



Media Monitoring of Local Government Elections of 2014

Monitoring of Print Media

May 24 – June 14, 2014

In connection with the local government elections of 2014, the Civic Development Institute (CDI) is implementing the media monitoring within the frameworks of the project “Professional Media for Elections”, funded by the EU and UNDP program. The monitoring is carried out for the period of April 15 through June 30, 2014, covering 7 publications: the *Resonance*, the *Akhali Taoba*, the *Asaval-Dasavali*, the *Alia*, the *Versia*, the *Kviris Kronika*, and the *Kviris Palitra*.

This report presents the media monitoring results from May 24, until June 14, inclusive.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the material revealed the following **key findings**:

- Criticism of the United National Movement still prevails in all the publications that have been selected for the monitoring.
- There is an especially critical attitude towards this party observed in the following newspapers: *the Alia*, *the Asaval-Dasavali*, *the Versia*, *the Kviris Kronika*.
- Election activities of mayoral candidates were less frequently covered; the publications laid more emphasis on the coverage of political parties and government forces.
- Among the mayoral candidates, the highest rate of negative tone was observed in case of Nika Melia, Tbilisi mayoral candidate of the United National Movement.
- Journalistic standards and ethical norms are especially grossly violated in the publications: *the Alia*, *the Asaval-Dasavali* and *the Kviris Kronika*.
- During this monitoring period, unlike the previous monitoring periods, there was less insulting and discriminatory terminology observed in the journalists’ texts in the newspapers: *the Akhali Taoba* and *the Versia*.

The Resonance

During this monitoring period, the Resonance kept providing quite an objective and impartial coverage about the events taking place in the country. This publication did not express any especially positive or negative attitude towards any political force. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were observed.

During this monitoring period, the most intensively covered activities were those of the United National Movement (29%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (23%), the government (16%) and the Prime Minister (9%). There were no especially high rates of positive or negative tone observed towards any of the monitoring subjects. There was relatively higher indicator of negative tone while covering the United National Movement (19%) (See the Chart 1). However, it should be pointed out that the negative tone is mostly encountered in the respondents' statements and not in the journalists' texts. The journalists of the Resonance abstained from providing political evaluations and unreasoned judgments during the monitoring period.

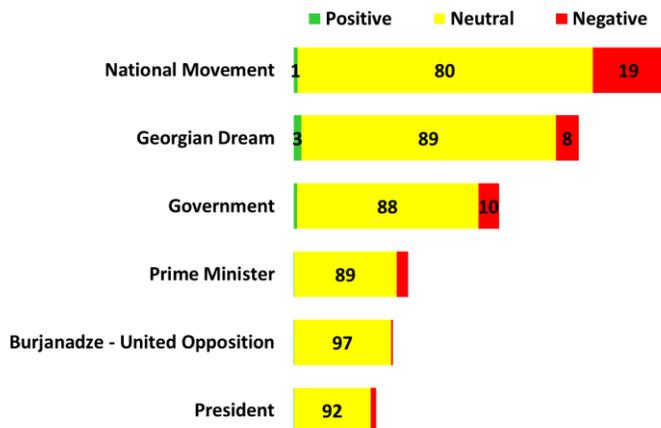
Rates of neutral tone prevail in regards to covering the Tbilisi mayoral candidates (See the Chart 2) in the newspaper. Relatively higher rate of positive tone was reported only for Davit Narmania (21%), candidate of the Coalition Georgian Dream.

The Resonance published many articles during the reporting period, where the balance of sources was highly observed and different positions were represented about the political processes going on in the country (e.g. "Dream and National Movement" similarities and dissimilarities, 26, 05, 2014, page 1). As for the coverage of Tbilisi mayoral candidates, the newspaper published articles that represented the opinions of various candidates about this or that problematic issue (e.g. housing policy of mayoral candidates, 11.06.2014, page 3).

The monitoring results let us conclude that the Resonance kept on offering quite an objective and impartial coverage of the national events during the third monitoring period. However, we should point out the high rates of negative coverage in case of the United National Movement. The newspaper adhered to the journalistic standards and ethical norms were observed during this monitoring period.

