

# Media Monitoring Results of the 2013 Presidential Elections in Georgia



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გამოცემულია ევროკავშირისა და გაეროს განვითარების პროგრამის (UNDP) მხარდაჭერით „პროფესიონალური მედია არჩევნებისთვის“ პროექტის ფარგლებში.

წინამდებარე გამოცემაში გამოთქმული მოსაზრებები ავტორისეულია და შეიძლება არ ასახავდეს ევროკავშირისა და გაეროს განვითარების პროგრამის (UNDP) თვალსაზრისს.

Published with assistance from the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Georgia under the project “Professional Media for Elections”.

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# Introduction

Large-scale media monitoring of the 2013 presidential elections in Georgia was implemented with the support of the European Union and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This research is a part of the ongoing project “Professional Media for Elections” aiming at, inter alia, supporting the professional, impartial and balanced media coverage during elections through monitoring.

Qualitative and quantitative monitoring of the Georgian TV, Radio, Print and Online media outlets was performed by the Georgian civil society organizations trained by the authoritative Slovak organization Memo98:

- The Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC) – TV media monitoring
- Internews – Georgia – Radio media monitoring
- International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) – Print media monitoring
- Civic Development Institute (CDI) – Online media monitoring

## Methodology and Analysis

During the monitoring process the organizations were guided by the methodology approved in more than 35 countries of the world, which consists of two main parts of the research – quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative component consists of: time/space allocated to the subjects, direct and indirect speech and the coverage tone. Components of the qualitative monitoring are: balance, accuracy, facts-based coverage, audio or video manipulations, language of the journalist/article, etc.

The list of monitoring subjects is attached to the presented reports as Annex #1.

The final summary reports describe key trends observed during the entire monitoring period. Midterm monitoring reports with detailed methodology, analysis and examples can be found on the website [www.mediamonitor.ge](http://www.mediamonitor.ge). The website also includes the online data analyses system that allows the user to perform real time analyses of the media monitoring by constructing various charts and comparing media outlets or monitored subject.



# Results of Monitoring of TV Channels

## News Releases

15 May – 15 November 2013

CRRC Georgia carried out the media monitoring of TV channels from 15 May until 15 November 2013, inclusive. The monitoring covered main evening news programs on the *Channel One* of the Public Broadcaster, *Adjara TV* and the following private channels: *Rustavi 2*, *Imedi*, *Maestro* and *Kavkasia*. The monitoring was also being performed for the main news releases of *Channel 9* until the channel stopped broadcasting on 18 August.

Following key findings were identified as the result of monitoring of main evening news releases on televisions:

- ✓ Compared to the election period in 2012, the TV media was less polarized before the presidential elections in 2013. None of the monitored channels broadcasted main news releases that would be clearly biased to any political side. Despite the fact that presidential candidates, as well as the President and the Prime Minister were covered with different frequency and quantity, the overall pre-election environment was more or less leveled on the monitored channels.
- ✓ During the whole monitoring, the lack of analytical reports was observed on almost all the channels, though more on some channels and less on others. Dry reports were often broadcasted, which were limited only to telling facts. The number of analytical and extensive stories started to increase since September.
- ✓ Although the election campaigns of presidential candidates were actively covered, there was a lack of analysis of their election programs on all the channels. It is possible to say that since the beginning of campaigns until the Election Day, the voters did not really get any additional information about presidential candidates' programs from the main news releases.
- ✓ There were cases during the monitoring period, when one and the same story was covered differently on different channels. The emphasis was laid on different details of the delivered fact, and consequently, dissimilar information was delivered to the viewers. Thus, different impression would be created depending on which TV company's news releases they were watching. This mostly indicated on a certain bias of the channels. The best examples are the coverage of two stories: removal of the Bagrati Temple from UNESCO's list of the world cultural heritage sites, and purchase of two French helicopters by the previous authorities.
- ✓ There were five main subjects identified on all the monitored channels (except the *Adjara TV*) during the whole monitoring period, to which the most time was allocated with different sequences: the government, the United National Movement, the Coalition Georgian Dream, the President and the Prime Minister. As for the *Adjara TV*, here more attention was always allocated to the local government of Adjara.
- ✓ Compared to the election monitoring of 2012, the share of negative coverage of subjects was quite low on all the channels. As for the positive tone, during the election period of 2013, it was more eye-catching in the main news releases of televisions, especially in case of presidential candidates, which was related to the coverage of their campaigns, extensive speeches and activities.
- ✓ On the Election Day on 27 October, main evening news releases of all the channels, and almost the whole prime time on some channels, were dedicated to the elections. All the channels covered the conduct of elections, activities of candidates and politicians in an informative and detailed way. The exit poll results were intensively announced. All the news releases were neutral, and there was no bias observed to any of the sides.
- ✓ Active and detailed coverage of issues around this topic continued even after the elections. Analytical stories were prepared on all the channels in connection to the acting and newly elected presidents and the inauguration as well.

This report reviews the main evening news releases of TV channels before and after the elections. The subject coverage trends were revealed especially well before the elections. Correspondingly, the charts represented in the report reflect the period before the elections. These trends did not actually change after the elections, and the clarification for a specific channel is provided in the report. For constructing additional charts for the period after or during elections, or for any other desirable period, please visit the website of online analysis of the data: <http://mediamonitor.ge/ge/moda/>.

## Channel One of the Public Broadcaster

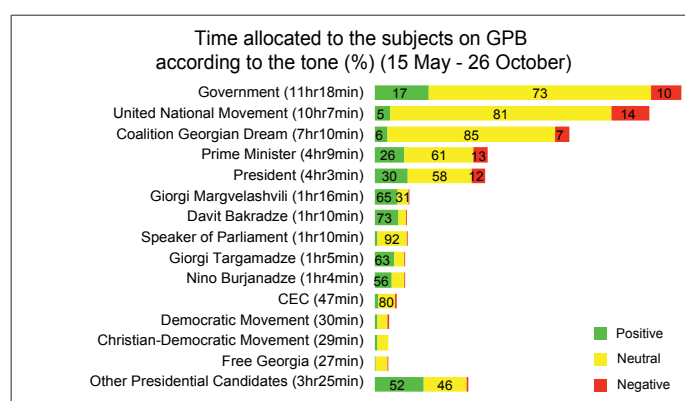
During the whole monitoring period, *Channel One* of the Public Broadcaster responded to all the major events developed in the country and the topics that were of current significance for that moment. There was a lack of analytical stories observed in the main news release at the outset of the monitoring. However, this trend was changed from month to month and quite many analytical stories were prepared in the *Moambe* during the run-up to the elections. Majority of the issues were analyzed in depth in the stories, and all the important pieces of information was provided in connection to the topic, thus the stories were delivered comprehensively. Some of the topics were being discussed for several days.

Balance between the sides was almost always observed in the reports, and the delivered story represented the position of various sides. However, there were cases when some stories lacked a quite significant detail that was broadcasted by other channels.

There was a trend observed that the reporters refrained from making any kind of evaluation comments. Correspondingly, the political bias to any of the sides was less felt during the whole monitoring. Equal coverage was provided for the Prime Minister and the President, the majority and the minority, as well as presidential candidates. Activities of presidential candidates, also their visits to the regions and various statements were most actively covered since September. The candidates were basically covered in the report "Elections 2013", which was prepared every day and provided an overview of their campaigns. It is noteworthy that the stories about presidential candidates, except for some stories, were very similar to one another with their timing, contents and style. There was no specific candidate singled out.

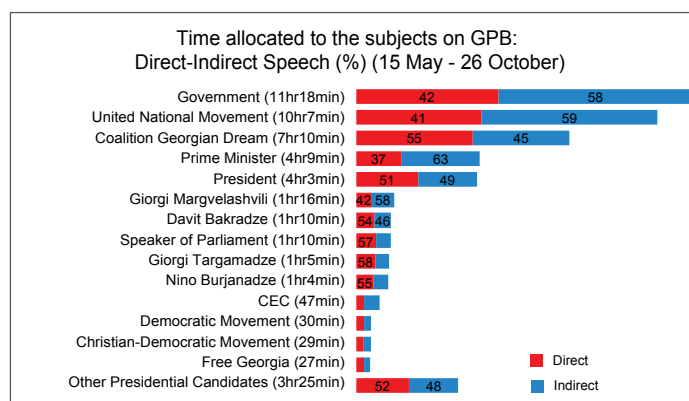
As for the tone of coverage of presidential candidates, the positive tone prevailed for each of them, which at some extent was the result of their appearances within the frameworks of their campaigns, statements and often due to the coverage of their direct speech. The biggest share of positive tone was observed for Davit Bakradze (73%) among the candidates during the run-up to the elections. (See the Diagram 1)

Diagram 1



As for the time allocated to the subjects, the following subjects were found among the top five on the *Channel One*, like other channels, during the period 15 May - 26 October, inclusive: the government, the United National Movement, the Coalition Georgian Dream, the Prime Minister and the President. The time was quite equally distributed between the government and the party of parliamentary minority (23% and 21%). The Prime Minister and the President also got equal 8-8 percent. Although these two subjects have almost equal ratios of time and coverage tone, the indicators of their direct and indirect speech is quite dissimilar. More than a half of the time allocated to the President was dedicated to his direct speech, whereas the share of direct speech of the Prime Minister is only 37%. (See the Diagram 2)

Diagram 2



*Channel One* broadcasted a four-hour, non-stop release in the evening of 27 October, which was fully dedicated to the presidential elections. Events of the day were discussed in details: how the candidates, the Prime Minister, the ministers and other politicians cast their votes. Bidzina Ivanishvili's interview where he was saying whom he had voted for was also discussed. There were also pictures of Mikheil Saakashvili voting and the rally of political prisoners meeting him at the precinct. Besides, the exit-poll results were announced after every two or three stories. This release also contained some reports about the topics such as: constitutional amendments, rights of the new President, how the political PR has been made since the 90s, etc. In a nutshell, the news program was quite informative and comprehensive. The topic of elections was covered quite actively and in details even after subsequent days. Evaluations by the Georgian experts and politicians also the opinions of foreign experts and organizations were discussed.

Social topics were especially highlighted on the *Channel One*. There were reports about this topic broadcasted almost every day. Various problems and issues related to ethnic minorities and the IDPs were covered in depth. It is noteworthy that such topics were almost never politicized or linked to any political force in a positive or negative context.

There are two stories that should be pointed out separately: the story broadcasted in June about the funeral of Georgian military servicemen who were killed in Afghanistan. This topic was covered by all the channels. However, the *Channel One* was distinguished with eye-catching and very graphic pictures selected for the story, which made the story content even harder, without delievering any additional information to viewers. The other story, aired in October, was about the death of a juvenile prisoner, where the injured body, wounds, face and quite graphic pictures of mourning by the family members were shown openly and without any warning. This made the story even harder to watch, though it did not contain any significant information.

## Adjara TV

*Adjara TV* laid major emphasis in its main news releases on the events taking place in the region of Adjara, and activities of the Adjarian government and the local self-government. Often, they would broadcast one and the same local news and its development during the whole week. The news release always started with local news, which might be followed by the news that would be the top news on other channels, or the program would continue with another local news. The important events taking place throughout the country, which would normally be among the top-three news on other channels, were basically represented in the second part of the program.

It is noteworthy that social issues were focused much on *Adjara TV*. Problems of natural gas, also various problems related to residential houses of the population, etc. were very often covered. The journalists would go to various structures of the local government and ask questions about the existing problems. Correspondingly, the local population had an opportunity to get specific answers. There were frequent reports about tourism in July-August, and various problems were discussed in connection to this issue. Such stories were mostly extensive, analytical and balanced with various opinions. However, in some cases the stories incompletely covered the issue. It was observed that only the dry facts were delivered and the preconditions or available additional information was not really provided about the topic.

Unlike other channels, coverage of campaigns of presidential candidates started a bit late. There was almost no coverage of the campaign of any of the candidates or the primary of the United National Movement. Presidential candidates were covered only when their activities were related to Adjara.

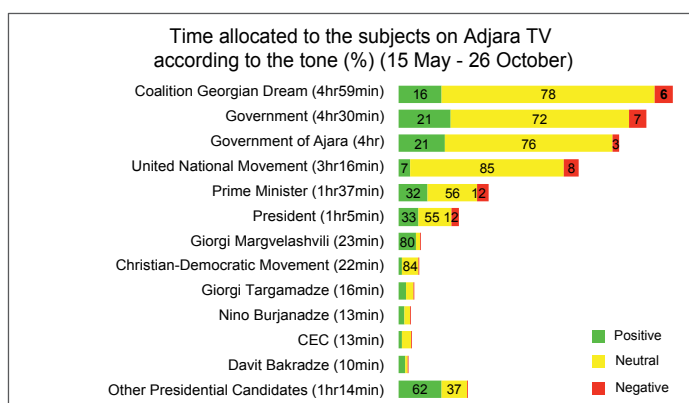
The issue of staffing the Advisory Board of the *Adjara TV* was very actively discussed during the monitoring period. Although this issue referred directly to the television, there was no subjectivity during the coverage. There were stories about the gaps observed while staffing the Board and also about the remarks of the NGOs.

*Adjara TV* provided an active and complete coverage of the Election Day. There were live broadcasts from precincts, showing the representatives of different political forces. However, the information was mostly about the Adjarian region and the exit polls were only announced for Adjara. Analytical stories became more prevalent after the elections not only about the issues important for Adjara region, but also about the national events. Besides, the share of coverage of central news increased as well.

Unlike other channels, the Government of Adjara was among the top three subjects based on the allocated time on *Adjara TV*. This subject got 17 percent of the total time. The time was quite equally distributed among the top four subjects (the Coalition Georgian Dream, the government, the Government of Adjara and the United National Movement). Relatively less time – 7 and 5 percent was allocated to the Prime Minister and the President.

Interestingly enough, and unlike other channels, the positive coverage of subjects was more observed in the news programs on *Adjara TV*. At the same time, there was less criticism expressed towards the government officials and the local government. This was also reflected in the quantitative data of the coverage tone. As it is in case of the allocated time, the coverage tone rates are also quite equally distributed. The central and Adjarian governments have the same indicator of positive tone – 21 percent each. Positive and negative tones were equally distributed between the President and the Prime Minister. (See the Diagram 3)

Diagram 3



There was a trend observed in main evening news releases on *Adjara TV* that the faces of dead bodies were not covered if they were reporting about an accident and graphic pictures with blood were shown. Faces of dead people were only covered if the pictures were provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

## Rustavi 2

Compared to the election monitoring of 2012, the main news release has been improved on *Rustavi 2*. The reports became more informative and analytical, than during the parliamentary elections, and there was less bias felt in the journalists' texts or pictures. Such trend was especially revealed since the end of September. The reports were often balanced and impartial than in 2012. There were stories where journalists did not try to create a special context despite the fact that the topics were burning and politicized, and reported the facts in a neutral way.

However, there was an especially positive attitude felt towards the President (Mikheil Saakashvili) and the former power representatives during the whole monitoring, though this attitude was more or less expressed at different times. The President's activities had a quite broad coverage and much time was dedicated to his speeches, which were sometimes



aired without cropping and editing, and it was always done in a positive context. This is reflected in quantitative data as well, where the President has 61 percent of positive speech, which is the highest rate compared to other subjects. Other than the President, the same trend was observed in regards to the former Prime Minister Vano Merabishvili. His trials were covered extensively and regularly, where Vano Merabishvili was often presented positively.

On their background, the new government and the Prime Minister were often covered in a negative context. Despite the government's every activity was regularly covered in the main news releases (the visits, new initiatives, meetings, etc.) and left positive impression, often there was still negative impression created about the government by the end of the news program, due to the contents of subsequent stories in the same news program.

Foreign policy was one of the topics, where the government and the Prime Minister were covered negatively during the monitoring. While covering these topics, there was a context created of political persecution and distancing from democracy. However, during subsequent months of the monitoring, especially in October and November, the biased attitude was more felt while covering the issues taking place in the country. The stories about the topics, such as foreign relations and official visits, were always neutral or positive towards the Georgian side.

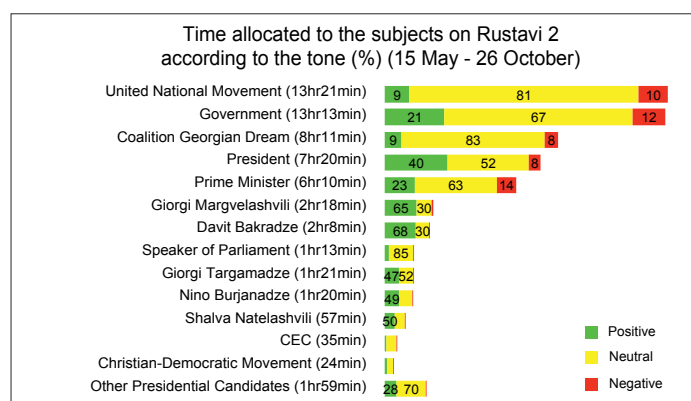
The general trend of positive presentation of the President and the United National Movement was also seen in the election activities. The Convention of the United National Movement had a very broad coverage on 5 October (the first news story, 14 minutes), where quite extensive bits of the President's and Davit Bakradze's speeches were shown. After that there was a story about Giorgi Margvelashvili's campaign, which lasted for three minutes. There was a live broadcast with the President in the same program, which lasted for almost 20 minutes. For the sake of comparison we may point out the story broadcasted on 19 September about the presentation of Giorgi Margvelashvili's presidential campaign, which took place at the Sports Palace. There was quite a big ceremony, the Prime Minister and government members made speeches. This was the fourth news on *Rustavi 2*, unlike the Convention of the National Movement, and six minutes were allocated to it. The story, however, was quite positive.

As for other major presidential candidates, all of them were regularly covered in main evening news releases and none of them was ignored. There was no bias observed while covering their activities and meetings with voters. News program *Curieri* started to invite presidential candidates after every day in its 9 o'clock release since July, where they were answering journalist's questions for 15-20 minutes. The journalist let all the guests express and finish their opinions.

*Rustavi 2* had 4 non-stop releases on the Election Day, which were quite informative and diverse. There were broadcasts from offices of various parties, polling stations and regions. Comments were sought from politicians, activists and voters. Exit poll results were often announced, which was commissioned by *Rustavi 2* to the organization GFK. The news program was not biased on the Election Day and it provided equal coverage of the election process taking place in the country.

Like other channels, here the United National Movement, the government, the Coalition Georgian Dream, the President and the Prime Minister were the top five subjects according to the allocated time. The National Movement and the government had equal bits of time – 21-21 percent. Time was quite equally distributed among the Coalition Georgian Dream, the President and the Prime Minister as well. As for the coverage tone, the President had the highest share of positive tone among these subjects – 40 percent. Besides, relatively higher indicator was observed for the Prime Minister (23%) and the government (21%). Mostly the positive tone prevailed while covering the presidential candidates, which was the result of their election speeches, activities and campaigns. (See the Diagram 4)

Diagram 4



## *Imedi TV*

During the monitoring period from May until November the change of tendencies was observed in main news releases on *Imedi TV*. At the beginning of the monitoring most part of the stories broadcasted underlined the problems in the country and linked them to the former authorities. Besides, special emphasis was laid on the changes carried out by the new power, and contrast was clearly made, which supported the presentation of negative things by the former authorities and the positive ones by the new government. The opening stories, which were related to the main events of the day, were made more extensively and more bias was felt, but subsequent stories were very short and dry. There were many stories during this period with diverse opinions, but they were not balanced and left many questions unanswered in regards to the presented information. There were cases when the fact was reported in a few seconds without any comment or analysis by the journalist.

However, more informative stories appeared since August, which were based on several sources, especially at the beginning of the program. In regards to the political bias, the ironic attitude was more observed towards the representatives of the National Movement in previous months. However, there was no such bias observed in August, which was especially felt in the stories made about the war in 2008.

Right from the beginning of September extensive, analytical and balanced stories started to prevail. The stories were mostly exhausted and well analyzed. Competent opinions of various sides were discussed in connection to the given issue. There was no bias observed to any political side. The positive or negative context was created in the stories by the fact itself, or the comments expressed in the story. There were positive and negative stories prepared about the government and the Prime Minister, also about the President as well. Compared to other monitoring periods, the critical stories about the government increased since October; for example, stories about the problems related to the border with so called South Ossetia; also the arsenic spilled in the river Tskhenistskali. In general, the political stories and topics were covered neutrally and the opinions of the parties were balanced too.

Coverage of presidential candidates started in July. Almost each presidential candidate was provided with equal conditions. Events developed around Salome Zurbashvili, as a potential presidential candidate, were actively covered. In regards to the coverage tone, the candidates had quite a high rate of positive coverage, which resulted from their activities, speeches and statements. Several analytical reports were prepared on the topic of election in October, contents of which were different from other channels. For example, the report on healthcare aired on 23 October, where the visions and programs of various presidential candidates were presented in this respect.

