



ევროკავშირი  
საქართველოსთვის  
The European Union for Georgia



# Study and Research on Media Coverage of 2020 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia

## Social Media Monitoring Second Interim Report

September 1 - October 15, 2020



საქართველოს  
ჟურნალისტური  
ეთიკის ქარტია

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# Methodology

## The Objective of the Study and the Research Questions

The social network monitoring carried out during the period of 2020 Parliamentary Elections aims to explore what type of information reaches users daily through the social network about ongoing political events in the country. Considering the fact that Facebook is the most popular social network platform in Georgia, monitoring has been carried out to find out how this platform is used by the traditional media, government bodies and electoral subjects and what type of information users receive through Facebook during the election period in Georgia.

Correspondingly, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

- What type of media outlets have access to the widest audiences via Facebook?
- What types of media products reach the widest audiences?
- How reliable is the information which is spread to the widest audiences?
- What is the ratio between more or less reliable information spread via the social network and problematic media products?
- How does the traditional media, in particular, online and TV media use their Facebook pages to disseminate daily information during the electoral period?
- What kind of information is disseminated through most popular pages and largest open groups?
- How is the social media used by government agencies, political parties and individual politicians as a platform for spreading information during electoral period?

### Observation method and sampling

To seek answers to the research questions, daily observation of the following sources was carried out:

- 1) Facebook pages of 13 online media outlets;
- 2) Facebook pages of 6 TV channels;
- 3) 60 open groups;
- 4) 137 popular pages;
- 5) Facebook pages of the President, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of Parliament, The Mayor of Tbilisi, the head of the Government of Adjara, the Government of Adjara, 11 ministries and 4 ministers;

- 6) Facebook pages of 12 political parties and 25 individual politicians;
- 7) 20 most widespread media products (based on the number of interactions) spread through Facebook daily.

Quantitative as well as qualitative analysis of the media products shared by the selected sources was carried out every day during the monitoring period. During quantitative observation, attention was paid to which political subjects were portrayed in exaggerated media products and the tone of the media coverage of the respective subjects. During qualitative observation, attention was paid to compliance with journalistic standards of the media products shared through Facebook. Particular attention was paid to observing which media outlet materials were published most frequently by various sources.

Analytical platforms Crowd Tangle and Buzz Sumo were used for data collection.

## Limitations of the Study

In accordance with the international practice, the spread range of individual materials through Facebook was determined according to numbers of interactions which the materials accumulated in a given time period.

## Definition of terms

Source - Facebook page under observation.

Might be a page of an individual, a political party or a government agency, an entertainment page with high numbers of likes and followers, an official Facebook page of a traditional media outlet or an open group, which is observed during the monitoring.

Author – a media outlet, which prepared the media product shared by the source via Facebook.

Media product – In the following report media product refers to materials prepared by the traditional media, such as articles, videos and other types of multimedia products.

Facebook statuses, post comments, original materials prepared by politicians or government agencies, such as press releases, videos, infographics and other types of campaigning materials are not considered as media products for the purpose of this study and are not analyzed quantitatively.

Traditional media – In the following report traditional media refers to a media outlet, which has its own platform, such as a website, a newspaper, radio or television broadcasting, and which publishes materials on its platform.

More or less reliable information – a media product prepared by traditional media outlets which does not contain gross violations of journalistic standards.

**Problematic media product** – a media product prepared by traditional media outlets which contains gross violations of journalistic standards, such as publishing unverified and unbalanced information, hate speech dissemination, deliberate spread of disinformation etc.

**Number of interactions** – cumulative number of various types of emoticons, comments and shares accumulated by individual media products on Facebook.

**Most widespread media product** – individual media products with the highest numbers of interactions accumulated on Facebook in a given period of time.

**Popular page** – a Facebook page which is not a personal profile of any individual or a page of a specific company or organization and which is liked by many users.

**Open group** – A group created on Facebook, joined by a certain number of users, joining which does not require confirmation by the group administrator.

## Main Findings

The monitoring has revealed the following key findings:

- According to the interactions monitored on Facebook, the most widely disseminated media products were the ones prepared by the TV channels and their websites even during the second monitoring period;
- Like the broadcasting media, political polarization is observed in the information disseminated via the Facebook pages of TV channels;
- Popular Facebook pages rarely share the media products that are reporting about current political processes;
- Specifically problematic media products are very seldom encountered on popular pages, and such materials have a very low number of interactions;
- The two problematic pages identified during the first monitoring period: Alt-Info and Alt-Club, were taken down by Facebook on October 23, and these pages are no longer searchable in the social network;
- The users of open groups on Facebook quite often share the media products that directly or indirectly address political issues;
- There are some cases observed when the users share the materials produced by problematic websites; however, the interaction rate is very low for these materials;
- During the second monitoring period too, the high-ranking public officials and government agencies used their Facebook pages for disseminating information about their activities and not for discrediting their political opponents;
- During the second monitoring period as well, insulting and humiliating materials were observed on Facebook pages of political parties and some politicians, which were targeted against their po-

litical opponents. However, the especially problematic materials, which contained hate speech, incitement to violence or deliberate misinformation, were encountered very rarely.

- Usually, the most widely shared posts on Facebook are the media products produced by the high-ranking and well-known media outlets, and the especially problematic materials get less interaction from users.

## Conclusion

The monitoring revealed that, similar to the first monitoring period, the media products prepared by the high-ranking and famous media outlets were shared most frequently via Facebook and had the largest user interactions in the second monitoring period as well.

The second monitoring period also clearly demonstrated that the media products of TV channels were largely disseminated in the social media. The highest rates of user interaction were attributed to their media products. On the other hand, as shown in the analysis of material disseminated via the social network by the TV companies themselves, their political polarization was clearly observed during the run-up to the elections.

Individuals who were directly or indirectly involved in the elections, politicians and government officials in some cases use their Facebook pages to insult political opponents. However, there is a little exception when particularly problematic material is shared, such as dissemination of statements containing hate speech and deliberate misinformation.