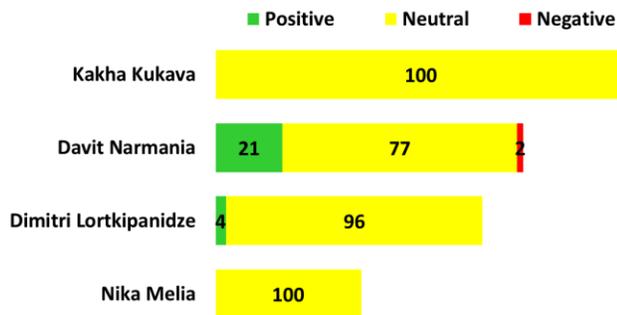
(Chart 1, Subject Coverage, the Resonance)

Space allocated to the subjects in "Rezonansi" according to the tone (%)



(Chart 2, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, the Resonance)

Space allocated to the Mayoral candidates in "Rezonansi", according to the tone (%)



The Alia

The Alia was still distinguished with its pretty critical attitude towards various political forces during this monitoring period. The newspaper was particularly critical towards the United National Movement. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were often disregarded. We also encountered ungrounded reasoning by the journalists, unethical expressions, insulting terminology, also the cases of publishing unverified facts and information that were provided by less reliable sources.

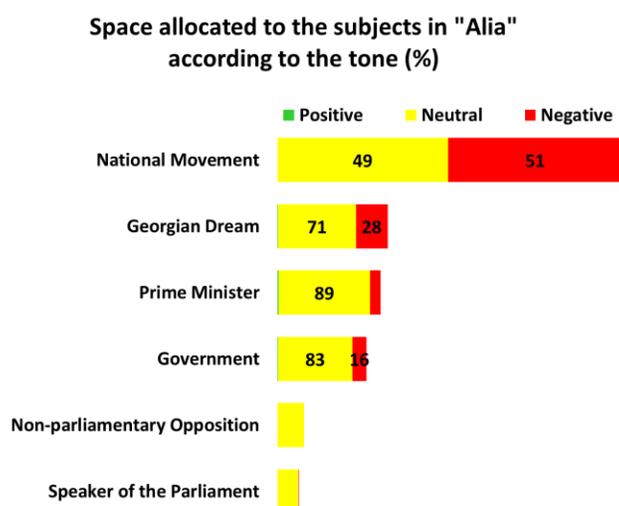
The most intensively covered activities were those of the following monitoring subjects: the United National Movement (44%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (14%), the Prime

Minister (13%) and the government (11%). We should point out quite high rates of negative tone used while covering the United National Movement (51%) and the Coalition Georgian Dream (28%) (See the Chart 3). The Alia did not provide active coverage of the election activities of mayoral candidates.

Like the previous monitoring periods, we observed many cases of gross violation of ethical norms in the Alia during the third monitoring period, which was basically demonstrated by the subjective evaluation of various politicians and the usage of insulting terminology by the journalists, and publishing information that was obtained from less reliable sources. Examples: “Alas, our Ex-President”, you have completely lost shape since you left us, you have swollen up, and you have become more stupid, cheap and down-and-out; “Hi, is that you, Givi?! I could recognize your way of being a scoundrel!” “People, can you see what they have done to the True Opposition?!” “Rizha took away the title of world champion of scoundrels from Givi”; “there is a big competition even among scoundrels!”, “Another notorious phrase from Maka Kiladze’s outrageous thinking is a precise adjective of the regime that Hakim Pasha of the “Nationals” arranged for the Georgian people, and what is the National Movement? – Devil, this mother-f***er” (My dear Ex-President, I see that you’ve become even more stupid since you left us...”, 12.06.2014, page. 3-4).

The monitoring results let us conclude that the Alia still goes on with unbalanced and impartial coverage of the political processes taking place in the country. There is a clearly negative attitude observed in the newspaper towards the United National Movement. Cases of gross violation of journalistic standards and ethics were often observed during this monitoring period. Journalists of the Alia are not reluctant to use insulting terminology while reporting about this or that politician.

