



## **Monitoring Regional Television Broadcasters**

### **Presidential Election 2013**

**Subagreement # S-13-238**

**Report for: September 16 - 29, 2013**

***Project Period: 11 September - 25 November, 2013***

***Total Budget: 40 000 GEL***

**Main findings of the first phase of monitoring:**

- Most of the TV companies tended to dedicate airtime to very few of the monitored subjects;
- Pre-election campaigns of presidential candidates and their election programs were provided almost no coverage. Journalists essentially reported on presidential candidates' meetings with population and openings of election headquarters.
- Most of the TV companies dedicated a fair amount of airtime to the activities carried out by local authorities. The reporting was almost always neutral in tone;
- The main issue of concern with the news programs of most of the TV companies was the superficial coverage of events. The topics of news programs were limited to citing policy makers' statements.
- Within the reporting period no manipulation through music/sound was identified.
- On most of the TV companies direct reporting prevailed over indirect.
- Talk shows aired on the channels essentially covered social issues and less time was devoted to political issues and presidential candidates' election programs.

**Background**

The report represents the results of the survey carried out by the Internews Georgia monitoring team within the period of September 16-29, 2013.

Media monitoring helps raise standard of professionalism and is conducive to the development of independent unbiased journalism.

The goal of our survey is to identify, through the monitoring of evening news outlets (19:00 - 24:00) and public-political programs aired on Georgian regional TV broadcasters, the proceeding of regional media coverage of pre-election campaign and key trends.

**Analysis and Methodology**

Monitored TV broadcasters include 12 regional TV companies *Channel 25 (Batumi), Rioni (Kutaisi), Kvemo Kartli TV-Radio Company (Rustavi), Odishi (Zugdidi), Tanamgzavri (Telavi), Channel 9 (Akhaltsikhe), Trialeti (Gori), Guria (Ozurgeti), Imervizia (Chiatura), Gurjaani (Gurjaani), Mega TV (Khoni) and 9<sup>th</sup> Wave (Poti).*

Monitoring was conducted on the regional broadcasters' main evening news programs, public-political talk shows and PSAs during so-called prime time when the number of viewers is at its peak.

### **Monitoring of News Programs**

The technique applied in the project is based on quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative monitoring determines quantitative indicators that can be counted and analyzed. While qualitative monitoring is applied to evaluate the efficiency of media outlets' activities in relation to the indicators such as ethical or professional standards whose quantitative measurement is complex. In particular, the distortion of news, unbalanced coverage, bias or anything else that might affect quality news was focused on.

Quantitative data includes the running time (seconds) of the stories produced about our preselected subjects or making a mention of them. Time is counted when either a news reader or a journalist or any of the respondents of the story is speaking about the monitored subject. The time is being counted when the monitored subject is on the TV screen, either his/her photo, poster or any kind of visual material is shown on the screen (in case s/he is not spoken about).

The monitoring focuses whether the subject is speaking on his/her own or is being spoken about either by a journalist or a respondent. When a monitored subject is speaking (the voice is audible) time is being counted as direct reporting; When a monitored subject is spoken about by others, either by journalists or respondents time is being counted as indirect reporting.

Reporting tone is attributed to every monitored subject. To assess the reporting tone three categories are applied: positive, neutral and negative. Always when the time dedicated to a monitored subject is calculated the tone is evaluated as well, this is to say the running time, seconds/minutes, of the monitored subject being spoken about in a certain tone is calculated. When evaluating the tone both the content as well as context is focused on.

Based on qualitative data the efficiency of media activities in terms of adherence to ethical or professional standards is evaluated. The qualitative part embraces components such as

balance, impartiality, accuracy (whether mistakes are in place in the titles, numbers or respondents' names), fact-based reporting, cases of ignoring news, timely coverage of events, journalist's vocabulary, subliminal political advertising and all those important aspects that are not subject to quantitative measurement. Manipulation through shots and music used in the news programs is also brought into focus.

Monitored subjects include: Parliamentary chairperson, independent MPs, President, government, Prime Minister, Central Election Commission, local authorities (without specification), Adjara government, United National Movement, Georgian Dream Coalition, Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia, Free Democrats (coalition), National Forum (coalition), Georgian Republican Party(coalition), Georgian Conservative Party (coalition), People's Party, Georgia's Way, Free Georgia, New Rights, Democratic Movement for United Georgia, National-Democratic Party; Labor Party, Georgian Democratic Party; Georgian Troupe; Christian-Democratic Movement, European Democrats, as well each and every presidential candidate separately.

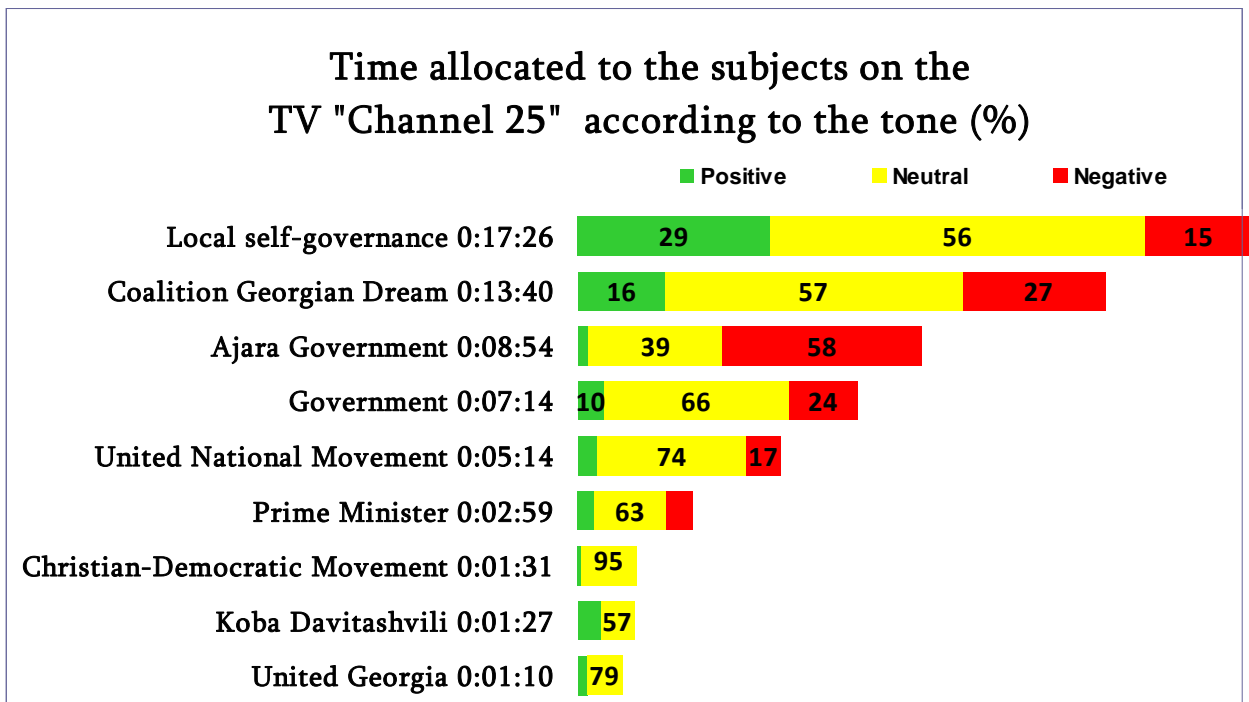
**News programs monitoring results per channel:**

**Channel 25 (Batumi)** – Within the reporting period the channel produced news programs on a daily basis. The monitored subjects were dedicated one hour and five minutes in total. The biggest share falls on the local authorities (27 percent), followed by Georgian Dream Coalition (21 percent) and Adjara government (14 percent). Journalists essentially reported on the events ongoing in Adjara region. The stories were often produced about the topics of social importance and obtained comments from local government representatives over the ways to settle the issues of concern. Even though journalists covered crucial social issues bias and lack of balance was not identified in the stories.

News programs devoted minor amount of airtime to reporting on presidential candidates. Over one minute was solely devoted to Koba Davitashvili, leader of the People's Party.

It is noteworthy that journalist tended to demonstrate criticism to local and central governments, as well as the activities carried out by government team. Reporting on Adjara government was 58 percent negative in tone, it is worth to note though that the parties were granted equal possibility to make comments.

It is as well notable that the index of direct reporting stood rather high.

