



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

**Subagreement # S-14-108**

**Reporting period: June 2 - 8, 2014**

**Main findings of the third phase of monitoring:**

- Some of the TV companies, compared to the previous reporting period, dedicated more airtime to reporting on election-related topics; pre-election campaigns conducted by candidates were actively covered;
- Most of the TV companies essentially offered viewers superficial coverage of ongoing events; Lack of in-depth analytical reports was apparent;
- Most of the TV companies dedicated the major portion of airtime to the Georgian Dream Coalition (GD) and the United National Movement (UNM).
- Reporting on the monitored subjects was mostly neutral in tone;
- TV companies produced talk shows inviting the candidates running for the upcoming municipal elections;
- The presenters of the talk shows refrained from demonstrating their standpoints, essentially assuming the function of a moderator;
- The hosts of the public-political programs on the most of the TV companies tended to pose same questions to the selected guests; Lack of censorious questions was evident;
- 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 June 2- 8, 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 (Akhaltzikhe)*, *Trialeti (Gori)*, *Guria (Ozurgeti)*, *Imervizia (Chiatara)*, *Gurjaani (Gurjaani)*, *Mega TV (Khoni)*, *9<sup>th</sup> 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.

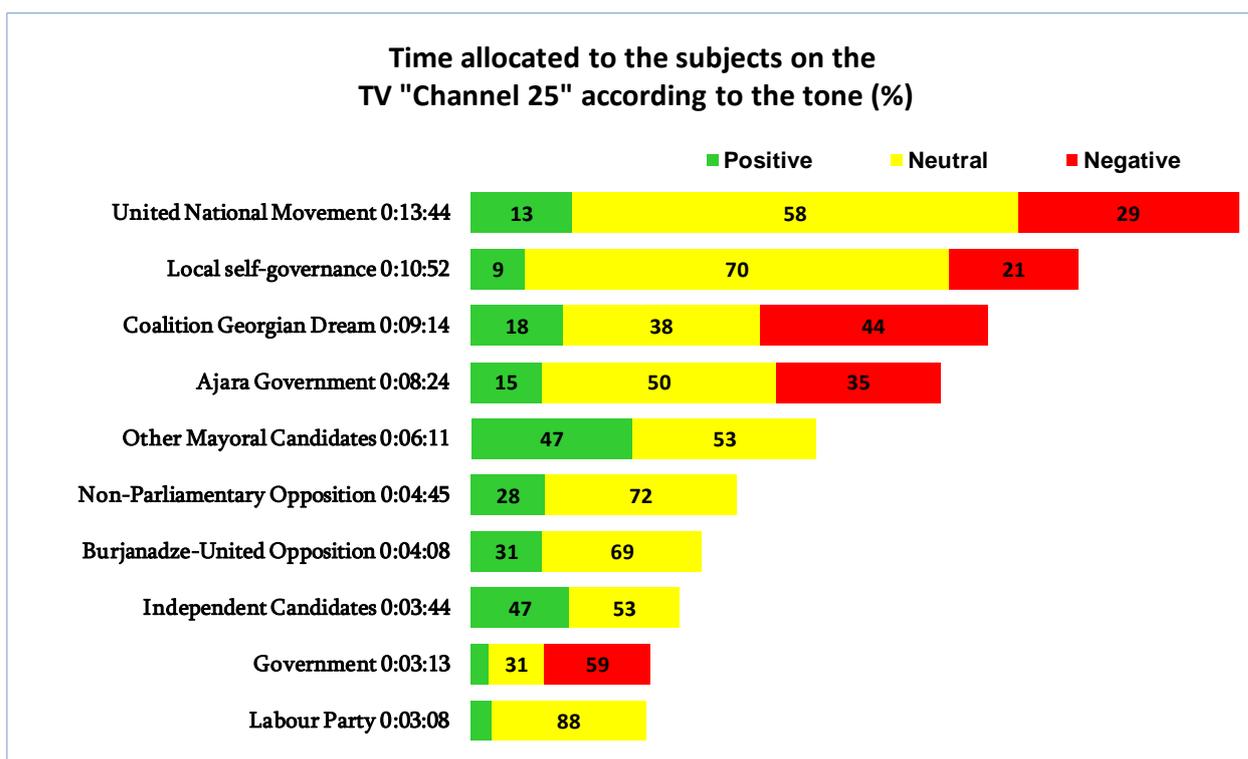
**News programs monitoring results per channel:**

**Channel 25 (Batumi)** – Within reporting period 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 17 minutes to the monitored subjects. 18 percent of the total falls on reporting on UNM, followed by local authorities with 14 percent, and GD with 12 percent. The amount of criticism towards local authorities (21 percent), Adjara AR government (35 percent), ruling political force (44 percent) and UNM (29 percent) stood rather high.

Rather often GD and UNM used the airtime to negatively speak about one another. No bias was demonstrated by journalist. From their side neither positive nor negative approach was identified in regard to political subjects. Political subjects were dedicated airtime in accordance with their activities. The time dedicated to the monitored subjects was almost equally divided inbetween direct and indirect reporting.

Almost all of the news programs produced TV stories about upcoming municipal elections and the campaigns conducted by election subjects. More time was though dedicated to political, social and economic events ongoing in the region. Journalists often showed concern into the problems the population faces and tended to produce comprehensive TV stories about the topics of concern. They were trying to deliver information from a different angle and get them substantiated by the comments provided by the persons in charge.



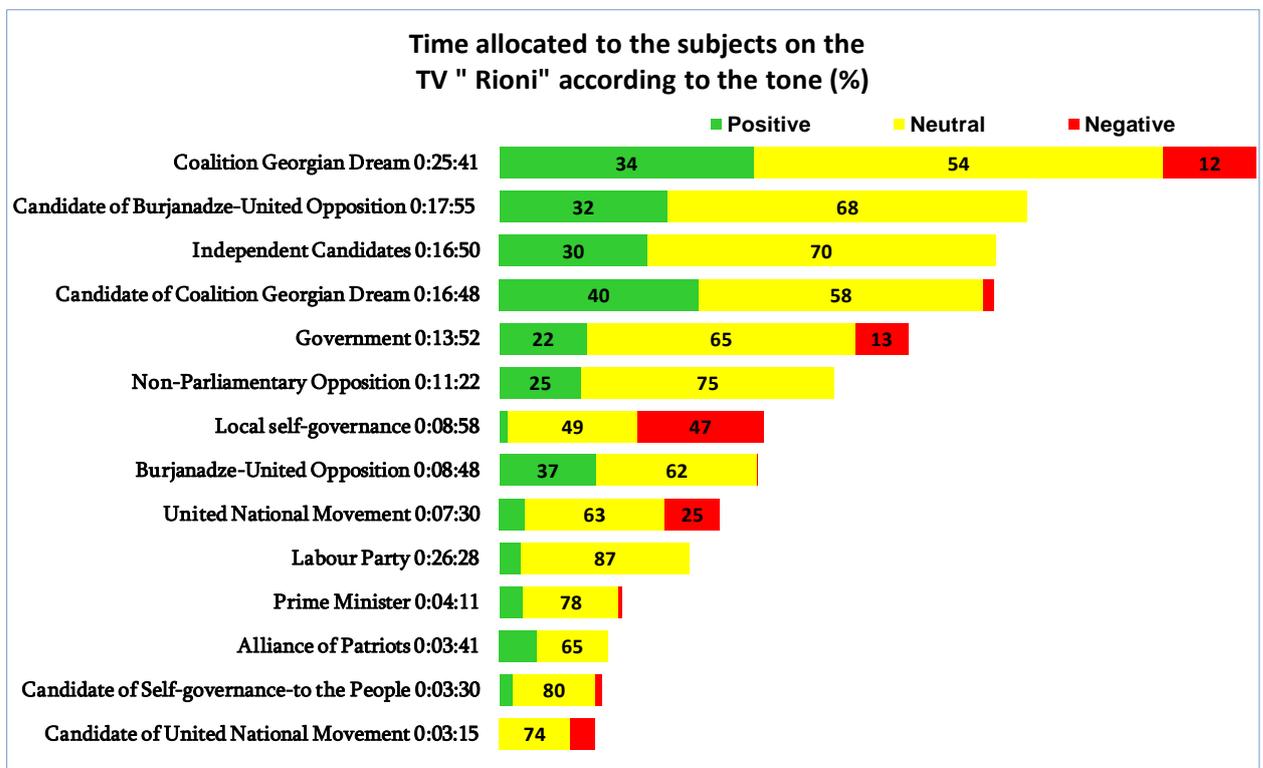
**Rioni (Kutaisi)** - During one-week reporting period Rioni TV-produced news program Dghis Ambebi (News of the Day) was on air from Monday to Saturday. On Sundays TV viewers were offered TV magazine 7 Days whose running time amounts to 50-60 minutes. The 7 Days camera crew offered viewers analytical and exhaustive TV stories. The TV magazine aired a story produced within the framework of the Fact-Meter project verifying the accuracy of statements made by political subjects. Based on the documented arguments and experts' comments the journalist weighed the truthfulness of the statements made by policy makers.

Within reporting period TV company Rioni dedicated the total of two hours and 36 minutes to the monitored subjects. 17 percent of the given time falls on GD with 17 percent, followed by Burjanadze – United Opposition's mayoral candidate Teimuraz Shashiashvili with 12 percent. Independent majoritarian candidates and GD's mayoral candidate Shota Murghulia each enjoyed 11 percent of reporting.

The bulk of airtime dedicated to the independent candidates falls on majoritarian candidate Giorgi Khazaradze nominated by City Museum. Rioni TV tended to cover Giorgi Khazaradze's meetings with the electorate in a positive manner. Within reporting week three TV stories produced by journalist Salome Chinchladze were found especially positive.

