



Media monitoring of 2014 local self-governance elections

Election Monitoring of Online Media

May 3 – May 23, 2014

In connection to the local self-governance elections of 2014, the Civic Development Institute (CDI) has resumed its media monitoring within the frameworks of the EU and UNDP funded project “Professional Media for Elections”. The monitoring is taking place from April 15, 2014 through June 30, 2014 and covers 12 most highly rated Georgian websites that are of a news portal type: *netgazeti.ge*, *droni.ge*, *pirveliradio.ge*, *liberali.ge*, *news.ge*, *presa.ge*, *civil.ge*, *tabula.ge*, *reportiori.ge*, *for.ge*, *dfwatch.net*, *palitratv.ge*. The report contains the media monitoring results from April May 3 until May 23, inclusive.

The following key findings have been identified during the monitoring of online media:

- As compared to media monitoring results for 2012 and 2013, significant improvement has been observed in online media from standpoint of both following journalism ethical norms and objective coverage of subjects.
- As compared to the results of 2013 monitoring, positive changes have been observed on the websites *presa.ge*, *droni.ge*, *for.ge*, *tabula.ge* in the second period of monitoring as well.
- *presa.ge*, which has drastically changed its work style, shall be especially highlighted.
- The activities of the United National Movement, the coalition Georgian Dream and the Government and the Prime Minister have been covered most intensively.
- Election related activities of the mayoral candidates have still been covered less actively; the websites have paid more attention to coverage of political parties and authorities.
- Coverage of mayoral candidates has not increased in the second period of monitoring.

netgazeti.ge

Within the monitoring period netgazeti.ge has still been covering ongoing events in the country in a pretty objective and impartial way. Positive or negative attitude towards any political power has never

been observed on the website. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed at a highest level.

Among the monitoring subjects the activities of the Government (29%), the coalition Georgian Dream (27%), the Prime Minister (14%) and the United National Movement (12%) have been covered most intensively. There were no especially high percentage indicators of positive or negative tone registered towards any subject (*refer to Diagram 1*). Relatively high indicator of negative tone has been registered while covering the Government (21%) and the United National Movement (15%). It shall however be noted that negative tone has been most often observed in statements made by respondents and not the texts drafted by journalists. The journalists of netgazeti.ge have been refraining from making political evaluations and unjustified judgments within the monitoring period. Pre-election activities of mayoral candidates have not been actively covered by the website over the monitoring period.

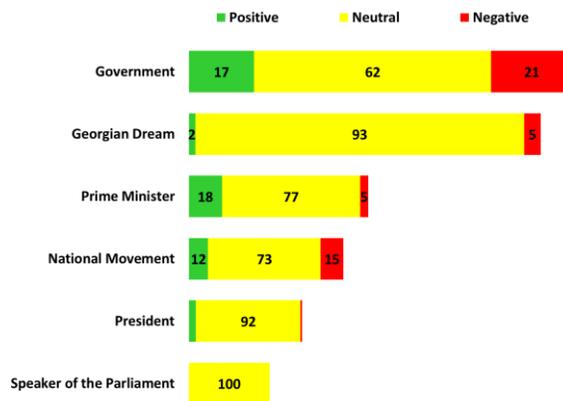
David Narmania is the only candidate for the position of a Mayor, whose activities have been covered. Within the monitoring period netgazeti.ge has been paying less attention to pre-election activities of candidates, while being oriented mostly on political parties and government agencies. Within the given period of monitoring the website has been actively covering activities of the Parliament related to consideration of the law on antidiscrimination.

netgazeti.ge has actively covered issues related to award of bonuses and additional salaries in government agencies. Journalism standards have been followed in such articles; also there have been no instances of journalists making unjustified judgments and subjective evaluations.

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that netgazeti.ge has been covering ongoing events of the country pretty objectively. Journalists have been following journalism standards and ethical norms at a high level.

(Diagram 1, Coverage of subjects, netgazeti.ge)

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on netgazeti.ge, according to the tone (%)



droni.ge

As compared to monitoring results of 2013 presidential elections, positive changes with respect to following balance in subjects' coverage have been observed on droni.ge. There has been no positive or negative attitude towards any political subject visible on the webpage any more. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed.