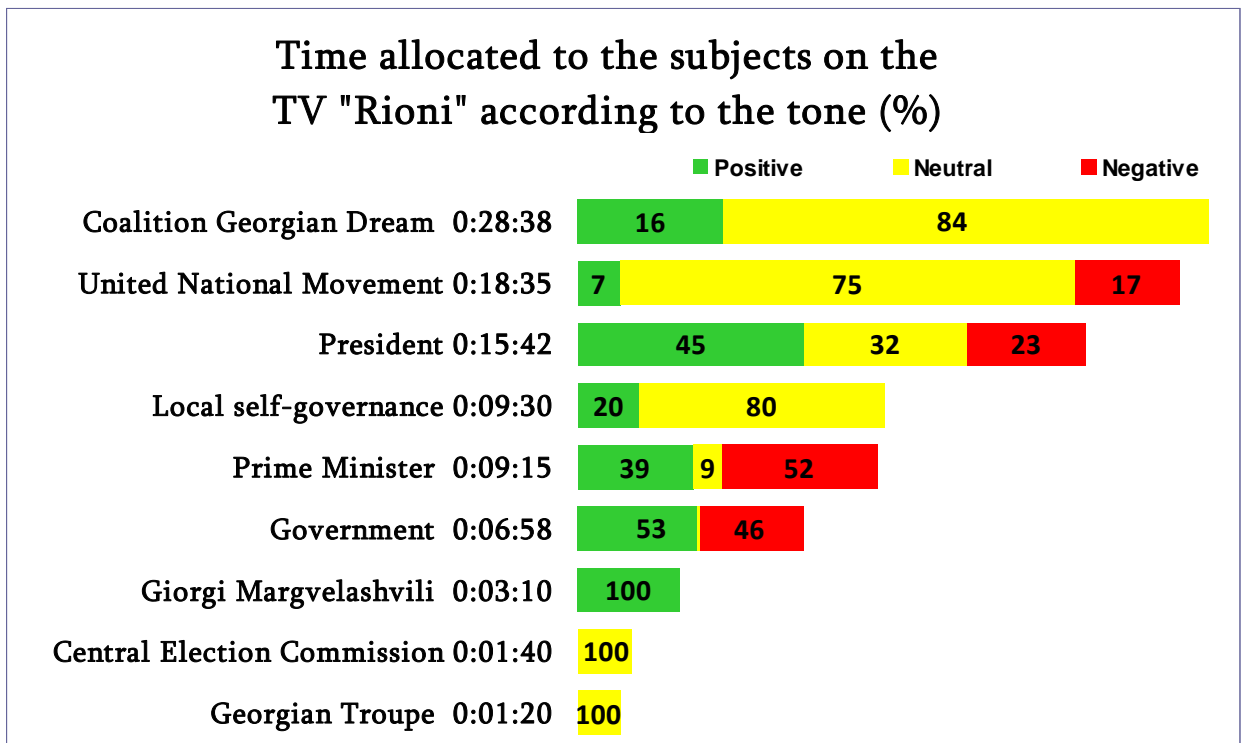


**Rioni (Kutaisi)** - During the reporting period the main evening news programs on TV company Rioni dedicated the total of two hours to the monitored subjects. In the 30-40-minute news programs parliament-related topic prevailed in the opening TV stories. TV stories about the developments in the country and region tended to get accumulated in the mid program.

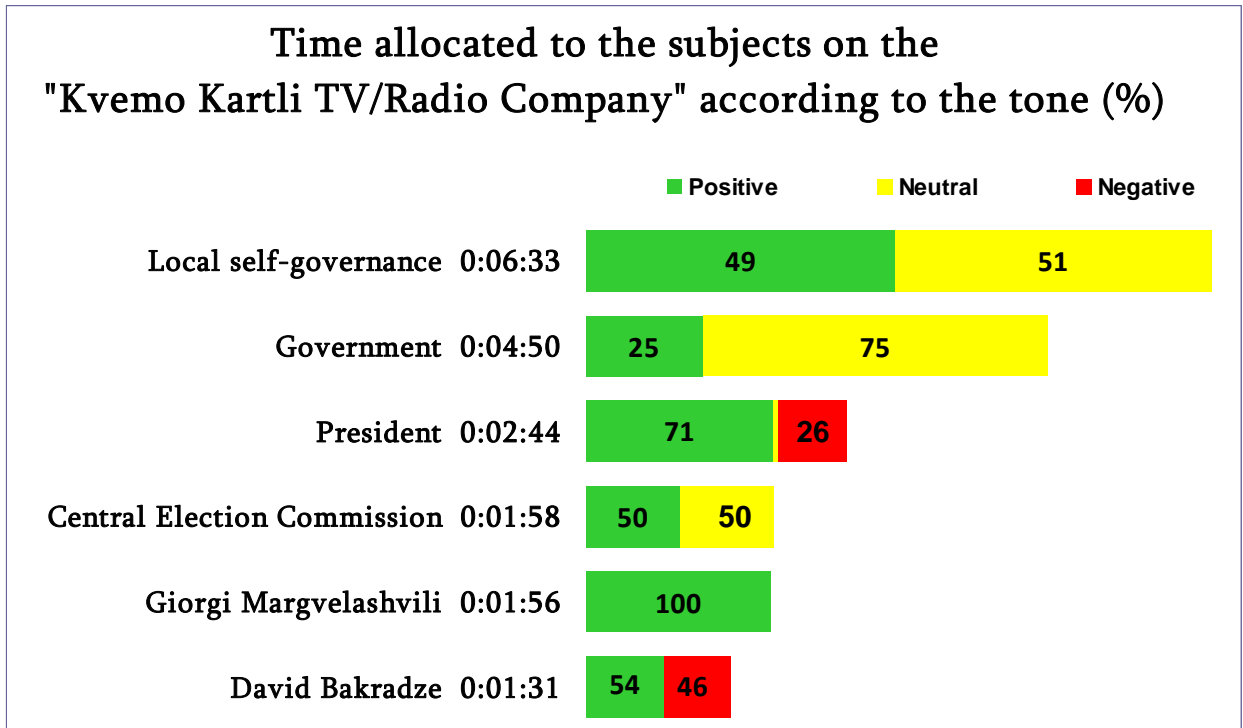
New programs dedicated biggest portion of airtime to the Georgian Dream Coalition (28 minutes) and UNM (18 minutes). Reporting tone tended to be neutral or positive. Negative reporting was mainly due to indirect reporting on monitored subjects.

News programs provided less coverage of pre-election campaigns of presidential candidates and their election programs. A bit more than one minute was dedicated to Giorgi Margvelashvili (Georgian Dream Coalition).

When reporting journalists sounded impartial, providing no personal stance. Most of the TV stories maintained balance and according to the topics of the stories some dissenting opinions were offered. The information delivered by journalists was substantiated by respondents' comments and reference to sources of information.