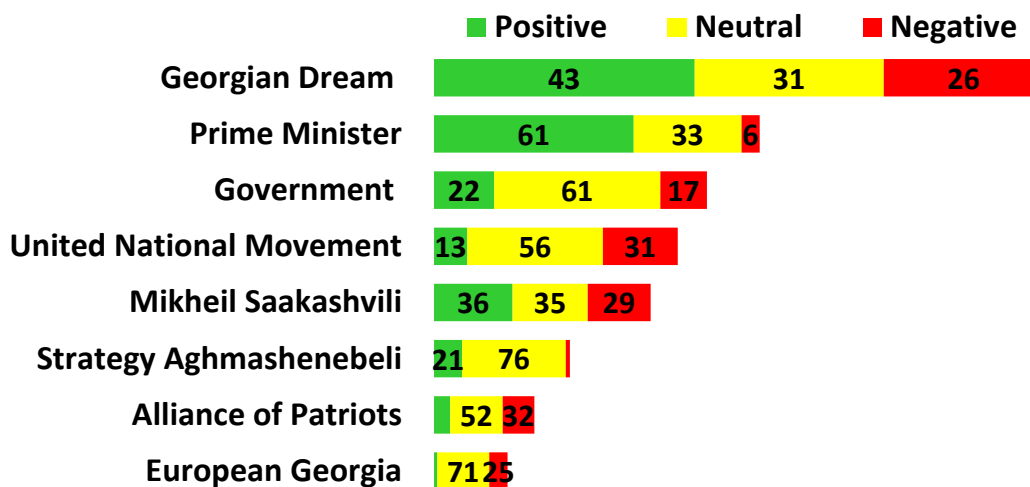
It was observed that mostly the media products prepared by high-ranking and famous media outlets are shared in popular groups and numerous open groups on Facebook. In some cases, especially while monitoring the open groups, some problematic materials were shared as well, which were produced by suspicious and problematic online media outlets. However, it was also observed that such problematic media outlets and their products had very low user interactions, which lets us assume that their coverage area is very small among the Georgian users during the run-up to the elections. It is also noteworthy that the two problematic pages Alt-Info and Ant-Club, which were revealed during the first monitoring period, were taken down by Facebook itself and these pages are no longer searchable in the social network.

## Annex: Tables and Charts

The most widely shared media products

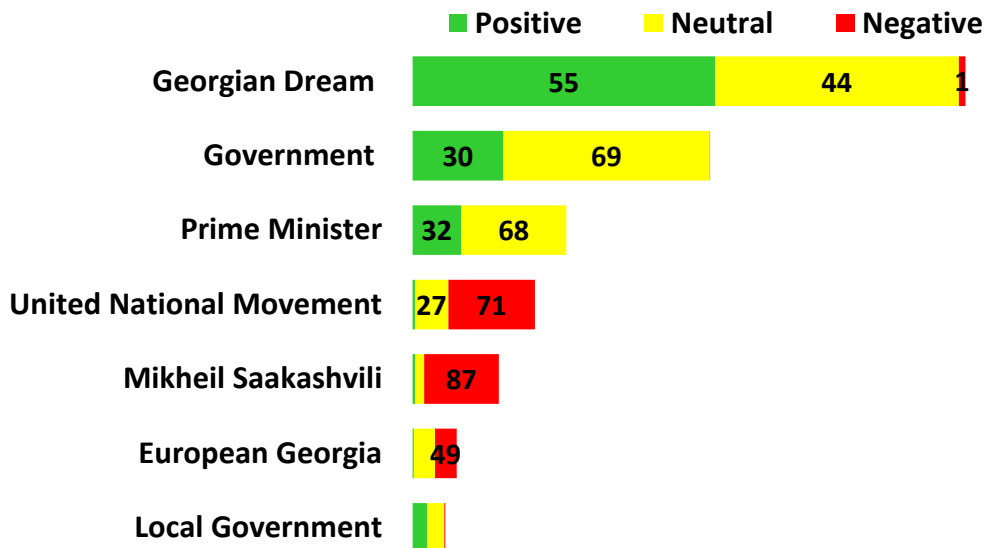
#	Media Outlet	Number of materials	%
1	Mtavari Channel (mtavari.tv)	224	26.7
2	Imedi (imedinevs.ge)	124	14.8
3	interpressnews.ge	108	12.9
4	Channel One of the Public Broadcaster (1tv.ge)	81	9.6
5	news.on.ge	57	6.8
6	radiotavisupleba.ge	45	5.4
7	tabula.ge	42	5
8	primetime.ge	25	3
9	metronome.ge	25	3
10	netgazeti.ge	25	3
11	Rustavi 2 (rustavi2.ge)	18	2.1
12	ambebi.ge	14	1.7
13	kvira.ge	9	1.1

**Cumulative data on 20 most frequently shared media products on Facebook every day, out of 900 (%)**  
(September 1 - October 15)



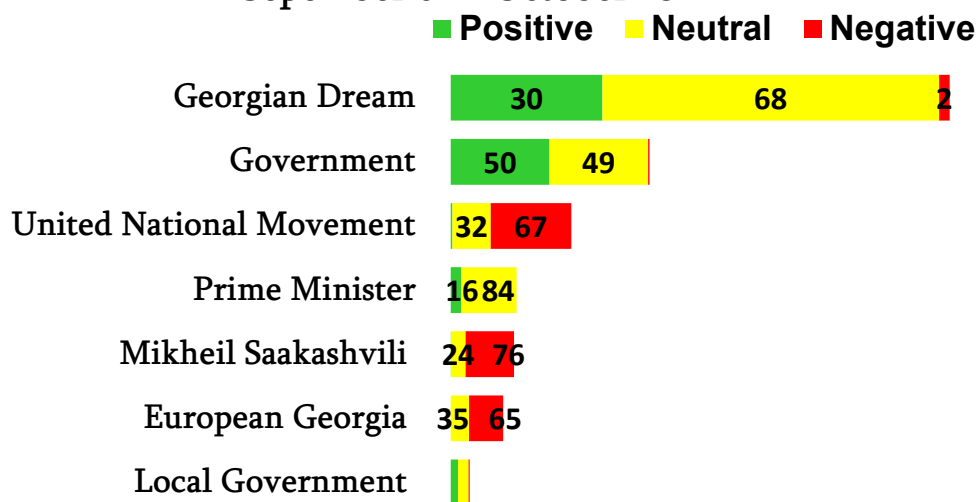
**Monitoring of Facebook pages of TV channels**