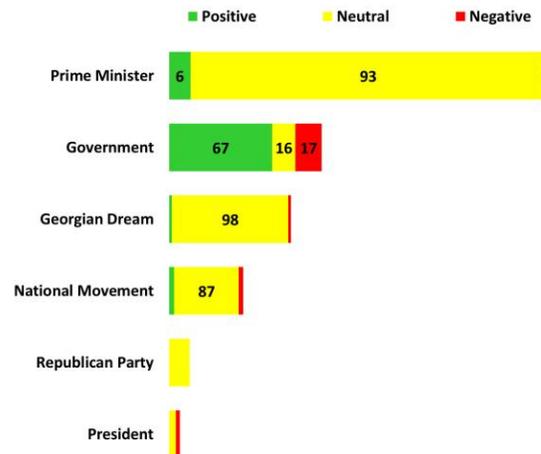
Among the monitoring subjects the activities of the Prime Minister (49%), the coalition Georgian Dream (15%), and the United National Movement (10%) have been covered most intensively. Especially high percentage indicator of a positive tone has been observed while covering the Government (67%) (refer to *Diagram 2*), which is caused by the fact that a rather extensive article, where the Prime Minister has described achievements of the Government, has been published on the website within the monitoring period ("The speech of the Prime Minister delivered in Harvard Club (translation)", 21.05.2014). High percentage indicators of positive or negative tone have not been registered whole covering other subjects.

Within the second period of monitoring droni.ge has actively covered issues related to construction of "Khudonhesi". It shall be highlighted that diverse opinions towards the issue have not been presented in this article (for instance, "Japaridze: Construction of Khudonhesi is of vital importance to our country", 23.05.2014; "Levan Bejashvili: We have to persuade locals in importance of constructing Khudonhesi", 23.05.2014; "Bidzina Gujabadze: Khudonhesi is an urgent necessity for economic development of the country", 12.05.2014; "Zurab Tkemaladze: Had we constructed Khudonhesi in 1990-ies, Georgia would have been in a completely different situation now", 14.05.2014).

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that compared to the results of monitoring carried out in previous years, positive changes from the standpoint of following journalism ethical norms and keeping balance in covering subjects, have been observed on droni.ge. Cases of rough violation of journalism standards have not been registered on the website any more. droni.ge has been covering ongoing political processes of the country in an objective way.

(Diagram 2, Coverage of subjects, droni.ge)

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on droni.ge, according to the tone (%)



pirveliradio.ge

Within the second period of monitoring pirveliradio.ge has still been covering practically all important ongoing events of the country in an objective and impartial way. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed. There has no particularly high indicator of positive or negative tone towards any political power registered on the website.

Among the monitoring subjects the activities of the Government (32%), the United National Movement (25%), the coalition Georgian Dream (16%), and the Prime Minister (16%) have been covered most intensively. There have been no especially high percentage indicators of positive or negative tone registered towards any subject (refer to Diagram 3).

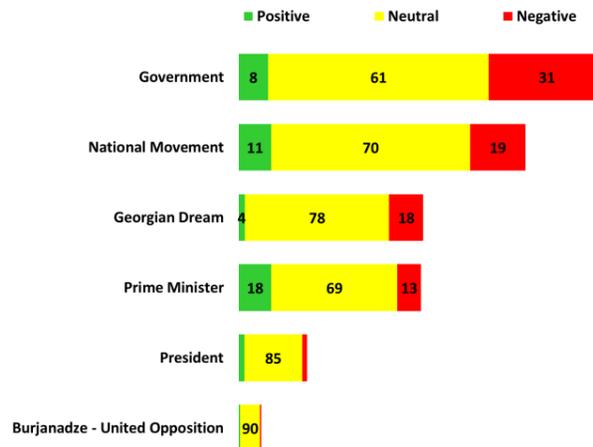
Among the mayoral candidates, high percentage indicators of positive tone have been observed while covering Nika Melia (52%), while David Narmania has collected the highest indicator of negative tone (21%) (refer to Diagram 4).

