



**Monitoring Regional Broadcasters
Georgia's 2014 Local Elections**

Subagreement # S-14-108

Reporting period: May 26 - June 1, 2014

Main findings of the second phase of monitoring:

- Some of the TV companies, unlike previous reporting period, dedicated airtime to comparatively less monitored subjects. Political subjects were covered in accordance with their pre-election activities;
- Most of the TV companies essentially offered viewers superficial coverage of ongoing events; Journalists limited themselves to reporting on the facts; Lack of censorious questions was apparent;
- Most of the TV companies dedicated the major portion of airtime to the Georgian Dream Coalition (GD), the United National Movement (UNM) election bloc and the government.
- Reporting on the monitored subjects was mostly neutral in tone. Criticism towards government though boosted;
- Thanks to the interactive nature of talk shows TV viewers enjoyed a possibility to call in to participate in the discussion and pose questions;
- Few cases of the use of hate speech were essentially identified from respondents' side; No violation of journalism ethics was observed;
- No signs of subliminal political advertising were identified in the programs aired during evening time;
- Within reporting period no manipulation through music/sound was identified.

Background

The report represents the results of the monitoring carried out by the Internews Georgia monitoring team within the period of May 25 - June 1, 2014.

Media monitoring helps raise the standard of professionalism and is conducive to the development of independent unbiased journalism.

The goal of our monitoring is to identify, through the monitoring of evening news outlets (19:00 - 24:00) and public-political programs aired on Georgian regional TV broadcasters, the proceeding of regional media coverage of pre-election campaign and key trends.

Analysis and Methodology

Monitoring was carried out on 16 regional TV broadcasters including *Channel 25 (Batumi)*, *Rioni (Kutaisi)*, *Kvemo Kartli TV-Radio Company (Rustavi)*, *Odishi (Zugdidi)*, *Tanamgzavri (Telavi)*, *Channel 9 (Akhaltikhe)*, *Trialeti (Gori)*, *Guria (Ozurgeti)*, *Imervizia (Chiatara)*, *Gurjaani (Gurjaani)*, *Mega TV (Khoni)*, *9th Wave (Poti)*, *Argo (Zestaponi)*, *Marneuli TV (Marneuli)*, *Borjomi (Borjomi)* and *Dia (Khashuri)*.

Monitoring was conducted on the regional broadcasters' main evening news programs, public-political programs and talk-shows during so-called prime time when the number of viewers is at its peak.

Monitoring of News Programs

The technique applied in the monitoring project is based on quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative monitoring determines quantitative indicators that can be counted and analyzed. While qualitative monitoring is applied to evaluate the efficiency of media outlets' activities in relation to the indicators such as ethical or professional standards whose quantitative measurement is complex. In particular, the distortion of news, unbalanced coverage, bias or anything else that might affect quality news was focused on.

Quantitative data includes the running time (seconds) of the stories produced about our preselected subjects or making a mention of them. Time is counted when either a news anchor or a journalist or any of the respondents of the story is speaking about the monitored subject. The time is being counted when the monitored subject is on the TV screen, either his/her photo, poster or any kind of visual material is shown on the screen (in case s/he is not spoken about).

The monitoring focuses whether the subject is speaking on his/her own or is being spoken about either by a journalist or a respondent. When a monitored subject is speaking (the voice is audible) time is being counted as direct reporting; When a monitored subject is spoken about by others, either by journalists or respondents time is being counted as indirect reporting.

Reporting tone is attributed to every monitored subject. To assess the reporting tone three categories are applied: positive, neutral and negative. Always when the time dedicated to a monitored subject is calculated the tone is evaluated as well, this is to say the running time,

seconds/minutes, of the monitored subject being spoken about in a certain tone is calculated.

When evaluating the tone both the content as well as context is focused on.

Based on qualitative data the efficiency of media activities in terms of adherence to ethical or professional standards is evaluated. The qualitative part embraces components such as balance, impartiality, accuracy (whether mistakes are in place in the titles, numbers or respondents' names), fact-based reporting, cases of ignoring news, timely coverage of events, journalist's vocabulary, subliminal political advertising and all those important aspects that are not subject to quantitative measurement. Manipulation through shots and music used in the news programs is also brought into focus.

Monitored subjects include: Parliamentary chairperson, independent MPs, President, government, Prime Minister, Central Election Commission, local authorities (without specification), Adjara government, election bloc United National Movement (*United National Movement, Georgian Christian-Conservative Party*), Georgian Dream Coalition (*Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia, Free Democrats, National Forum, Georgian Republican Party, Georgian Conservative Party, Industry will Save Georgia*), election bloc Non-Parliamentary Opposition (Free Georgia, New Rights), election bloc Nino Burjanadze – United Opposition (*Democratic Movement – United Georgia, Georgian Troupe, Christian-Democratic Movement, Union of Georgian Traditionalists, Leftist Alliance*), bloc Self-Governance to People (*European Democrats, For Fair Georgia*), People's Party, Georgia's Way, alliance Euro Atlantic Choice (*National-Democratic Party, Civil Alliance for Freedom, Christian-Democratic Party, Ilia Chavchavadze Society, Merab Kostava Society, Georgian Women's Party*), Labor Party, Greens Party, Georgian Party, Alliance of Georgian Patriots, Our Georgia, as well as mayoral candidates nominated separately by each political party running for the elections and independent candidates running for the Sakrebulo mandates.

News programs monitoring results per channel:

Channel 25 (Batumi) - Within reporting period the Channel 25-produced news program Matsne was on the evening air on a daily basis. News programs essentially covered local news. Less time was dedicated to the events ongoing nationwide.

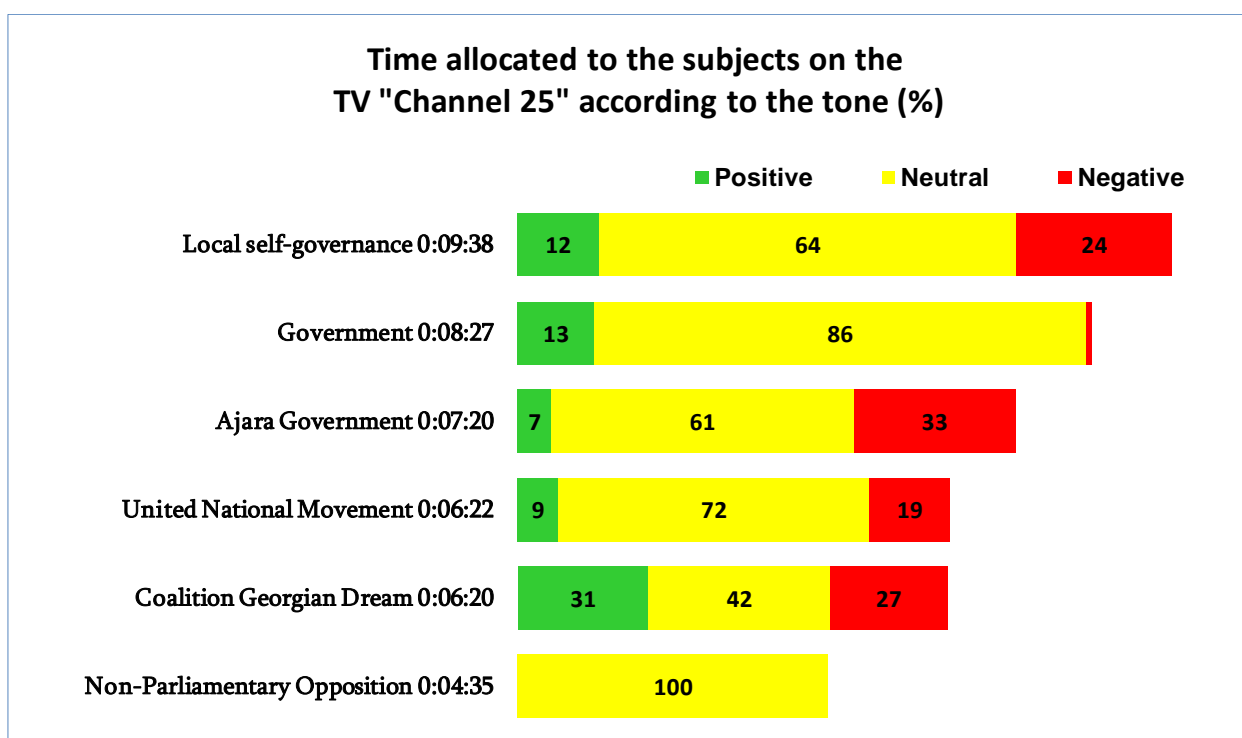
News program Matsne dedicated the total of one hour and three minutes to the monitored subjects. 15 percent of the total falls on reporting on local authorities (Gangebeli, Sakrebulo members, State representatives to the villages), 13 percent on central government, 12 percent on Adjara AR government. News programs dedicated less than three minutes to most of the monitored subjects including Batumi mayoral nominees.

Reporting on the activities carried out by the nominees running for Batumi mayor office, Sakrebulo majoritarian MP mandates was unbiased and the scarcity of time dedicated to them was presumably due to the lack of activities carried out by political subjects.

40 percent of airtime was apportioned to the monitored subjects for direct reporting. Major opponent political forces GD and UNM were equally covered, in terms of time, but in GD's case the degree of negative reporting stood higher (27 percent).

In the May 28 news outlet the use of hate speech was identified. The program televised the interview with Irakli Tavartkiladze, UNM's majoritarian candidate for old Batumi referring to Prime Minister as "Hakim Pasha."

No breach of journalism ethics was identified. Reporting was found balanced. No positive or negative approach to either political subject was observed.



