



ევროკავშირი
საქართველოსთვის
The European Union for Georgia



Media Monitoring for 2017 local self-government elections in Georgia

Monitoring of Online Media

19 June-8 October 2017

საზოგადოებრივი
განვითარების
ინსტიტუტი



**CIVIC
DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE**

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The Civic Development Institute (CDI) is implementing the monitoring of online media within the framework of the project Study of the Media Coverage of the 2017 Local Self-Government Elections supported by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Monitoring is carried out from 19 June, and covers 20 online publications: adjaraps.com, ambebi.ge, batumelebi.ge, chemikharagauli.com, for.ge, inforustavi.ge, interpressnews.ge, knews.ge, kutaisipost.ge, livepress.ge, medianews.ge, netgazeti.ge, news.ge on.ge, presa.ge, qartli.ge, reginfo.ge, sknews.ge, tabula.ge, telegraph.ge.

Research Methodology: Monitoring on selected media outlets has qualitative and quantitative components. Quantitative analysis concentrates on the frequency and tone of the coverage. The qualitative analysis focuses on whether the monitored media outlets upheld journalistic ethics. This includes the following: fact-checking and accuracy of information, appropriacy of language, diversity of sources of information, reasonable balance in reporting, visual or other type of manipulation, making fact-based argumentations and conclusions, etc. Monitoring has been carried out on each article of every selected newspaper from the first to the last day of the monitoring period.

The report presents the results of media monitoring from 19 June through 8 October.

According to the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the materials the following Key findings were revealed:

- The most websites selected for monitoring have no positive or negative attitude toward any political force;
- The most of the websites prepare articles without any gross violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms;
- No instances of using offensive and discriminatory terminology by the journalists of the selected websites were identified;
- One of the main challenges of the media is the absence of in-depth reporting and critical analysis;
- Critical analysis on social and economic problems are comparatively more common in regional publications;
- In most cases pre-election promises of mayoral candidates are published without analysis;
- The election programs of political parties and analysis of these projects are rarely covered;

- Serious challenge is the improper separation of the advertising articles prepared within the commercial agreements from an editorial content. Some of the websites do not always indicate that the articles are commercial, while others do, but not appropriately.

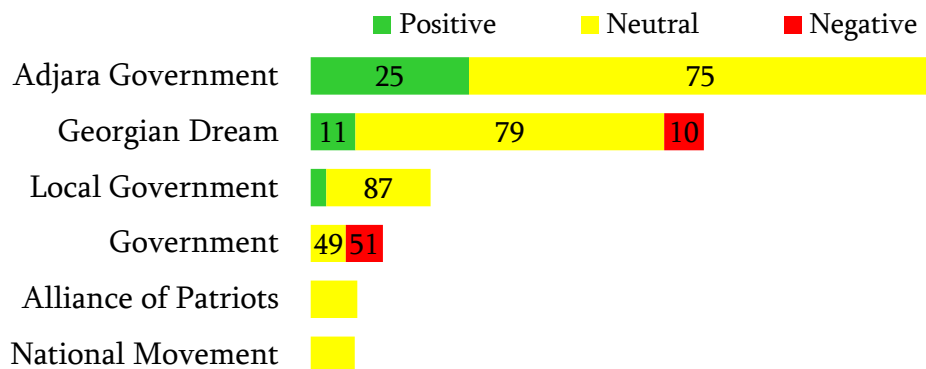
adjaraps.com

Within the frameworks of the monitoring period, the instances of gross violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms were not revealed on adjaraps.com. However, the website was especially covering the activities of the ruling party.

During the monitoring period, the activities of Adjara Government (48%) and Georgian Dream (30%) were most intensively covered on adjaraps.com. The high percentage of negative tone were presented in the coverage of government (51%), which was caused by an interview with the engineer-hydrologist, who criticized the government's work regarding the coastline of Adjara. ("Adjara coastal disaster and millions of money thrown in the water... ", September 5).

In the given period of monitoring, adjaraps.com systematically published materials prepared by the Georgian Dream press office. These materials had the reference to the party press office, but it was not shown whether these articles were made within the commercial agreement or not. If an article is commercial, than it is better if the reference is clearer.