(Chart 3, Subjects Coverage, the Alia)



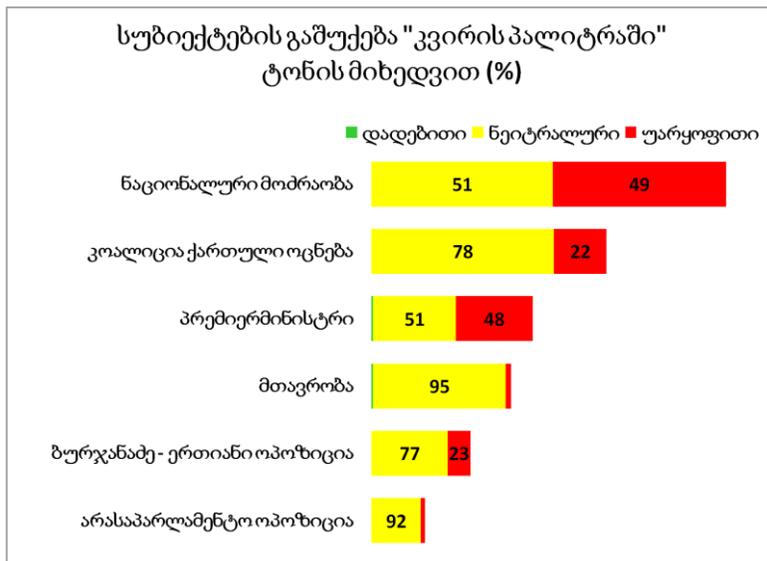
The Kviris Palitra

The Kviris Palitra kept on providing quite an objective and impartial coverage of the national events during this monitoring period. We did not observe any significantly positive or negative attitude towards any political force. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were observed. It is noteworthy that the criticism against the Prime Minister and the United National Movement has increased during this monitoring period in the Kviris Palitra.

The most intensively covered activities were those of the United National Movement (32%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (21%), the Prime Minister (15%) and the government (12%) during this monitoring period. It is noteworthy that quite high rates of negative tone were used for the United National Movement (49%) and the Prime Minister (48%) during this monitoring period (See the Chart 4). The high rate of the Prime Minister's negative coverage was at a larger extent caused by an extensive interview with Nika Melia, where he is critically evaluating the Prime Minister's activities ("The mistake of Ugulava was that he was a mayor and a party leader at the same time" 15.06.2014, page 7). Besides, criticism against the Prime Minister and the United National Movement was quite frequently encountered in the column of the journalist Merab Metreveli (e.g. Merab Metreveli's thoughts of the week, 9.06.2014, page 11). The Kviris Palitra did not actively cover the activities of mayoral candidates during this monitoring period.

The monitoring results let us conclude that the Kviris Palitra still reports about the national events in a quite objective and impartial manner. Rates of negative tone have increased in the third monitoring period while covering the United National Movement and the Prime Minister.

(Chart 4, Subjects Coverage, the Kviris Palitra)



Asaval-Dasavali

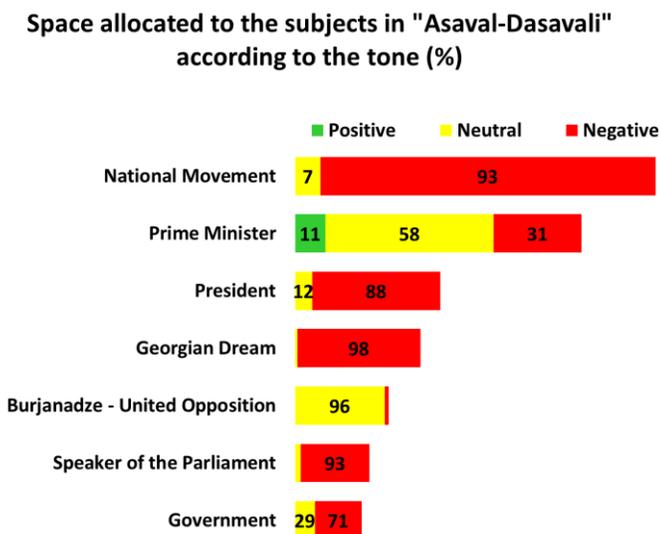
The Asaval-Dasavali was still distinguished during this monitoring period with its extremely critical attitude towards the United National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream as well. Journalistic standards and ethical norms were regularly violated in the articles. The journalists often provided ungrounded reasoning and used abusive terminology. The Asaval-Dasavali provided an extremely biased coverage of the events taking place in the country during this monitoring period.