Journalism ethical norms have been strictly followed in articles published on pirveliradio.ge. However, over the given period of monitoring we have encountered a few articles on the website that simply quoted various newspapers. Those articles often violated journalism ethical norms (for instance: “National candidates of the Dream? Poti Zugdidi, Telavi”, 22.05.2014).

As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that pirveliradio.ge has been covering ongoing political processes of the country in a pretty objective and impartial manner. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed.

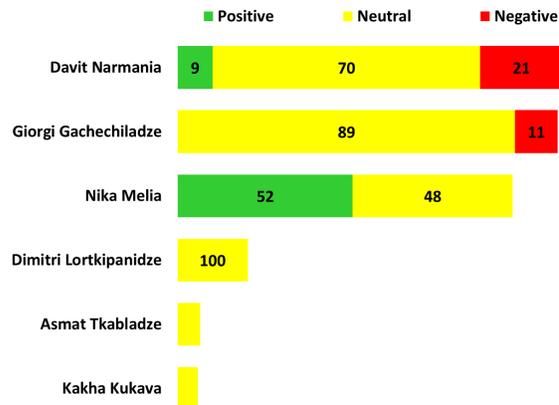
(Diagram 3, Coverage of subjects, pirveliradio.ge)

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on pirveliradio.ge, according to the tone (%)



(Diagram 4, Coverage of mayoral candidates, pirveliradio.ge)

Volume of the text allocated to the Mayoral candidates on pirveliradio.ge according to the tone (%)



liberali.ge

Within the second period of monitoring liberali.ge has still been objectively covering ongoing events of the country. There has been no positive or negative attitude towards any political power registered on the website. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed at a high level. Compared to the

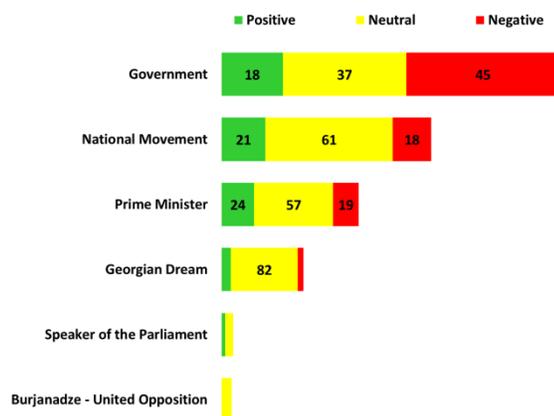
first period of monitoring, the indicator of negative tone observed while covering activities of the Government has increased.

Among the monitoring subjects the activities of the Government (41%), the United National Movement (26%), the Prime Minister (17%) and the coalition Georgian Dream (10%) have been covered most intensively. A rather high percentage indicator of negative tone has been observed in case of the Government's coverage (45%) (refer to Diagram 5), which is caused by the fact that the webpage has been actively covering critical appeal of various organizations towards the Government (for instance: "The foreign experts shall monitor the process of Sakdrisi destruction?!", 7.05.2014, "NGOs disseminate a statement concerning homophobic evaluations made by David Darakhvelidze", 12.05.2014). There have been no especially high indicators of positive or negative tone registered towards other subjects. Within the given period of monitoring the website has been covering pre-election activities of the candidates for Mayor's position less intensively and has paid more attention to political parties and government agencies.

As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that liberali.ge has been still covering ongoing political processes pretty objectively. Critical attitude towards activities carried out by the Government has been visible. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed at a high level.

(Diagram 5, Coverage of subjects, liberali.ge)

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on liberali.ge, according to the tone (%)



news.ge

Compared to the first period of monitoring, percentage indicators of positive tone towards the Government and other subjects have decreased on news.ge. The website has still been actively covering ongoing events of the country. There has been no positive or negative attitude observed towards any

political power. Cases of rough violation of journalism standards and ethical norms have not been registered within the given period.

