

# Election Monitoring of Radios

15 – 30 June, 2014



Internews – Georgia, under the frameworks of the project “Professional Media for Elections”, funded by the EU-UNDP program, is monitoring the radio channels. The monitoring started on April 15 and will last through June 30. It includes the monitoring of evening news releases of 12 radio broadcasters: Radio 1 (Public Broadcaster), Imedi, Fortuna, Radio Liberty, Palitra, The First Radio, Utsnobi, Maestro, Hereti (Lagodekhi), Old City (Kutaisi), Atinati (Zugdidi) and Ajara (Batumi).

Monitoring of radio channels during June 15 –30 revealed following key findings:

- Most of the time was dedicated to the United National Movement, the Government and the coalition Georgian Dream;
- Majority of radio broadcasters actively covered violations registered on election precincts during the election day;
- Time allocated to mayoral candidates further decreased;
- Majority of radio broadcasters demonstrated less interest towards the second round of elections;
- The First Radio covered the election related topics most actively;
- Questions asked by journalists were mainly based on politicians’ statements rather than empiric data;
- Journalists limited themselves to single coverage of issues related to social problems and failed to disseminate follow up information concerning the development within the following days;
- The journalists did not manipulate with voice/music, neither did they use the hate speech.

## Radio 1 (Public Broadcaster)

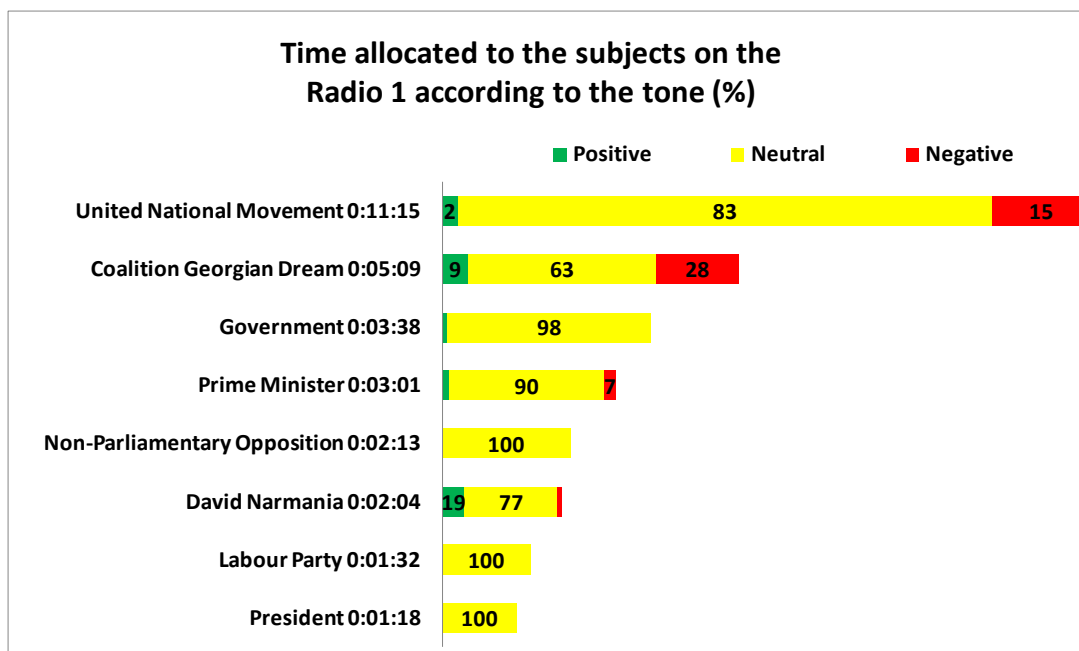
The Public Broadcaster allocated 33 minutes to the monitoring subjects. 34% of this coverage time was dedicated to the United National Movement, 15% - to the Coalition Georgian Dream and 11% - to the Government. The radio broadcaster did not cover direct speech of subjects.

Journalists were making brief news programs, covering issues shallowly, without researching additional information. News were mainly based on a sole source and were limited to citing the politicians' statements. Negative tone was collected by the United National Movement and the coalition Georgian Dream, which was caused by critical statements made by politicians towards each other rather than critical questions asked by journalists.

The Radio broadcaster was making stress on covering election related topics. Within the reporting period violations registered on election precincts and claims submitted by political parties and NGOs were intensively covered. CEC statements also attracted a lot of attention. However, journalists still limited themselves to citing the statements and refrained from in-depth coverage of issues.

Apart from announcement of the election results, the news programs practically allocated no time to the mayoral candidates. Therefore, only candidate from the coalition Georgian Dream, David Narmania managed to collect more than one minute of air time.

Overall, the radio broadcaster operated in an impartial manner and journalists followed professional ethics standards. However, shallow coverage of events still remained to be a problem.



## **The First Radio**

The First Radio allocated 1 hour and 56 minutes to the monitoring subjects. The largest portions of time were dedicated to the United National Movement (32%), the Government (16%) and the coalition Georgian Dream (11%). Non-parliamentary opposition parties mostly used their time to criticize the Government or the United National Movement. Therefore, negative tone was mainly addressed to those subjects, while other subjects were covered neutrally.

Compared to all other radio broadcasters significant portion of time was allocated to the direct speech of monitoring subjects (65%) that was caused by live coverage of politicians during news programs.