As for the coverage of campaigns and activities of presidential candidates in general, mostly this was limited by airing smaller reports in the second part of the news program, where mostly just a fact was presented about the candidate's meeting with voters. However, these reports did not contain their speech or conversation. In a nutshell, such reports lacked analytics and delivered little information.

On the Election Day on 27 October, there was an evening news program broadcasted on *Imedi* that lasted for two hours. There were reports about the conduct of elections, showing how the candidates and other politicians voted, including the coverage of a rally arranged by political prisoners against Mikheil Saakashvili at the polling station. There were live broadcasts from the offices of the Georgian Dream during the program, not only from Tbilisi, but also from the regions. There was the Mayor's statement about the elections, where he congratulated Giorgi Margvelashvili with winning; and David Bakradze's statement as well where he thanked the population and evaluated the election process. The story about Bidzina Ivanishvili's speech at the office of the Georgian Dream was repeated twice, including David Usupashvili's and Giorgi Margvelashvili's appearances. Exit poll results were regularly announced during the whole news program.

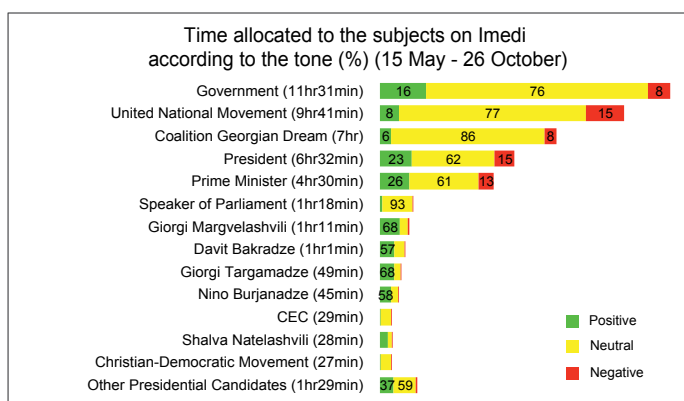
Analytical and extensive reports decreased again at the end of the period, from 27 October until 15 November, inclusive. Correspondingly, the number of brief and dry news increased, as it was observed at the beginning of the monitoring.

As for the quantitative data, the coverage tone rates were quite equally distributed between the President and the Prime Minister. The share of positive and negative tone observed towards them is very similar. However, the Prime Minister has more positive (26%) and less negative tone (13%). The United National Movement and the President have the highest rate

of negative tone than other subjects – 15-15%. The most neutral coverage was provided for the Coalition Georgian Dream. (See the Diagram 5)

The presidential candidates were covered positively for more than a half of the allocated time. Similar trend was observed on all the channels, which is explained by the coverage of their election activities and campaigns.

Diagram 5



## Maestro TV

*Maestro* mostly broadcasted the balanced stories in its main evening news programs during the whole monitoring period. It was possible to hear the opinions of various sides about the discussed topic. Some of the topics were covered quite extensively during several days, and exhaustive information was provided about the issue. Often all the details were explained and clarified so that there was nothing unclear left to the viewers.

Besides, the stories covered on *Maestro* were less biased. There was no bias observed to any political force. There was not only criticism towards the government and the Prime Minister, also the United National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream, but also positive coverage as well. In August, *Maestro* aired many stories about the war of August, 2008. It is noteworthy that in general the stories were quite balanced and there was no emphasis laid on blaming the President or representatives of former authorities. Reports about the War of August mostly discussed Russia in a negative context than the Georgian side or any Georgian politician.

The reports were often analytical and not limited to delivery of dry facts only. However, there were cases when the topic, which was covered in depth and on a daily basis, was not represented exhaustively and analytically; some questions remained and the balance of respondents was not observed in the reports. For example, the NATO visit in Georgia in June was covered quite actively and as if in details at first glance, but at the end of the day it was still unclear what the goal of this visit was, or why such visit was significant for Georgia. There was no expert evaluation presented about this issue. There were only dry facts reported in the stories. However, the balance was observed between the evaluations by the United National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream.

*Maestro* had two exclusive reports at the end of October: interview with a former prisoner in the program of 23 October, which was saying that his torturers were released from prison, and an interview with a convict aired on 24 October, who admits to the fact of raping juveniles at Ksani Prison. Despite the confidentiality of respondents was observed in the stories and investigative and state structures were represented (or it was mentioned that they could not be contacted), broadcasting these interviews as top news just few days before the elections was a reminder of negative attitude towards the former authorities about this fact and the prison scandal in 2012.

As the elections got closer, the focus got wider on the presidential candidates. Reports about their campaigns were aired in the beginning of the program. In regards to the allocated time and coverage tone, there was no special attitude observed towards major candidates. In general, the candidates were covered quite positively. The report on 26 October presented the summary speeches of all the main presidential candidates.

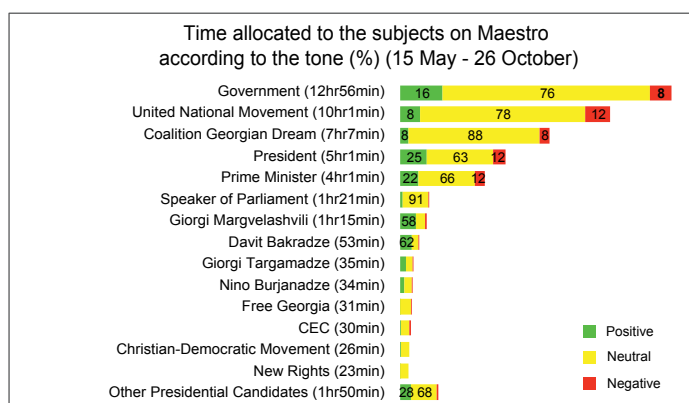
*Maestro* did not broadcast an unusually long main evening news release on the Election Day. However, all the important facts linked to this day were discussed: exit poll results, procedure of voting by the presidential candidates and politicians, voting by the President and the protest rally arranged at his polling station, also voting by law enforcement officials and prisoners. There were live broadcasts from the offices of the Georgian Dream. There was a discussion whether it was a violation when Bidzina Ivanishvili said who he had voted for when leaving the polling station. Overall, the program was quite informative and provided a glimpse of all the events by that time.

Since September, timing of main news releases started to decrease gradually up to 30-40 minutes on *Maestro*, and acquired a function of reporting major events as facts. Often they made prior announcements about the stories to be broadcasted by the TV channel *Maestro 24*.

Like other channels, *Maestro* allocated the most time in its main news releases to five subjects with the following sequence: government (27%), the United National Movement (21%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (15%), the President (10%) and the Prime Minister (8%). Other subjects got 3 percent and less. As for the presidential candidates, the time was equally distributed among them, which ranged from 3 to 1 percent of the total time.

As mentioned above, there was no especially positive or negative coverage of any subject observed on *Maestro* and this was reflected in the quantitative data as well, where the neutral tone prevailed. The biggest share of positive tone was observed for the President (25%) and the Prime Minister (22%) among the top five subjects. As for the presidential candidates, here the share of positive tone prevailed, which was caused by covering their speeches, campaigns and election activities. (See the Diagram 6)

Diagram 6



## Kavkasia TV

As a result of the monitoring performed from 15 May until 15 November, inclusive, it can be said that the main news releases broadcasted on *Kavkasia* were less tendentious and biased to any of the sides than on other channels. The monitoring subjects were mostly covered neutrally. The news was mostly balanced and various opinions and positions were represented around the discussed issue. The reports aired in the first part of the news releases were broader and had more respondents, than the reports broadcasted in the second part.

Despite the news was mostly covered neutrally and impartially, there were cases in the beginning of the monitoring, when the journalist expressed his assumption about the issue related to a certain subject, and did it in a negative context and delivered it as a fact to the viewer. Also there were cases when the information was not verified and was delivered as a fact only based on the statement of a particular politician or expert.

It is possible to say that in general, the lack of analytical reports was observed, and the abundance of respondents and opinions could not compensate for this. The stories were limited to delivering dry facts and lacked the analysis; information was not completely clear and the questions remained, though answers were not found in the report.

Despite this, there were some topics, which were covered quite analytically. Information was delivered exhaustively and in full so that there were no questions remaining after the report was over. For example, the report aired in July about the universal healthcare provided clear and detailed information about the new program. Benefits and drawbacks of this program were explained. There was a precondition provided, where the old and existing problems were discussed. Besides, the topic of minaret removal in the village Chela was extensively and exhaustively covered in September.

*Kavkasia* covered the main activities of the presidential candidates, but did not highlight their every visit in the region or other minor activities. The biggest attention was focused on the campaigns of Margvelashvili, Bakradze and Targamadze. Coverage of election campaigns was mostly done in a positive context. Election activities of Nino Burjanadze and Zurab Kharatishvili were also quite actively covered in October.

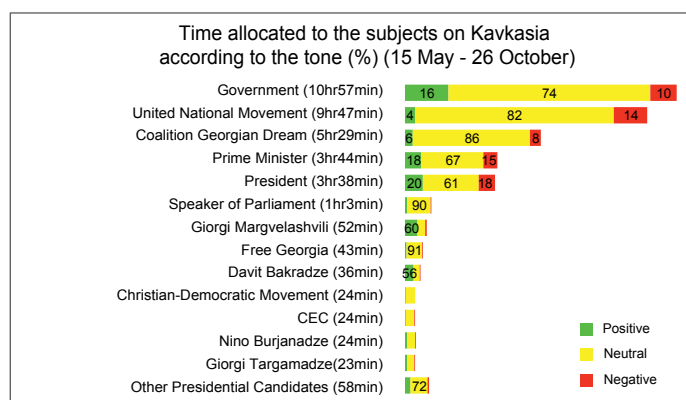
There were two news releases broadcasted during the prime time on *Kavkasia* on the Election Day on 27 October, which were completely dedicated to the presidential elections taking place in the country. The ongoing electoral processes were covered in a neutral and impartial way. The stories had appearances of CEC representatives, presidential candidates, government members and voters. Results of several exit polls were announced. Live broadcasts were made containing the excerpts from the President's and Prime Minister's statements, press conferences, where the representatives of various political parties talked about some imperfections in the electoral process.

Similar trend was observed after the elections as well. The reports broadcasted in the main evening news releases often were brief and dry. The lack of analytics and little number of sources were observed in the reports. There were stories, which were constructed on one respondent only, or on the statement of one particular expert. At the same time, there were balanced and analytical stories as well, for example, the story of 1 November on self-governance reform, and the story on 8 November on falling exchange rate of GEL and its reasons.

In total, the most time in the main evening news releases was dedicated to the same five subjects as on all the other channels. These are: the government, the United National Movement, the Coalition Georgian Dream, the Prime Minister and the President. Almost equal time was dedicated to the government and the party of parliamentary minority. Government – 27 percent, the National Movement – 24 percent. The President and the Prime Minister both had equal shares of time 9-9 percent.

As for the coverage tone, as it was pointed out, neutral tone prevailed on *Kavkasia*. The biggest rate of positive coverage (20%), and at the same time, the biggest share of negative tone (18%) was observed for the President. (See the Diagram 7)

Diagram 7



Technical problems occurred pretty often on *Kavkasia* during the whole monitoring – in some cases the announcement title was incorrect, journalist's or respondent's voice was cut, or nothing was seen and only the voice was heard, or there were errors made while editing, etc. The news release of 5 June, should be pointed out as it was possible to hear a man swearing live, though out of the frame, from the studio right in the beginning of the very first report.

## Conclusion

Compared to 2012, the elections were not the most important event in the news releases in 2013. All the channels regularly broadcasted the news on the elections, but more emphasis was laid on the events taking place in the country. During the presidential elections of 2013, the TV media was less polarized. There was no clear bias observed to any of the political sides on any of the channels. However, some positive or negative attitudes towards particular subjects were felt in the stories broadcasted on some channels, and mostly it was applicable to the representatives of former and present authorities.

Lack of analytics was observed in the main evening news releases on all the channels during the monitoring. The reports were often limited to delivering dry facts and brief news only. Sometimes there were some unanswered questions left about the discussed topics after the reports were over. This trend was improved as the elections got closer, and then the exhaustive and analytical reports were broadcasted. However, the majority of channels got back to their old mode of operations after the elections.

Campaign of major presidential candidates was actively covered on all the channels, with similar time allocated to them and similar contents of stories. In general, the coverage tone of candidates was quite positive, as far as the reports about their campaign contained their speeches, meetings with population and other activities. Despite this, there was no emphasis laid on the candidates' programs and they were not discussed in details. The viewers were able to get information about the candidates' plans and political vision from the political talk shows of these very channels.

There were special and quite extensive news programs broadcasted by the majority of channels on the Election Day. These news programs discussed the voting process, showed speeches of the government representatives and presidential candidates, and broadcasted the exit poll results. All the news releases, which were aired that day, were neutral and did not give priority to any of the political sides.



## TV Talk-Show Monitoring Report

16 September – 15 November 2013

CRRC Georgia carried out the TV talk-show media monitoring from 16 September until 15 November 2013. The monitoring covered all the talk shows on political topics, broadcasted via the main TV channels during the monitoring period. It is noteworthy that the majority of channels suspended the political talk shows in the second half of summer for some time, and then resumed them from the second half of September. The monitoring was performed for the following political talk shows aired during the prime time:

- ✓ *Channel One* of the Public Broadcaster: “First Studio” – Eka Mishveladze;
- ✓ *Rustavi 2*: “Choice” – Giorgi Gabunia, “Position” – Nino Shubladze;
- ✓ *Imedi TV*: “Open Air” – Vakho Sanaia, “Politics Time” – Tea Sichinava;
- ✓ *Maestro TV*: “Subjective Opinion” – Diana Trapaidze and Teona Gegelia, “Politmeter” – Nino Zhizhilashvili, “Arguments” – Nino Tolordava;
- ✓ *Kavkasia TV*: “Spectrum Studio” – Davit Akubardia, “Hotline” – Alexander Elisashvili, Zviad Koridze and Merab Metreveli, “Barrier” – Nino Jangirashvili and Alexander Elisashvili;
- ✓ *TV3*: “Big Politics” – Inga Grigolia;
- ✓ *Tabula*: “Focus” – Salome Ugulava and Nino Macharashvili.

Following key findings were identified as a result of the monitoring:

In total, compared to the period of parliamentary elections of 2012, there were much more informative and interesting talk shows broadcasted via the Georgian TV channels in 2013, hosting the debates and discussions about the events going on in the country, and giving platform to different opinions. Many government representatives could use talk shows for providing significant information to the public. The presidential candidates had a chance to present themselves, their opinions and plans, and also to state their position regarding this or that issue. Hate speech was rarely used in the talk shows. Some of the talk shows expressed certain sympathies to the current or former authorities and their representatives. However, the cases of bias were not that frequent and evident as during the parliamentary elections (2012).

This report presents the monitoring results separately, per talk shows and channels from 16 September until 15 November, inclusive.

### *Channel One* of the Public Broadcaster

*Channel One* of the Public Broadcaster started a new political talk show the “**First Studio**” in the run-up to the presidential elections, which had been broadcasted every business day at 9 pm since 1 October. The talk show was hosted by Eka Mishveladze, and the program participants included representatives of the government, the majority and the minority, the non-parliamentary opposition, the media and the NGO sector. The National Movement representatives did not participate only in two programs, although according to the host they had been invited.

The talk show discussed the current political processes and other events of public interest taking place in the country. It should be noted that the program allocated much interest to the promotion of presidential candidates. Both the qualified and non-qualified candidates participated in the talk show. They had a chance to talk about their election promises and

political plans, or state their position regarding a certain subject of the discussion. Interestingly enough, the candidates laid less emphasis on their election programs despite the host's attempts, and mostly spoke about their promises and plans. In total, the talk show was pretty much informative. The guests were always relevant to the topics of the discussion. The host was involved in the program and let the guests express their positions. She interrupted them only if she wanted to get additional information to clarify some issues. However, the questions were often less demanding and more general. The host's questions became more demanding, as the topic of the discussion got more severe. She tried to oppose to the guests and corroborated the questions with the arguments that were contrary to the expressed opinion. In some cases, when the studio hosted several very active guests at a time, it was hard for the host to control the situation.

Eka Mishveladze was more of a moderator. She provided equal positions to the guests and there was no bias to any political side revealed in her attitude to the guests, or in her questions and comments. The host of the talk show did not use hate speech or politically incorrect expressions and encouraged the guests to do the same.

## *Rustavi 2*

Rustavi 2 broadcasted two political talk shows every evening during the monitoring period from 16 September until 15 November, inclusive. These were: "Position", which was broadcasted every Friday at 10 pm (hosted by Nino Shubladze), and "Choice" – aired every Tuesday after the 9 o'clock *Curieri* (hosted by Giorgi Gabunia). Both of the talk shows hosted diverse and interesting guests and discussed the important events for the week.

The talk show "**Position**" was balanced in terms of the guests, as far as the program presented various sides, different political forces, representatives of the parties and government involved in the elections, and high-level politicians. Five major presidential candidates visited the program the day before the elections: Giorgi Margvelashvili, Davit Bakradze, Nino Burjanadze, Giorgi Targamadze and Shalva Natelashvili. The candidates were sitting face to face with the host and Nino Shubladze was asking topical and quite demanding questions to each of them for 20 minutes. There was no bias of the host observed to any of the candidates.

In general, Shubladze was distinguished with constructive and demanding questions. In case of one guest in the studio she would oppose to the guest by providing contrary arguments against the stated position, but in case of two or more guests in the studio she tried to be just a moderator to evenly allocate time among the participants so that they were able to answer the questions and express their opinions.

As observed, the host was not biased to any of the sides and the guests were mostly provided with the leveled field. However, when representatives of five political forces visited the program on 18 October, the biggest criticism was expressed towards the ruling party. The host attempted to regulate the conversation of guests, but Manana Kobakhidze still could not fully state her position. Moreover, when Archil Kbilashvili visited the program after the election on 1 November, the host was very critical to him and often emphasized weak performance of the Prosecutor's Office.

There was no hate speech or abusive vocabulary used by the host of the talk show, neither did her guests spoke in a politically incorrect manner.

The talk show "**Choice**" was presented in a different format. Often there were several guests sitting in the studio with an audience in the room, who were involved with their questions and comments. The talk show was mostly focused on the elections, and presented the presidential candidates before the elections. All the major presidential candidates, their political teams, family members and supporters participated in the talk show.

Giorgi Gabunia was very actively involved in all the programs. He was distinguished with direct and quite critical questions and with his way of probing for getting additional information or for verifying what had been said. The host's overall attitude to the guests was not biased. However, sometimes there was irony to certain subjects observed in his probing or comments. For example, when the presidential candidates Koba Davitashvili and Giorgi Targamadze were visiting the program, the host laid more emphasis on negative facts in his questions. However, positive comments and questions were heard when Davit Bakradze, candidate of the United National Movement was visiting the talk show. The host read out quite positive quotes from an interview with Bakradze in the magazine "The Economist" several times. As for the candidate of the authorities –



Giorgi Margvelashvili, the host was not especially positive or especially critical when he was visiting the program. He asked questions about the candidate and his political plans.

Visits of presidential candidates were preceded by the introductory video presenting the compilation of statements and pictures of these candidates. In general, these videos were more positive towards every candidate. However, there was irony felt in some cases, for example, the video, which was broadcasted before Salome Zurbishvili's visit, started with Zurbishvili singing at one of the rallies. The collage on Davit Bakradze should be pointed out as every second of the video was very positive and created an elevated mood.

The talk show of 5 November is interesting, participated by Ani Nadareishvili, Bacho Akhalaia's wife. There was an impression created after her visit that Bacho Akhalaia was innocent and that his pretrial detention was not fair. Then the non-politicians continued the program. As the host pointed out, as the government officials did not participate in the program due to subjective or objective reasons, consequently neither did they invite the representatives of the National Movement. Guests of the second block were mostly lawyers and NGO representatives, who discussed the issue from the legal standpoint, thus the impression of the first block did not change significantly.

Giorgi Gabunia did not use hate speech and politically incorrect expressions, and he always reacted if the guests did so.

## *Imedi TV*

There were two political talk shows broadcasted by *Imedi* in the evenings during the monitoring period: "Open Air" on Friday evening (hosted by: Vakho Sanaia) and "Politics Time" on Monday (hosted by Tea Sichinava). Both of the talk shows were diverse, informative and interesting, and discussed the significant events for the week.

The guests invited to "**Open Air**" were always relevant to the subject of the discussion: members of the parliamentary majority and minority, ministers, presidential candidates, political scholars, diplomats, writers, psychologists, representatives of the media and arts, war veterans and students. Not only the main guests, but also the people sitting in the studio participated in the talk show, who asked questions to the guests, made comments regarding the discussed issue and thus made the program more diverse.