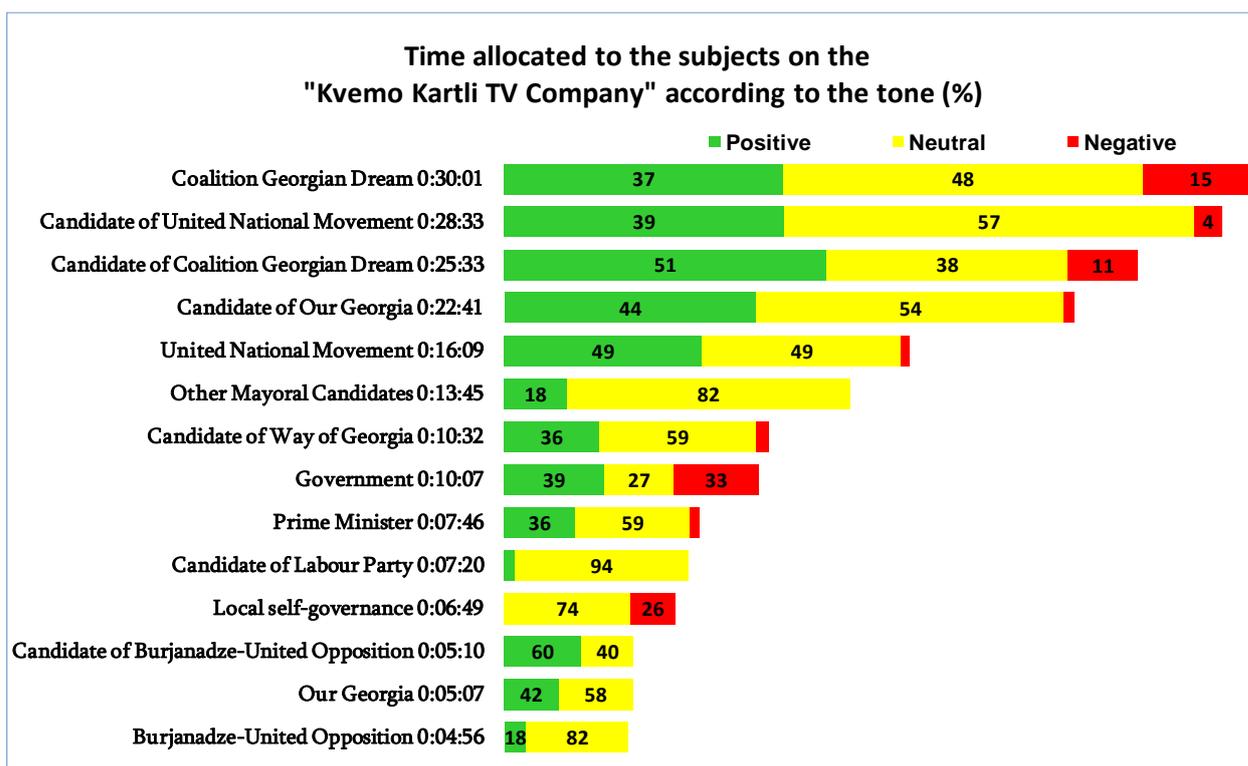
In the TV stories the journalist cited the comments made by voters ultimately providing TV viewers a positive outlook. In all three TV stories the candidate's electoral number "42" was on the TV screen for a few seconds. No similar stories were produced about any other political subject.

Rioni TV air was often dedicated to the monitored subjects for direct reporting. News reporters, in a timely manner, covered pre-election campaigns of political parties, mayoral, Gamgebeli and majoritarian candidates as well as the developments nationwide. News reporting was found superficial. Journalists did not stand out in terms of posing severe questions. No breach of ethical standards was identified in the news programs.



**Kvemo Kartli TV Company (Rustavi)** – Within reporting week the channel's main news program Kronika was on air on a daily basis. The bulk of airtime in the news programs was dedicated to the pre-election campaigns conducted by political subjects. The channel dedicated the total of three hours and 25 minutes to the monitored subjects. GD ranks first with 15 percent of the total time, followed by UNM's mayoral candidate Mamuka Chikovani with 14 percent and GD's mayoral candidate Davit Jikia with 12 percent.

News programs actively covered mayoral and majoritarian candidates' meetings with the population residing in different streets. Reporting on the political subjects was rather diverse. The journalists though failed to produce some comprehensive TV stories about candidates' election programs, neither posed censorious questions. The materials produced essentially focused on the candidates' program priorities, e.g. what they are going to do for the town, therefore the share of positive and neutral reporting prevails in the chart.

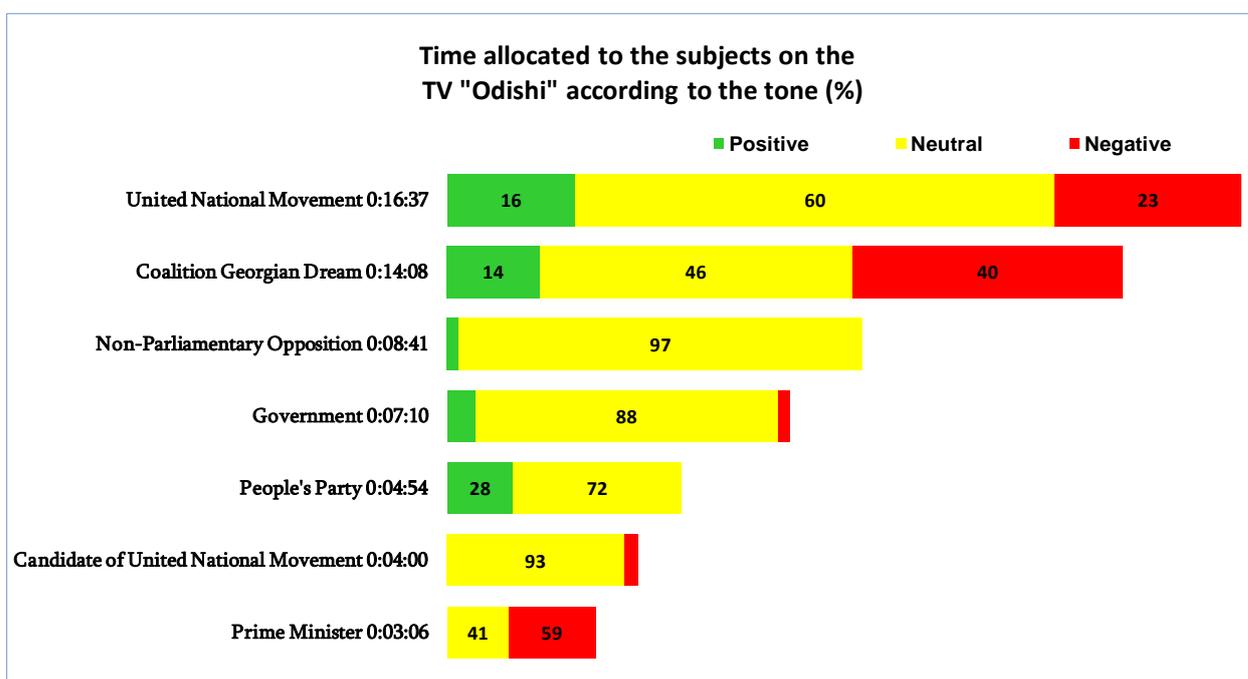


**Odishi (Zugdidi)** – In the reporting week the main news programs Dro (Time) produced by TV company Odishi essentially covered events ongoing in the region. The developments ongoing nationwide were again televised through Infolenti by means of brief scripts. Infolenti featured the opinions expressed by policy makers and public figures. Together with the texted citation the author's photo was shown as well.

Compared to the previous reporting period the time dedicated to the monitored subjects has boosted due to recent developments in the region. In total the time dedicated to the monitored subjects amounts to one hour and nine minutes. The bulk of the airtime falls on UNM (24 percent), GD (20 percent) and Non-Parliamentary Opposition (13 percent). The reporting on the monitored subjects was essentially indirect. In the main reporting was

neutral in tone, in regard to UNM and GD though high index of negative reporting was identified, and that due to the rally at the UNM's election headquarters organized by the family of the missing Defense Ministry's top official Paata Kardava against UNM's Zugdidi Gamgebeli nominee Tengiz Gunava. During the rally the allegations against Tengiz Gunava were followed by some harsh statements made by political subjects.

TV company tended to report in an impartial manner, allocating equal airtime to the parties, hence equally representing them.

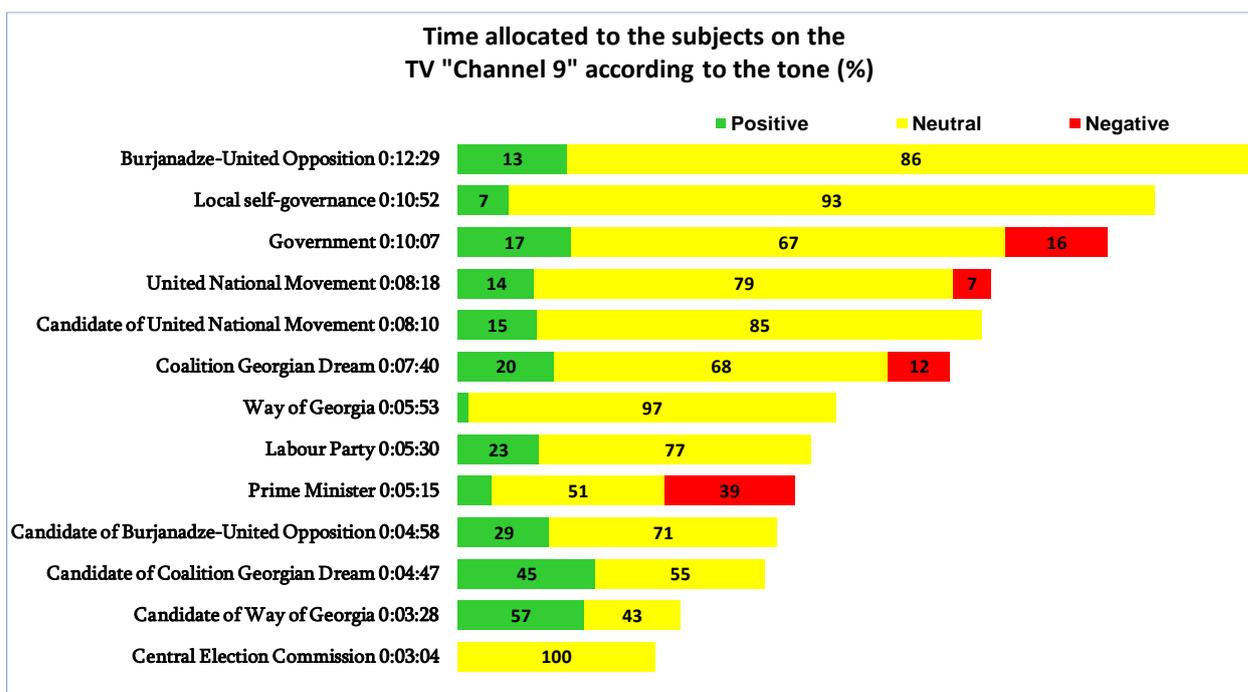


**9<sup>th</sup> Channel (Akhaltzikhe)** - In the course of the reporting period the channel aired the main news program Echo from Monday to Friday. On Sunday news program Echo of the Week was offered to the viewers. The Sunday news outlet was on air without a newsreader, the audience had a possibility to watch the important weekend developments in the region and nationwide. The Echo of the Week also re-aired several TV stories about some stories of current importance televised throughout the week. The news programs dedicated the total of one hour and 32 minutes to the monitored subjects. Burjanadze – United Opposition enjoyed the bulk of reporting, followed by local authorities and government.

