



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

Subagreement # S-14-108

Reporting period: May 12-25, 2014

Main findings of the first phase of monitoring:

- Compared to 2012-2013 regional broadcasters tended to more keenly cover monitored subjects. Political subjects have been still covered according to their activities carried out within the framework of pre-election campaigns;
- The number of censorious reports in some of the TV companies has boosted, most of them though offered viewers superficial coverage; News tended to lack in-depth reporting;
- Most of the TV companies dedicated the major portion of airtime to the Georgian Dream Coalition (GD) and the United National Movement (UNM) election bloc.
- Some of the TV companies tended to dedicate a considerable amount of airtime to the activities carried out by local authorities, the reporting has been essentially neutral in tone;
- Reporting on the monitored subjects has been mostly neutral in tone. Journalists provided unbiased coverage of events;
- TV companies produced some interesting talk-shows with the participation of candidates running for the municipal elections;
- Talk-show presenters tended to refrain from demonstrating their stance, mainly playing the role of a moderator. Journalists offered guests a possibility to fully express their viewpoints;
- No signs of subliminal political advertising were identified in the programs aired during evening time;
- Within the reporting period no manipulation through music/sound was identified.

Background

The report represents the results of the survey carried out by the Internews Georgia monitoring team within the period of May 12-25, 2014.

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

The goal of our survey 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 (Chiatura)*, *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, Iliia Chavchavadze Society, Merab Kostava Society, Georgian Women's Party*), Labor Party, Greens Party, Georgian Party, Alliance of Georgian Patriots, Our Georgia, as well as mayor 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 air from Monday to Saturday. On Sundays the new programs were available without a newsanchor. The news outlets essentially covered local events, some crucial developments nationwide were brought into focus as well.

Channel 25 dedicated the total of two hours and 15 minutes to the monitored subjects. In terms of airtime given to the activities carried out by the Georgian Dream Coalition leads the chart with 18 percent, followed by local authorities (15 percent) and Adjara AR governemnt (12 percent).

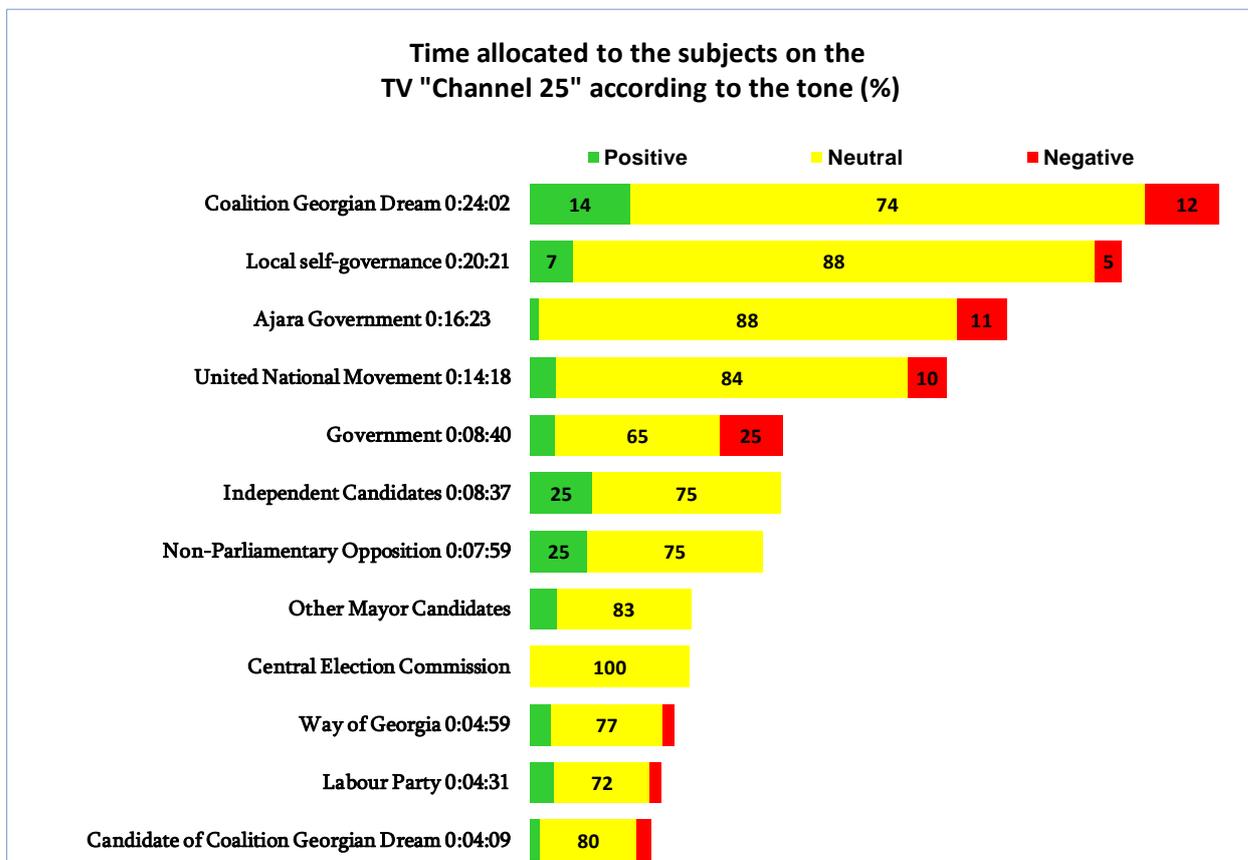
The share of direct/indirect reporting was found almost equal. All three tones of reporting were identified, neutral tone prevailed though. Positive tone had been essentially attached to the abundance of pledges given by policy makers during pre-election meetings, while negative tone was found attributed to criticism voiced in the statements made against opponents.

The TV company rather actively reported on the pre-election campaigns by political subjects running for the upcoming municipal elections, as well as activities of political parties. Giorgi Ermakov, the Georgian Dream nominee for Batumi mayor enjoyed the biggest portion of airtime (four minutes).

In addition to political topics the TV stories touched upon the problems the population faces, as well as sports and cultural events. The journalists working for the channel reported in a timely and impartial manner. Balance in the TV stories was essentially maintained.

Journalists essentially reported on the events ongoing in Adjara region. The stories were often produced about the topics of social importance and obtained comments from local government representatives over the ways to settle the issues of concern. Even though

journalists covered crucial social issues neither bias nor the lack of balance was identified in the stories.



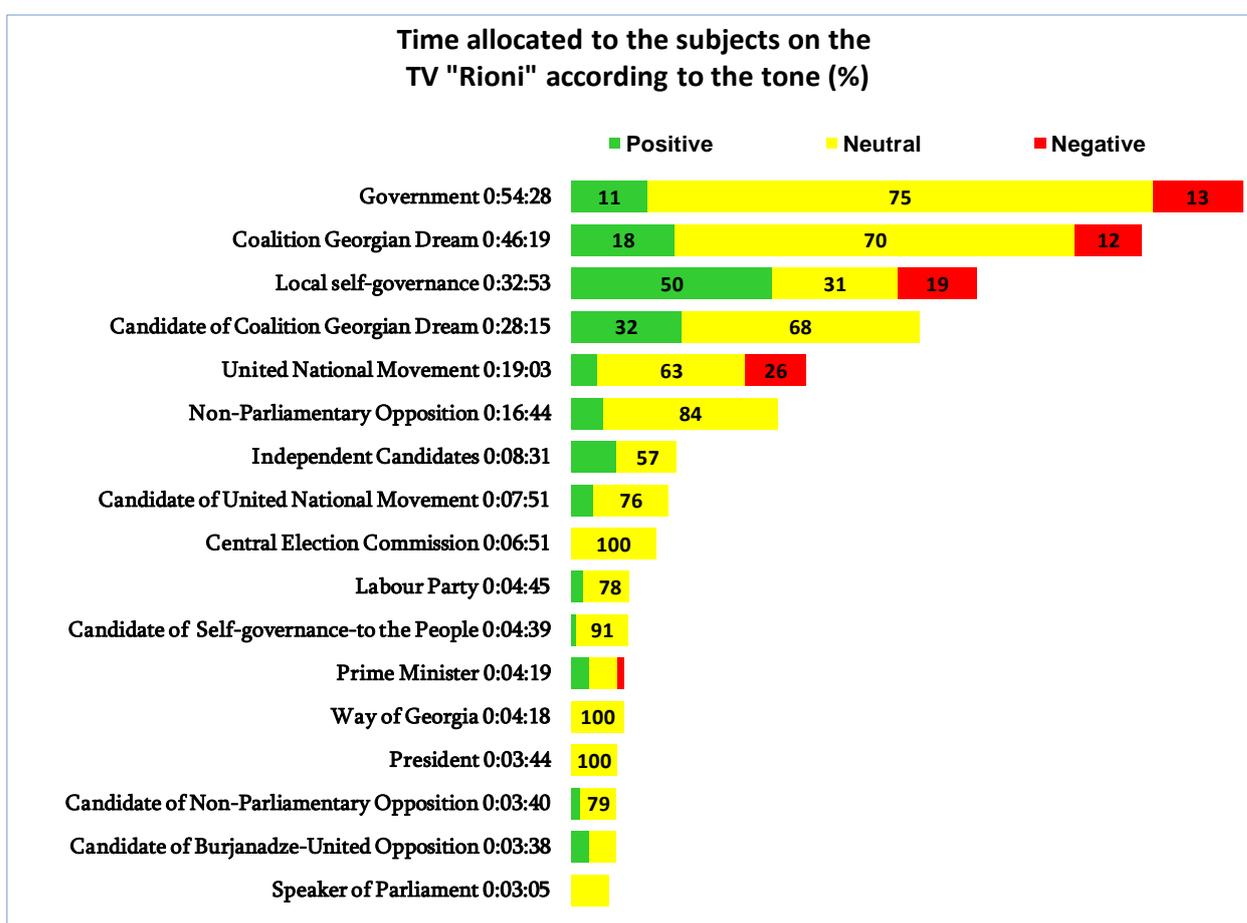
Rioni (Kutaisi) – Within reporting period TV company Rioni aired two news programs during evening time – news of the day and news digest, the latter re-aired the TV stories televised by the daytime news outlet. Rioni produced quite a lengthy news program to cover the developments locally as well as nationwide.

During reporting period the Rioni TV-produced news programs dedicated the total of 4 hours and 22 minutes to the monitored subjects, 21 percent of which falls on the government, followed by the Georgian Dream coalition with 18 percent, and local authorities with 12 percent. Over half of the given time was dedicated to the subjects for direct reporting.

Journalists provided reporting in a neutral tone, without demonstrating their personal stance. Though when covering pre-election campaigns of political forces some lack of balance was identified. For instance the May 19 news outlet covered all of the activities carried out by the GD's Kutaisi city mayor nominee Shota Murghulia. The latter enjoyed the biggest share of

airtime (28 minutes). Giorgi Tevdoradze (UNM) received eight minutes, Khatuna Machavariani of Self-Governance to People – four minutes, Magda Gabrichidze and Teimuraz Shashiashvili of the non-parliamentary opposition and Burjanadze – United Opposition respectively - three minutes each.

Along with political topics journalists dedicated a considerable amount of airtime to social issues. They tried to provide comprehensive coverage of the aforesaid topics. The facts were found substantiated by pre-history and respondents' comments. Neither manipulation through music/sound nor the signs of subliminal political advertising were identified in the news programs.



Kvemo Kartli TV Company (Rustavi) – Within a two-week monitoring period the channel's main news program Kronika was on air from Monday to Saturday at 20:30. The news digest televised at the end of the day re-aired several stories produced by the channel. On Sunday at 22:30 the channel re-aired the TV stories on the top important news of the week. The same stories were televised later as a news digest.