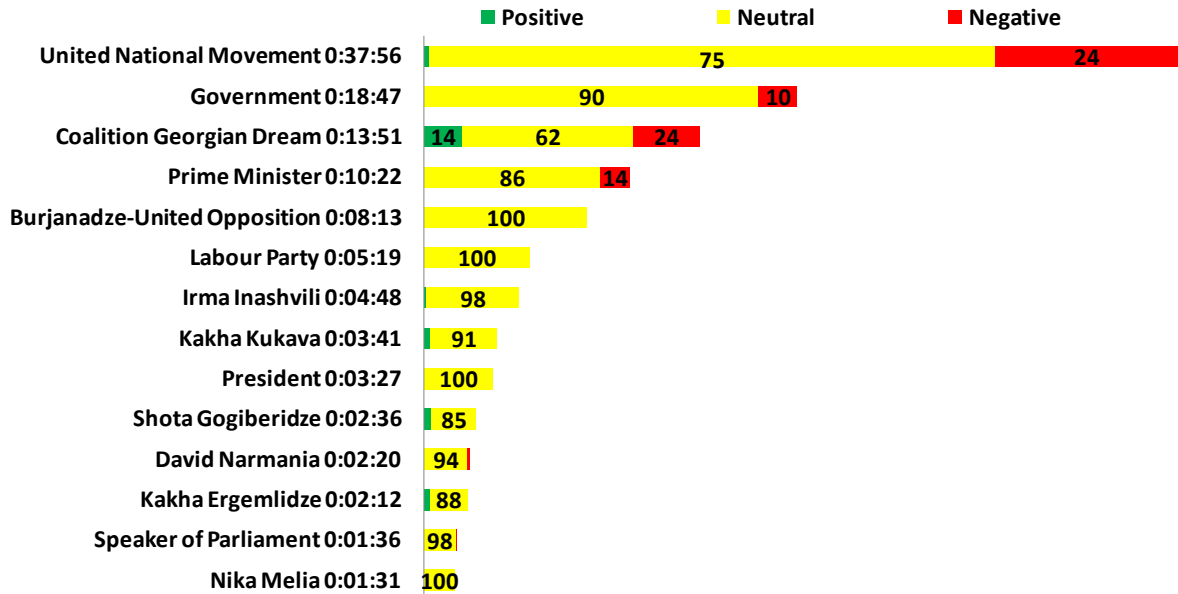
On the election day the situation existing on election precincts was considered in the radio broadcaster's programs, during which the first comments made by the mayoral candidates were covered.

Elections still remained to be the main topic of the following week's news program. Journalists were intensively covering identified violations and statements made by politicians and NGOs. The First Radio demonstrated interest in the second round of elections as well. Journalists interviewed the candidates, who reached the second round. For instance: the Ozurgeti candidate from the Georgian Alliance of Patriots – Shota Gogiberidze, was invited to participate in June 17 program, while the Gori candidate from the Georgian Party – Kakha Ergemlidze – in June 18 program. The journalist rarely asked candidates tough questions, however allowed them to evaluate elections and speak about their own plans. Interview was made with only one candidate, who qualified for the second round of self-governance city mayor elections, while his/her competitor was not provided with the same opportunity.

The First Radio was allocating a lot of time to mayoral candidates representing non-parliamentary opposition parties, while they were practically completely absent in the programs aired by other radio broadcasters. Besides, compared to the previous reporting period, the radio broadcaster was preparing even more balanced news. However, the issue related to presentation of respondents still remained to be a problem, since sometimes comments of subjects were aired by the broadcaster without indicating who the respondent was.

The journalists were working impartially. There were no cases of manipulation with sound or music, nor were the journalists using hate speech.

### Time allocated to the subjects on the First Radio according to the tone (%)



#### Radio Palitra

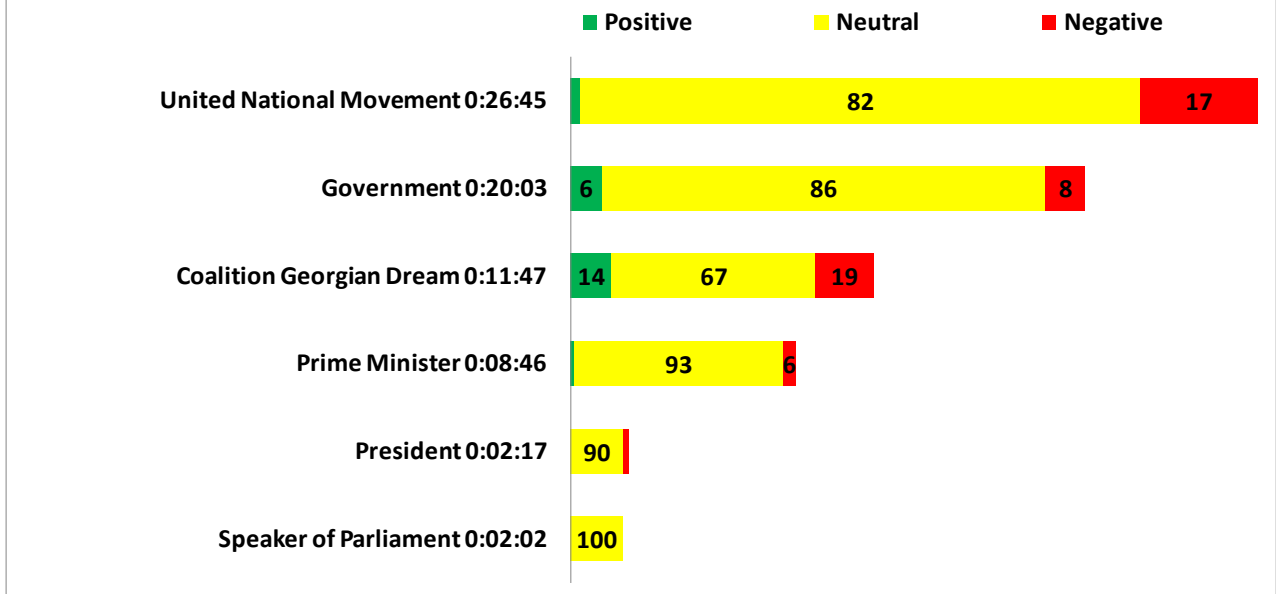
Radio Palitra allocated 1 hour and 18 minutes to the monitoring subjects. The biggest portion of time was dedicated to cover the United National Movement (34%), the Government (26%) and the coalition Georgian Dream (15%). The radio broadcaster was also covering direct speech of subjects (34%).

Journalists were making balanced stories concerning the major topic of the day. News programs were mainly dedicated to activities carried out by the Government and the United National Movement. Non-parliamentary opposition parties were provided with less than 1 minute of time.

Election related stories described violations identified on election precincts, however none of the mayoral candidates received more than one minute of air time. Therefore, additional information concerning the candidates, who qualified for the second round was not provided.