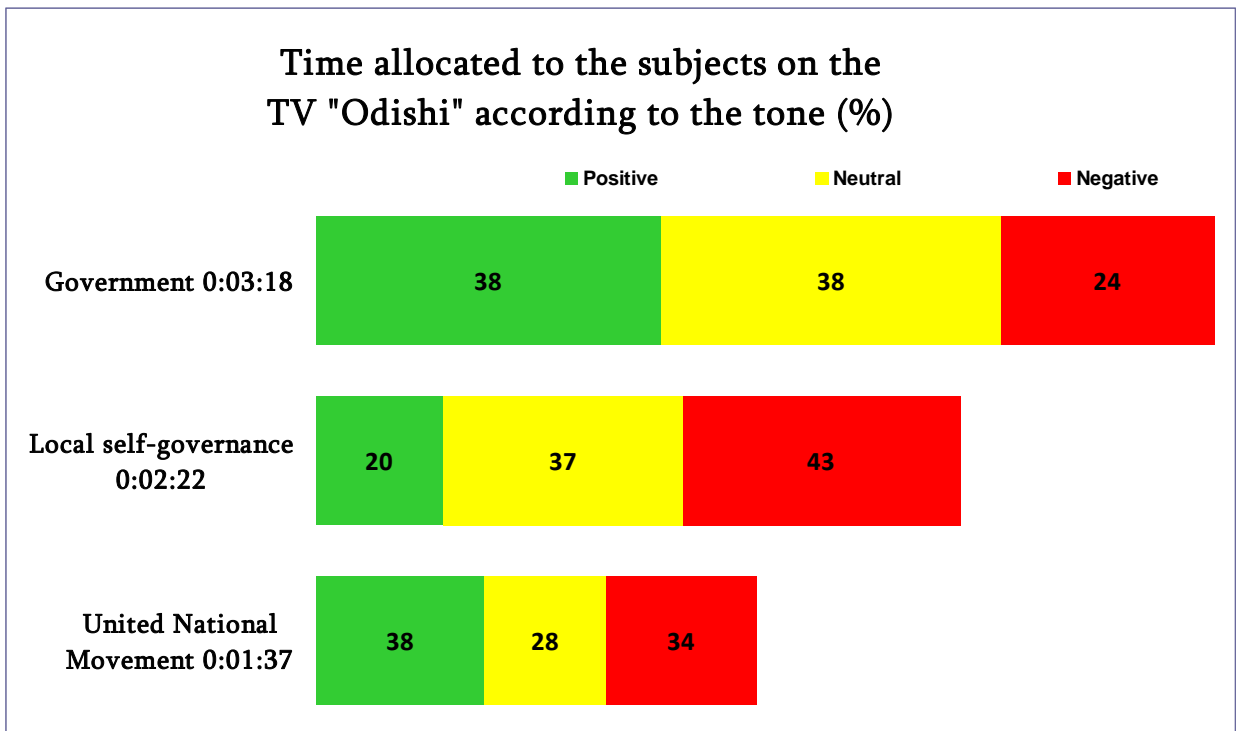


**Kvemo Kartli TV and Radio Company (Rustavi)** – The channel aired 35-minute news program Kronika from Monday to Saturday. On Sundays TV air was dedicated to a special news outlet Kviris Kronika offering viewers a compilation of important events of the week. Within the reporting period the TV company devoted the total of 23 minutes to the monitored subjects, the biggest portion of which falls on the local authorities (29 percent) and government (21 percent). Out of the presidential candidates over one minute was devoted to Giorgi Margvelashvili (Georgian Dream Coalition) and Davit Bakradze (UNM). TV stories were essentially balanced, journalists subjective comments were not in place. The news programs mostly covered developments within the region. Special emphasis was placed on the local government’s involvement in the political and social developments in the region. Reporting on their activities was mostly positive and neutral in tone. It is noteworthy that out of the covered subjects negative tone was attached to only two of them.



**Odishi (Zugdidi)** – During the reporting period 15-minute news programs were aired by the channel on a daily basis from Monday to Friday. Nevertheless the monitored subjects were dedicated approximately nine minutes in total, the biggest portion of which falls on government (3 min. 18 sec.) and local authorities (2 min. 22 sec.). Pre-election campaigns of presidential candidates were not covered. The share of all three reporting tones appeared equal.

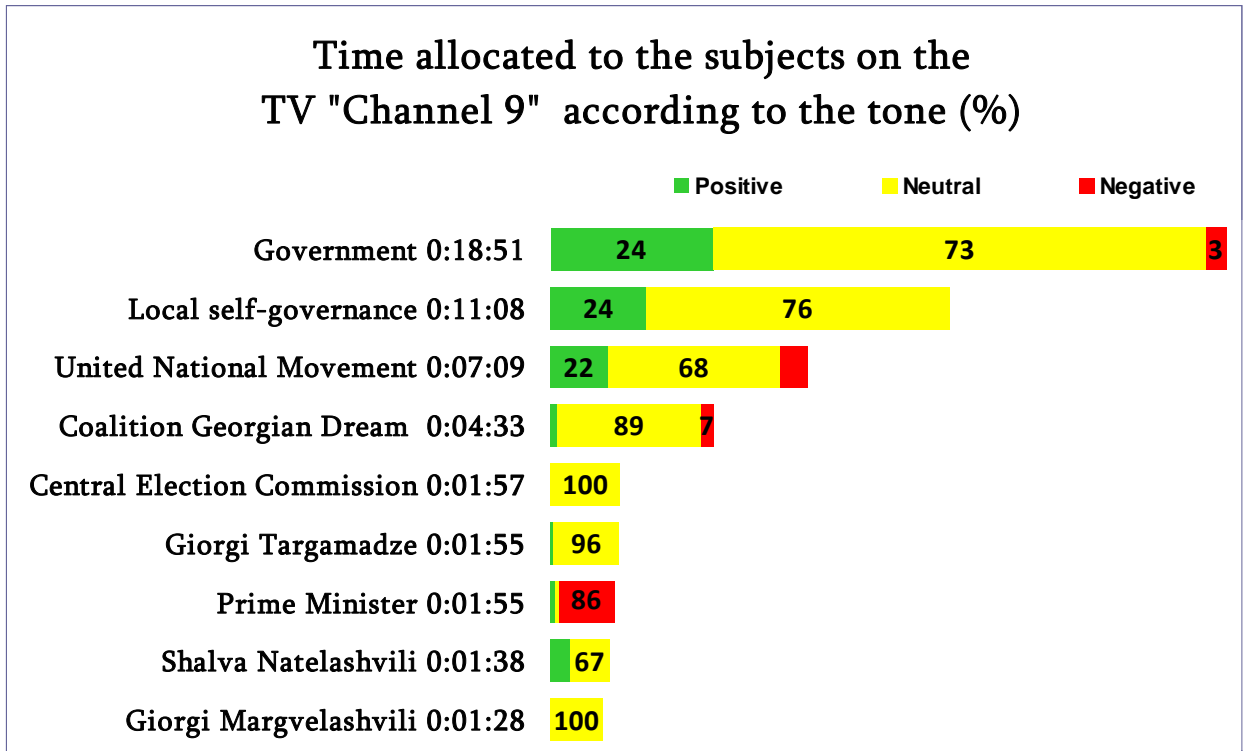
Journalists reported much on social issues but in relation to the matters of concern journalists did not report much on the viewpoints demonstrated by the representatives of authorities; only superficial reporting was in place.



**9<sup>th</sup> Channel (Alkhaltsikhe)** - In the course of the reporting period the channel offered viewers two news outlets during evening air. News outlets dedicated little time to the events ongoing in the centre, they were mainly oriented on the region. News programs devoted 53 minutes and 19 seconds to the monitored subjects. Government leads the chart with 35 percent, followed by local authorities (21 percent) and UNM (18 percent). Over one minute, mostly neutral in tone, was dedicated to three presidential candidates including Giorgi Margvelashvili (Georgian Dream Coalition), Giorgi Targamadze (Christian-Democratic Movement) and Shalva Natelashvili (Labor Party). According to journalists the low index of reporting on presidential candidates is linked to scanty pre-election activities. In regard to the aforementioned issue the Sunday summarizing news program produced a TV story (ultimately repeated in the September 27 news outlet).

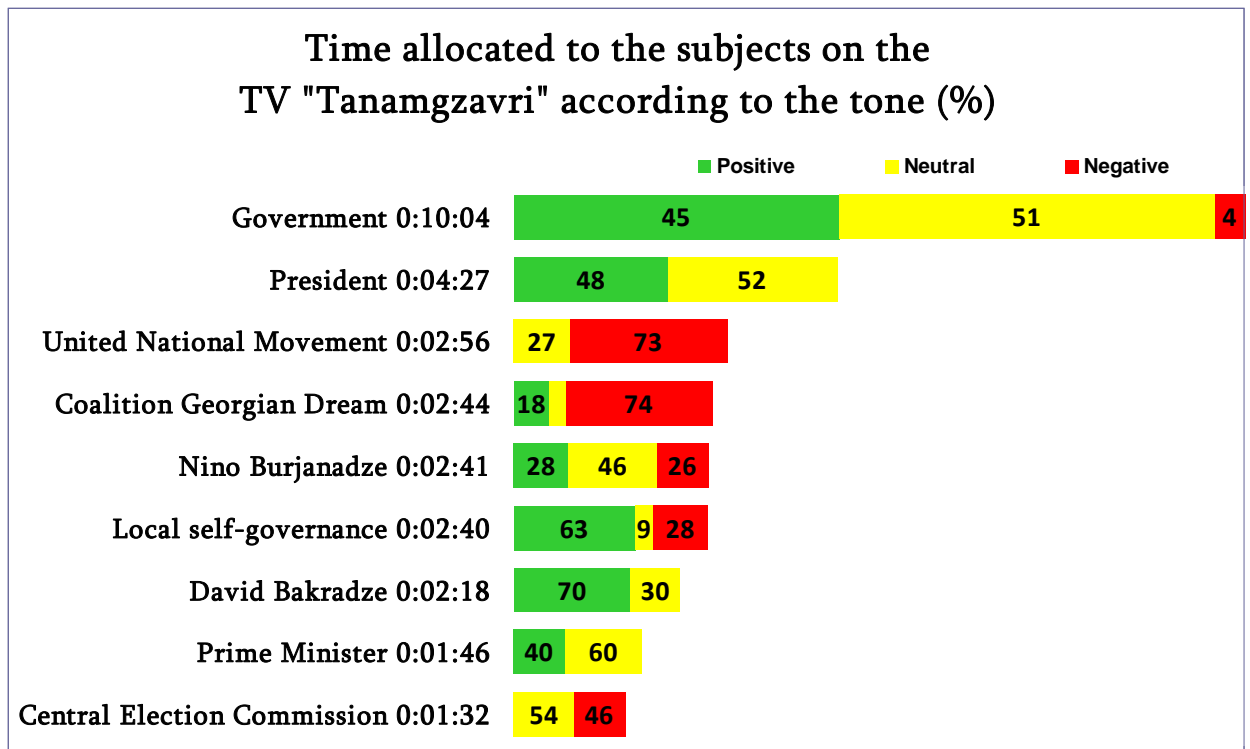
The stories in the news programs tended to be balanced, journalists reported on events in an impartial manner, personal viewpoints were not in place, reporting was brief and comprehensive. It is noteworthy that in regard to every subject direct reporting prevailed over indirect.





