



Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics

Study of the Media Coverage of the 2016 Parliamentary Elections

TV News Monitoring Report

31 August – 25 September, 2016

The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics is implementing the monitoring of TV news broadcasts within the framework of the project entitled “Study of the Media Coverage of the 2016 Parliamentary Elections” funded by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The monitoring is carried out from 20 May to 19 December, 2016 and covers main news programs on the following 11 TV channels: “1st Channel” of the public broadcaster, “Rustavi 2”, “Maestro”, “GDS”, “Tabula”, “Kavkasia”, “TV Pirveli”, “Obieqtivi”, “Ajara TV”, and “TV 25”.

The report covers the period from 31 August through 25 September 2016.

The quantitative and the qualitative analysis of the monitoring data has revealed the following **key findings**:

- If during the previous rounds of monitoring, majority of TV channels most actively covered the activities of the Government of Georgia (GoG), now the trend has changed and they started to allocate much more time to political parties.
- “Maestro” and “Obieqtivi” lead the list of all the 11 TV channels with favorable treatment of the Government’s activities - 8% of positive coverage each. As during the previous round of monitoring, “Rustavi 2” is the most critical to the GoG with 44% of negative coverage.
- Activities of the “Georgian Dream” party were covered most favorably on “GDS” (9% of positive tone indicators), and most negatively on “Kavkasia” (42% of negative tone indicators).
- The “United National Movement” had most positive coverage on “Rustavi 2” with 5% of positive tone indicators, while “GDS”, as during the previous round, was the most critical with 61% of negative coverage.
- Bidzina Ivanishvili was covered most favorably on “Rustavi 2” (4% of positive tone indicators), and most negatively on “Obieqtivi” (57% of negative tone indicators each).
- The analysis of time allocation and qualitative observation again reveals that specific TV channels may be favoring particular election subjects. Thus “Obieqtivi” openly supports the

election bloc “Patriotic Alliance, United Opposition”. “Rustavi 2” favours the “United National Movement”, and “Imedi” - the “Georgian Dream” party.

- The content analysis of the TV broadcasts indicates that the channels cover election subjects more or less in accordance with ethical standards. However, their coverage remained unbalanced. TV media imbalances was identified as the main problem during the previous round of monitoring.
- Unbalanced footages with soundbites remain a challenge. The previous reports have already highlighted that those are frequently based on only one source of information. TV media outlets do not seem to treat those as full-fledged media product, neither do they prepare them on par with TV stories or ordinary media coverages and, subsequently, violate the balance. Meanwhile, being an ordinary media product, soundbites should also be prepared according to the standards as for the TV audiences it does not really matter whether they get biased information as a TV story or a soundbite.
- Unlike the previous rounds of monitoring, a number of xenophobic statements by election subjects were observed. Sadly, TV broadcasters revealed the lack of proper knowledge of diversity, equality, and tolerance requirements of the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters and did not distance themselves from such statements.

As a general trend, the level of positive coverage has decreased. This may indicate the increased criticism and balance of media outlets.

Results by TV channels

Charts below show the data of qualitative analysis by the time allocated to and the tone of the coverage of 10 subjects on 11 TV channels. These 10 subjects were selected by the combination of two criteria: the frequency of coverage and the popularity of subjects. For the sake of clarity, 10 subjects are the same for all monitored channels save Adjara TV and TV 25. The charts of the last two channels additionally include the data on the government of Adjara as these broadcasters mainly focus on the developments in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara and their audiences mainly consist of local residents.

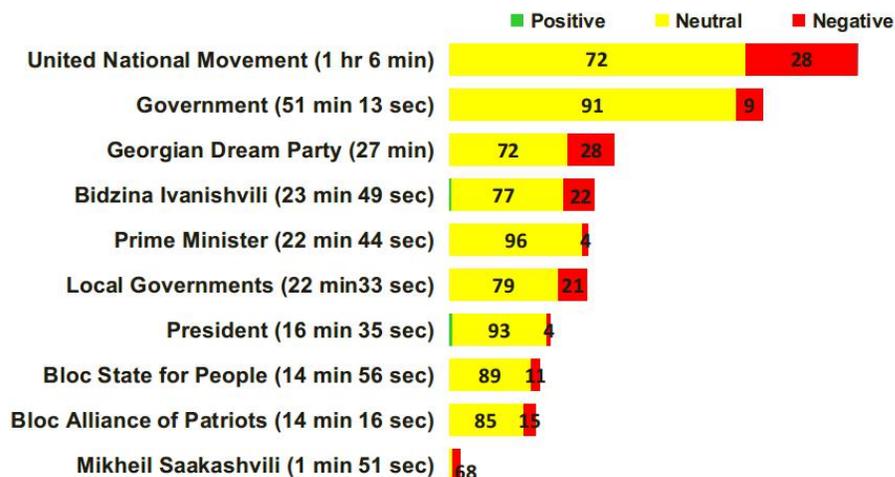
1st Channel

In the reporting period, monitors studied a daily primetime news program “Moambe at 20:00” and “Kviris Moambe” (Moambe on Sunday).