Overall, the journalists were working impartially, following professional ethics standards. However, compared to the previous reporting period, their proactiveness was not visible and less diverse stories were prepared on elections related topics.

### Time allocated to the subjects on the Radio Palitra according to the tone (%)

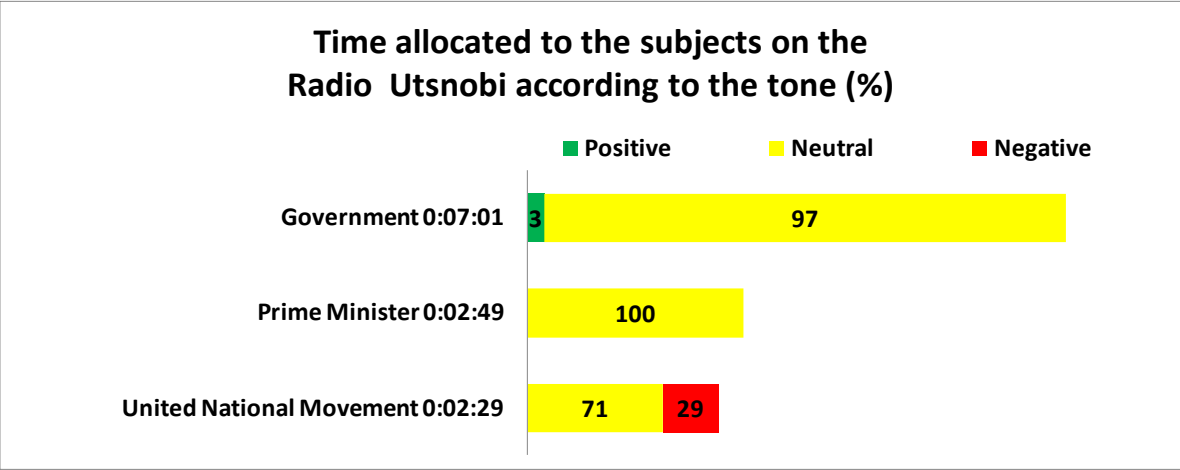


### Radio Utsnobi

Radio Utsnobi was making brief news programs, therefore the monitoring subjects were provided with little time (14 minutes). Only three subjects received more than one minute of coverage time.

Journalists limited themselves to citing politicians' statements. They were neither covering their direct speech nor trying to research additional information. Election related news were shallow. Mayoral candidates were provided with no time whatsoever.

Radio Utsnobi was not demonstrating biased attitude towards any political power. However, news programs were often unbalanced and based on a sole source.

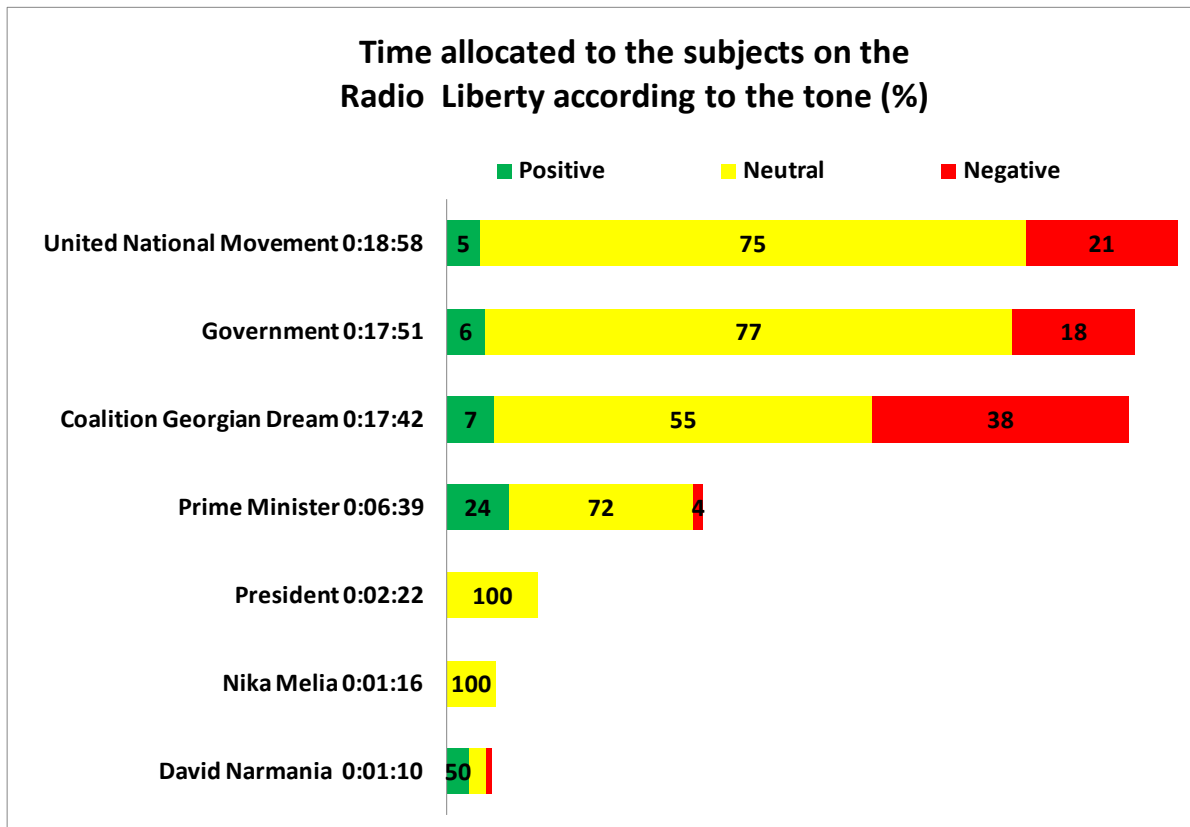


**Radio Liberty**

Radio Liberty provided the monitoring subjects with 1 hour and 10 minutes of coverage time. 27% of that time was dedicated to the United National Movement, while 25-25% - to the Government and the coalition Georgian Dream. The radio broadcaster was also covering direct speech of the subjects. Alike the previous reporting periods, the radio broadcaster was distinguished by balanced and analytical news programs. The monitoring subjects were covered mostly in a neutral tone, however the most covered three candidates also collected some negative tone.