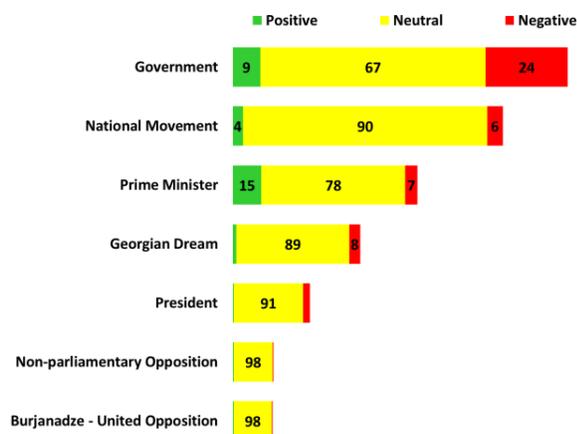
Among the monitoring subjects the Government (30%), the United National Movement (24%), the Prime Minister (16%) and the coalition Georgian Dream (11%) have been covered most intensively. There has been no particularly high percentage rate of positive or negative tone registered towards any subject (*refer to Diagram 6*). The website has been covering pre-election activities of mayoral candidates less frequently, paying most of the attention to political parties and government bodies.

Within the given period of monitoring the website has been covering information researched on the social network Facebook.

As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that within the second period of monitoring news.ge has been covering pre-election processes objectively. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed.

(Diagram 6, Coverage of subjects, news.ge)

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on news.ge, according to the tone (%)



presa.ge

Drastic changes in terms of following journalism standards and ethical norms have been observed on presa.ge as compared to the results of the monitoring carried out in 2012 and 2013. Subjective evaluations and abusive terminology, usual for presa.ge, have not been visible in texts any more. Within the second period of monitoring the website has covered ongoing events of the country pretty objectively and impartially.

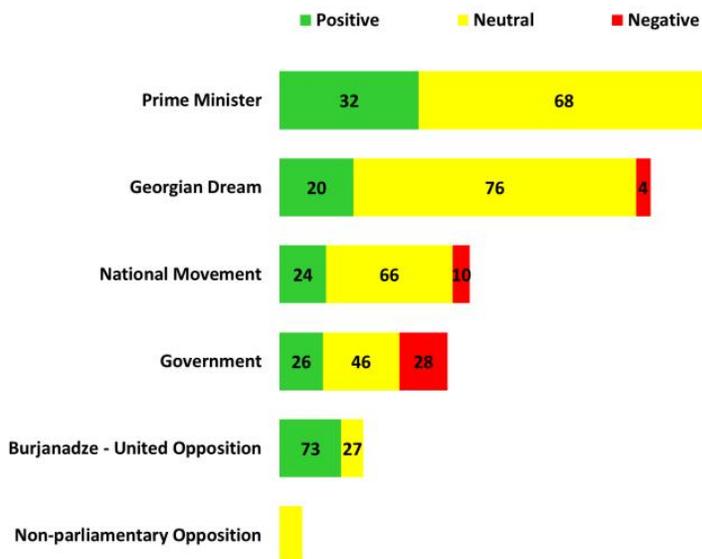
Among the monitoring subjects the Prime Minister (32%), the coalition Georgian Dream (28%), the United National Movement (14%), and the Government (13%) have been covered most intensively. Particularly high percentage rate of positive tone has been registered in case of Burjanadze – United Opposition (*refer to Diagram 7*) that is caused by the fact that the website has often covered pre-election meetings and promises made by the party without any comments.

A rather high rate of positive tone has been registered during coverage of mayoral candidates (*refer to Diagram 8*). Within the given period of monitoring presage has published numerous articles, where mayoral candidates of different cities have discussed their election programs (for instance: “What did candidates for the position of Mayor of Zugdidi tell presage?, 22.05.2014; “What do the candidates for the position of the Mayor of Zugdidi offer the voters?, 23.05.2014).

As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that presage has drastically improved the work style in terms of following journalism standards and ethical norms. Within the given period of monitoring the website has covered ongoing political processes objectively and impartially.