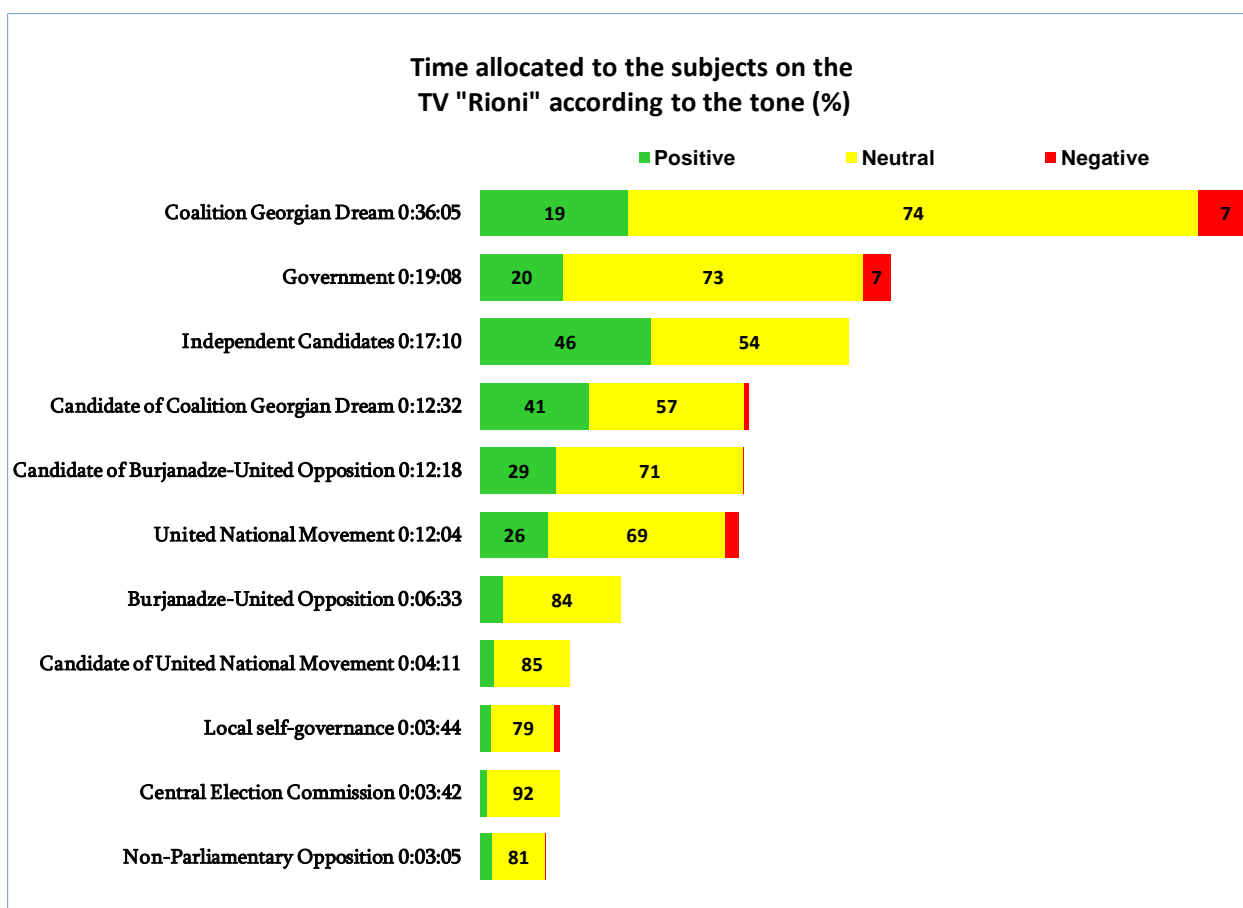
Rioni (Kutaisi) – During one-week reporting period Rioni TV-produced news program Dghis Ambebi (News of the Day) was on air from Monday to Saturday. On Sundays the TV viewers were offered TV magazine 7 Days anchored by journalist Nana Robakidze.

The reporters working for the TV magazine 7 Days mostly reported in an impartial manner. At times though certain TV stories about monitored subjects sounded rather positive, for example the May 28 TV story about Kutaisi Sakrebulo independent candidate Giorgi Khazaradze's meeting with the population residing in Monk Tevdore Street. In the TV story the reporter was citing citizens' comments. Consequently the journalist happened to repeatedly pay compliments to the political subject. When screening the story for a few seconds only respondent's voice was audible and the candidates election number "42" was visible.

Rioni TV journalists reported in a timely manner. They though lacked to pose censorious questions. TV stories were produced about local events, activities carried out by political parties, nominees for mayor position, or the ones running for Gamgebeli or majoritarian MP mandates. Some important developments nationwide were brought into focus too.

TV company Rioni dedicated the total of two hours to the election subjects. 25 percent of the given time falls on GD, 13 percent – on government, 12 percent – on independent candidates running for majoritarian MP mandates. 9-9 percent of the total time was enjoyed by Shota Murgulia and Teimuraz Shashishvili nominated for the city mayor position by GD and Burjanadze – United Opposition respectively. For direct reporting Rioni TV apportioned comparatively more time. The degree of indirect reporting stands at 30-35 percent. Reporting was essentially neutral and positive in tone.

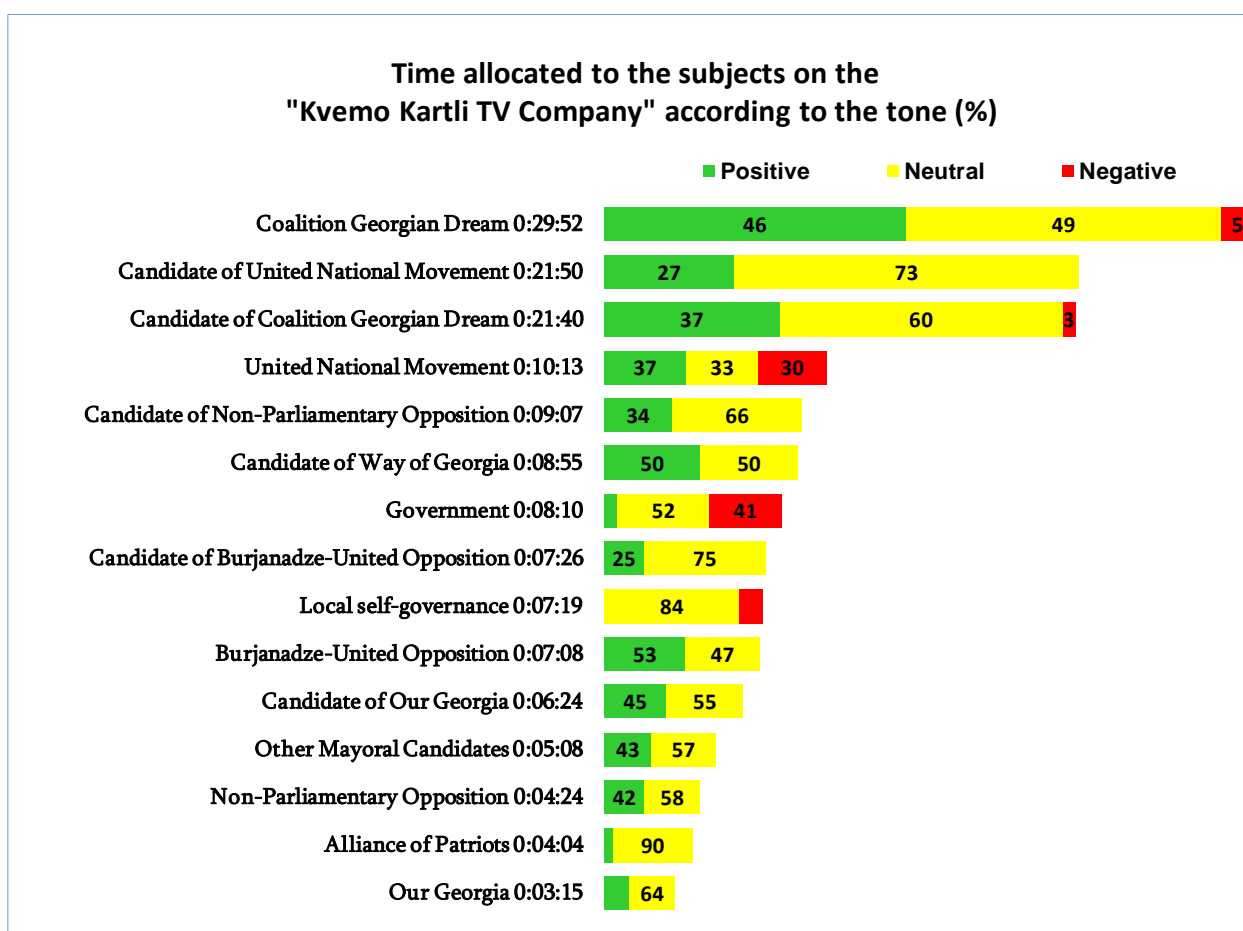
Neither manipulation through sound/music nor hate speech was identified in the news programs.



Kvemo Kartli TV Company (Rustavi) – Within a reporting week the channel's main news program Kronika essentially focused on the coverage of pre-election campaigns ran by political subjects. The total airtime dedicated to the monitored subjects made up two hours and 38 minutes with GD leading the chart. Equal time (21 minute per each) was dedicated to the nominee for Rustavi city mayoral candidates Davit Jikia of GD and Mamuka Chikovani of UNM. In total though GD's representatives were dedicated 13 percent more time than UNM. The ruling party was 46 percent positively represented, the degree of negative tone in regard to UNM was 30 percent.

For direct reporting the monitored subjects were apportioned a considerable amount of airtime (60 percent). When reporting direct the UNM representatives essentially used airtime to make negative comments against incumbent government, therefore reporting in regard to the government was 41 percent negative in tone.

At times news programs televised pre-election meetings of certain political parties with the residents of different streets in separate TV stories. For example the May 28 news outlet produced three TV stories about the activities carried out by the GD's nominee for Rustavi city mayor Davit Jikia. Similar trend was identified in regard to some other political subjects. Despite active TV coverage of pre-election activities carried out in the region the TV stories did not contain in-depth information about election programs of the political subjects running for elections. In the main election pledges were brought into focus therefore positive and neutral reporting prevails in the chart.



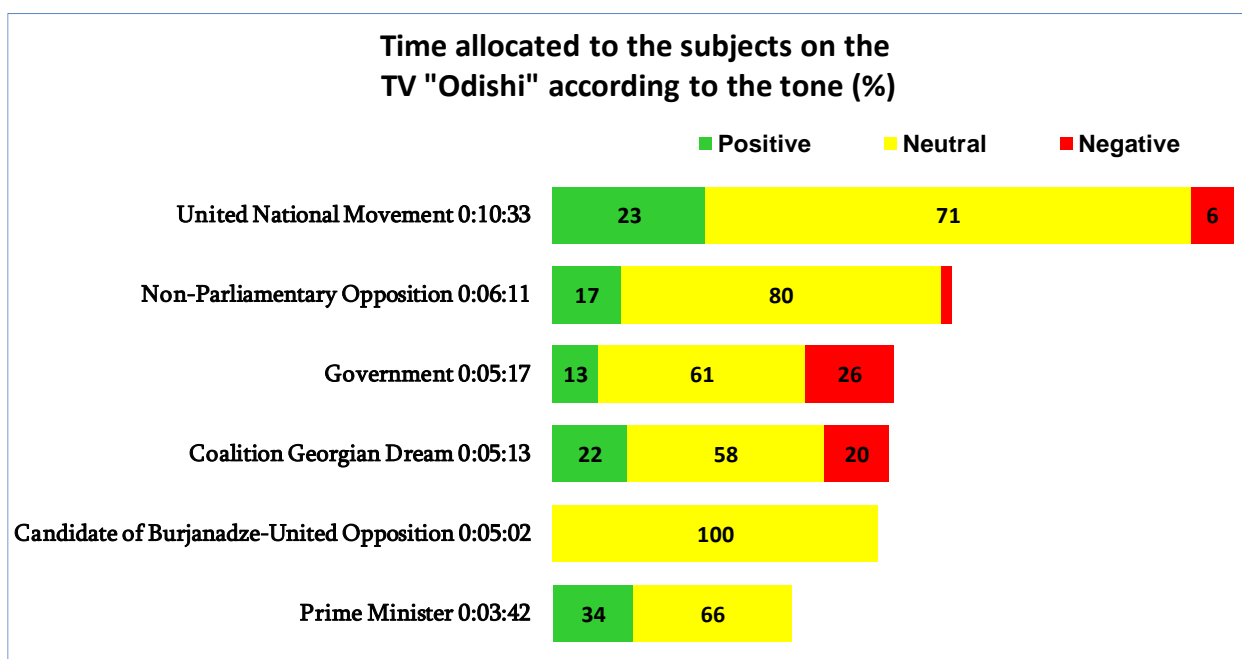
Odishi (Zugdidi) – In the reporting week the main news programs produced by TV company Odishi essentially covered events ongoing in the region. The developments ongoing nationwide were televised through Infolenti by means of brief scripts. Infolenti featured the opinions expressed by policy makers and public figures. Together with the texted citation the

author's photo was shown as well. Infolenti is on air every evening, the pieces of news though provide superficial coverage of events.