The talk show was visited by the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. The host announced three topics of the discussion at the beginning of the program: occupation, the President's speech at the UN and the foreign policy of the country. However, the talk was mostly conducted around the occupation only. The host tried to probe or change the topic, but found it hard to control the situation and the President kept on speaking about his preferred topic.

The talk show has always been balanced guest-wise, and various opinions were heard. However, when the representatives of various societal groups were invited to the program on 25 October, the guests mostly expressed one and the same position: they were critical to the United National Movement and evaluated their role in politics only in the negative context.

The host of the talk show was mostly concentrated on asking critical questions and tried to get exhaustive answers from the guests. Vakho Sanaia did not stand out with his clearly positive or negative attitude to any political side, and acted in opposition to all of them. Besides, he tried to moderate and provide equal conditions to the guests. The discussion was pretty much constructive and politically correct during the program.

The talk show "**Politics Time**" was visited by high-rank politicians, the Prime Minister, ministers, presidential candidates, the candidate who won the elections – Margvelashvili, also the experts and representatives of various organizations. However, the members and supporters of the new government and the coalition prevailed among the guests, and as for the National Movement representatives, they were invited to the talk show very rarely, and only during the run-up to the elections.

The Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili visited the program on 21 October. The conversation was about the topics such as: relations with Russia, de-occupation process, coalition prospects, etc. Tea Sichinava tried to oppose to the Prime Minister and asked questions from a different angle, but in this case the opposition was less felt than in other programs and with

other guests. Even in case of Giorgi Margvelashvili, the host was quite loyal on 28 October, after the elections. She tried to present him in a different light and talk not only about his political plans, but also about his private life, about where he would live, etc.

“Politics Time” took place in a more quiet setting than other political talk shows. The host, Tea Sichinava was in most cases actively involved in the program, especially when she was hosting the politicians. She was calmer and more loyal to the civil sector representatives than to politicians. She tried to oppose to them and ask more demanding questions, or the questions containing different opinion, and get exhaustive information with additional questions. The guests always had a chance to fully express their opinions. There were no hate speech or politically incorrect expressions heard in the talk show.

## *Maestro TV*

There were three talk shows monitored on *Maestro*: “Arguments” with Nino Tolordava, “Subjective Opinion” hosted by Diana Trapaidze and Teona Gegelia and “Politmeter” hosted by Nino Zhizhilashvili. All the three talk shows were broadcasted during business days: “Subjective Opinion” – every day, “Arguments” – on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and “Politmeter” – every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

The guests invited to “**Arguments**” always represented different sides. Representatives of the parliamentary majority and minority, also those of the civil sector were invited to discuss various topics. Members of the non-parliamentary opposition parties participated in the program together with experts and other representatives of the society. The discussed topics always coincided with the currently significant issues and the guests were selected respectively. A topic would always be discussed from different angles and the balance was observed in this respect. There were debates often arranged in the talk show, which made the program more interesting and informative for the audience in general.

Following presidential candidates were invited to the program during the monitoring period: Sergo Javakhadze, Nestan Kirtadze, Koba Davitashvili, Giorgi Targamadze, Davit Bakradze, Shalva Natelashvili, Teimuraz Mzhavia, Nino Burjanadze and Akaki Asatiani. Shalva Natelashvili visited the program even after the elections. Their programs, political visions and future plans were discussed.

Nino Tolordava was quite actively involved in the program and asked many questions. She almost always tried to get exhaustive information to the question asked, and if needed, often asked additional probing questions to the respondents. If there was no other side represented in the talk show, she tried to act in opposition to the guests herself, by providing contrary arguments to them and by asking questions from a different position. Besides, her personal position was mostly not seen in her questions and comments.

Tolordava provided equal conditions to every guest and her questions were also equally demanding. All the guests to the program were able to fully express their opinions. However, there were cases when the host was distinguished with more criticism towards the representatives of former authorities, whereas the members of the current government were provided with a more loyal and peaceful setting.

Nino Tolordava never used unethical expressions and hate speech in her program. In this respect she tried to control the guests as well and encouraged them to be more politically correct. Whenever she provided any facts and information, the respective source was almost always indicated.

“**Subjective Opinion**” was distinguished with the diversity of topics discussed in the program. Here the first part of the show stood out, where the hosts spoke about the more interesting and “fun” facts and non-political topics without any guests, due to the specifics of the program. Talks about the current political events were continued in subsequent blocks of the program, involving the politicians and other representatives of the public: sociologists, the media and NGO sector. Out of the politicians, the program was visited by the ministers, members of the Parliament and representatives of various parties. It is also noteworthy that the program mostly hosted the representatives of the ruling party and government, or the people who were loyal to them. Neither members of the former authorities, nor the members of the minority parties visited the program during the monitoring even once. Correspondingly, the program often lacked the balance and some topics were discussed from one side only.

There were several programs dedicated to the presidential elections and the candidates' programs during the monitoring period. The following guests were invited to the program: Shalva Natelashvili, Giorgi Margvelashvili, Giorgi Targamadze and Akaki Asatiani. In other cases the experts or members of the candidate's party discussed their programs. Nino Burjanadze visited the program after the elections.

Diana Trapaidze and Teona Gegelia were always actively involved in the program. They stated their own opinions pretty often, mostly in the first part of the program. However, their position was often evident during the program regarding various issues. This was mostly revealed in negative evaluations of the former authorities, Mikheil Saakashvili and the United National Movement. On the other hand, however, the journalists often gave positive evaluation to the current government and their activities.

There was always one respondent in the studio and the hosts were quite positive to him/her. The journalists talked to the guests in a quite familiar manner. Despite the guests always had a chance to fully express their opinions, the journalists often made remarks for stating their ideas. Diana Trapaidze and Teona Gegelia often interrupted the respondents, mostly, with their opinions, comments or additional rhetorical and hilarious questions. However, in most cases, they used these questions and comments for stating an opinion that was contrary to the guest's opinions. Sometimes they were even critical to the guests and asked demanding questions. However, their criticism and demanding questions were more evident if their position did not coincide with that of the guest's.

The hosts often expressed ironic attitude to various guests or topic, which in specific cases created less serious background for the program. Such attitude was often expressed by their non-verbal language as well, when the journalists looked at each other with a smile after making their comments. Besides, they were often laughing, making various gestures, using exclamations, etc. Some of the guests did not react on such behavior by the journalists and continued to speak in a serious manner, but others would follow them. Despite this, the hosts did not use any hate speech.

There were cases observed during the monitoring period, when the journalists went beyond the announced topic and started to discuss another one. This mostly happened when the guest started to speak about another issue and the hosts did not make them get back to the main topic of the program.

**"Politmeter"** was very diverse in regards to the invited guests. The program always represented one or more sides. Members of the majority and the government, also the parliamentary and non-parliamentary opposition were invited. The program was also often visited by various NGOs, experts, representatives of art community, etc. Only Nino Burjanadze visited the program from among the presidential candidates. The topics discussed in the talk show were about the most central and important issues of that moment.

The talk show was quite balanced and objective. Nino Zhizhilashvili was actively involved in the program, intensively asked questions and let the guests fully express their positions. She was quite demanding and critical during the first block, where the journalist was sitting face to face with the respondents. She acted in opposition to the respondents without stating her own opinion. There was no bias to any political force. Despite the political affiliation of the guest, the host was always asking the question from the standpoint which was the opposite from the respondent's opinion, and acted in opposition to them.

Zhizhilashvili would get more passive during the second block of the program, which was more in the form of a discussion, and let the guests argue with each other. She would get less involved in the conversation and let the opposing sides answer to each other and state opposing opinions. She did not reveal any support to any of the guests, and always provided equal conditions to the guests. Zhizhilashvili would allocate time to them evenly and managed the situation as well. If the guest diverted from the main topic or started to speak in general terms, then Zhizhilashvili would get them back to the particular question. Guests of the talk show always represented different sides; correspondingly, the viewers would be able to learn almost all the opinions regarding the discussed issue.

The host did not use hate speech or any politically incorrect expressions. Besides, she almost always reacted to the similar behavior of the guest. However, there were cases when irony was felt towards a certain party or a politician in Nino Zhizhilashvili's questions, which sometimes looked like as if she was stating her subjective position or opinion. The program was almost always dedicated to the discussion of the announced topic. However, there were some cases when the host and the guests went beyond the main topic and allocated more time to other issues. It is also noteworthy that the

journalist always disseminated the verified information. She often verified the facts provided by the guests and corrected them herself, if needed.

There was a special program aired via “Politmeter” on 27 October. The program was not balanced from the viewpoint of the guests, as far as mostly the representatives and supporters of the Georgian Dream were gathered in the studio. Correspondingly, the program was dedicated to the winning of Giorgi Margvelashvili in the elections. Zhizhilashvili was quite passive herself, there were many guests visiting the program and it was them who did the most talking.

## *Kavkasia TV*

There were three talk shows monitored on *Kavkasia*: “Spectrum Studio” hosted by Davit Akubardia; “Hotline” hosted by Alexander Elisashvili and either Zviad Koridze or Merab Metreveli, alternatively, and “Barrier”, hosted by Alexander Elisashvili and Nino Jangirashvili. “Spectrum Studio” was broadcasted every business day, “Hotline” three times a week and “Barrier” – twice a week.

The guests invited to the “**Spectrum Studio**” were mostly the people with non-political background. There were experts, NGO representatives, political scholars, and other representatives of the media and the society visiting the program. Out of politicians, the talk show was visited mostly by the members of the government and the authorities. Representatives and supporters of the United National Movement almost never visited the program.

David Akubardia’s respondents were the following presidential candidates during the monitoring period: Giorgi Margvelashvili, Koba Davitashvili, Mikheil (Gela) Saluashvili and Akaki Asatiani. Besides, Koba Davitashvili and Giorgi Margvelashvili visited the program twice. The Prime Minister participated in the talk show as well before the elections.

As for the topics discussed in the talk show, Davit Akubardia hardly ever announced a topic or an issue for the discussion at the beginning of the program. Therefore, the conversation would touch upon many various topics during the program, depending on the guest, so that sometimes it was difficult to figure out what the main topic of the program was even by the end of the program. Despite this, during the monitoring period the program discussed many topical, important and major issues for that time: elections, cohabitation, foreign policy of the country, social issues, etc. Besides, often the audience did not have a chance to completely get to know the guest, as far as the journalist sometimes introduced him/her only by name and surname and did not specify what exactly this person was. One and the same persons would often visit the program, whom the host introduced with the following words: “an amazing person”, “a person who is very sympathetic to me”, “a friend of mine”.

The invited guests and the host almost always had a common opinion about the discussed issue and the conversation was taking place in a quite peaceful and familiar environment. The programs were mostly presented as a dialogue. The host hardly ever asked any question. He was positive to all his respondents and often pointed out that they were his friends.

The talk show was quite biased. Akubardia very often stated his opinions and attitudes towards various political forces. He never hid his extremely negative attitude towards Mikheil Saakashvili and members of the United National Movement. He often referred to them with unethical and politically incorrect words and expressions, such as: “The Nazis”, “idiot”, “imbecile”, “crazy”, “filthy person”, “sleazy”, etc.

On the other hand, he spoke about the government and the current authorities in an extremely positive context. He openly stated his sympathy to the ruling team and their presidential candidate. However, sometimes he would criticize the Coalition Georgian Dream, which mostly looked like advice and recommendations.

Akubardia’s involvement differed from program to program. Sometimes he was very active and talked more than the guests, and also interrupted them in order to state his opinion. It was characteristic to him to divert to an absolutely different subject from the discussed topic. On the other hand, there were cases when he was very passive and was hardly involved in the program.

The host told stories and hearsays in almost all the programs. He spoke about facts and figures without referring to the source and did not specify where from he received this information and based on what he was saying these things.

The program of the Election Day was quite biased. There were many guests invited from the observer's organizations, also from the coalition as well. The host underlined that such elections had never been held in Georgia yet and the reported violations were very insignificant. Besides, he also expressed dissatisfaction that the candidate of the United National Movement got such a "big share". The program was basically dedicated to the victory of Giorgi Margvelashvili and his positive presentation.

The program of 24 October is noteworthy, visited by Bidzina Ivanishvili and Giorgi Margvelashvili. Akubardia was very familiar and quite active. He addressed the Prime Minister as "Bidzina", whereas the Prime Minister addressed him as "Mister David". Akubardia often did not let the respondents speak and told stories and things about various issues, when the guests were seriously discussing the economy or the election program.

The talk show "**Hotline**" was visited by the politicians, also by the NGO representatives, experts and other members of the society. However, the civil sector representatives were more frequent guests to the program. The talk show was also often visited by the members of opposition parties. It is noteworthy that the members or supporters of the United National Movement hardly ever participated in the talk show. In this respect the hosts sometimes pointed out that the representatives of the United National Movement were against participating in their program. The following presidential candidates visited the program during the monitoring period: Nestan Kirtadze, Akaki Asatiani, Sergo Javakhidze, and Giorgi Targamadze. Sergo Javakhidze participated in the program twice: on 30 September and on 16 October.

The program was hosted by Alexander Elisashvili, together with Zviad Koridze or Merab Metreveli, alternatively. Elisashvili had a co-host once a week. It was only the journalists speaking during the first part of the program. They discussed various topics and showed the story they had prepared. This part of the program was often more informative and the journalists were more active. However, their personal opinions and positions were also mostly stated in this block. The viewers had an opportunity to call and express their opinions about the discussed topic. In total, there were various opinions stated in connection to the main topic of the discussion during the program.

The journalists were always actively involved in the second block of the program, which also hosted the guests in the studio. However, there were cases when one of the hosts would be more involved in a particular program than his colleague. Alexander Elisashvili was the most passive journalist during the program as compared to Metreveli and Koridze. Sometimes the journalists were so passive, that the guests could speak about the topic without time limits. It was characteristic for the journalist Alexander Elisashvili to state his position, quite often and with an informal language. This was mostly aimed at presenting the government positively, and criticizing the United National Movement and Mikheil Saakashvili. He seldom probed for additional information and rarely asked additional questions to the guests.

There were cases when Elisashvili gave hints to the audience about which question of the interactive was "right". Besides, once Alexander Elisashvili expressed his opinion live, which could have been considered violence enticing. On 9 October, when the conversation was about the events developed in *Ditsi and Dvani*, he stated his negative attitude to Vakho Babunashvili, who was criticizing the government position and had a relatively positive attitude to the former authorities: Alexander Elisashvili – *"You know your business, what can I do now? I have no confidence in musical protest. When I see the guys with machine guns drawing fences in my country, you should go there and shoot a round of nine-gams under the ear or in the forehead. If you cannot do that, then I don't believe in music and stuff like that"*.

Aleko Elisashvili was also distinguished from other hosts of the program with his unethical expressions and sometimes even with hate speech. He often used humiliating, unethical and abusive words when stating his opinion. Besides, he did not react when the guests were using the same vocabulary.

Unlike Elisashvili, Zviad Koridze and Merab Metreveli always played a role of a moderator only; they did not state their point of view and actively asked questions from different positions. Zviad Koridze was always objective. The program was more quiet and informative with his participation. He acted in opposition to the respondents without stating his positing. He was actively involved in the program and was asking extensive questions for clarification. It is noteworthy that the hosts always tried to provide equal conditions to the guests and they let them fully express their opinions.

The talk show "**Barrier**" was hosted by Nino Jangirashvili or sometimes by Alexander Elisashvili. The program was distinguished with its numerous guests. Other than the guests, the public representatives also attended the program and

got involved in the discussion. Representatives of the political parties participated in the talk show from the majority and also from the minority, though rarely. The program was often visited by the experts and civil sector representatives. Some of the presidential candidates took part in “Barrier”, but not the major and high-ranking candidates. The people who were critical to the former authorities and the United National Movement prevailed among the guests. Due to the big number of guests, the program would often turn into the heated discussion and when so, the hosts found it hard to control the situation.

The hosts Nino Jangirashvili and Alexander Elisashvili had a very different style of working. Jangirashvili was more involved in the program and she tried to be a moderator and let the guests express themselves, and in some cases to state a contrary position. However, Aleko Elisashvili was often quite passive and observed the discussion from outside. Because of this, the advantage was created for those guests in his programs, who were active. For example, when Thea Tutberidze was visiting the talk show on 1 November, the program was conducted on the background of loud voices. The host could not make her stop and some of the guests left the studio.

None of the hosts were distinguished with very demanding questions. However, Jangirashvili tried hard to get the answer to the questions she asked, and probed for getting additional information. Elisashvili did little probing and mostly was asking the respondents to evaluate a certain fact or event, and also stated his position as well. In some cases, attitudes of both of the hosts were felt. They were clearly more opposing to the guests who were loyal to the former authorities and the National Movement, and less opposing to the supporters of the new government and the coalition. However, this was observed in case of Elisashvili at a greater extent. It was typical for him to joke and express his opinion while making a comment.

The hosts did not use hate speech. However, Elisashvili often spoke very openly and did not react on the politically incorrect conversation by the guests. Jangirashvili was more responsive to the usage of hate speech by the guests. However, in the program of 15 October, which was dedicated to the events of 17 May and sexual minorities, some hate speech was heard, but the hosts failed to control the situation.

## TV3

The talk show “**Big Politics**” has been on air every business day at 8 pm since 23 September, hosted by Inga Grigolia. In some cases she was substituted by Nodar Meladze. The talk show discussed the important events of the day and invited the representatives of authorities and the opposition as well, also high officials, experts, media and civil sector, and also the presidential candidates.

The program was always dynamic and informative. The guests, who were invited in connection to the discussed subject, were always relevant to the topic and the audience had an opportunity to listen to different opinions regarding this or that issue. Inga Grigolia was actively involved in the program; she had prepared quite much information, which she used when asking extensive questions. However, she did not always provide source when delivering some information and she was just saying “according to the information at our hand”. Grigolia’s questions were always demanding, and sometimes even provoking; the wording for her questions was selected so that to add scandalous coloring to it. She often acted in opposition to the guest by providing contrary arguments. In some cases, while asking extensive questions, the host’s position was observed, which was related to the criticism of the former power.

Guests of the talk show always had an opportunity to express their opinions. However, often the host was interrupting the guest in order to verify some information or to get additional information. Very seldom, e.g. in the program of 23 September, Levan Pirveli was unable to finish his statement because of little probing by the host.

The host of the talk show did not use hate speech or abusive expressions, and speaking in a politically incorrect way was rare by the guests. The host always reacted to that and encouraged them to be more correct.

## Tabula

On *Tabula*, the political talk show “**Focus**” was monitored, hosted by Salome Ugulava or, alternatively, Nino Macharashvili. The program has been broadcasted since 23 September and it was on every business day at 10 pm.

The program hosted the politicians, experts, NGO representatives, sociologists, etc. It is noteworthy that the program was frequented by the members of the United National Movement, and basically it was only them who represented the opposition. Out of presidential candidates, only Davit Bakradze, Giorgi Targamadze and Shalva Natelashvili visited the program during the monitoring period.

The program was aired every day and always followed up to the significant and main issues of the day; the guests were always invited respectively in connection to the topic of the discussion.

The programs discussed the election issues, domestic and foreign policy of the country, departure of the Prime Minister from politics and other issues during the monitoring. There were often two sides invited for discussing the issues and the topics were discussed from different angles. However, there were cases when only the members of the former authorities or members of current minority were invited for discussing a certain topic, resulting in a one-sided discussion of the issue. However, in such cases the hosts noted that representatives of the authorities or those of the Georgian Dream did not wish to participate in the program.

Salome Ugulava and Nino Macharashvili, who hosted the program in turn, were pretty much actively involved in the program and were quite well prepared for talking about the subject of the discussion. Irrespective of political affiliation of the guests, the journalists allocated time to the guests evenly, let them speak, asked critical and demanding questions and tried to act in opposition to them. It was easy to point out their loyal attitude towards the representatives of the former power, and at the same time, the critical attitude to the current government and the Prime Minister. Such trend was revealed in the way of asking questions, their wording, probing, also facial expressions and non-verbal gestures of the journalists. The hosts would get more engaged in controversy with representatives of the authorities and argue with them more. However, the respondents who were loyal to the former authorities were given a chance to speak quietly and fully express their opinions. The journalists often expressed ironic remarks and comments about Bidzina Ivanishvili. The hosts often stated their own opinions and positions. They did not conceal their disposition to the parliamentary minority and the former authorities and openly agreed with them during their reasoning. It is noteworthy that the journalists never used hate speech or politically incorrect expressions.