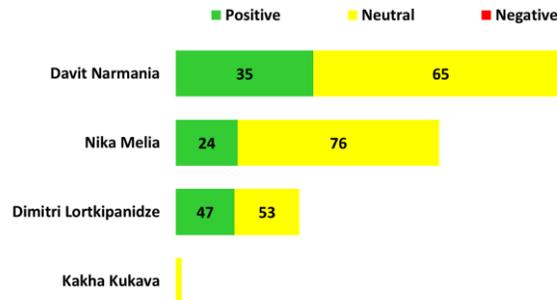
(Diagram 7, Coverage of subjects, presage)

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on presage, according to the tone (%)



(Diagram 8, Coverage of mayoral candidates, presa.ge)

Volume of the text allocated to the Mayoral candidates on presa.ge according to the tone (%)



civil.ge

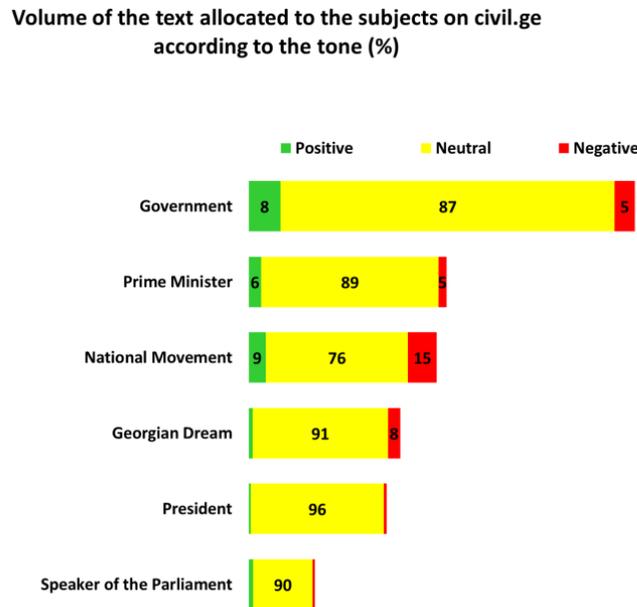
Within the second period of monitoring civil.ge has still been covering ongoing events of the country pretty objectively and impartially. There has been no positive or negative attitude towards any political power observed on the website. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed at a highest level.

Among the monitoring subjects the Government (33%), the Prime Minister (17%), the United National Movement (16%) and the coalition Georgian Dream (13%) have been covered most intensively. There has been no particularly high percentage rate of positive or negative tone registered towards any subject (refer to Diagram 9). Neutral tone has been dominating while covering mayoral candidates. civil.ge. has not actively covered pre-election activities of mayoral candidates.

Within the given period of monitoring the website has thoroughly covered lists of the candidates for the position of the Mayor of Tbilisi, political parties and election blocks (for instance: “14 Candidates Run for Tbilisi Mayor’s position”, 19.05.2014; “20 Parties, 4 Blocs Registered to Run in Local Elections”, 19.05.2014).

As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that civil.ge has been covering ongoing political events pretty objectively. Journalism standards and ethical norms are followed at a highest level. The website has thoroughly covered registration procedures of election subjects.

(Diagram 9, Coverage of subjects, civil.ge)



tabula.ge

Within the second period of monitoring the website has been covering ongoing events pretty objectively. Compared to the first period of monitoring frequency of covering comments made by representatives of various political parties or government agencies have become more equal. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed.

Among the monitoring subjects the activities of the Government (31%), the United National Movement (24%), the coalition Georgian Dream (17%), and the Prime Minister (14%) have been covered most intensively. Relatively high percentage rate of negative tone has been registered in case of the Government (34%). However, it shall be mentioned that negative tone has been observed in statements made by respondents and not the texts drafted by journalists. Within the monitoring period the journalists of tabula.ge have been refraining from making political evaluations and unjustified judgments.

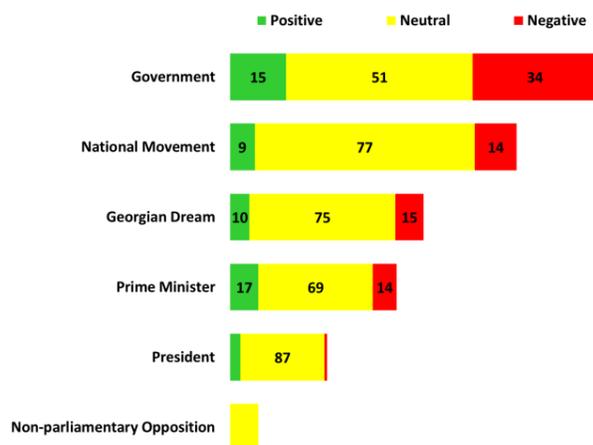
There has been no particularly high rate of positive or negative tone registered in coverage of other subjects (refer to Diagram 11). Positive tone has prevailed while covering mayoral candidates (refer to Diagram 12).