The channel dedicated the total of 41 minutes, UNM leading the chart with 25 percent, Non-Parliamentary Opposition with 15 percent, followed by government with 13 percent. News reporting was neutral in tone. 20 percent out of 5-5 minutes dedicated to GD and government activities was found negative.

During reporting period no bias was identified. The news programs dedicated unequal time to the political subjects that was presumably due to frequency of their activities. For instance, over three minutes were solely dedicated to Rusudan Pachkoria, Burjanadze-United Opposition's nominee for Zugdidi mayor position.

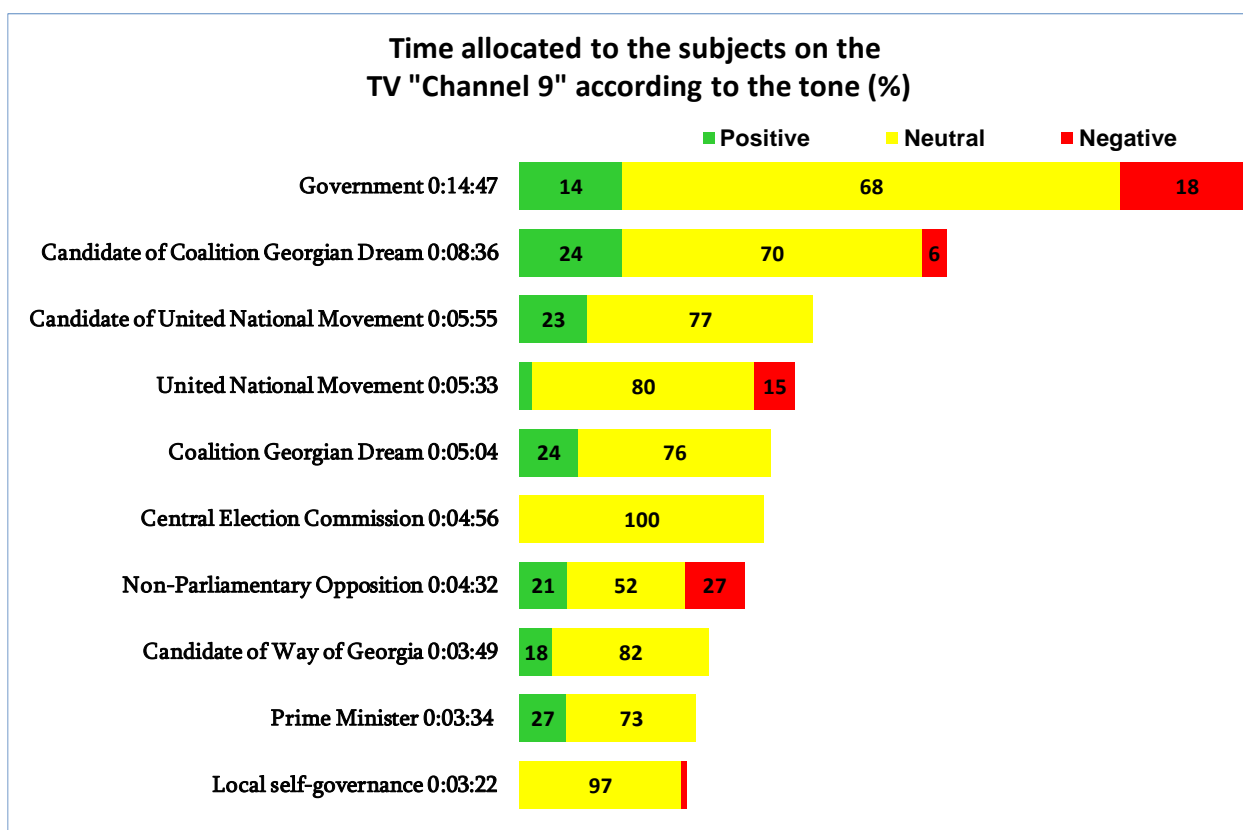
It is noteworthy that in the May 28 news outlet TV company's management demonstrated its willingness to allocate additional airtime to the political subjects.



9th Channel (Alkhaltsikhe) - In the course of the reporting period the channel aired the main news program Echo from Monday to Friday. On Sunday, Echo of the Week, usually aired without a newsreader, granted viewers a possibility to watch re-aired TV stories about important topics of the week.

TV company 9th Channel actively covered local news: activities carried out by political parties and subjects running for the upcoming elections, as well as sports, cultural and other type of events and the problems the population faces. The “News in Georgia” rubric touched upon the developments in the country. The news production team had the topics of current importance suitably selected and brought into focus. During reporting week 9th Channel dedicated the total of one hour and 13 minutes to the monitored subjects. 20 percent of the given total falls on reporting on the government, 12 percent on Giorgi Kopadze, GD’s nominee for Akhaltsikhe mayor position. UNM and their nominee Gela Demetradze each received 8 percent of the given time. The latter essentially reported direct, reporting was neutral in tone. 80 percent of reporting on his political union was indirect. The share of direct and indirect reporting in regard to GD and its nominees for mayor positions was almost equal.

Journalists tended to produce interesting TV stories. Rather often the company offered viewers 3-5-minute TV stories. Journalists reported in a comprehensive manner, representing all of the parties. Journalists reported about recent developments in a timely manner without demonstrating their standpoints. In the news programs neither the signs of subliminal political advertising nor the violation of ethical norms were identified.



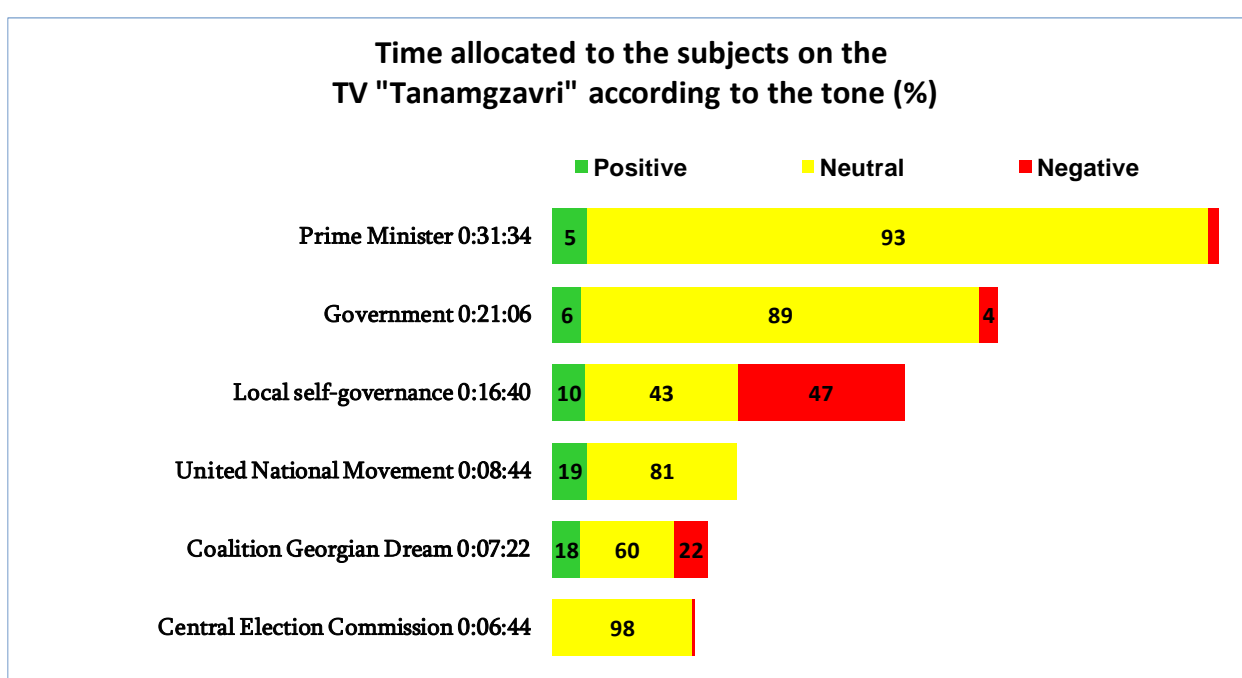
Tanamgzavri (Telavi) – Within reporting period TV company aired the main news program Akhali Ambebi (News) from Monday to Friday. The TV company repeated the 30-minute news outlet twice during evening air. Along with the events ongoing locally, the company covers developments nationwide and world news. Almost equal share of time was apportioned to local and nationwide news.

The news programs dedicated the total of one hour and 40 minutes to the monitored subjects. 32 percent of the given time falls on Prime Minister, with 62 percent of direct reporting recorded. The high index was due to reporting on Prime Minister's visit to Kakheti and his greetings on the Independence Day. Reporting on PM Irakli Gharibashvili was 93 percent neutral.

21-minute reporting was enjoyed by the government, that was essentially due to lengthy comments provided by government's members: respondents' comments when reporting on nationwide news were lengthier compared with reporting on local developments. Accordingly reporting on the government was 67 direct. In terms of the dedication of airtime local authorities rank third in the chart, 16 percent of reporting was neutral and

negative in tone. Negative tone was due to a TV story produced about current issues of concern, featuring population complaining about their inactivity. News programs produced several comprehensive stories about various social and infrastructural problems (destroyed roads, drainage canals, drinking water problems) persisting in the region.