During reporting period the channel dedicated the total of six hours to the monitored subjects. The biggest portion of airtime was enjoyed by GD coalition (1 hour, 30 min) and GD's nominee for Rustavi mayor Davit Jikia (46 minutes). The channel rather actively reported on the rest of the nominees for the city mayor's position, in particular Mamuka Chikovani (UNM) - 32 minutes, Aleksandre Kobaidze (Georgia's Way) – 35 minutes, Koba Dzlierashvili (Burjanadze – United Opposition) – 14 minutes, Ivane Shatirishvili (Alliance of Georgian Patriots) – 13 minutes, Erosi Kitsmarishvili (Our Georgia) – 9 minutes.

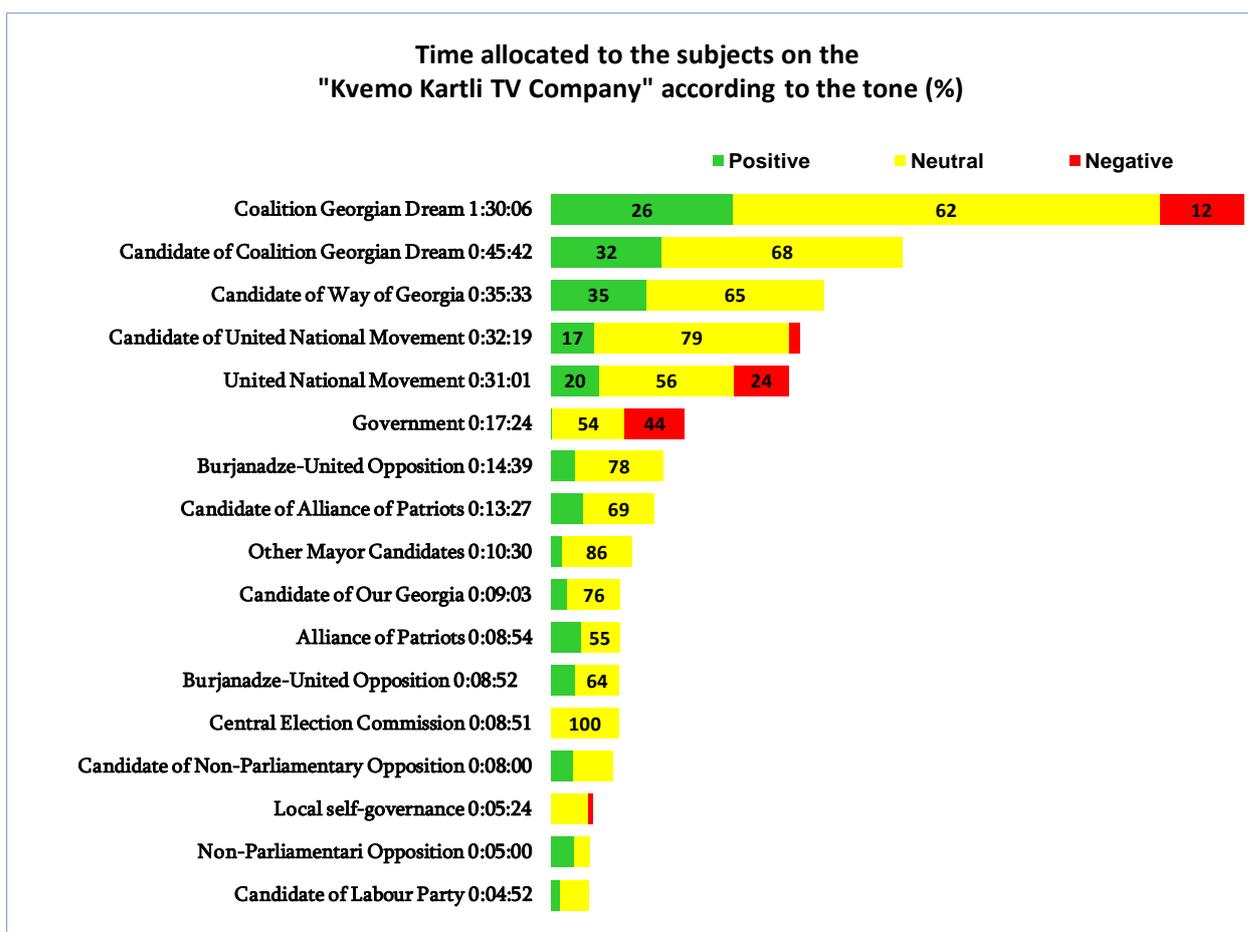
Monitored subjects were provided equal share of direct and indirect reporting. Negative reporting tone was identified in regard to three subjects only (GD, UNM and government). Monitored subjects were essentially provided neutral and positive reporting.

In the course of the monitoring a single case of the use of hate speech was identified: UNM's nominee for the city mayor Mamuka Chikovani speaking about incumbent government in a negative context used the name Hakim Pasha. As far as you are concerned UNM uses the name Hakim Pasha with reference to the incumbent Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili.

Topics covered in the Kronika news program were found diverse. The channel rather actively reported on the pre-election campaigns of the candidates nominated by different parties for mayor, Gamgebeli, Sakrebulo mandates; Also the activities of political parties, cultural and sports events.

Kvemo Kartli TV Company mostly reported on local events, the second block of the news outlet though reported on some important developments both nationwide and worldwide.

Journalists tended to report in a timely and impartial manner. Essentially no lack of balance was observed.



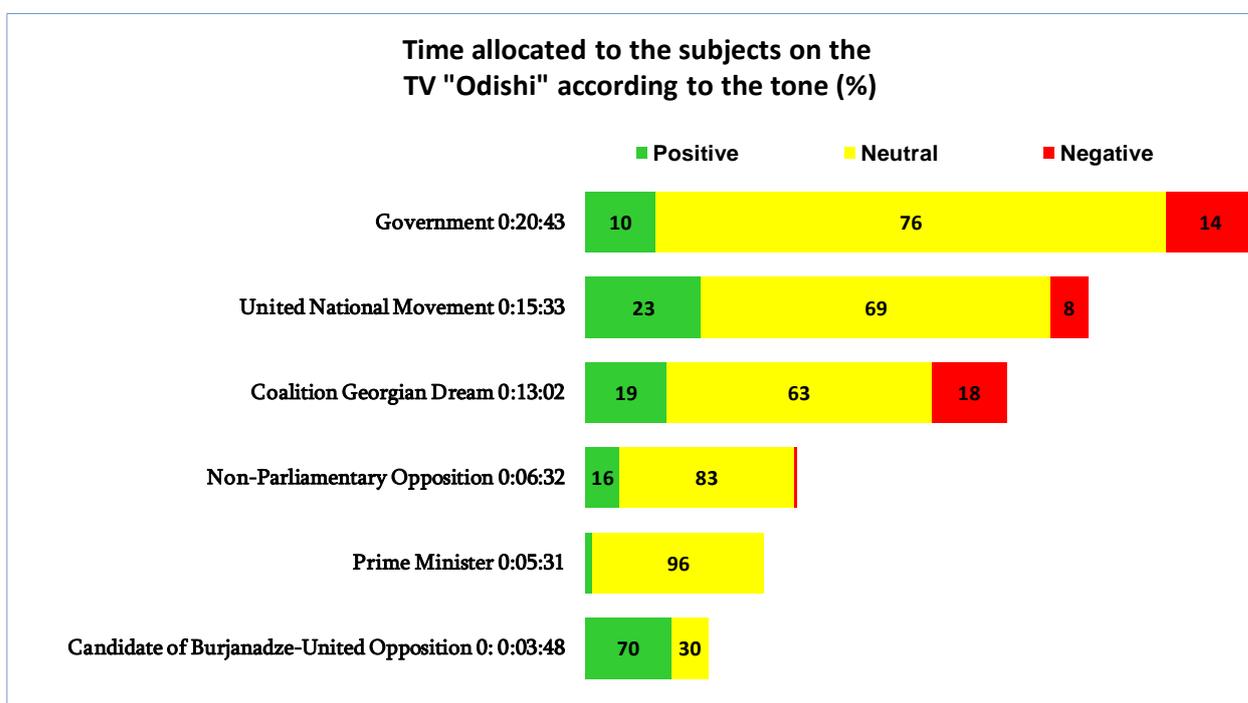
Odishi (Zugdidi) – Within reporting period TV company Odishi aired 10-15-minute news program Dro on a daily basis at 22:00. In the main the news programs were made up of local events. The developments ongoing nationwide were televised through Infolenti aired in the evening air 2-3 times. Infolenti featured the opinions expressed by policy makers and public figures. Together with the texted citation the author's photo was shown as well. Through Infolenti the channel informed the audience of world news.

Within reporting period Odishi TV-produced news programs dedicated the total of one hour and 15 minutes to the monitored subjects. The government's activities enjoyed the biggest portion of TV coverage (27 percent), followed by UNM with 21 percent and GD coalition with 17 percent. Over three minutes were apportioned to Burjanadze – United Opposition nominee Rusudan Pachkoria.

The channel essentially offered viewers indirect reporting. The biggest share of reporting tone was found neutral. Only in regard to three top covered subjects the negative tone was applied.

No bias was identified in the TV stories aired on TV company Odishi. The channel actively covered the nominees running for city mayor, Gangebeli and Sakrebulo mandates, as well as activities implemented by NGOs and cultural and sports events.

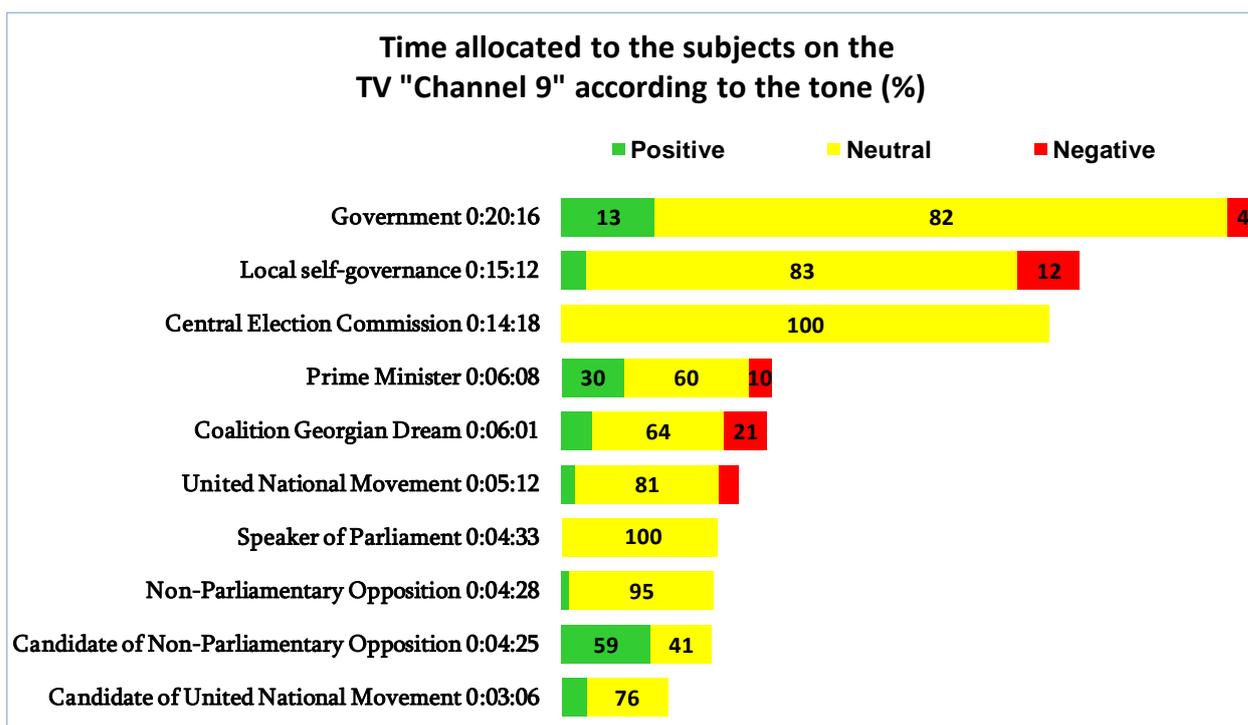
In the news programs no subliminal political advertising or the infringement of ethical norms was identified.