**Coverage of the Subjects on adjaraps.com
According to the Tone (%)
19 June - 8 October 2017**



ambebi.ge

During the monitoring period on ambebi.ge neither positive nor negative coverage towards any political force was noticeable at all. The website adhered to journalistic standards and ethical norms.

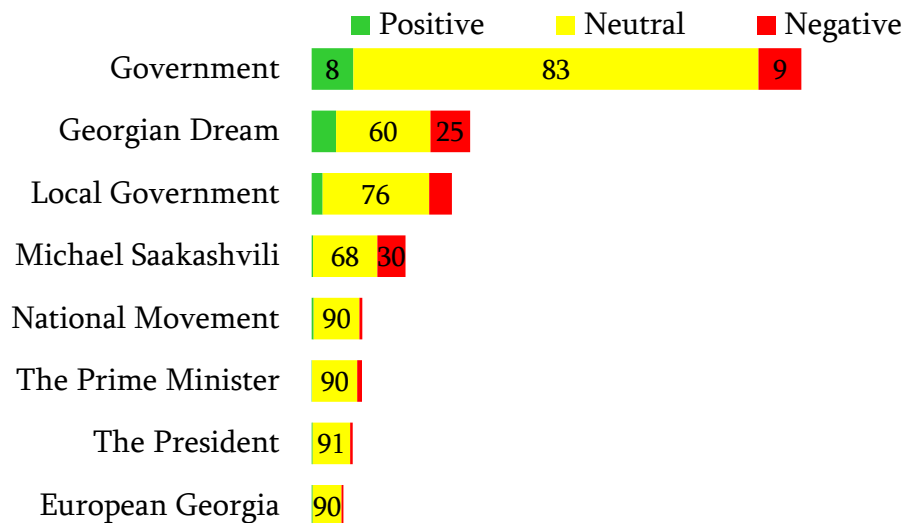
ambebi.ge most intensively covered the government activities (42%). High indicators of negative tone was revealed during the coverage of the ex-premier - Bidzina Ivanishhvili (50%) and ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili (30%). The relatively high indicators of positive tones, have not been revealed while covering other subjects of the monitoring.

It should be noted that there is distinct improvement over the journalistic standards and ethical norms, as well as impartial coverage of current political processes on ambebi.ge. Within the given period of the monitoring, ambebi.ge objectively reports on the ongoing processes in the country.

Coverage of the Subjects on ambebi.ge

According to the Tone (%)

19 June - 8 October, 2017

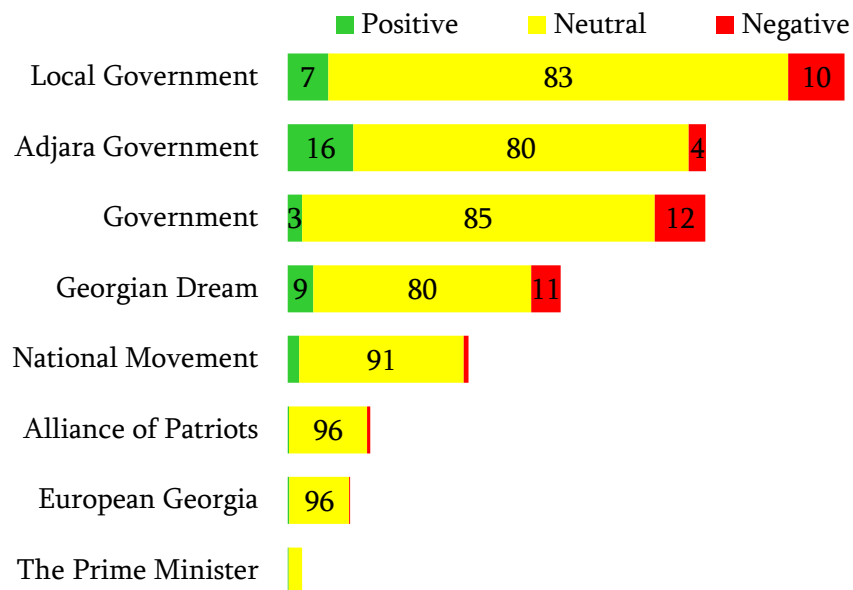


batumelebi.ge

In the monitoring period Batumelebi.ge did not show either positive or negative attitude towards any of the political forces. The website adhered to journalistic standards and ethical norms. The interviews with Batumi Mayor candidates were offered. They were prepared objectively and professionally.