Overall, it should be noted that the program was informative and despite the journalists' attitudes were often felt towards a certain side or a respondent, in general, all the sides were represented and the audience had an opportunity to get information from different standpoints.

There was an additional program broadcasted on the Election Day, hosted by Nino Macharashvili. The program was fully dedicated to this day. The host gave updates to the viewers about the exit poll results. There were live broadcasts during the program from Davit Saganelidze's and Davit Bakradze's briefings. There were also ministers, secretary of the Security Council and other politicians brought live, and interviews and speeches of candidates were also covered. During the live broadcast of ministers, the journalist was pointing out that there was a low turnout during presidential elections and more violations than during parliamentary elections in 2012. Besides, she emphasized with all of them that Vano Merabishvili was still in prison and the United National Movement was being put under pressure.

## Conclusion

Electoral processes were actively discussed and presidential candidates were presented in the political talk shows on the monitored channels during the election period. Although the programs of candidates were less emphasized like the news releases, the candidates in the talk shows had an opportunity to express their positions regarding the discussed subjects and to talk about their general political vision.

Compared to the monitoring of 2012, although the period before the parliamentary elections was much more tense, the political talk shows were broadcasted on every channel in 2013 and were distinguished with their diversity. Representatives of the government and political parties, NGO sector actively participated in the programs, and the viewers were more informed about the electoral processes also the events taking place in the country.

It is noteworthy that the talk show hosts mostly had neutral position. However, there were several talk shows where the sympathies of hosts toward the current or former authorities were visible in almost all the programs. Compared to 2012, there was less hate speech or politically incorrect vocabulary heard in political talk shows and the hosts were trying more to play a role of a moderator.





## Radio Monitoring Results

15 June – 15 November 2013

From 15 June through 15 November 2013 inclusive Internews - Georgia carried out the monitoring of evening news releases of 12 radio broadcasters. The monitoring covered the following radio outlets: *Radio 1* (Public Broadcaster), *Imedi*, *Fortuna*, *Radio Liberty*, *Palitra*, *The First Radio*, *Green Wave*, *Hereti*, *Old City*, *Atinati*, *Maestro* and *Adjara*.

At the first stage of monitoring (15 June – 15 July) the research also covered the news releases of radio *Utsnobi* and radio *Apkhazetis Khma* but since they ceased making news programs (*Utsnobi* – from 30 June, while *Apkhazetis Khma* – from 12 July) for an indefinite period, the monitoring of those channels was terminated. Radio *Maestro* substituted radio *Utsnobi* from 2 July, while radio *Adjara* – radio *Apkhazetis Khma* from 17 July. It is noteworthy that during the monitoring of 2012 Parliamentary elections radio broadcasters were preparing news releases in an uninterrupted regime and no similar impediments were registered. Calculation of separate time for presidential candidates started from 1 July after announcement of the election day and formal nomination of the candidates.

Monitoring of major news releases of radio channels within the period commencing 15 June – 15 November revealed the following key findings:

- ✓ The monitoring demonstrated that radio does not belong to polarized media segment;
- ✓ Out of all monitoring subjects the largest portion of the time was dedicated to the Government;
- ✓ Out of all presidential candidates Giorgi Margvelashvili (the coalition “Georgian Dream”) enjoyed the most significant coverage. Although it should be mentioned that overall the candidates were provided with little time for coverage;
- ✓ The election campaign process was covered shallowly and was mainly limited to quoting statements made by the candidates during their meetings with population;
- ✓ Most of the negative tone registered during the monitoring was addressed to the “United National Movement” and the President;
- ✓ Opposition parties having no seats in the Parliament received almost no coverage within the monitoring period;
- ✓ News were covered poorly and shallowly. Sole source based stories and lack of critical questions deprived listeners of an opportunity to make a full-scale analysis of events;
- ✓ News programs of radio broadcasters were often identical: topics of the stories were discussed from the same angle and the same comments made by respondents were often the case;
- ✓ Radios *Liberty* and *Palitra* were preparing in-depth and critical news as compared to other radio channels;
- ✓ Compared to the year 2012 regional radio broadcasters were providing subjects with less time for direct speech;
- ✓ Journalists were not making subjective evaluations, neither were cases of manipulating with voice/music or using hate speech registered.

### *Radio 1* (Public Broadcaster)

News releases of the *Radio 1* provided monitoring subjects with 8 hours and 46 minutes. The largest portion of that time was allocated to the Government (20%), the “United National Movement” (16%) and the coalition “Georgian Dream” (10%). The monitoring did not reveal particularly excessive positive or negative tone towards any monitoring subject.

Journalists were quoting respondents’ answers in news releases and almost no time was allocated to direct speech (in average 2% of time).

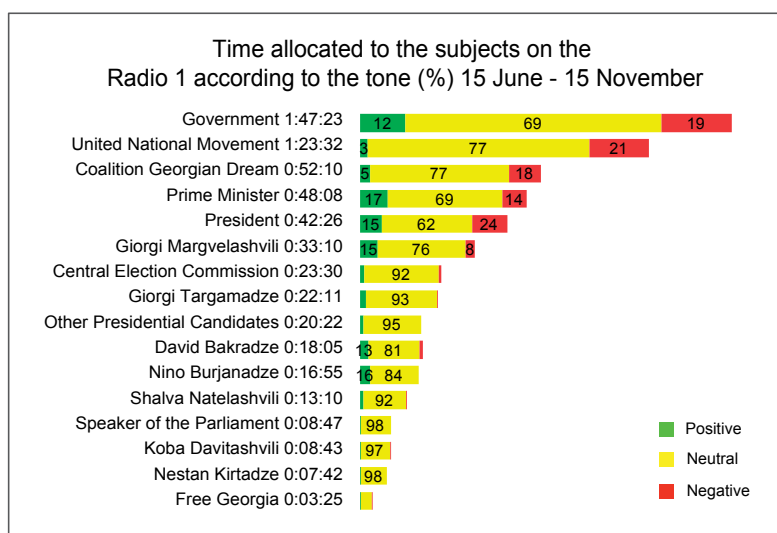


The radio broadcaster was covering events impartially: journalists were not making subjective evaluations and were not biased towards any political power. However, stories were shallow and were sometimes based on one source. Journalists were rarely asking critical questions. They limited themselves to providing brief, descriptive information. One month prior to elections (26 September - 26 October) shallow coverage of events increased. Therefore, within that period subjects were mostly covered neutrally (around 90% of neutral coverage).

Despite the fact that the Public Broadcaster was providing significant portion of time to cover presidential candidates and was even preparing a separate program about them, shallow information aired on the channel did not provide for better analysis of election programs. Within one month from announcing the date of elections a few stories about election programs of candidates were prepared. Nevertheless, the quantity of in-depth stories reduced once the election day was approaching. Journalists were limiting themselves to simply quoting statements of candidates made during their meetings with population. They were not asking particular questions: for instance, how a candidate was going to fulfill promises made prior to elections or what was their vision concerning certain problems. Therefore, there was practically no negative tone applied to candidates.

Alike the results of the 2012 parliamentary elections media monitoring, the same trend of making short and similar stories was still observed. But at the same time the broadcaster was characterized with impartial coverage and adhered to ethical norms. There were no cases of manipulating with voice/music or use of hate speech registered within the period. (See the Diagram 1)

Diagram 1

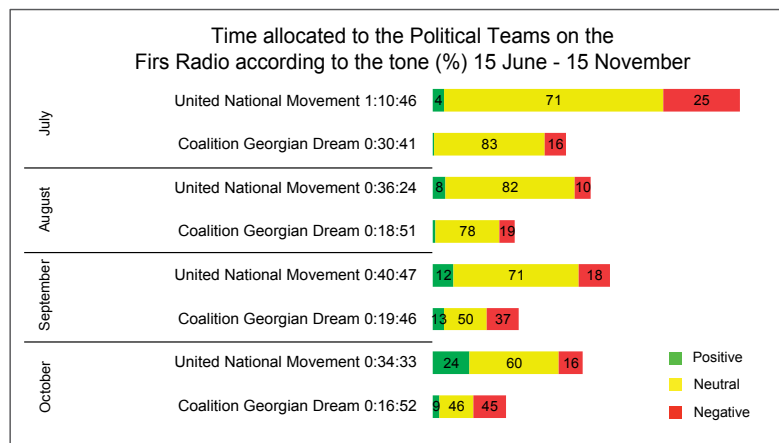


## Pirveli Radio

*Pirveli Radio* covered most of the monitoring subjects (26), providing them with 22 hours and 10 minutes in total. The Government (22%), the “United National Movement” (20%) and the Prime Minister (12%) were covered most often. On average 46% of the total time was dedicated to direct speech.

Insufficient balance and shallow coverage were the major problems faced by the radio broadcaster. Journalists were rarely asking critical questions. Stories were often based on a sole source and covered position of only one side. In the beginning of the monitoring (15 June - 15 July) the “United National Movement” was covered in a negative tone (41%), however, as the elections came closer the picture had changed drastically. The negative coverage rate of the “United National Movement” had reduced, while that of the coalition “Georgian Dream” and the Prime Minister – had increased. (See the Diagram 2)

Diagram 2

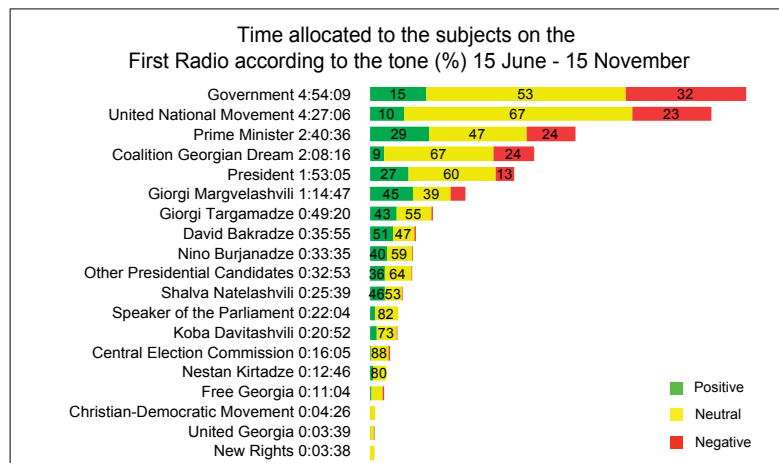


Such changes in tone were not conditioned by in-depth and critical coverage: journalists were limiting themselves to quoting politicians' statements, therefore negative tone was accumulated mostly in regard to those subjects, position of which was less covered in the stories.

The radio broadcaster was actively covering presidential candidates, however, stories were mainly dedicated to candidates' meetings with population. Their election programs were not covered thoroughly and critically. Journalists were not asking candidates about their vision related to solving particular problems that would enable listeners to make more informed choice. Among the presidential candidates most of the time (1 hour and 14 minutes) was allocated to the candidate from the coalition "Georgian Dream" Giorgi Margvelashvili, however the highest rate of negative tone (16%) also belonged to him. Other candidates were almost never covered in negative context.

Journalists were not making subjective evaluations within the monitoring period, nor showing their private attitude towards any monitoring subject had ever been the case. (See the Diagram 3)

Diagram 3

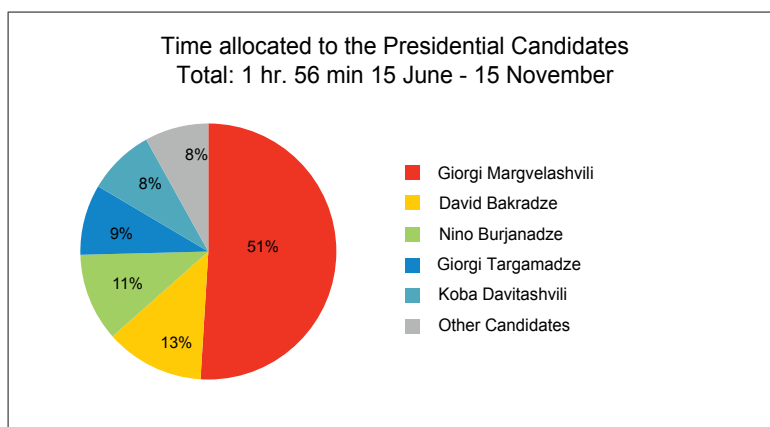


## Radio Palitra

Radio *Palitra* allocated 21 hours and 50 minutes to the monitoring subjects. 31% of that time was used to cover the Government, 20% - the "United National Movement", 13% - the Prime Minister. In average 22% of the time dedicated to subjects was used for direct speech.

The time allocated to presidential candidates within the monitoring period was equal to 1 hour and 56 minutes that was distributed unequally: Giorgi Margvelashvili of the coalition "Georgian Dream" received 51% of the time, while David Bakradze of the "United National Movement" four times less (13%). (See the Diagram 4)

Diagram 4

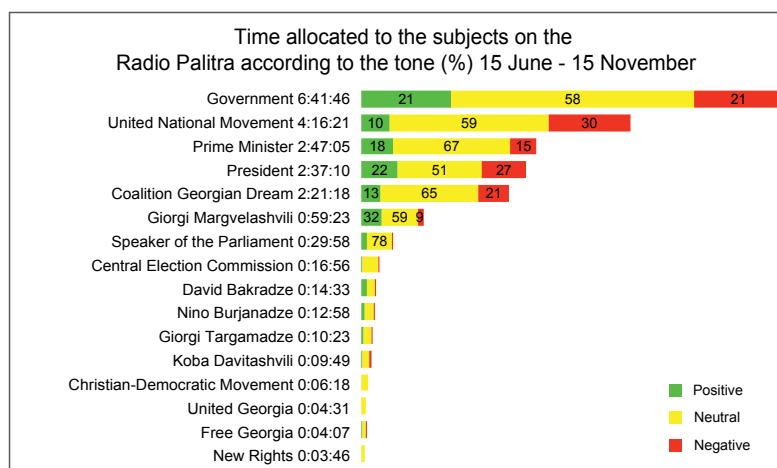


Journalists were covering activities carried out by presidential candidates less critically compared to other monitoring subjects, therefore they were almost always presented only in positive and neutral tone.

The radio broadcaster was making far more thorough and diverse stories involving the Government, ruling political team and other parties. Therefore, in case of the five most covered subjects, the negative tone rate in average constituted 23%. Journalists were asking critical questions. For instance, they were preparing stories that sought to reveal what type of threats might be hidden in certain decisions of the Government.

Lack of balance was revealed within the first monitoring period (15 June – 15 July). However, stories became more balanced once the elections were getting closer; that trend continued after the elections as well. Journalists were not making subjective evaluations and were covering events impartially. Besides, if, according to results of the 2012 media monitoring of parliamentary elections, it was hard to draw a clear line between journalists' texts and respondents' periphrasis in radio *Palitra's* news releases, now such problems were not registered. There were no cases of manipulating with voice/music or use of hate speech registered in the radio broadcaster's programs within the period. (See the Diagram 5)

Diagram 5



## Radio Green Wave

Radio *Green Wave* allocated 12 hours and 28 minutes to the monitoring subjects. The time was distributed the following way: the Government – 24%, the “United National Movement” – 15%, the Prime Minister – 12%. Subjects were provided with 24% of time in average for direct speech.

During the period commencing 15 June – 15 July, the “United National Movement” received less time for direct speech compared to other subjects. Besides, the party collected twice as many negative tone that points to unbalanced coverage.

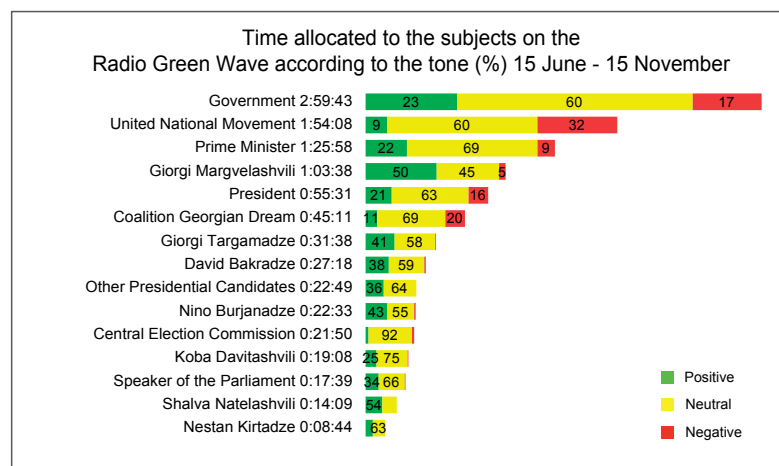
Stories became more or less balanced in the following periods, however news were still covered shallowly. Journalists' attempts to reach the problem, ask critical questions and receive additional answers from responsible persons, were not visible.

The radio broadcaster covered most of the presidential candidates. Nevertheless, the coverage depended solely on a candidate's activities and not a journalist's initiative to provide voters with an opportunity to make better analysis of election environment. Despite the fact that journalists were preparing separate blocks about candidates' activities, negative tone in their address was almost never registered. Giorgi Margvelashvili of the coalition "Georgian Dream" was among the four most often covered subjects. He was provided by at least twice more time than other candidates and 50% of his coverage was done in a positive tone.

Operative work of the radio broadcaster during the election day should be noteworthy: journalists were making live broadcasting from election precincts during news releases and covering violations registered by observers and statements made by politicians.

Compared to 2012 monitoring results, there were more gaps registered from the balance standpoint now, however, journalists were still covering events impartially without making subjective evaluations. (See the Diagram 6)

Diagram 6



## Radio *Liberty*

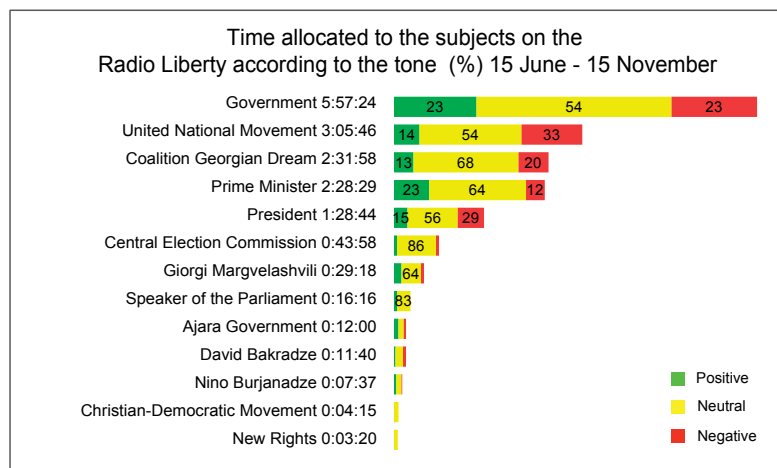
The radio *Liberty* provided monitoring subjects with 17 hours and 58 minutes of air time. 33% of that time was dedicated to cover the Government, 17% - the "United National Movement", 14-14% the coalition "Georgian Dream" and the Prime Minister. In average 24% of time was dedicated to direct speech of subjects. Relatively more negative tone was addressed to the "United National Movement" (33%) and the President (29%). However, such distribution of tones was not caused by biased coverage but was rather conditioned by frequent criticism of the former government by politicians and experts.

The radio broadcaster was actively covering events taking place in Tbilisi and regions. The stories were thorough and based on diverse sources. Journalists were not limiting themselves to simply quoting politicians' statements. They were asking critical questions, covering positions expressed by experts and civil society representatives. Conclusions made by journalists were always based on the aired information.

The trend of the balanced and diverse coverage of events has not changed over various stages of the monitoring. However, stories about activities of the presidential candidates were rarely prepared. Their coverage has not significantly increased event once the elctions came closer. The radio broadcaster dedicated more than three minutes of the air time only to three candidates: Giorgi Margvelashvili (the coalition "Georgian Dream"), David Bakradze ("United National Movement") and Nino Burjanadze ("Democratic Movement – United Georgia"). Unlike other radio broadcasters, the radio *Liberty* was preparing analytical stories related to the candidates' election programs and their vision for solving particular problems. For instance, in 17 August issue the journalist was trying to receive an answer to the question how the presidential candidates were going to deal with economic problems faced by the country.