Journalists actively covered political developments in the region, as well as social issues, the problems the locals face, events of different type, and nationwide news. The time dedicated

to the government (10 minutes) is made up of the TV stories provided by the Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters (GARB).

TV journalists tended to report in a timely and unbiased manner, trying to offer viewers comprehensive stories, representing all of the parties. Neither the use of hate speech nor manipulation through sound/music was identified.



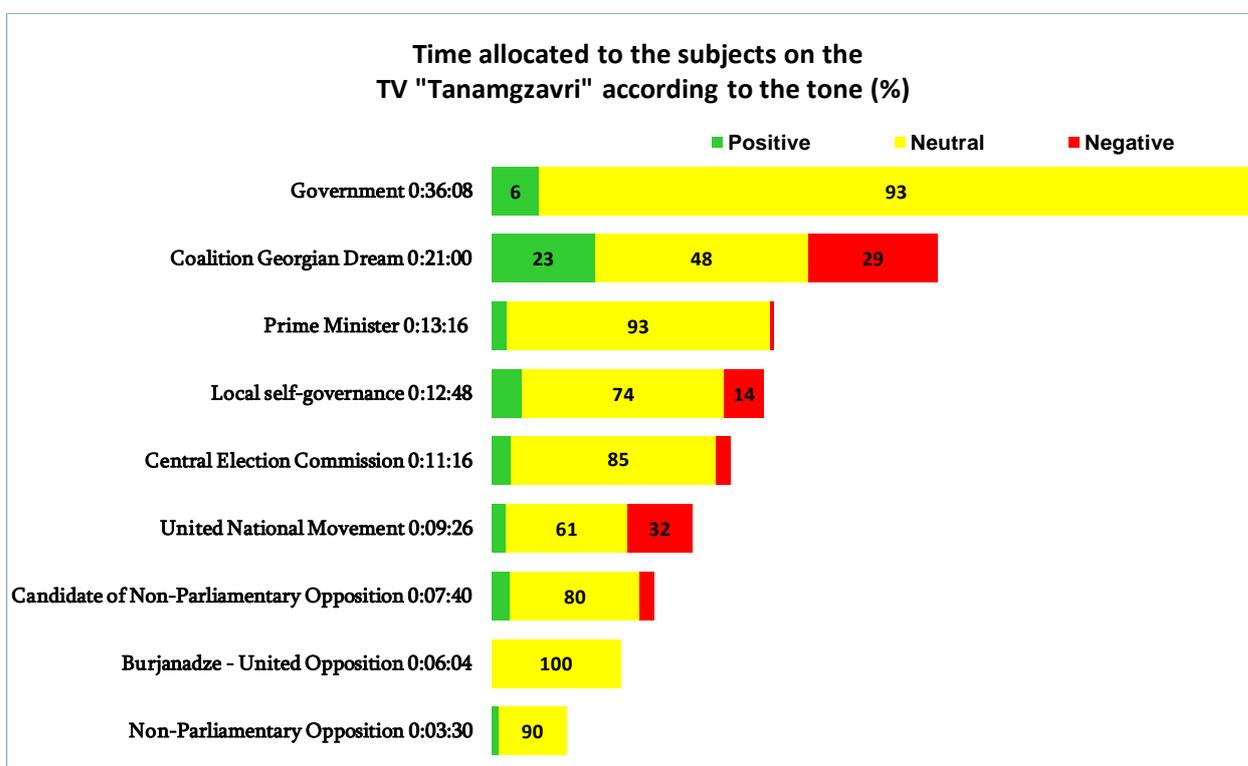
**Tanamgzavri (Telavi)** – Within reporting period TV company aired the main news program Akhali Ambebi (News) from Monday to Friday. The TV company repeated the news outlet twice during prime time. News outlets aired with a newsreader ran for about 35 minutes. The first block of the news program covered events ongoing in the region, the second block was dedicated to the developments nationwide and world news. The share of time dedicated to local and national news was almost equal. During reporting week the TV company dedicated less time to reporting on election-related topics. The time allocated to the monitored subjects though topped two hours and four minutes. 29 percent of the given time, equally made up of direct and indirect reporting, falls on government, reporting was 93 percent neutral in tone. 17 percent of the total time was dedicated to GD, 11 percent to Prime Minister, 10 percent to the local authorities. The share of direct/indirect reporting was almost equal. The reporting tone was essentially neutral in tone. Negative tone too was though identified, mostly in relation to GD (29 percent) due to allegations voiced by the

Non-Parliamentary Opposition and Burjanadze – United Opposition’s Telavi mayoral candidate Giorgi Mosiashvili over the funding of GD’s local headquarters.

Out of Telavi mayoral candidates the news program dedicated airtime to solely Giorgi Mosiashvili which is presumably due to other candidates’ inactive pre-election campaigns.

Tanamgzavri produced several TV stories about various social and infrastructural issues persisting in the region.

TV stories in the news programs were found balanced, no bias was identified to any political force. News reporters tended to refrain from commenting.

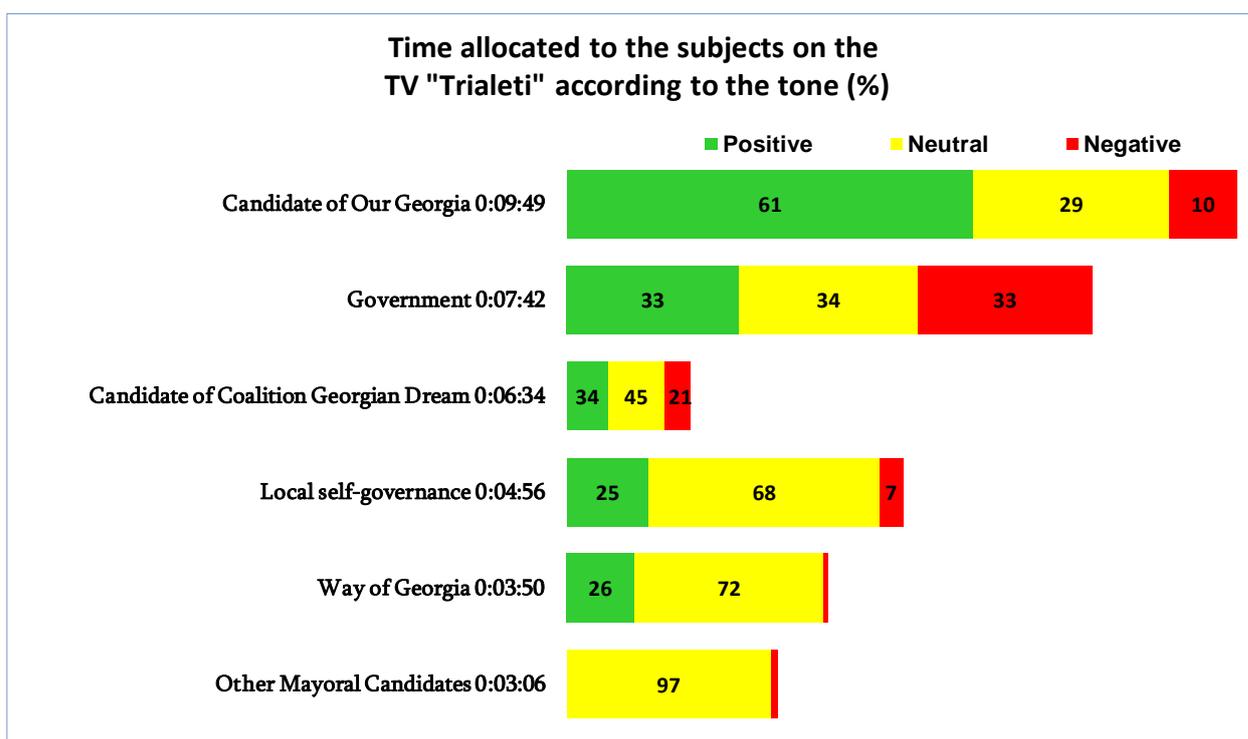


**Trialeti (Gori)** – During reporting week the news program Akhali Ambebi Trialetze (News on Trialeti) was on air from Monday to Friday. On Saturday the TV air was dedicated to the weekly news program Kviris Ambebi (News of the Week) thoroughly analyzing important events of the week. The second block of the program was hosting some selected guests. The topic of the June 7 outlet was the escalating cases of violence against women.

The news programs produced within the period of June 2-8 actively covered the developments in the region as well as nationwide. Compared to the previous reporting period the monitored subjects were dedicated less time – 51 minutes in total. 19 percent of

the given time falls on Erosi Kitsmarishvili, Rustavi mayoral candidate nominated by the Our Georgia political party. TV stories about the aforementioned candidate's election program, priorities and future plans were aired in the June 2 and June 6 news outlets. Reporting on the candidate was 61 positive in tone, 81 percent of reporting was indirect.

The news programs dedicated over three minutes were enjoyed solely by GD's Gori mayoral candidate Zurab Jirkvelishvili. Reporting on the monitored subjects was essentially neutral in tone. Journalists demonstrated no bias when reporting.



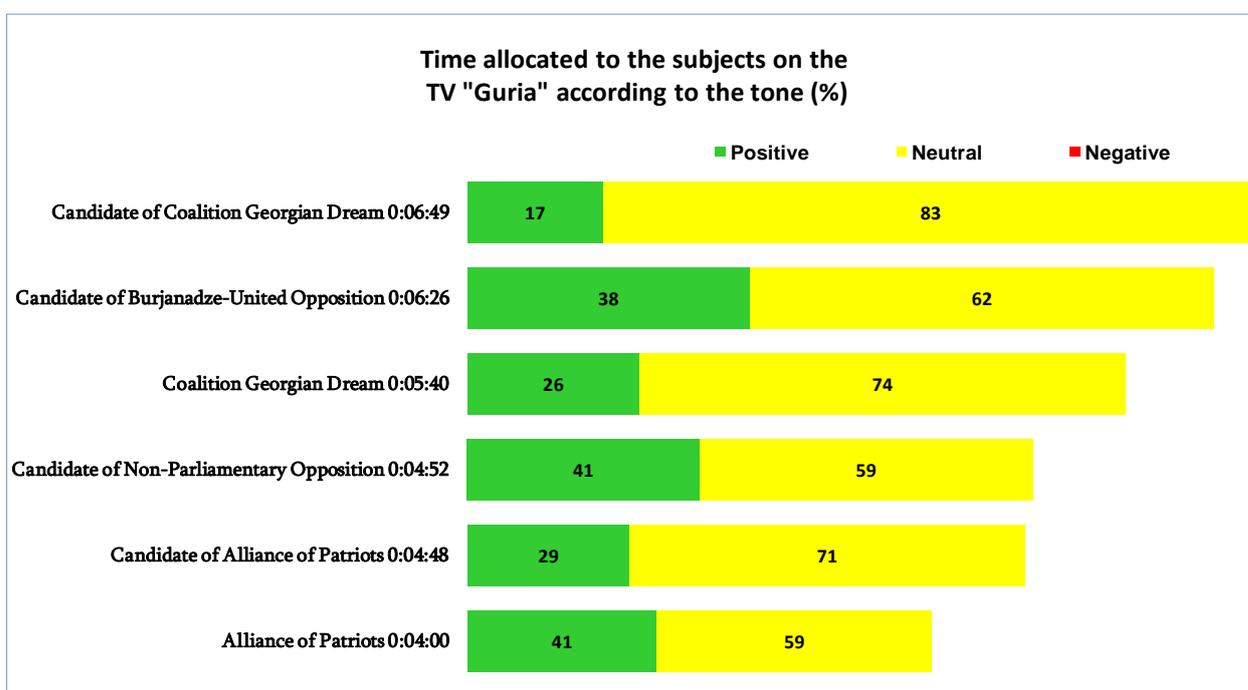
**Guria (Ozurgeti)** - During reporting period the Guria-produced main news program Fact was aired four times. The channel re-aired news outlet twice during prime time. The news programs usually have a newsreader, but the June 4 and June 6 outlets did not have one. The 10-minute news program Fact essentially focused on the local developments.