During the monitoring period, the relatively high indicators of positive or negative tones, towards any political force were not noticeable on batumelebi.ge. The site objectively and impartially covers the pre-election campaigns of Batumi Mayor candidates. We can conclude that, batumelebi.ge objectively and impartially covers the ongoing political processes. It is noteworthy that, the site properly separates the editorial materials from the articles prepared within commercial agreements.

**Coverage of the Subjects on batumelebi.ge
According to the Tone (%)
19 June - 8 October, 2017**

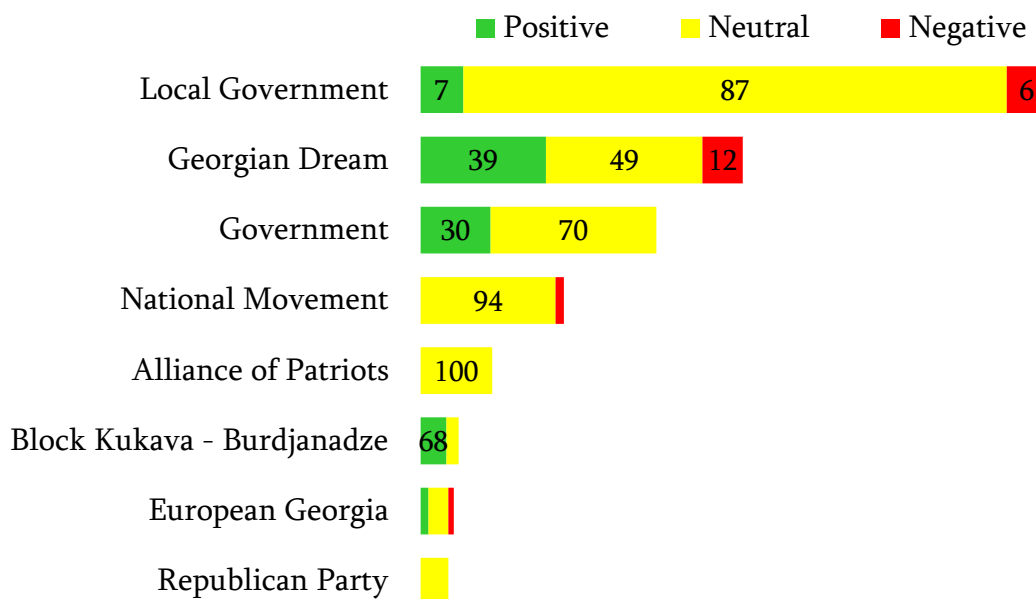


Neither especially positive nor notably negative attitude towards any political force was observed on chemikharagauli.com during the monitoring, however, the positive tones, while covering the ruling party and the government were prevailing. The cases of the violation of ethical norms and journalistic standard were not revealed.

chemikharagauli.com covered the local government (40%), Georgian Dream (21%) and Government (15%) most intensively. The indicators of positive tone prevailed while covering the block Dimitri Lortkipanidze, Kakha Kukava – Democratic Movement –Free Georgia (68%), Georgian Dream (39%) and Government (30%). The relatively high indicators of negative tones, have not been revealed while covering other subjects of the monitoring.

Chemikharagauli.com quite actively covers the ongoing political processes. There are no positive or negative attitude toward any political force. Pre-election campaign of mayoral candidates are also active and impartial.

Coverage of the Subjects on chemikharagauli.ge
According to the Tone (%)
19 June - 8 October, 2017