**Tanamgzavri (Telavi)** – TV company aggressively covered political developments. News programs on the channel were produced on a daily basis (except for weekend). Within the reporting period the subjects were dedicated the total of 35 minutes. The biggest share falls on reporting on the government (10 min.), President comes next with 4 minutes. Out of the presidential candidates only Davit Bakradze (UNM) and Nino Burjanadze (Democratic Movement for United Georgia) were covered. Their meetings with the population was the main topic of TV stories. In regard to two most covered subjects (government, President) the share of positive reporting tone ranks high. Reporting on UNM and the Georgian Dream Coalition was mostly negative in tone (73 percent and 74 percent respectively).

In general journalists provided unbiased coverage of events, demonstrating equal criticism to both authorities as well as the opposition. The lack of sources though was identified: TV stories often offered the viewpoints of one party.



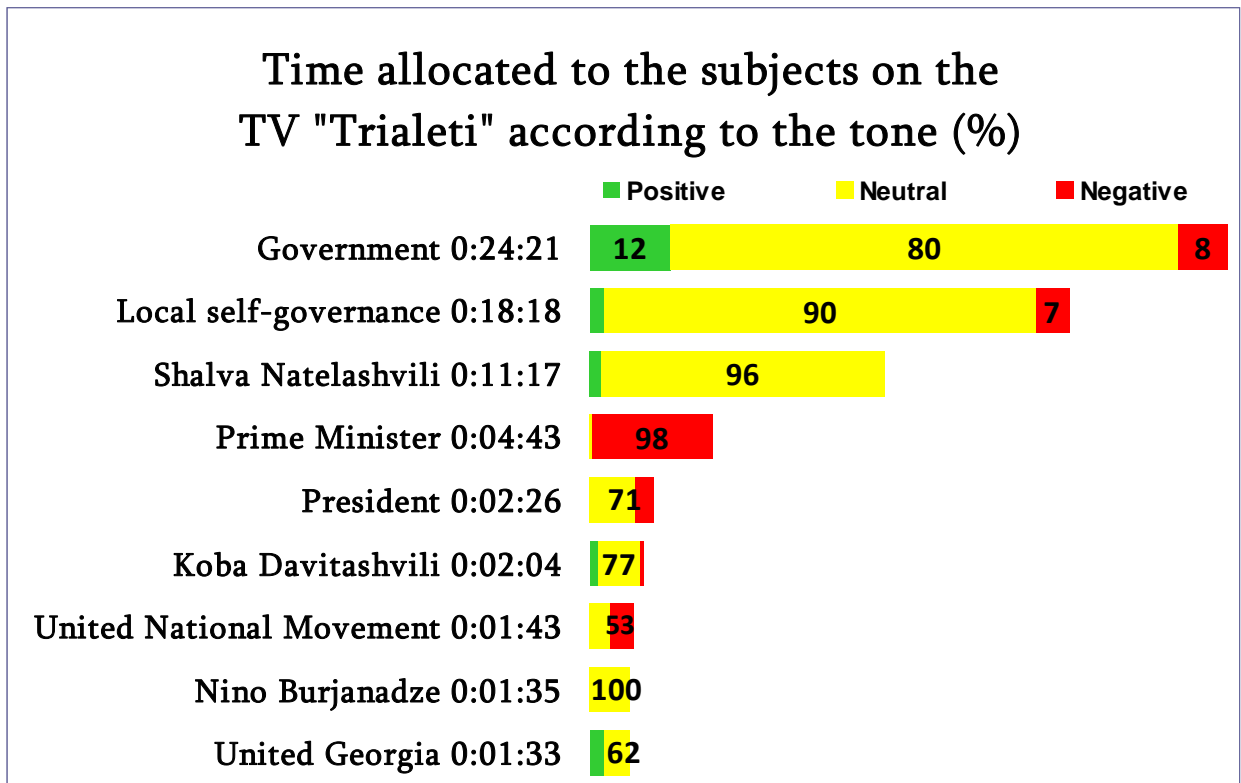
**Trialeti (Gori)** – During the reporting period TV company Trialeti produced 10-20-minute news programs on a daily basis from Monday to Friday. The Saturday news outlet repeatedly aired the stories about top important events of the week. It is noteworthy that news programs were on air without the newsreader.

Throughout the reporting period TV company dedicated one hour and nine minutes to the monitored subjects. The major portion of the given time falls on government (24 min.), followed by local authorities with 18 minutes. Out of the presidential candidates only Shalva Natelashvili (Labor Party) was dedicated 11 minutes, two-minute reporting was enjoyed by Koba Davitashvili (People’s Party), a bit more than one minute was devoted to Nino Burjanadze (Democratic Movement for United Georgia).

Reporting on most of the monitored subjects was neutral in tone. Due to some negative statements made by presidential candidate Shalva Natelashvili (Labor Party) in regard to Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili the bulk of reporting on the Premier turned out to be 98 percent negative in tone.

In the main the news programs aired lengthy stories about the events ongoing in Shida Kartli. The viewpoints of interested parties were presented. Journalists reported without subjective evaluations provided. TV stories tended to be balanced. During reporting period

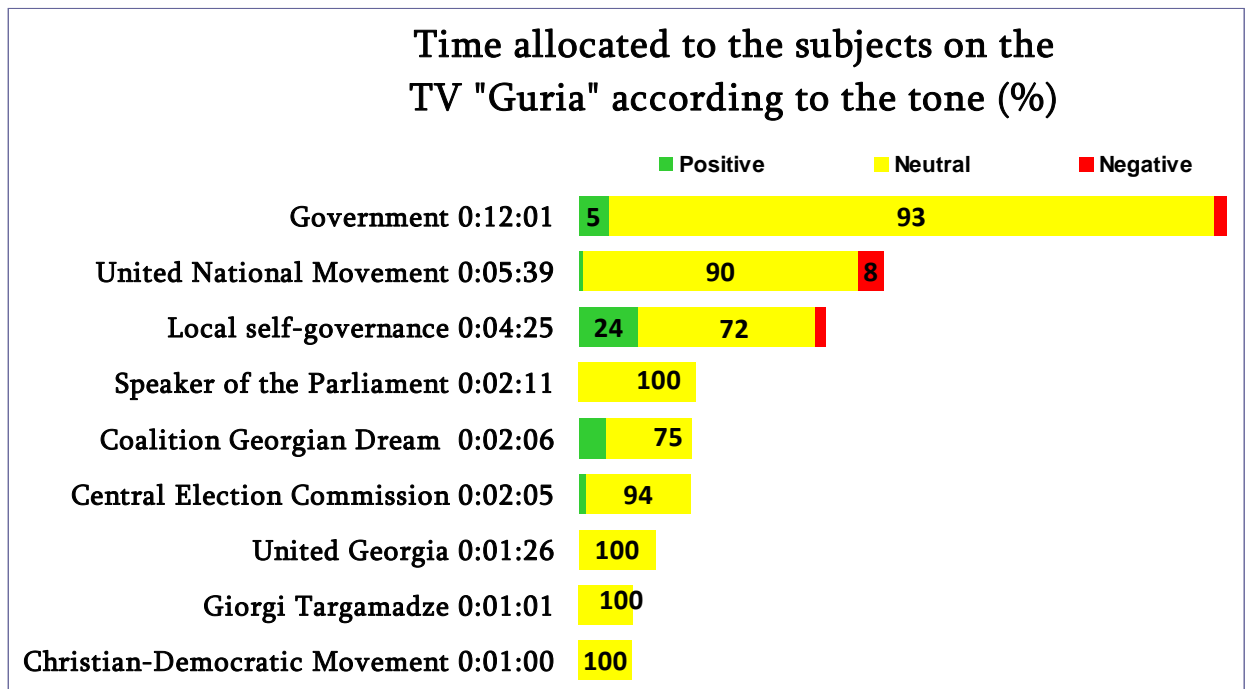
some interviews with respondents were missing subtitles, therefore the respondents were hard to identify.