Quantitative analysis

Time Allocated to the Subjects on "1st Channel" (GPB) according to the tone (%)

(30 August - 25 September, 2016)



The news program Moambe on the 1st Channel of Public Broadcaster allocated the largest amount of time to the UNM (in the previous reporting periods, the leader by allocated time was the government). The most favorable coverage was received by the President, with the indicator of positive tone in the total reporting on this subject comprising 3%. The most unfavorable was the coverage of the former President Mikheil Saakashvili, with 68% of total reporting on this subject being in negative tone. Let us recall that Mikheil Saakashvili was in the lead by negative coverage on the 1st Channel in the previous reporting period too (11 July – 30 August). The highest neutral tone was observed in the reporting on the Prime Minister, with the indicator comprising 96% of the total coverage of this subject.

The 1st Channel reported about a wide spectrum of electoral subjects. Reports covered election activities of the subjects and mainly conformed with ethical standards though, alike the previous reporting period, instances of imbalance reporting were observed.

On **2 September**, environmentalists staged a protest rally outside the Tbilisi Mayor's Office to demand from the Mayor the dismissal of the head of Environment and Landscaping Department and the reorganizations of the department. They also demanded the investigation into the fact of tree felling on Kazbegi Avenue. The report contained comments of several demonstrators about unbearable ecological conditions in the city, but it did not contain responses of the Mayor or a representative of the Mayor's Office to the demands. The next news item also concerned the problem of Environment and Landscaping Department of Tbilisi Mayor's Office and the tree felling, though it did not contain replies of the Mayor's Office to the demands of demonstrators either.

On **13 September**, a short footage with soundbites was dedicated to the defection of a majoritarian candidate for Rustavi constituency from the Free Democrats party to the ruling Georgian Dream. It noted that together with the candidate some 270 members left the political

party too due to the change in “Alasania’s political course” and failure to pay salaries to party members. Both Free Democrats and its leader were presented in a negative light; however, the material did not contain a reply from the political party; nor was any effort to obtain a reply seen.

A report aired on **19 September** recounted a story of defection of concrete persons from the political party of Paata Burchuladze and allegations voiced by them. The report also informed that the leaders of the party met with representatives of diplomatic corps and nongovernmental organizations. The report was balanced, enabling all sides to express their positions; however, the report was finished with the following text of journalist: “...however, the majority of ambassadors did not attend the meeting; the leaders of nongovernmental organizations were not seen in the meeting room either. Most of seats were taken by members of the political union.” This text was biased as it showed an attempt to denigrate the meeting. All ambassadors and leaders of nongovernmental organizations might were unable to attend the meeting, but this did not belittle the significance of the meeting because the aim of such meetings is to inform invited organizations and this aim is achieved regardless of who attend the meeting - top persons or their representatives. In this particular case, the above cited text of the journalist did not provide any important information to audience, but created an impression of bias. Journalists must avoid such texts in news items and limit themselves to conveying important information.

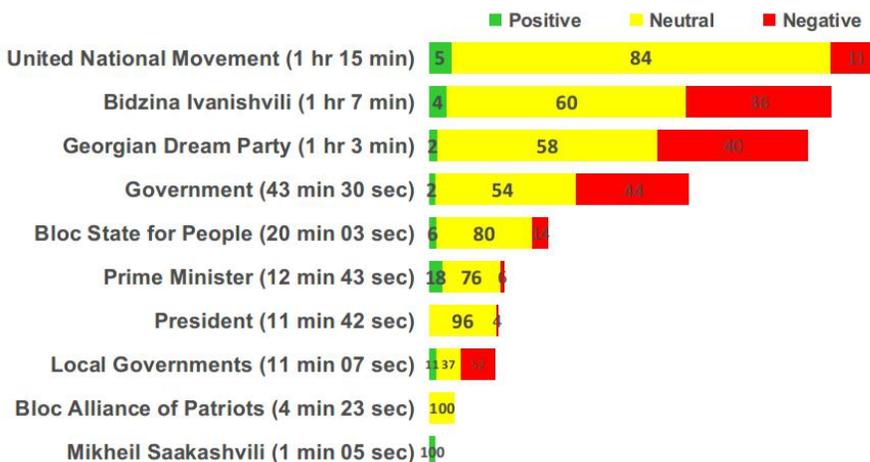
Rustavi 2

In the reporting period, monitors studied a daily primetime news program “Kurieri” (aired every weekday at 21:00), “Shabatis Kurieri” (at 21:00 every Saturday) and “P.S.” (at 21:00 every Sunday).

Quantitative analysis

Time Allocated to the Subjects on "Rustavi 2" according to the tone (%)

(30 August - 25 September, 2016)



In its news broadcasts, Rustavi 2 allocated the largest amount of time to the coverage of the United National Movement (UNM), in contrast to the previous reporting period when the government was in the lead by the corresponding indicator. The most favorable coverage was received by Mikheil Saakashvili, with the total 100% of reporting about him being positive in tone. The highest amount of unfavorable coverage was received by the local government (52%) whilst the highest indicator of neutral tone was observed in the reporting about the election bloc Alliance of Patriots (100%). Rustavi 2 continued to be distinguished for extreme criticism of Bidzina Ivanishvili and the Georgian Dream.

In terms of ethical standards, the problem was the violation of balance in reporting again.

In a lead-in of a report aired on **3 September**, the presenter said: “The Georgian Dream introduced such an amendment to the law, which makes it easier to seize the property of mortgage debtors.” The report and a journalist’s stand-up were dedicated to the issue of mortgage debtors. It was said that the amendment made to the Civil Code by the Georgian Dream in 2013 violated the rights of mortgage debtors unfairly leaving them without housing.