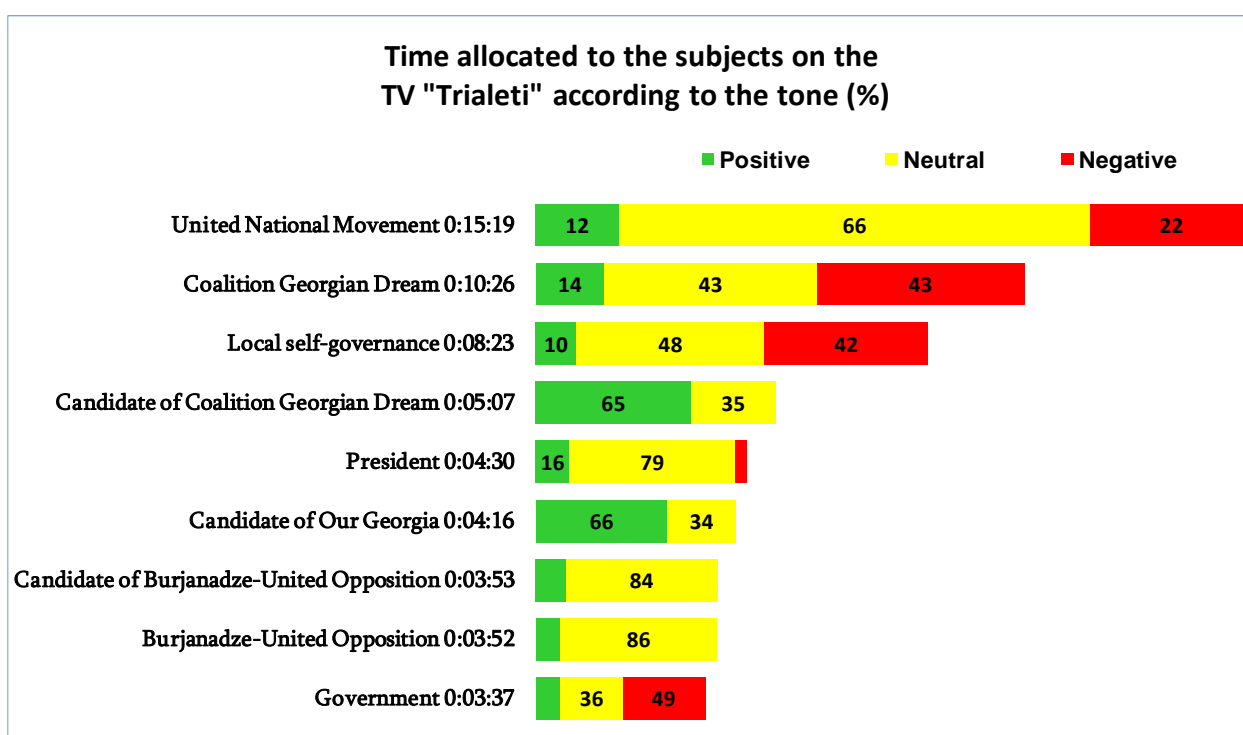
Out of the election subjects UNM and GD enjoyed the bulk of time. Over one minute was dedicated to Giorgi Mosiashvili, Non-Parliamentary Opposition's nominee for Telavi city mayor position. News reporting was in general balanced and unbiased. When reporting, journalists did not demonstrate their subjective stance. Neither manipulation through music/sound nor hate speech was identified in the news programs.



Trialeti (Gori) – During reporting week the news program Akhali Ambebi (News) on Trialeti actively covered developments in the region as well as nationwide from Monday to Friday. On Saturdays the TV air was dedicated to the weekly news program Kviris Ambebi (News of the Week) summarizing important events of the week. In the news programs aired throughout the week journalists covered pre-election meetings of nominees running for the city mayor and Gamgebeli positions as well as Sakrebulo mandates in a timely and impartial manner. TV stories were essentially found balanced. The diversity of tones shown in the chart is due to dissention about ongoing events and opponents' comments.

Within reporting week the monitored subjects were dedicated one hour and five minutes in total. UNM ranks first with 24 percent, followed by GD and local authorities with 16 and 13 percent respectively. For direct reporting political subjects were offered one fourth of the total time.

High degree of negative reporting in regard to GD and local authorities was due to the allegations made by UNM representative Irma Nadirashvili against local authorities over the handover of the new market area to a private entity on the basis of the 49-year leasing agreement. On May 31, at the end of the news program, a fierce discussion was held over the issue among the guests invited to the studio. The invited guests included the UNM and GD representatives. The hosts in the studio failed to fully deal with the situation. Counter allegations were repeatedly made, the hosts though called on the guests to substantiate their statements.



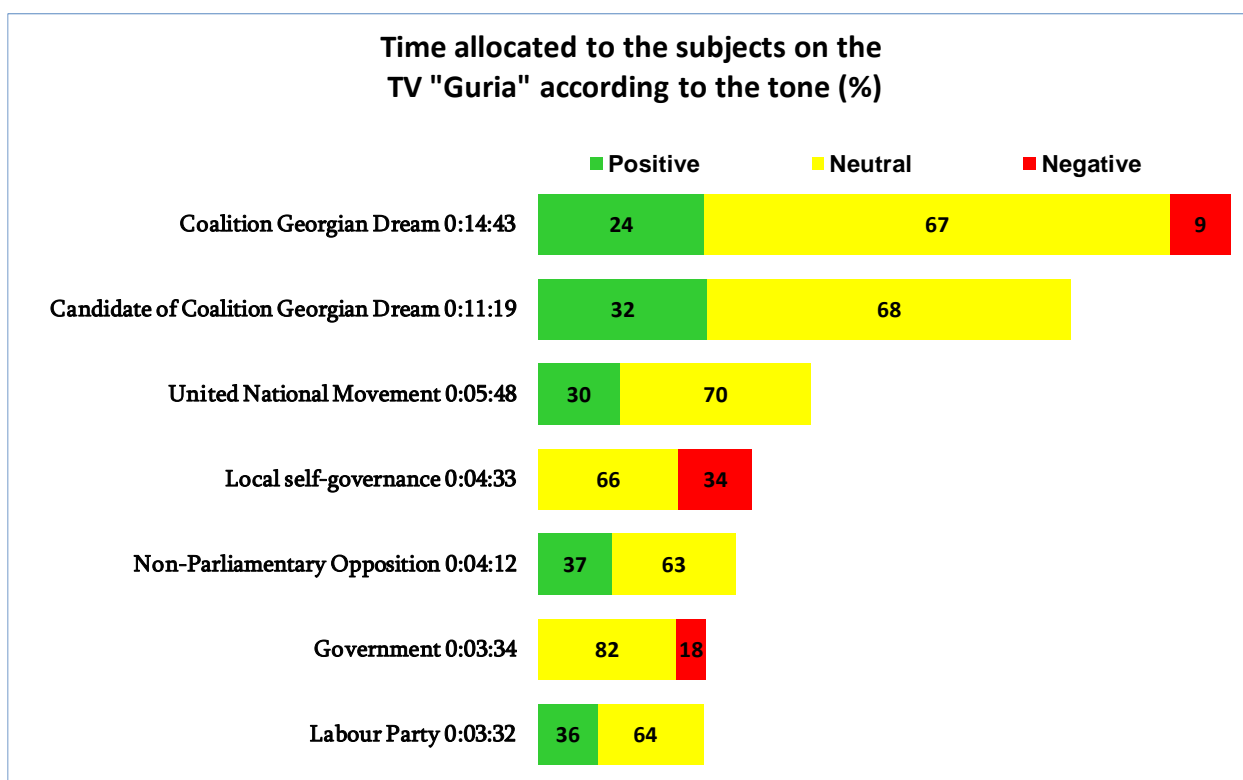
Guria (Ozurgeti) - During reporting period the TV company Guria-produced main news program Fact was on air from Monday to Friday. The channel aired 10-15-minute news outlet twice during prime time. The TV stories televised within the news program focused on the local developments. TV company Guria actively covered pre-election meetings of the

subjects running for the elections. From May 28 a new rubric “Who We Elect” has been added to the news program, to the audience the rubric introduces different nominees for Gamgebeli position.

Guria TV dedicated the total of 53 minutes to the monitored subjects. 28 percent of the total time falls on GD, followed by Beglar Sioridze, Ozurgeti mayoral candidate. The share of direct and indirect reporting was almost equal. 11 percent of the total time was enjoyed by UNM. Local authorities and Non-Parliamentary Opposition each received eight percent. The TV stories within the news program Fact was essentially of shallow and informative nature. No comprehensive TV story was produced about any topic. At times journalist's subjective approach to the monitored subject was apparent; for example, while the journalist covered the pre-election meeting of GD's Ozurgeti mayoral candidate in the May 28 news outlet. Within reporting period the lack of balance was identified too. In particular, the May 29 10-minute TV story about the problems the Chokhatauri Street dwellers face was built upon residents' comments, the position of the local authorities was not demonstrated.

In one of the TV stories in the May 27 news outlet a technical shortcoming was identified: in the chart designed to better represent the list of nominees for the city mayor and Gamgebeli positions the same individuals were mentioned as nominees for both Gamgebeli and mayor posts.

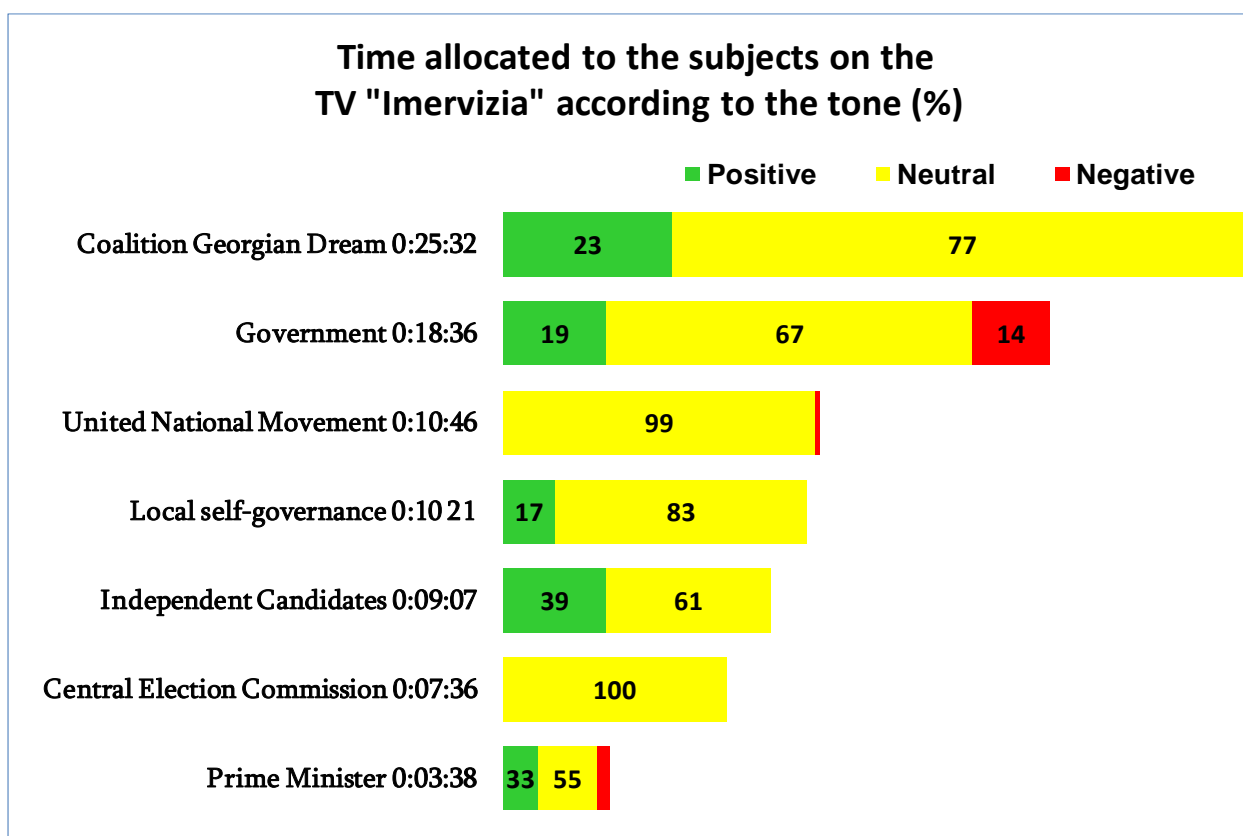
No hate speech or manipulation through sound/music was identified.