9th Channel (Alkhaltzikhe) - In the course of the reporting period the channel aired the main news program at 21:30. Along with local events the channel covered some significant developments nationwide.

In total within reporting period the news program dedicated one hour and 29 minutes to the monitored subjects. 23 percent of the total falls on central government, followed by local authorities with 17 percent and Central Election Commission with 16 percent. As regards the nominees for Akhaltsikhe mayor Natali Sisvadze (Non-parliamentary Opposition) and Gela Demetradze (UNM) are leading the chart. In general the news reporting on the candidates

running for the municipal elections was found scarce. Reporters limited themselves to reporting on pre-election activities of the parties and their meetings with the population. The news programs included TV stories produced by the Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters, also the TV material provided by TV company Borjomi. The channel focused much on social issues. Journalists provided unbiased reporting, without demonstrating their viewpoints. No hate speech or infringement of ethical norms 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 30-minute news outlet twice during evening air. In the first block of the news program the channel covered events ongoing locally, the second block was dedicated to the developments nationwide and world news. Almost equal share of time was apportioned to local and nationwide news. Along with political topics there were some stories produced about social, economic and other issues of concern.

Pre-election meetings conducted by the subjects running for the upcoming municipal elections were vigorously covered. The news programs dedicated the total of three hours and 25 minutes to the monitored subjects, the biggest share of which, 50 minutes, falls on government. 70 percent of the given total reporting was direct, the reporting tone was 85

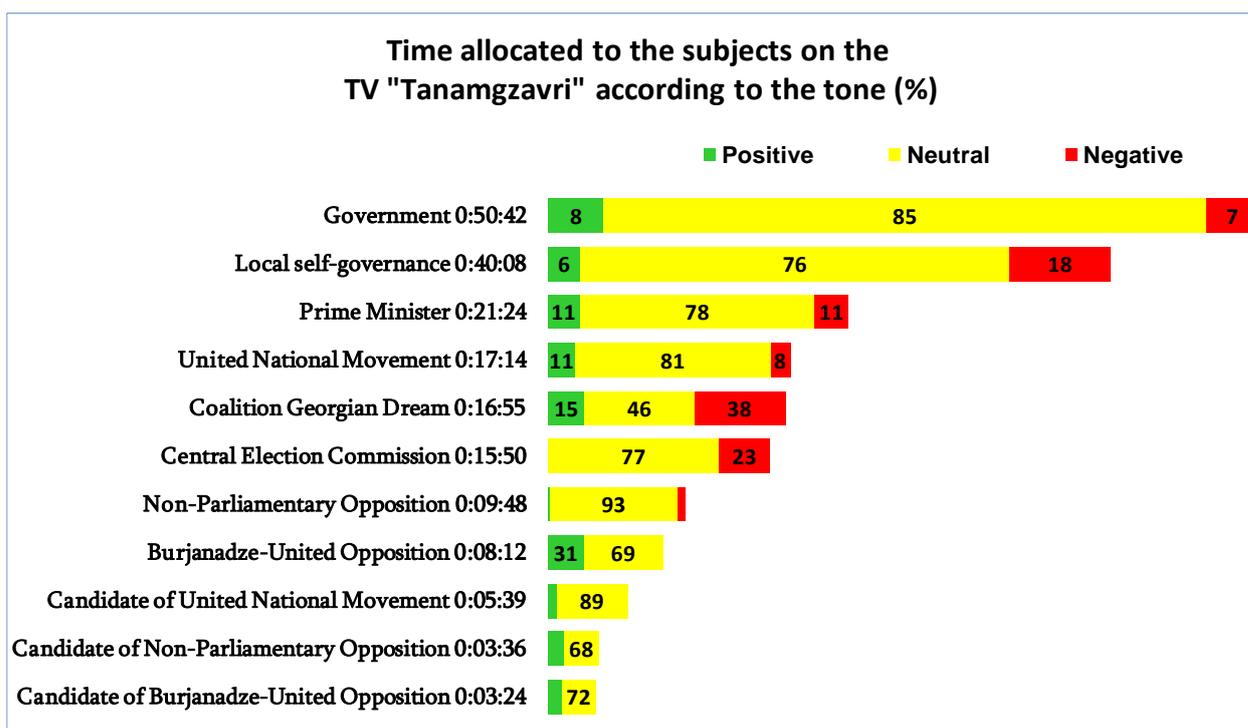
percent neutral. High index of airtime dedicated to the government was due to lengthy speeches delivered by government representatives when covering developments nationwide. 40 minutes were dedicated to the local authorities. 51 percent of the given time falls on direct reporting. Prime Minister ranks third in terms of the time dedicated. 61 percent of the total time (21 minutes) dedicated to him falls on indirect reporting.

Out of the election subjects UNM enjoyed the biggest portion of airtime (17 minutes). The May 13 news program produced a 10-minute story about the nomination of UNM candidates in Kakheti region. The news programs dedicated approximately 17 minutes to the GD coalition, 63 percent of which falls on indirect reporting. 23-percent negative reporting on CEC was prerequisite by the statement made by the Burjanadze – United Opposition representative in the May 19 news program, accusing CEC's DEC member of pressure in favor of GD coalition (covert recording was shown).

Out of Telavi city mayor nominees TV company Tanamgzavri dedicated the biggest share of airtime (5 minutes and 39 seconds) to UNM candidate Aleksi Dzuliashvili. A bit more than three minutes were enjoyed by Giorgi Mosiashvili of the Non-Parliamentary Opposition and Tamaz Arjevanidze of Burjanadze – United Opposition. Nominees for the city mayor position were mostly covered direct. Reporting tone was essentially neutral. Neither manipulation through music/sound was identified nor were the signs of subliminal political advertising identified in the news programs.

A single case of factual inaccuracy was identified during reporting period, in particular: in the May 20 news program Lasha Chkhartishvili nominated for Sakrebulo mandate by the Non-Parliamentary Opposition was also mentioned in the subtitles as a mayor candidate nominated by the same bloc.

Journalists tended to report in a timely and unbiased manner. When covering various social issues they tried to obtain answers to any matter of public concern. TV stories were characterized with balanced reporting.



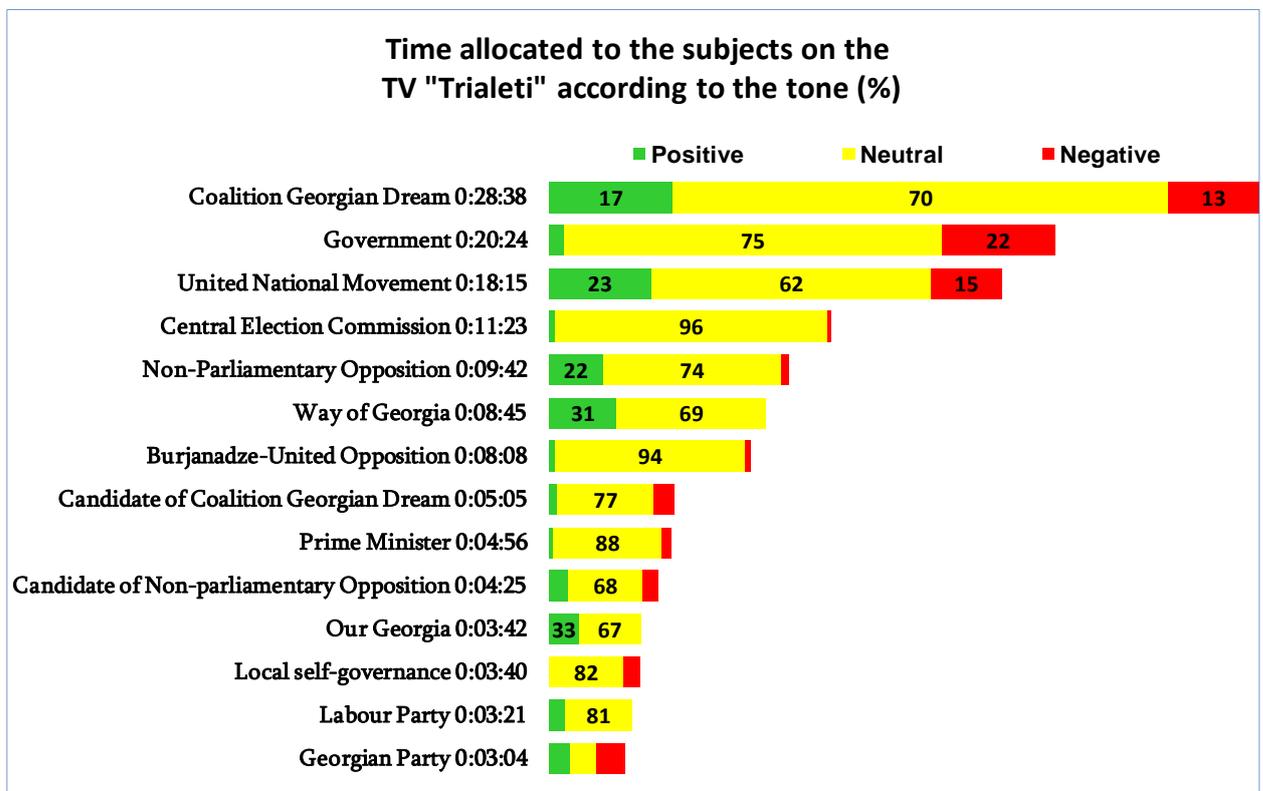
Trialeti (Gori) – During reporting period the news program Akhali Ambebi (News) on Trialeti was aired from Monday to Friday. On Saturdays the TV air was dedicated to the weekly news program Kviris Ambebi re-airing the stories on important events of the week within the region. The program is occasionally made up of two blocks. The second block would be dedicated to the guests invited to the studio to discuss some important topics of the week. In the May 17 news program the Gori Agrarian Market issue was brought into focus to make public aware of the traders' demands, government's position and investors' interest.

During reporting week the channel was rather closely covering the developments in the region as well as nationwide. Journalists provided timely and impartial coverage of the activities carried out by political parties and pre-election meetings held by the candidates for mayor, Gamgebeli and Sakrebulo mandate. No lack of balance was observed in the TV stories. The program also aired the stories about sports and cultural events taking place locally.

During reporting period Trialeti dedicated the total of two hours and 27 minutes to the monitored subjects. 20 percent of the given time falls on reporting on GD coalition, followed by government and UNM with 14 and 12 percent respectively.

Out of the Gori city mayor candidates over three minutes of reporting was enjoyed by Zurab Jirkvelishvili nominated by GD coalition, and Vasil Butkhuzi of Non-Parliamentary Opposition. They were essentially spoken about in neutral tone. In general indirect reporting slightly prevailed over direct.

Journalists reported in a timely and unbiased manner. TV stories were characterized with brief and balanced coverage. Journalists tended to report neutrally without demonstrating their personal stance. Neither hate speech nor manipulation through music/sound was identified.