**Coverage of subjects on the Facebook page of Imedi (%)**  
(September 1 - October 15)



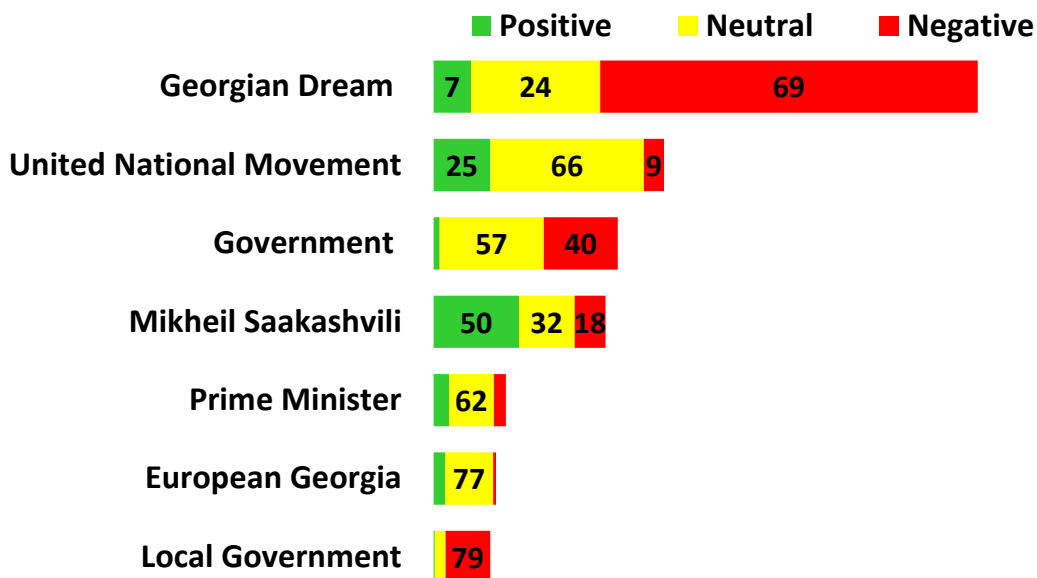
**Coverage of Subjects on Imedi**  
(in main news releases)

September 01 - October 15



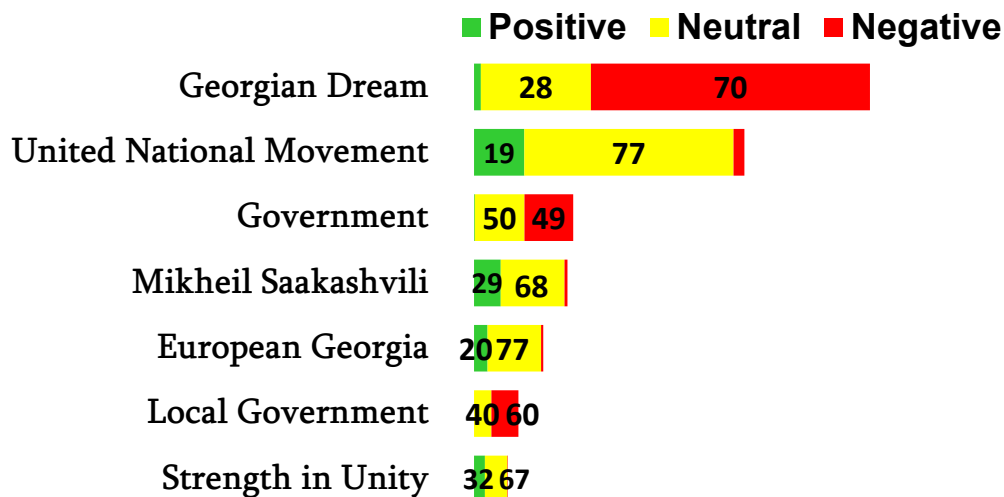
### Coverage of subjects on the Facebook page of Mtavari Channel (%)

(September 1 - October 15)