Overall, the journalists were covering issues impartially. The radio broadcaster was touching the issues that were not covered by other radio channels, except radio *Palitra*. For instance, the journalists were trying to identify what risks were the government decisions related to and how it was possible to avoid them. Coverage of those issues provided readers with an opportunity to see the events from a new angle and make a better analysis. (See the Diagram 7)

Diagram 7

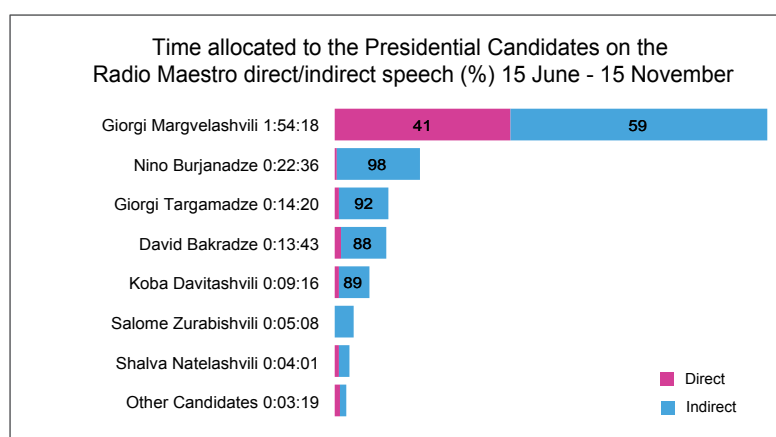


## Radio *Maestro*

Duration of the radio *Maestro* news releases was much longer than those of other radio broadcasters. 21 hours and 32 minutes of air time was dedicated to coverage of monitoring subjects. 32% of that time was allocated to the Government, 14% - to the “United National Movement” and 12% - to the coalition “Georgian Dream”.

Despite duration of the news releases, the stories were shallow and sometimes unbalanced. The monitoring subjects were provided with little time for direct speech (12% of time, in average). The presidential candidate of the coalition “Georgian Dream” was an exception, collecting 41% of time for direct speech. (See the Diagram 8) Giorgi Margvelashvili also enjoyed high indicator, 51% of positive tone coverage.

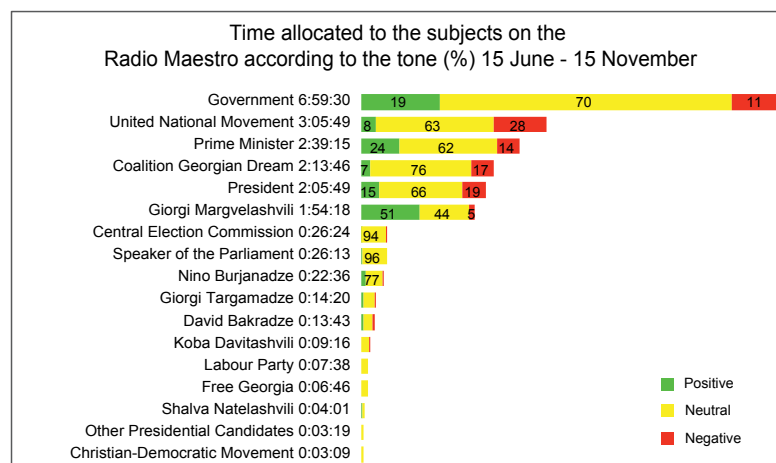
Diagram 8



Other presidential candidates were provided with less time as compared to Margvelashvili. Election campaigns were covered shallowly, journalists did not ask candidates sharp questions. Stories prepared about them were limited to quoting statements made during public meetings.

Another problem faced by the radio broadcaster rests within unbalanced stories and sole source based coverage. For instance, during 8 July program related to cut of the crime, the information released by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia was covered unilaterally and shallowly. The program anchor was reading the information supplied by the Ministry during almost four minutes without any comments made by opposition or experts. Such stories clearly presented the Government and the Prime Minister from a positive side despite the fact that journalists were not making subjective evaluations. (See the Diagram 9)

Diagram 9



## Radio *Fortuna*

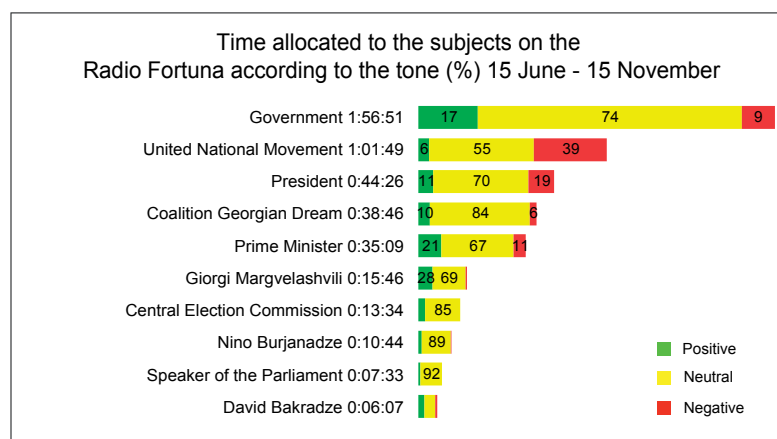
News released of radio *Fortuna* ran for five minutes. Subjects were provided with six hours of air time within the monitoring period. 32% of that time was dedicated to the Government, 17% - to the “United National Movement” and 12% - to the President.

The radio broadcaster was briefly transmitting information about the ongoing events in the country. Stories sometimes suffered from lack of balance. Within the first two months of monitoring (15 June – 15 August) the “United National Movement” was often provided with time in negative context, while the position of the party was not covered. Therefore, the “United National Movement” overall collected most of the negative tone (39%).

Pre-election activities of Giorgi Margvelashvili (the coalition “Georgian Dream”), Nino Burjanadze (“Democratic Movement – United Georgia”) and David Bakradze (the “United National Movement”) were covered most often among the presidential candidates. However, there was no information provided concerning election programs of the candidates. Air time was mainly dedicated to covering their meetings with population.

Similar to 2012 parliamentary elections coverage, journalists were still quoting comments made by respondents and no time was dedicated to direct speech of the subjects whatsoever. Stories were still brief and shallow, however preserving the trend that journalists were avoiding subjective evaluations and negative or positive attitude towards candidates. (See the Diagram 10)

Diagram 10



## Radio Imedi

Radio *Imedi* provided monitoring subjects with 14 hours and 38 minutes of air time, out of which 24% of time was spent to cover the Government, 20% - the “United National Movement” and 13% - the coalition “Georgian Dream”. Subjects were provided with 44% of time in average for direct speech. The coalition “Georgian Dream” collected the largest direct speech indicator among all subjects – 60%. The representatives of the coalition were often criticizing the former Government in their statements. Therefore, the “United National Movement” (29%) and the President (22%) received the most negative coverage.

A few unbalanced stories about the presidential candidate from the coalition, Giorgi Margvelashvili, were prepared in August that caused 57% rate of positive coverage of Margvelashvili in that month.

Other presidential candidates were covered mainly in positive or neutral tone, except David Bakradze (the “United National Movement”), since in his case negative tone of coverage prevailed over the positive one.

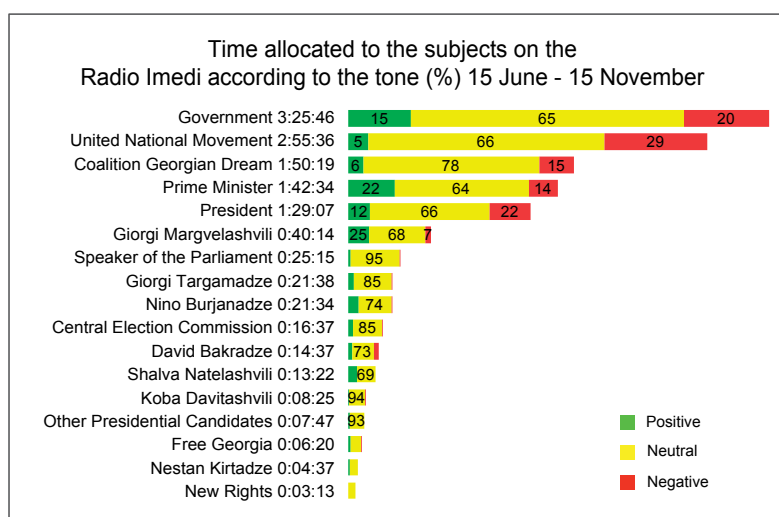
The radio broadcaster was covering the election campaign pretty actively. One month prior to the presidential elections the time allocated to the candidates has increased. For instance, the following candidates were enabled to address the voters live and discuss their election programs: Nino Burjanadze (“Democratic Movement – United Georgia”), Giorgi Targamadze (“Christian-Democratic Movement”) and Zurab Kharatishvili (“Georgian – European Democrats”). The presidential candidates from the coalition “Georgian Dream” and the “United National Movement” were invited to participate in the program but they refused due to certain reasons.

On the election day, 27 October, radio *Imedi* covered in details events taking place on election precincts, politicians’ statements and violations registered by observers.

Nevertheless, lack of critical questions during the election campaign coverage was the major problem. Journalists were rarely asking questions related to candidates’ promises that, of course, did not contribute to making an informed voter’s choice.

Similar to 2012 monitoring results, the events on the radio broadcaster were still covered without any subjective evaluations. (See the Diagram 11)

Diagram 11



## Radio *Atinati* (Zugdidi)

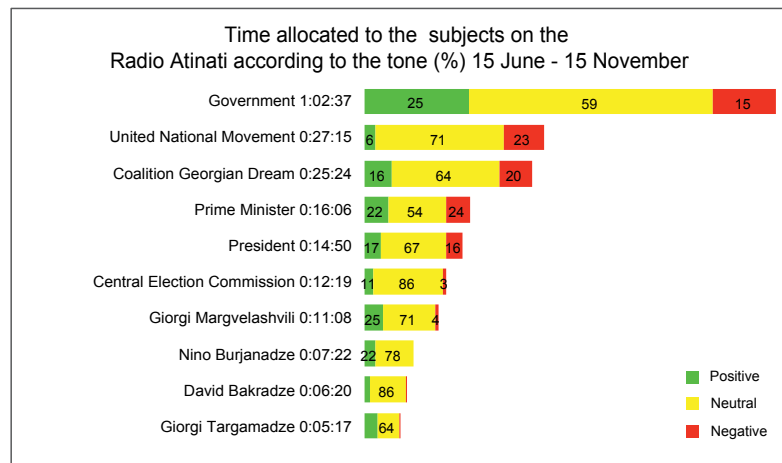
News releases of the radio *Atinati* did not exceed 5-7 minutes. Therefore, the radio provided the monitoring subjects with just 3 hours and 22 minutes of air time. 31% of that time was dedicated to the Government, 13-13% - to the “United National Movement” and the coalition “Georgian Dream”. Compared to media monitoring results of the 2012 parliamentary elections the share and time of the live coverage of subjects decreased to constitute 10% in average.

Within the period commencing 15 June – 15 July, the radio broadcaster was covering the monitoring subjects more critically. Journalists were trying to identify social problems existing in Samgrelo region and cover the position of officials responsible for solving those issues. Stories became more shallow as the elections came closer that facilitated increase of positive and neutral tone. However, the trend of impartial coverage of events and refraining from making subjective evaluations was preserved. The five most covered subjects received all three kinds of tone.

The presidential candidates were provided with little time. The coalition “Georgian Dream” candidate Giorgi Margvelashvili was provided with 11 minutes, then Nino Burjanadze (“Democratic Movement – United Georgia”) – 7 minutes and David Bakradze (the “United National Movement”) – 6 minutes. The stories prepared about them were mainly limited to covering their meetings with population, while no critical attitude towards their election programs was ever observed. Therefore, the candidates were covered mainly in positive and neutral tone.

In general, the radio broadcaster was not tendentious towards any political force. (See the Diagram 12)

Diagram 12



## Radio *Old Town* (Kutaisi)

The radio *Old Town* provided the monitoring subjects with 4 hours and 18 minutes of air time. 25% of that time was used to cover the Government, 21% – the “United National Movement” and 20% – the coalition “Georgian Dream”. The Prime Minister collected the best percentage of positive tone (33%), while most of the negative tone (29%) went to the “United National Movement”.

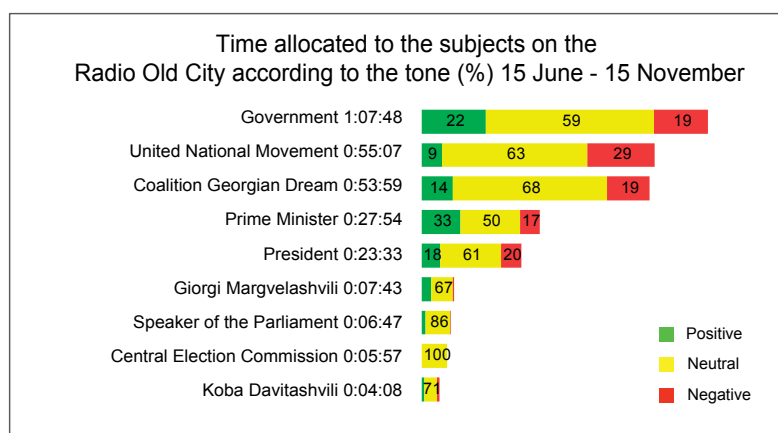
The news releases were short and shallow. Journalists were limiting themselves to quoting politicians’ statements and were rarely asking critical questions. Coverage of the “United National Movement” in a negative context increased as the elections were coming closer.

The radio broadcaster was hardly covering the election related topics. Only Giorgi Margvelashvili of the coalition “Georgian Dream” and Koba Davitashvili of “People’s Party” were provided with more than three minutes of air time. However, even in their case only shallow information was disseminated and the candidates’ opinion regarding election programs or particular issues was never covered. Besides, a few unbalanced and positive stories were prepared about Giorgi Margvelashvili that ensured 53% positive tone coverage of Margvelashvili within the period commencing 17 August – 17 September.



Compared to media monitoring results of 2012 parliamentary elections, direct coverage rate has decreased. Number of unbalanced stories has increased on the contrary. However, journalists were still refraining from making subjective evaluations. (See the Diagram 13)

Diagram 13



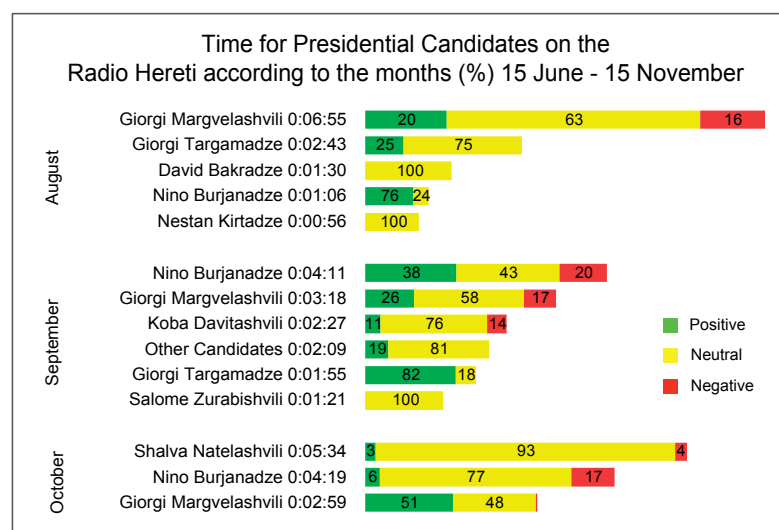
## Radio *Hereti* (Lagodekhi)

Radio *Hereti* provided monitoring subjects with 7 hours and 25 minutes of air time, where 31% was used to cover the Government, 17% – the coalition “Georgian Dream” and 16% - the “United National Movement”. Compared to other regional radio broadcasters, more time was dedicated to direct speech of the subjects (in average 26% of time).

The highest rate of positive tone coverage was registered in case of Giorgi Targamadze (“Christian-Democratic Movement”), Nino Burjanadze (“Democratic Movement – United Georgia”) and the Government. The “United National Movement” and the President were mostly covered in negative context.

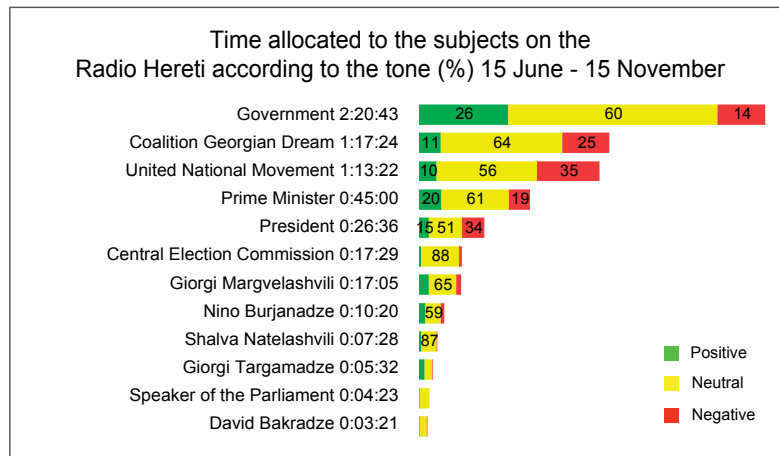
In the beginning of the monitoring the radio broadcaster was covering presidential candidates more actively. However, one month prior to elections the time allocated to candidates was cut. David Bakradze (“United National Movement”) was not covered within 18 September – 26 October. After the elections (15 November inclusive) only Giorgi Margvelashvili (the coalition “Georgian Dream”) and Shalva Natelashvili (“Labor Party”) were provided with more than one minute of air time. (See the Diagram 14)

Diagram 14



Overall, the major problem of news releases rested with shallow coverage of events. Unlike 2012 parliamentary elections period, less thorough stories were prepared at this stage. However, compared to other regional radio broadcasters, the news releases were more critical and the aired information was based on more sources. Journalists were covering events objectively and were impartial towards all political forces. (See the Diagram 15)

Diagram 15



## Radio Adjara (Batumi)

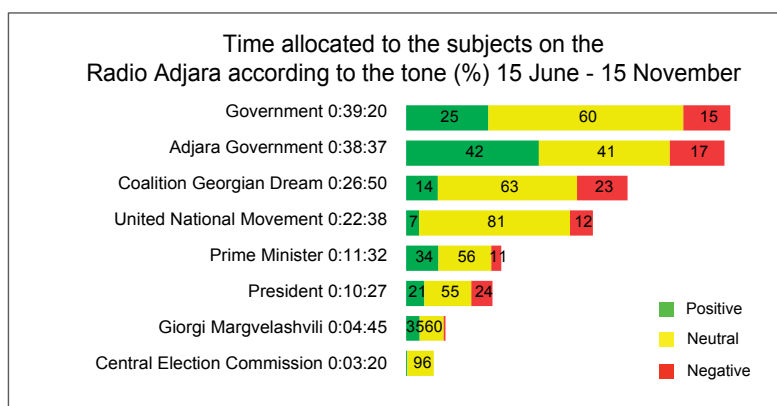
Radio *Adjara* provided monitoring subjects with 2 hours and 47 minutes of air time. In average five minute news releases dedicated most of the time to the central government (23%), the Adjarian Government (22%) and the coalition “Georgian Dream” (16%).

Activities of the Adjarian government were covered without any criticism. The stories prepared about them were mostly unbalanced and sole source based. Therefore, the Adjarian Government collected most of the positive tone (42%), while the President (24%) was covered in negative context in most of the cases. During the first month of the monitoring (17 July – 16 August) the radio broadcaster was providing in average 37% of air time to direct speech of the subjects, however, later this indicator decreased to 1%.

The radio broadcaster did not make stress on election related topics neither prior to elections nor afterwards. Only the candidate from the coalition “Georgian Dream” was provided with more than three minutes of air time. Besides, Giorgi Margvelashvili was covered positively during 35% of air time and 5% – in negative tone.

The major problems faced by the radio broadcaster appeared to be shallow and unbalanced coverage of events. However, journalists were not making subjective evaluations towards any political power, neither did they manipulate with voice or music. (See the Diagram 16)

Diagram 16



## Conclusion

During the monitoring period radio broadcasters were covering events impartially. Journalists were not making subjective evaluations, neither did they manipulate with voice or music.

Shallow coverage of events appeared to be the major problem. Stories were limited to direct coverage of politicians' statements that mainly touched criticism of opponent politicians, long-term perspectives of the EU and NATO integration and relations with Russia. As for the daily problems of population, the radio broadcasters were almost never making stories concerning those topics. Journalists were less interested in social themes and were not asking responsible officials harsh questions. Therefore, various radio broadcasters were often making the same stories.

Short coverage of news was especially visible in cases of election campaign coverage. Most of the time was dedicated to the Presidential candidate of the coalition "Georgian Dream" Giorgi Margvelashvili, mostly in positive or neutral tone. No in-depth stories concerning the candidates were prepared to enable voters make election program analysis. Such stories were mostly happening in the beginning of the monitoring, while one month prior to elections the news releases became even more monotonous and shallow: neutral tone had increased and direct speech share had decreased. After the elections the accent was made on inauguration of Giorgi Margvelashvili and Mikheil Saakashvili's acts of mercy. Position and future plans of the defeated candidates were almost never covered.

Non-parliamentary opposition parties were not provided with time within the monitoring period. Coverage of the monitoring subjects depended on their activities only. Journalists mainly served as passive conductors of information, their activeness to reveal the problem and collect more information concerning the issue was not visible.