As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that, as compared to the results of the monitoring carried out in previous years, improvement in terms of objective coverage of political processes has been

observed on tabula.ge. There have been no cases of violating journalism standards and ethical norms registered within the given period.

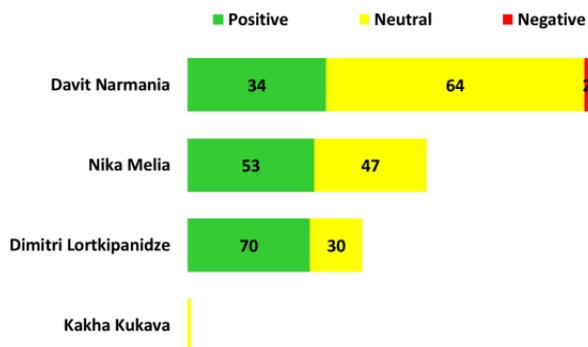
(Diagram 11, Coverage of subjects, tabula.ge)

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on tabula.ge, according to the tone (%)



(Diagram 12, Coverage of candidates for Mayor's position, tabula.ge)

Volume of the text allocated to the Mayoral candidates on tabula.ge according to the tone (%)



reportiori.ge

Within the monitoring period reportiori.ge has still been covering ongoing events of the country pretty objectively. However, it shall be mentioned that negative tone has prevailed on the website while covering the United National Movement and positive tone – while covering the Government agencies . Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed in articles published on reportiori.ge.

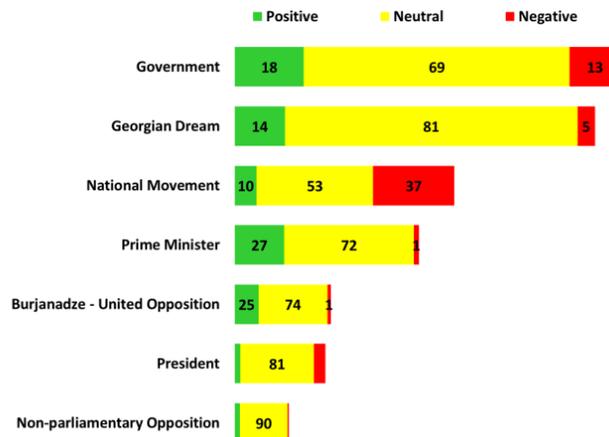
Among the monitoring subjects the Government (27%), the coalition Georgian Dream (24%), the United National Movement (13%), the coalition Georgian Dream (18%), and the Prime Minister (9%) have been covered most intensively. The highest percentage rate of negative tone has been dedicated to the United National Movement (37%), while the positive tone – to the Prime Minister (27%) (refer to Diagram 12). However, it shall be mentioned that positive or negative tone has been observed in statements of respondents and not in the texts drafted by reporters. The journalists of reportiori.ge have been refraining from making political evaluations and unjustified judgments within the reporting period.

Positive tone indicators prevail in coverage of mayoral candidates(refer to Diagram 13), which is caused by the fact that reportiori.ge has been actively covering pre-election meetings and promises of candidates within the monitoring period.

As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that reportiori.ge has been objectively covering ongoing political processes. However, negative tone prevails towards the United National Movement. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed on the website.