Journalists were asking critical questions and presented topics from various angles. For instance, the story concerning exports of Georgian products to the Russian market aired during June 24 program provided analysis of the Georgian export market peculiarities and challenges related to issue. Opinion of the citizens and clarifications made by experts were provided along with the politicians’ comments. On June 15 the radio broadcaster aired several election related stories discussing events of the day. Journalists were covering the identified violations in detail. The materials presented processes taking place in Tbilisi and regional election precincts. However, after the elections, the radio broadcaster did not make a stress on a follow-up coverage of mayoral candidates. Apart from Tbilisi mayoral candidates from the coalition Georgian Dream and the United National Movement, no other candidate received more than one minute of coverage time.

The Radio Liberty journalists were operating impartially, following professional ethics standards.



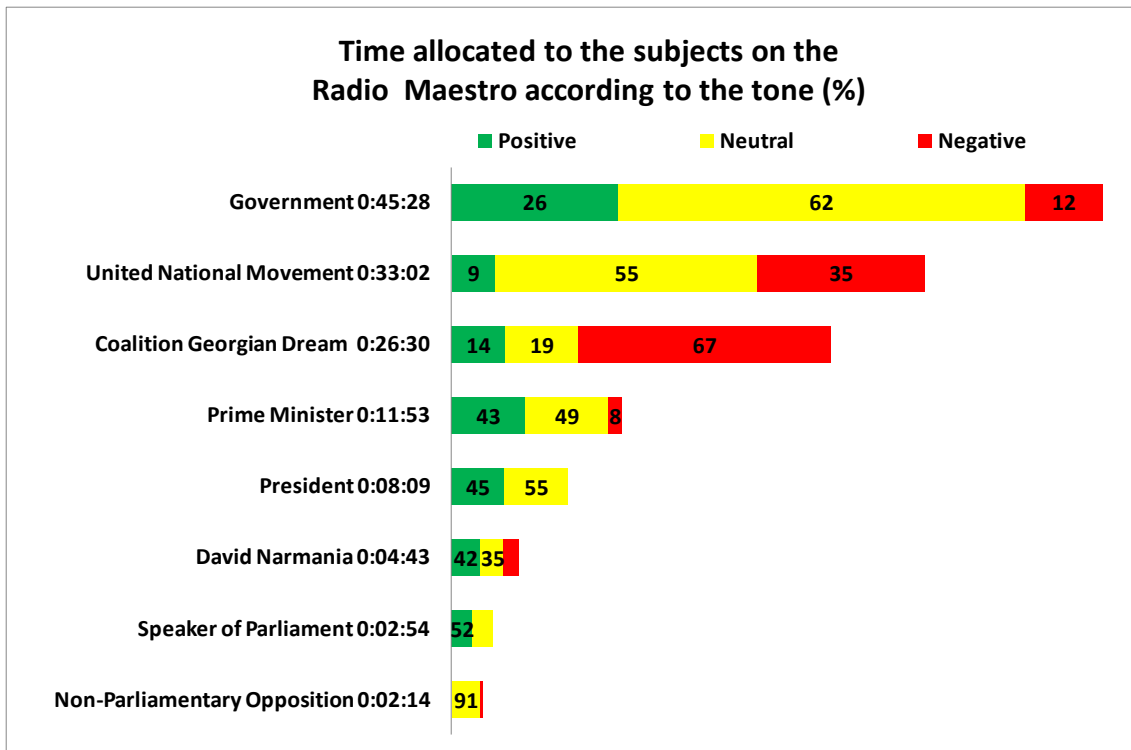
### Radio Maestro

The time allocated by Radio Maestro to the monitoring subjects comprised 2 hours and 18 minutes. 45 minutes of that time was provided to the Government, 33 minutes – to the United National Movement and 26 minutes – to the coalition Georgian Dream. The radio broadcaster did not cover direct speech of the subjects.

Compared to the previous reporting period, the journalists became more active and the news programs – more diverse. News prepared on the sole source basis still remained to be a problem, however their number relatively decreased. The journalists started covering events in more detail.

Coverage of statements made by NGOs and international organizations on the election day and the following period increased. Mayoral candidates were provided with little time and the stress was made on coverage of violations occurring on election precincts. Journalists were addressing experts to analyze the events. For instance, an interview was prepared on June 17, where political scientist Kakhi Kakhishvili was discussing results of the elections. On June 27 another political scientist Soso Tsintsadze was speaking about importance of the EU Association agreement.

The radio broadcaster was covering events impartially; the journalists were following ethical standards. There were no cases of manipulating with voice/music or use of hate speech registered on the radio.