The news programs actively covered pre-election meetings held by the subjects running for the upcoming municipal elections. The rubric "Who We Are Electing" discussed a number of election subjects. About their election programs and priorities some lengthy TV stories were produced.

During reporting week TV company Guria dedicated the total of 36 minutes and 45 seconds to the monitored subjects. The time was essentially shared between political subjects running for the upcoming municipal elections. In particular, the bulk of airtime (6 min. 49 sec) was enjoyed by GD's Ozurgeti mayoral candidate Beglar Sioridze. Almost same amount of time was allocated to Burjanadze – united Opposition's Ozurgeti mayoral candidate Kakha Chavleishvili. Also, almost equal share of airtime was dedicated to the Ozurgeti mayoral candidates Irma Kvachantiradze and Shota Gogiberidze nominated by Non-Parliamentary Opposition and Alliance of Georgian Patriots respectively.

According to the findings the TV company tended to dedicate equal time to direct and indirect reporting. Reporting on the monitored subjects was mainly neutral in tone. Positive tone was identified too. No negative tone was applied though.

The TV stories televised in the new program Fact were shallow, of informative nature. Various events and projects were often covered. News programs failed to offer viewers any TV story thoroughly analyzing any topic or a matter of concern. Subtitles identifying the respondents were often missing in the TV stories.



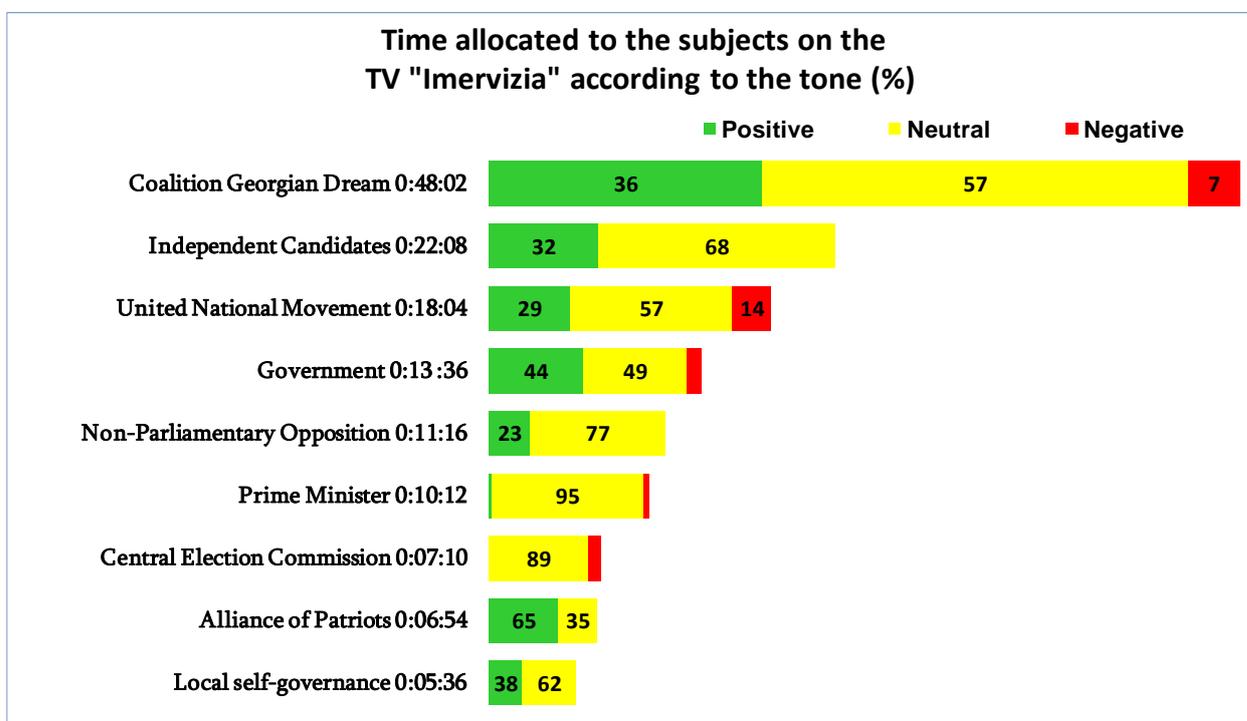
**Imervizia (Chiatura)** - Within reporting period the channel televised main news program Akhali Ambebi (News) from Monday to Friday without a newsreader. The 20-25-minute news outlet is aired twice during prime time. News reporters working for Imervizia tended

to report in a timely manner, the reporting though was found shallow and informative only. No censorious questions were posed, accordingly the audience was deprived of a possibility to watch comprehensively prepared stories.

Within one-week reporting period Imervizia dedicated the total of two hours and 24 minutes to the monitored subjects. The company actively covered pre-election meetings organized by Chiatura Gamgebeli and majoritarian MP candidates.

The broadcaster dedicated the bulk of the airtime to GD (48 minutes). The channel, on a daily basis, covered pre-election campaigns conducted by GD's nominee for Chiatura Gamgebeli position Sulkhan Makhatadze and other majoritarian candidates. 22 minutes in the news programs was allocated for reporting on the independent majoritarian candidates. The bulk of the given time falls on Chiatura Gamgebeli candidate Iason Chumburidze nominated by the Initiative Team. 18 minutes were dedicated to reporting on the UNM activities.

The share of direct/indirect reporting is almost equal. To the monitored subjects the time was neutrally apportioned.



**Gurjaani (Gurjaani)** – Gurjaani TV-produced news program Dghes (Today) was on air from Monday to Saturday. A summarizing news program Whole Week was televised without a

newsreader. The weekly news program re-aired the TV stories about top important developments of the week. News programs actively covered developments in the region as well as nationwide. The News Outside Region rubric covered developments nationwide and worldwide.

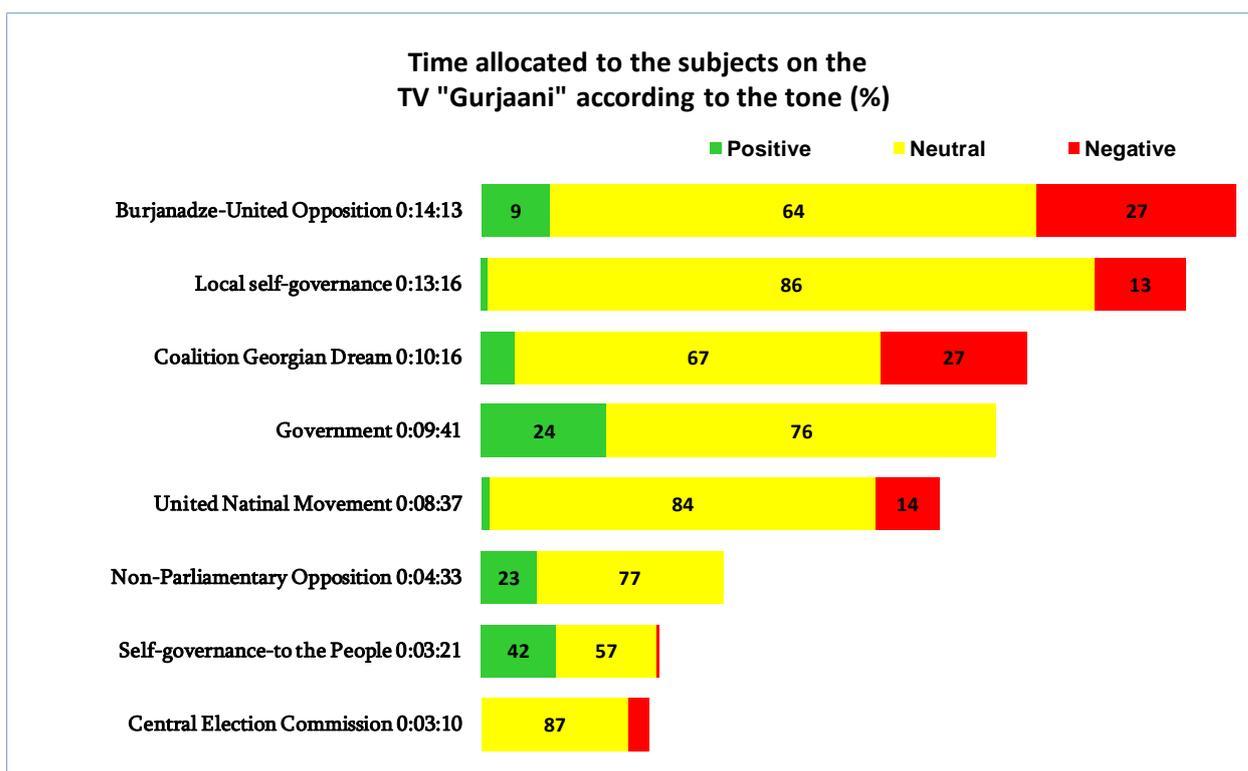
Gurjaani TV journalist tended to report in a timely manner, without demonstrating their standpoints in regard to the topics covered. Rather often reporting was found superficial, at times though the journalists happened to pose some censorious questions.

During reporting week TV company Gurjaani dedicated the total of one hour and 13 minutes to the monitored subjects. 20 percent of the given time was enjoyed by Burjanadze – United Opposition, 18 percent was received by local authorities and 14 percent by GD.

The news programs often broadcast the selected guests live answering case-related questions posed by the reporter. On June 4 the news program was hosting Valeri Shoshiashvili nominated for Gurjaani Gamgebeli position by Burjanadze – United Opposition.