Compared to the year 2012, the situation related to coverage of events by the radio broadcasters had not changed drastically. However, share of direct speech had been significantly cut by the radio broadcasters.

Results of the 2012-2013 monitoring showed that radio did not belong to polarized media segment. Journalists followed ethical norms, while hate speech or abusive statements were never observed.



## Print Media Monitoring Results

15 June – 15 November 2013

The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) carried out print media monitoring from 15 July through 15 November 2013. The media monitors of the organization were observing the following media outlets: *Rezonansi*, *24 Hours*, *Akhali Taoba*, *Akhali Versia*, *Alia*, *Kviris Palitra* and *Asaval-Dasavali*.<sup>1</sup>

The following key findings were identified as a result of qualitative and quantitative analysis of the materials:

- ✓ During the pre-election period readers were not provided with sufficient information concerning presidential candidates and their programs, hence, voters were not ensured with an opportunity to make an informed choice.
- ✓ During the pre-election period, as well as after the elections print media outlets were covering representatives of executive and legislative power more actively as compared to presidential candidates.
- ✓ The tone of the subjects' coverage was mainly neutral. The negative tone was mostly observed while covering the President and the "United National Movement", while the positive one – in case of the Prime Minister and the presidential candidates. David Bakradze was an exception as compared to other candidates he was mainly covered in a negative tone during the four months period of the monitoring.
- ✓ The journalists tried to follow journalistic standards. The supplied information was in most cases diverse and relied on several sources. A weekly publication *Asaval-Dasavali* was an exception to that rule, since ethical norms had been violated most often there.

### *Rezonansi*

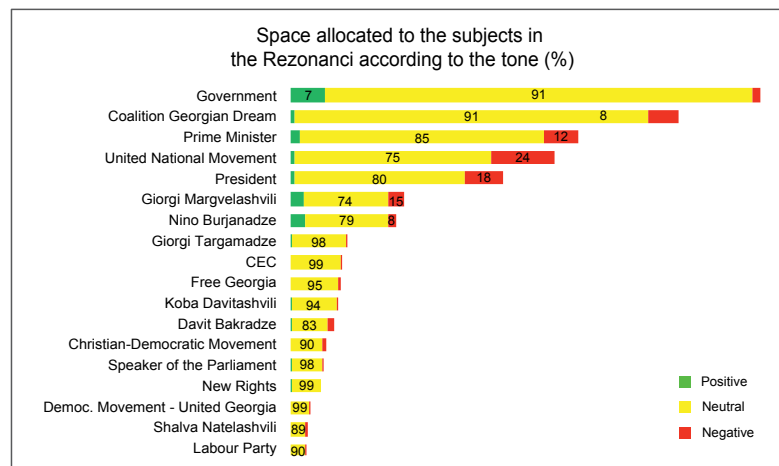
During the four months period of monitoring a daily publication *Rezonansi* had been intensively covering all important topics not only in a news format but in the form of analytical articles as well. A broad spectrum of monitoring subjects has been represented in this publication both in pre-election period and after the elections, however, it is noteworthy that presidential candidates were paid less attention than representatives of the Government.

During the monitoring the following subjects were provided with most of the space: Government, Prime Minister, the coalition "Georgian Dream" and the "United National Movement". The tone applied towards them was mainly neutral. Positive and negative tone was mainly observed in this publication towards the mentioned subjects, as well as presidential candidates. (See the Diagram 1) Such tendency remained after the elections as well<sup>2</sup>.

1. The newspapers were selected based on results of the 2012 print media survey carried out by the "Institute for the Public Opinion Research and Marketing".

2. The diagram demonstrates subjects, which were provided with at least 1 % of the total space.

Diagram 1



Materials published in *Rezonansi* in most of the cases did not violate journalistic standards or ethical norms and diversely covered the events. Such tendency was followed over the whole period of the monitoring. The journalists were trying to provide readers with verified information and evaluations made by various parties. It is noteworthy that similar to other publications, *Rezonansi* rarely offered information concerning election programs of the candidates.

## 24 Hours

Alike *Rezonansi* *24 Hours* was covering ongoing events on a daily basis. The newspaper was publishing brief news releases about major events taking place in the country, while devoting extensive articles to the most important news.

The most significant part of the space allocated for the monitoring subjects was devoted to the Government, Prime Minister, President, the “United National Movement” and the coalition “Georgian Dream”.

Giorgi Margvelashvili, David Bakradze, Nino Burjanadze, Giorgi Targamadze and Shalva Natelashvili were paid most attention among the presidential candidates. It should be noted that out of 23 registered presidential candidates some were provided with less than 1% of the total space, while some were not covered at all over the four months monitoring period.

The tone towards the subjects was almost always neutral in *24 Hours*. All cases of positive and negative tone were related to respondents, since the journalists employed by this media outlet never made value judgments, comments, they did not state their position but rather provided readers with facts and quotes only.

From one side such approach allowed readers to get familiar with comments made by different parties and make their own conclusions. From the other side there was a lack of event analysis that is equally important while evaluating ongoing processes. *24 Hours* was so oriented on sole demonstration of respondents’ position that in certain cases extensive articles completely consisting of quotes were published.

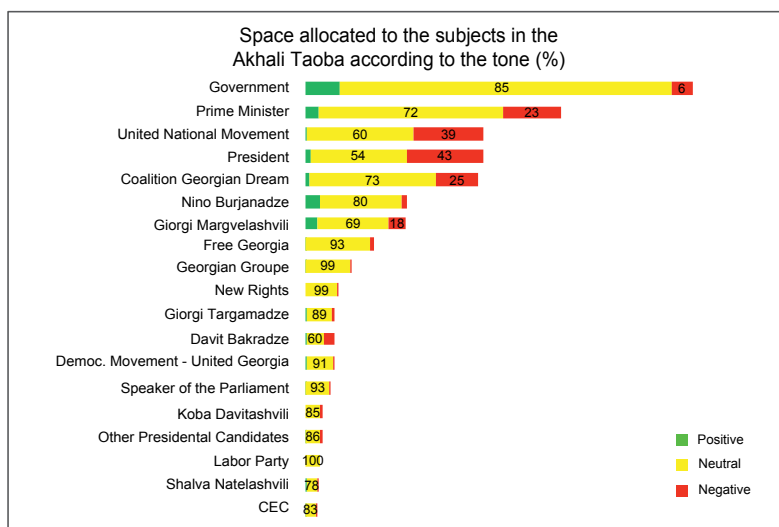
Photo materials were also poorly present in *24 Hours*. Stories prepared on political topics contained illustration only on the first page of the newspaper. In general, a newspaper shall completely use the space for supply of textual information, however photo often represents additional source of information for readers.

## Akhali Taoba

The daily newspaper *Akhali Taoba* was paying relevant attention to important topics over the four months period of monitoring, however relatively more stress was made on the work of the government. As a result the share of the Government coverage in the total allocated space was much higher than that of the others (Government – 22%, Prime Minister – 15%). Neutral

tone was prevailing while covering the subjects, however, negative tone was often the case with respect to the “United National Movement”, President (43%), the coalition “Georgian Dream” (25%) and the Prime Minister (23%). Positive tone was quite a rare occasion and it mainly covered the Government (9%). (See the Diagram 2)

Diagram 2



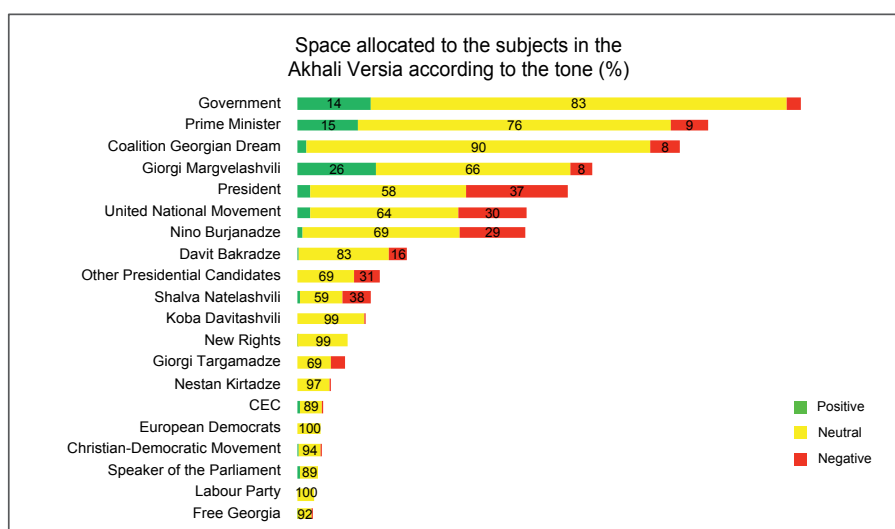
From qualitative standpoint it is noteworthy that articles published in *Akhali Taoba* in most cases relied on two or more sources and the information supplied was verified or there was an obvious attempt on behalf of an author to verify facts. Journalists were not using unethical statements to criticize subjects or events.

## Akhali Versia

A broad spectrum of monitoring subjects was represented in *Akhali Versia*. Although government related subjects (Government, Prime Minister, President) were the main focus as in the case of other outlets, presidential candidates Giorgi Margvelashvili and Nino Burjanadze were paid equal attention. Besides, the presidential candidates that were less familiar to the public were covered more intensively as compared to other newspapers. Numerous articles were published in *Akhali Versia* concerning these subjects (Sergo Javakhidze, Giorgi Chikhladze, Avtandil Margiani etc).

Neutral tone in regard to the subjects was prevailing. Positive tone was prevailing while covering the Government, the Prime Minister and Giorgi Margvelashvili (14%, 15% and 26%), while negative – the President, the “United National Movement” and Nino Burjanadze (37%, 30% and 29%). (See the Diagram 3)

Diagram 3



The qualitative analysis carried out within the four months monitoring revealed that in most cases materials published in *Akhali Versia* had several sources, however sometimes the facts were based only on “backstage information”. From July to November journalistic investigations were published in several issues of the newspaper that certainly deserved positive evaluation, since an in-depth analysis and research of events provided readers with useful and necessary information. The tone of a journalist in this publication was in most cases neutral, however, in certain occasions authors of articles used cynical phrases.

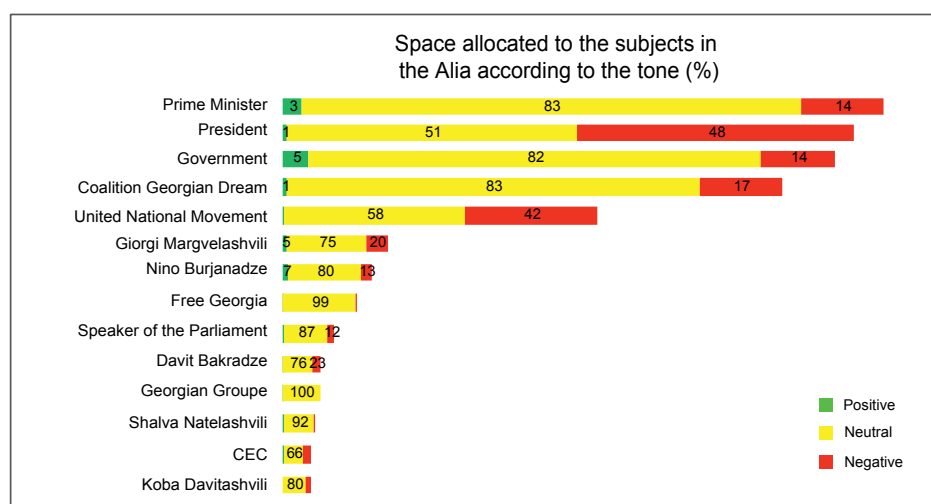
## Alia

Within the monitoring period the newspaper *Alia*, apart from stating facts, was offering readers opinions expressed by various respondents in the form of interviews.

Most of the space in *Alia* was allocated for the Prime Minister, the Government, the coalition “Georgian Dream”, the “United National Movement” and the President. (See the Diagram 4) The presidential candidates follow those five subjects, some of them collecting less than 1% of total space. Similar to other print media outlets, monitored by the organization prior to elections, *Alia* contained poor information about the candidates’ programs.

*Alia* was critical towards almost all subjects both prior to elections and afterwards. It is noteworthy that positive tone was almost never present in this publication, especially after the elections.

Diagram 4



Unethical statements were used in materials published in the newspaper prior to elections. For instance: “Derailed Saakashvili is not lonely, he has like-minded persons not only in “national” whose gang but also in the coalition” (*Alia*, 7 August). Similar statements were registered in titles of articles: “Mikheil, where did you get freaks like you? They should be called masturbators rather than euro parliamentarians” (*Alia*, 18 July). Besides being unethical, journalists sometimes used hate speech towards sexual minorities: “The team of the Prime Minister is aware that he hates faggots and he should be indeed...” (*Alia*, 31 July). However, such violations were significantly cut after the elections. Although the publication remained critical towards politicians after the elections, the criticism was not expressed through abusive phraseology.

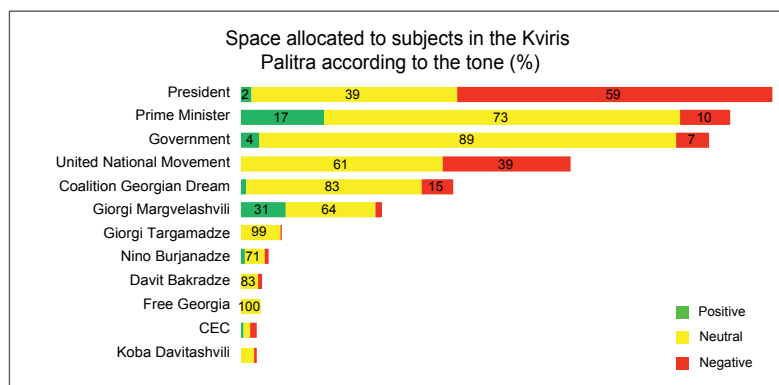
Within the monitoring period some materials published in *Alia* were based on a sole source and the supplied information required additional verification.

## Kviris Palitra

Similar to other monitored print media outlets, *Kviris Palitra* paid the most attention to the Government, the Prime Minister, the President, the coalition “Georgian Dream” and the “United National Movement”. This tendency became obvious prior to elections and continued afterwards.

Out of all presidential candidates the weekly publication covered Giorgi Margvelashvili, Giorgi Targamadze, Nino Burjanadze and David Bakradze. Other presidential candidates were provided with less than 1% of the total space. The tone used towards the subjects was diverse. Negative tone prevailed in case of the President (59%). He was covered negatively prior to elections and after them. The “United National Movement” was also covered negatively (39%). Relatively more positive tone was used to cover the Prime Minister (17%) and Giorgi Margvelashvili - 31%. (See the Diagram 5)

Diagram 5



The interviews and articles of *Kviris Palitra*, apart from providing readers with new information, enabled them to analyse ongoing events together with respondents. Despite extensive interviews and analytical articles, the information about the election programs of the candidates was not sufficient for voters.

## Asval-Dasavali

*Asval-Dasavali* offered readers numerous interviews and articles, where respondents or journalists evaluated the ongoing events. This weekly publication differed from other monitored print media outlets.

This publication had been demonstrating negative attitude towards the President and the “United National Movement” over the whole period of monitoring, similar to the monitoring of 2012. To deliver that attitude journalists and respondents were applying various lexical means. Mikheil Saakashvili was mentioned through unethical epithets in this newspaper on several occasions, for instance: “major clown”, “greedy”, “mishitler”, “feurer of the national movement” etc. Besides, the publication had been actively publishing requirements concerning litigation against the “United National Movement”. To express such attitude *Asval-Dasavali* was using photo illustrations as well. In most of the cases those were negative photos of the President Saakashvili.

On the other side *Asval-Dasavali* was covering the Prime Minister and the Government pretty positively, especially in post-election period. This becomes obvious while looking at the tone diagram below. (See the Diagrams 6 and 7)

Diagram 6

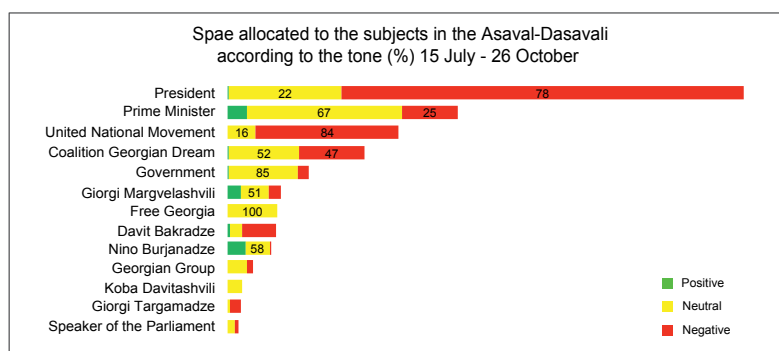
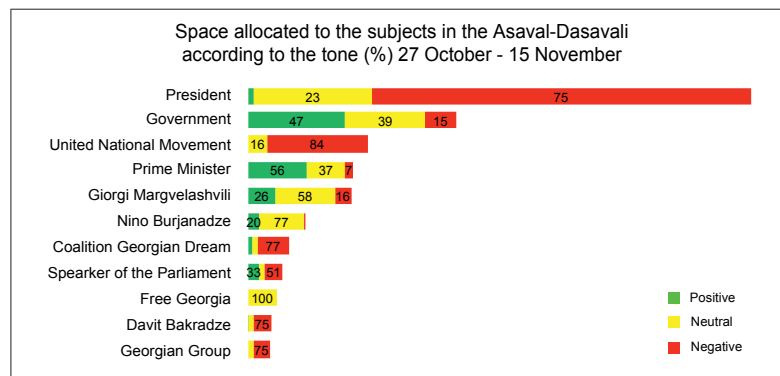




Diagram 7



Among the presidential candidates the newspaper actively covered some of them (Giorgi Margvelashvili, David Bakradze, Nino Burjanadze, Koba Davitashvili, Giorgi Targamadze), while the majority of candidates were left beyond the attention. It is noteworthy that in a pre-election period *Asaval-Dasavali* did not reveal positive attitude towards any of the candidates, like it happened during 2012 parliamentary elections. During the last year election campaign the publication was explicitly supporting “Georgian Dream” and made it look like a power that would save the country. No similar tendency was registered during 2013 presidential elections.

Facts published in *Asaval-Dasavali* in certain cases required additional verification, nevertheless, such information was provided as authentic event that overall facilitated dissemination of unverified information among the public. It is especially important in a pre-election period, when every single piece of information disseminated in relation to candidates has significant importance and influence on public opinion.

## Conclusion

The 2013 election campaign was not as tense as the one of 2012 that reflected on media as well. Namely, media focused more on government related subjects rather than presidential candidates.

Election monitoring of seven Georgian newspapers carried out during four months revealed that Georgian voters were not receiving sufficient information about candidates to make an informed choice. Out of 23 registered candidates media has focused only on few of them (Giorgi Margvelashvili, David Bakradze, Nino Burjanadze, Giorgi Targamadze, Koba Davitashvili and Shalva Natelashvili) and even their coverage was not uniform. For instance, if we compare coverage of Giorgi Margvelashvili, Nino Burjanadze and David Bakradze during four months (15 July - 15 November), we will clearly see that the candidate from the “United National Movement” was covered in more negative tone than the other two. (See the Diagrams 8, 9 and 10)

Majority of the print media outlets tried to follow journalistic standards and ethical norms but in certain outlets unethical, abusive statements addressed to political subjects were used even within the presidential elections period. However, it should be mention that this trend reduced after the elections.