According to the report, this amendment was introduced to favor interests of the Cartu Bank. Accusations were made against the Georgian Dream by Amiran Giguashvili, presented by the journalist as a defense lawyer, though the caption identified him as a single-seat candidate for Gldani constituency from Free Democrats. The journalist, the defense lawyer, a representative of the nongovernmental organization and a member of the UNM were all railing against the government, the Georgian Dream and the Cartu Bank; however, the report did not provide even a single comment of any of the accused parties and did not show any attempt to obtain such a comment. The report was biased and unbalanced.

A report on **4 September** concerned an agreement that emerged in the dispute between Rustavi 2 and Kibar Khalvashi and according to which Kibar Khalvashi had no claims for Rustavi 2 but was merely representing Irakli Okruashvili.

“As it has transpired, the businessman who now demands shares in the TV company does not have any right to act so,” the journalist noted thus excluding any questioning of the authenticity of the agreement signed between Khalvashi and Okruashvili.

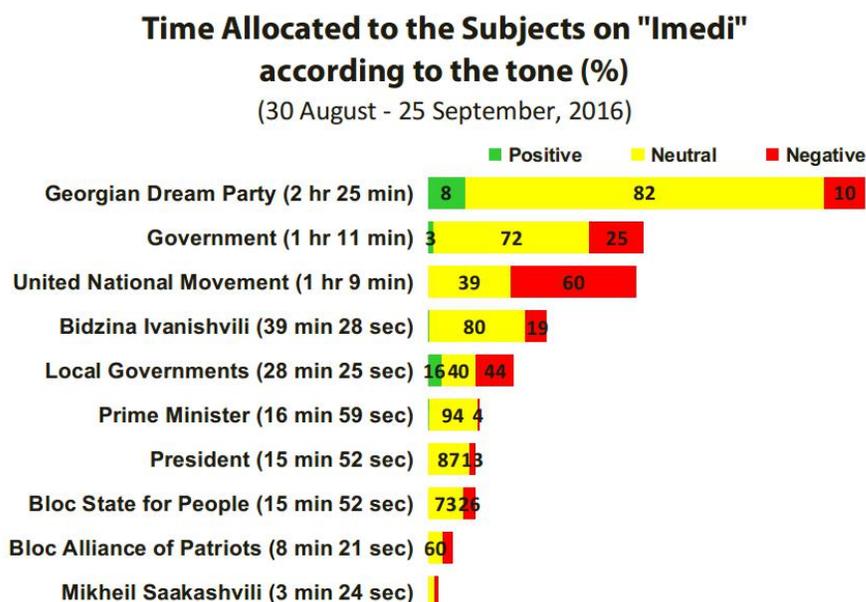
The journalist of Rustavi 2 provided the information in the agreement as a confirmed fact. The journalist drew conclusions without double checking the trustworthiness with several sources and relying only on the agreement, the authenticity of which was not verified.

The author of the report accused Kibar Khalvashi of lying. The report contained comments of Irakli Okruashvili and his defense lawyer. According to the journalist, Okruashvili’s lawyer stated that the authenticity of the agreement were confirmed by several international expertise. The journalist did not show opinions of those expertise; it was not clear from the report whether the journalist asked

the defense lawyer to show those opinions. At the end of the report, the journalist noted that the attempts to reach Kibar Khalavshi proved futile, but the journalist did not say whether attempts were made to reach Khalavshi’s lawyer. Having produced an almost nine-minute-long report in which a subject was insulted, the media outlet should have undertaken more efforts to ensure balance in reporting. It is worth to note that the report was aired on the program P.S. which, in contrast to daily news program, allows journalists to take much more time and means to produce a fully-fledged report.

Imedi

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program “Qronika” (aired every weekday at 20:00), “Qronikis Studia” (at 20:00 every Saturday) and “Imedis Dro” (at 20:00 every Sunday).



Quantitative analysis

Imedi TV allocated most of its news broadcast time to the Georgian Dream. Similar to the previous reporting period, the most positive coverage was received by the Georgian Dream (8%). The most negative tone was observed in the reporting about the UNM (60%). The highest indicator of neutral coverage was seen in the reporting about the Prime Minister (94%). The efforts to favorably cover the Georgian Dream was apparent not only by the quantitative analysis but also by the content of materials.

For example, on **8 October**, a report about political party lists covered top ten candidates on the lists of almost all main parties. The journalist’s text said: “According to experts, the promise of having new faces on the lists was delivered on by the Georgian Dream alone.” An expert was

shown saying that the lists of other parties, save the Georgia Dream, did not offer any novelty. This information was not true because there were new personalities on the lists of several other political parties, but the journalist ignored that. It was apparent that the aim of journalist's text and selected comments was to present the Georgian Dream in the favorable light, which gave the impression of biased reporting.

A report on **7 September** was dedicated to new buses in Tbilisi. To see new buses, Tbilisi Mayor Davit Narmania traveled to Poland. The video footage showed Narmania inspecting the quality of buses. The journalist said that 143 buses were brought in Tbilisi, which was not true as there were talks underway on handing over only 10 buses. The Tbilisi Mayor, who was speaking about ecological conditions, was covered favorably.

The report lacked information about the number of buses Tbilisi needed; whether those few buses would help improve ecological conditions given that up to 700 old buses operate in the capital city. A journalist has an obligation to offer public diverse opinions and information about the topics of public interest. In this particular case, the information which relied on only one source failed to inform audience and it served the aim of presenting the Tbilisi Mayor in a favorable light.