TV company actively covered the activities implemented by election subjects and local authorities. The time dedicated to them was equally shared between direct/indirect reporting.

According to the findings neither hate speech nor the manipulation through sound/music was identified.



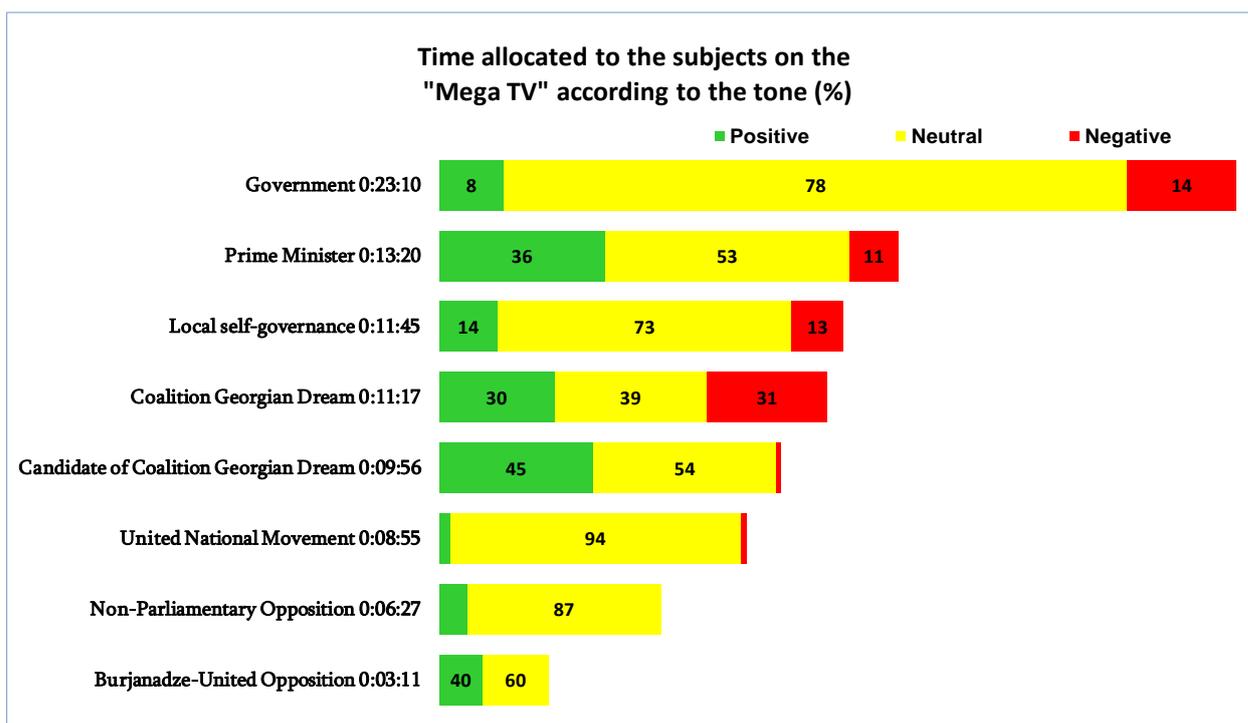
**Mega TV (Khoni)** – During reporting week the Mega TV-produced news program Mtavari Dghes (Main Today) was on air from Monday to Friday to cover developments in the region as well as nationwide. On Saturday the TV air was dedicated to the news program Main during the Week and on Sunday the viewers were offered Facts of the Week. Compared to daily news the weekly news program offered viewers a far more comprehensive reporting. The channel dedicated the total of one hour and 51 minutes to the monitored subjects. The highest index of reporting was enjoyed by government (21 percent) and Prime Minister (12 percent).

Mega TV also covered pre-election activities of political subjects. GD ranks first in terms of time apportioned (10 minutes) and Kutaisi mayoral candidate Shota Murghulia (10 minutes). 45 percent of time dedicated to the candidate included coverage of the candidate's electoral priorities.

Out of political unions over three minutes were dedicated to the activities carried out by UNM, Non-Parliamentary Opposition, and Burjanadze – United Opposition, and in the main the meetings with the population. The sequence of the TV stories in the news programs was not preconditioned by the importance of the topics.

The weekly summarizing news outlet prepared a story about pre-election environment and the level of public awareness; The outlet also televised TV stories produced within the framework of the Fact-Meter project.

Direct reporting prevailed over indirect reporting. Reporting tended to be of informative nature. Journalists reported in an impartial manner, without demonstrating their standpoints.



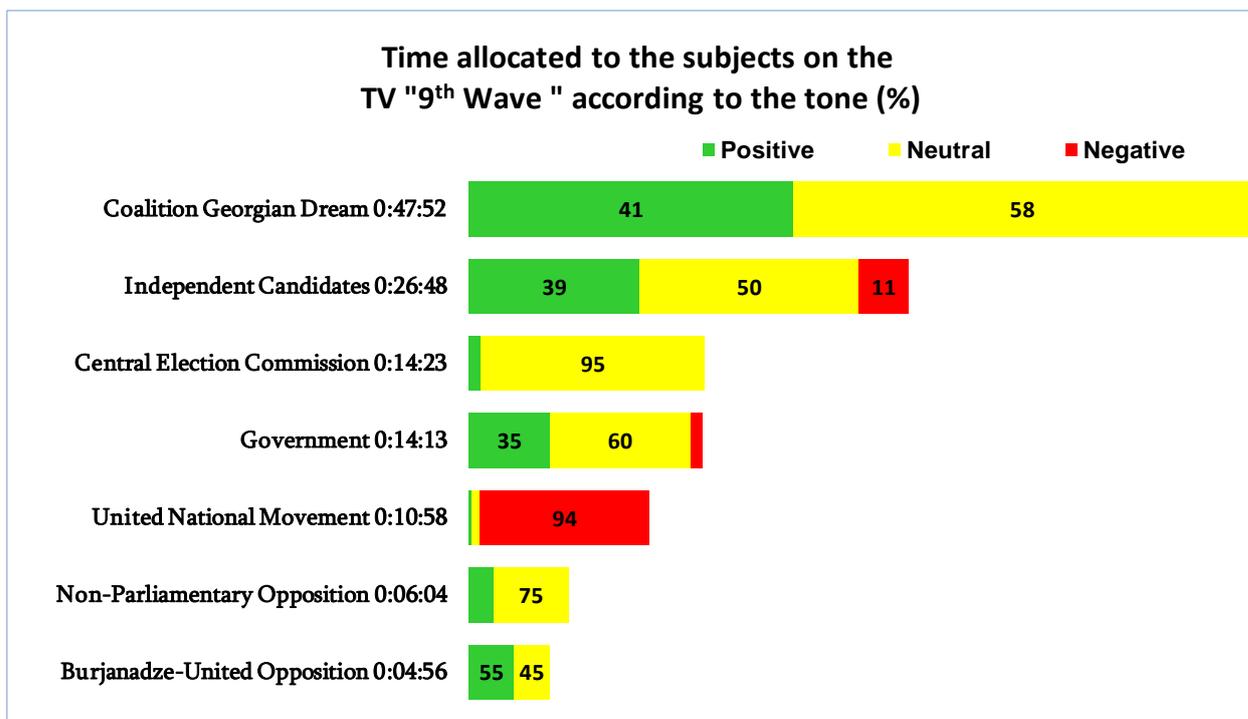
**9<sup>th</sup> Wave (Poti)** – During reporting period the 9<sup>th</sup> Wave actively covered the developments in the region. TV viewers also had a possibility to get aware of the events ongoing nationwide. Central news was covered through the pieces delivered from GARB. The 20-25-minute news program Cursor was on air twice during prime time from Monday to Friday.

9<sup>th</sup> Wave dedicated the total of two hours and 13 minutes to the monitored subjects. In terms of time the chart is led by GD, followed by independent majoritarian candidates and Central Election Commission.

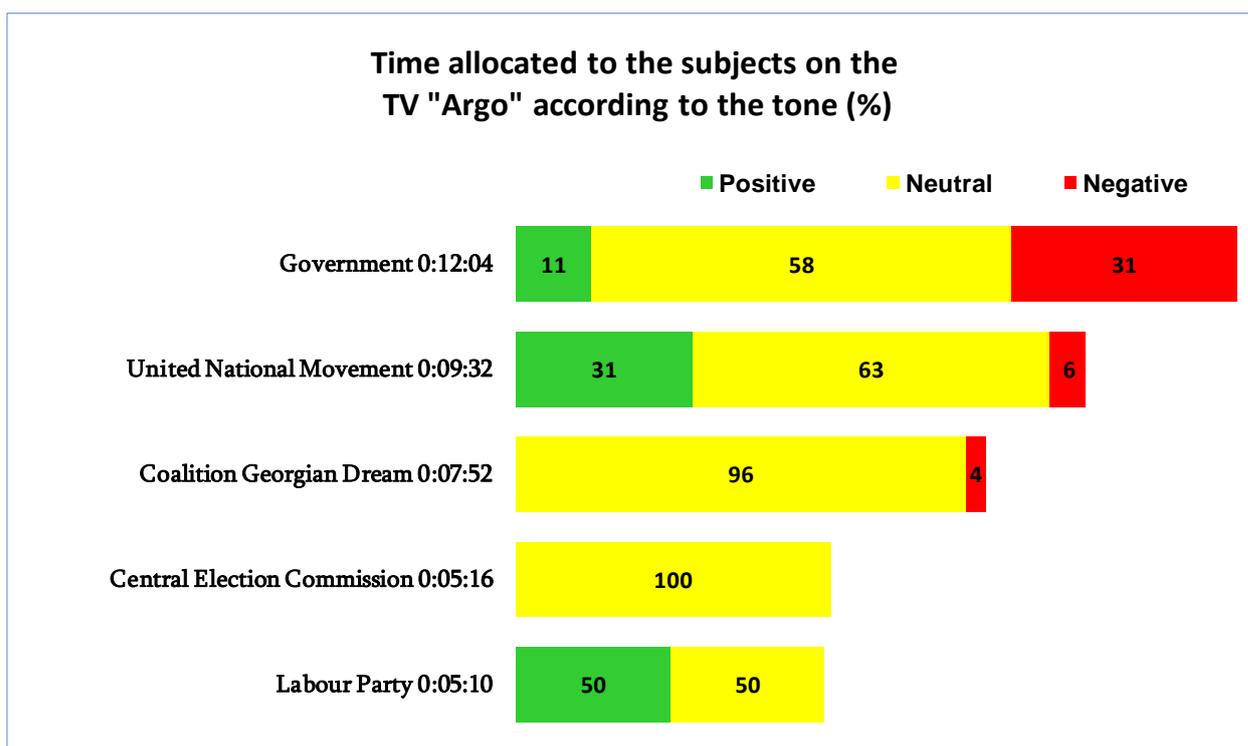
In the second block of the news program the host had a guest invited to the studio to answer questions about the topics of current importance. On June 4 deputy chairperson of Poti district election commission #70 was invited to the studio. On June 5 the program was

hosting Poti majoritarian MP Eka Beselia of GD. Due to the aforementioned outlets the increase in the amount of airtime dedicated to CEC and GD was identified.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Wave journalists reported in a timely manner, the reporting though lacked comprehensive way of news coverage. Journalists did not tend to demonstrate personal standpoints, trying to maintain balance in the TV reports.