Imervizia (Chiatura) - Within reporting period the channel televised news program Akhali Ambebi (News) from Monday to Friday without a news anchor.

Within past week the TV company dedicated the total of one hour and 20 minutes to the monitored subjects. The GD activities enjoyed 25-minute TV coverage, followed by government with 18 minutes, and UNM with 10 minutes. The share of direct/ indirect reporting was almost equal. In the TV stories about political or other issues no bias was identified. Journalists were trying to report in a timely manner without expressing their viewpoints.

News programs were found diverse. Along with political topics sports, cultural and other type of events and the nationwide developments of key importance were brought into focus.



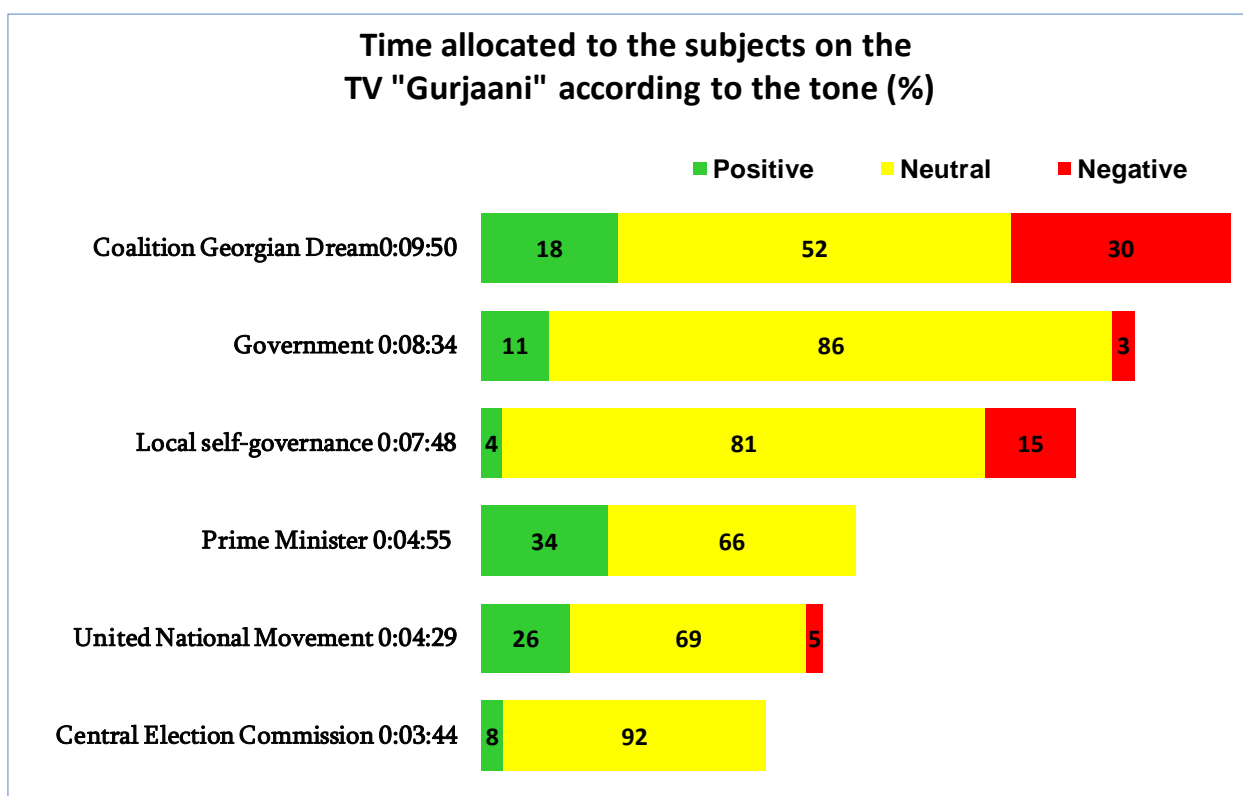
Gurjaani (Gurjaani) – TV company Gurjaani-produced news program Dghes (Today) was on air from Monday to Saturday at 22:00. A summarizing news program “Whole Week” on the important events of the week was televised without a news anchor.

Within reporting period TV company Gurjaani dedicated the total of 46 minutes to the monitored subjects. GD, government and local authorities are leading the chart with 21, 19 and 17 percent respectively.

The channel offered monitored subjects a possibility to report directly, they were also spoken about in a neutral and negative context. The share of direct/reporting is almost the same.

News reporters covered local developments in a timely and impartial manner. Some of the TV stories touched upon the activities of political parties, independent subjects running for the elections or local authorities. Local sports and cultural developments were brought into focus as well. The “News Outside Region” rubric covered developments nationwide. The viewers also had a possibility to learn about world news.

Journalists reported in an impartial manner, without demonstrating their standpoints. No hate speech or breach of ethical standards was identified.



Mega TV (Khoni) – During reporting week the Mega TV-produced news program Mtavari Dghes (Main Today) was on air from Monday to Friday to cover developments in the region as well as nationwide. On Saturday the TV air was dedicated to the news program Main on Sunday and on Sunday the viewers were offered Facts of the Week. The broadcaster dedicated the total of one hour and nine minutes to the monitored subjects. Prime Minister ranks first with 20 percent followed by UNM and government with 16 and 13 percent respectively.

PM's high ranking was due to the lengthy greeting speech on the May 26 Independence Day. The video footage was provided by PM's press office.

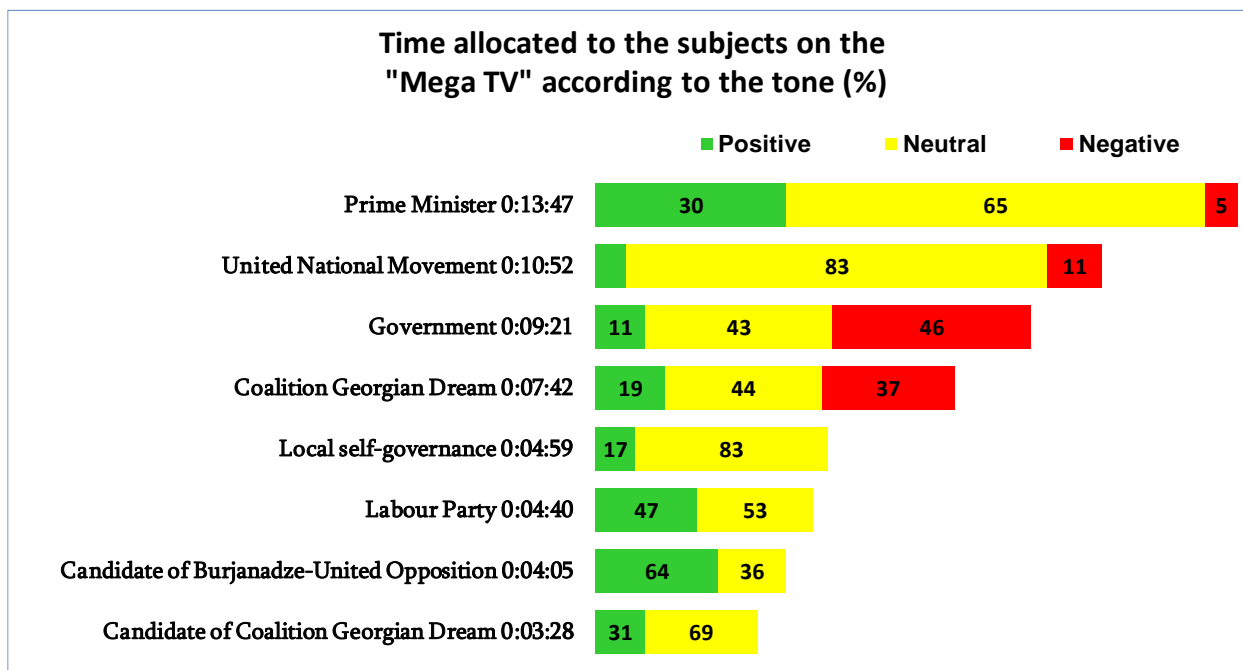
TV company also covered censorious comments made in regard to the government. 46 percent of the dedicated time was negative in tone. The journalists though were never found biased.

Mega TV also covered pre-election activities carried out by political subjects, but no in-depth information was delivered to the viewers about political subjects' election programs, nor were censorious questions posed. Pre-election pledges made by election candidates were

essentially brought into focus, accordingly positive and neutral reporting prevails in the chart. News programs dedicated a certain amount of time to social issues.

Compared to daily news programs the weekend news outlets offered viewers more comprehensive information. The May 31 news program aired the TV stories within the Fact Meter project verifying the accuracy of statements made by political subjects. Documented arguments and expert's comments were provided to substantiate factual accuracy or inaccuracy of the statements made by policy makers. The news outlet verified, in row, the accuracy of statements made by Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili and UNM's representative Mikheil Machavariani. No attempts of representing subjects in a biased manner were identified.