**Guria (Ozurgeti)** – Broadcasting company produced 10-15-minute news programs on a daily basis from Monday to Friday. Within the reporting period the channel devoted 36 minutes to the monitored subjects. 34 percent of the given airtime falls on reporting on government. 15 and 12 percent of the total was dedicated to UNM and local authorities respectively. Pre-election campaigns of presidential candidates were not covered at all. Out of the presidential candidates Giorgi Targamadze (Christian-Democratic Movement) was the only one the channel devoted one minute.

Most of the TV stories were mostly found balanced, thereupon reporting tone in regard to every monitored subject was mostly neutral. When reporting journalists abstained from making subjective assessments.

The channel essentially produced stories about the developments in the region. The main events ongoing nationwide were covered as well.



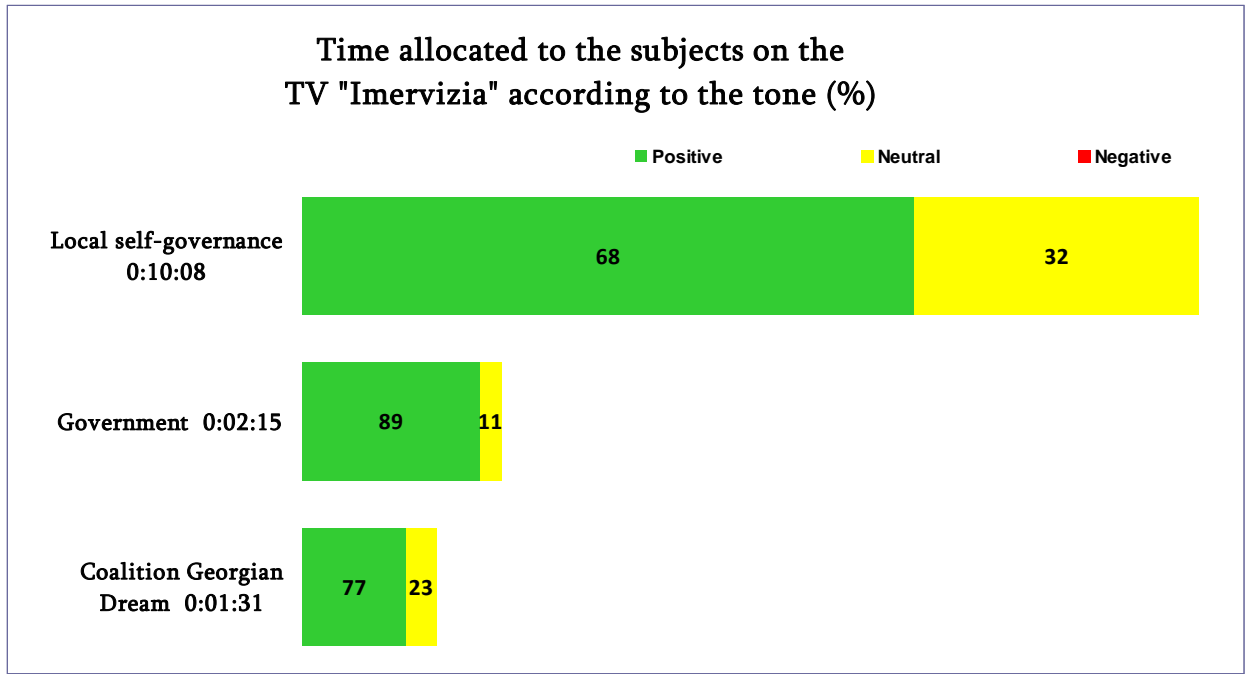
**Imervizia (Chiatura)** – During reporting period the 40-minute news program was aired twice per week (Tuesday, Friday) at 19:00 pm and later repeatedly aired at 21:20 pm.

The news of the day essentially touched upon the developments in Chiatura and Sachkhere regions. Only four of the monitored subjects were covered in the news programs with the total of 15 minutes dedicated. The candidates running for presidential elections were not covered at all.

Reporting was mostly positive in tone. Positive tone was attached to reporting on the activities of local authorities: 68 percent out of 10-minute coverage was positive in tone. It is noteworthy that journalists were trying to portray the problems the region faces and tended to shoot critical questions to the representatives of the authorities. One of the news programs invited the representatives of the authorities to discuss planned infrastructural changes. The spokesperson's answers mainly implied promises to tackle problems. Accordingly the reporting on local authorities was 80 percent direct.

During reporting period the topics covered in the stories touched upon pre-school education and infrastructural development, various events and celebrations were covered too. When reporting on public issues journalists sounded unbiased, trying to pose interesting critical questions without demonstrating their subjective stance.

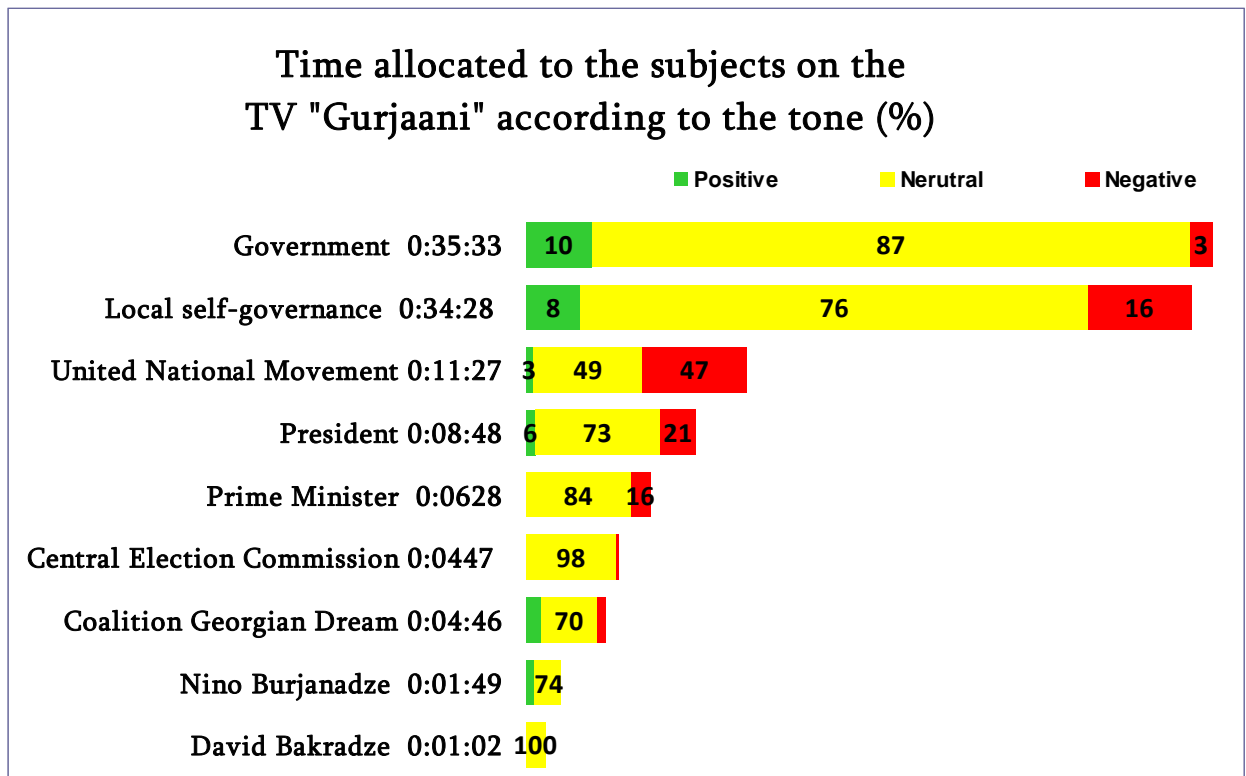
Imervizia does not produce news programs on a daily basis. Along with self-produced content the TV company transmits Tbilisi-based cognitive-entertainment TV channel GDS. Accordingly the airtime dedicated to monitored subjects within two weeks looks rather modest. Hence it's hard to identify certain trends.