**Argo (Zestaponi)** – Within one-week reporting period the channel's main news program Spectrum was on air from Monday to Friday. Each outlet was made up of four or five TV stories. The channel re-aired news twice during evening air. News programs dedicated a considerable amount of airtime to cultural and sports events. Compared to the previous monitoring period monitored subjects enjoyed a lengthier coverage of 47 minutes in total. Government leads the chart with 25 percent. UNM comes next with 20 percent, and GD with 16 percent. Reporting on the political subjects was neutral in tone, reporting was essentially direct. Journalists tended to report in an impartial manner.



**Marneuli TV (Marneuli)** – Within reporting period the Marneuli TV-produced news program Akhali Ambebi (News) was on air from Monday to Friday. The news outlets were re-aired twice during prime time. The 10-25-minute TV stories had no newsreader. On June 6 TV air was dedicated to the 48-minute news outlet. News programs covered solely local developments. Compared to the previous monitoring periods the TV company dedicated more time to reporting on the subjects running for the upcoming municipal elections. The running time of the TV stories did not run longer than five minutes. The broadcaster produced approximately 14-minute story about Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili's visit to Marneuli.

During reporting week the channel dedicated the total of two hours and 47 minutes. 32 percent of the given time was dedicated to repeated coverage of Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili's visit to Marneuli; GD comes next with 28 percent, 55 percent of which falls on direct reporting. Reporting was only neutral and positive in tone.

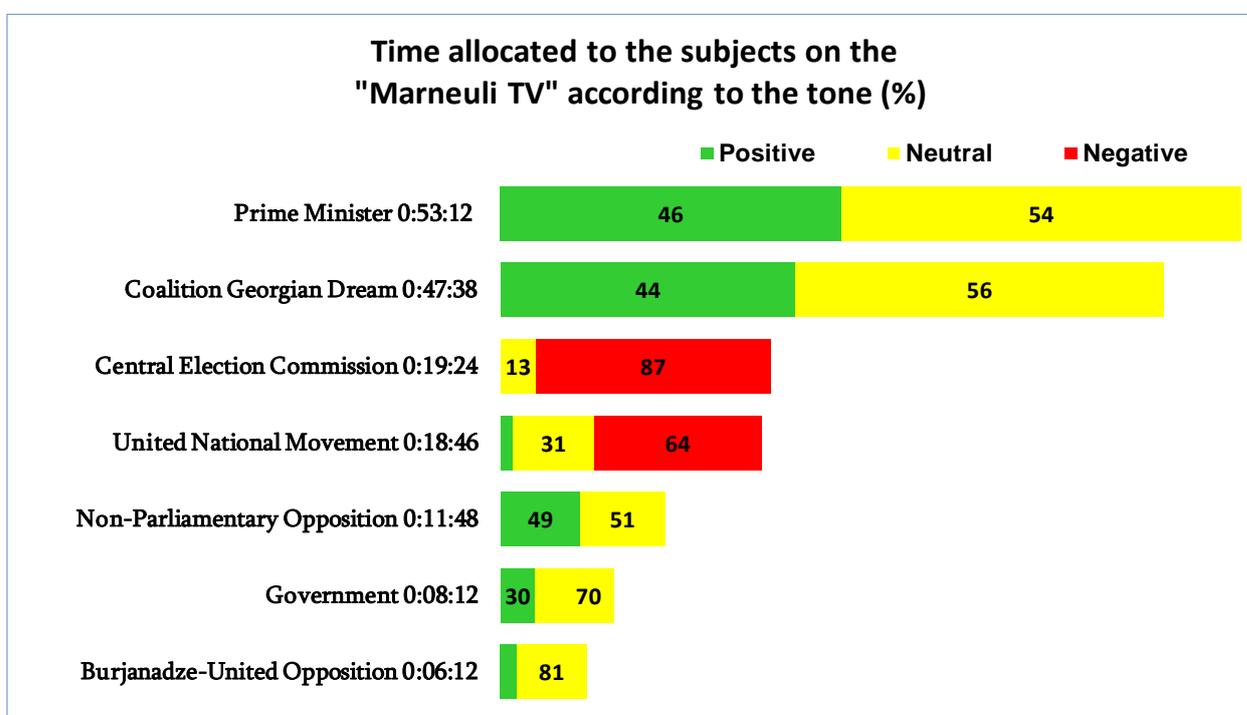
TV company covered the pre-election meetings of GD's Marneuli municipality Gamgebeli candidate Merab Topchishvili almost on a daily basis. But the stories aired on the channel were essentially superficial. For example on June 2 the news program televised a story about the supervision of ongoing infrastructural projects in Marneuli municipality villages by GD's

nominee acting municipality Gamgebeli. In the TV story the reporter did not mention that Merab Topchishvili is GD's nominee for Marneuli municipality Gamgebeli position. Neither got the journalist curious whether he was authorized to hold the position of acting Gamgebeli.

The channel dedicated over 19 minutes to CEC. 88 percent of the given time falls on indirect reporting, 86 percent was negative in tone. The given result was due to the withdrawal of UNM's Marneuli municipality Gamgebeli candidate's from the registration list by Marneuli DEC. The June 5 news program dedicated around nine minutes to cover the aforesaid topic. The TV story was not comprehensive enough. The journalist did not clarify the reason of the candidate's extraction from the registration list, neither reminded the audience of the pre-history. The TV story was re-aired few times in the news outlets. Accordingly 64 percent of 19-minute reporting on UNM was negative in tone.

Out of monitored subjects Non-Parliamentary Opposition and Burjanadze – United Opposition fell under monitoring.

The TV stories aired in the news programs were essentially found of superficial and informative nature.

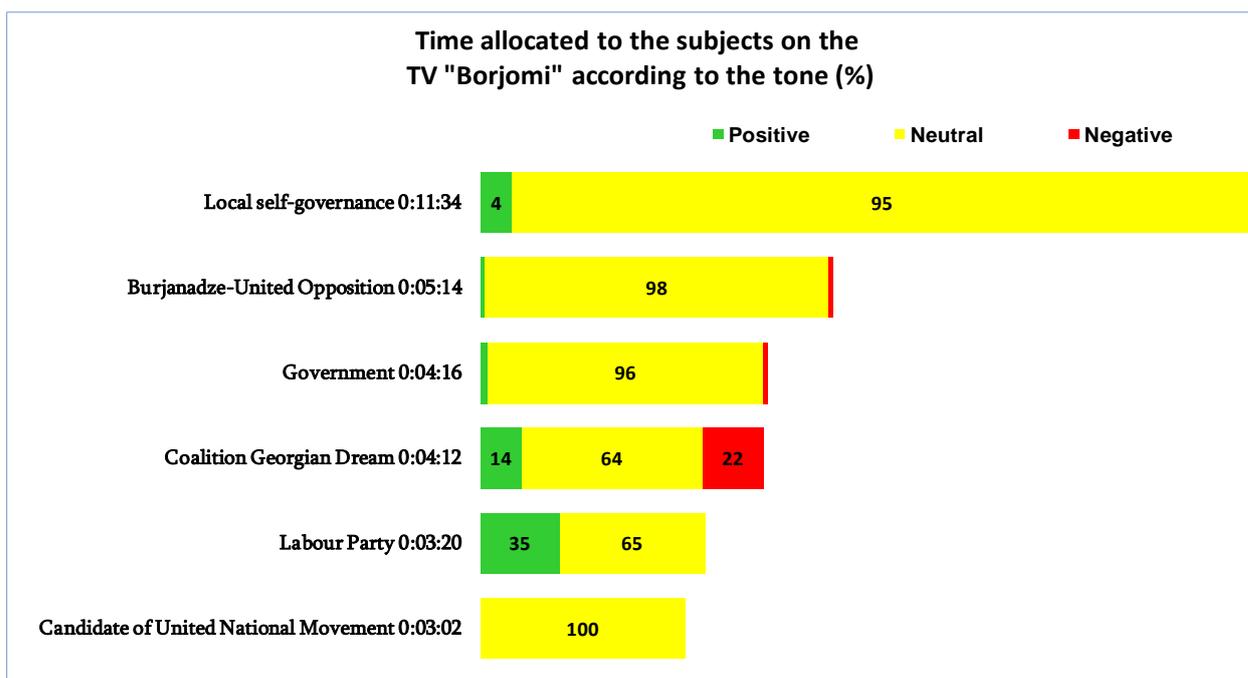


**Borjomi (Borjomi)** – Within reporting period Borjomi TV-produced main news program Dghis Kronika (Chronicle of the Day) was aired six times. Approximately 8-15-minute outlets, aired twice during prime time at 20:00 and 22:00, essentially covered solely local events and were of informative nature. The channel aired TV stories about social and infrastructural issues, sports and cultural events. The TV company tended to dedicated less time to pre-election campaigns conducted by election subjects.

During reporting period TV company dedicated the total of 39 minutes and 26 seconds to the monitored subjects. 29 percent of the given time falls on the local authorities, followed by Burjanadze – United Opposition with 13 percent, and government and GD - 11 percent each. 77 percent of the time dedicated to the local authorities and government was made up of direct reporting. When reporting on election subjects indirect reporting prevailed over direct reporting.

Dgis Kronika repeatedly aired the 9<sup>th</sup> Wave-produced TV stories (damaging election campaign posters, refusal to TV coverage to prevent pressure upon candidates and supporters). Consequently three minutes were dedicated to UNM's Akhaltsikhe mayoral candidate Gela Demetradze.

Neutral tone prevailed when reporting on subjects of monitoring. TV stories were essentially balanced. The journalist tended to report in a superficial unbiased manner.