### Radio Fortuna

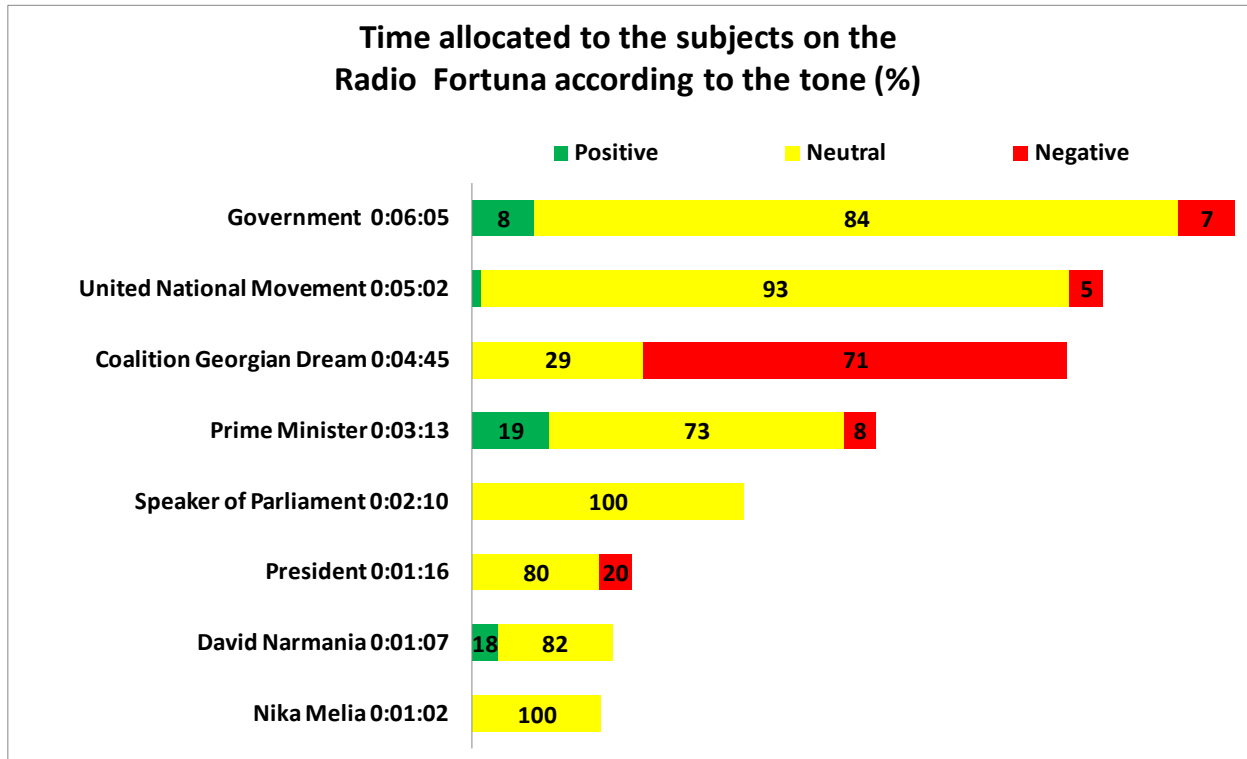
Duration of news programs aired by the Radio Fortuna did not exceed 5-6 minutes. Therefore, the monitoring subjects were provided with just 26 minutes of air time. 23% of that time was used to cover the Government, 19% - the United National Movement and 18% - the coalition Georgian Dream. The radio broadcaster did not cover direct speech of the subjects.

The monitoring subjects were mainly covered in neutral tone, while the coalition Georgian Dream received high rate of negative coverage (71%). Negative tone applied to the ruling team was caused by quoting the comments made by opponents and not subjective evaluations on behalf of the journalists or manipulation with voice and music. For instance, in June 16 program the political scientist Kakhi Kakhishvili was criticizing the ruling coalition while summarizing the election results.

The news programs provided almost no time to mayoral candidates. Only Tbilisi mayoral candidates, who qualified for the second round of elections were covered.



Journalists were disseminating impartial but shallow information related to the main events of a day. Analytical stories were not prepared and tough questions concerning activities of the politicians were not asked.



### Radio Imedi

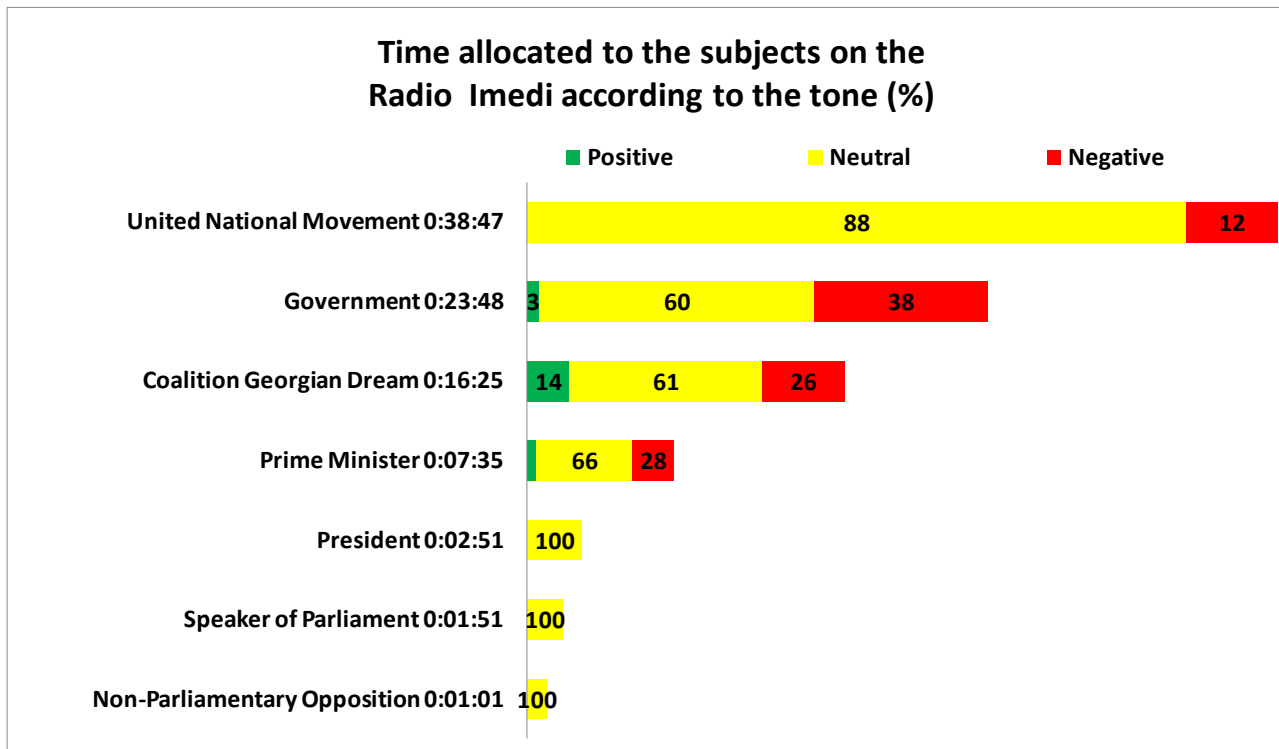
Radio Imedi provided the monitoring subjects with 1 hour and 34 minutes of coverage time. Most part of that time was used to cover the United National Movement (41%), the Government (25%) and the coalition Georgian Dream (17%). More time was allocated to direct speech of the subjects (59%) rather than indirect one.