### Coverage of Subjects on Mtavari Channel (in main news releases)

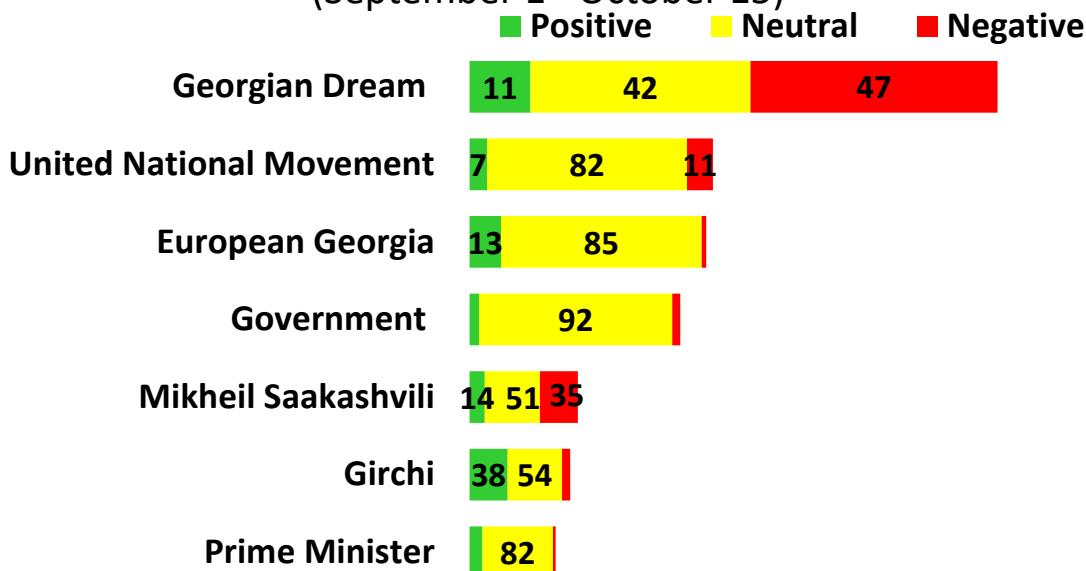
September 01 - October 15 2020





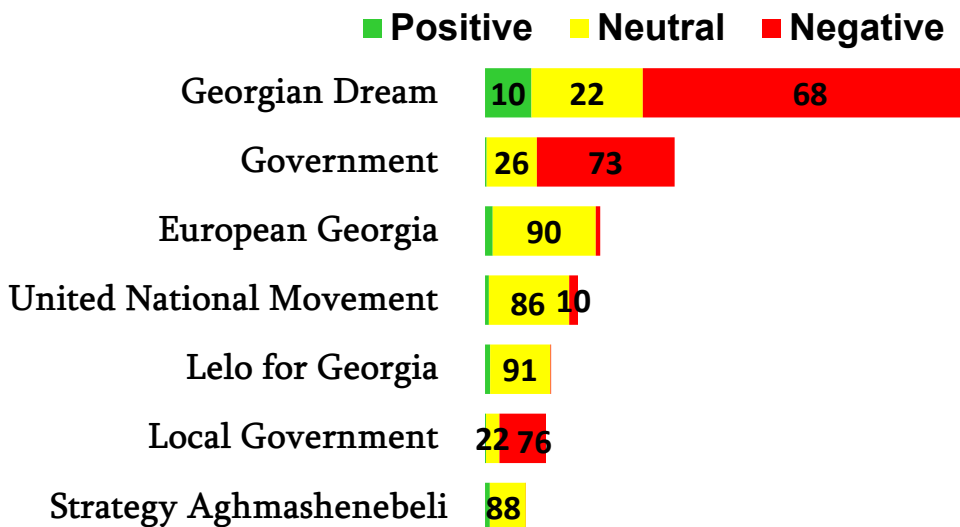
### Coverage of subjects on Facebook page of Formula TV (%)

(September 1 - October 15)



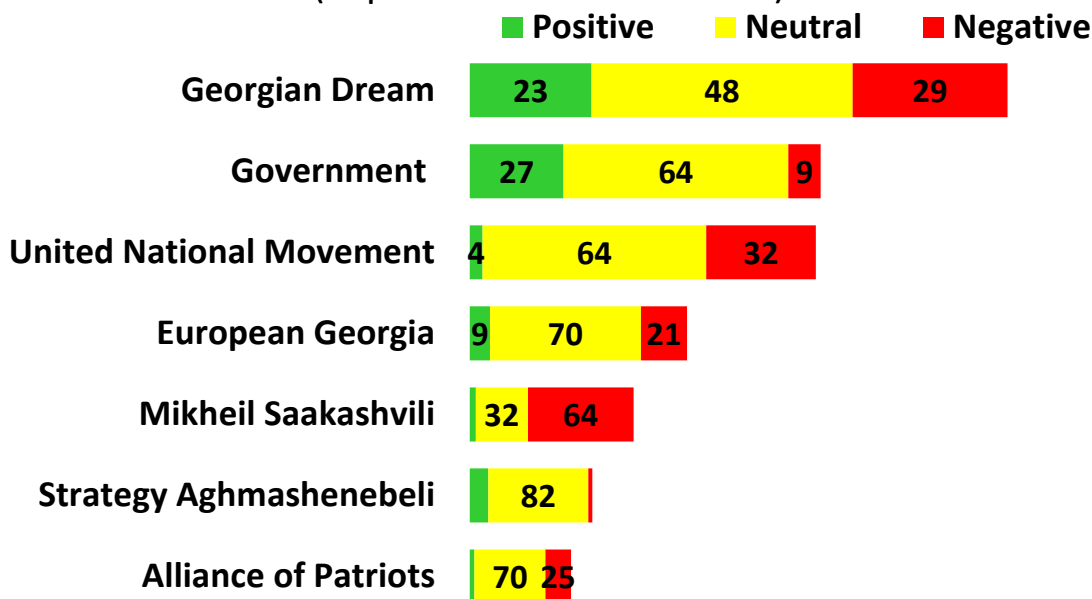
### Coverage of Subjects on Formula (in main news releases)

September 01 - October 15 2020



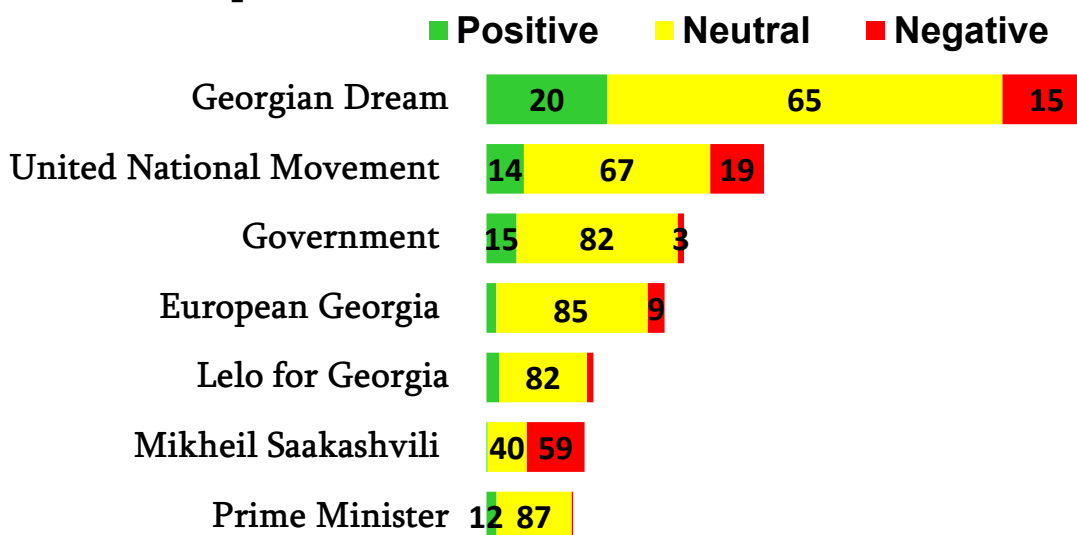
### Coverage of subjects on the Facebook page of Rustavi 2 (%)

(September 1 - October 15)