for.ge

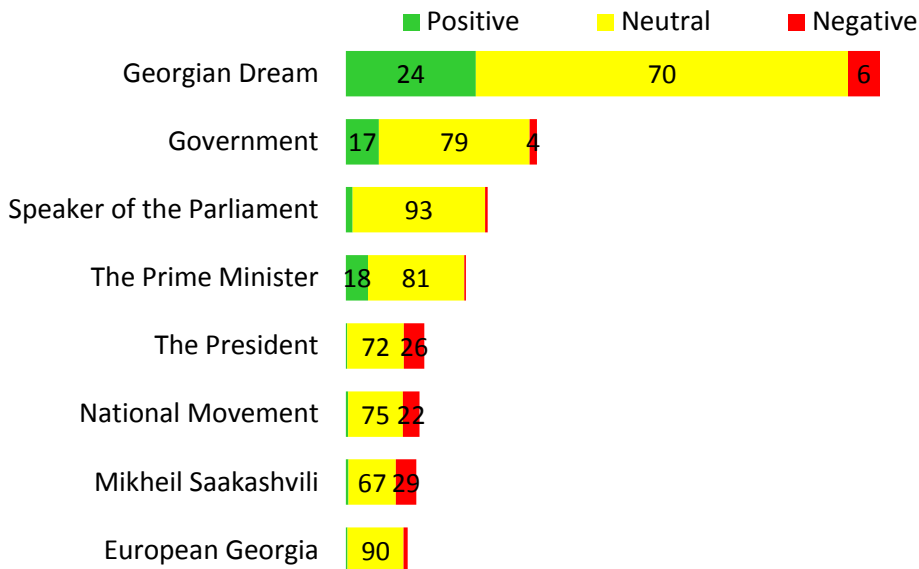
In the given period of the monitoring, a positive disposition was noticeable towards the ruling team and its candidate for Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze on for.ge. The commercial articles were published on the site without appropriate indications.

For.ge covered Georgian Dream (38%) and Government (13%) activities. While covering subjects indicators of positive tone prevailed. High indicators of negative tone went to former president, Mikheil Saakashvili (29%), the president of Georgia (26%) and United National Movement (26%). Among the mayoral candidates, Kakha Kaladze was covered more than four times than all other candidates.

Commercial materials are published without any indications on for.ge. For instance, on 5 September, six websites selected for the monitoring, published the identical article on Kakha Kaladze's meeting with the British ambassador. Some of these six websites had a promotional indication, part of them had inappropriate indications and others including for.ge did not specify that the article was commercial.

The articles of interpressnews.ge are often posted on the For.ge. The source of the materials are not indicated. It is noteworthy that, the articles are often posted on the interpressnews.ge as a promotional and without on for.ge.

**Covering of the Subject on for.ge
According to the Tone (%)
19 June - 8 October, 2017**



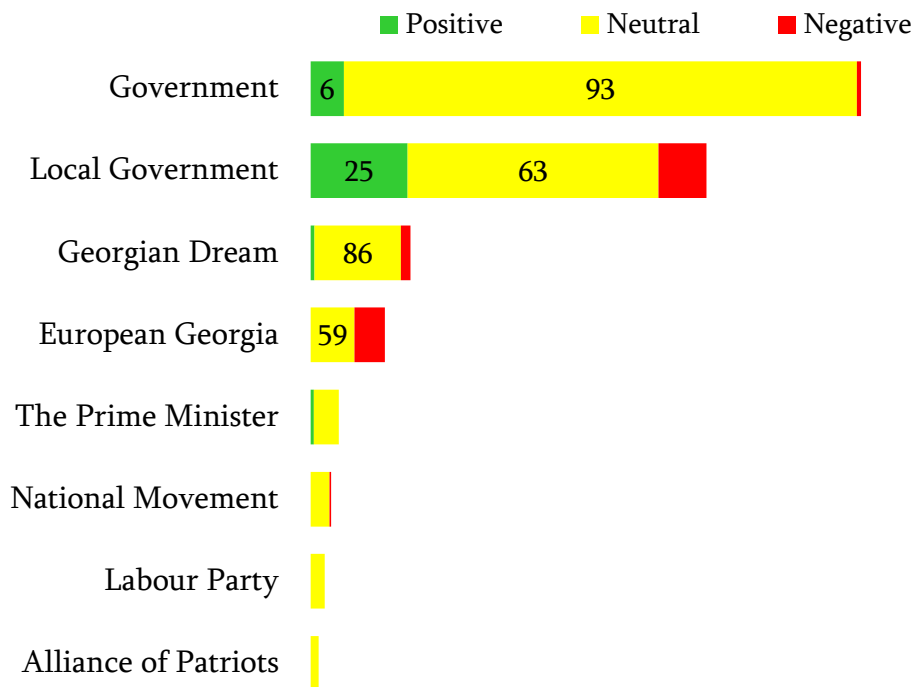
inforustavi.ge

In the given period of monitoring, inforustavi.ge did not show either a positive or a negative attitude towards any of the political forces. The website adhered to journalistic standards and ethical norms.

inforustavi.ge covered Government (44%) and Local Government (32%) activities most intensively. Considerably high indicators of negative tone had been revealed toward (41%) European Georgia, that was caused by the fact that the website posted an extensive article on Rustavi City Hall, where Rustavi City Hall representative was critical toward the allegations made by the mayor candidate of European Georgia („Nino Imedashvili is just lying“, October 3).