**Gurjaani (Gurjaani)** – Throughout reporting period 20-30-minute news programs were aired on a daily basis. Lengthy TV stories were produced about main events of the day, in the framework of the Events Out of Region rubric the channel covered the developments nationwide.

The news programs produced during reporting period dedicated one hour and 50 minutes to monitored subjects, 32 percent of which falls on government and 31 percent on local authorities.

Journalists reported in a timely manner, with no subjective evaluations attributed. Accordingly TV stories were essentially balanced, the viewpoints of interested parties were portrayed.

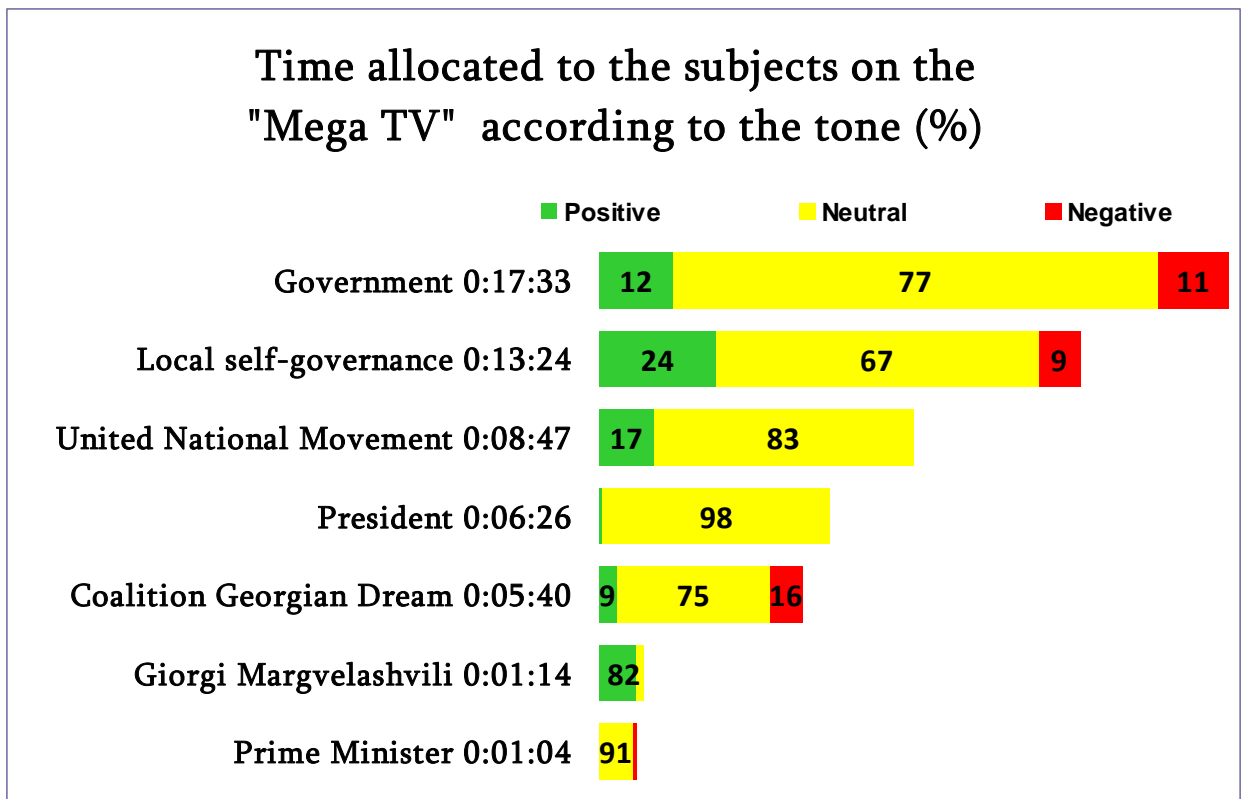


**Mega TV (Khoni)** – During reporting period TV company produced news programs on a daily basis whose running time was 20-30 minutes on average. News programs covered political, economic and social issues ongoing in the region and the country in general.

The airtime dedicated to monitored subjects in news programs is one hour, the biggest portion of which falls on government and Prime Minister (18 min. per each). TV news did not stand out with the diversity of reporting on political parties: 16 percent of dedicated time falls on UNM and 10 percent on Georgian Dream Coalition. Neither pre-election campaign of presidential candidates nor their election programs were covered. Over one minute was devoted solely to Giorgi Margvelashvili (Georgian Dream Coalition).

Journalists were limited to brief coverage of news. Reporting was balanced, no subjective stances were offered by journalists. Neutral reporting tone prevailed over both positive and negative tones. Lack of balance was not that extreme in the TV stories. The main issue with summarizing weekly news programs was the lack of analytical stories.

All seven monitored subjects were devoted considerable amount of airtime for direct speeches.

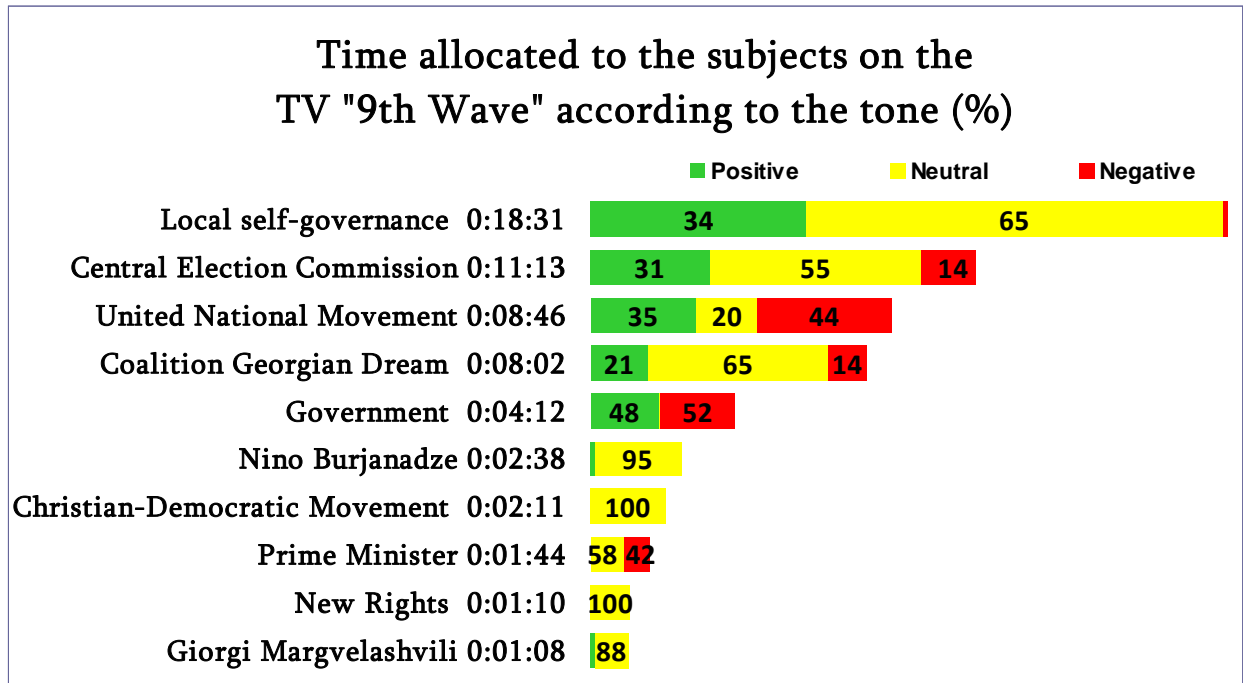


**9th Wave** – Throughout two-week reporting period TV company 9<sup>th</sup> Wave’s news program Cursor was on air with 10-20-minute news outlets on a daily basis. The events ongoing in the region were mainly focused on, airtime was devoted to the TV stories produced by the Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters and partner TV companies.

The news programs dedicated one hour to the monitored subjects. A considerable share of dedicated airtime falls on local authorities (30 percent). Out of the political subjects UNM and Georgian Dream Coalition are leading the chart with 14 and 13 percent respectively. As regards presidential candidates Nino Burjanadze (Democratic Movement for United Georgia) and Giorgi Margvelashvili (Georgian Dream Coalition) were covered. In general neutral tone prevailed when reporting. In relation to UNM though reporting tone was 44 percent negative.