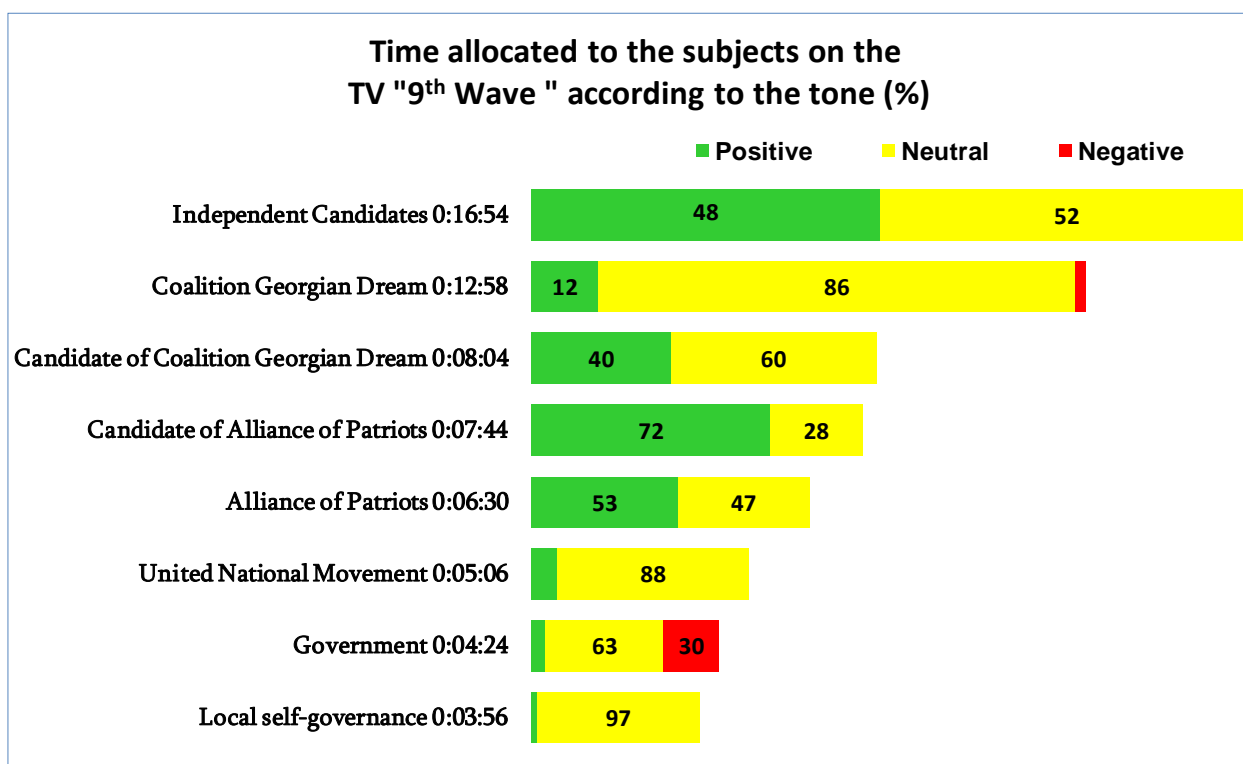
No hate speech or manipulation through sound/music was identified in the news programs.



9th Wave (Poti) – During reporting period the 9th Wave-produced news program Cursor dedicated the total of one hour and 13 minutes to the monitored subjects. Cursor, being on air from Monday to Friday, offered viewers a possibility to thoroughly become aware of the developments in the region as well as nationwide.

23 percent of the total time dedicated to monitored subjects falls on independent candidates running for Sakrebulo majoritarian MP mandates, followed by GD with 18 percent and their mayoral nominee Irakli Kakulia with 11 percent. Approximately the same amount of time

was dedicated to mayoral candidates Ushangi Gegenava nominated by the Georgian Alliance of Patriots. News programs offered viewers diverse type of programs. Political topics as well as activities of local authorities and the problems the locals face, also sports and cultural events were brought into focus. 60 percent of the total time was apportioned for direct reporting. No lack of balance was identified. Reporting on monitored subjects was positive and neutral in tone. Journalists reported in an impartial manner.



Argo (Zestaponi) – Within one-week reporting period the channel dedicated 14 minutes to the monitored subjects. Argo TV-produced main news program Spectrum was made up of various topics including religious holidays, increase in the cases of enteroviruses, young musicians, sports contests and the like.

Solely the May 28 news outlet covered GD's majoritarian candidate's meeting with the population. 89 percent of the time dedicated to him was direct, reporting was 59 percent positive and 41 percent neutral in tone. Over two minutes were dedicated to Georgia's Way and UNM.

Marneuli TV (Marneuli) – Within reporting period the TV company Marneuli TV-produced news program Akhali Ambebi (News) was on air from Monday to Friday. The news outlets

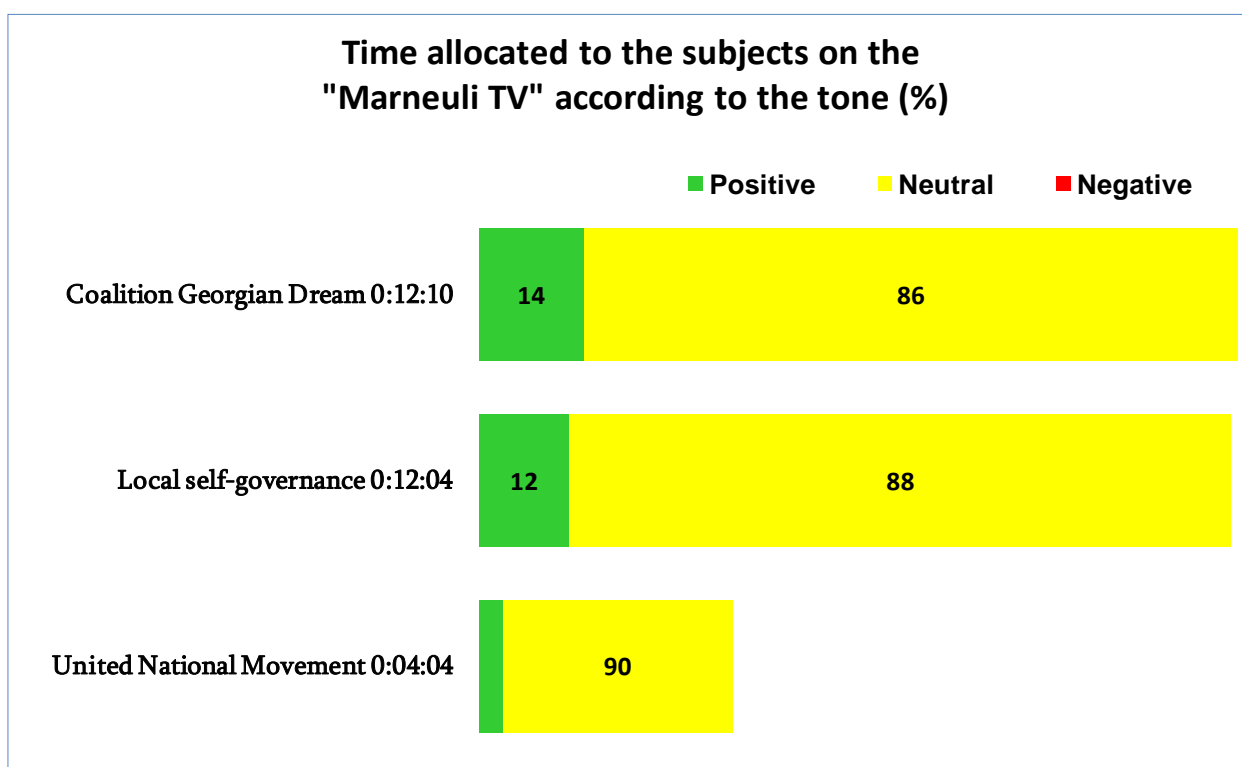
were re-aired during evening time. TV stories touched upon local developments. The channel dedicated the total of 40 minutes to the monitored subjects. GD and local authorities are leading the chart with 12 minutes each. Reporting was mostly direct – 72 and 78 percent respectively. Four-minute TV reporting falls on UNM, 67 percent of the apportioned time was direct.

The time dedicated to the rest of the monitored subjects was less than three minutes.

Reporting on recent developments Marneuli TV tended to apportion more time to direct reporting rather than indirect. Reporting was essentially neutral in tone. Negative tone was not identified at all.

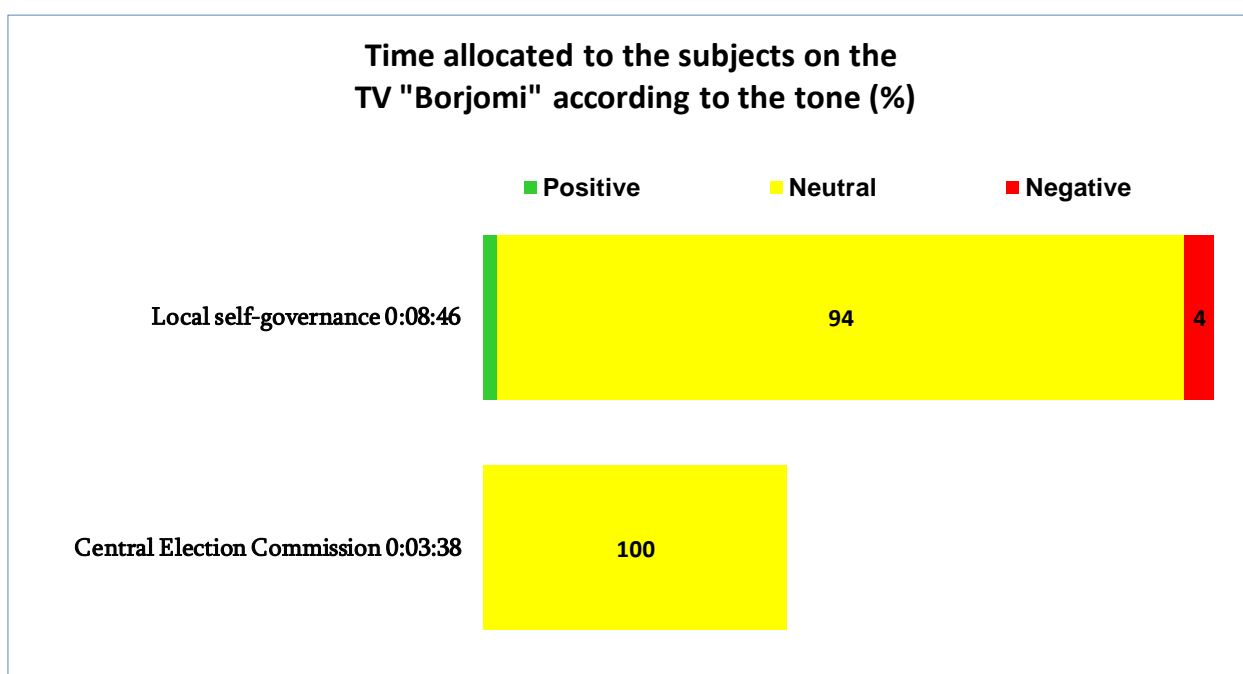
News programs produced no TV stories about election programs of the subjects running for the upcoming elections. Only their pre-election meetings were brought into focus. Also a story was produced about nominees running for the Marneuli Municipality Gemgebeli position.