The commercial articles are separated from editorial materials on inforustavi.ge, but not improperly. The mentioned articles are accompanied with the letter R in the circle. It is better to point out more clearly for the readers.

Coverage of the Subjects on inforustavi.ge
According to the Tone (%)
 19 June - 8 October, 2017



interpressnews.ge

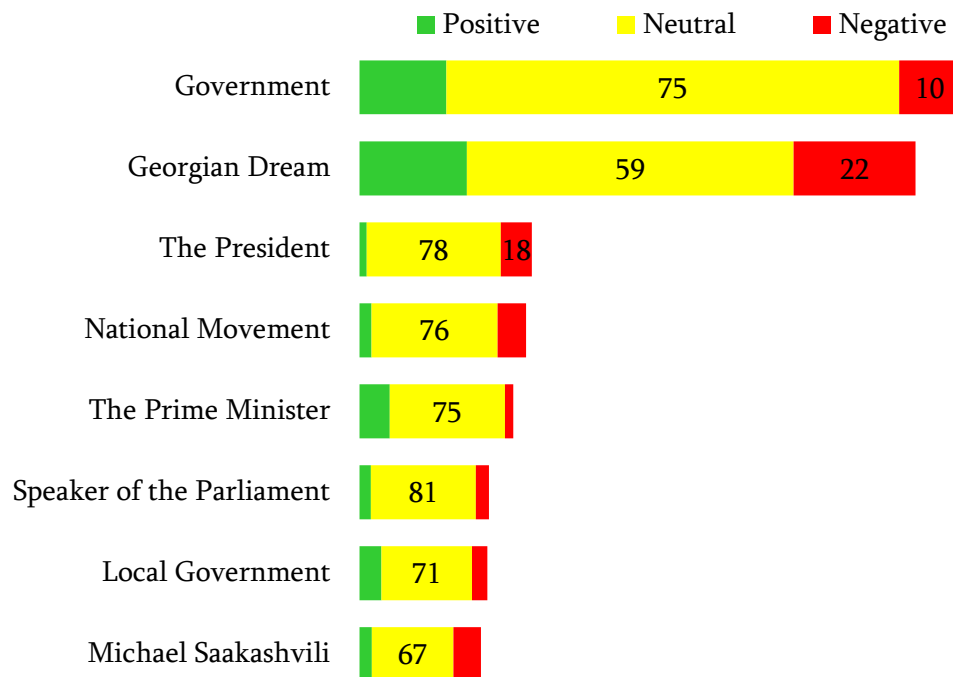
In the given period of the monitoring positive or negative disposition were not noticeable towards any political parties on interpressnews.ge. The website adhered to journalistic standards and ethical norms, but the articles prepared within the framework of commercial agreements are not appropriately separated from editorial articles.

interpressnews.ge covered government (25%) and Georgian Dream (23%) activities most intensively. Considerably high indicators of negative tone was revealed while covering the ex-Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili (75%). Negative tone also went to ex-president, Mikheil Saakashvili (23%), the president of Georgia (18%) and United National Movement (17%). High indicators of positive tone were not found when covering any of the subjects.

Among the mayor candidates, the activities of Kakha Kaladze (55%) were covered most intensively. Relatively high indicators of positive or negative tones, have not been revealed while covering other mayor candidates.

The commercial material of interpressnews.ge have the marking which are not clear. The mark constitutes of Latin letters NS. (as cursor approaches the symbols the inscription “News from Subscriber” comes out). It would be better, if the website made a clear indications for the readers.

**Covering the Subject on interpressnews.ge
According to the Tone (%)
19 June - 8 October, 2017**



knews.ge

In the given period of the monitoring , knews.ge did not show either positive or negative attitude towards any of the political forces, however positive tone slightly prevailed while covering the Government. The website adhered to journalistic standards and ethical norms.