In a report aired on **15 September**, the organization In Allegiance to Georgia was accused of having ties with the UNM and intending to stage provocations. The report also stressed that members of this organization was caught by an Imedi camera at the UNM office. The UNM was presented unfavorably but the report neither provided their comments nor showed an attempt to get comments from them.

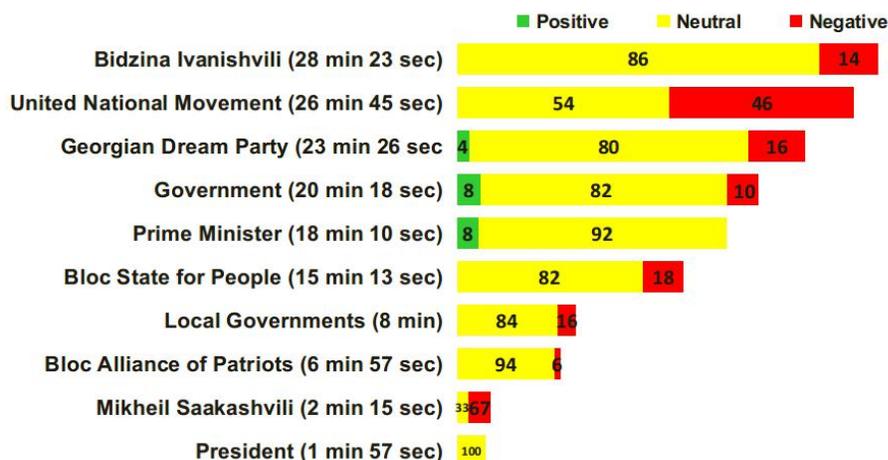
Maestro

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program "Kontakti at 8 o'clock" (aired every weekday at 20:00).

Quantitative analysis

Time Allocated to the Subjects on "Maestro" according to the tone (%)

(30 August - 25 September, 2016)



Maestro allocated most of its news broadcast time to Bidzina Ivanishvili. The most favorable coverage was received by the government and Prime Minister with the positive tone indicators standing at 8% in either of the cases. The most unfavorable coverage was received by Mikheil Saakashvili – at 67%. The highest indicator of neutral tone – 100% of the allocated time, was observed in the reporting about President Giorgi Margvelashvili. Among political parties, the Georgian Dream received the most positive reporting on Maestro.

In terms of ethical standards, the main problem on Maestro was the breach of balanced reporting.

A report on **16 September** contained an accusation against Irakli Okruashvili. A member of the Alliance of Patriots said that Irakli Okruashvili bribed voters in Gori by supplying food products to them. The report did not feature Okruashvili or any member of his election headquarters; nor was seen any attempt to obtain comment from them. It is worth to note that the opponent accused Okruashvili of committing a criminal offence – bribery of voters. In such a case it was necessary for a journalist to achieve a reasonable balance in reporting as the topic of the report was an alleged crime, not an ordinary political criticism. When providing such information to audience, a media outlet must take all efforts to double check and confirm facts; this was not done in the mentioned report.

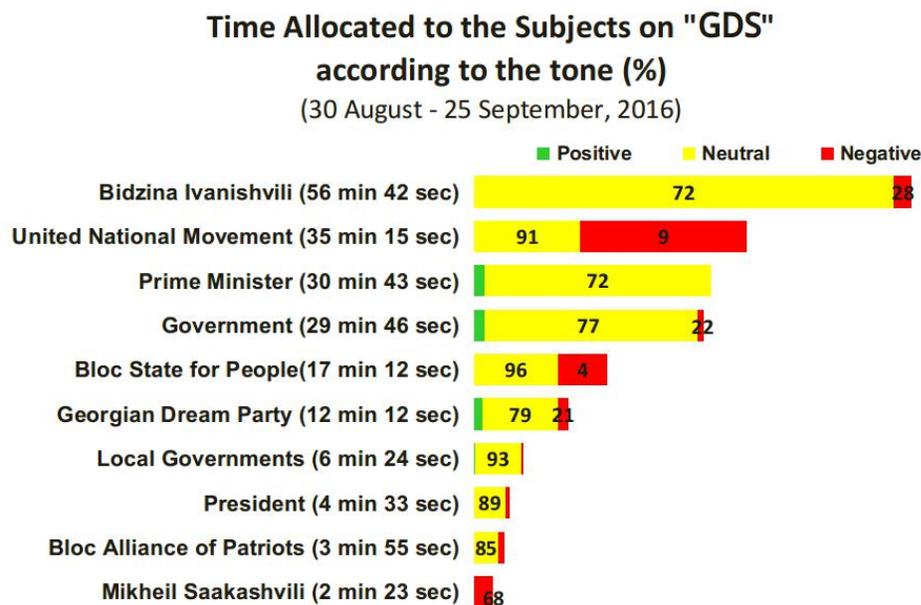
On **31 August**, a report was aired about the incitement to suicide of a young person in Samtredia. A suspect in committing this crime is a police officer. Alongside the comments of defense lawyers and victims, the report also contained a comment of one of UNM leaders though no reason was provided behind the need to include this comment. The aim of recording a political party's comment was unclear as it provided the audience with no information about the criminal case but merely represented a general political evaluation. In our previous monitoring report, we called on media outlets not to discriminate against members of other political forces and if reports about

non-political topics contain a comment of a political force then other political forces should also be enabled to make comments. Otherwise, the principle of selecting only one political subject is not clear.