News programs did not stand out with the diversity of reporting on monitored subjects. Presidential candidates were essentially covered in the TV stories produced by the Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters.

TV stories offered contradictory opinions. When reporting on the local self government journalists were trying to provide opinions of different political parties. Direct reporting prevailed over indirect reporting.



### Monitoring of Public-Political Programs and Talk Shows

The monitoring of this type of programs implies only qualitative component. Solely journalists are subject to monitoring. Their behavior is evaluated based various criteria: their role and participation in the program, they way the lead the process, whether they are just moderators or are trying demonstrate their stance, the extent of equality of conditions offered to guests, the way they approach guests and how hard they try to obtain in-depth information, how well they let guests express their opinions, when do the guest get interrupted. Monitoring also focuses on the use of offensive or discriminating expressions and statements by journalists and their response to the use of hate speech by guests.

### Results of Monitoring per Channel:

**Channel 25 (Batumi)** – In the evening the TV company daily (except for weekend) aired talk show Dialogue, hosted by journalist Jaba Ananidze. Once a week at the same time Dialogue was alternated by another similar type of talk show Answer People (project implemented by



Open Society Georgia Foundation). One or several guests invited to the studio responded live to the questions posed by audience. Debates too were held rather often.

The program was always announced beforehand. During the reporting period the TV company aired ten talk shows. In terms of topics the programs were diverse. The following issues were discussed:

- The results of ten-month government activities;
- Businessman seeking for justice applies to Minister of Justice;
- Funding of Supreme Council of Adjara AR increases;
- VIP persons in Adjara government;
- NGOs' cooperation with Adjara AR government;
- New and old investments in Adjara;
- Separation of customs and tax services;
- Future of coalition government;
- Adjara television;
- Pre-election programs of election candidates.

The parties in the programs were demonstrated in a balanced manner. The representatives of local authorities, Adjara government and civil society as well as experts were invited. The degree of citizens' involvement (calls in) was rather high too. Programs stood out with the diversity of opinions. In the September 16 program though hosting Batumi majoritarian MP Murman Dumbadze the journalist only appeared to be the respondent's opponent since no other guest had been selected. Criticism and questions were brought about through citizens calling in. The host of the program happened to be just the moderator, offering invited guests equal conditions. At times, due to the arguments between selected guests in the studio, the arguments were inaudible and incomprehensible due to noise. The host was trying to refrain from expressing his stance. In regard to local authorities and government team he would shoot critical questions.

**Rioni (Kutaisi)** – Within the reporting period TV company Rioni aired public-political talk show Tema (Topic) twice a week. The studio was hosting four or five selected guests.

During the monitoring period the following topics were discussed:

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- Higher education;
- Developments ongoing at local self government;
- Food safety and consumer rights;
- World Rabies Day.

During the reporting period TV program Tema provided no coverage of presidential candidates' programs and proceeding of pre-election campaign. Out of the monitored subjects the talk show discussed local authorities, government, Prime Minister, Georgian Dream Coalition, and UNM. In the program negative and neutral tones prevailed. In regard to Prime Minister and Georgian Dream Coalition the reporting was neutral and positive in tone. Negative tone was mainly streaming from respondents.

The Tema program hostes Khatia Babunashvili and Nana Robakidze were actively involved in the program and posed rather a number of questions. At times the journalist demonstrated skepticism and criticism towards UNM and together with shooting a question voiced hr stance. Hostes sounded favorable to respondents. The discussion went on within limits, no discourteous statements or hate speech was found in the programs.

**Kvemo Kartli TV /Radio Company (Rustavi)** – At 21:30 pm the channel aired talk show Your Time. One of the presidential candidates invited to the 40-minute program is due to answer the questions posed by the journalist as well as citizens calling in. The aforementioned format, according to the host of the program, goes well with presidential candidates since their majority refused to take part in the debates.

In the past two weeks TV program Your Time was on air three times (September 20, 24 and 27). Selected guests included presidential candidates Nino Burjanadze (Democratic Movement for United Georgia), Zurab Kharatishvili (European Democrats of Georgia) and Nestan Kirtadze (initiative team). The questions posed by the journalist were courteous, no subjective commenting was in place. The journalist responded in a timely manner and did not let the guest make unethical statements. When Nino Burjanadze, for instance, was trying to accuse her competitor UNM and Georgian Dream Coalition of preventing the provision of equal conditions for pre-election campaign the journalist made her stop. The journalist also took into account that the talk show was hosting only one party and avoided posing

questions that would require answers from the opponent of the selected guest. The questions posed were thematic and of current importance. Discussions too were held between the host and the guest the host though always let the guest finish his/her speech.

**Odishi (Zugdidi)** – Within the reporting period none of the talk shows was aired on the channel.

**Channel 9 (Akhaltikhe)** – During the reporting period the following talk shows were monitored: Dialogue Together with Rusudan Gvaramadze, Choice 2013 (hosted by Rusudan Gvimradze) and Your Parliament.

It is notable that during the monitoring period the aforementioned talk shows were aired only once which deprives us of a possibility to provide in-depth analysis and determine trends.

The host of talk show Dialogue and Choice 2013 was unbiased during the programs. The guests selected for the show represented different parties, hence viewpoints in the programs were portrayed in a more or less balanced manner. The host was trying to obtain comprehensive information over the topic and offered guests a possibility to express their viewpoints.

Talk show Choice 2013 was produced in partnership with the Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters in the framework of media sector partnership project Choice 2013 being made possible with the support of IREX G-MEDIA program.

Talk show Choice 2013 touched upon the discussion over the program thesis of presidential candidates. The guests invited to the first block of the program thoroughly presented election programs of the presidential candidates of the Georgian Dream Coalition and People's Party. In the second half of the program Giorgi Targamadze, presidential candidate of Christian-Democratic Movement spoke about his stance and plans.

It is noteworthy that the program was of interactive nature and along with main guests the NGO representatives being present among the public were posing questions. The host was utmost neutral and mainly played the role of a mediator.

The program Your Parliament, aired on September 23, is the program produced with the support of USAID within the framework of the Parliament's Communication Center project implemented by NDI and Internews-Georgia. The questions to be posed to the selected guests though are delivered to the host in advance by regional TV companies.

In the September 23 outlet of Your Parliament the host discussed formerly announced topic - amendment to law over legal status of villages - together with selected guests. The parties were balanced. UNM and Georgian Dream coalition majoritarian MPs expressed their viewpoints in relation to the aforementioned topic. No discussion was held on air, the program essentially went on in the Q & A format.

**Tanamgzavri (Telavi)** – Talk show Dialogue is aired once per week, on Fridays at 20:30. The running time of the program is one hour on average. The program is divided into two parts – the topics change and accordingly the guests too. The talk show is hosted by Nato Megutnishvili.

During two-week reporting period the program was aired twice. The following topics were discussed:

- The start of new school season and problems to be tackled within education system;
- Re-socialization of probationers;
- Evaluating Abkhazian war;
- Opening of a new season at Telavi Theatre.

The journalist was trying to be a moderator throughout the program and debating with selected guests. The questions were adequate to the topics, in the September 20 program though the host shot an unethical question to Lia Bazierashvili, head of the educational resource center. The journalist was curious to learn about her political stance.

In the course of the program citizens kept calling in, asking questions to the invited guests. Some of the questions were inadequate, the host though made no comment to it.

The host offered guests a possibility to express their opinions and never interrupted them.

**Trialeti (Gori)** - On September 26 TV company Trialeti aired a talk show Discussions on Women's Issues. The program stood out with the diversity of guests discussing resettlement of IDPs in Shida Kartli. Throughout 45-minute program journalist Eka Tetradze offered guests equal possibility to discuss the problems female IDPs face. The host of the program briefly laid out the questions, trying to obtain information from a guest about the way female IDPs live in Georgia and IDPs in general. The host was curious to learn more about their problems.

On September 23 upon the completion of the news program TV company Trialeti aired the interview with Luis Navaro, the National Democratic Institute Georgia Office Director. The journalist asked him questions about the results of opinion poll survey presented on September 23. The question sounded shallow and just helped raise public awareness of the results of the survey. One of the questions touched upon distrust to NDI surveys.