News reports produced by the channel were found superficial and informative. Journalists reported in a shallow and unbiased manner.



Borjomi (Borjomi) – Within reporting period TV company Borjomi-produced main news program “Dghis Kronika” (Chronicle of the Day) was aired four times. Approximately 10-minute outlets covered solely local events.

The news programs produced within reporting week dedicated the total of 16 minutes to the monitored subjects. With nine minutes the local authorities are leading the chart. The time was equally shared between direct/indirect reporting. The channel dedicated about four minutes to the Central Election Commission (CEC). The time apportioned to the rest of the monitored subjects was less than one minute. TV stories were essentially informative: placing election posters in the forbidden places, expiration of making corrections to general voter lists.



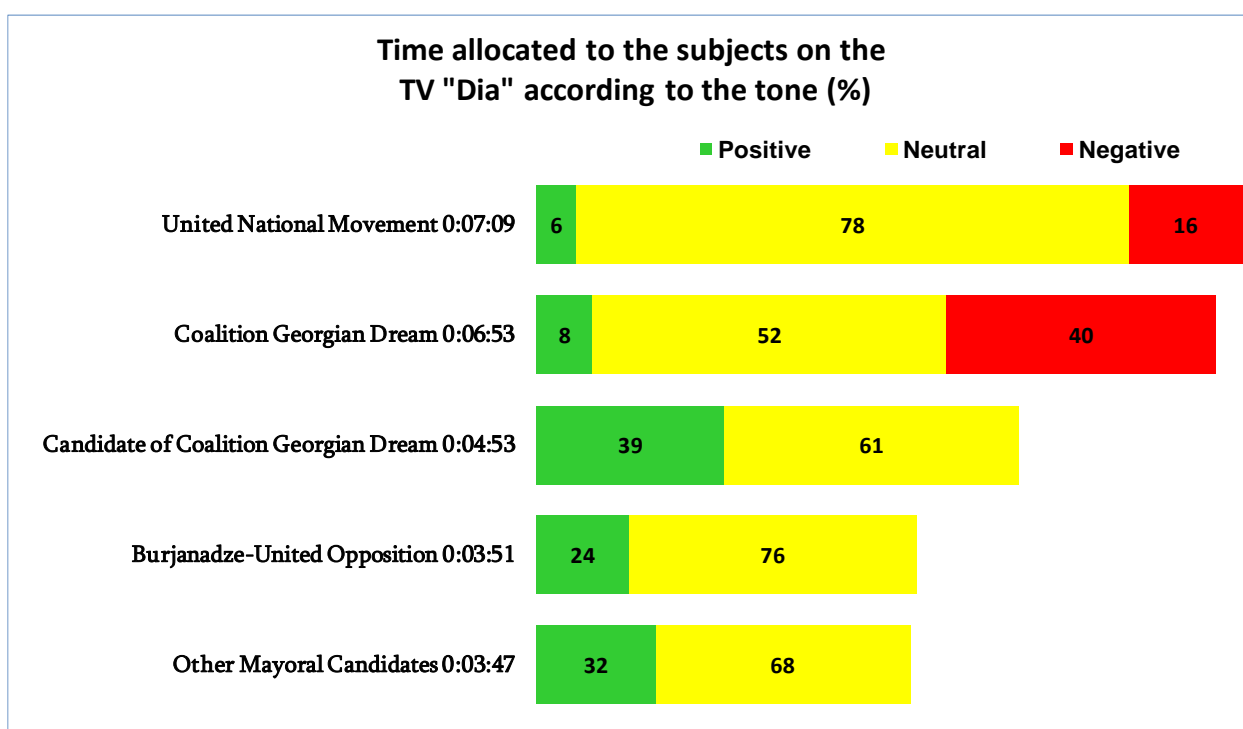
Dia (Khashuri) – TV company Dia offered its main news outlet to the audience from Monday to Friday without a news anchor. On Saturday viewers had a possibility to watch again top important events of the week the weekly news outlet “News of the Week”. The channel reported on the developments locally as well as nationwide.

TV Dia news reporters actively produced news about activities carried out by political subjects, rather often though the subtitles were missing, therefore it was hard to identify the speaker. For that particular reason monitors failed to calculate the time dedicated to several political subjects.

The channel dedicated the total of 36 minutes to the monitored subjects. UNM and GD activities were covered most. Zurab Jirkvelishvili, GD's nominee for Gori city mayor position was spoken about for approximately five minutes. In regard to the most reported subjects the share of indirect/indirect reporting was almost equal.

Reporting was essentially neutral in tone. High degree of negative reporting was identified in regard to UNM and GD, that was due to UNM's representative Irma Nadirashvili's allegations against ruling team.

TV stories were balanced, reporting was though shallow. Journalists tended to report in a timely manner, without demonstrating their personal stance.



Monitoring of Public-Political Programs and Talk Shows

The monitoring of this type of programs implies only qualitative component. The topics of the programs, as well as selected guests and especially journalists are subject to monitoring. Their behavior of presenters is evaluated based on various criteria: their role and participation in the program, the way they conduct the process, whether they are just moderators or are they trying demonstrate their stance, the extent of equality of conditions offered to guests, the way they approach guests and how hard they try to obtain in-depth

information, how well they allow guests to express their opinions, when do the guests get interrupted. Monitoring also focuses on the use of offensive or discriminating expressions and statements by journalists and their response to the use of hate speech by guests.

Results of Monitoring per Channel:

Channel 25 (Batumi) - In the evening time on a daily basis from Monday to Friday the TV company aired **talk show Dialogue**, hosted by journalist Jaba Ananidze. During reporting period four outlets were produced. The candidates nominated by different political forces (GD, UNM, Burjanadze – United Opposition) to run for Gangebeli positions in Khelvachauri, Khulo, Kobuleti and Shuakhevi municipalities were invited to the studio.

The host of the program offered them a possibility to fully and freely express their viewpoints about election programs, priorities and future plans. The journalist was trying to ask the guests away to obtain comprehensive information through additional questions.

In the second block of almost each program a heated discussion was held among the representatives of political parties. The host tended to actively oppose the guests. It is noteworthy that the May 20 outlet, having offered a fierce discussion, had Ada Marshania, a co-leader of Georgian Patriots Alliance and Davit Tebdoradze, Alliance's number one in the proportional list invited to the studio. The journalist was shooting some censorious questions about the formation of the party, future plans, that have ultimately annoyed the guests. Posing questions the journalist sounded rather demanding. In the course of the program one of the TV viewers called in accused the host of aggressiveness and lack of awareness. The programs were highly interactive.

Rioni (Kutaisi) –Within reporting period TV company Rioni aired a **public-political talk show Tema** (Topic) on May 26 and 29 hosted by journalists Nana Robakidze. The guests invited to the studio included Burjanadze – United Opposition, Self-Governance to People, UNM and GD's nominees running for Tkibuli, Samtredia and Tskaltubo Gangebeli positions. The topic of the program was the pre-election programs of the candidates.

The host was actively participating in the discussion. She was curious to learn about candidates' election programs, their priorities, the way they are going to fulfill their pre-election pledges. The host was trying to make guests speak about the issues raised in the most comprehensive manner. In case the selected guest started criticizing his/her opponent who was not present in the studio, the journalist was trying to oppose to the respondent herself. The journalist did not resort to hate speech or unethical wording.

Viewers had a possibility to call in to pose questions to the invited guests.

On May 27 the TV company aired **talk show Objective Opinion**. The outlet lasted for about an hour and a half. The program hosted by journalist Elza Chubinidze was made up of two blocks. The guests to the first block included majoritarian MP candidates and the second block was dedicated to the non-governmental sector.

The journalist was eager to learn about candidates' election programs. Posing the questions of current importance the journalist was trying to obtain comprehensive answers to all of the questions.

She was playing the role of a moderator, trying to apportioned equal time and keep them to the point.

Kvemo Kartli TV /Radio Company (Rustavi) – Within reporting period three outlets of the **talk show Tkveni Dro** (Your Time), hosted by three different journalists, fell under monitoring. The main topic of the programs was upcoming municipal elections. Posing questions the journalists offered the guests a possibility to thoroughly speak about election programs and priorities. Viewers enjoyed a possibility to get fully updated about activities and plans to be implemented by the political forces being among selected guests.

The May 27 outlet was hosted by journalist Tato Gogoladze. Aleksandre Beridze, Rustavi mayoral candidates nominated by Non-Parliamentary Opposition was the guest selected to the studio. The program was conducted in the Q& A format. The host kept shooting some interesting questions, trying to obtain comprehensive answers about the candidate's background, future plans and political stance. The host urged the guest to provide argumentation and did not let him cite unverified facts.

Viewers had a possibility to call in to pose questions to the guests. The host called on TV viewers to shoot some censorious question. The program was rather informative.

The May 28 outlet was hosted by journalist Nino Kapanadze. Solely Rustavi mayoral candidates were taking part in the program, in particular: Aleksandre Beridze of the Non-Parliamentary Opposition, Koba Dzierashvili of the Burjanadze – United Opposition, and Elguja Kochiashvili of the In the Name of God – God is Our Truth.

The program was conducted in a different pre-determined format: at the beginning the candidates were granted three minutes each to speak about program priorities. The turn of the speakers was agreed by means of a casting of lots. The host's questions touched upon candidates' action plans, election environment, and the way to address the problems the population is facing.

The host did not participate much in the polemic held between the selected guests, mainly assuming the function of a moderator.

The May 30 outlet was hosted by journalist Khatuna Mamardashvili. Elguja Kochiashvili, nominated by the In the Name of God – God is Our Truth was invited to the studio. The host granted the guest every possibility to comprehensively speak about election program, asking him about the ways to make planned activities work.

According to the findings the journalists neither used hate speech nor unethical wording.

Odishi (Zugdidi) – No talk show was aired within reporting week.

Channel 9 (Akhalsikhe) – During reporting period **the talk show Dialogue** hosted by journalist Rusudan Gvaramadze fell within the scope of monitoring.

On May 29 the TV air was dedicated to the two-hour outlet divided into two parts. Akhalsikhe municipality activities was the topic of the first block of the program. To discuss the topic – the way the Sakrebulo operation changed in the past year and a half and the reason Sakrebulo chairperson changed his political preferences – the selected guests included incumbent chairman of Akhalsikhe municipality Sakrebulo, at the same time nominated by

Georgia's Way, together with majoritarian MP candidates nominated by UNM, GD and Burjanadze – United Opposition were invited to the studio.

The second block of the talk show was dedicated to **the talk show Elections 2014** hosting Akhaltsikhe mayoral candidates Giorgi Kopadze (GD), Gocha Atoshvili (Georgia's Way), Natali Sisvadze (Non-Parliamentary Opposition), Zaza Natenadze (Burjanadze – United Opposition), and Gela Demetradze (UNM). Candidates' election programs was the topic of the program.