GDS

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program “2030” (aired every weekday at 20:30).

Quantitative analysis



GDS spent the largest amount of time on Bidzina Ivanishvili and most favorably covered the Georgian Dream, with the indicator of positive tone comprising 9%. The most unfavorable coverage among political parties was received by the UNM, with the negative tone indicator reaching 61% of total reporting on this subject. The coverage of Mikheil Saakashvili was totally - 100% negative in tone. The neutral tone was the highest in the coverage of Bidzina Ivanishvili and the Prime Minister with the indicators standing at 96% in either of the cases.

Special sympathy towards the Georgian Dream was apparent on GDS.

For example, on **9 September** an almost three-minute-long report was dedicated to the election list of Georgian Dream candidates and throughout the report, the Georgian Dream was shown in a positive light with the journalist speaking about those issues which would portray the Georgian Dream favorably. For example, the journalist’s text emphasized new faces on the party list; a person with disability on the list; lack of single-set candidates among the top 50 candidates of the list, thereby underlining that the political party did not insure candidates against being left without

seats in the parliament; lack of old faces on the list such as Jachvliani, Zviadauri, Tamazashvili, et cetera.

The report did not contain even a single critical opinion, although after the presentation of the party list many people criticized it for having several such persons whose credentials were very much questioned; hence, the report did not reflect a real picture. A media outlet shall provide audience with diverse opinions and positions on issues of public interest.

Yet another report, which was permeated with sympathy for the Georgian Dream, was dedicated to election manifestoes of political parties. The key subject of the report was the Georgian Dream while other parties were just criticizing the Georgian Dream manifesto. The journalist underscored that experts deem the creation of 200,000 jobs possible and that the number was taken from the Georgian Dream manifesto; the journalist also said that employers spoke about a positive employment trend of late. The journalist emphasized positive aspects of the Georgian Dream manifesto, for example, “a special attention paid to the employment in the Georgian Dream election manifesto.” The report included comments of representatives of Nino Burjanadze’s party, Burchuladze’s party, the Free Democrats and the UNM, but did not include those of Republican Party, Alliance of Patriots, Labor Party and others. The principle of selection a segment of subjects was not clear.

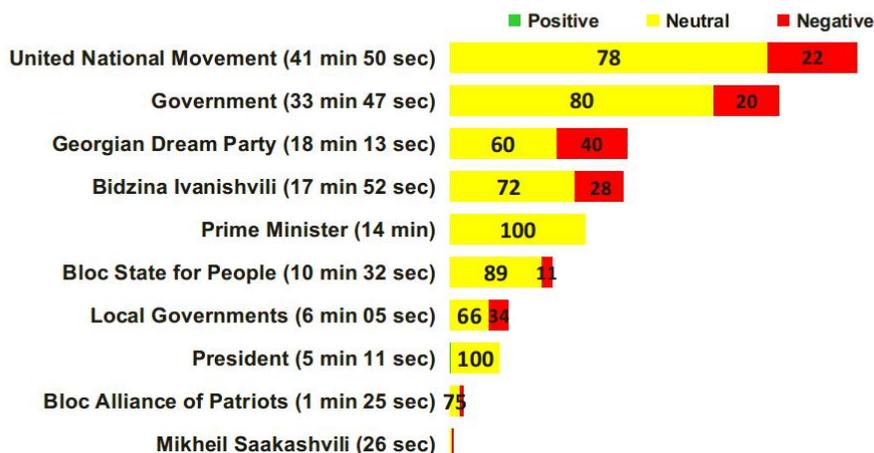
Tabula

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program “Focus” (aired every weekday at 19:00).

Quantitative analysis

Time Allocated to the Subjects on "Tabula" according to the tone (%)

(30 August - 25 September, 2016)



Tabula allocated the largest amount of time to the UNM. It did not provide favorable coverage to any of subjects. In terms of negative tone, the leader was the Georgian Dream with the indicator standing at 40% of total coverage of the subject. The neutral tone was most extensively used towards President and Prime Minister (100% each).

Instances of unbalanced reporting was observed on Tabula.

For example, a report on **2 September** was dedicated to a rally of citizens and environmentalists, staged outside the Mayor's building, who voiced their protests against felling of trees in Tbilisi. Several respondents criticized Tbilisi Mayor and the Mayor's Office, but the report did not provide a comment in response, nor was an attempt to obtain one seen.

In another report, aired on the same day, the Mayor's Office was criticized again, but it did not contain a comment in response; an attempt to obtain one was not seen this time again.

On **6 September** Free Democrats accused the Georgian Dream of exerting pressure on them; they released an audio recording in which, according to Free Democrats, brother of a single-seat candidate from the Georgian Dream threatened their activist. The person who threatened the activist was identified. Nevertheless, the report did not provide a comment in response to the accusation, nor was the attempt to obtain such a comment seen. An important thing in this particular case is that while in other cases imbalance was observed when political subjects were criticizing one another, in this report a concrete person was accused of criminal offense (intimidation) and a journalist was required to treat the topic with higher degree of responsibility and to necessarily provide a position of another side – an accused person.

