



Election Monitoring of Press

October 27 – November 15, 2013

The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) carried out pre-election print media monitoring within the frameworks of the EU-UNDP funded project “Professional Media for Elections” and hereby presented the fourth interim report of the year 2013 covering post-election period of October 27 - November 15.

The media monitors of the organization were observing the following media outlets: “Resonansi”, “24 Hours”, “Akhali Taoba”, “Akhali Versia”, “Alia”, “Kviris Palitra” and “Asaval-Dasavali”.¹

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

- Alike the pre-election period the President, the Government, the Prime Minister, the coalition “Georgian Dream” and the “United National Movement” still appeared to be the most actively covered subjects after the elections.
- Neutral tone towards the subjects was prevailing, however negative tone addressed to the President was often rather dominant.
- Among the presidential candidates Giorgi Margvelashvili, Nino Burjanadze, Giorgi Targamadze and David Bakradze were covered after the elections. Remaining candidates were provided with 1% or even less of the total space.
- Unethical statements were still made in “Asaval-Dasavali”, other publications, however, the outlets tried to be ethical while criticizing certain political figures.
- Newspapers provided readers with an opportunity to become familiar with various opinions regarding actual events.
- Facts stated in certain cases required additional verification, since information supplied by a source was not verified.

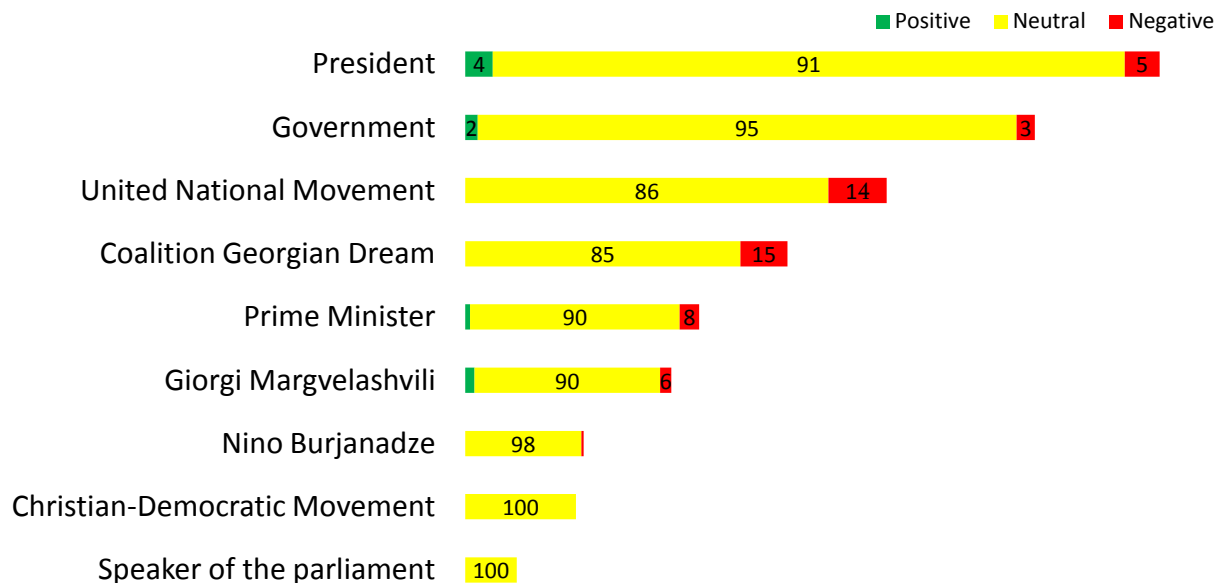
¹ The newspapers were selected based on results of the 2012 print media survey carried out by the “Institute for the Public Opinion Research and Marketing”.

Resonansi

In a post-election period “Resonansi” paid significant attention to the election day and related events. Numerous articles were dedicated to coverage of election process and discussion of the results, however, similar to the pre-election period, after the election day the largest portion of space was allocated to the President, the Prime Minister, the coalition “Georgian Dream”, the “United National Movement” and the Government. Among the presidential candidates the stress was made on Giorgi Margvelashvili and Nino Burjanadze.

The subjects were covered neutrally in “Resonansi” alike the pre-election period. A little portion of positive and negative tone was registered towards them.