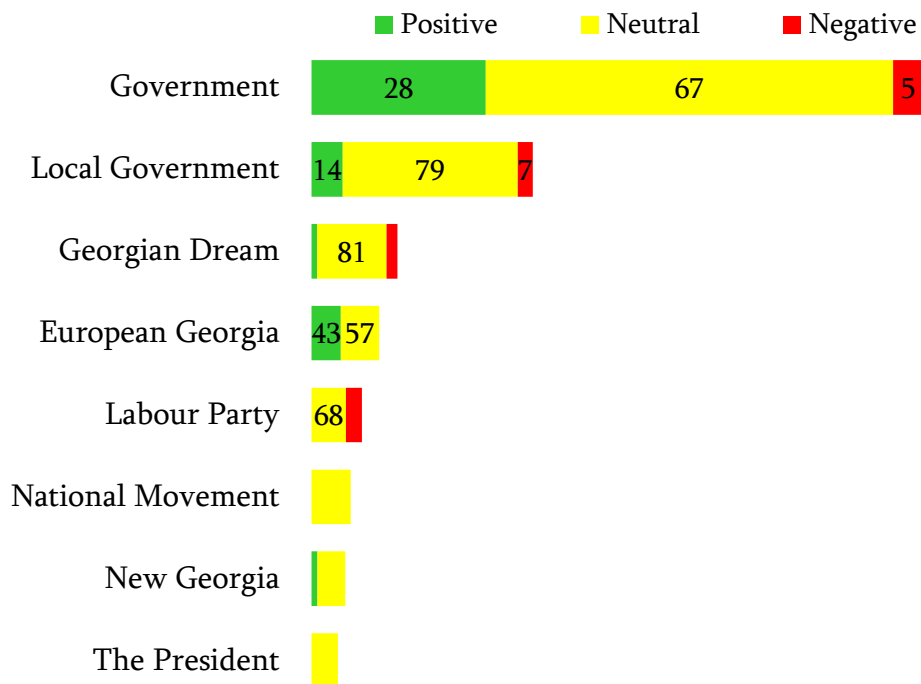
knews.ge-covered Government (48%) local government (18%) activities most intensively. High percentage of positive indicators were revealed while covering the „European Georgia“

(48%) and Government(28%). The high percentage indicators of negative tone have not been resurfaced while covering other subjects.

During the given period of the monitoring, the issues related to the elections were not actively covered by the *knews.ge*. However, it is noteworthy, that we met very interesting article about the involvement of women candidates in elections. („*why women are passive during the elections*”, August 18).

knews.ge intensively covered the ongoing processes in the region. The processes in some cases were covered very comprehensively and comments of authorities as well as the local population were represented. (e.g. „*life of Telavi until the election day of 2014*“, June 28).

Coverage of the Subjects on *knews.ge*
According to the Tone (%)
 19 June - 8 October, 2017



kutaisipost.ge

During the given period of the monitoring kutaisipost.ge did not show especially positive or negative disposition towards any political force. The website adhered to journalistic standards and ethical norms. It is noteworthy, that commercial articles prepared within the framework of commercial contracts are appropriately separated from the editorial articles.