The journalist was actively involved in the program, shooting censorious questions of current importance. The journalist was curious to know about certain details to let the audience receive answers to certain questions.

The host did not let the guests move away from the topic of discussion. The journalist was curious to know about Akhaltsikhe mayoral candidates' election programs, the way they are going to make their pledges work. From the journalist's side no hate speech or unethical wording was identified.

Tanamgzavri (Telavi) – Within reporting week the only outlet of the **talk show Dialogue** was aired. The guests invited to the May 30 outlet included majoritarian MP candidates nominated by Non-Parliamentary Opposition and Burjanadze – United Opposition. Along with the main guests the representatives of some other parties were present too to participate in the program: answering host's questions and demonstrating their standpoints in regard to the topic of discussion.

Election programs and the ways they are going to tackle the problems persisting in the city was the topic of the program.

In the course of the program the host Nato Megutnishvili repeatedly stressed that she also had GD's representative invited to the studio. The latter though refused to participate in the program in order to avoid provocation. Due to their absence the UNM representatives also quit the program.

GD's refusal and UNM representatives' decision on quitting the program somehow affected and annoyed the host. The coalition members, she stressed, due to lack of time, refused to attend the May 23 outlet too. Her first question to the guests – what they think about GD's

representatives' no-show and the reason UNM representatives quit the program – had an impact on the guests' answers, leading to negative statements against opponents.

Dialogue was aired live, thus TV viewers calling in had an opportunity to pose questions. 1,5-hour program was conducted in the debates format. The program televised a TV story about the problems persisting in Atskuri Street which made the program far more dynamic.

In general the host of the program was neutral and unbiased, she managed to deal with the process, did not let guests deviate from the topic of discussion, apportioned equal airtime to every guest.

Trialeti (Gori) – During reporting period TV company Trialeti discussed upcoming municipal elections in three programs. **The talk show Municipal Elections 2014** has got different formats and different hosts Thea Giguashvili and Lado Bichashvili. Calling in the viewers had a possibility to pose questions.

In the May 27 outlet the host Lado Bichashvili had Giuli Mukniashvili, Gori city mayoral candidate of the Council of Georgian Workers invited to the studio. For an hour the candidate was granted a possibility to speak about his election program. In the course of the program deviation from the topic of discussion was observed. The host though was trying to ask the guests away about his general election pledges and obtain comprehensive information. The journalist was found a little bit ironic to the guest. During the program the guest used unethical wording, in (regards to former President Mikheil Saakashvili), to which the host failed to immediately respond.

The May 29 outlet was hosted by Thea Giguashvili. The talk show started with a TV story about GD's member Tamaz Makashvili's participation in the elections on behalf of Unity Hall. Tamaz Makashvili and the Unity Hall's majoritarian MP candidate were invited to the studio. The host was taking active part in the program, lively opposing guests and shooting some censorious questions. The questions were interesting and of current importance. Guests had an opportunity to speak freely.

The May 30 **program Debates**, within the framework of the **Elect City Mayor** project, was made possible with the support of USAID and IFES. The program was hosted by Lado Bichashvili. Four Gori mayoral candidates were invited to the studio. The selection of

candidates was transparent, conducted by means of the casting of lots among seven candidates.

Zurab Jirkvelishvili (GD), Mamuka Nozadze (Burjanadze - United Opposition), Archil Sabiashvili (UNM), Vasil Butkhuzi (Non-Parliamentary Opposition) were invited to the studio. The format of the program was strictly set. Guests were granted equal time to present their programs, visions and future plans. The length of speeches was under control with a stopwatch. The journalist limited himself to shooting questions, playing the role of a moderator.

In the course of the program no hate speech was used.

The main technical drawback with the TV company Trialeti is the lack of subtitles which makes it difficult to identify the speakers.

Guria (Ozurgeti) – Within reporting period TV company Guria aired TV **program Together with You** hosted by journalist Tamta Dolidze. The guests to the May 30 outlet included Lanchkhuti municipality Gangebeli candidates of GD and UNM. The host pointed out that she had the candidates of Alliance of Georgian Patriots and Burjanadze – United Opposition invited, they did not show up though.

During one-hour program selected guests spoke about their election programs, municipality problems and the ways of their solution. Through the TV story televised during the program the guests heard and responded to the issues of concern raised by the population.

The program was of political debates type. The host was essentially playing the role of a moderator, trying to allocate equal time to the guests. She kept posing questions in turn as of determined through the casting of lots. The host though failed to manage the process. Her attempts to stop verbal argument among the selected guests were unsuccessful too. They kept moving away from the topic of discussion, making counter allegations, that the host failed to put an end to.

The program was broadcasted live, viewers had a possibility to call in to pose questions to the guests.

Imervizia (Chiatura) – No talk shows were aired during reporting week.

Gurjaani (Gurjaani) – On Fridays Gurjaani TV airs **talk show The Power of Powerless** hosted by journalist Levan Aleksishvili. Gamgebeli candidates' election programs was the main topic of the May 30 outlet. The selected guests included Lagodekhi and Sighnaghi municipality Gamgebeli candidates nominated by GD, UNM, Burjanadze – United Opposition.

At the very beginning of the program the journalist offered the guests an opportunity to introduce themselves to the viewers, and afterwards got curios about election programs. The host of the program was very much keen to learn about details related to the issues raised and was trying to urge guests to thoroughly speak about various topics. He kept asking guests away, at the same time refraining from expressing his stance. He was found balanced and neutral.

TV viewers had a possibility to call in to pose questions to the candidates in the studio.

Mega TV (Khoni) – Within reporting period two public-political talk shows **Discourse** and **Debates** happened to fall under the monitoring.

Discourse, hosted by journalist Nana Toshkhua, is on the evening air every Wednesday. The programs discussed various issues of concern. In the May 28 outlet the representative of Young Economists Association spoke about upcoming municipal elections. The host of the program limited herself to posing questions to the guest, almost never demonstrating her stance. The program was conducted in the Q & A format in a peaceful environment. The guest was granted every possibility to fully express his standpoints.

The TV program **Debates** was hosted by Tiko Kikabidze. During reporting period three outlets were produced. The topic of the programs was the election programs of the candidates running in the upcoming elections. The guests invited to the studio included the representatives of political unions, the persons running for Kutaisi city mayoral office on behalf of political parties or election blocs.

The majoritarian MP candidates nominated by UNM, GD, Self-Governance to People, and People's Party were invited to the studio, also Kutaisi city mayoral candidates Irakli Kikvadze (Labor Party), Aleksandre Kezevadze (Alliance of Georgian Patriots), and Teimuraz Shashiashvili (Burjanadze – United Opposition).

Mayoral candidates Shota Murgulia of GD, Giorgi Tevdoradze of UNM and Magda Gabrichidze of Non-Parliamentary Opposition refused to partake in the May 30 outlet. The debates were conducted in the pre-set format. To discuss election programs the guests were limited in time. The journalist assuming the function of a moderator, limited herself to posing questions.

9th Wave (Poti) – Within reporting week the 9th Wave 's TV air was dedicated to the political **talk show Tema** (Topic) hosted by journalist Thea Absaridze. The talk show is available every Friday and running time is over one hour.

The main topic of the May 30 outlet was the election programs of Sakrebulo majoritarian candidates. The program was made up of two blocks. The journalist had Poti the 2nd and 3rd majoritarian district candidates of Non-Parliamentary Opposition, Burjanadze – United Opposition, UNM, GD, Georgia's Way as well as the initiative team invited to the studio.

The host was not taking active part in the program, just fulfilling the function of a moderator, limiting herself to posing shallow questions and trying to allocate equal airtime to the guests. In the course of the program selected guests too were shooting questions at one another.

Argo (Zestaponi) – Within reporting week no talk show was aired.

Marneuli TV (Marneuli) – Within reporting period Marneuli TV aired the only talk show with the participation of monitored subjects. The **TV debates Elections 2014** produced in partnership with the Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters (GARB) was aired on May 29. Nana Sisvadze was the host of the program. The guest invited to participate in the program included local leaders of election subjects, candidates running for Gamgebeli office and majoritarian MP mandates on behalf of Non-parliamentary Opposition, Future Georgia, Burjanadze – United Opposition, GD and UNM. The host pointed out that the representative of Political Movement of [law enforcement and armed forces] Veterans and Patriots of Georgia had been invited too, but the latter refused to participate.

The topic of the 1,5-hour program was the candidates' pre-election programs. TV debates allocated equal airtime to all of the guests. The questions were shot in turn as of pre-determined through the casting of lots. The host was mainly playing the role of a moderator, just posing questions to the guests. She was found unbiased and neutral.

The third block of the program aired the questions provided by non-governmental organizations and the population that helped the program appear more dynamic. TV viewers too had an opportunity to shoot questions through calling in. Subtitles were missing to the guests speaking during the program.

Borjomi (Borjomi) – During reporting week TV company did not produce any talk show.

Dia (Khashuri) – Within reporting period TV company Dia televised **Nino Chibchiuri's talk show** on May 31. The guests to the studio included Gori mayoral candidates Archil Sabiashvili (UNM) and Zurab Jirkvelishvili (GD).

The journalist did not tend to pose censorious questions, though trying to obtain detailed answers on the way they are going to fulfill pre-election pledges. The host was assuming the function of a moderator and in case the guests started interrupting one another she was trying to put the things right. The selected guests were granted equal opportunity to express their standpoints.

The "Voter's Vote" rubric, produced in advance, televised citizens' questions, that were ultimately answered by the candidates in the studio.

TV Magazine Mravalkutkhedi (Polygonal)

Weekly TV magazine Mravalkutkhedi (Polygonal) produced by the Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters (GARB) was aired at different times on the following TV channels: **Kvemo Kartli TV-Radio Company, Tanamgzavri, Odishi, Guria, 9th Wave, Rioni, Channel 25, Imervizia, Gurjaani, Channel 9, Marneuli TV, Argo, Borjomi and Dia.**

Within reporting period the only outlet of TV magazine Mravalkutkhedi was aired. Nikoloz Rubashvili is the presenter of the 35-minute program. The host of the TV magazine is responsible to present TV stories, he is neutral and unbiased.

The topics discussed within the framework of the program were diverse. Election-related topics about the candidates registered in Marneuli and Khashuri districts as well as some other topics were brought into focus. TV stories covered events in a balanced, in-depth and unbiased manner.

The TV story about a dispute between Chobiskhev population and Forest Service over dismantling of the saw factory is the one worth to note: screening a certain story the TV presenter portrayed the whole problem and analyzed it. He tried to show the policy the Forest Service follows. Approximately 16 minutes were dedicated to scrupulously analyze the topic.

Activities to be carried out: Within the period of June 2-8 the third phase of monitoring of regional broadcasters will be carried out.



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