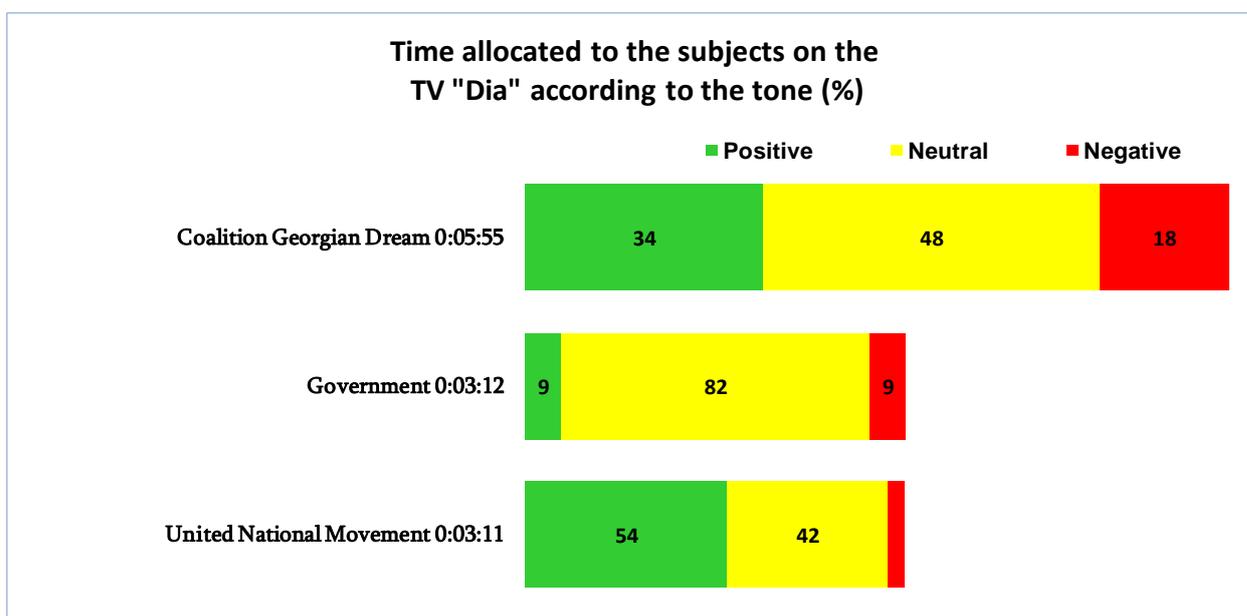


**Dia (Khashuri)** – TV company Dia offered its main news outlet to the audience from Monday to Friday. On Saturday viewers had a possibility to watch again top important events of the week in the weekly news outlet News of the Week.

The channel dedicated the total of 25 minutes and 44 seconds to the monitored subjects. GD's representatives were covered for six minutes, government and UNM each enjoyed three-minute reporting.

The channel actively covered developments ongoing in the region and pre-election campaigns. The TV stories though were of superficial and informative nature, mainly touching upon pre-election campaigns conducted by candidates and parties and their pledges. Subtitles were missing to the comments in the TV stories, for that reason we were unable to calculate time for several subjects, since we failed to identify the parties they were representing.

Journalists tended to refrain from demonstrating their standpoints. No hate speech was identified in news reporting.



### 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)** - During reporting period on a daily basis from Monday to Friday the TV company aired **talk show Dialogue**, hosted by journalist Jaba Ananidze. The outlets were again dedicated to the election-related topics, hosting the nominees running for Gamgebeli positions and Sakrebulo majoritarian MP mandates.

Unlike previous election periods all five outlets produced within reporting period were being on in a more peaceful environment, some fierce debates and counter allegations were still in place though.

The following topics were discussed in the talk show Dialogue:

- In the June 2 outlet the leader of the political union Irakli Ghlonti – Reformers and its number one nominee in the list spoke about their visions and future plans. The host's questions touched upon the party's emergence in the politics and motivations for the participation in the elections;
- The June 3 outlet hosted Keda municipality Gamgebeli candidates nominated by GD, Burjanadze – United Opposition, and UNM to speak about their election programs. At the beginning of the program they were granted three minutes each. The time was measured by means of a stopwatch. The second block of the program was dedicated to the Q & A between the journalist and respondents.
- The June 4-5 outlets were dedicated to the introduction of pre-election programs developed by independent Sakrebulo majoritarian candidates;
- To the People's Party representatives invited to the studio on June 6 the same questions were posed like in previous programs, the host though was actively participating.

In the course of the program the journalist was trying to ask the guest away through additional questions to deliver comprehensive information to the viewers. The journalist was shooting some interesting questions of current importance. The questions were ethical and informative. The journalist had a possibility to obtain comprehensive information about candidates' visions and activities. The programs were found highly interactive. When accepting calls in the journalist called on viewers to shoot specific questions and speak in an ethical manner, the journalist urged the guests to provide argumentation when answering.

On June 8, at 21:30 Channel 25 aired the first **film Top Comfort** produced by investigative studio REC. Jaba Ananidze was the author of the 55-minute documentary.

The main topic of the investigative documentary was the activities carried out by the top management of Supreme Council of Adjara AR and deputies. The work performed by the Council and the extent of efficiency of the decisions reached, the expenses incurred by the deputies and budgetary expenditure on them – the author of the documentary tried to provide comprehensive and well substantiated answers to the given questions.

The documentary starts with an ambiguous and ironic type of stand-up, containing negative context against the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Adjara Avtandil Beridze. The viewpoints portrayed in the documentary were substantiated through the comments from various sources, mostly upheld by experts' viewpoints and conclusions. The journalist did not resort to hate speech, but at some point a bit less ethical wording was observed (“what made deputies blind?”). The questions raised in the documentary provided detailed information in relation to the issues of public concern. The author of the documentary tended to raise crucial questions.

**Rioni (Kutaisi)** – On June 2 TV company Rioni aired a **public-political talk show Tema** (Topic) hosted by journalist Nana Robakidze. The guests invited to the studio included the nominees by Burjanadze – United Opposition, and UNM running for Terjola municipality Gamgebeli position. The host was actively shooting questions about the issues outlined in the election program.

On June 5 talk show Tema was dedicated to the TV debates produced in partnership with GARB in the framework of **Elections 2014** media partnership project. Almost two-hour program was hosted by journalist Nana Robakidze.

Kutaisi mayoral candidates including Gia Tevdoradze (UNM), Irakli Kikvadze (Labor Party), Alexandre Kezevadze (Alliance of Georgian Patriots), Teimuraz Shashiashvili (Burjanadze – United Opposition), Magda Gabrichidze (Non-Parliamentary Opposition) and Shota Murghulia (GD) were invited to the studio.

In the first block of the program the candidates were granted a possibility to introduce their election programs to the viewers. In the second block they responded to the host's questions. In the third block media and NGO representatives invited to the studio posed questions to the selected guests. In the fourth block TV viewers enjoyed an opportunity to call in to get answers to the questions of concern. TV viewers did not miss this chance, actively calling in, shooting questions, demonstrating their viewpoints about the candidates or the issues discussed.

The journalist appeared well prepared for the debates. She was allocating equal time to the selected guests. In the light of fierce debates having failed to curb one of the candidates the host announced a commercial break. The host tended to pose censorious questions, got curious about the issues raised in the course of the program, without demonstrating her stance.

On June 3 TV company aired **talk show Objective Opinion** hosted by journalist Elza Chubinidze. The program was made up of two blocks hosting different guests.

The guests to the first block included Nikea district majoritarian MP candidates of Non-Parliamentary Opposition, GD and UNM. The second block was hosting Nugzar Kokhraidze, Board chairman of the scientific-intellectual club Dialogue of Generations.

The topics of the program included the following:

- How well majoritarian MP candidates are aware of the problems Nikea district population faces and the way they are going to tackle the challenges in case they win Sakrebulo mandates.
- The degree of equality of the pre-election environment.

The journalist was actively involved in the talk show, posing some censorious questions of current importance. The journalist televised opinion poll survey of Nikea district population speaking about the issues to be settled. The host was curious to know whether the candidates had been aware of these problems and how they were going to deal with them. The program was on in the light of fierce debates. The host called on the guests not to interrupt one another. The guests to the studio were allocated equal time.

On June 7 Rioni aired TV **program Gender and Society** hosted by the same journalist Nana Robakidze. The program was provided by Women's Information Center within the framework of the Women as Authors of Changes and Enhancement project.

The guests selected to the Gender and Society TV program included the representative of Women's Information Center, Board Chairperson of the pedagogues' union Education and Work and Zestaponi Sakrebulo MP candidate of GD. The journalist was curious to learn about the goals of the project. The host was trying to obtain information about current situation in Georgia in terms of women's political participation, the extent of their involvement in political developments and self-governance.

**Kvemo Kartli TV /Radio Company (Rustavi)** – Within reporting period two outlets of the **talk show Tkveni Dro** (Your Time) were televised. The June 3 and June 6 outlets were hosted by journalist Khatuna Mamardashvili. Rustavi mayoral candidates Koba Dzlierashvili of Burjanadze - United Opposition and Revaz Rizhamadze of Labor Party were invited to the studio.

The programs were mainly conducted in the Q & A format, the lack of harsh and censorious questions was though apparent. Mayoral candidates enjoyed a possibility to freely speak about election programs, political visions, and priorities. Viewers had a chance to receive comprehensive information about guests' background and current activities.

The programs were interactive. Viewers had a possibility to call in to pose questions to the selected guests.

On June 4 TV air was dedicated to talk show **Municipal Elections 2014** hosted by journalist Nino Kapanadze. Rustavi mayoral candidates including Erosi Kitsmarishvili (Our Georgia), Davit Jikia (GD), Mamuka Chikovani (UNM), Ivane Shatirishvili (Alliance of Georgian Patriots), and Revaz Rizhamadze (Labor Party) were invited to the studio.

At the beginning of the program the candidates were each granted three minutes to speak about the program priorities. The time was under control with a stopwatch. The host was posing questions about candidates' action plans, the ways to address the problems and pre-election environment. The journalist did not debate much with the guests, essentially assuming the function of a moderator. When deviating from the topic of discussion she urged the guests to get back to the point.

The program was on in the light of some fierce comments. The second part of the talk show was a way more tense and dynamic. The journalist was trying to balance the situation, calling on the guests to be more ethical in their statements. In the conclusive part of the program though counter allegations grew into fierce debates, and the host found it hard to keep the situation under control.

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

**Channel 9 (Akhaltikhe)** – On Thursday Channel 9 airs **talk show Dialogue** hosted by journalist Rusudan Gvaramadze.

On June 5 the guests to the studio included the chairperson of the Gender Equality Network, coordinator of the same organization and the female candidates running for municipal elections.

In the course of the program the journalist was posing some interesting questions of current importance. The host was actively involved in the talk show, trying to grant equal airtime to each and every guest. The journalist was curious to know about the reason the selected guests decided to run for the elections. They were granted a possibility to freely express their standpoints.

**Tanamgzavri (Telavi)** – Within reporting week two outlets of the **talk show Dialogue** fell within the scope of monitoring. The outlets aired on June 5 and 6 were hosted by journalist Nato Megutnishvili.