Space allocated to the subjects in *Resonansi* according to the tone (%)



From the qualitative standpoint it is noteworthy that majority of articles published in “Resonansi” have two or more sources and the supplied information is verified. Where journalists failed to verify facts, the readers were informed about it.

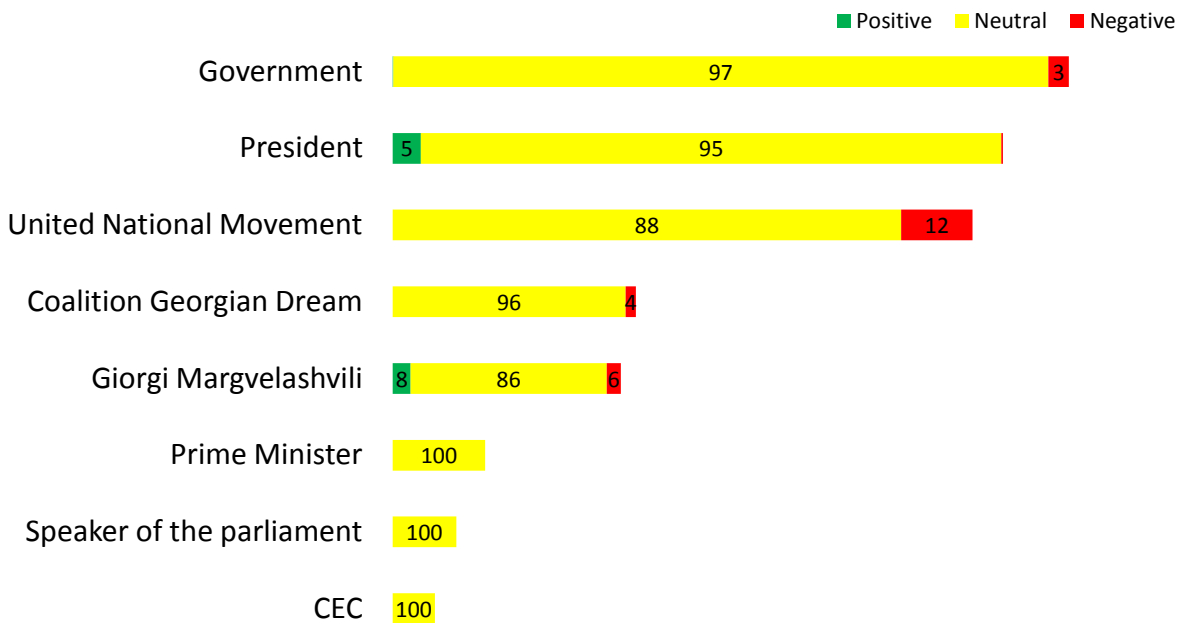
Journalists were neutral in covering the ongoing events, there was no bias registered towards any political subject. Various experts were asked to make analysis and prognosis related to elections or other political events and the readers were enabled to become familiar with diverse opinions.

24 Hours

Similar to the pre-election period “24 Hours” was actively covering all actual topics after the elections. The topics were related to elections as well as other political events, however analytical materials published in relation to those topics were rather rare.

During the reporting period the Government, the President, the “United National Movement” and the coalition “Georgian Dream” were provided with largest portion of the space among all subjects and the tone addressed to them was neutral. Giorgi Margvelashvili enjoyed most of the attention among the presidential subjects.

Space allocated to the subjects in *24 Hours* according to the tone (%)



Articles prepared by the journalists of “24 Hours” were distinguished by multiplicity of sources and diversity. They represent position of many diverse political subjects with respect to certain issues, however, sometimes the whole articles comprised only quotes without additional comments and analysis.

