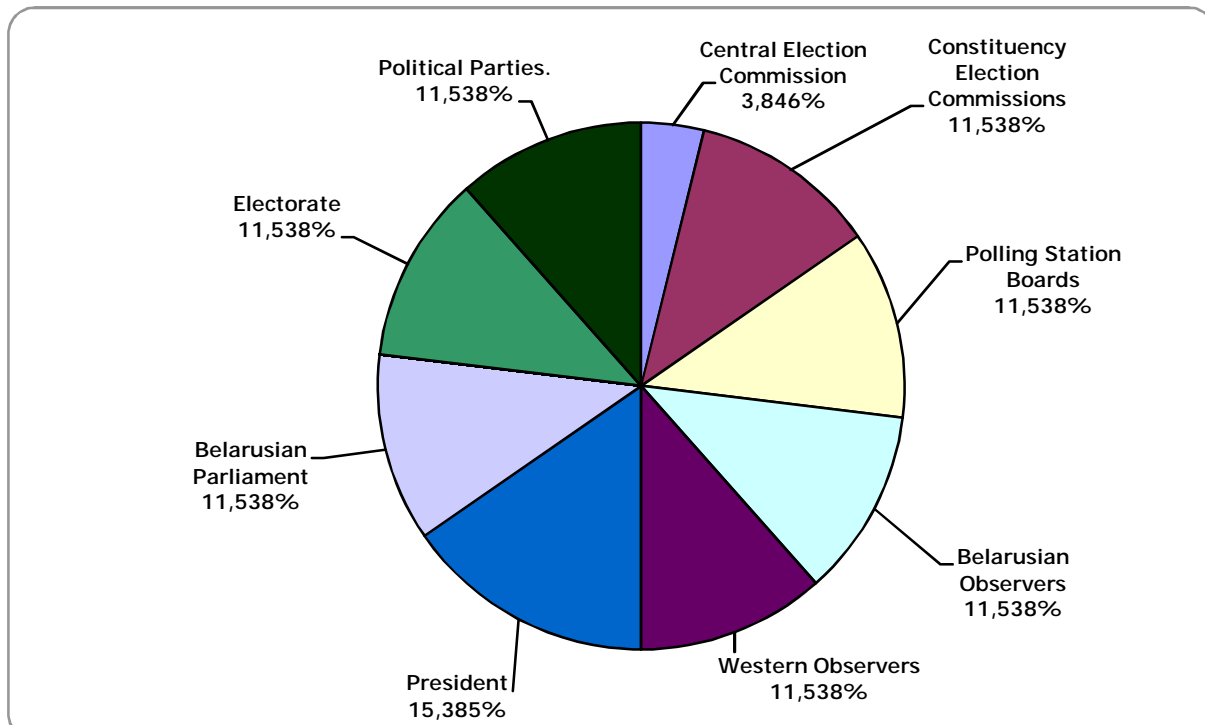


# BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

Dneprovskaya Nedelya

01.08-15.08.2008

Measured in cm<sup>2</sup>



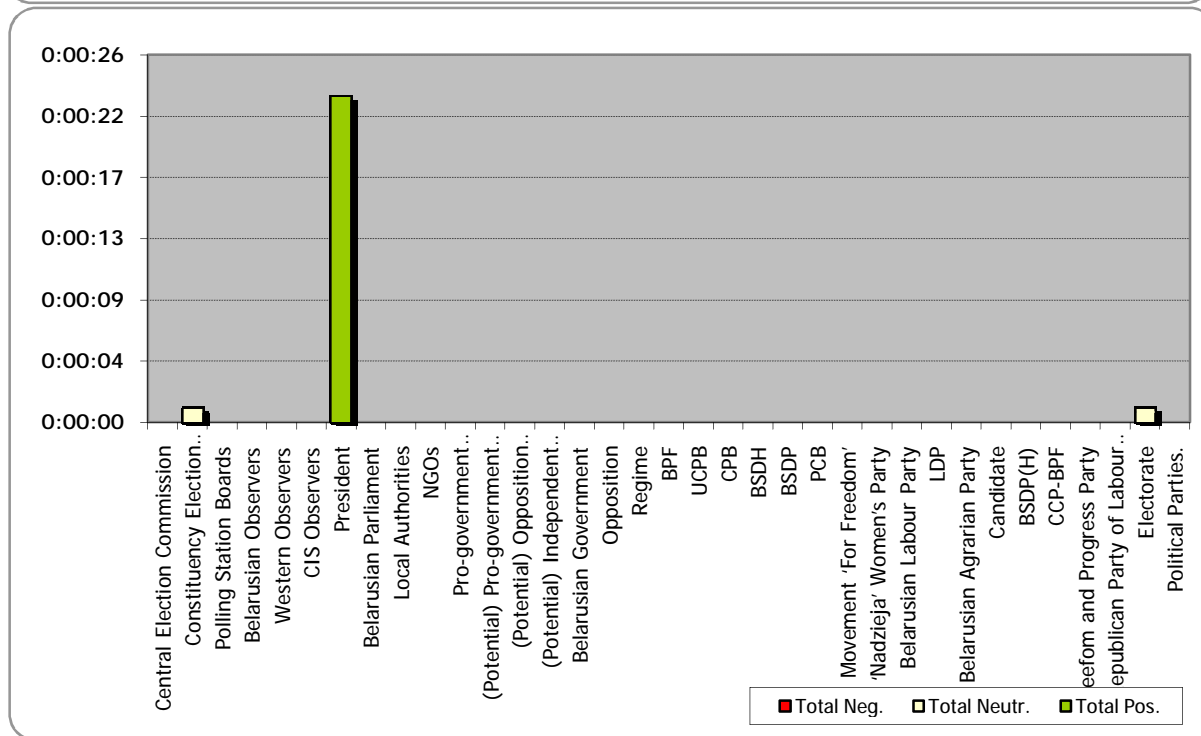
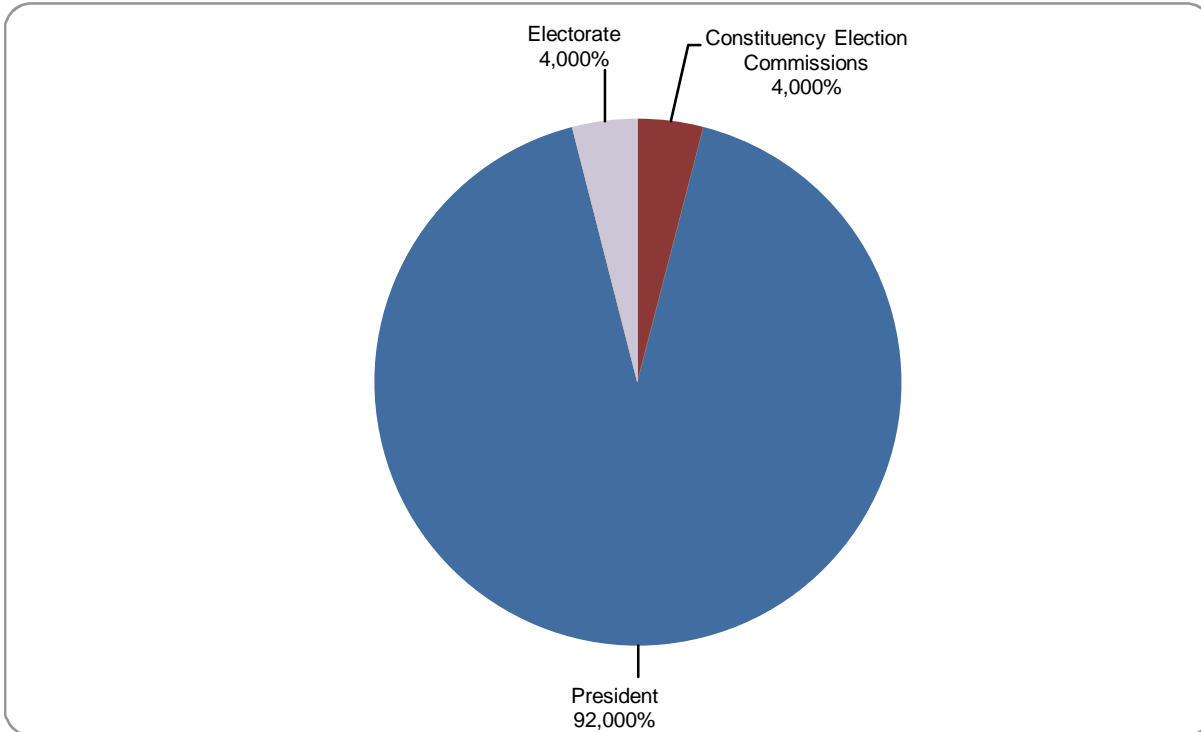


# BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

## Novosti-Region (Mahilou regional TV)

01.08-15.08.2008

Measured in hours, minutes, seconds (0:02:45)





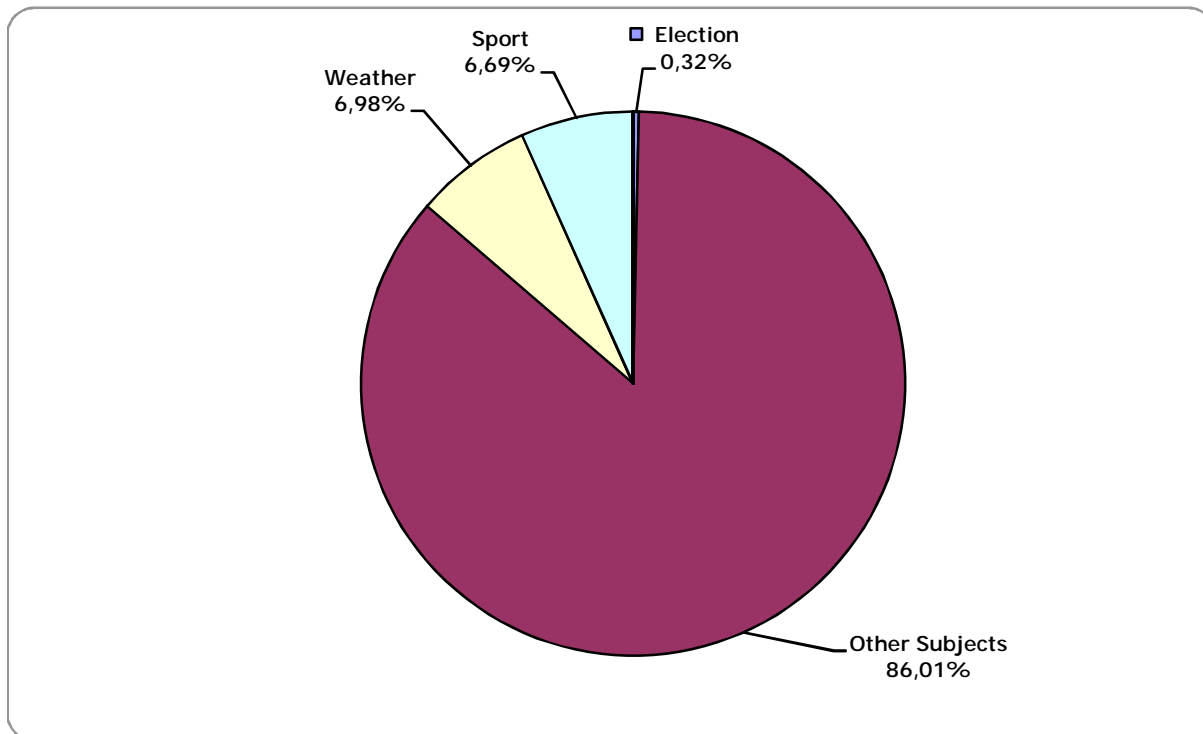


## BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

Novosti-Region (Mahilou regional TV)