The June 5 outlet was produced in partnership with GARB within the framework of the **Elections 2014** project. The guests to the studio included Zaza Devidze (Alliance of Georgian Patriots), Ketevan Zakariashvili (Labor Party), Giorgi Mosiashvili (Non-Parliamentary Opposition), Nodar Mumlauri (Greens Party) and Tamaz Arjevanidze (Burjanadze – United Opposition). The host stressed that she had all seven Telavi mayoral candidates invited but UNM's and GD's nominees Aleksi Dzuliashvili and Platon Kalmakhelidze refused to participate in the program.

On June 6 the selected guests included Telavi Gangebeli nominees of Burjanadze – United Opposition, Non-Parliamentary Opposition, and UNM. All four nominees for Gangebeli position had been invited but GD's representative refused to participate.

Along with main guests the program was attended by their party representatives and supporters. Media representatives too were taking part in the June 5 outlet, expressing their viewpoints and posing questions to the guests.

The topic of both of the programs was election programs and the ways to settle persisting problems. The questions were shot in turn as of pre-determined through the casting of lots. The time was equally allocated to all of the guests. The host was essentially assuming the function of a moderator. Rather often a single question posed by the host touched upon several issues, without focusing on a particular topic.

Subtitles were missing to the guests speaking which is rather challenging when it comes to multiple guests in the studio. It is noteworthy that following a commercial break the host failed to introduce either the topic of the program or the guests. The question about the reason of UNM's and GD's representatives' refusal to the participation in the program triggered negative statements against the aforesaid subjects. Respondents also resorted to hate speech, the host though did not try to stop them.

The programs lasted for a about an hour and a half. In the course of the program the problems the population faces were televised. Calling in made the program more dynamic.

**Trialeti (Gori)** – During reporting period TV company Trialeti aired six talk shows about and with the participation of monitored subjects. The channel intensively covered ongoing electoral processes and tended to dedicate airtime to the candidates on a daily basis.

On June 2, 4, and 6 the TV air was dedicated to the **program Dgis Tema** (Topic of the Day) hosted by journalist Ia Gavasheli. Talk shows discussed the confrontation among political parties, electoral environment, increasing level of crime in the country and relations between media and authorities. The topics were generally reviewed in the programs. The selected guests did not include monitored subjects. The program was conducted in the Q & A format.

On June 3 TV program **Municipal Elections 2014** was hosted by Lado Bichashvili. The guests to the studio included GD's, Georgia's Way's and UNM's nominees for Kareli Gamgebeli position. The format of the program was set in advance. The time apportioned to the guests was measured by a stopwatch. The host urged the guests to speak to the point. The program was of interactive nature, viewers had a possibility to pose the questions of interest. The journalist's questions essentially touched upon the candidates' strategic visions and future plans. According to the format of the program the guests were to assess each other's answers. The assessments sounded rather harsh. The host was trying to balance the situation.

The June 4 outlet was hosted by Thea Giguashvili. The representatives of Gender Equality Network and female candidates running for the elections were taking part in the program. Due to the multiplicity of selected guests the program was more or less balanced, the host though granted every guest a possibility to express their standpoints. The questions touched upon some interesting issues of current importance. The host was trying to get thoroughly updated about women's participation in political processes and self-governance.

The June 5 talk show **Municipal Elections 2014** was hosted by journalist Thea Giguashvili. Kaspi municipality Gamgebeli candidates of UNM, GD and Greens Party were participating in the program.

At the beginning of the program the guests were granted three minutes each to introduce their election programs and future plans. The host was intensively involved in the program, shooting censorious questions, and calling on candidates to substantiate their statements. The guests were granted a possibility to speak freely, without any restrictions applied.

The main technical shortcoming 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 two outlets (June 4 and June 6) of TV **program Together with You**. One-hour program is hosted by journalist Tamta Dolidze. The guests to the June 4 outlet included Chokhatauri municipality Gamgebeli candidates of UNM and Alliance of Georgian Patriots. To the June 6 outlet Ozurgeti municipality Gamgebeli candidates nominated by UNM, Non-Parliamentary Opposition and GD were invited.

The guests to the studio spoke about election programs and answered the questions posed by the population calling in. The absence of subtitles was identified.

To the June 4 outlet the host had invited three other election subjects but they refused to participate. The host did not identify their names. The host was not appropriately prepared for the program, lacking information about the number of candidates registered in the municipalities.

In the course of the program the guests repeatedly moved away from the topic of the day. In the June 6 outlet UNM's and GD's nominees had a verbal argument, the host failed to keep the situation under control.

The journalist was trying to equally allocate airtime. In the main she was assuming the functions of a moderator and occasionally, following guests' answers, tended to pose some questions.

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

**Gurjaani (Gurjaani)** – On Fridays Gurjaani TV airs **talk show The Power of Powerless**. On June 6 the program was dedicated to the TV program Elections 2014 produced in partnership

with GARB. The host of the program Levan Aleksishvili had Gurjaani Gangebeli candidates of UNM, Burjanadze – United Opposition and Georgia's Way invited to the studio.

Gangebeli candidates' election programs was the topic of the outlet.

The journalist offered the guests an opportunity to introduce themselves to the viewers, and afterwards got curious about election programs and the ways they are going to address the problems persisting in the region. The host of the program was very much keen to learn about the issues outlined in the candidates' election programs.

The supporters of all three political forces were present in the studio. They were free to shoot questions to the candidates. In the second block of the program viewers had a possibility to call in to pose questions to the candidates in the studio. The program was rather interactive. The journalist was trying to obtain answers to the questions of public interest.

**Mega TV (Khoni)** – Within reporting period four outlets of the **public-political talk show Debates** was aired, hosted by journalist Tiko Kikabidze. Khoni and Martvili Sakrebulo majoritarian candidates were participating in the June 2-5 outlets. Nominees by UNM, Burjanadze – United Opposition, Non-Parliamentary Opposition, GD, Alliance of Georgian Patriots as well as independent majoritarian candidates were invited to the studio.

The debates were conducted according to the pre-set format. The guests were granted equal time to respond to the questions. They also had an opportunity to shoot a single question to one another. The journalist assuming the function of a moderator, limited herself to posing questions. Due to time limit the host at times did not let guests to completely express their opinions. In case of heated discussion the journalist urged the guests to use ethical wording, trying to balance the situation. Despite a strictly set format and host's attempts to allocate equal time to all of the guests the nominee of the Alliance of Georgian Patriots quit the June 2 program in protest, accusing the TV channel of conducting debates in unequal conditions. Following the incident the program together with the selected guests was back to normal.

On June 6 the channel aired **talk show Municipal Elections 2014** hosted by journalist Nana Tvalabeishvili. The program was made possible with the support of USAID and IFES.

Kutaisi mayoral candidates including Shota Murghulia (GD), Giorgi Tevdoradze (UNM) and Teimuraz Shashiashvili (Burjanadze – United Opposition) were invited to the program. The talk show was conducted according to the pre-set format. At the very beginning of the program the journalist said she would be assuming the function of a moderator shooting questions to the guests. She was also responsible for keeping control over the time apportioned. The turn to speak was determined by means of casting of lots. Time was equally granted to the guests to speak about election programs. The program was conducted in a peaceful environment, no hate speech or unethical wording was identified.

**9th Wave (Poti)** – Within reporting week on June 6 the 9<sup>th</sup> Wave 's TV air was dedicated to the political **talk show Tema** (Topic). The host of the program journalist Thea Absaridze had the one-hour program divided into two blocks. The guests to the first block included the candidates for the 5<sup>th</sup> majoritarian district nominated by UNM, GD and Burjanadze – United Opposition as well as the nominee by the initiative team. The second block of the program was hosting youth wing representatives of GD, UNM, Non-Parliamentary Opposition, and Burjanadze – United Opposition.

The topic of the talk show was the election subjects' programs and priorities.

The journalist was actively participating in the talk show, trying to allocate equal time to the guests. The candidates invited to the studio had a possibility to introduce their election programs and visions to the audience. Guests also enjoyed an opportunity to pose questions to one another, and they willingly used this chance.

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

**Marneuli TV (Marneuli)** – Within reporting week no talk show was aired.

**Borjomi (Borjomi)** – During reporting period two outlets of the **talk show Forum** fell under monitoring. The project is made possible with the support of the Open Society Georgia Foundation. Forum, being aired live, is hosted by journalist Eka Nozadze.

The guests to the studio included Borjomi Sakrebulo majoritarian candidates. Due to the multiplicity of the guests the program was divided into two, hence aired separately on June 3 and June 4. The guests to the studio included the candidates nominated by UNM, GD, Alliance of Georgian Patriots, Labor Party, Political Movement of [law enforcement and armed forces] Veterans and Patriots of Georgia and the initiative team. Along with the selected guests party representatives and supporters were present in the studio. According to the host of the program 10 candidates are running for Sakrebulo majoritarian MP mandates, four of them though refused to participate in the talk show.

The program was of political debates type. The program in total lasted for two hours and a half. No subtitles were provided to the guests speaking.

The journalist was well prepared, fully update about candidates. The journalist enlightened the viewers of the candidates' background. The host was tended to allocate equal airtime to the selected guests, without interrupting the guests she tried to verify some answers following the completion of their speeches. The journalist did not let the guests move away from the topic of discussion. The program was found dynamic.

The guests responded to the journalist's questions in turn, as of determined by means of a casting of lots. The supporters of the selected guests also participated in the program.

**Dia (Khashuri)** – On June 3 and June 6 TV company Dia aired **Nino Chibchiuri's Talk Show**. The guests to the studio included Gori mayoral candidates Mamuka Nozadze (Burjanadze – United Opposition) and Giuli Bukniashvili (Laborers' Council), also Gori Gamgebeli nominees of UNM, Georgia's Way and GD. Candidates' election programs and pre-election pledges was the topic of the programs.

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

The host tended to pose shallow questions, showing less interest into details. She was trying to equally allocate airtime to the guests in the studio. At the beginning she offered guests a possibility to introduce their programs. Afterwards she was curious to figure out how different their programs were from others' and how they were planning to make their pledges real.

### 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, 9<sup>th</sup> 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 was the presenter of the one-hour program.

The host essentially tended to present TV stories but to this particular outlet he had Manana Mebuke, chief of Gender Equality Network and Network coordinator Maia Kuprava-Sharvashidze invited. The host sounded neutral and unbiased, he seemed to be well aware of the topic of discussion, posing case-related questions of interest.

The guests were granted around 35 minutes to speak about women's political participation. During the program two TV stories were televised about the number of women registered for the upcoming municipal elections.

**Activities to be carried out:** Within the period of June 9-15 the fourth phase of monitoring of regional broadcasters will be carried out.



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