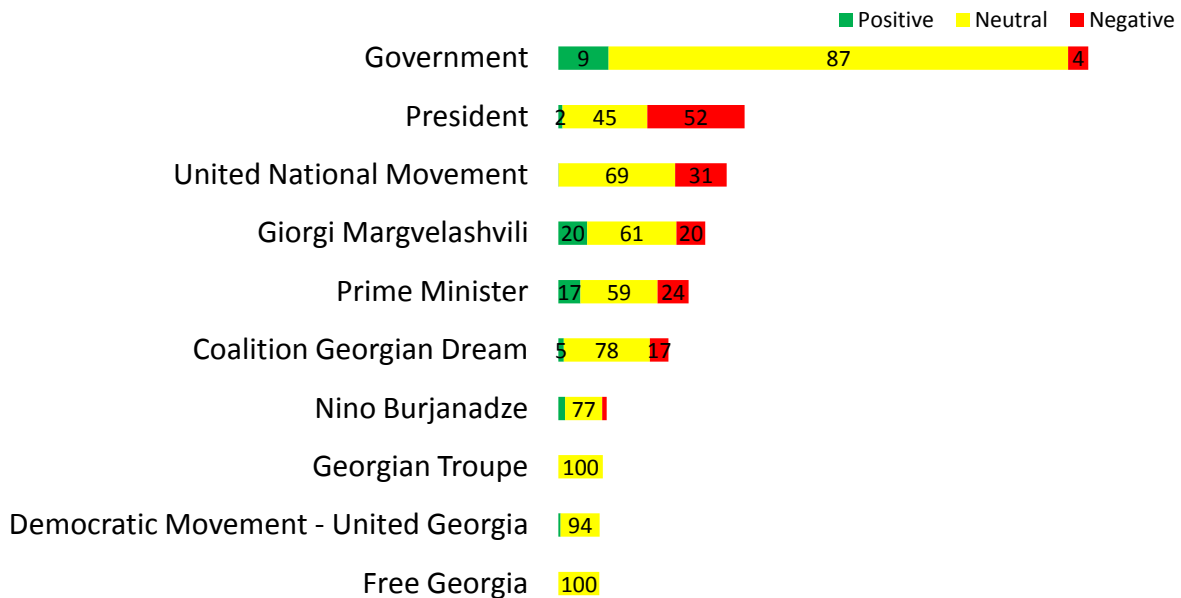
The language of articles published in “24 Hours” was always neutral on behalf of the authors. Journalists were not using lexical means to create positive or negative attitude of readers.

Scarcity of photo materials in this daily publication is obvious. Articles were rarely accompanied by illustrations that would provide readers with additional information.

Akhali Taoba

“Akhali Taoba” was covering ongoing events in a diverse manner and offered readers both news and analytical articles and interviews related to actual topics. The publication was equally critical towards various political subjects that is clearly visible on a diagram below, which is composed on the basis of space allocation among subjects.

Space allocated to the subjects in *Akhali Taoba* according to the tone (%)



Similar to the pre-election period, “Akhali Taoba” allocated most of its newspaper space to the Government, the President and the “United National Movement”. Among the presidential candidates Giorgi Margvelashvili and Nino Burjanadze were covered most actively compared to others. Neutral tone was dominant in regard to all subjects, except the President, who received 52% of negative tone within the space provided to him.

In most of the cases the articles published in “Akhali Taoba” had various sources and issues were discussed from different angles, except interviews, where an opinion of one particular respondent was shared.

The journalists of the media outlet were not demonstrating bias towards any political subject and tried provide readers with fact based information.