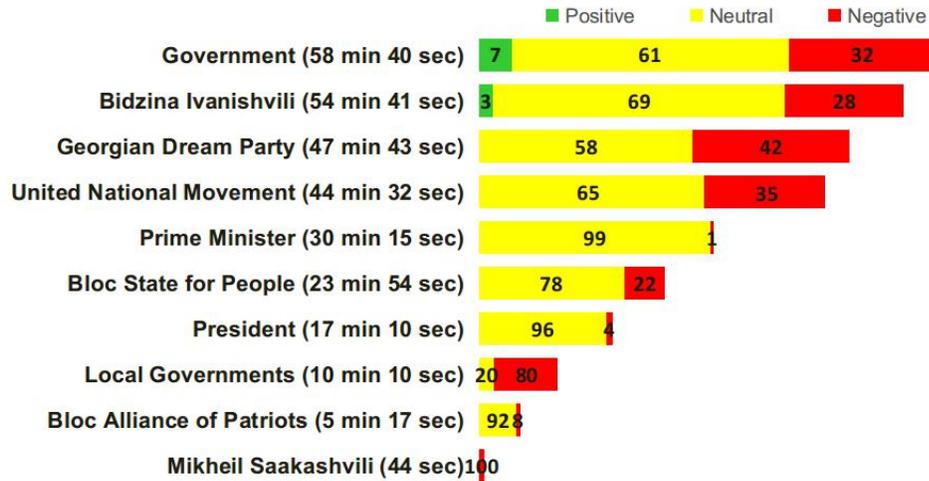
Kavkasia

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program “Dghe” (aired every weekday at 20:30).

Qualitative analysis

Time Allocated to the Subjects on "Kavkasia" according to the tone (%)

(30 August - 25 September, 2016)



Kavkasia spent the largest amount of time on the government. The most favorable coverage was received by government, with the positive tone at 7% of the total reporting on the subject. The highest negative tone was observed in the reporting about the local government (80%) and Mikheil Saakashvili (100%). The most neutral coverage in tone was the reporting about the Prime Minister (99%). News broadcasts on Kavkasia is distinguished for its shortage of reports. Stories are mainly reported by means of short footages with soundbites. Lack of captions identifying respondents remain a problem and on certain occasions it is impossible to identify respondents. The main problem on Kavkasia was also a lack of balance.

On **1 September**, the UNM accused the Georgian Dream of exerting pressure on kindergarten teachers. The report provided two accusations made by UNM members, nothing else. No attempt was undertaken to double check the information. The information was unbalanced.

On **6 September**, the UNM and the Free Democrats made a statement concerning the aggravation of crime situation in the country. The information was not supported by any evidence. The UNM raised the issue of liability of Interior Minister and the Vice Premier Kakha Kaladze. Serious allegations were voiced against Kaladze, but no reply from him was provided; the efforts to obtain his comment was not seen either.

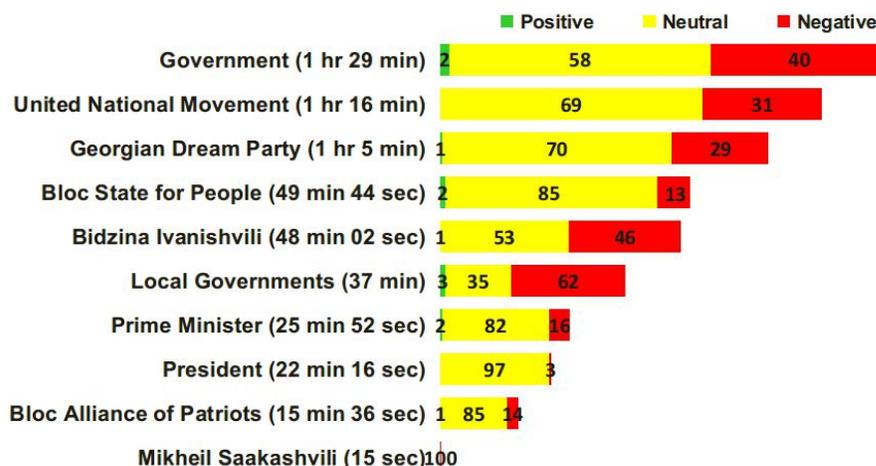
TV Pirveli

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program (aired at 22:00).

Qualitative analysis

Time Allocated to the Subjects on "TV Pirveli" according to the tone (%)

(30 August - 25 September, 2016)



TV Pirveli covered the government most extensively. The highest indicator of positive tone – 3%, was observed in the reporting on the local government. The most negative tone was observed in the reporting on the local government with the corresponding indicator comprising 62% of the total coverage of this subject. The most neutral in tone was the reporting about the President (97%).

In the reporting period, TV Pirveli covered news mainly in the format of short footage with soundbites; in-depth reports were in shortage. Stories were mainly covered superficially and the lack of balance in the coverage was the main problem of this TV channel. For example:

On **8 September**, during a briefing the Labor Party made an accusation: “the Georgian Dream runs a nest of credit issuing offices, online credits and game business. With their encouragement these criminal organizations have been plundering our population. Many people were driven to the point of suicide.” No evidence was provided to prove the accusations voiced by the Labor Party; there were no comments from the Georgian Dream; nor were attempts to obtain such comments seen. The balance was violated.

On **2 September** windows of the office of UNM single-seat candidate for Vake constituency were smashed. According to the journalist’s text, Elene Khoshtaria accused the Georgian Dream of being behind this fact. In her comment, the candidate herself blamed the Georgian Dream for fighting against opponents in this form. Nothing proved this information; no reply from the Georgian Dream or the government was provided.