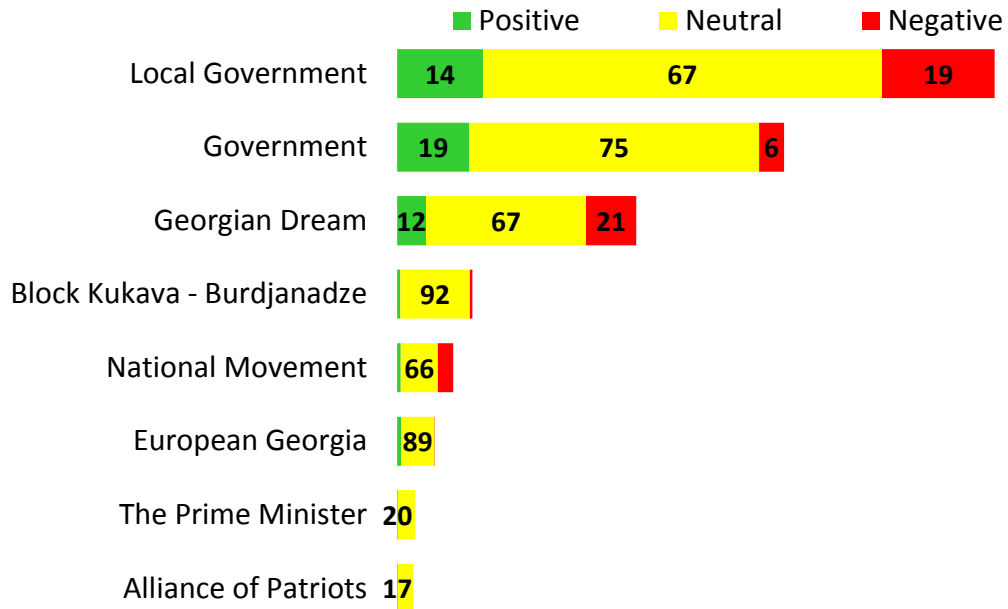
kutaisipost.ge covered activities of local government (40%), Government (26%) and Georgian Dream (16%) most intensively. Especially high indicators of either positive or negative tones have not been revealed during the coverage of any of the other subjects.

On the website kutaisipost.ge we saw the cycle of videos - “Free Tribune” prepared by the site. This section offered interviews with the mayor candidates of Kutaisi as well as with the representatives of different parties. The videos were made objectively and positive or negative tones have not been shown toward any mayor candidate of Kutaisi.

The commercial articles were appropriately separated from the editorial materials on kutaisipost.ge. For instance, on 5 September, six websites selected for the monitoring, published the identical article on Kakha Kaladze’s meeting with the British ambassador. Some of these six websites did not have promotional indications, some of them had inappropriate indications, while others including kutaisipost.ge had clearly specified for all readers that the article was commercial.

As a result of the monitoring we can conclude that, kutaisipost.ge objectively and impartially covers the political processes. Journalistic standards and ethical norms are kept, too.

Coverage of the Subjects on kutaipost.ge
According to the Tone (%)
 19 June - 8 October, 2017



livepress.ge

During the given period of monitoring livepress.ge had not revealed either a positive or a negative attitude towards any political force. It is noteworthy, that commercial articles prepared within the frames of a commercial contract are appropriately separated from the editorial articles.

livepress.ge has most actively covered the activities of Government (30%), Local Government (21%) and Georgian Dream (19%). Especially high percentage of indicators of either positive or negative tones had not been revealed while covering any of the other subjects.

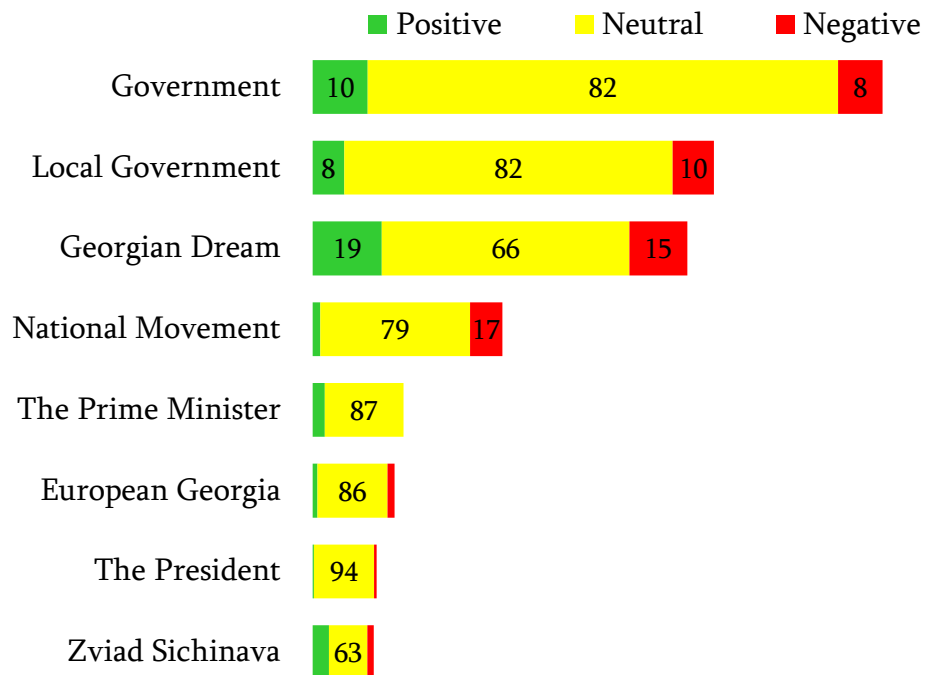
livepress.ge objectively and impartially covered pre-election campaign of Zugdidi Mayor candidates.