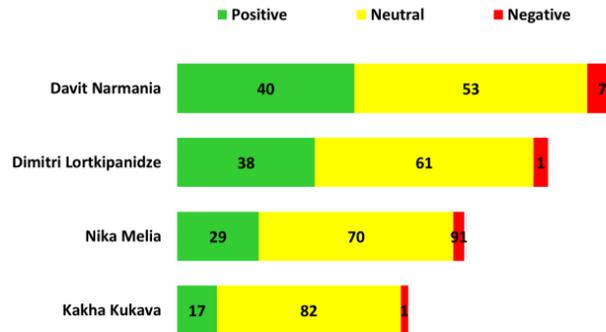
(Diagram 12, Coverage of subjects, reportiori.ge)

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on reportiori.ge, according to the tone (%)



(Diagram 13, Coverage of mayoral candidates, reportiori.ge)

Volume of the text allocated to the Mayoral candidates on reportiori.ge according to the tone (%)



for.ge

Compared to the first period of monitoring criticism towards the United National Movement has significantly increased on for.ge. Journalism ethical norms have been violated more frequently.

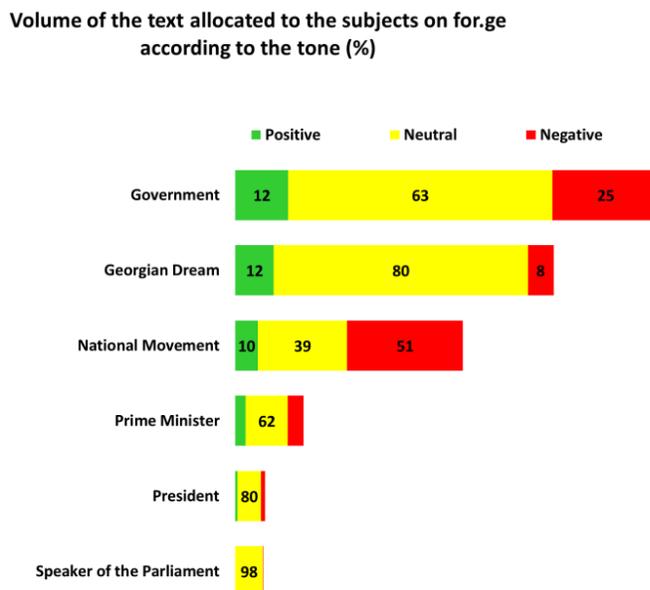
Among the monitoring subjects activities of the Government (38%), the coalition Georgian Dream (29%) and the United National Movement (21%) have been covered most intensively. A rather high indicator of negative tone has been registered in case of the United National Movement (51%) (refer to Diagram 14). Pre-election activities of the mayoral candidates have not been actively covered on the website.

Within the given period of monitoring for.ge has often published interviews with respondents, who have demonstrated extremely critical attitude towards the United National Movement (for instance: “Manana Kobakhidze laughs at Rustavi 2 and the nationals – they are dirty people”, 12.05.2014; “Sporting excellence of the light house of democracy – what happened on May 13, i.e. how the operation “while the President was asleep” got ruined”, 13.05.2014).

Journalists have often used unjustified statements and slandering terminology in articles published on for.ge. For instance: “Bloody cohabitation between the Georgian Dream and National Movement, which has been unmasked to commit numerous system crimes, has turned into a form of a political wedding” (Inga Grigolia discloses!”, 16.05.2014).

As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that cases of violating journalism standards and ethical norms have become more frequent on for.ge, as compared to the previous period of monitoring. A rather critical approach towards the United National Movement has been clearly observed on the website.

(Diagram 14, Coverage of subjects, for.ge)



dfwatch..net

Within the second period of monitoring dfwatch.net has still been covering ongoing events of the country pretty objectively and impartially. There has been no positive or negative attitude towards any political power observed on the website. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed.