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 in the evening time. The TV stories televised within the news program focused on the developments across the region. Within reporting period most of the TV stories covered pre-election meetings conducted by the subjects running for municipal elections. To the monitored subjects the channel dedicated one hour and 43 minutes in total. 34 percent of the given total was dedicated to Ozurgeti city mayor candidate Beglar Sioridze nominated by GD coalition. The meetings planned within his pre-election campaign were covered in

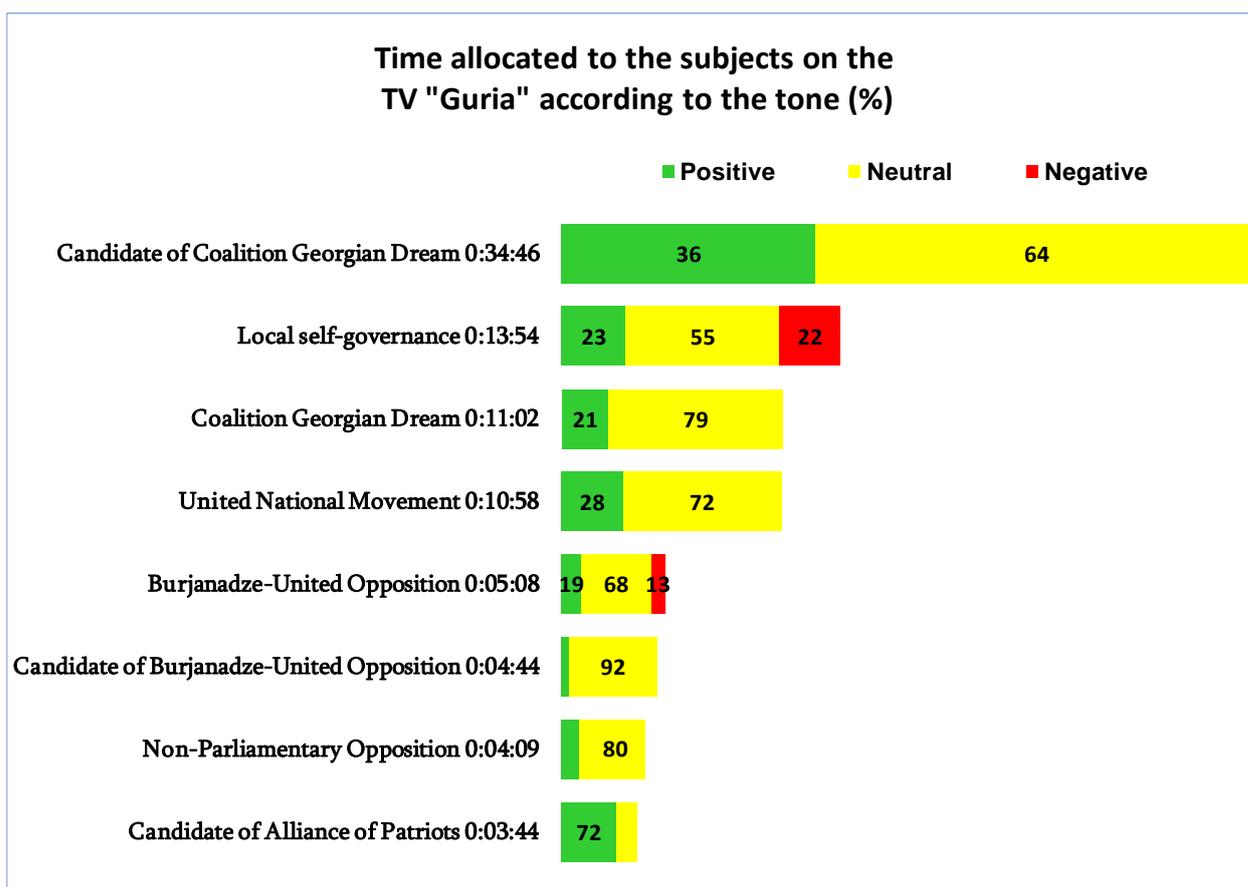
almost every news program. The time dedicated to the aforesaid nominee was 61 percent indirect. Reporting tone was positive and neutral. In the May 14 news outlet journalist Khatuna Chankseliani says: “Begi Sioridze’s first pre-election meeting with the people with a disability at the Rehabilitation Center was conducted in a warm and open manner. His visit to the Center was not strange thing to the beneficiaries, they had been on rather welcoming terms with him.” The TV story features journalist’s personal approach, attempting to exhibit the candidate in a positive manner.

14 minutes out of the total airtime dedicated to the monitored subjects falls on the local authorities, GD coalition and UNM equal share of time, 11 minutes each. The time apportioned to the top three covered subjects was equally direct and indirect. Negative tone was solely attached to reporting on the local authorities (22 percent) and Burjanadze – United Opposition (13 percent). Positive reporting was essentially due to the comments provided by their supporters.

The city mayor candidate Kakha Chavleishvili nominated by Burjanadze – United Opposition enjoyed almost 5-minute coverage, followed by Shota Gogiberidze of the Patriots Alliance with four minutes and Irma Kvachantiradze (Non-Parliamentary Opposition) and Mirza Chkhikvishvili (Labor Party) with two minutes each.

In the May 23 news story about the nomination of the Burjanadze – United Opposition candidates a mistake was made in the subtitles introducing the candidate. It is noteworthy that the TV stories often lack subtitles, therefore it’s hard to identify respondents.

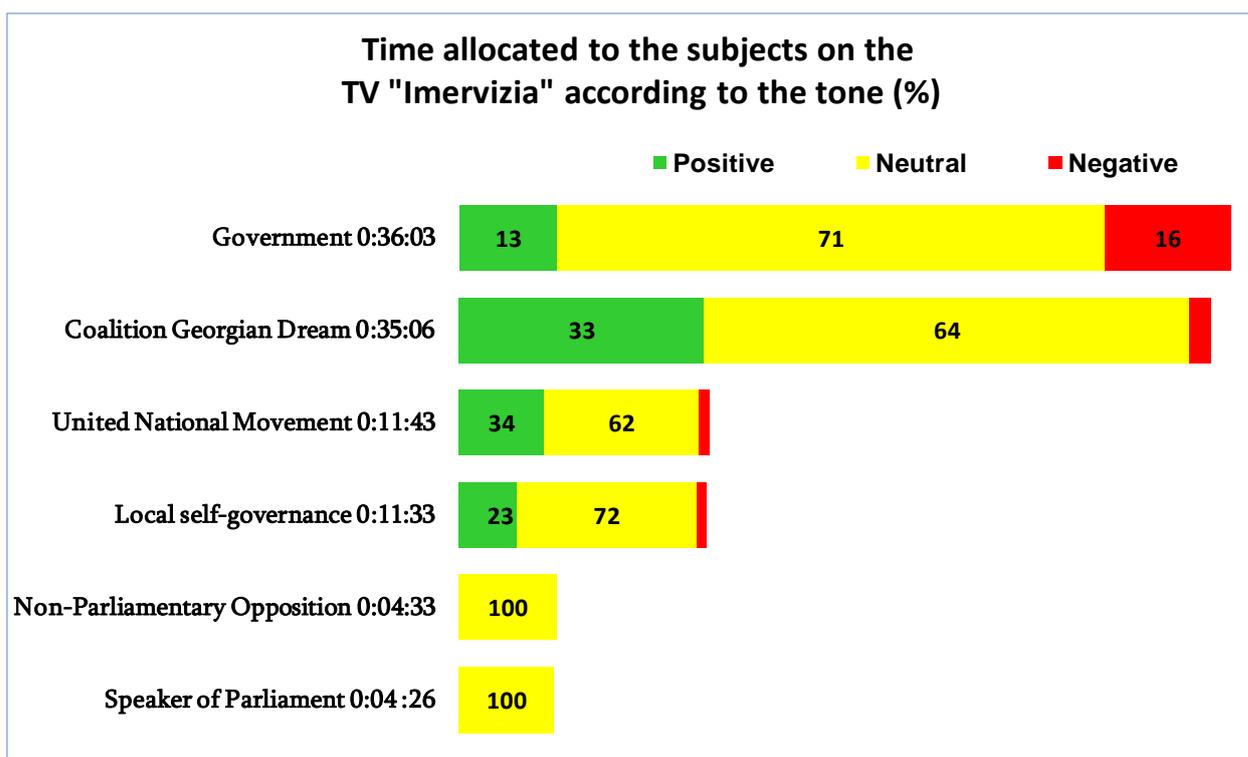
No in-depth stories about any issue of concern were found in the news programs. Journalists tended to report in a shallow manner. Reporting was essentially of informative nature.



Imervizia (Chiatura) – Within reporting period the channel televised news programs twice during evening TV air, having ultimately dedicated the total of one hour and 50 minutes to the monitored subjects. The government is leading the chart with 33 percent, the ruling team comes next with 32 percent.

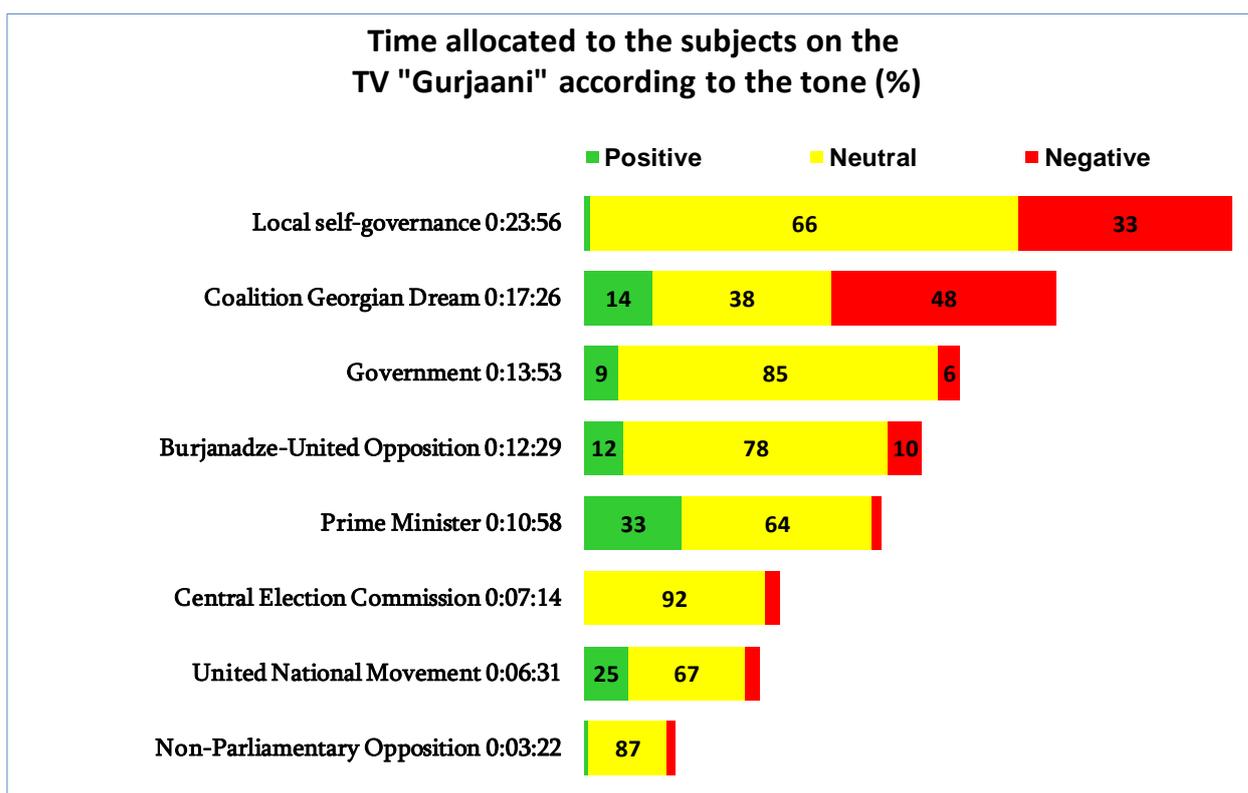
The mayor candidates for self-governing cities were not covered much since Chiatura is not going to elect a city mayor. Sakrebulo members and Gamgebeli nominees were essentially focused on. No bias was identified. Parties fell under coverage according to their activities. At the same time the journalists failed to provide in-depth analysis of the subjects' election programs.

News programs apportioned a considerable time to the opinion polls about municipal elections. Journalists tended to be neutral, no infringement of ethical norms was observed.