The radio broadcaster covered the subjects mostly in neutral and negative tone. Indicator of negative tone coverage of the Government, the coalition Georgian Dream and the Prime Minister is mostly caused by statements made by representatives of the United National Movement. For instance, the interview with the representative of the Parliamentary minority Sergo Ratiani was covered on June 20. The issue was related to detention of the members of the United National Movement at the border in Azerbaijan and Ratiani severely criticized the Government of Georgia for that.

On June 15 the radio Imedi covered in detail election processes and evaluations made by the Central Election Commission and the NGO sector. However, compared to the previous reporting periods, the

time allocated to mayoral candidates decreased and none of them received more than one minute of air time.

The Radio Imedi did not demonstrate biased attitude towards any political power; the journalists were following professional ethics standards.



### Radio Atinati (Zugdidi)

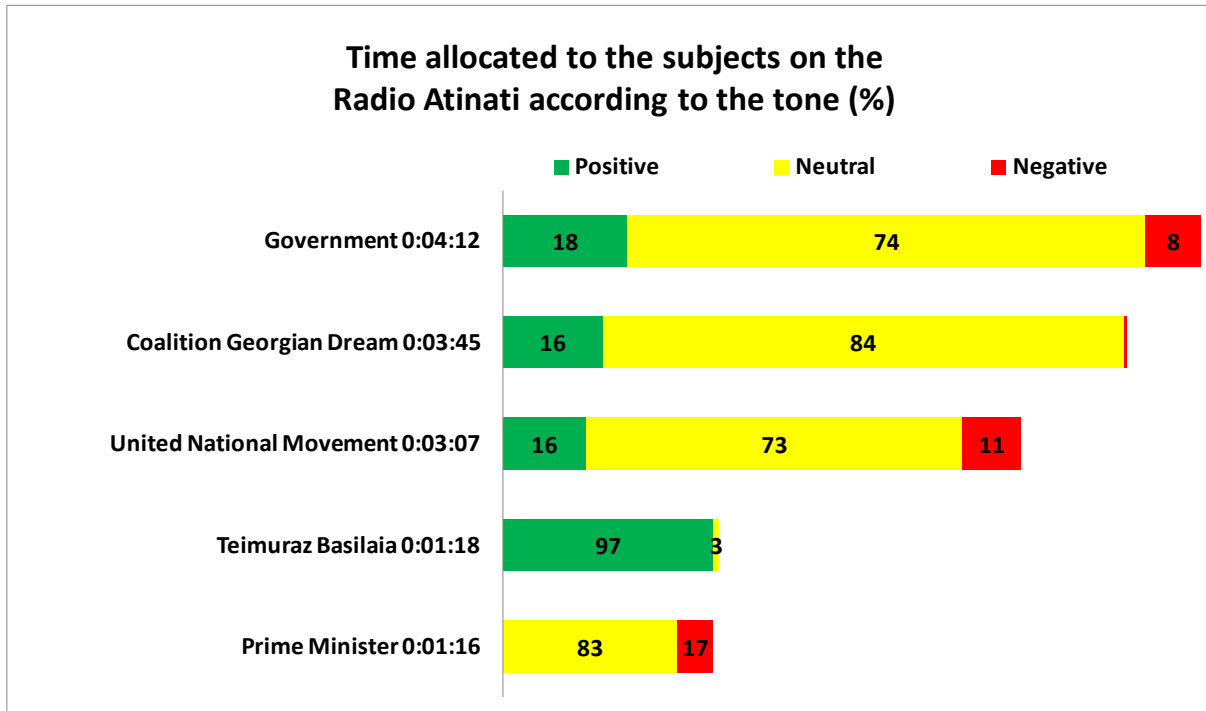
Radio Atinati was airing 5-6 minute news programs. The monitoring subjects were provided with only 15 minutes in total. The Government (28%), the coalition Georgian Dream (25%) and the United National Movement (21%) were covered most often. The journalists were quoting the respondents' statements and the subjects were provided with almost no time for direct speech.

The journalists were not making subjective evaluations. Significant part of information covered by them was related to social topics, which, apart from comments made by population, also comprised clarifications offered by officials.

The June 15 program supplied listeners with information about the voting process taking place in Zugdidi. The radio broadcaster covered violations identified on election precincts and the process of voting carried out by the government representatives. The mayoral candidate from the United

National Movement, Teimuraz Basilaia was the only candidate provided with coverage time, notably 97% in positive tone.

The Radio Atinati was working impartially over the election period, however it covered events in a brief and shallow manner.