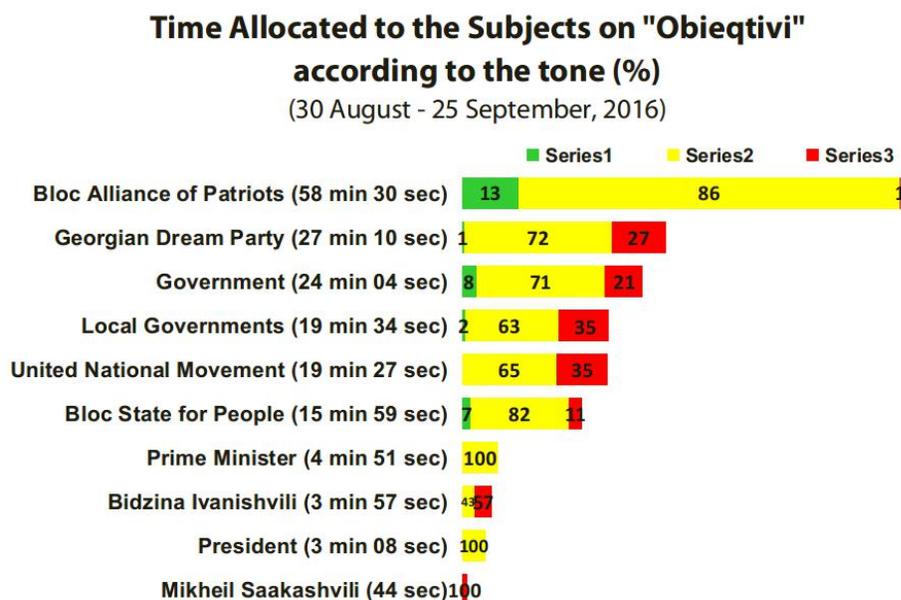
On **2 September**, one of the leaders of Alliance of Patriots, Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, when presenting a single-seat candidate in Adjara constituency, made a xenophobic statement involving Turkophobia: “First of all I will defend Adjara from the expansion of Turkey and no Georgian will be

a servant of others.” The presenter of the news program did not distance herself from the Turkophobic statement and did not explain to the audience that such statements were unacceptable. However, the ethical rule requires from a journalist to fight against intolerant statements in their broadcasts.

Obieqtivi TV

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program (aired every weekday at 19:30).

Quantitative analysis



Much like the previous reporting period, Obieqtivi allocated the largest amount of time to the Alliance of Patriots. Let us recall that one of the leaders of this bloc, Irma Inashvili, is a co-founder of the Media Union Obieqtivi. The highest indicator of positive coverage also belonged to the Alliance of Patriots (13%). The highest negative tone was seen in the coverage of Mikheil Saakashvili (100%). The neutral tone was the highest in reporting about Prime Minister and President (100% each).

Frequent and loyal coverage of members of the Alliance of Patriots by the channel was apparent. Balance was also violated in favor of the Alliance of Patriots. For example, a report aired on **1 September**, featured a conversation between a Borjomi single-seat candidate from the party and the Minister of Environment taking place on the Borjomi plateau. In this conversation Zurab Khachidze accused the Minister of failing to timely remove diseased trees from the plateau. The report said that the candidate did not receive the answer from the Minister. The report included a video record, which was submitted to the TV channel by Khachidze, containing a question of

Khachidze but missing an answer of the Minister. This video is followed by Khachidze’s comment that the Minister failed to answer his question. Khachidze spoke about the violation of safety rules on the part of the Ministry. The report ended with a text saying that the Minister did not respond to Khachidze’s accusations either. The report did not show whether the Minister was asked to comment or what the Minister told Khachidze in the abovementioned video record. The report contained a comment of a representative of Forestry Agency, though given that the entire report was dedicated to the criticism of the Minister, it would be appropriate to show at least an attempt of the journalist to obtain a comment from him.

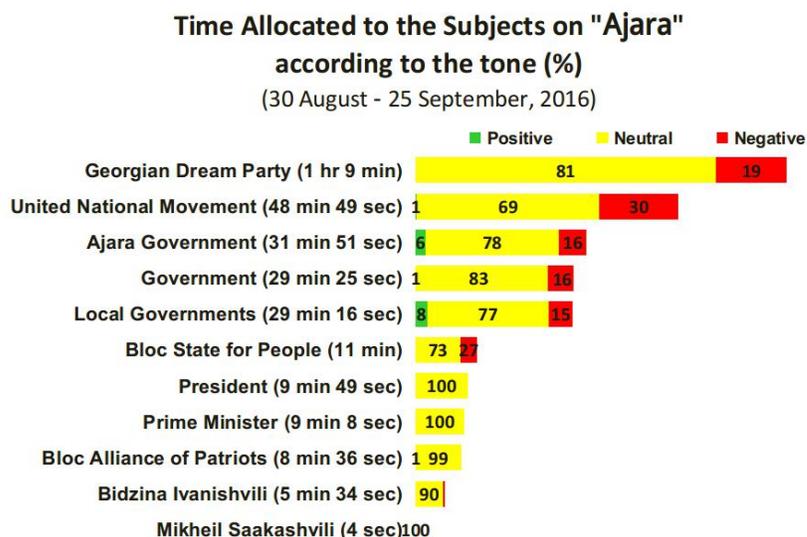
On **1 September** the UNM members voiced accusations against the Tbilisi Mayor’s Office. They claimed that the Mayor’s Office was pressurizing kindergarten employees by demanding that they fill in special forms. Although in this report the journalist said that accusations were made by UNM members, this does not relieve a media outlet from the responsibility to observe a reasonable balance in reporting. The report should have included a comment of a representative of Tbilisi Mayor’s Office or shown an attempt to obtain such a comment.