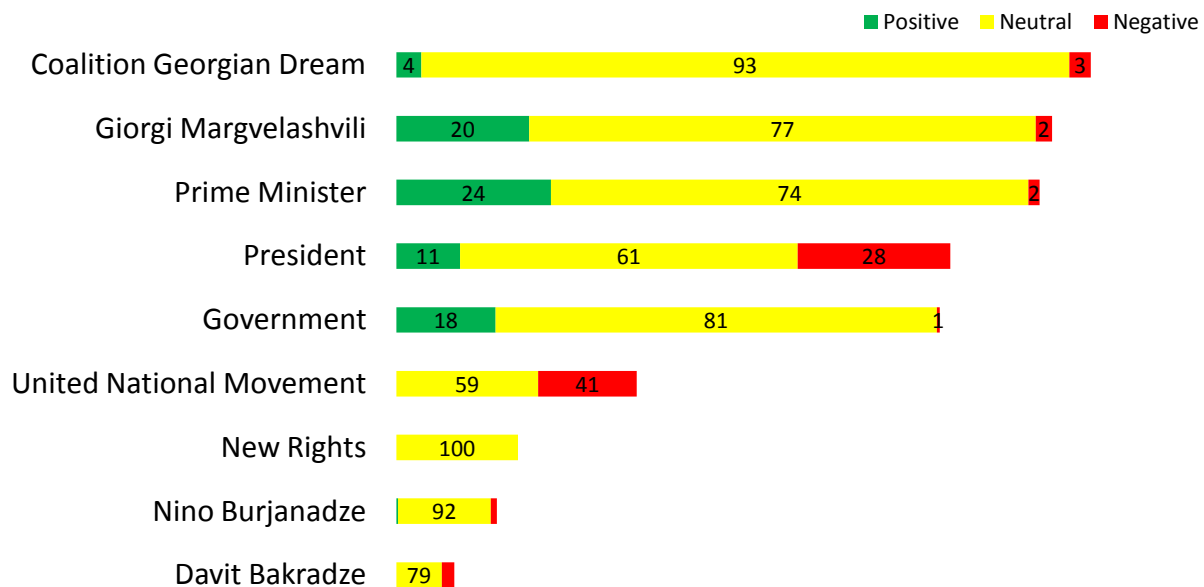
Akhali Versia

After the elections “Akhali Versia” was covering news and summarizing past events, in addition offering readers analytical materials.

Unlike other publications “Akhali Versia” provided almost equal space to the coalition “Georgian Dream” (18%), Giorgi Margvelashvili (17%) and the Prime Minister (17%). Space provided to the President (14%) and the Government (14%) was a bit smaller. Apart from Giorgi Margvelashvili the media outlet covered other presidential candidates as well. Nino Nurjanadze and David Bakradze were provided with more than 1% of the space, while others – 1% or less.

The tone applied to the subjects was neutral both prior to elections and afterwards. However, positive tone rate in case of Giorgi Margvelashvili, the Prime Minister and the Government was rather high. 41% of the space provided to the “United National Movement” belonged to negative tone. Negative tone overweighed the positive one in case of the President as well.

Space allocated to the subjects in *Akhali Versia* according to the tone (%)

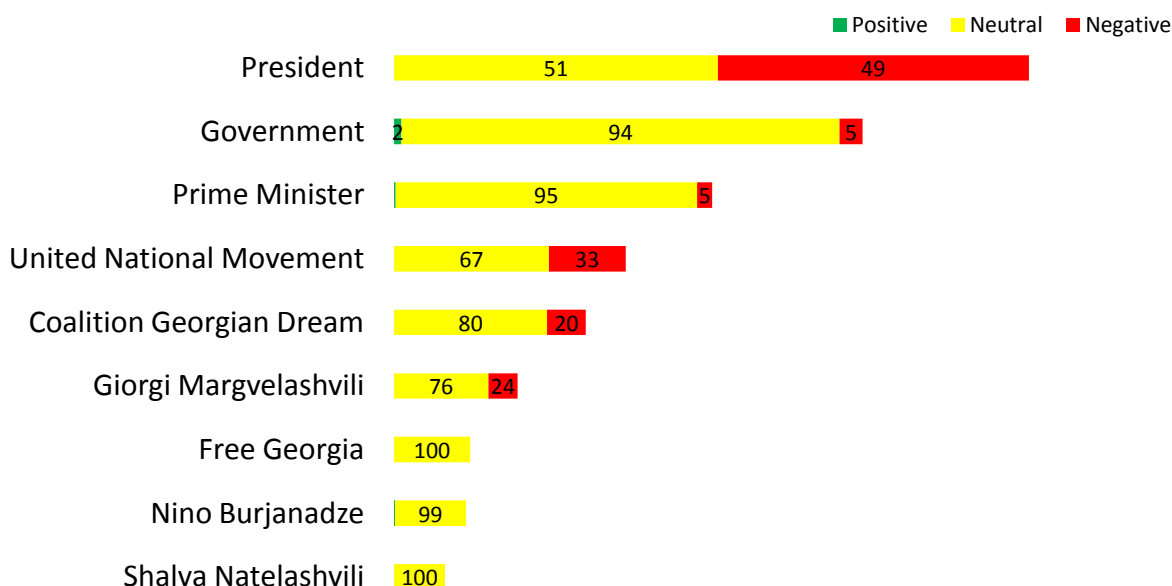


From qualitative standpoint it should be mentioned that articles in “Akhali Versia” usually relied one more than one source and events were presented from different positions. The language used by journalists was more or less neutral, however in certain cases authors wrote ironically about political subjects and events.

Alia

Apart from covering the election day and results, “Alia” actively wrote about expected changes in Government and the country in general. The media outlet was making an accent on officials holding political position, namely most of the space after the elections was provided to the President, the Government and the Prime Minister. The coalition “Georgian Dream” and the “United National Movement” were covered more often than presidential candidates. As for the presidential candidates, Giorgi Margvelashvili, Nino Burjanadze and Shalva Natelashvili were provided with more than 1% of the total space, while other – only 1% or less.