**Guria (Ozurgeti)** – On September 23 TV company aired talk show Elections produced in partnership with the Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters in the framework of media sector partnership project Choice 2013. The project is made possible with the support of IREX G-MEDIA program. The spokespersons of four presidential candidates were taking part in political debates. The talk show presenter granted 3 minutes per selected guest to present election programs. The journalist was posing brief questions trying to dedicate equal time to every guest. The host of the program appeared neutral to the guests. The talk show aired the story about the problems the dwellers of different villages face. The journalist got curious what plans the presidential candidates had to tackle the problems. Being provided just a general kind of answer the journalist was trying get a more specific answer and obtain more information.

During the reporting period TV company Guria also aired a talk show Water-Related Issues in Ozurgeti. Diversity of guests was characteristic to the program. According to their speeches it was very much evident they all were well aware of water supply-related

problems in Ozurgeti. The program also aired a story featuring citizen voicing complaints and describing current situation.

The journalist was limited to posing just shallow questions, without expressing his viewpoint. The journalist, together with the invited guests, was trying to figure out the ways to solve the problems.

Another talk show Public Hall produced by the channel discussed the agriculture-related problems in Ozurgeti municipality and the ways of their solution. The journalist had two guests invited to the studio reviewing the issues of concern in different fields of agriculture. The journalist offered journalists equal possibility, limiting himself to just shooting questions.

**Imervizia (Chiatura)** – During the reporting period no talk show was aired on the channel.

**Gurjaani (Gurjaani)** – In the course of the reporting period the channel aired several talks shows The Power of Powerless, Choice 2013, Dialogue and Your Parliament.

The topic of the September 20 outlet of the Power of Powerless was the ways the authorities are going to tackle the problems in Gurjaani municipality. The host of the program Levan Aleksishvili had five guests invited to the studio. Acting Gamgebeli of Gurjaani municipality, deputy Gamgebeli, head of infrastructural service of Gurjaani municipality and State envoys to two villages were among the guests.

The host of the talk show was posing questions about the problems in Gurjaani municipality. The host was trying to further generalize the topics raised by the guests. In the framework of the talk show calls in were accepted too. Within a one-hour program the degree of citizens participation stood rather high. The journalist was trying to let guests speak about any topic of citizens concern.

The September 27 outlet of the Power of the Powerless, hosted by Levan Aleksishvili, was dedicated to Choice 2013. TV debates were produced in partnership with the Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters in the framework of media sector partnership project Choice 2013 being made possible with the support of IREX G-MEDIA program.

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The representatives of headquarters of five presidential candidates were participating in the debates. The journalist was curious about the key message of each presidential candidate, their programs and priorities.

The order of the guests to speak was agreed through casting of lots. The public present in the hall was rather actively participating in the program. The public representatives enjoyed a possibility to pose one question each in the mid program. Citizens' participation through calls in was rather intense, 15 minutes out of 1,5-hour program was dedicated to TV viewers. It is noteworthy that several calls in with the citizens making discourteous statements against UNM were rejected following host's request.

On Mondays the evening air offered viewers program Dialogue. During the reporting period two programs were produced. The topic discussed included:

- Agriculture;
- Sport in Gurjaani region.

The host posed questions to the selected guests about the problems in the aforesaid fields. In the program about agriculture the host was aggressively shooting questions about the problems the peasants encounter. Almost all of the sectors of agriculture were discussed during the program.

On September 22 TV company Gurjaani aired 6-minute program Your Parliament made possible with the support of USAID within the framework of the Parliament's Communication Center project implemented by NDI and Internews-Georgia.

UNM members Davit Chavchanidze was participating in the program dedicated to the evaluation of the first-year activities carried out by the eighth parliament of Georgia. The journalist limited himself to posing questions only, without expressing his stance. Based on the format of the program the guest was to answer the questions readied by regional televisions as TV questions.

**Mega TV (Khoni)** – TV company-produced talk show Forum was aired once per week, on Mondays. On Fridays the channel dedicated airtime to the talk show produced by Studio Re.

During reporting period two outlets of the talk show Forum were offered to the viewers. The programs touched upon the following issues:

- Evaluation of pre-election environment;
- Civil society activism and the rate of its development.

The host of the Forum talk show, together with the invited guests, was discussing live the issues selected for the program in advance. The journalist limited himself to posing shallow questions, without demonstrating his stance. The program, 40-45 minutes in length, went on in the Q & A format. The guests were granted every possibility to express their viewpoints. Civil society representatives were invited to both of the programs, both times they were free to express their opinions over the issues under discussion. The September 23 program discussed some other issues along with the previously announced one.

**9<sup>th</sup> Wave (Poti)** – No talk was aired during reporting period.

#### **TV Magazine Mravalkutkhedi (polygonal)**

Weekly TV magazine Mravalkutkhedi (polygonal) produced by Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters was aired at different times on the following TV channels: Kvemo Kartli TV-Radio Company, Channel 25, Tanamgzavri, Odishi, 9<sup>th</sup> Wave, Rioni, Imervizia, Gurjaani and Channel 9.

The TV airtime of the magazine is essentially dedicated to stories and discussions. Usually two or three guests were invited to the studio.

During the reporting period TV magazine covered the activities carried out in the regions by presidential candidates. Out of the monitored subjects the program embraced government, local authorities, Prime Minister, Giorgi Margvelashvili, Nino Burjanadze and Davit Bakradze.

Two programs produced within the reporting period covered the following topics:

- Food safety and consumer rights;
- Occupation line and problems of so called borderline population;
- The problems rural schools face;
- Election campaign run by presidential candidates in the regions;



- Vintage-related issues;
- Return of Stalin's monument.

The first of the two programs aired during the reporting period invited an expert and NGO representative. The TV stories produced about the topic of discussion featured the importance of food safety issue. Out of the monitored subjects the aforesaid program covered local authorities. The program offered viewpoints about food safety and consumer rights, the way the local authorities meet legal requirements. The TV story offered the stance of the municipality as well.

The following outlet of TV magazine Mravalkutkhedi covered several issues of current importance. In the story about the installation of iron fences on the occupation line the Shida Kartli governor provided his stance. His negative tone to the Prime Minister, according to the government representatives, was followed by positive comment. In general the story was found balanced.

In the following story, about problems the rural schools face, the TV magazine covered, from the archive, the GD's presidential candidate Giorgi Margvelashvili's comment promising the dwellers of one of the villages in Marneuli to build a school. The journalists pointed to the non-fulfillment of the promise.

In the digest about the presidential candidates' election campaign the journalist stressed the lack of information in the regions. Pre-election meetings held by presidential candidates were covered too. TV magazine dedicated equal time to Davit Bakradzes (UNM) and Nino Burjanadze's (Democratic Movement for United Georgia) meetings with citizens in Akhalkalaki and Akhmeta, as well as the opening of GD's presidential nominee Giorgi Margvelashvili's

election of headquarters in Kutaisi. The story implies comments by some of the presidential candidates failing to fully update viewers about their election programs.

In-depth analysis and diversity of viewpoints was characteristic to the stories offered in the TV magazine. Journalists reported in an unbiased manner, without providing their personal stance. Most of the stories maintained balance and neutral reporting tone.

### Studio Re

TV companies Gurjaani, Mega TV and Channel 9 dedicated evening air to 45-minute TV discussion produced by Studio Re.

During the reporting period three programs were aired, having discussed the following topics:

- Need of democratic reforms (Gurjaani, Mega TV and Channel 9);
- Checkup of cars (Gurjaani);
- Visa liberalization (Mega TV and Channel 9).

Diversity of guests to the programs was found.

Journalist's questions were often of evaluative nature. The program host Zviad Koridze, through his questions, tried to generalize the topic to obtain comprehensive information from the guests.

### Monitoring of PSAs

Within the framework of the undertaking PSAs will be monitored as well. According to Article 12 of the Law of Georgia on Advertising "The social advertising is the advertising aimed at supporting public goods and achieving charitable objective, which is neither commercial nor election advertising and does not promote a legal entity of public law or a government organization as well as the service rendered by them." (9.06.2006 #3245).

Monitoring will try to identify whether social ads meet the legal criteria and whether they contain the signs of subliminal advertising (advertising of State agencies, and their services). Along with qualitative research the frequency of PSAs containing signs of subliminal ads will be counted.

**Results of monitoring:** Within two-week reporting period no signs of subliminal political ads were identified in the PSAs aired on the monitored TV companies.

**Activities to be carried out:** Within the period of September 30 – October 13 the second phase of monitoring of regional broadcasters will be carried out.



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