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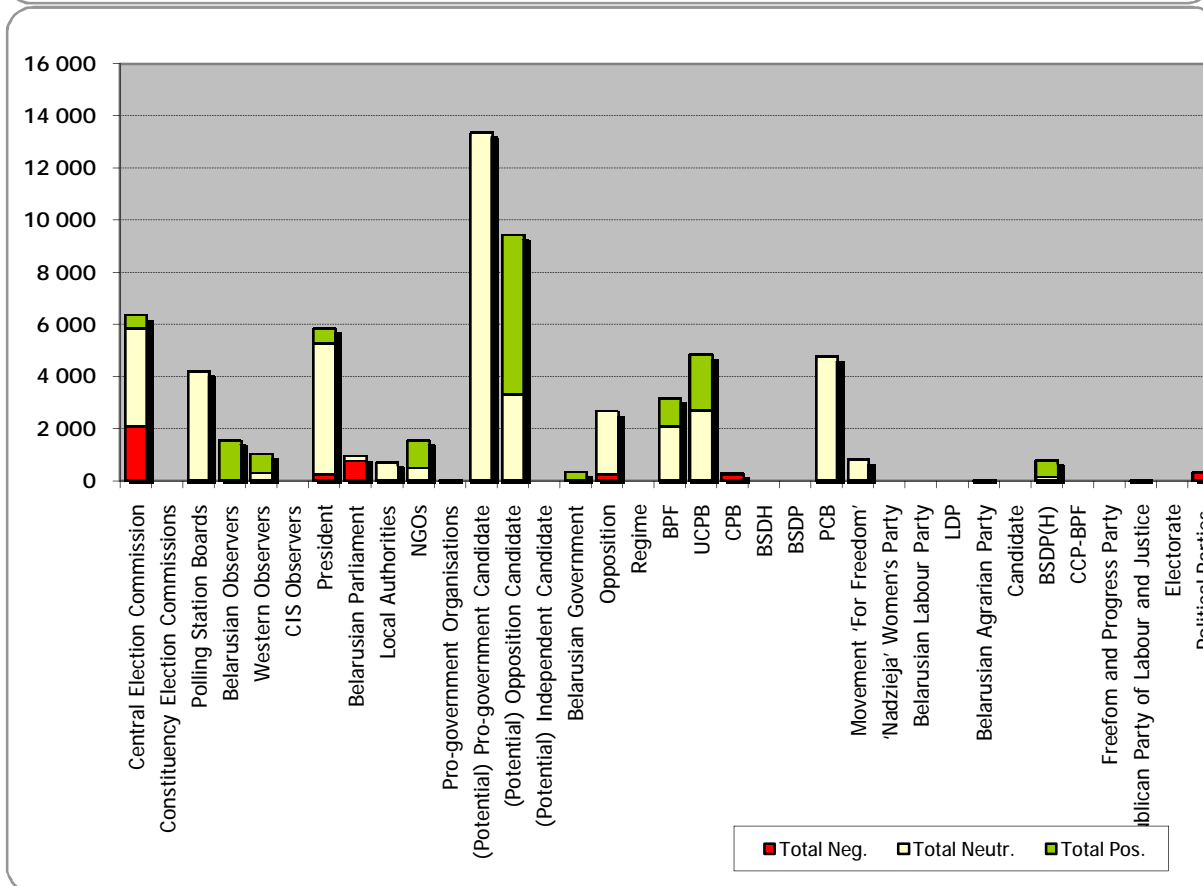
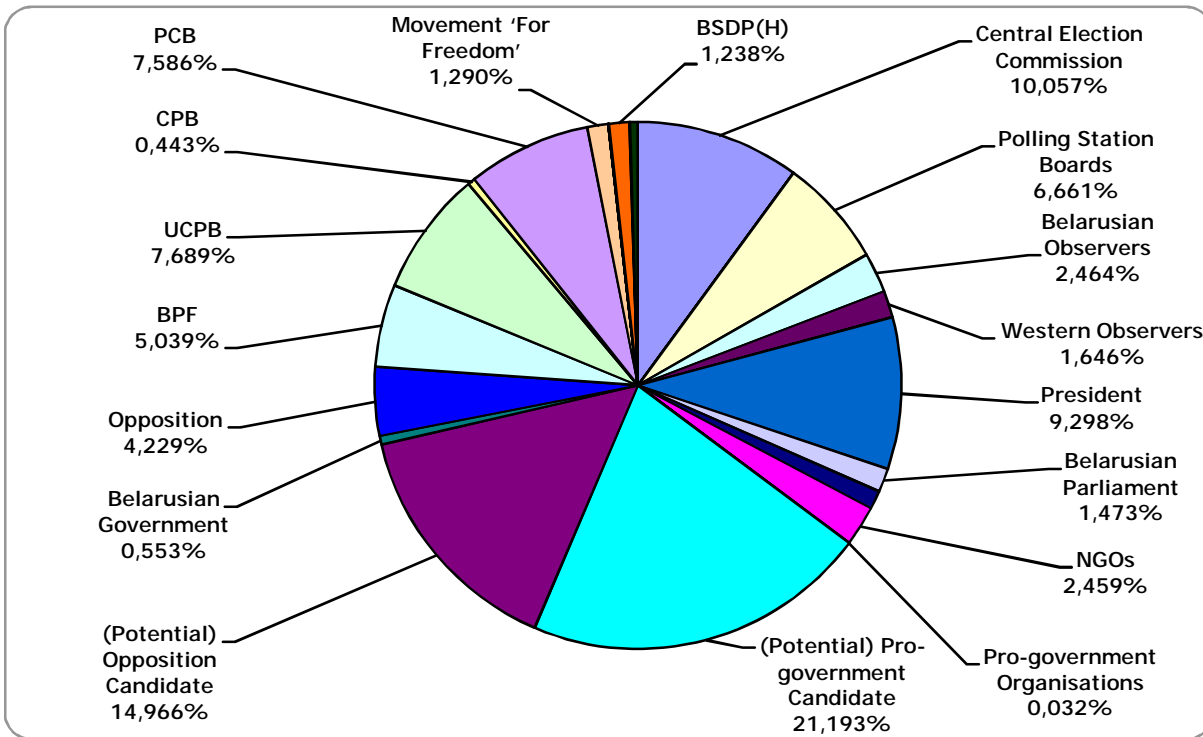




# BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

Euroradio  
01.08-15.08.2008

Measured in symbols

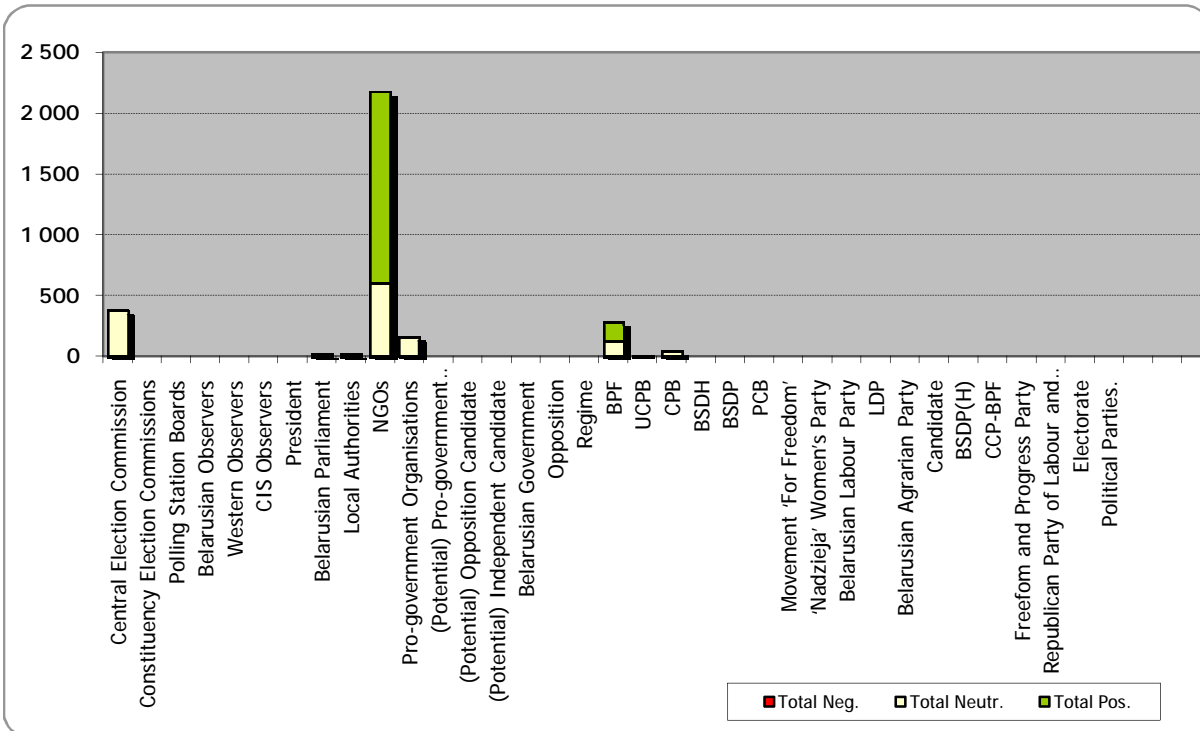
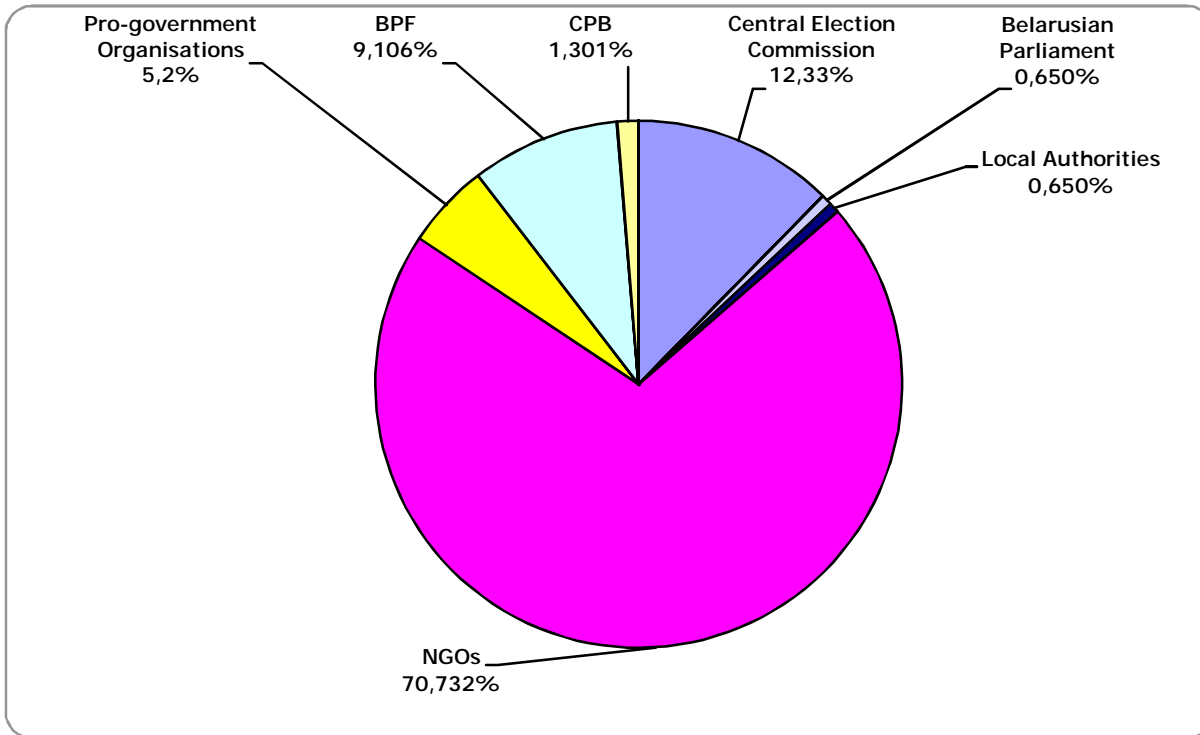




# BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

Respublika  
01.08-15.08.2008

Measured in cm<sup>2</sup>



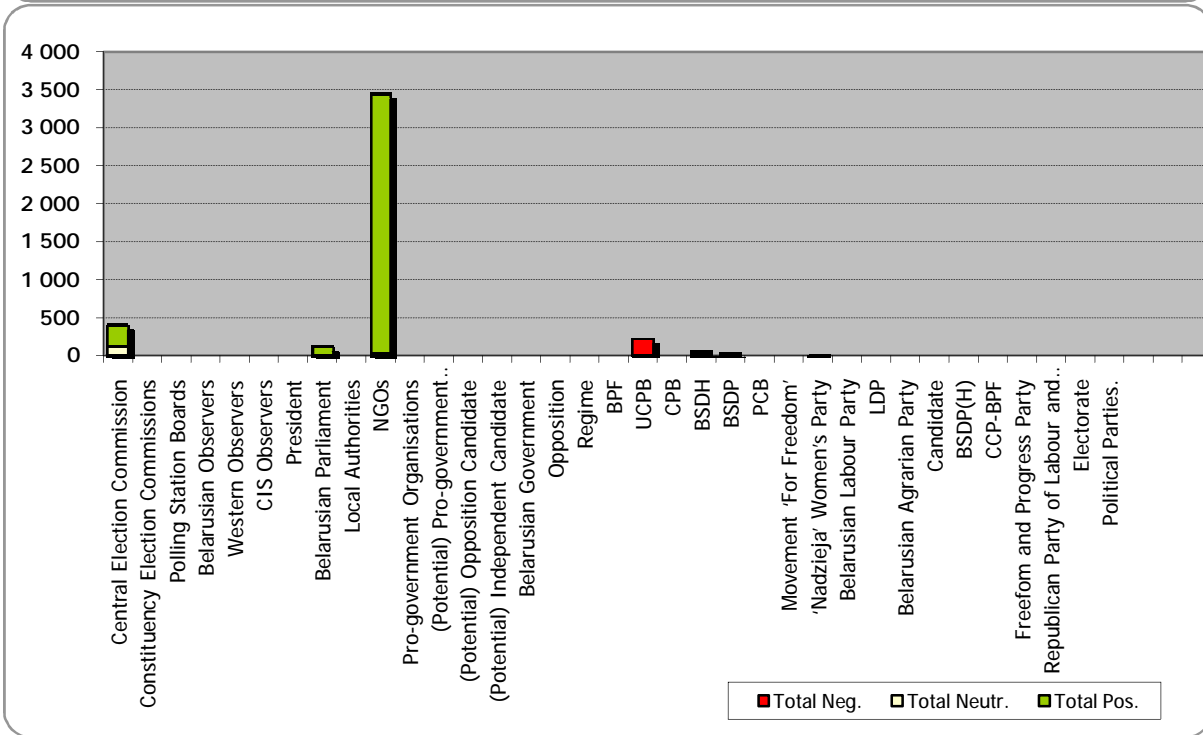
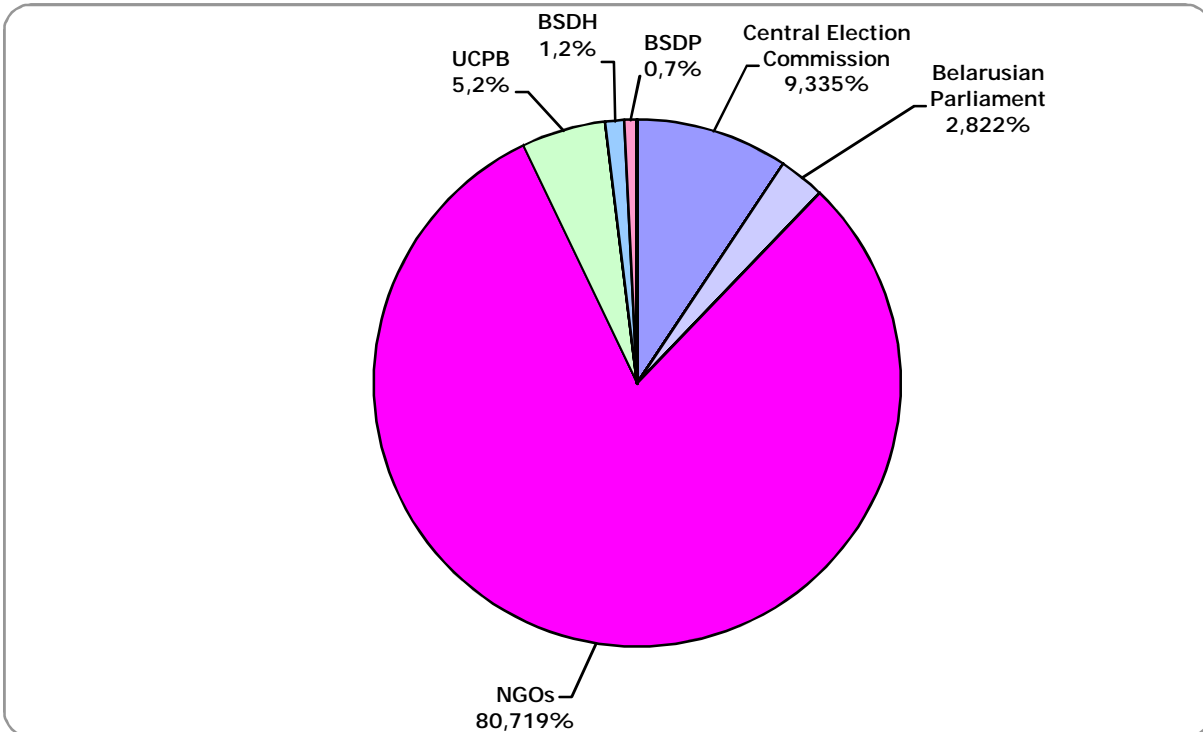


# BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

Sovetskaya Belorussiya: Belarus Segodnya

01.08-15.08.2008

Measured in cm<sup>2</sup>



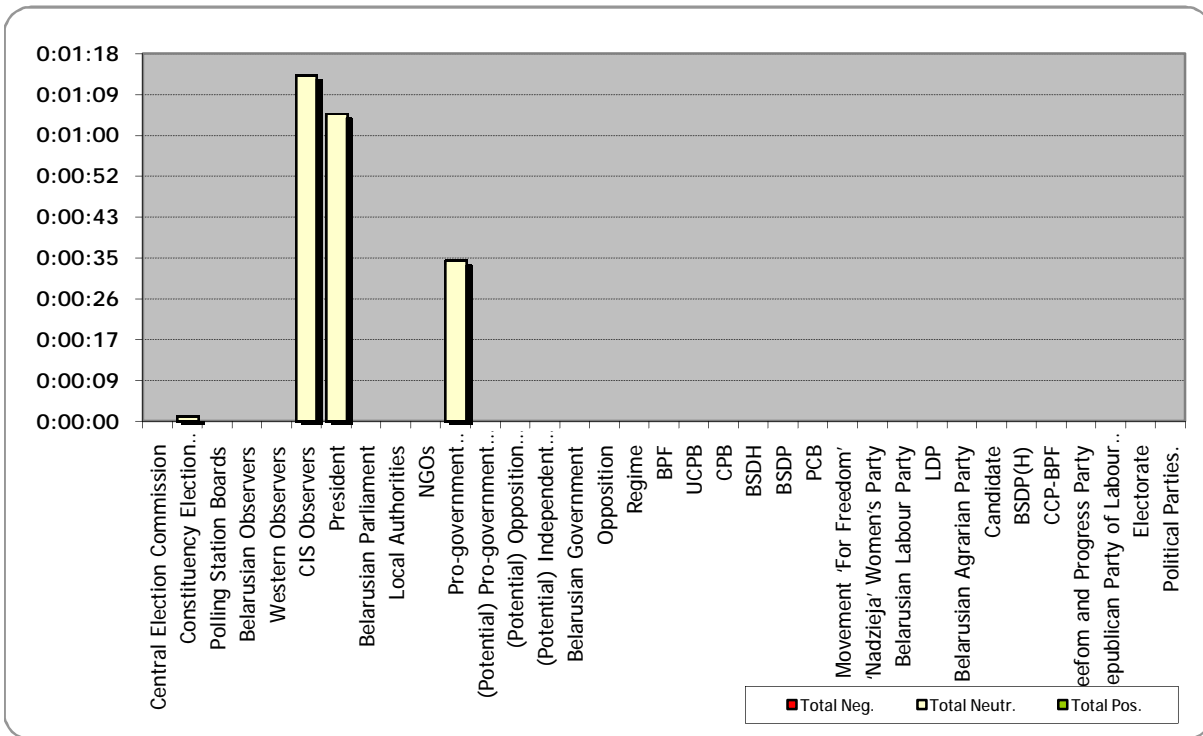
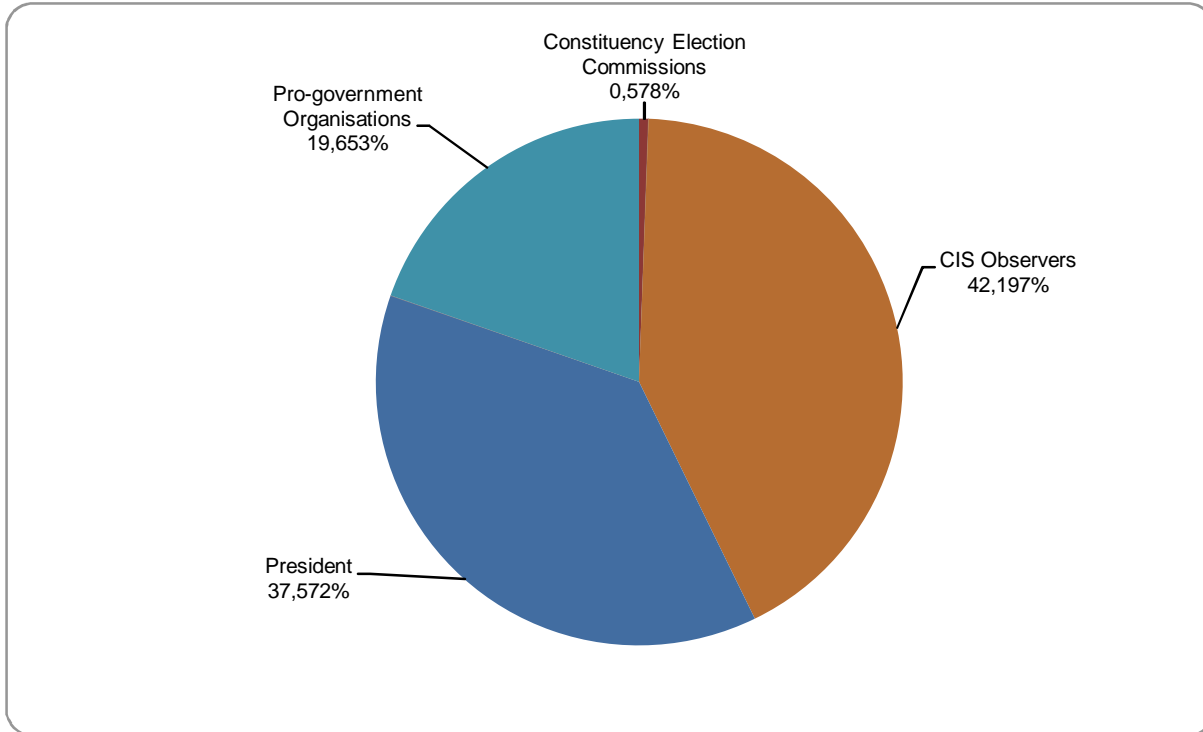


# BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

Navy (Homiel Regional Radio 101.3 FM)

01.08-15.08.2008

Measured in hours, minutes, seconds (0:02:45)