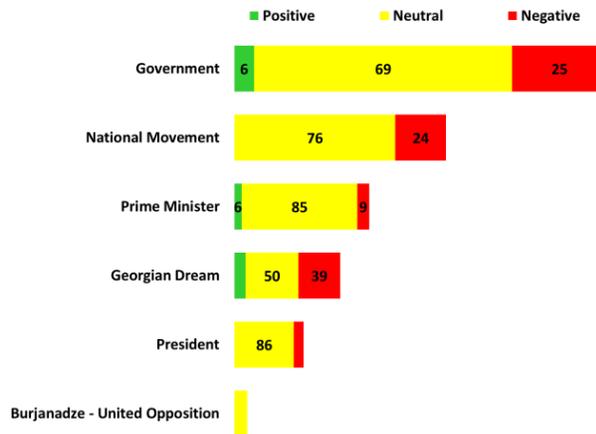
Among the monitoring subjects activities of the Government (40%), the United National Movement (23%), the Prime Minister (15%) and the coalition Georgian Dream (11%) have been covered most intensively. There have been no particularly high indicators of positive or negative tone registered on the website (refer to Diagram 15). Pre-election activity of the mayoral candidates has been covered less intensively within the given period of monitoring, while most of the attention has been paid to activity of political parties and government agencies.

Within the second period of monitoring dfwatch.net has actively covered issues related to discovery of surveillance equipment in premises of TV company Rustavi 2. Also, the criticism expressed by the Government towards the journalist Vakho Sanaia and evaluation of that criticism. Journalism standards have been followed during coverage of those issues and journalists have refrained from making unjustified judgments and subjective evaluations.

As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that dfwatch.net objectively covers ongoing political processes of the country. Journalism standards and ethical norms are being followed at a high level.

(Diagram 15, Coverage of subjects, dfwatch.net)

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on dfwatch.net, according to the tone (%)



palitrav.ge

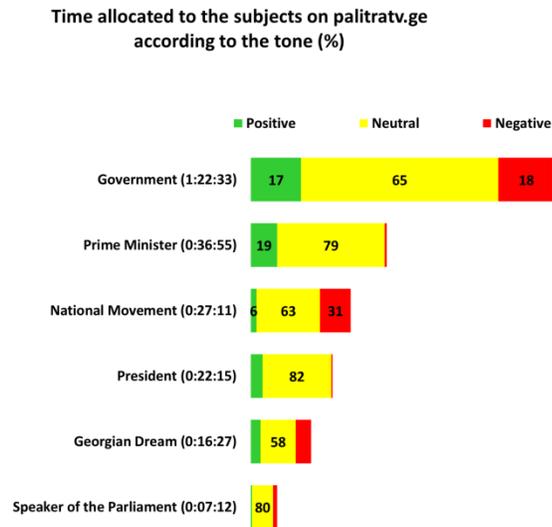
Within the second period of monitoring palitrav.ge has been objectively and impartially covering ongoing events of the country. There has been no positive or negative attitude towards any political power observed on the website. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed.

Among the monitoring subjects activities of the Government (42%), the Prime Minister (19%), the United National Movement (14%) and the President (11%) have been covered most intensively. There has been no particularly high percentage indicator of positive or negative tone observed in relation to any subject. A relatively high indicator of negative tone has been registered in case of the United National Movement (refer to Diagram 16). The website has refrained from active coverage of pre-election activities carried out by the mayoral candidates.

Within the monitoring period numerous different types of public opinion polls have been held on palitrav.ge. It shall be noted that balance of opinions has been followed in such stories and respondents having different opinion concerning the issue at stake have been represented (for instance, “Who should sign the association agreement with the EU - the President or the Prime Minister? Does it have any meaning at all?”, 14.05.2014; “Is the following question still actual: Which vector does Georgia trend to – the North or the West?”, 1.05.2014) .

As a result of the monitoring, we may conclude that palitrav.ge has been covering political processes pretty objectively. Journalism standards and ethical norms are followed.

(Diagram 16, Coverage of subjects, palitrav.ge)



Conclusion

Compared to the results of the election monitoring carried out in 2012 and 2013, positive changes in Georgian online media are being observed in terms of following journalism standards and ethical norms. Within the given period of monitoring there has been no rough violation of journalism ethics norms in any of the selected webpages. Presa.ge is particularly worth mentioning, since it has radically changed its work style. The websites droni.ge and tabula.ge have improved their work from the standpoint of objective coverage.

Within the given period of monitoring the Georgian online media has objectively and impartially covered activities of mayoral candidates, as well as various political parties and government agencies. None of the websites contain particularly positive or negative attitude towards any political power.

No significant changes have been observed in online media compared to the first period of monitoring.