The most intensively covered monitoring subjects were the United National Movement (27%), the Prime Minister (22%), the President (11%) and the Coalition Georgian Dream (10%). Extremely high rates of negative tone were observed in case of the Coalition Georgian Dream (98%), the United National Movement (93%), the Speaker of the Parliament (93%), the President (88%) and the government (71%) (See the Chart 5). The lowest rate of negative tone was observed in case of Burjanadze-United Opposition (4%), and the highest rate of positive tone – for the Prime Minister (11%). The Asaval-Dasavali did not provide any active coverage of election activities of mayoral candidates.

The Asaval-Dasavali mostly presented the comments or interviews of those respondents, who were negative to the United National Movement and to the Coalition Georgian Dream during this monitoring period. The journalists of this newspaper did not abstain from using their subjective judgments and insulting terminology towards these parties; for example: “not even saying anything about the National Foxes who have been painted into blue – large groups of people who have become Dreamers at local government bodies!” (“National Dream of the Citizens Union!”, 2, 06.2014, page 8); “In short, as it was the case with Saakashvili, the Dreamers also can’t wait to be called “Beacon of Democracy” or at least the “Bulb of Democracy” by someone” (Georgian Dream in African, 9.06.2014, page 23). However, it is noteworthy that the cases of using insulting terminology by the journalists have decreased in the newspaper compared to the previous monitoring periods.

The monitoring results let us conclude that the Asaval-Dasavali is still providing an extremely biased coverage for the events taking place in the country. We regularly encounter the cases of gross violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms in the newspaper. Criticism of the United National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream has extremely increased in this newspaper during this monitoring period.

(Chart 5, Subject Coverage, The Asaval-Dasavali)



The Akhali Taoba

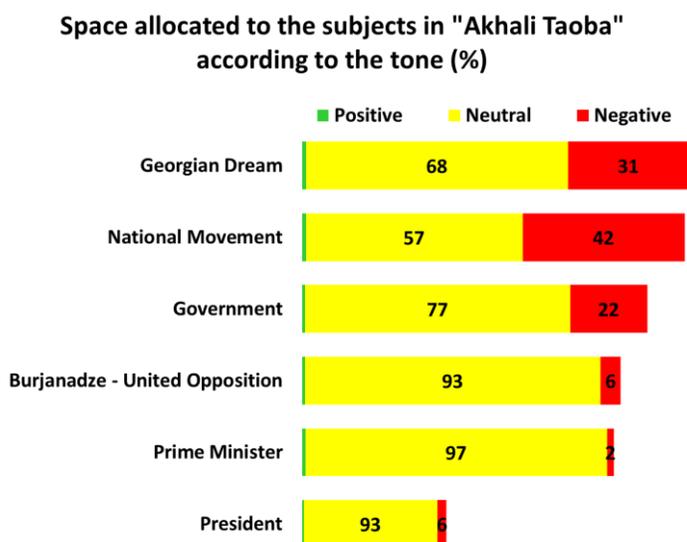
We did not come across with cases of gross violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms in the Akhali Taoba during this monitoring period. The publication provided quite an objective coverage for the national events, although the criticism of the United National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream still prevails.

The newspaper most intensively covered the activities of the Coalition Georgian Dream (19%), the United National Movement (18%), the government (17%) and Burjanadze – United Opposition (15%). Relatively higher rates of negative tone were reported for the United National Movement (42%) and the Coalition Georgian Dream (31%) (*See the Chart 6*). However, it is noteworthy that the negative tone was mostly encountered in the respondents’ statements and not in the journalists’ texts. Journalists of the Akhali Taoba refrained from making political evaluations and ungrounded judgments during this monitoring period.

The Akhali Taoba did not offer active coverage of the activities of mayoral candidates.

Based on the monitoring results we can conclude that there are positive changes observed in the Akhali Taoba during this monitoring period in regards to adherence to the journalistic standards and ethical norms. We no longer see ungrounded reasoning and abusive terminology used by the journalists. The Akhali Taoba provided quite an objective coverage of the events taking place in the country, but the criticism of the United National Movement and the Coalition Georgian Dream still prevails in the newspaper.