Space allocated to the subjects in *Alia* according to the tone(%)



After the elections almost no subjects received positive tone coverage in “Alia”. Neutral tone towards the subjects prevailed. Negative tone is significantly higher in case of the President, where almost half of the provided space (49%) was negative.

From the qualitative standpoint it is important that in a post-election period there were almost no unethical statements registered in “Alia” that were the case on a frequent occasion prior to elections and during monitoring of 2012 parliamentary elections. The journalists and respondents of the media outlet were still critical towards certain subjects, especially the President, however their criticism was not more expressed through abusive phraseology.

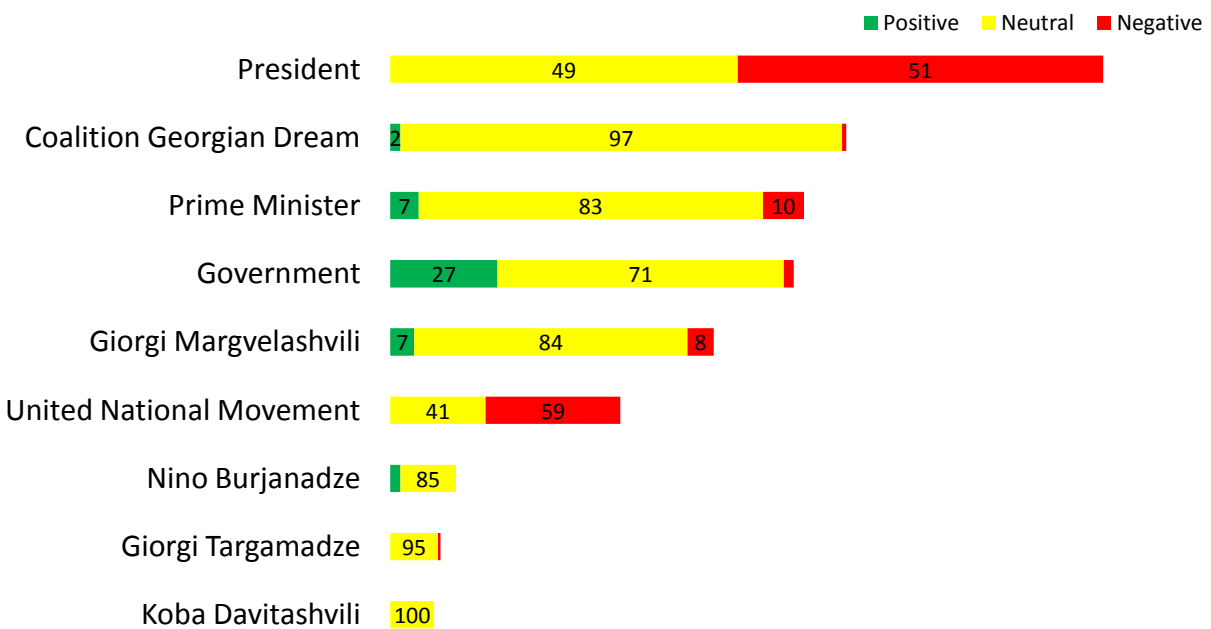
“Alia” is reach with its photo materials. No cases of manipulating with photo materials were registered after the elections. Photos provide additional information to readers about a topic or a respondent.

The media outlet provided readers with diverse opinions and positions concerning actual topics, although in some cases the provided information required additional verification.

Kviris Palitra

“Kviris Palitra” offered readers numerous analytical articles and interviews related to the election results and expected changes in government. In a post-election period the presidency of Mikheil Saakashvili and various initiatives implemented during his term were also summarized. As a result Mikheil Saakashvili was provided with most of the space, where 49% was covered in neutral, while 51% - in negative tone. Neutral tone was prevailing in case of other subjects except the “United National Movement”, in case of which more than half of the allocated space (59%) was covered in negative tone. Among presidential candidates Giorgi Margvelashvili, Nino Burjanadze, Giorgi Targamadze and Koba Davitashvili were the main focus of the media outlet. Other candidates were provided with 1% or less of the total space.