Gurjaani (Gurjaani) – TV company Gurjaani airs main news program in the evening time. The news outlets actively covered developments in the region as well as nationwide. All of the important events ongoing across the country were briefly covered in a separate block. Within reporting period the news programs dedicated the total of one hour and 45 minutes to the monitored subjects. 23 percent of the given time falls on the local authorities. GD coalition comes next with 17 percent and government with 14 percent. The index of direct reporting stood rather high. Political subjects running for municipal elections were covered in accordance with the intensity of their election-related activities, no bias to any party was identified.

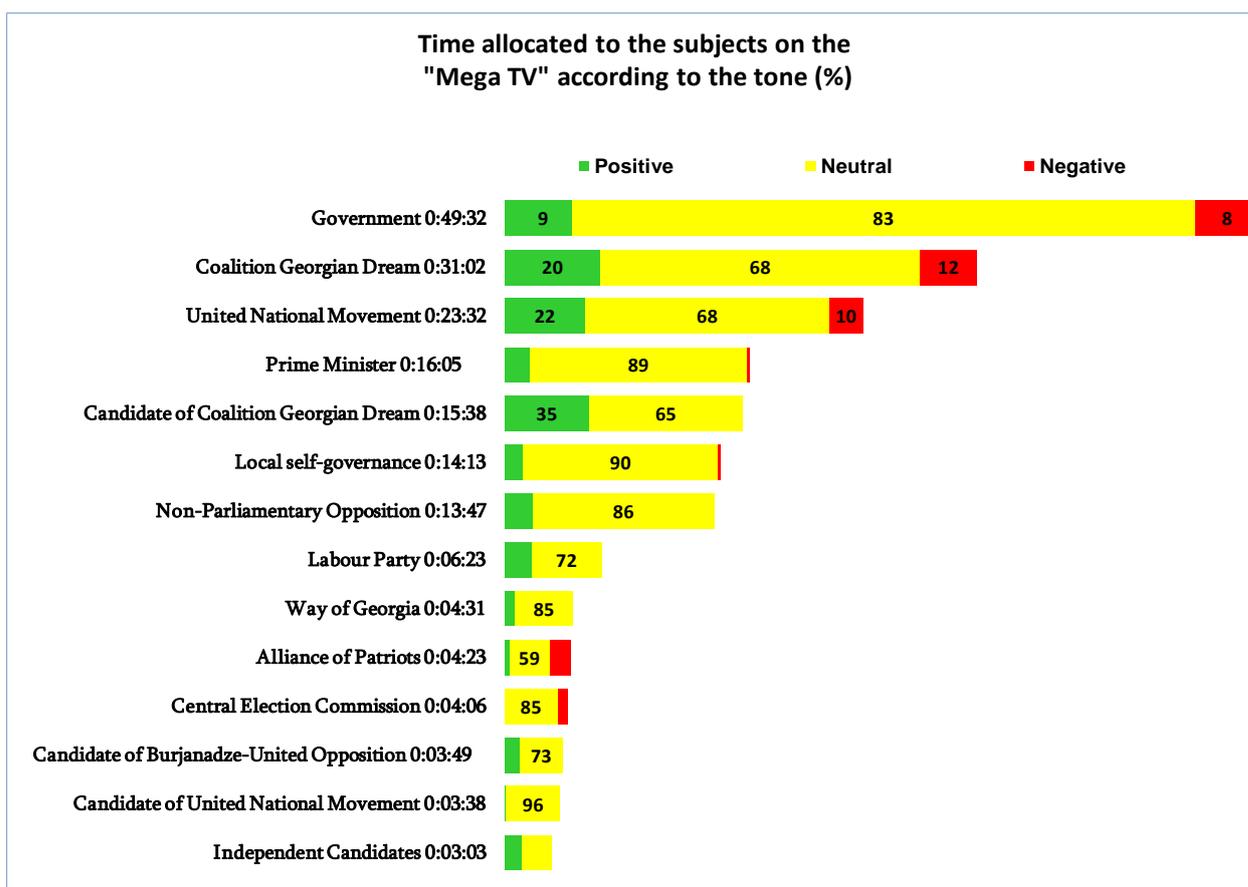
Mostly the TV stories contained criticism. Journalists demonstrated criticism towards local authorities (33 percent), and GD coalition (48 percent). Some in-depth and comprehensive stories were produced about social issues.



Mega TV (Khoni) – The Mega TV-produced news program Mtavari Dghes (Main Today) was on air from Monday to Friday at 22:00. On Saturdays the channel aired news program Mtavari Kviras (Main this Week) and on Sundays TV air was dedicated to Kviris Faktebi (Facts of the Week).

The news programs aired on the channel dedicated the total of three hours and 28 minutes to the monitored subjects. 24 percent of the given time falls on government, 15 percent on GD's Kutaisi mayoral candidate Shota Murghulia, 11 percent - on UNM. Over three minutes of reporting was dedicated to Teimuraz Shashaishvili and Giorgi Tevdoradze, mayor candidates nominated by Burjanadze – United Opposition and UNM respectively. The channel offered monitored subjects more time for direct reporting. The reporting tone was essentially found neutral.

According to the findings the channel provided an active coverage of political subjects' pre-election campaigns, activities of political parties, local news, activities of local authorities, problems the population faces, cultural and sports events. Reporting tended to be impartial and neutral. No lack of balance was identified in the TV stories.



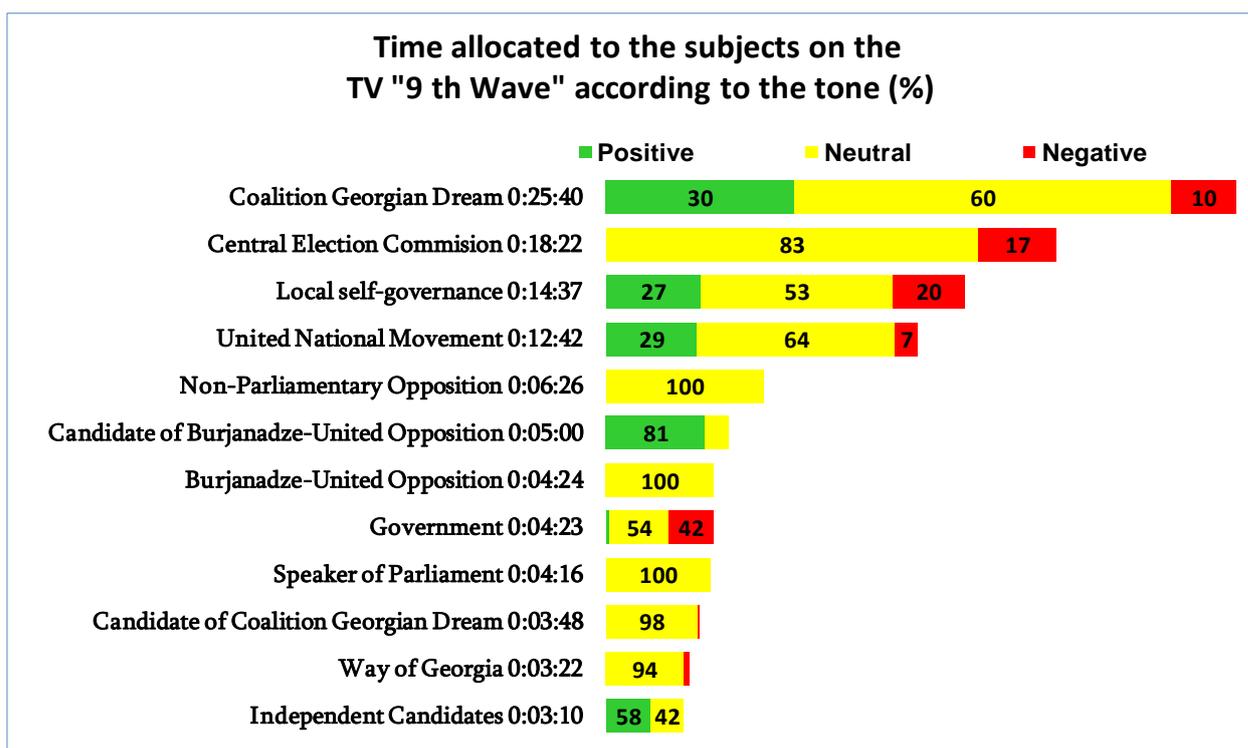
9th Wave (Poti) – During reporting period the 9th Wave-produced news program Cursor was aired twice in the evening hours. Each outlet was made up of 7-8 stories to cover developments in the region as well as nationwide.

Within reporting weeks the channel dedicated the total of one hour and 49 minutes to the monitored subjects. GD coalition ranks first with 23 percent, CEC comes next with 17 percent and local authorities with 13 percent. Over half of the airtime dedicated to the monitored subjects falls on direct reporting.

Journalists dedicated a considerable amount of time to the opinion polls over pre-election topics. The channel also brought gender issues into focus. The second block of the May 21 news program, for instance, was fully dedicated to the discussion of the aforementioned topic together with the selected guests.

Out of the city mayoral candidates Davit Kantaria of Burjanadze – United Opposition (5 min) and Irakli Kakulia of GD coalition (3 min) enjoyed the bulk of the airtime.

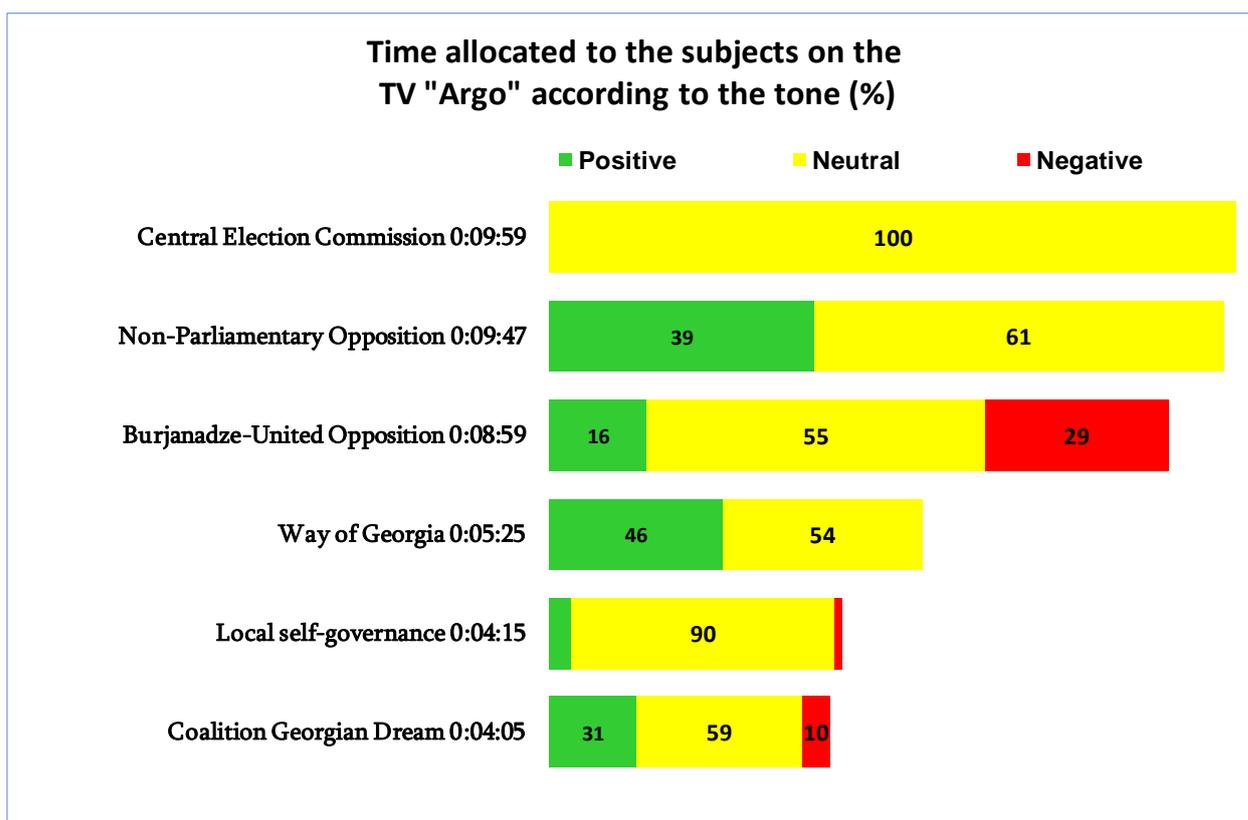
Journalists offered viewers neutral reporting on events and election subjects. No bias was identified.