(Chart 6, Subject Coverage, The Akhali Taoba)



The Versia

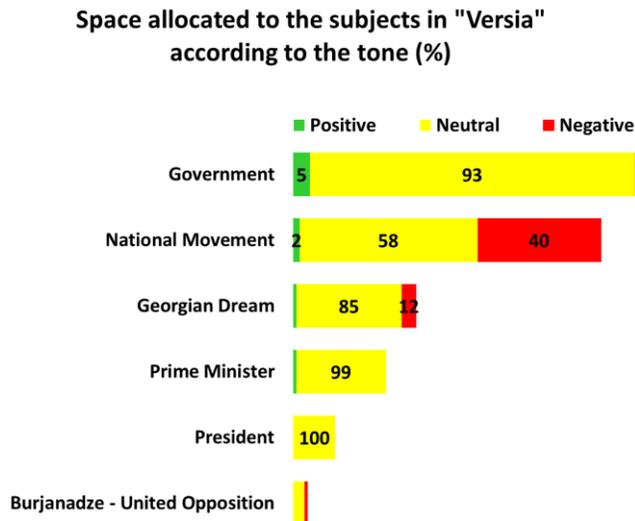
There was quite a critical disposition towards the United National Movement observed in the Versia during this monitoring period. The newspaper basically observed journalistic standards and ethical norms in its news reporting, though the columns often contained subjective and ungrounded reasoning.

The most intensively covered activities were those of the government (36%), the United National Movement (32%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (13%) and the Prime Minister (9%). There was quite a big rate of negative tone observed in regards to the United National Movement (40%). Rates of positive or negative tones were not observed while covering other subjects (See the Chart 7). It is noteworthy that among the Tbilisi mayoral candidates the highest rate of negative tone (39%) was observed when covering Nika Melia (See the Chart 8).

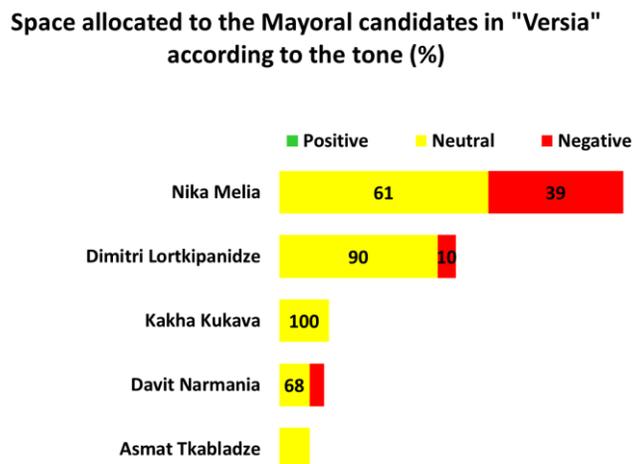
Compared to the previous monitoring periods, there are positive changes observed in the Versia in regards to adherence to journalistic standards and ethical norms, namely, from the viewpoint of usage of abusive and discriminatory terminology by the journalists. However, it should be pointed out that the journalists of the newspaper are not reluctant to express their negative attitude while reporting about the United National Movement. During this monitoring period there were many extensive articles dedicated to the criticism of this party (e.g. "Baramidze's EuroBairam", 4.06.2014, page 3; "Secret funding scheme of the National Movement with Ukrainian Money", 9.06.2014; "Baramidze's EuroBairam - 2", 11.06.2014).

The monitoring results let us conclude that the Versia still has critically disposition towards the United National Movement. However, the cases of usage abusive terminology by the journalists have decreased significantly in this newspaper.

(Chart 7, Subjects Coverage, The Versia)



(Chart 8, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, The Versia)



The Kviris Kronika

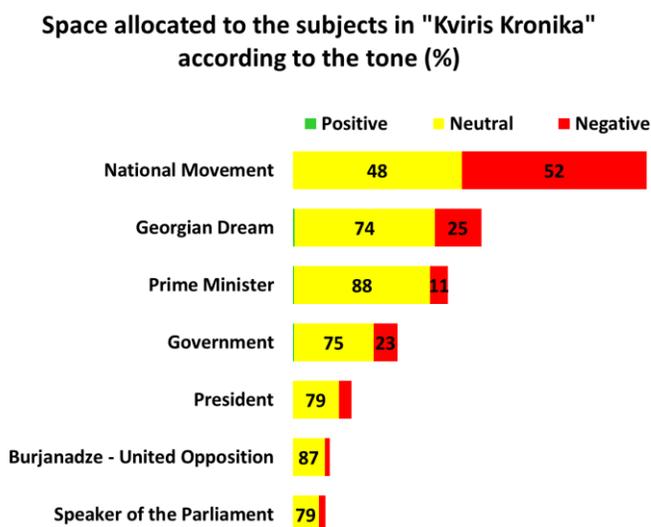
The Kviris Kronika went on providing the biased coverage of national events even in this monitoring period. The newspaper was distinguished with its extremely negative attitude towards the United National Movement. We often encountered the cases of gross violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms. Journalists of the Kviris Kronika were not reluctant to providing subjective reasoning and usage of insulting terminology towards various politicians.