Space allocated to the subjects in *Kviris Palitra* according to the tone (%)



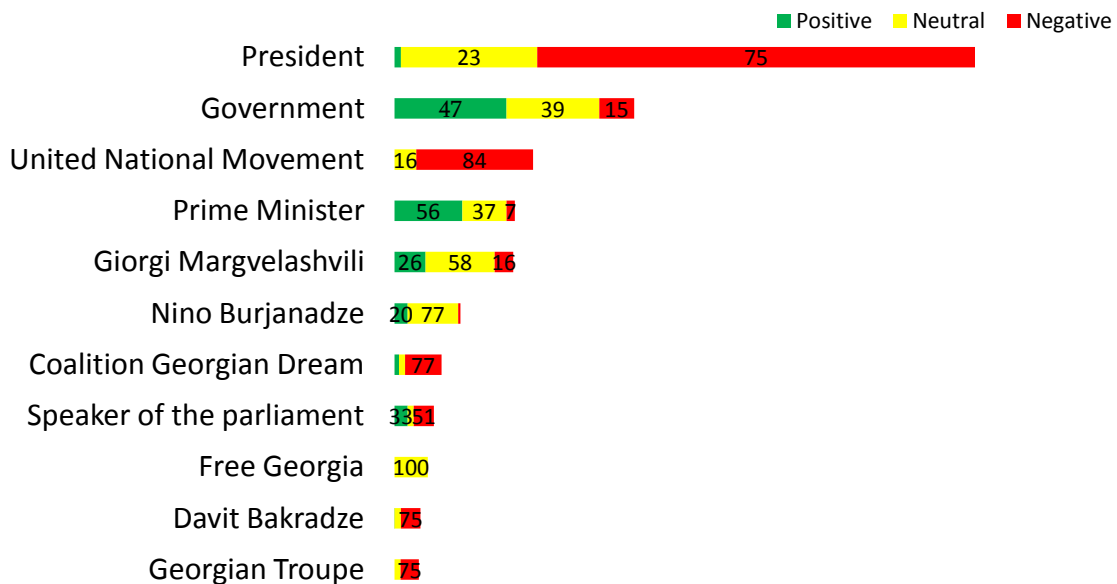
From qualitative standpoint it is noteworthy that majority of “Kviris Palitra”’s articles had various diverse sources presenting events from different sides, except interviews, which obviously highlighted a position of one particular respondent.

Journalists were not using unethical statements neither in analytical articles nor in authors’ columns, although we came across the following epithets used by particular respondents: „Sick Saakashvili“ (“Kviris Palitra” N45, 4-10 November), „Threshing-floor full of blood”, they call his decisions psychopathic” (“Kviris Palitra” N44, 28 October - 3 November).

Asaval-Dasavali

In post-election period “Asaval-Dasavali”, along with covering ongoing events, has still been active in writing about Mikheil Saakashvili, who was provided with most of the space with negative tone out of all subjects. 75% of the space provided to the President contains negative tone. The media outlet also demonstrated negative attitude towards the “United National Movement”, the space of which is 84% negative. Positive tone dominated in case of the Government and the President. 47% of the space provided to the Government and 56% - to the Prime Minister was accompanied by a positive tone.

Space allocated to the subjects in *Asaval-Dasavali* according to the tone (%)



Similar to the pre-election period unethical statements made towards subjects by respondents and journalists were still present in the newspaper. One of the most evident

cases of disrespect demonstrated against a subject was registered in October 28 issue, almost the whole front page of which was occupied by the three words: „Got away, blacked away, darked away“. Those words were dedicated to finishing Mikheil Saakashvili’s presidency.

“Asaval-Dasavali” contains a lot of photo materials, however in certain cases illustration was used to express negative attitude towards a subject rather than provide information.

Some facts published in the newspaper required verification, since the information supplied by a source was not verified.

Conclusion

In a post-election period most of the newspapers were covering ongoing events in a neutral and balanced way. They paid greater attention to expected changes to be introduced after inauguration of the new president.

Among the monitoring subjects the President appeared to be covered in a negative way almost in all publications. Neutral tone was prevailing in case of other subjects. “Asaval-Dasavali” was an exception though, where the Prime Minister and the Government were mostly covered in a positive tone.

In general from qualitative standpoint and in post-election period journalists tried to follow journalism standards, supply verified information in more ethical and comprehensive manner, although in some cases they used unethical language and disseminated unverified information.