Argo (Zestaponi) – Within two-week reporting period the Argo TV-produced main news program Spectrum was on air from Monday to Friday without a news anchor. On Saturdays the company aired several top stories televised throughout the week. The channel tended to generally cover the developments in the region.

To the monitored subjects the news programs dedicated the total of 47 minutes. In some of the news outlets monitored subjects were not covered at all. Spectrum dedicated the biggest portion of airtime to CEC and Non-Parliamentary Opposition, 10 minutes each. Nine minutes of reporting was enjoyed by Burjanadze – United Opposition. In regard to the latter 29 percent of reporting was negative in tone. The May 15 TV story “Pre-election Scandal in Zestaponi” covered some representatives quitting the Burjanadze – united Opposition election bloc. Former and incumbent members made negative statements against one another having ultimately preconditioned the 29-percent index of negative tone.

In addition to reporting on the activities carried out by political parties the news programs offered viewers some stories about cultural and sports events, health issues, various social topics. News reporters reported in an impartial manner. No lack of balance was identified in the TV stories.



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 company sometimes produced news over the weekend as well. During prime time news outlet was re-aired twice. Akhali Ambebi was delivered to the viewers without a newsreader. The running time of the news programs ranges from 5 to 30 minutes. On Saturday, May 25 the TV air was dedicated to the summarizing news program. News programs essentially covered local news. The stories about developments nationwide were covered too. The May 25 news program aired the only 27-minute story about the government members' informational meeting with the regional media representatives to discuss EU-Georgia Association Agreement to be signed. To the monitored subjects the channel dedicated two hours and nine minutes. 34 percent of the given time falls on reporting on local authorities, followed by GD coalition with 24 percent, and government with 17 percent. High index enjoyed by them was due to lengthy TV stories virtually produced about each of them: May 13 – weekly Municipality sitting, May 17 – nomination of candidates to Marneuli municipality by GD coalition, May 25 – government's members meeting with regional media.

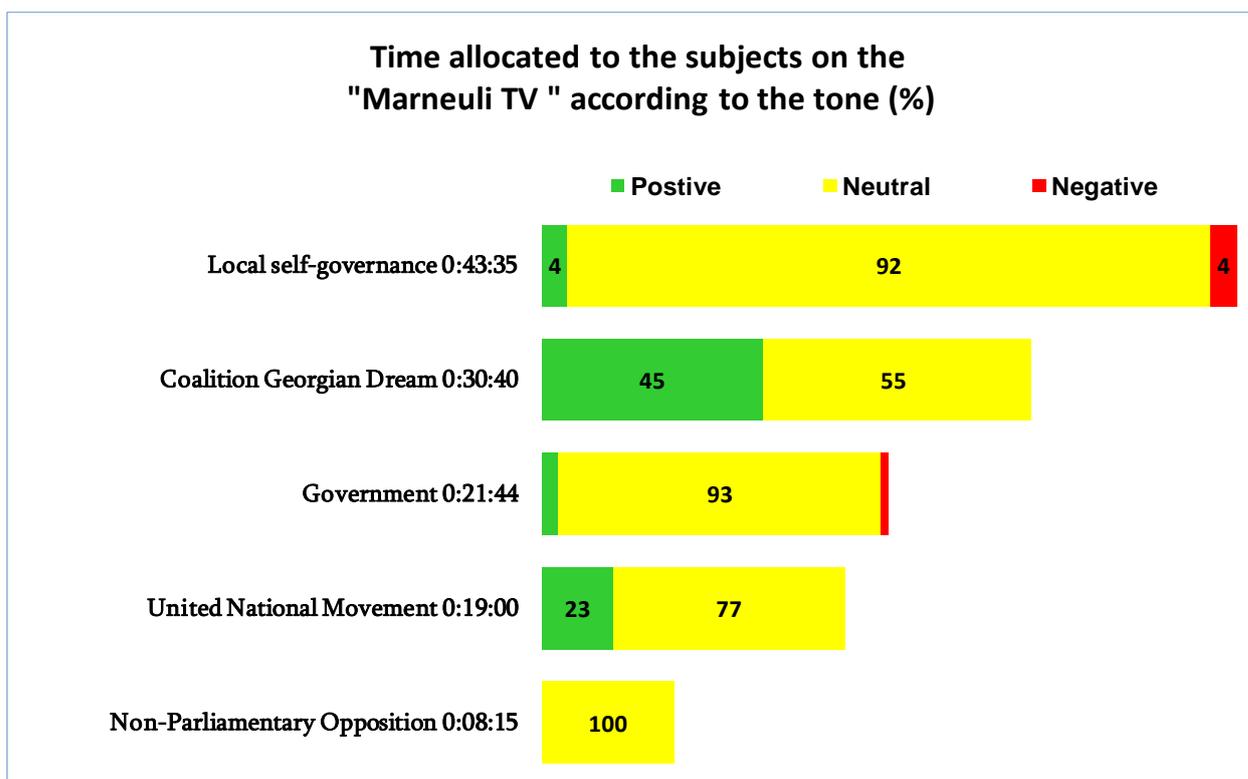
Out of the rest of the monitored subjects running for the upcoming municipal elections the channel also covered UNM (19 minutes), Non-Parliamentary Opposition (8 minutes). Almost three minutes were dedicated to Burjanadze – United Opposition.

70 percent of time dedicated to the monitored subjects falls on direct reporting. The reporting tone was mostly neutral.

The news programs produced within reporting week two factual inaccuracies were revealed: in the May 17 TV report which touched upon the GD's official nomination of candidates for Marneuli municipality made a mistake mentioning Sakrebulo membership candidate as a Marneuli mayoral nominee; In the May 20 news program Lasha Chkhartishvili, nominated by Non-Parliamentary Opposition for Tbilisi Sakrebulo membership was mistakenly subtitled as the mayoral candidate nominated by the same bloc.

It is noteworthy that in some of TV stories subtitles are missing, therefore it is complicated to identify the respondent.

News programs limited themselves to superficial coverage of events, in-depth reporting was rare. Journalists tended to report in an impartial manner without demonstrating their personal stance. Along with political topics the TV stories were produced about various issues of concern to the region.



Borjomi (Borjomi) – Within reporting period TV company Borjomi-produced main news program Dghis Kronika (Chronicle of the Day) was available from Monday to Friday. News outlets were re-aired twice during evening air. Dghis Kronika was usually anchored but at times the program was offered to the viewers without a newsanchor. In particular, on special occasions, when something of high importance is taking place in the region or the country some separate TV stories are delivered to the audience, including weekend, without a newsanchor. News programs' running time ranges from 7 to 13 minutes. TV stories essentially cover local news.

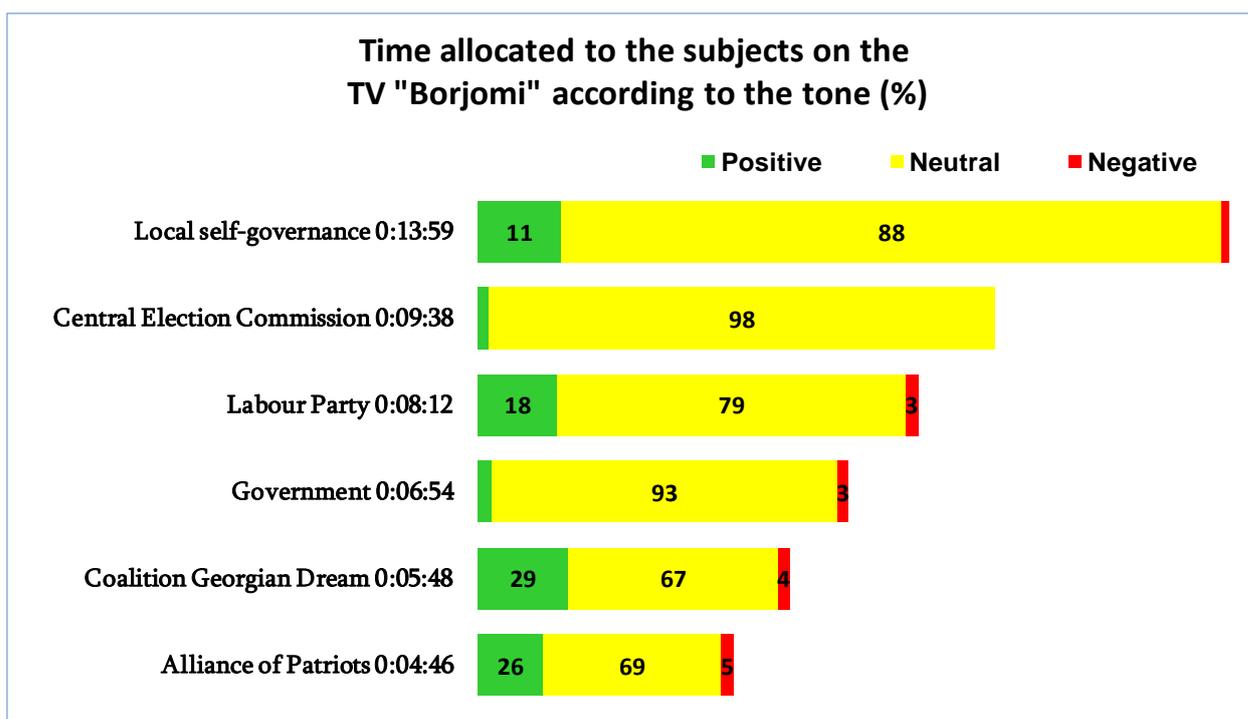
To the monitored subjects Borjomi TV dedicated the total of 58 minutes. 24 percent of the given time falls on reporting on the activities implemented by local authorities. 81 percent of reporting out of 14 minutes dedicated to them was direct.

New programs produced by the channel focused less on the subjects running for municipal elections, Labor Party enjoyed the biggest portion (8 minutes) among them. In the May 14 Dghis Kronika a separate TV story was produced about the registration of Labor Party at the 36th district commission. In general the TV company ardently covered the commencement of the activities by the 36th district commission, registration of subjects running for the elections, its deadlines.

Six minutes were dedicated to GD coalition, followed by the Alliance of Georgian Patriots with five minutes; UNM, Non-Parliamentary Opposition and Self-Governance to People each received two-minute reporting.

TV company Borjomi covered monitored subjects mostly through direct reporting. The reporting was found neutral in tone.

Dghis Kronika failed to air any exhaustive stories about any topic of concern. Journalists limited themselves to the superficial coverage of events. No bias was identified. The programs did not lack balance.