Diagram 8

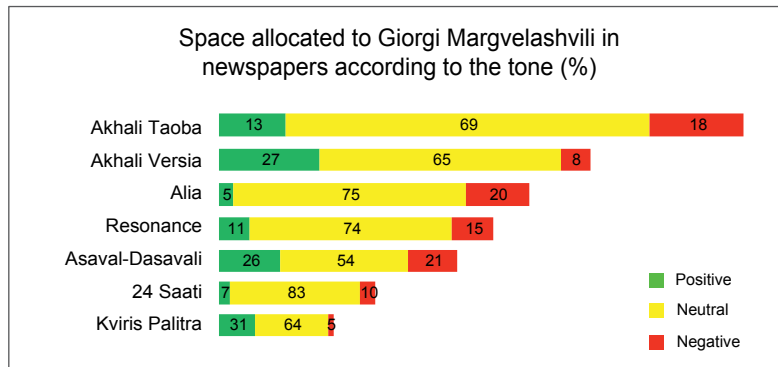


Diagram 9

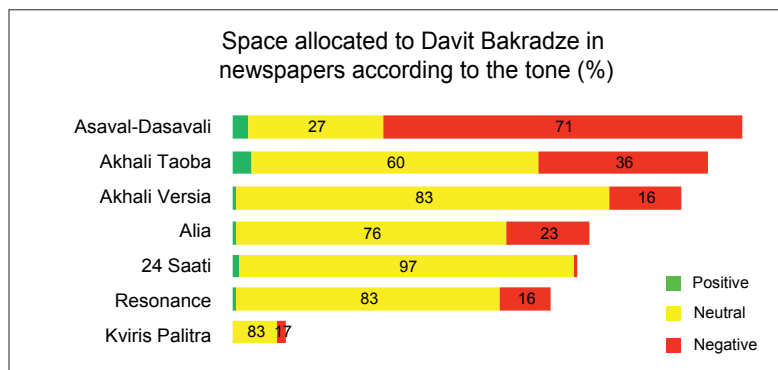
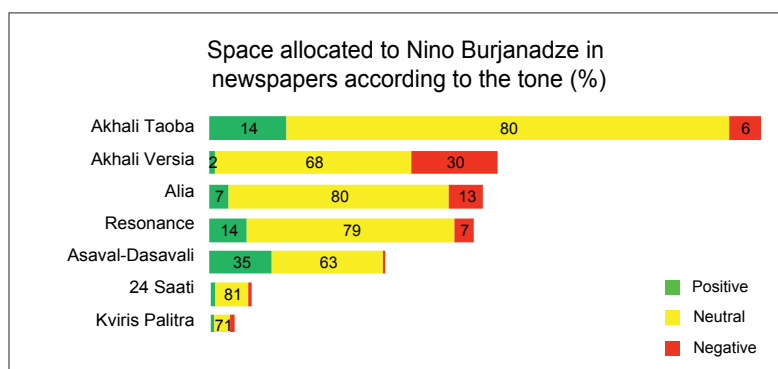


Diagram 10



# Election Monitoring of Online Media

15 June – 15 November 2013

The Civic Development Institute (CDI) performed the media monitoring of 12 news portals from 15 June 2013 until 15 November, inclusive. The following websites were selected for the monitoring: *netgazeti.ge*, *droni.ge*, *politico.ge* (until 18 September), *liberali.ge*, *news.ge*, *presa.ge*, *civil.ge*, *tabula.ge*, *garbonline.tv*, *for.ge*, *dfwatch.net*, *palitrav.ge*, *pirveliradio.ge* (from 18 September). This report presents the results of the media monitoring from 15 June until 15 November, inclusive.

The online media monitoring has revealed the following key findings:

- ✓ The Georgian online media covered the activities of presidential candidates with much less frequency during the pre-election period.
- ✓ There was a relative increase in the frequency of coverage of presidential candidates during September - October, but their coverage rate remained lower than that of other monitoring subjects.
- ✓ The main emphasis was laid mostly on political parties and not on presidential candidates while reporting about political events.
- ✓ Majority of websites provided a more or less balanced and impartial coverage of election activities of presidential candidates.
- ✓ There was an attempt observed on the websites *presa.ge* and *droni.ge* to discredit the ruling party's presidential candidate.
- ✓ The violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms was regularly observed on the websites: *presa.ge*, *droni.ge* and *for.ge*.
- ✓ Compared to the media monitoring performed during the parliamentary elections in 2012, there were positive changes observed in the online media in regards to adhering to the ethical norms of journalism.
- ✓ Such a positive change was observed on the website *droni.ge*, where the cases of using discriminatory and abusive terminology by the journalists were significantly reduced.
- ✓ Improvement of ethical norms of journalism was also observed on *news.ge*.
- ✓ Compared to the monitoring performed during the parliamentary elections of 2012, there was less critical attitude to the issues observed on the English language websites *dfwatch.net* and *civil.ge* (*civil.ge* publishes articles in the English, Georgian and Russian languages). Correspondingly, the rate of neutral tone increased significantly on these websites.
- ✓ The Election Day was quite actively covered by Georgian online media.
- ✓ The coverage of other presidential candidates in online media has been reduced after the elections, and the coverage of Giorgi Margvelashvili, the winning candidate increased significantly.
- ✓ The observation revealed that the main problems of the Georgian online media are: superficial attitude towards the covered issues, lack of sources of information in certain articles, and lack of critical analysis.

## *netgazeti.ge*

*Netgazeti.ge* was distinguished with its diversity of topics and critical attitude to the issues during the monitoring period. It should be pointed out that despite critical approach to the covered issues, the website managed to observe respective balance among political powers and in total provided quite an impartial coverage of the events taking place in the country. There was no positive or negative attitude towards any presidential candidate observed on the website during the election

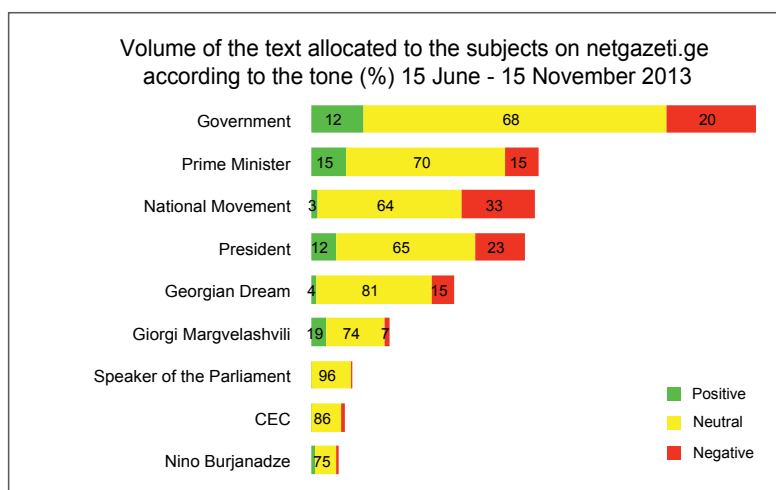
period. *Netgazeti.ge* highly observed the journalistic standards and ethical norms. Moreover, the balance was highly observed in regards to the sources of information, and different and opposing opinions in the articles were often encountered.

The most intensive coverage was provided for the activities of the following monitoring subjects: the government (28%), the Prime Minister (14%), the National Movement (14%) and the President (14%). Among the presidential candidates, the most regularly covered ones were Giorgi Margvelashvili (5%), Nino Burjanadze (2%) and Davit Bakradze (1%) during the monitoring period. It should be pointed out that there were no especially high rates of positive or negative tone observed while covering any of the subjects. (See the Diagram 1)

*Netgazeti.ge* provided quite an active and objective coverage of the Election Day. The website was publishing the information disseminated by various NGOs and Central Election Commission during the day.

The monitoring results let us conclude that *netgazeti.ge* covered not only the election period, but also the Election Day and subsequent events in a quite objective and impartial manner. There were no cases of violating the journalistic standards and ethical norms observed on the website during the monitoring period.

Diagram 1



## *droni.ge*

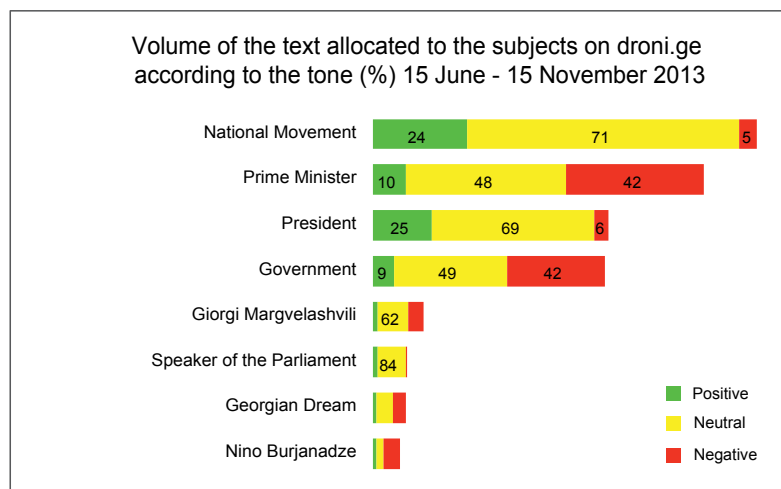
Compared to the monitoring carried out during the parliamentary elections of 2012, there was a sharp change observed on the website in regards to the adherence to the journalistic standards and ethical norms. Discriminatory and abusive terminology in the journalists' texts, which used to be an ordinary characteristic feature for *droni.ge* was hardly ever noticed. The website did not use insulting terminology, nicknames, etc. when criticizing the monitoring subjects. However, it was possible to see the clearly positive attitude to the President and the "National Movement", and the negative attitude to the Prime Minister, the government and the "Coalition Georgian Dream".

*Droni.ge* provided quite a biased coverage of the events taking place in the country during the monitoring period. While reporting on the election activities of presidential candidates, there was a clear attempt to discredit Giorgi Margvelashvili, presidential candidate of the "Georgian Dream".

The most intensive coverage was provided for the activities of the following monitoring subjects: the "National Movement" (28%), the Prime Minister (24%), the President (17%) and the government (17%). The most intensively covered presidential candidates during the monitoring period included: Giorgi Margvelashvili (4%), Nino Burjanadze (2%), Davit Bakradze (1%) and Giorgi Targamadze (1%). Very high rate of negative tone should be pointed out while covering Nino Burjanadze (58%), the Prime Minister (42%), the government (42%), and Giorgi Margvelashvili (29%), although there were high rates of positive tone while covering the President (25%) and the "National Movement" (24%). (See the Diagram 2)

The monitoring results let us conclude that *droni.ge* provided an extremely biased coverage for the events going on in the country. The journalism standards and ethical norms were regularly violated on the website; however, it should be pointed out that compared to the monitoring carried out in 2012, there are positive changes observed on the website in regards to the reasoning of journalists and the terminology used.

Diagram 2



## *politico.ge*

(The monitoring was carried out from 15 June, 2013, until 17 September, inclusive, because the website temporarily suspended its operations at the end of September 2013)

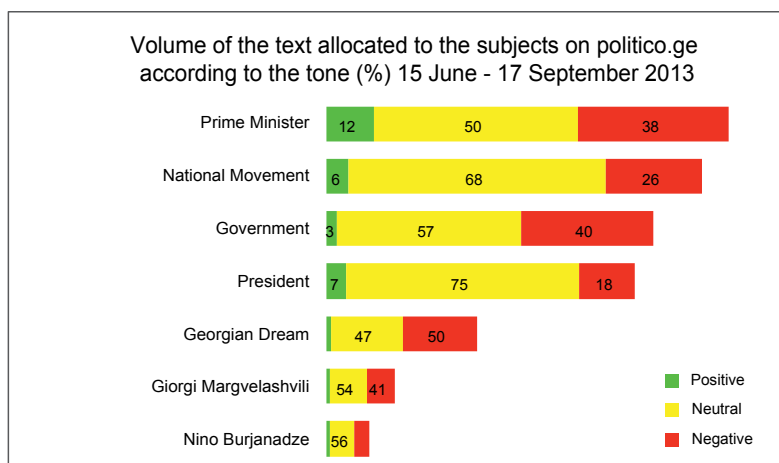
During the monitoring period *politico.ge* mostly published brief, news-type articles. Despite the journalistic standards and ethical norms were mostly observed in certain articles, the long-term observation revealed positive attitude to the President and the “National Movement”, and the negative attitude – to the government, the Prime Minister and the “Coalition Georgian Dream”.

*Politico.ge* often posted articles prepared by another media during the monitoring period. It is noteworthy that the website mostly posted the articles, where the criticism of the government and the “Coalition Georgian Dream”, also the comments of the representatives of the “National Movement” prevailed.

Among the monitoring subjects, the most intensively covered activities were those of the Prime Minister (21%), the “National Movement” (20%), the government (17%) and the President (16%). As for the presidential candidates, the most intensively covered candidates were Giorgi Margvelashvili (4%), Nino Burjanadze (2%) and Davit Bakradze (2%). There was a quite high rate of negative tone observed while covering the “Coalition Georgian Dream” (50%), Giorgi Margvelashvili (41%), the government (40%) and the Prime Minister (38%). (See the Diagram 3)

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that *politico.ge* provided quite a biased coverage of the election processes in the country. The website more or less observed the ethical norms of journalism, and there were no cases of especially gross violation during the monitoring period. However, it should be pointed out that unverified information was published several times.

Diagram 3



## pirveliradio.ge

(The monitoring was performed from 18 September 2013 until 15 November, inclusive)

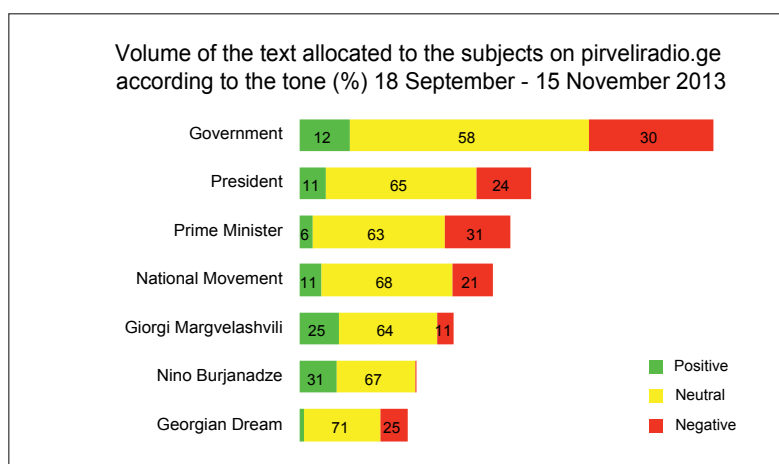
During the monitoring period, *pirveliradio.ge* quite actively covered all the events taking place in the country. The website mostly published brief, news-type articles. During the run-up to the elections, the website quite impartially covered the activities of presidential candidates, also those of various political forces. The website highly observed the journalistic standards and ethical norms.

The most intensive coverage was provided for the activities of the following monitoring subjects: the government (26%), the President (14%), the Prime Minister (13%) and the “National Movement” (12%). Compared to other websites, *pirveliradio.ge* was quite active in terms of covering the activities of presidential candidates during the elections. The most regular coverage was provided for the activities of following presidential candidates: Giorgi Margvelashvili (9%), Nino Burjanadze (7%), Davit Bakradze (3%) and Shalva Natelashvili (2%). It should be mentioned that there was no positive or negative attitude observed to any of the candidates during the monitoring period. (See the Diagram 4) The positive tone rate prevailed while covering the presidential candidates, which is attributed to the active coverage of election meetings and promises, etc. of the candidates on the website.

The website intensively covered the evaluations of various politicians and voting procedures on the Election Day.

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that *pirveliradio.ge* covered the election period, also the Election Day and subsequent events quite actively and impartially. The journalistic standards and ethical norms were observed in the articles.

Diagram 4



## *liberali.ge*

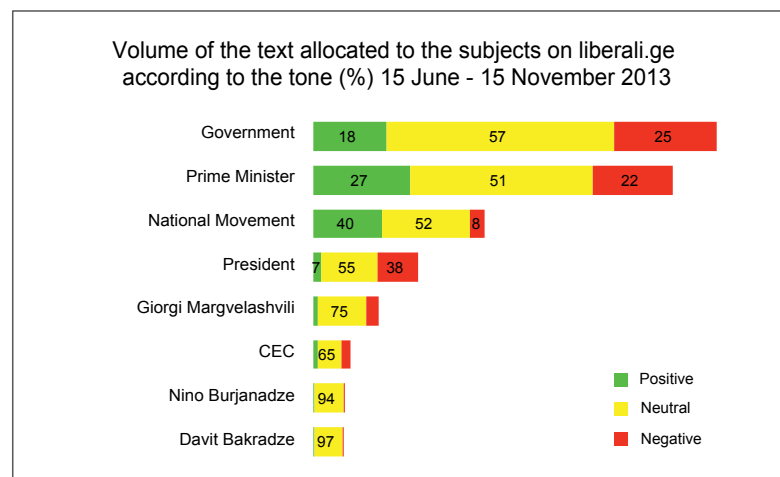
*Liberali.ge* was quite objective and impartial while covering the events taking place in the country during the monitoring period. The website had a high adherence to the journalistic standards and ethical norms. There was no positive or negative attitude observed to any political power.

Among the monitoring subjects, the most intensively covered activities were those of the government (32%), the Prime Minister (28%), the “National Movement” (13%) and the President (8%), and as for the presidential candidates, here the most intense coverage was observed for the activities of Giorgi Margvelashvili (5%), Nino Burjanadze (3%) and Davit Bakradze (2%). There was no especially high rate of positive or negative tone observed while covering any of the presidential candidates. (See the Diagram 5)

The website provided quite an intense and impartial coverage of the Election Day, actively posting information about the elections disseminated by various NGOs and Central Election Commission. Besides, evaluations of various politicians and voting procedures were reported.

Overall *liberali.ge* provided quite an objective and impartial coverage for the election period, also the Election Day and subsequent events as well. The website highly observed the journalistic standards and ethical norms.

Diagram 5



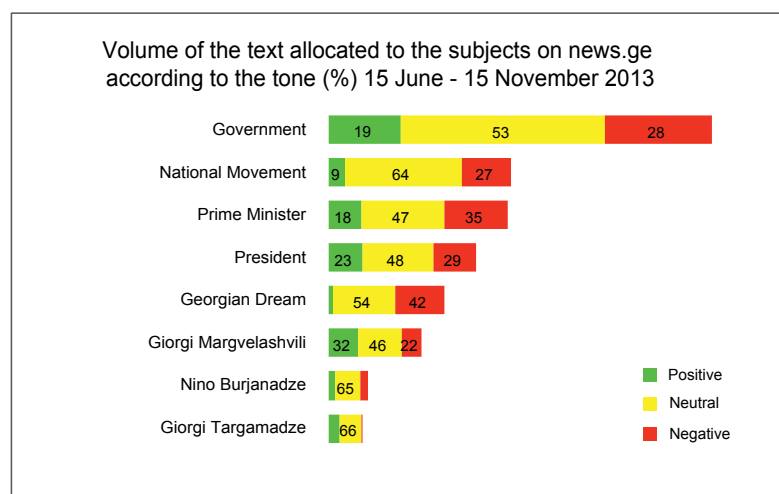
## *news.ge*

During the monitoring period *news.ge* mostly published brief, news-type articles. Despite the journalistic standards and ethical norms were mostly observed in certain articles, the long-term observation reveals relatively more positive disposition to the President and the “National Movement”, and the negative attitude – to the government, the Prime Minister and the “Coalition Georgian Dream”. It was possible to draw this opinion by looking at the thematic selection of the issues posted on the website, also by observing the prevalence of statements and comments of representatives of the “National Movement”. The most intensively covered activities were those of the following monitoring subjects: the government (28%), the Prime Minister (13%), the “National Movement” (13%), and the President (11%). As for the presidential candidates, here the most frequently covered one was Giorgi Margvelashvili (7%), Nino Burjanadze (3%), Giorgi Targamadze (3%) and Davit Bakradze (2%). Quite high rate of negative tone needs to be pointed out while covering the “Coalition Georgian Dream” (42%) and the Prime Minister (35%). (See the Diagram 6)

There were various violations of journalistic standards observed on the website. For example, subjective reasoning of the journalists and mismatch of article headline with the text. There were many articles, where the headline contained the respondent's phrase, though, out of the context, which in fact did not represent an opinion or position of this particular respondent.

Overall there was a positive attitude observed on *news.ge* towards the “National Movement” and a relatively more negative - towards the “Coalition Georgian Dream”. The observation revealed many cases of violation of journalism standards on the website during the monitoring period.

Diagram 6



## *presa.ge*

*Presa.ge* was distinguished with an extremely negative attitude towards the government, the Prime Minister and the “Coalition Georgian Dream” during the monitoring period. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were regularly violated on the website. Balance of sources was rarely observed in certain articles. Unverified information was often published. Besides, the website was also distinguished with extremely unethical expressions, mostly addressed to the government forces and the presidential candidate of the “Coalition Georgian Dream” – Giorgi Margvelashvili, who was often mentioned on the website as “Prime Minister’s Puppet”. There was abusive terminology also encountered in the headlines of articles. In fact, all the articles on the website were critical to the government. The journalists were not reluctant to engage in subjective reasoning and drawing subjective conclusions, which were not supported by any relevant facts. They often published unverified information, as well as those provided by anonymous sources.