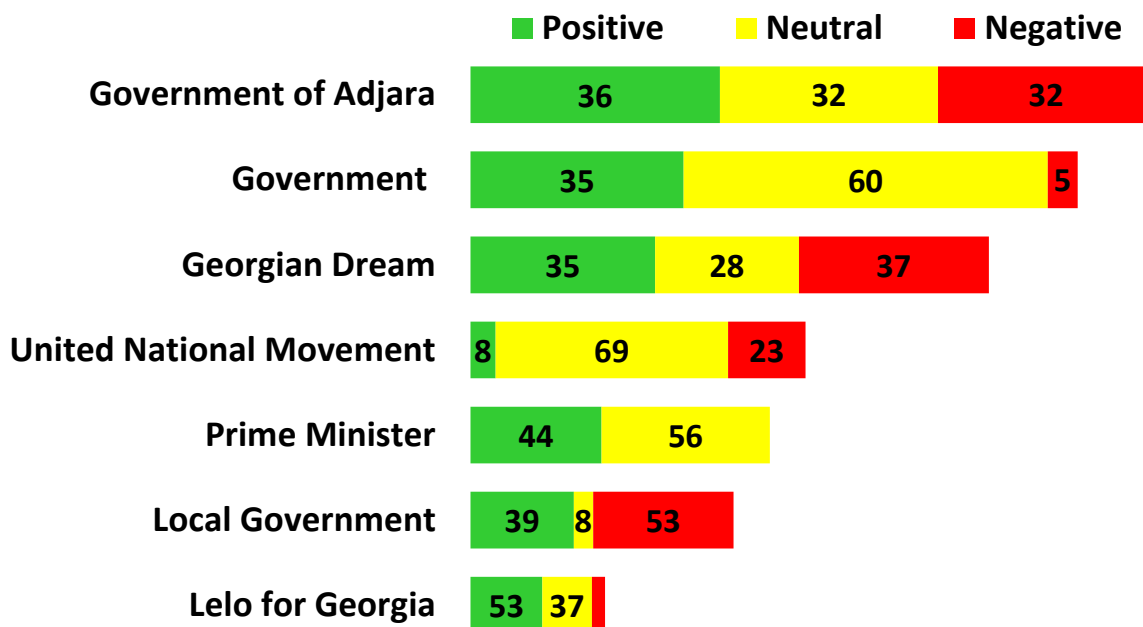
### Coverage of Subjects by Rustavi 2 (in main news releases)

September 01 - October 15, 2020



### Coverage of subjects on the Facebook page of Adjara TV (%)

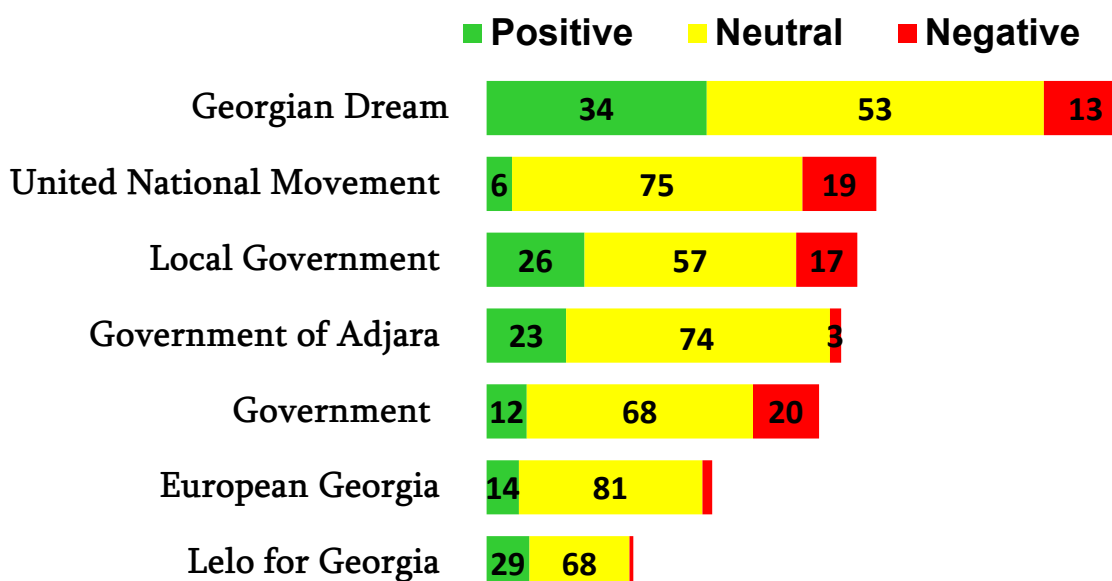
(September 1 - October 15)



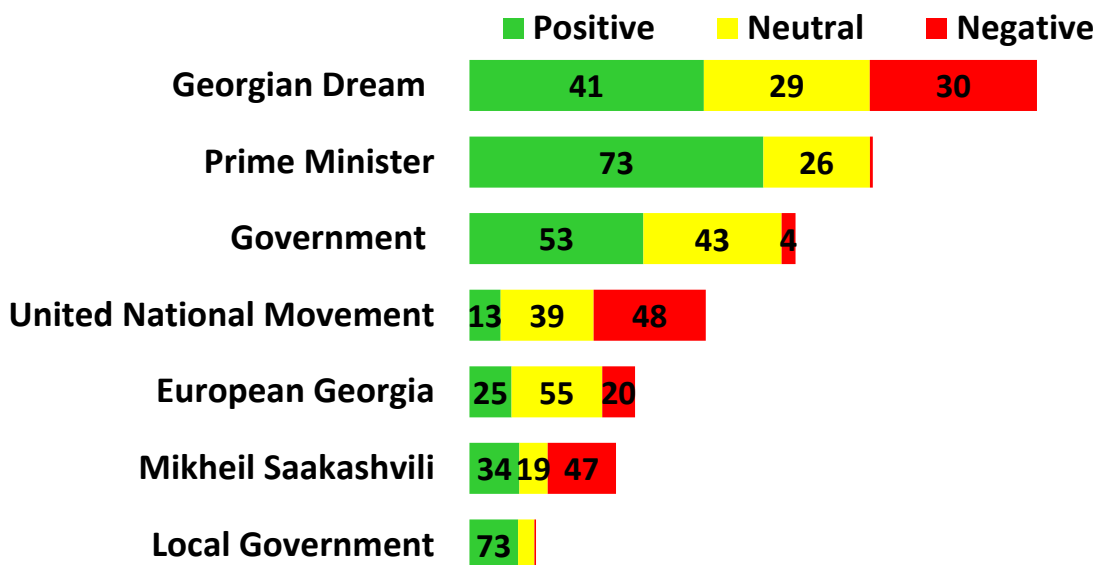
### Coverage of Subjects on Adjara TV

(in main news releases)