On **8 September**, Bidzina Ivanishvili, at one of regional meetings, called on the Alliance of Patriots to openly declare their foreign policy course. A report on this topic spent eight seconds in total on this call, but it was followed by a lengthy, 4,5 minute-long, and unfit for a news format, monologue of one of the leaders of Alliance of Patriots, Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi. In general, Obieqtivi is distinguished for its sympathy towards the Alliance of Patriots; something which we have noted in our previous reports as well.

Adjara TV of Public Broadcaster

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program (“Main News at 21:00”).

Quantitative analysis



Adjara TV covered the Georgian Dream most extensively; the highest indicator of positive tone was seen in the reporting about the local government – 8% of the total coverage time of this subject. The highest negative tone was seen in the reporting about the UNM – at 30%. Most neutral in tone was the coverage of the Prime Minister and the President – 100% each.

Undue reporting of xenophobic and Turkophobic fact by Adjara TV was observed in the reporting period. There were instances of unbalanced reporting too.

A report on **6 September** covered the presentation of single-seat candidate for Batumi constituency, Armaz Akhvlediani. The journalist's text presented him in a positive light by abundantly using such modifiers as: honest, humble, professional, et cetera. According to the report, the Georgian Dream, the local government of Adjara and the head of government Zurab Pataridze were accused of luring and pressurizing Akhvlediani's supporters. Akhvlediani cited concrete facts. Despite grave accusations, there were no comments provided in response; nor was an attempt to obtain such comment seen. The reporting was unbalanced.

On **5 September** eggs were hurled at the office of Girchi in Batumi. A representative of the political party put the blame on the government and the Georgian Dream. This accusation, which was expressed in a partly-humoristic manner, was left without a response. Since a journalist deemed it necessary to report about this accusation, she should have made efforts to obtain a response to this accusation as well.

On **21 September**, the TV Adjara offered opinions of politicians regarding the construction of a Turkish school in Batumi. Among them was a comment of a representative of Alliance of Patriots: "Turkish expansion must be stopped in Adjara." During the reporting period, several xenophobic statements were observed, made by representatives of Alliance of Patriots; unfortunately in this as well as other cases media failed to stand up to such statements. When covering such statements, a media outlet must distance itself from them and explain to audience that the statement is xenophobic and unacceptable. Modern ethical standards require from journalists to express their position, criticize intolerant, xenophobic statement and its author. Unfortunately, TV Adjara failed to act so, thereby contributing to the unconditional reporting of xenophobia.

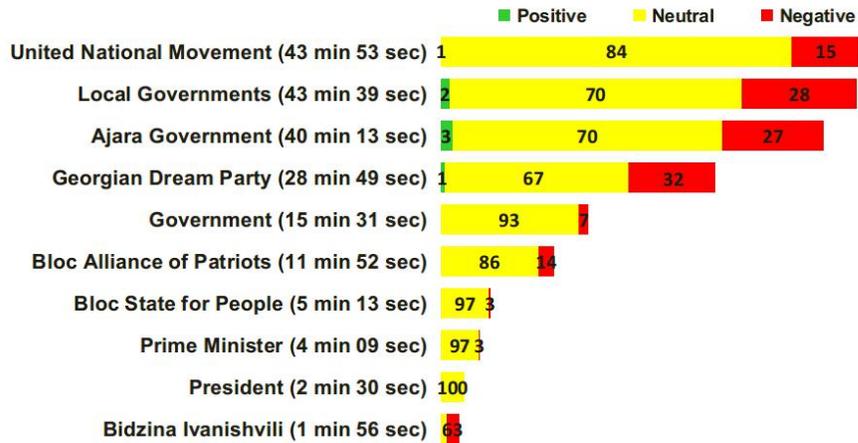
TV25

In the reporting period, monitors studied the primetime news program "Matsne" (at 19:30).

Quantitative analysis

Time Allocated to the Subjects on "TV 25" according to the tone (%)

(30 August - 25 September, 2016)



TV 25 allocated most of its time to the coverage of the UNM and covered the government of Adjara most favorably (3%). The most unfavorable coverage (63%) was received by Bidzina Ivanishvili. The highest indicator of neutral tone was observed in the reporting about the President (100%).

Active coverage of the UNM translated into the violation of balance in favor of this political party. For example, the news program of the channel aired a footage with soundbites, titled “Petre Zambakhidze speaks about violations of law on electoral precincts.” A representative of the UNM accused the local government of unlawful appointment of the chairmen and deputy chairmen of commissions, claiming that these positions were taken by people pursuing interests of the authorities. The material did not include comments of the government, electoral administration or Georgian Dream. The story was unbalanced, based on only one source.

According to a footage with soundbites aired on **24 September**, a UNM representative accused the head of Adjara government, Zurab Pataridze, of corruption, citing a concrete fact which, according to him, raised doubts about corruption. The material did not provide a comment of the head of Adjara government, nor did it show an attempt to obtain one. Although the material contained a general phrase that the government declined to comment on this issue on that day, it cannot be regarded as an attempt to observe balance in reporting; the material did not make it clear whether the government was approached for comments on the accusation.