### Radio Old City (Kutaisi)

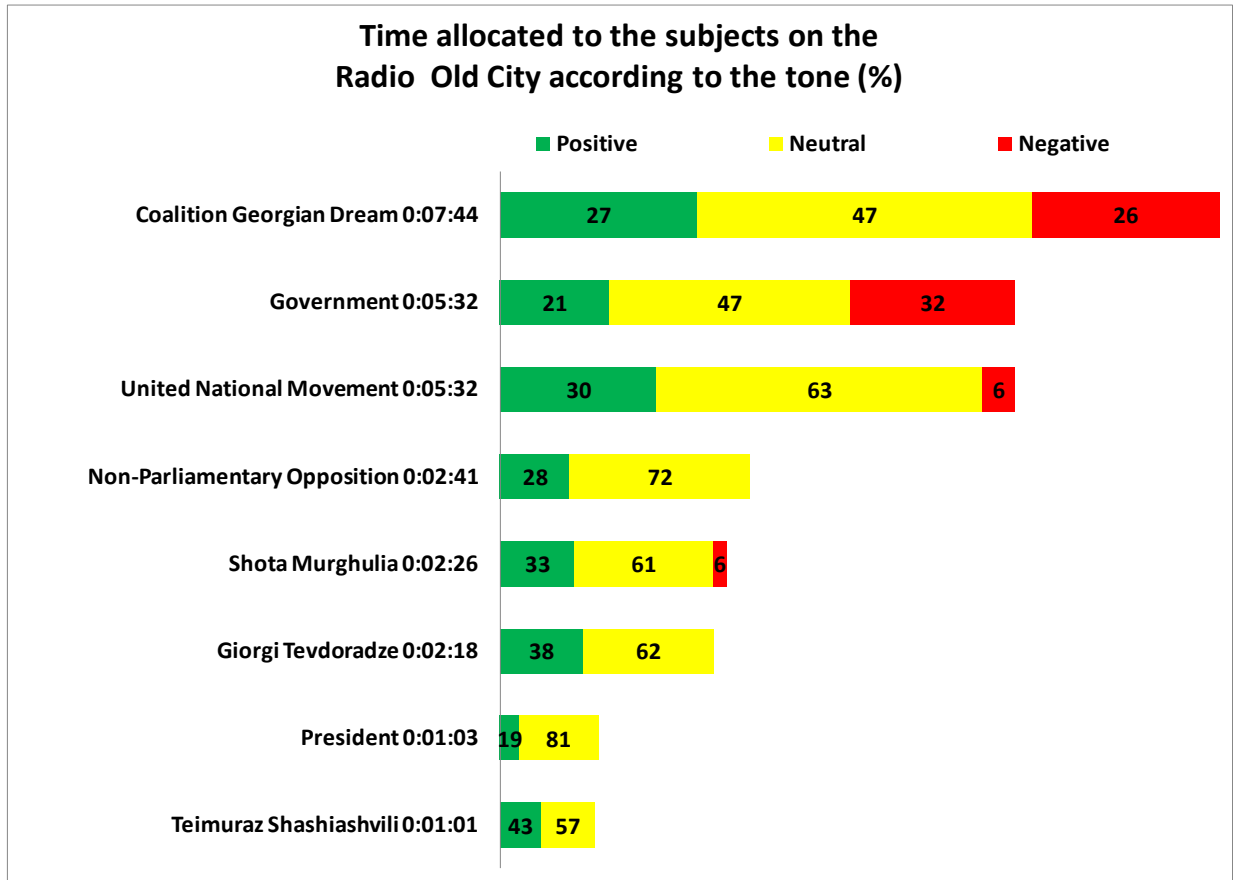
Radio Old Town was preparing brief news programs. The monitoring subjects were provided with 31 minutes in total. The coalition Georgian Dream, the Government and the United National Movement were covered most often. In average 30% of time was dedicated to direct speech.

Compared to the previous monitoring periods, events were covered more shallowly. The journalists limited themselves to quoting politicians' statements and were rarely asking critical questions.

Oppositional parties blamed the Government for alleged falsification of elections. Therefore negative tone collected by the coalition Georgian Dream and the Government is a result of critical statements covered by the radio.

The radio broadcaster was focused on events taking place in Kutaisi. Stories concerning violations identified on election precincts were prepared, where politicians were enabled to express their position towards various issues. Among mayoral candidates, the ones, who won the first three places

were covered by the broadcaster. Besides, public opinion polls were held, where citizens discussed the election results, spoke about the previous Sakrebulo and the newly elected mayor. The journalists were covering events impartially, without making subjective evaluation addressed to any political power. Professional ethical standards were followed by the radio broadcaster.



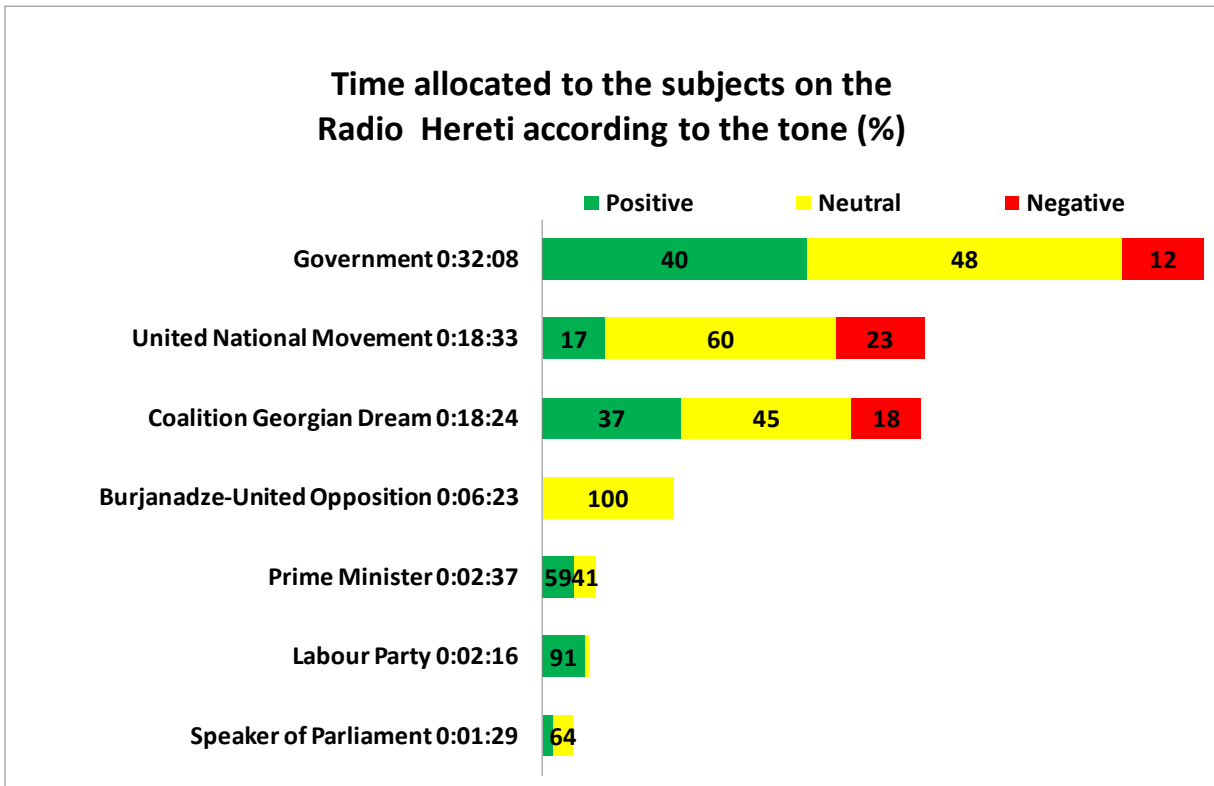
### Radio Hereti (Lagodekhi)

Radio Hereti provided the monitoring subjects with one hour and 26 minutes of air time, out of which 37% of time was dedicated to the Government, 21-21% - to the United National Movement and the coalition Georgian Dream. The radio broadcaster was also covering direct speech of the subjects (32% in average).