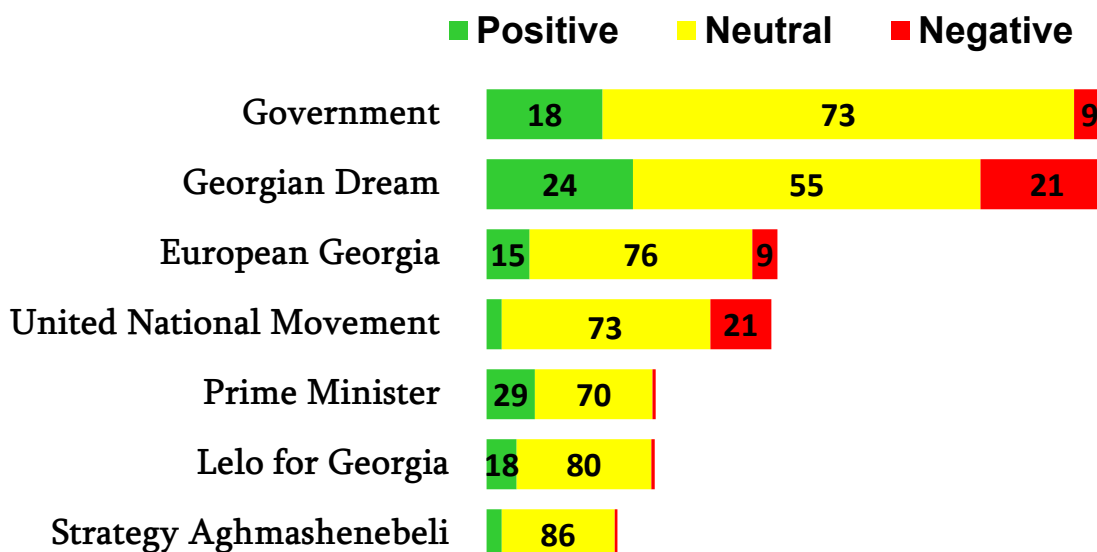
September 01 - October 15 2020



### Coverage of subjects on the Facebook page of the Channel One of the Public Broadcaster (%) (September 1 - October 15)



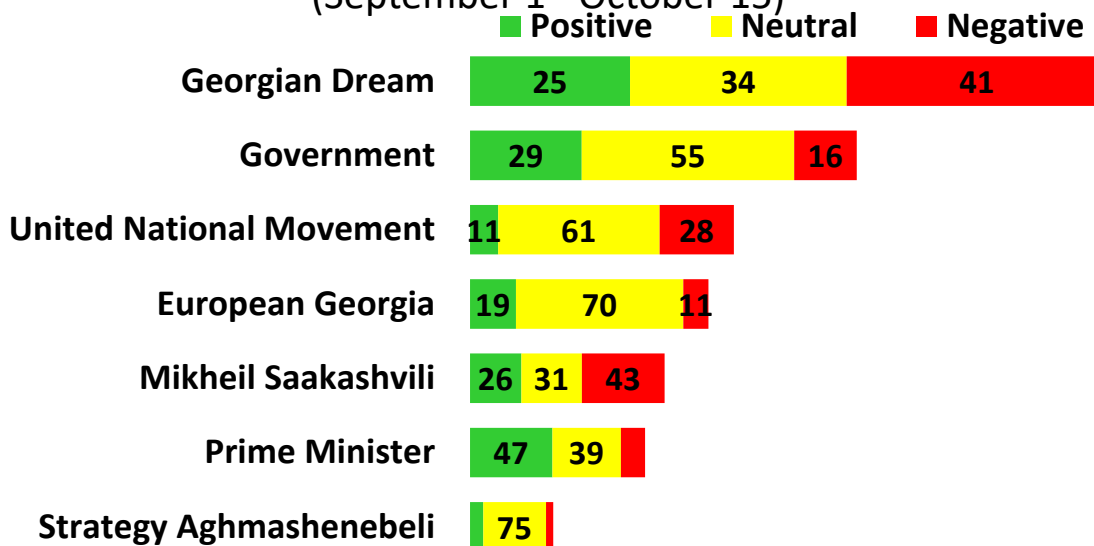
### Coverage of Subjects by Channel One (in main news releases) September 1 - October 15



Monitoring of Facebook Pages of online media outlets

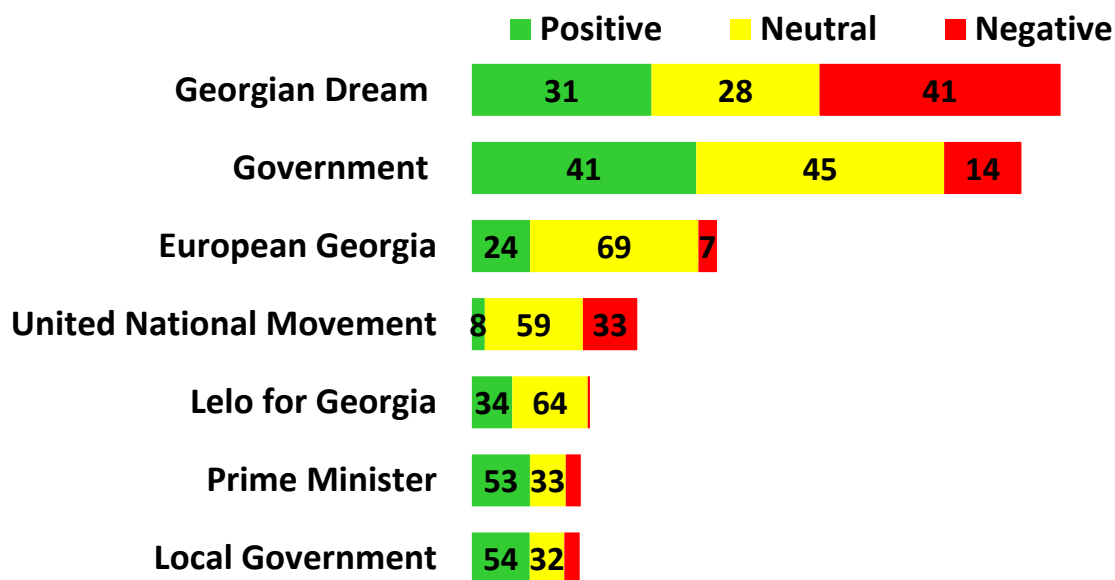
**Coverage of subjects on Facebook page of interpressnews.ge (%)**