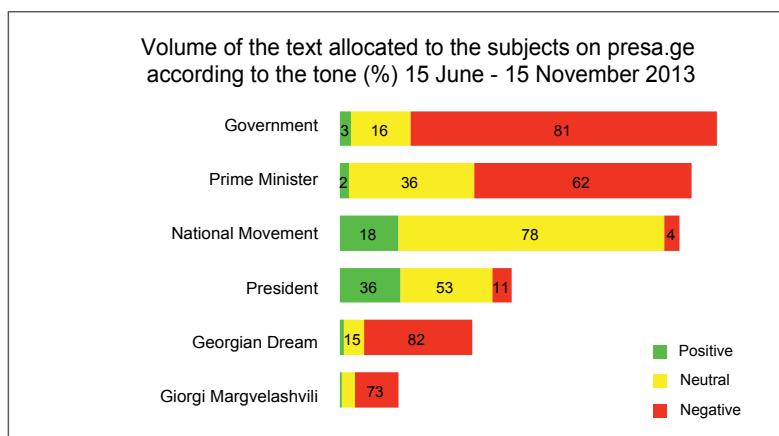
Activities of the following monitoring subjects were most frequently covered: the government (25%), the Prime Minister (23%), the “National Movement” (23%) and the President (11%). As for the presidential candidates, here the most intensively covered subjects were: Giorgi Margvelashvili (4%), Nino Burjanadze (1%), Koba Davitashvili (1%) and Davit Bakradze (1%). There was a very high rate of negative tone observed while covering the “Coalition Georgian Dream” (82%), the government (81%), Giorgi Margvelashvili (73%) and the Prime Minister (62%). High rates of positive tone were observed for the President (36%) and the “National Movement” (18%). (See the Diagram 7)

Compared to other political parties, the website was more actively covering the comments and evaluations by the “National Movement” representatives regarding the election process on the Election Day.

As a result it can be concluded that during the monitoring period *presa.ge* covered the events taking place in the country in an extremely biased and unbalanced manner. Practically all kinds of journalistic standards were regularly violated on the website. The journalists were not reluctant to make subjective evaluations and to use abusive terminology while covering the activities of the ruling party and the government. There was a clear attempt of discrediting Giorgi Margvelashvili, presidential candidate of the “Coalition Georgian Dream” during the election period.



Diagram 7



## civil.ge

During the monitoring period *civil.ge* was covering the ongoing political events objectively and impartially. There was no positive or negative attitude observed to any political power. The journalism standards and ethical norms were very highly observed.

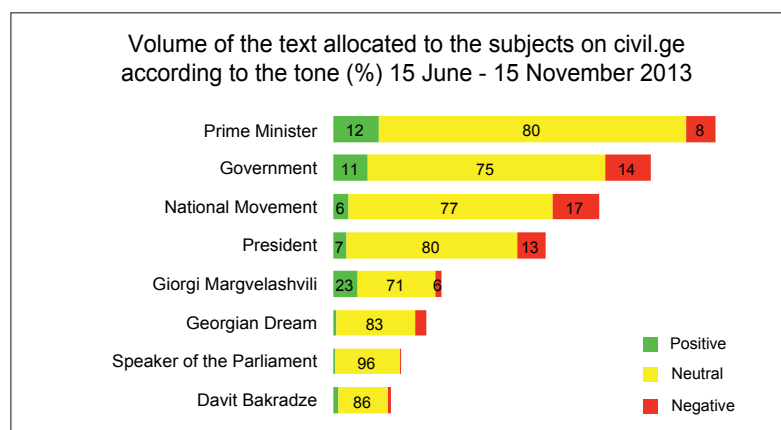
*Civil.ge* was also distinguished with its diverse sources of information. The opinions of representatives of various political forces were often encountered on the website. However, it should be pointed out that compared to the monitoring carried out in 2012, the number of analytical articles decreased significantly. Besides, the critical attitude towards the reported issues became less frequent, and mostly *civil.ge* was limited to only superficial reporting of facts.

The mostly covered activities were those of the following monitoring subjects: the Prime Minister (23%), the government (19%), the "National Movement" (16%), and the President (13%). As for the presidential candidates, here the website mostly reported on Giorgi Margvelashvili (7%), Davit Bakradze (3%) and Nino Burjanadze (2%). We did not observe any especially high rate of positive or negative tone in regards to any presidential candidate. (See the Diagram 8)

*Civil.ge* provided quite an active and impartial reporting on the Elections Day. The website managed to post evaluations of various politicians, results of the exit polls, etc. during the day.

The monitoring results let us conclude that *civil.ge* covered the election period, also the Election Day and subsequent events in a quite objective and impartial manner, and in full adherence to the journalistic standards and ethical norms. The website observed the journalistic standards and ethical norms at the highest degree. However, it should be pointed out that compared to the monitoring of 2012, there was less critical analysis of the events taking place in the country.

Diagram 8



## *tabula.ge*

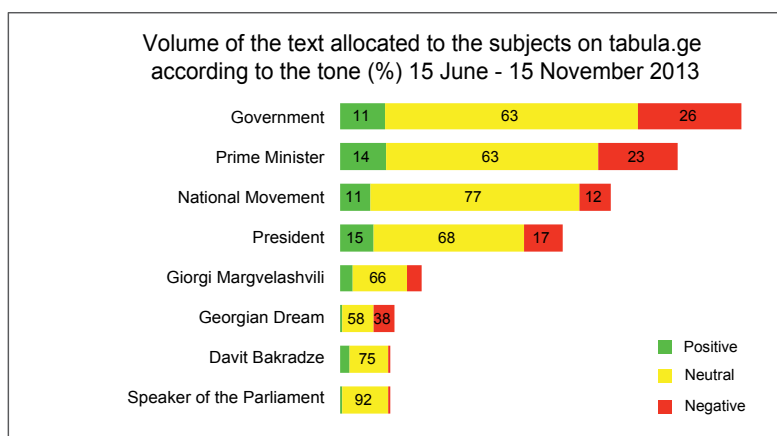
*Tabula.ge* was quite intensively covering the political events happening in the country. The website was distinguished with thematic diversity and critical approach to the issues. Ethical norms of journalism were more or less observed on the website, however, the long-term observation revealed a relatively more positive attitude to the “National Movement”, and quite a critical attitude – to the government and the Prime Minister. However, it should also be mentioned that *tabula.ge* was not clearly biased and some articles posted on this website were mostly prepared in adherence to journalistic standards.

Statements of representatives of the “National Movement” prevailed on the website. Besides, the cases of detention and interrogation of former officials were reported with special intensity. The issues such as suspension of infrastructure projects, which had been initiated by the former authorities, were covered with special intensity. There were many comments of respondents, who were speaking about pro-Russian disposition of the government members. Besides, the website often posted the articles published by the foreign media about detention of former authorities, where much space was allocated to the criticism of the government.

The most actively covered monitoring subjects included: the government (25%), the Prime Minister (21%), the “National Movement” (17%) and the President (14%). As for the presidential candidates, the website most frequently reported about the activities of Giorgi Margvelashvili (5%), Davit Bakradze (3%), Nino Burjanadze (2%) and Giorgi Targamadze (1%). There was no especially high rate of positive or negative tone in regards to any presidential candidate. (See the Diagram 9)

The website provided quite an active and objective coverage of the Election Day. *Tabula.ge* posted the statements of the Central Election Commission and also evaluations of various politicians about the conduct of the elections during the day. The monitoring results let us conclude that *tabula.ge* quite actively covered the election processes taking place in the country. Journalism standards were mostly observed in the articles. Qualitative observation suggests that there is a more positive disposition towards the “National Movement” observed on the website, but in general it is possible to say that the website tries to observe the journalistic standards and in most cases manages to provide reliable and objective information to the readers. Besides, it is distinguished with thematic diversity and critical attitude to the issues.

Diagram 9



## *garbonline.tv*

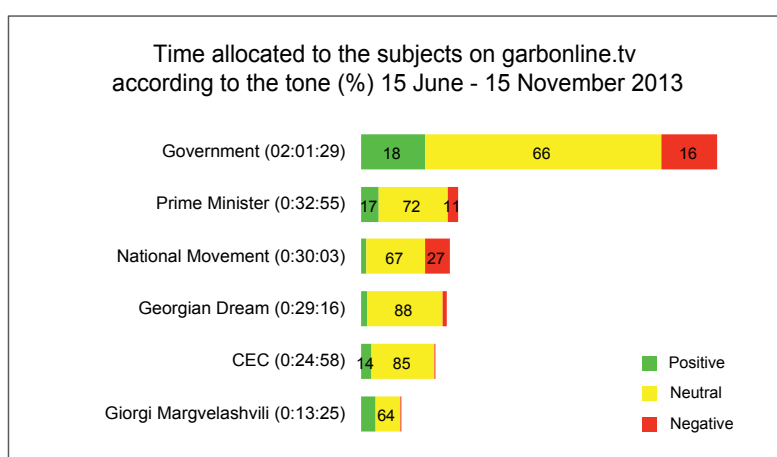
During the monitoring period *garbonline.tv* covered the regional news, also the political events taking place throughout Georgia. The website posted mostly the short videos reporting about the activities of politicians or civil servants, and often presented the fragments of materials shot at press conferences. Any comments or reasoning by journalists were very seldom encountered. It should be pointed out that the journalists' texts were prepared in high adherence to the journalistic standards and ethical norms. The website provided quite an objective and impartial coverage of important events taking place in the country and there was no positive or negative disposition towards any political power during the monitoring period. The opinions of representatives of various political forces were presented on the website.

The website most intensively covered the activities of the following subjects: the government (38%), the Prime Minister (10%), the “National Movement” (9%) and the “Coalition Georgian Dream”. As for the presidential candidates, the most frequently covered candidates were: Giorgi Margvelashvili (4%), Mikheil Saluashvili (3%), Nino Burjanadze (2%), Davit Bakradze (2%), and Koba Davitashvili (4%). There were no especially high rates of positive or negative tone observed while reporting about any presidential candidate. (See the Diagram 10)

The website reported actively about the presidential elections. There was information posted on the Election Day about processes taking place in the capital city, also in the regions as well.

The monitoring results let us conclude that *garboline.tv* did a quite impartial reporting about the election process, also the Election Day and subsequent events. The website highly observed journalistic standards and ethical norms. However, it should also be pointed out that the lack of materials was observed on the website during the monitoring period and thus, it did not fully reflect the political events and election activities of presidential candidates. *Garbonline.tv* paid special attention to the reporting of regional news.

Diagram 10



## for.ge

There was an extremely negative attitude towards the President and the “National Movement” observed on *for.ge* during the monitoring period. This conclusion is based on the frequency of interviews with respondents who are extremely critical to the President and the “National Movement”, also quite insulting statements often expressed by the website’s journalist towards these monitoring subjects. This trend was also reflected in the headlines of articles and photos attached to these articles.

Journalistic standards and ethical norms were regularly violated on the website. The subjective judgments and conclusions by the journalist, which were not supported by any respective facts was often encountered. It is also noteworthy that the journalists frequently used discriminatory and abusive terminology. The balance of sources of information was seldom observed in the articles. Besides, it is notable that the website quite often referred to one and the same experts for evaluating the events taking place in the country, who criticized the President and the “National Movement” while speaking actually about any topic.

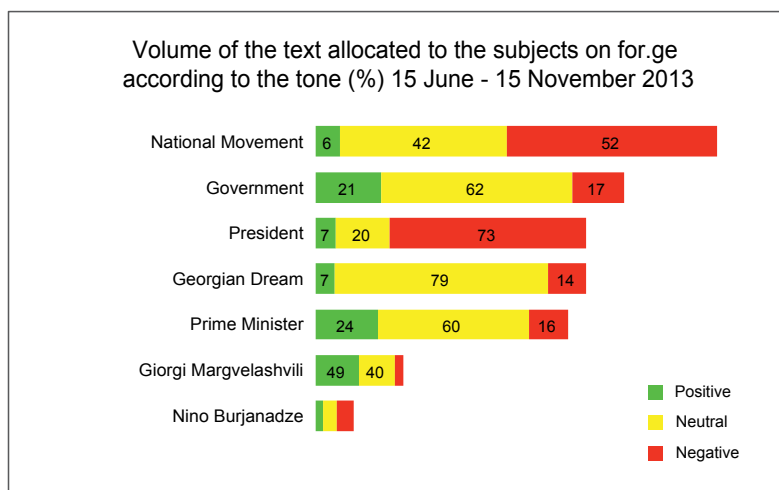
As for the thematic diversity, in this respect the activities of the Ministry of Defense and the Minister Irakli Alasania were covered with special intensity. There was no such interest observed to any of the public agencies on the website during the monitoring period. Activities of the Ministry of Defense and the Minister Irakli Alasania were mostly covered with positive tone.

The website reported most intensively about the activities of the following monitoring subjects: the National Movement (22%), the government (17%), the President (15%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (15%) and the Prime Minister (14%). As for the presidential candidates, the most frequent reporting was done for Giorgi Margvelashvili (5%), Nino Burjanadze (2%), Davit Bakradze (2%) and Koba Davitashvili (1%). We should point out quite a high rate of negative tone observed

while covering activities of the President (73%) and the National Movement (52%), and high rate of positive tone for Giorgi Margvelashvili (49%), the Prime Minister (24%) and the government (21%). (See the Diagram 11)

The monitoring findings let us conclude that *for.ge* covered events taking place in the country in an extremely unbalanced and biased manner. There was a clearly negative attitude towards the President and the “National Movement” observed on the website. In fact, most of the journalistic standards were regularly violated.

Diagram 11



## *dfwatch.net*

*Dfwatch.net* covered the events taking place in the country pretty much objectively and impartially. The website fully observed the highest journalistic standards and ethical norms. There was no especially positive or negative attitude towards any presidential candidate or political power during the election period. Opinions of various political forces were usually covered.

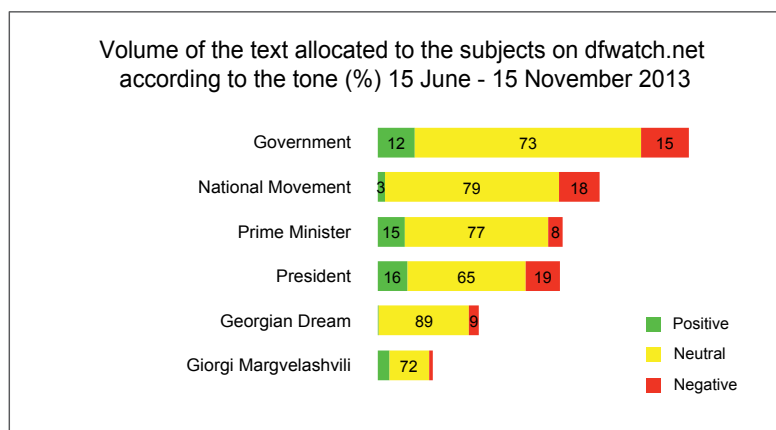
It should be pointed out that compared to the monitoring performed during 2012, the number of analytical articles decreased on the website along with the in-depth and critical analysis.

There was little coverage of daily meetings of presidential candidates on the website during the election period. However, there were several articles during the monitoring period, providing information about the election activities of candidates. *Dfwatch.net* provided pretty active and objective coverage of presidential elections. During the entire Election Day the website was posting evaluations of various politicians and information on voting procedures.

During the monitoring period the most intensively covered monitoring subjects included: the government (26%), the “National Movement” (18%), the Prime Minister (15%) and the President (15%). As for the presidential candidates, the most frequent coverage was provided for Giorgi Margvelashvili (4%), Davit Bakradze (2%) and Nino Burjanadze (2%). There were no especially high rates of positive or negative tone observed for any of the subjects. (See the Diagram 12)

Based on the monitoring results it may be concluded that *dfwatch.net* covered the election processes, also the Election Day and subsequent events in an objective and impartial manner. The website observed the highest journalistic standards and ethical norms, but compared to the monitoring period in 2012, there was less in-depth and critical analysis of issues.

Diagram 12



## palitrav.ge

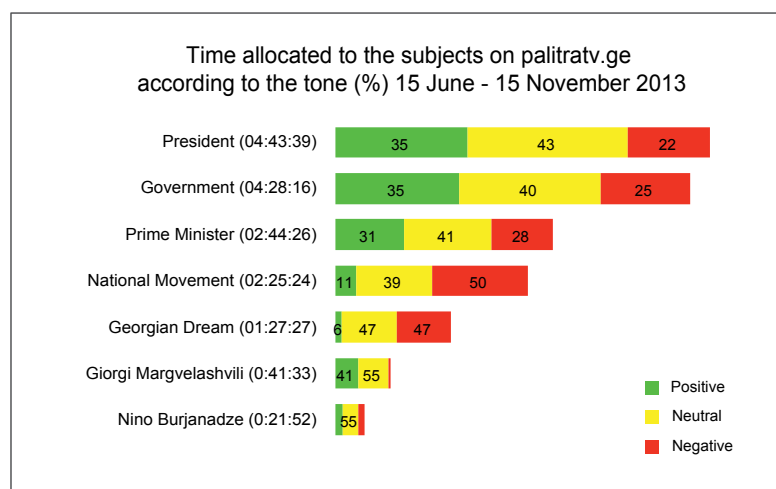
The website mostly posted video-stories during the monitoring period, which was seldom accompanied with texts or comments of journalists. They often posted the videos obtained from various TV companies and materials prepared by the editorial board of *palitrav.ge* that would contain some analysis were rarely encountered. Occasionally there were some original materials prepared by the website journalists, but in most cases there were only videos posted without the journalist's comment or text.

The website most extensively covered the activities of the President (26%), the government (24%), the Prime Minister (15%) and the "National Movement" (13%). The most covered presidential candidates were: Giorgi Margvelashvili (4%), Nino Burjanadze (2%) and Davit Bakradze (1%). Activities of presidential candidates were quite objectively and impartially covered by *palitrav.ge*. Rates of positive tone prevailed while covering the monitoring subjects, which was caused by posting the politicians' statements on the website mostly without any comment or evaluation. (See the Diagram 13)

The website quite actively covered the presidential elections. Evaluations of various politicians and voting procedures were being covered during the Election Day. Besides, there were many reports made about the statements and evaluations of the Central Election Commission during the Election Day. There was no positive or negative disposition to any political power observed while covering the presidential elections.

The monitoring results let us conclude that during the election period *palitrav.ge* provided an objective and impartial coverage of the events developed in the country. The website more or less observed the ethical norms of journalism, although there were cases when unethical vocabulary was allowed without limits in the videos posted on the website.

Diagram 13



## Conclusion

The Georgian online media provided quite an intensive coverage of the political events taking place in the country during the monitoring period. It is noteworthy that the coverage of activities of presidential candidates was much less frequent during the election period. Majority of the websites allocated more attention to the activities of representatives of political parties and public agencies. As the elections got closer, coverage of presidential candidates increased, but their coverage rate still remained quite low compared to other monitoring subjects.

It is possible to identify the following trends: compared to the monitoring period in 2012, the cases of violating the journalistic ethics, namely, the usage of discriminatory and abusive terminology decreased in the Georgian online media. Special emphasis should be laid on *droni.ge*, which radically changed its working style.

Majority of websites provided more or less objective coverage of the election activities of presidential candidates. The exceptions were the websites *droni.ge* and *presa.ge*, where the attempt to discredit Giorgi Margvelashvili, presidential candidate of the “Coalition Georgian Dream” was clearly evident.

*For.ge* also stood out with its one-sided coverage of events. This website openly expressed the editorial board’s critical attitude towards the President and the “National Movement”. However, we cannot say that the website attempted to present Davit Bakradze, presidential candidate of the “National Movement” in a clearly negative manner.

Compared to the monitoring performed in 2012, the number of analytical articles decreased on the websites *civil.ge* and *dfwatch.net*. These websites were mostly limited to superficial coverage of issues during the monitoring period.

The Georgian online media covered the Election Day quite actively. After the elections, the coverage about various presidential candidates decreased on every website and the coverage of the winning candidate Giorgi Margvelashvili increased significantly.

Main problems of the Georgian online media are: superficial coverage of events, scarcity of sources of information in some articles and the lack of critical analysis for the events taking place in the country.



# Annex 1

## List of the monitoring subjects:

- 1 Speaker of Parliament
- 2 Independent MPs
- 3 President
- 4 Government
- 5 Prime Minister
- 6 Central Election Commission
- 7 United National Movement
- 8 Coalition Georgian Dream
- 9 Free Georgia
- 10 New Rights
- 11 Democratic Movement
- 12 National Democratic Party
- 13 Georgia Labor Party
- 14 The Way of Georgia
- 15 Democratic Party of Georgia
- 16 Georgian Group
- 17 Christian–Democratic Movement
- 18 European Democrats
- 19 Government of Ajara
- 20 Girogi Margvelashvili
- 21 Shalva Natelashvili
- 22 Nino Burjanadze
- 23 Nestan Kirtadze
- 24 Salome Zourabishvili
- 25 Mikheil (Gela) Saluashvili
- 26 Mamuka Chokhoniidze
- 27 Nikoloz Gorgijanidze
- 28 Giorgi Targamadze
- 29 Davit Bakradze
- 30 Koba Davitashvili
- 31 Other candidates