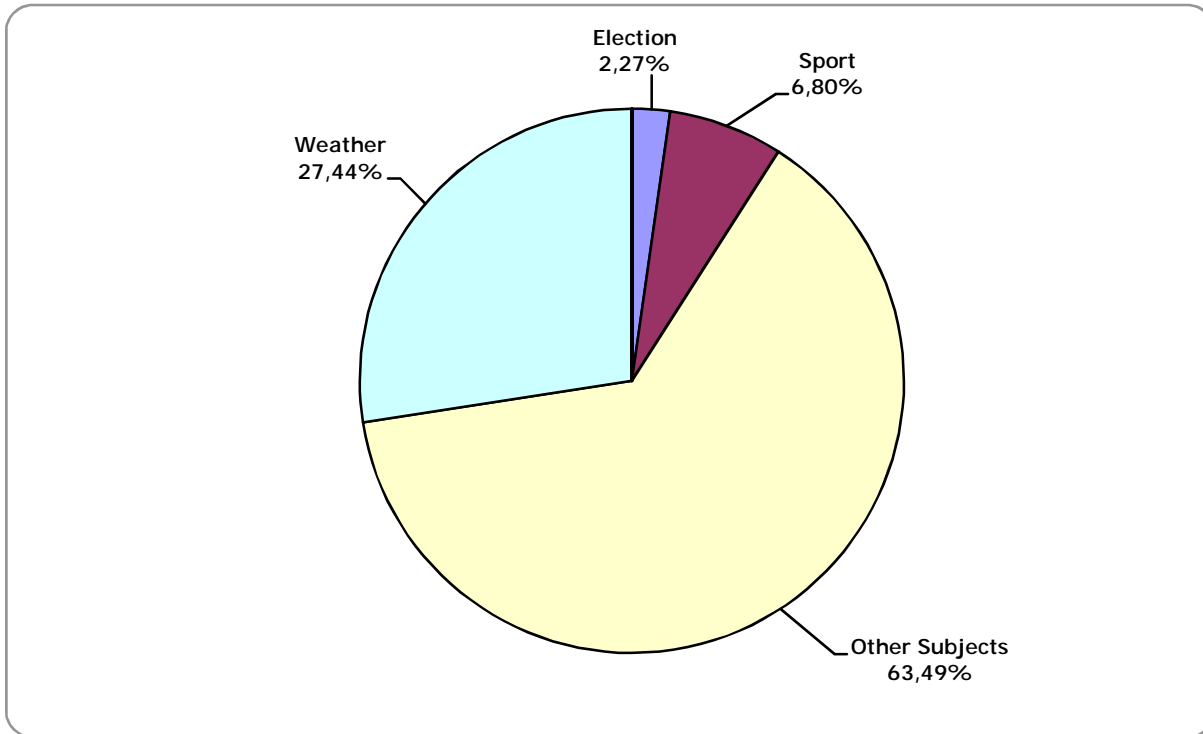


## BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

Navyi (Homiel Regional Radio 101.3 FM)

01.08-15.08.2008

Measured in hours, minutes, seconds (0:02:45)



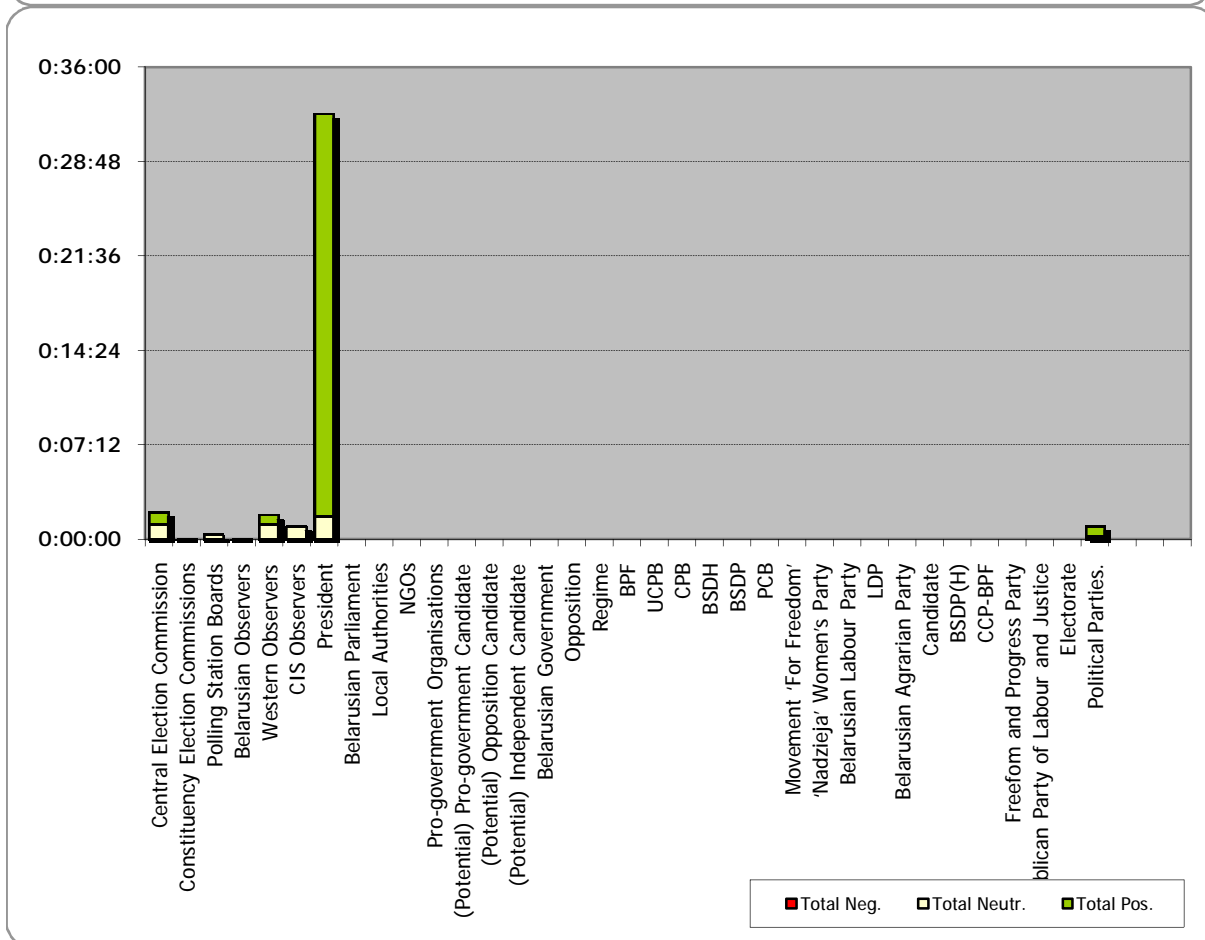
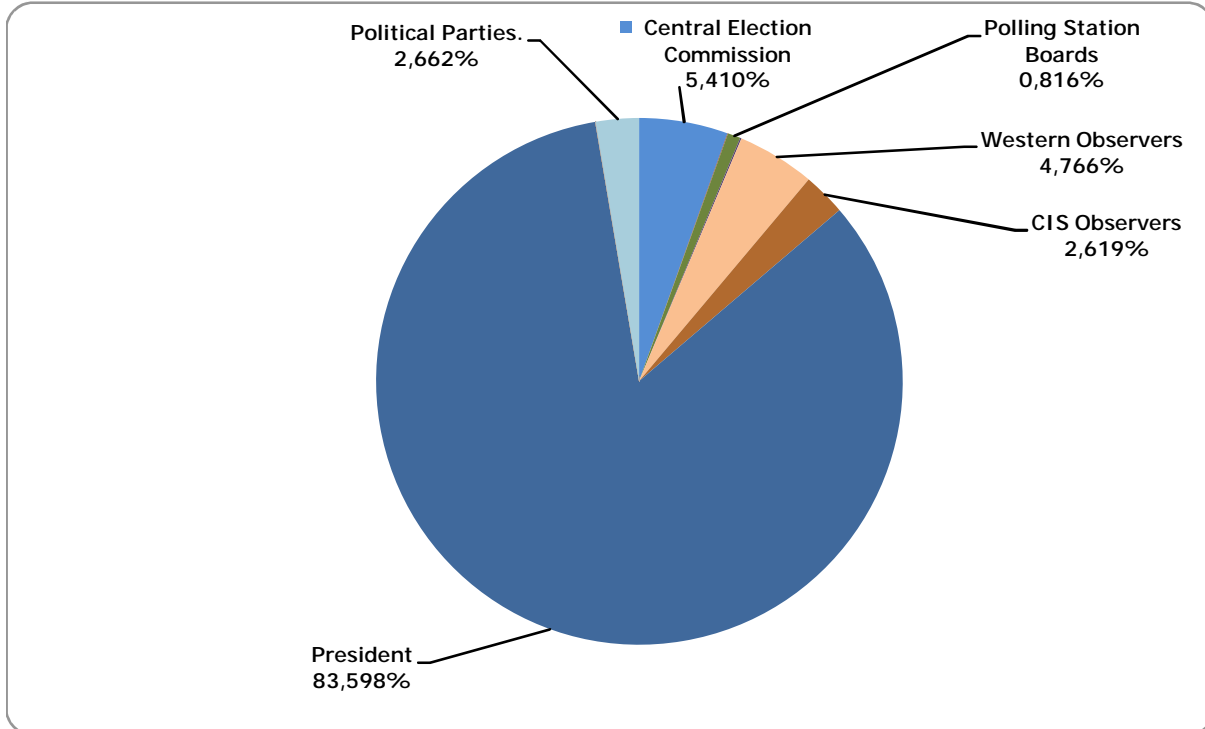


# BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

## Nashi Novosti (ONT)

01.08-15.08.2008

Measured in hours, minutes, seconds (0:02:45)



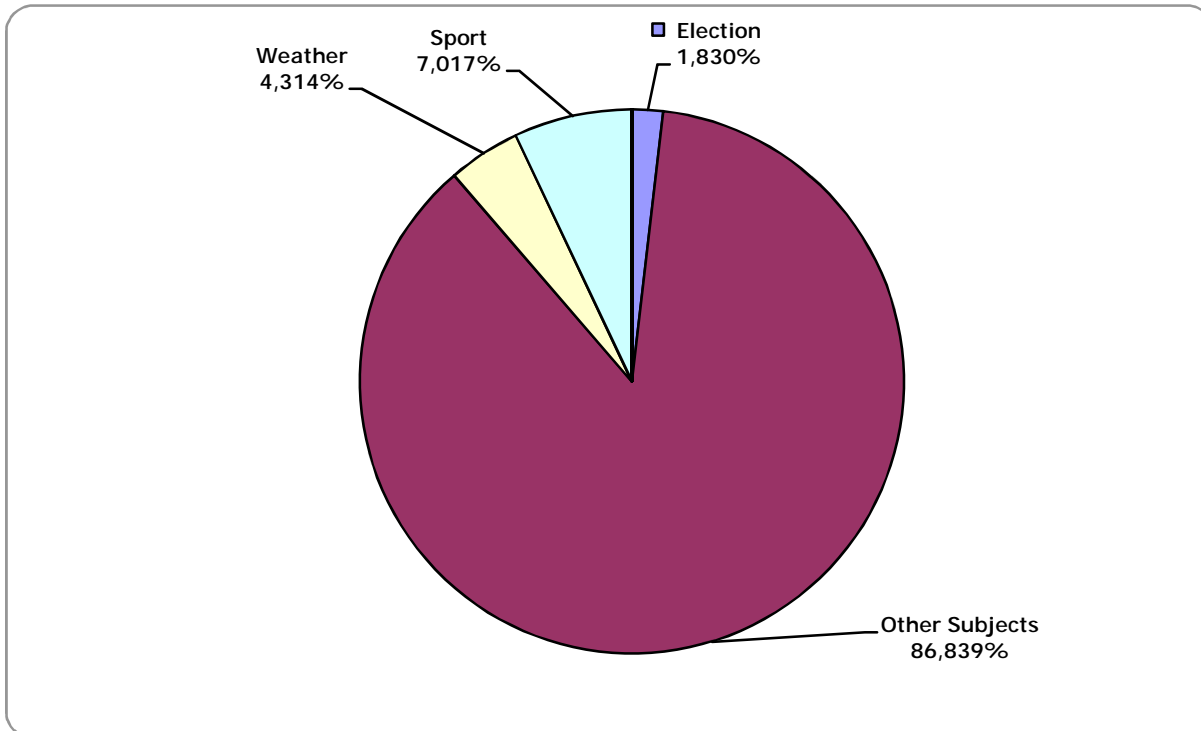


## BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

Nashi Novosti (ONT)

01.08-15.08.2008

Measured in hours, minutes, seconds (0:02:45)







# BELARUSIAN PARLAMENT ELECTIONS 2008

TUT.BY  
01.08-15.08.2008

Measured in symbols