Activities of the following monitoring subjects were most intensively covered: the United National Movement (35%), the Coalition Georgian Dream (19%), the Prime Minister (15%) and the government (10%). There was a pretty high rate of negative tone observed while covering the United National Movement (52%) (See the Chart 9). High rates of negative tone were observed for the Coalition Georgian Dream (25%) and the government (23%). We did not observe any especially high rates of positive or negative tone among the Tbilisi Mayoral Candidates (See the Chart 10).

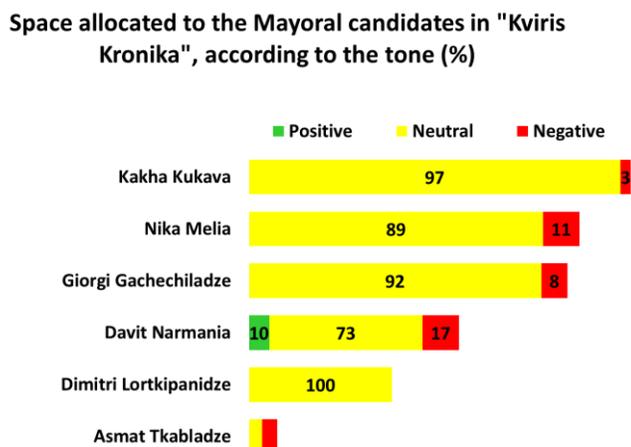
We often came across with the journalist's subjective reasoning and usage of insulting terminology in the Kviris Kronika towards a certain politician, in most cases, towards representatives of the United National Movement during this monitoring period. For example: "Merkel used to call Mikheil Saakashvili "crazy" and "f***ing lunatic", and has never bothered herself inviting him..." ("Why is Irakli Gharibashvili going to Germany for the second time?", 02.06.2014, page 3), "It's over, finished, why can't I just decide to write a poem? For example, like this one? - "I see f***ing Nationals on TV, some have a face as if they have smoked a joint or have been beaten up". ("It seems that the view over this country is different from the Parliament", 2.06.2014, page 33). Journalists of the Kviris Kronika often use the term "NaziZonders". We also came across with several cases when the respondent's extremely insulting quote was used as a headline; for example: "Go away, you motherf***ers! And f*** those who don't like what I'm saying now!" (26.05.2014, page 29).

The monitoring results let us conclude that the Kviris Kronika keeps on providing the biased coverage of political processes taking place in the country. We regularly encounter the cases of gross violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms in the newspaper.

(Chart 9, Subject Coverage, The Kviris Kronika)



(Chart 10, Coverage of Mayoral Candidates, The Kviris Kronika)



Conclusion

Like the previous monitoring periods, journalistic standards and ethical norms are still violated quite often in the Georgian print media during the third monitoring period. Often the journalists are not reluctant to provide subjective and ungrounded reasoning. Moreover, we often encounter insulting and discriminating terminology in the journalists' texts towards a certain politician in the publications that were selected for the monitoring. However, it is noteworthy that the cases of usage of insulting terminology by the

journalists during this monitoring period significantly decreased in the newspapers: the Akhali Taoba and the Versia. Especially gross violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms were observed in the newspapers the Asaval-Dasavali and the Kviris Kronika.

Criticism towards the United National Movement prevails in all the publications that have been selected for the monitoring. It is noteworthy that as the elections got closer, the frequency of coverage of mayoral candidates did not increase in majority of the monitored newspapers. In this respect, the publications lay more emphasis again on the activities of representatives of various political parties and government structures.