(September 1 - October 15)

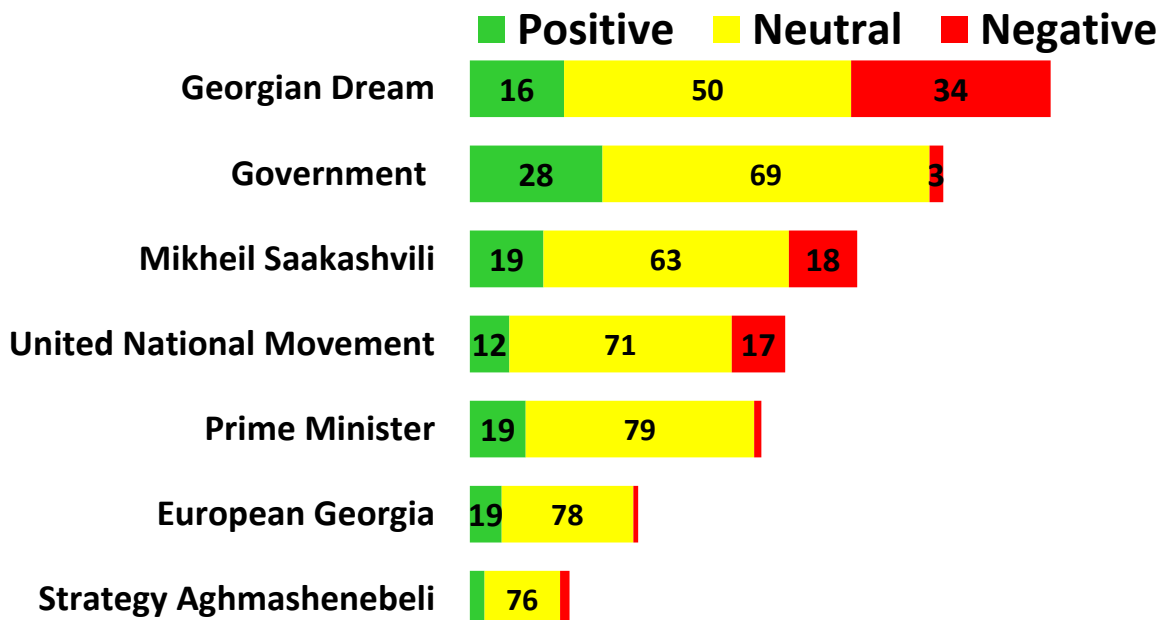


**Coverage of Subjects on the website interpressnews.ge**

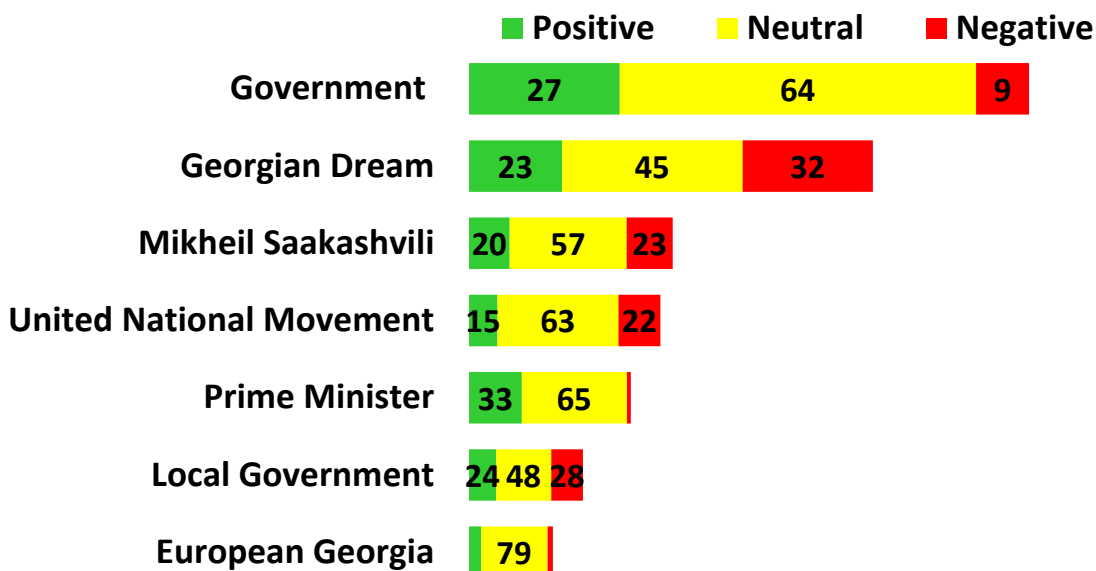
(September 1 - October 15)