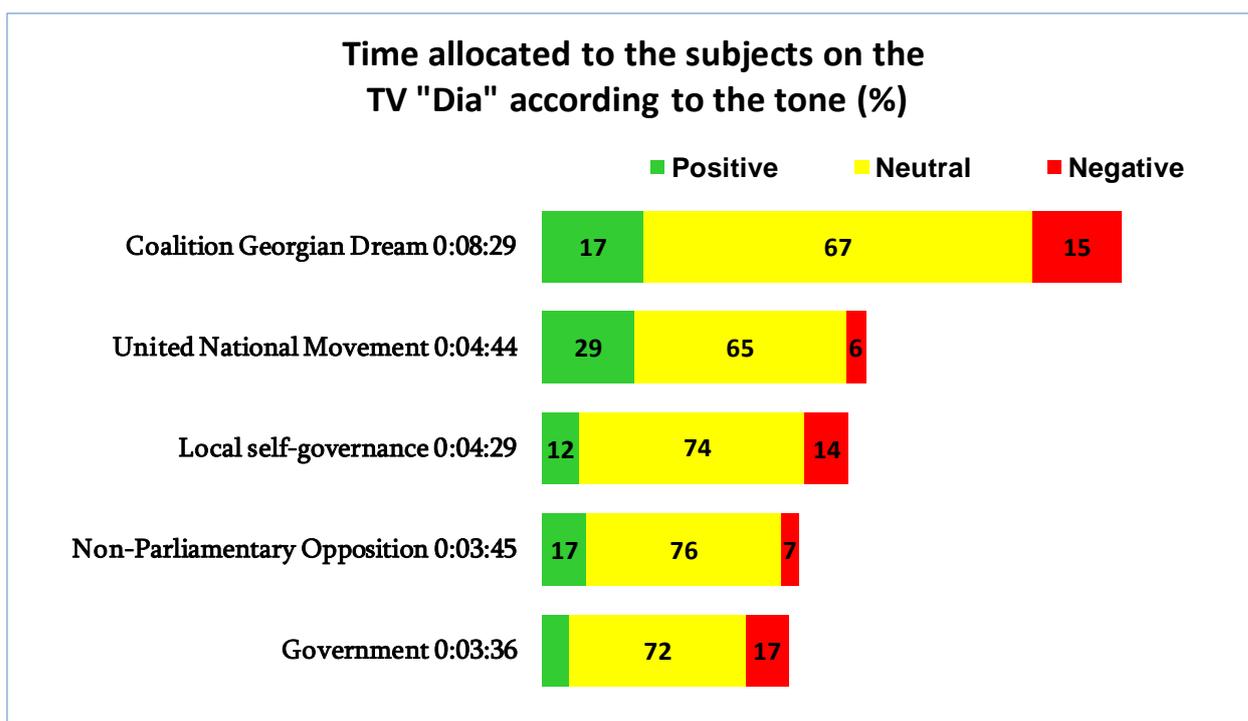


Dia (Khashuri) – TV company Dia offered news outlets to the audience from Monday to Friday. Along with the events taking place in the region the news programs the covered developments nationwide.

Within reporting period the news programs dedicated the total of 33 minutes to the monitored subjects. GD coalition leads the chart with 26 percent, followed by UNM and local authorities with 14 percent each. Monitored subjects were offered almost equal airtime for direct and indirect reporting. All three reporting tones were attached, neutral tone prevailed though. UNM enjoyed the highest ranking (29 percent) in terms of positive reporting, the aforementioned though is not linked to the journalist's biased reporting.

During reporting period TV company Dia did not stand out in terms of providing intensive and comprehensive coverage of the topics related to upcoming municipal elections, it is noteworthy though that on May 22 the street survey was carried out in regard to the election-related topics. The goal of the street survey was to identify public awareness.

In the news programs journalists tended to abstain from demonstrating their stance, except for a few cases. Journalists failed to take the initiative to pose censorious questions or prepare some comprehensive TV stories. Rather often respondents' direct reporting was aired without subtitles to identify the speaker.



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 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. The programs televised within reporting period touched upon the upcoming municipal elections. The program was made up two blocks, each hosting a single mayor candidate from different

political forces, including Giorgi Khimshiashvili (Unity Hall), Giorgi Diasamidze (UNM), Gocha Gugunava (Georgia's Way), Giorgi Ermakov (GD coalition), Jumber Tavartkiladze (People's Party), Aleksandre Tevzadze (Non-Parliamentary Opposition), Davit Diasamidze (Irakli Ghlonti – Reformers), Durmishkan Shainidze (Self-Governance to People), Nugzar Chkhaidze (Labor Party), Levan Antadze, independent majoritarian deputy in old Batumi.

The main topic of the May 21 program was relatives in the Party Lists. Sulkhan Okropiridze, GD's nominee with number one in the Kobuleti electoral list and GYLA's spokesperson from Adjara branch took part in the program.

The main topic of the May 22 program was Corruption Risks in Sakrebulo. The selected guest, coordinator of the Transparency International Georgia's Batumi branch spoke about the survey the organization carried out to identify shortcomings in the course of tenders conducted by Batumi Sakrebulo.

Laborists' Message to Adjara was the topic of the May 23 program held with the participation of the Labor Party leader Shalva Natelashvili and Davit Robakidze running as number 1 in their party list in Batumi.

The presenter of the program was virtually posing no questions to the mayor candidates, trying to obtain from them as much information as possible about their background, political stance or the plans for Batumi development. The guests enjoyed a possibility to fully express their opinions, without any limitations imposed. In the course of the program viewers had an opportunity to call in to shoot questions to the selected guests. The journalist was trying to ask away the guests in order to, through additional questions, deliver more comprehensive information to the audience.

The presenter was especially actively engaged in the May 21 and 23 programs. Posing hypercritical questions and demanding comprehensive answers from the guests. The discussion was extremely harsh, the presenter actively opposing guests, kept repeating the same question, but at times failed to apportion sufficient time to get a response to the question shot.

The presenter of the talk show Dialogue did not use discourteous vocabulary or hate speech, nor did the guests.

Rioni (Kutaisi) –Within the reporting period TV company Rioni aired two **public-political talk shows Tema** (Topic) and **Objective Opinion**. Talk show Tema is available on Monday and Thursday at 21:30. The program is hosted by journalists Nana Robakidze. During reporting period four programs fell within the scope of monitoring. The programs were characterized with the diversity of the selected guests. At different times the program was hosting the candidates for Sakrebulo membership and Gamgebeli position nominated by the opposition parties and the ruling team, also independent majoritarian candidates and representatives of NGO sector.

The program essentially touched upon the following topics:

- Women's role in politics, the way they are represented for the municipal elections;
- Election programs of the political subjects running for municipal elections in Imereti region, political stance, program priorities;
- Election environment.

The guests invited to the studio were offered maximum opportunity to express their viewpoints. Any interested party enjoyed a possibility to demonstrate their stance. In the course of the talk show viewers were delivered comprehensive information. The presenter was actively involved in the program, she though did not stand out in terms of shooting stern questions. She did not express her viewpoint, essentially limited herself to playing the role of a moderator. No bias was demonstrated in relation to any political subject. No subliminal advertising was identified either.

The May 12 program, dedicated to women's political participation aired the TV story lacking balance in terms of respondents. Out of nine interviews responding to the question "What male policy makers think about women's more active political participation?" seven respondents were representing GD coalition, the context of the discussion was found neutral, none of the parties were negatively covered.

The programs were of interactive nature. The population had an opportunity to call in to demonstrate their viewpoints. In the course of the program no hate speech was used by the journalist.

Talk show Objective Opinion, aired every Tuesday on Rioni TV, is anchored by journalist Elza Chubinidze. The program starts at 21:30, and running time does not exceed 30 minutes. During the period of May 12-25 two programs fell within the scope of monitoring. The programs hosted the GD coalition members as well as the representatives of opposition parties and NGO sector.

The topics of the program included the following:

- Pre-election environment;
- The extent of efficiency of self-governance and changes expected by the population.

The talk show presented the interactive question. In the May 20 TV program viewers had a possibility to express their points of view in regard to the degree of effectiveness of the local self-government's performance.

According to the guests the program was balanced. No privilege was offered to anyone in the course of the program. The presenter did not allow guests to deviate from the topic of discussion. During heated polemic the presenter actively opposed selected guests. The main debates were held between the representatives of GD coalition and UNM. In case the debate got heated up the host of the program called on the guests to be ethical.

Journalist Elza Chubinidze took active part in the talk show, trying to obtain comprehensive answers from the guests.

Kvemo Kartli TV Company (Rustavi) – In the evening time on Tuesdays and Fridays the channel aired **talk show Tkveni Dro** (Your Time) hosted by Tato Gogoladze. Within the reporting period four programs were aired.

In the run up to elections the host switched to a special format, inviting Rustavi mayoral candidates to the studio. The topics of the program included: election programs of Rustavi mayoral candidates. The guest to the only program was not the one among monitored subjects.

The selected guests included Rustavi mayoral candidates: Aleksandre Kobaidze (Georgia's Way), Ivane Shatirishvili (Alliance of Georgian Patriots), Erosi Kitsmarishvili (Our Georgia).

The journalist was trying to make guests speak thoroughly about election programs, the way they are going to make the planned issues work. The presenter was posing the questions of current importance, at times the questions were harsh, the host was trying to oppose guests. In the course of the program viewers had a possibility to call in to shoot questions to the mayoral candidates.

Odishi (Zugdidi) – On May 24 and 25 TV company aired **political debates Elections 2014**, produced in partnership with the Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters (GARB). The programs were hosted by journalist Nana Kobalia. The guests to the studio included the candidates for Zugdidi Gamgebeli position nominated by GD coalition, UNM, Burjanadze – United Opposition, People's Party, and Unity Hall. The candidates nominated by Non-Parliamentary Opposition refused to participate in the debates.

The journalist was curious to know about candidates' electoral programs and their priorities. The journalist was trying to obtain detailed information from the selected guests. TV viewers had an opportunity to pose questions to the selected guests through Facebook. Upon the completion of the program the host publicized the results of interactive.

Channel 9 (Akhaltikhe) – During reporting period **talk show Dialogue** fell within the scope of monitoring. The program aired on Thursdays at 20:30 is hosted by journalist Rusudan Gvaramadze.

The main topic of the May 15 program was women's political participation: why to elect female representatives to the local self-government body, their role in the political processes. The majority of guests was made up of women. Among selected guests the women running for the municipal elections discussed gender issues. Male policy makers did not take part in the discussion.

The program was conducted within the Q & A format. The presenter essentially played the role of a moderator, refraining from expressing her standpoint.

Tanamgzavri (Telavi) – Talk show Dialogue is aired once per week, on Fridays. Within reporting period two outlets were offered to the audience, on May 16 and 23. The talk show is hosted by Nato Megutnishvili.

On May 16 the topics of the talk show included the problems the youth faces, current situation at preschools.

On May 23 the program was more like a political debate hosting number one candidates of qualified subjects including UNM, Self-Governance to People, Non-Parliamentary Opposition, Burjanadze – United Opposition. At the beginning of the program the presenter pointed out that the GD's nominee had been also invited but the latter did not show up.

The program broadcast live for an hour and 20 minutes. The first block was dedicated to the presentation of electoral programs. The presenter was found neutral and impartial, allocating equal airtime to the guests, and posing the same question to the guests in row according to the turn determined by means of the casting of lots. She played the role of a moderator, did not let guests deviate from the topic of discussion. She did not interrupt the speakers, did not tend to pose supplementary questions.

In the course of the program the journalist asked the invited guests about anti-discrimination law adopted by the Parliament: “What do you think should government have adopted this law, what changes is it going to bring about to Telavi everyday life and how much important the issue is to Telavi? Discussing the issue some homophobic statements were made by the guests, the journalist though did not try to stop them.

Guests also answered the questions posed by the supporters invited to the studio as well as the voters having shot questions through a TV report.

Trialeti (Gori) – At 19:00 TV company Trialeti airs talk show Municipal Elections 2014. The program is offered few times a week. The talk show is hosted by Thea Giguashvili and Lado Bichashvili. Within the reporting period four programs were produced.

Each outlet hosted the representatives of a particular political group running for the upcoming elections, namely: GD's Gori mayor candidate Zurab Jirkvelishvili, and Chairperson of Georgian Dream Democratic Georgia Gori branch; Georgia's Party's Gori mayor candidate Kakhaber Ergemlidze and the Party leader Irakli Okruashvili; Non-

Parliamentary Opposition's Gori mayor candidate Vasil Butkhuzi and Gamgebeli nominee representing the same political force; Burjanadze – United Opposition's Gori mayor candidate Mamuka Nozadze and the chief of his election staff.