The news programs focused on events taking place in Kakheti region. The Radio Hereti journalists were especially proactive. Significant portion of time was dedicated to coverage of problems faced by population, where listeners could hear citizens' statements and responses provided by relevant officials. Besides, the radio broadcaster did not limit itself to single coverage of problems in its news programs but rather provided listeners with follow up information concerning further developments.

The radio broadcaster was actively covering election related topics, however none of the mayoral candidates were provided with more than one minute of coverage time. The journalists provided extensive and detailed coverage of violations indentified on election precincts. They covered statements made by politicians as well as the NGO sector. News programs were not analytical, however they were rather balanced.

The radio broadcaster was operating impartially and the journalists were following professional ethical standards.



### Radio Ajara (Batumi)

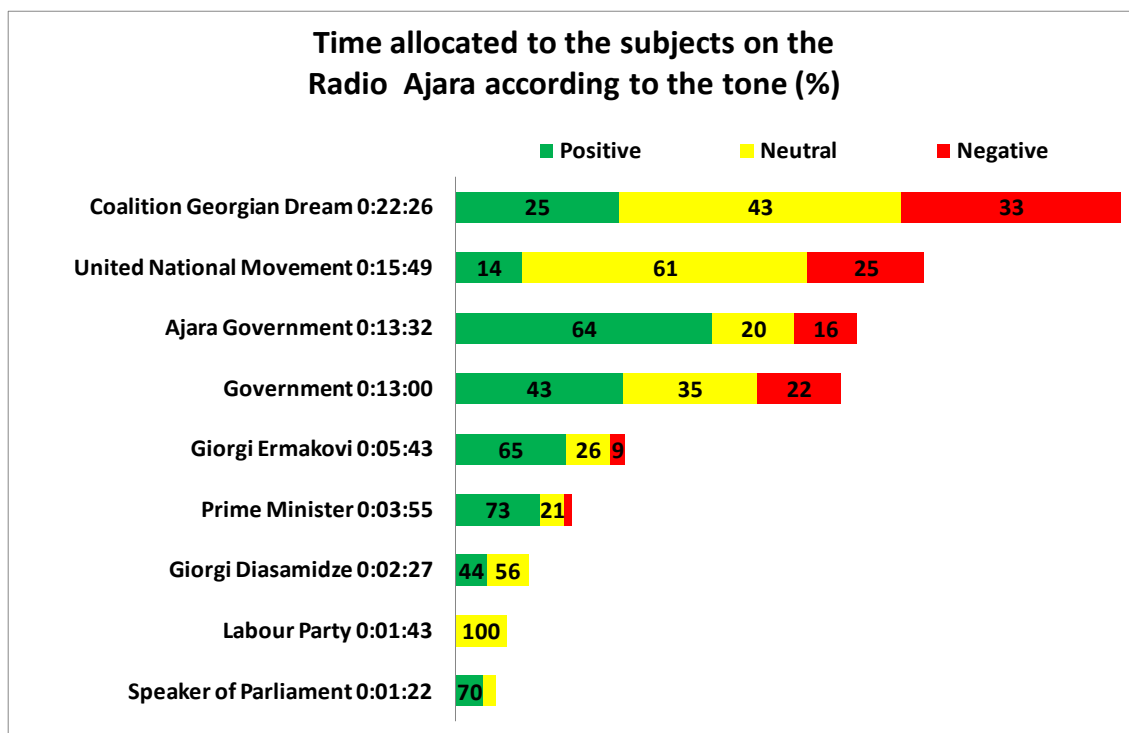
Radio Ajara provided the monitoring subjects with one hour and 24 minutes of air time, out of which 27% of time was dedicated to the coalition Georgian Dream, 19% - the United National Movement and 16% - the Government of Ajara. The radio broadcaster was also covering direct speech of the subjects.

Compared to the previous reporting periods the news programs became more diverse and the stories – more balanced. The journalists were not expressing loyal attitude towards any political power that reflected on allocation of negative tone. However, lack of critical questions still remained to be a

problem, as a result activities carried out by the subjects were mainly covered in a positive tone. For instance, successful projects of Ajarian Government were covered much more intensively than vision and plans of the Government in regard to particular problems.

Duration of news programs on the election day and the following week had increased. The Batumi mayoral candidates from the coalition Georgian Dream and the United National Movement, the two political teams that qualified for the second round, were covered within the reporting period. The journalists were preparing balanced stories concerning violations identified on the election day and covered opinion expressed by the CEC representatives, politicians and NGO sector.

The radio broadcaster operated in an impartial way. The journalists were neither manipulating with voice/music nor using hate speech.



## Conclusion

Within the reporting period the radio broadcasters were covering events impartially, however the problem related to lack of critical questions, journalism proactiveness and in-depth stories became more evident.

Majority of the radio broadcasters were making news programs around the activities carried out by the Government or the United National Movement, while time allocated to non-parliamentary

opposition significantly decreased. The stories were based on politicians' statements and journalists were not trying to research additional information.

Politicians were enabled to speak about their advantages, however those statements were not followed by critical questions. For instance, successful projects implemented by the Government were covered much more intensively than than vision and plans of the Government in regard to particular problems. There were almost no instances, when journalists required public information pr applied statistics and results of the research to verify statements made by politicians. Thereofe, questions asked by journalists were based solely on politicians' statements and not empiric data.

The radio broadcasters were relatively more active on the election day. They were covering situation existing on election precincts and violations pretty operatively. Besides, a lot of time was dedicated to cover statements made by the NGO sector and the CEC.

The time allocated to mayoral candidates further decreased. Majority of radio broadcasters did not allocate more than one minute even to those mayoral candidates, who qualified for the second round of elections. In general, there were few stories prepared in relation to the second round of elections and election campaigns of the candidates were not covered.

The journalists were not demonstrating subjective attitude towards any political power. Violation of professional ethical norms, such as manipulation with voice/music or use of hate speech, was not registered within the reporting period.