### Coverage of Subjects on the Facebook Page of ambebi.ge (%)



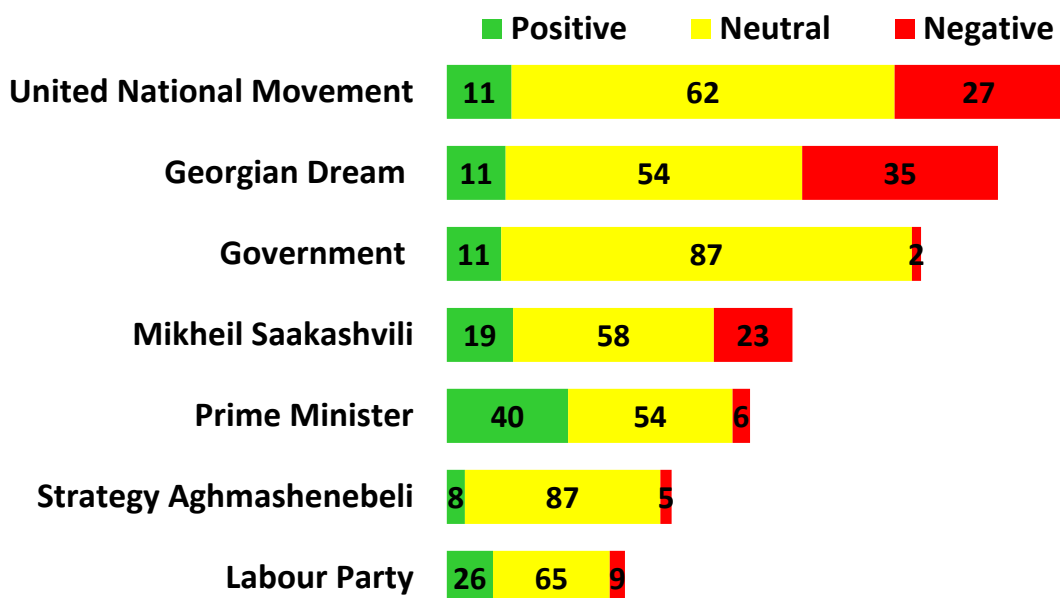
### Coverage of Subjects on the website ambebi.ge September 1 - October 15



## Monitoring of popular Facebook pages

### Coverage of Subjects on the Facebook Page of Gogaggg according to the tone (%)

(September 1 - October 15)



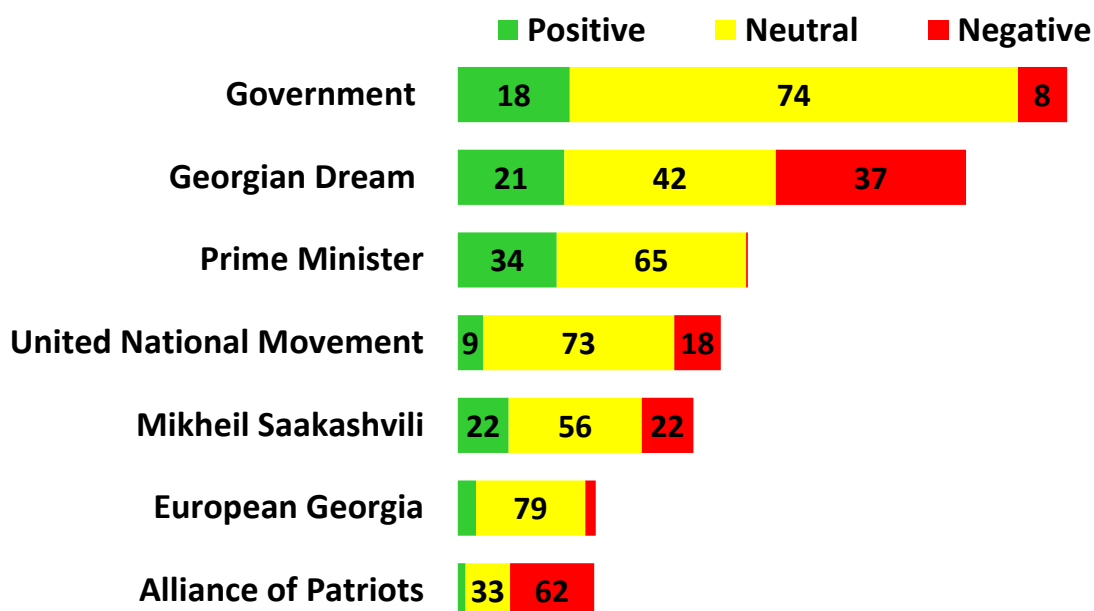
#	Media Outlet	Number of shared media products
1	mshoblebi.ge	25
2	report.ge	21
3	ambavi.cc	19
4	goal.ge	15
5	mtavari.tv	12
6	sputnik-georgia.com	11
7	crystalsport.ge	9
8	itar.ge	8
9	alt-info.com	8
10	formulanews.ge	7

## Monitoring of Open Groups

Top ten authors whose media products were shared most of all in open groups:

#	Media Outlet	Number of shared media products	%
1	heretifm.com	276	15.4
2	accentnews.ge	178	9.9
3	report.ge	141	7.9
4	formulanews.ge	125	7
5	news.on.ge	113	6.3
6	sportliga.ge	105	5.9
7	tabula.ge	88	4.9
8	metronome.ge	80	4.5
9	cyc.ge	74	4.1
10	wnews.ge	74	4.1

## Coverage of Subjects in open Facebook Pages (%) (September 1 - October 15)





## Monitoring of Facebook pages of high-ranking state officials and government agencies

#	Media Outlet	Number of shared media products
1	Maestro	24
2	Imedi	21
3	Rustavi 2	6
4	Post TV	5
5	Adjara TV	5
6	Channel One of the Public Broadcaster	2
7	Palitra News	1

## Monitoring of Facebook pages of political parties and politicians

Georgian Dream		
#	Media Outlet	Number of shared materials
1	Imedi	28
2	Rustavi 2	9
3	Palitra news	2
4	Pos TV	2
5	Radio Imedi	1

United National Movement		
#	Media Outlet	Number of shared materials
1	Mtavari Channel	33
2	Pirveli TV	21
4	Formula TV	9
5	Palitra News	8
6	Rustavi 2	6
7	Kavkasia	3
8	Imedi TV	1
9	Rioni	1
10	kutaisipost.ge	1
11	newposts.ge	1
12	interpressnews.ge	1
13	primetime.ge	1

European Georgia		
#	Media Outlet	Number of shared materials
1	Pirveli TV	19
2	Formula TV	17
3	Mtavari Channel	13
4	Rustavi 2	4
5	Palitra News	3
6	radiotavisupleba.ge	1
7	interpressnews.ge	1

Alliance of Patriots of Georgia		
#	Media Outlet	Number of shared materials
1	Media Union Obieqtivi	56
2	tinp.ge <sup>1</sup>	9
3	Pirveli TV	8
4	Channel Two of the Public Broadcaster	6
5	Rustavi 2	5
6	Kavkasia	2
7	boqlomi.blogpost.com	2
8	Maestro	1
9	Ertsulovneba	1
10	1tv.ge	1
11	ipress.ge	1

1. Facebook took down tinp.ge's Facebook page on October 23 because of unauthentic conduct