In the course of the program viewers had an opportunity to call in to pose questions to the selected guests.

Journalist Thea Giguashvili tended to pose hypercritical question, made respondents thoroughly specify their standpoints so that viewers could comprehend them properly. The presenter had the program well prepared and was well aware of the topics to be discussed. Giguashvili would point out in case respondents' provided answers which were not precise. The journalist was trying to make guests scrupulously speak about electoral programs in order to figure out what they were planning to do in case of victory.

Journalist Lado Bichashvili demonstrated less criticism. He was also trying to deliver to the audience more information about electoral programs and election subjects' plans for the further development of the city. Guests had a possibility to speak freely, no strict time limit was set, they were granted a possibility to fully express their standpoints.

From May 20 TV company Trialeti started producing another **public-political program Dghis Tema** (Topic of the Day) to thoroughly inform the audience of the issues of current importance. The program to be aired on weekdays will be hosted by Ia Gavasheli. Within reporting period four programs were aired. The topics discussed included:

- Accusations made by Lali Moroshkina, former advisor to the head of Penitentiary Department against the chief of the Department;
- Bonus payments made at the ministries – survey carried out by Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI);
- Current situation over Sakdrisi gold mine;
- EU-Georgia Association Agreement.

The program hosted one or two guests demonstrating the stance of a single party. According to the host of the program the other party had been invited too but they refused participate. Accordingly selected guests have a possibility to freely speak. The journalist did not oppose,

just posing questions, at times trying to verify some details though additional questions. The questions were found interesting and being of current importance.

The main technical problem with TV company Trialeti is the lack of subtitles, hence it's difficult to identify either a presenter or a guest.

Guria (Ozurgeti) – Within reporting period on May 21 TV company Guria aired TV **program Together with You** hosted by journalist Tamta Dolidze. The topic of discussion was the role of the woman in local decision making process. The guests to the 45-minute TV program included the women running for the upcoming municipal elections, in particular, independent candidate running for Sakrebulo mandate, Ozurgeti municipality Sakrebulo membership candidates nominated by GD coalition and Burjanadze – United Opposition, also the head of Gender Equality Network. It is noteworthy that no subtitles were shown on the TV screen as the guests spoke.

During the program the host found it hard to maintain the topic of the program, guests repeatedly deviated from the topic of discussion and the journalist granted them a possibility to make pre-election statements.

The presenter was trying to be neutral and unbiased, giving all of the guests equal opportunity and time to respond and completely express their standpoints.

Imervizia (Chiatura) – on May 23 TV company Imervizia aired **TV debates Elections 2014** hosted by journalist Inga Jajanidze. The program was produced in partnership with GARB. The representatives of political unions running for the upcoming municipal elections were invited to the studio. In particular, the subjects participating in the election for majoritarian deputy mandates and Gamgebeli position nominated by the initiative team, Georgian Alliance of Patriots, Burjanadze – United Opposition, Non-Parliamentary Opposition, and Labor Party were among the selected guests.

The sequence of the speakers participating in the debates was agreed by means of the casting of lots. The journalist let the guests freely express their standpoints, without interrupting

them, the presenter though did not allow them to move away from the topic of discussion. The journalist called on the guests to provide argumentation to substantiate their statements. TV Viewers had a possibility to obtain comprehensive information. The journalist showed no bias to the guests. No hate speech was identified.

Gurjaani (Gurjaani) – Within reporting period the channel produced two outlets of the **talk show The Power of Powerless**. The talk show hosted by Levan Aleksishvili is aired on Fridays.

The representatives of regional headquarters of the political parties operating in Kakheti region were invited to the talk show. The guests included the representatives of NGO sector and active citizens. The following topics were discussed in the talk show:

- Importance of women's political participation; women running for municipal elections in Kakheti region and their programs;
- Pre-election developments in Kakheti region, plans and priorities of political forces;

The host of the program turned out to be quite demanding, asking guests to provide reasoning for the dissenting opinions expressed. Through a text and questions the presenter as trying to make the program more interesting and informative to the viewers. Providing contradictory arguments the journalist tended to oppose the guests.

Levan Aleksishvili, together with the respondents of the program was trying to thoroughly analyze the topic of discussion. He though maintained balance and refrained from expressing his personal stance. He was found neutral. No hate speech or unethical language was identified.

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

Discourse, being aired on Wednesdays, is hosted by journalist Nana Toshkhua. The program discusses various issues of current importance. In the May 21 outlet GYLA's Kutaisi branch representative spoke about the outcome of the survey they conducted to evaluate electoral environment nationwide. The journalist tended to limit herself to posing questions to the

guest, almost never demonstrating her stance. She was trying to thoroughly enlighten the viewers about shortcomings identified throughout monitoring conducted by GYLA. The program was conducted in a Q& A format in a peaceful environment. The guest was offered maximum opportunity to express his point of view.

On Mega TV the political **program Debates** is available on weekdays at 21:30. The program is hosted by journalist Tiko Kikabidze. The main topic of the programs is the election programs of the candidates running for the upcoming elections.

Within reporting period nine programs were produced. The guests to the studio included the representatives of political unions taking part in the municipal elections to be held. The people, who on behalf of a political party or election bloc or independent majoritarian candidates are running for the elections in various election districts across Western Georgia (Kutaisi, Khoni, Tskaltubo, Martvili and etc). Two or three guests were invited to each program. The debates were held in accordance with the format set beforehand: greeting (30 seconds), Q & A (2 minutes), 1,5 minute to evaluate one another, 30 seconds for a comment. Moreover, guests have a possibility to pose a single question to each other and for the closing speech they are granted 30 seconds. Despite strictly outlined restrictions the guests were not limited, they were apportioned equal time to demonstrate their standpoints.

The journalist essentially posed questions in regard to the guests' electoral programs and was curious to figure out why the voter was to vote for any candidate. The journalist limited himself by shooting questions. Whenever a guest tried to change format of the program the journalist called on the one not to move away, the guests though sometimes managed to. No bias or an attempt to demonstrate either candidate in a positive or negative way was not identified. The journalist, avoiding to express his personal stance, played a role of a moderator. No use of hate speech was identified in the course of the programs.

9th Wave (Poti) – The 9th Wave 's TV air is dedicated to the political **talk show Tema** (Topic) once per week, on Fridays. The program is conducted by Thea Absaridze. Talk show stands out in terms of diversity of guests. The guests of different political affiliation took part in the program, therefore dissention was quite common.

Within reporting period two programs were subject to monitoring. One of the outlets was dedicated to Poti mayor candidates including Irakli Kakulia, (GD coalition), Vakhtang Darsmelidze (UNM) and Davit Kantaria (Burjanadze – United Opposition).

The main topics of the talk shows included:

- Electoral programs and pledges made by mayor candidates;
- Political visions and priorities of nominees for Sakrebulo majoritarian mandate.

Polemic was found rather fierce among the guests. Viewers had an opportunity to obtain comprehensive information from the selected guests. In case the respondents' answers lacked substantiation with facts the presented called for well-substantiated speeches.

At times the journalist appeared passive, playing the role of a moderator. It is noteworthy that no bias, or hate speech was applied by the journalist.

Argo (Zestaponi) – Within reporting period on May 22 the company aired TV debates **Elections 2014**. The program was produced in partnership with GARB. Debates were conducted by journalist Manana Jugeli.

The guests to the studio included the candidates for Zestaponi Gamgebeli position nominated by Non-Parliamentary Opposition, Burjanadze – United Opposition, UNM, and Georgia's Way. GD's nominee did not take part in the debates for being out of town. In the course of the program the journalist was curious to know about each candidate's electoral program, what they are planning to do for the region in case of victory and the resources they rely on to make their plans work.

The TV debates televised a story featuring citizens speaking about local matters of concern. The journalist was eager to figure out what each candidate would do to tackle the problems in case of victory. Later the election subjects in the studio were posed TV questions by the representatives of local media and NGOs. TV viewers were actively participating in the program through calls in.

TV debates were re-aired on TV Argo on May 23.

Marneuli TV (Marneuli) – Within reporting period Marneuli TV aired the only **public-political program Questions to Gangebeli**. The guest selected for the May 23 program was deputy Gangebeli of Marneuli municipality. The program was aired live. The presenter of a one-hour outlet was Nona Samkharadze. Viewers had a possibility to call in during the live broadcast to pose questions to the guest, only two TV viewers called though.

TV program **Questions to Gangebeli** is produced on a monthly basis to summarize one-month performance of the local self-government. Deputy Gangebeli spoke about the projects implemented in the past month and activities to be carried out. The journalist tended to take active part in the conversation, posing harsh questions about certain problems to be addressed in the city as well as activities carried out by self-government. The journalist was trying to verify and specify the respondent's answers. The journalist was rather well prepared, being aware of current issues of concern and population's demands to the self-government. The guest too appeared similarly well prepared, he had a list of implemented and planned projects, trying not to miss anything.

Borjomi (Borjomi) – During reporting period TV company Borjomi aired two outlets of the **TV program Forum** and a talk show **Elections 2014**.

TV program **Forum** made possible with the support of the Open Society Georgia Foundation was hosted by Eka Nozadze. The running time of the program is 30-40 minutes.

The topic of the May 12 Forum outlet was the extent of trust shown by the representatives of political parties' Borjomi branches towards political rating surveys carried out by National Democratic Institute (NDI). The selected guests included the representatives of UNM, Labor Party, and GD coalition.

In the main the hostess of the program played the role of a moderator. She sounded neutral, unbiased, trying to apportion equal airtime to all of the guests. At the same time she granted guests an opportunity to express their viewpoints in a comprehensive manner, thereby verifying their answers. She did not let respondents deviate from the topic of discussion. To the given questions the journalist was trying to obtain answers from every single guest.

The topic of the May 16 outlet was the expiration of registration term for election subjects. The guest, Chairperson of the district election commission #36 thoroughly discussed registered election subjects and election procedures. According to the findings the journalist was neutral and impartial, posing questions reviving public interest in relation to election process.

A technical drawback was identified: when reporting no subtitles were provided to identify the speakers.

Political debates Elections 2014 was produced in partnership with GARB. The program aired on May 22 was conducted by the same journalist Eka Nozadze.

The guests to the studio included Borjomi municipality Gemgebeli candidates nominated by GD coalition and Georgian Alliance of Patriots. According to the presenter they had invited the nominees of the Labor Party and Burjanadze – United Opposition, they did not take part in the debates though.

To the selected guests and their supporters invited to the studio the presenter dedicated equal airtime. She was trying to maintain balance, she was found unbiased and neutral. The journalist mainly played the role of a moderator according to sequence determined by means of a casting of lots. The presenter kept posing the same questions to every respondent in turn, limiting time to respond with a stopwatch. In the first block of the program the guests spoke about their electoral programs. In the second block the guests responded to the voters' questions posed through the TV story aired in the course of the debates. The third block was dedicated to the questions made through calls in. Debates lasted for about an hour.

Dia (Khashuri) – Within reporting period no talk show was aired with the participation of monitored subjects.

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:

Channel 25, Kvemo Kartli TV Company, Tanamgzavri, Odishi, 9th Wave, Rioni, Imervizia, Guria, Gurjaani, Channel 9, Marneuli TV, Argo, Borjomi and Dia.

Within reporting period two outlets of TV magazine Mravalkutkhedi were aired. 35-45-minute programs televised only some TV stories. No guests were invited. The program presenter Nikoloz Rubashvili essentially made the introduction of the TV story. He was neutral and impartial.

Both of the programs included a TV story about the history of governance of four self-governing cities, and two other stories on the election-related topics. The TV stories within TV magazine Mravalkutkhedi are produced by different regional TV companies on various topics of concern to a particular region. Thematically the program is diverse. TV stories are balanced, impartial and comprehensive.

Activities to be carried out: Within the period of May 26 – June 1 the second phase of monitoring of regional broadcasters will be carried out.



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