



ევროკავშირი  
საქართველოსთვის  
The European Union for Georgia



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

## Pre-Election Report on Monitoring of TV News Programmes Key Findings

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საქართველოს  
ჟურნალისტური  
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## About the Project

The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics, as part of the EU/UNDP ‘Survey of Media Coverage of Georgian Parliamentary Elections 2020’ project, is monitoring the coverage of Georgia’s 2020 parliamentary elections by TV media. The monitoring began on 15 June 2020 and will run until December 2020, focusing upon the 12 following channels: First Channel (Georgian Public Broadcaster), Adjara Public Broadcaster, Mtavari Arkhi, Rustavi 2, Imedi, Formula, TV Pirveli, Maestro, Obiektivi, Caucasia, Palitra TV and Post TV.

## Monitoring Methodology

The pre-election monitoring of major TV news programmes includes both quantitative and qualitative components. Quantitative indicators include airtime dedicated to subjects, direct and indirect speech and tone of coverage; and qualitative indicators include: balance, accuracy, facts-based coverage, and manipulation of footage and music. The tone of coverage is given to subjects when they are spoken about indirectly and when they speak about themselves, other subjects or general issues. The diagrams show three categories of tone: positive (green), neutral (yellow), and negative (red). When the airtime allocated to each subject is counted, its tone is then evaluated. Attention is also paid to the statements of journalists and respondents, as well as to the whole context of stories. During qualitative monitoring, attention is paid to the balance or extent to which several different opinions are presented around the issue covered in the stories, as well as to the accuracy with which the monitor observes the relevance of the journalist’s conclusions with the materials used in the story (e.g. footage, respondents’ comments).

## Main Trends:

- The monitoring revealed that the polarization of TV news programmes is even more intense than during the first reporting period; that instances of negative coverage and defamation of the opposition by pro-Government TV channels increased sharply; and that TV stations that are critical of the Government increased their negative tone towards the ruling team and the Government.
- The political party to which the most airtime was dedicated was the ‘Georgian Dream’, followed by the ‘United National Movement’ and ‘European Georgia’.
- The ‘Georgian Dream’ was most positively covered by POSTV (51%).
- The tone of 70% of the Mtavari Channel’s coverage of the ‘Georgian Dream’ was negative.
- The ‘United National Movement’ was most positively covered by the Mtavari Channel, the latter

dedicating 19% of its airtime to the UNM. The coverage tone for this party was the most negative (97%) on Obiektivi.

- Support for the ‘United National Movement’ and Mikheil Saakashvili clearly catches the eye on the Mtavari Channel.
- The most positive coverage of ‘European Georgia’ was to be found on the Mtavari Channel, with a positive tone of 20% of the airtime dedicated to it, whereas the most negative coverage was observed on Obiektivi, with a negative tone of 87% of total airtime.
- 50% of the airtime allocated to the Government on Imedi TV was positive.
- POSTV dedicated the most time to Mikheil Saakashvili, but the tone of this coverage was the most negative (83%).
- The most critical tone towards the Government was observed on Formula, with 73% of total airtime being negative.
- Channel One of the Public Broadcaster dedicated the most time to the Government. The most positive coverage was that of Giorgi Gakharia, the Prime Minister, with 29% of total airtime being positive.
- Obiektivi continues to be the only channel that allocates much airtime to the ‘Alliance of Patriots’.
- The Mtavari, Formula and Pirveli channels are all three characterized by their sharply critical attitude towards the authorities.
- Imedi, POSTV and Maestro are pro-Government channels. Imedi and POSTV used most of their airtime to discredit the opposition and cover them negatively.
- As in previous years, the problem remains that almost all the channels continue to lack in-depth investigative stories linked to electoral topics that would help voters to make informed choices.
- Compared to the previous monitoring period, statements containing gender-based stereotypes and discrimination are almost never reported without comments.
- Similar to the previous monitoring period, xenophobic content was observed on Obiektivi.

# ANNEX: Diagrams. Tone of Coverage