The commercial articles on livepress.ge were appropriately separated from the editorial materials. For instance, on 5 September, six websites selected for the monitoring, published

the identical article on Kakha Kaladze’s meeting with the British ambassador. Some of these six websites did not have promotional indications, some of them had inappropriate indications, while others including livepress.ge had clearly specified for all readers that the article was commercial.

As a result of the monitoring we conclude that livepress.ge objectively and impartially covers the political processes underway in the country. The articles are prepared within the frameworks of journalistic standards and ethical norms.

Covering the Subject on livepress.ge
According to the Tone (%)
 19 June - 8 October, 2017



medianews.ge

During the period of the monitoring the 40 percent of the articles posted on medianews.ge were covered the activities of the Governmnet. The commercial articles prepared within the frames of commercial contract are nor sperated from the editorial materils.

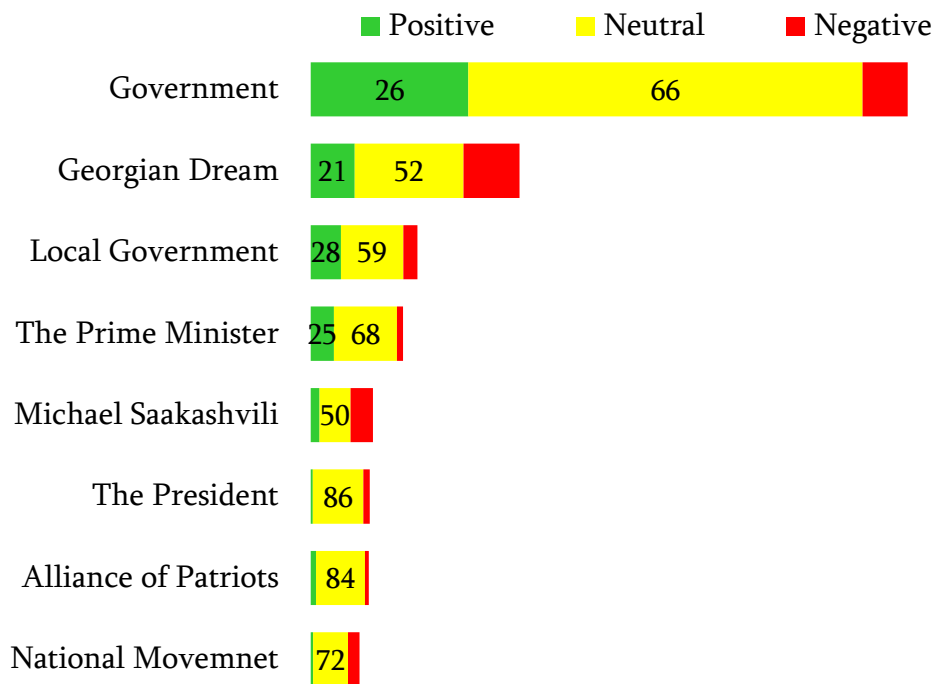
medianews.ge most intensively covered the activities of Government (40%) and „Georgian Dream” (14%) . Considerably high percentage of indicators of positive tone was revealed while covering the “Adjara Government” (39%), “Local Authorities” (28%), „Movement youths“ (27%), Government (26%) and Prime-Minister (25%). High percentage of indicators of negative tone were accorded the ex- premier Bidzina Ivanishvili (69%) and ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili (36%). Among Tbilisi Mayor candidates most intensively was covered Kakha Kaladze (50%).

The commercial materials are posted on medianews.ge without special indications. For instance, on 5 September, six websites selected for the monitoring, published the identical article on Kakha Kaladze’s meeting with the British ambassador. Some of these six websites have the promotional indications, some of them had inappropriate indications, while others including interpressnews.ge did not indicate that the article was commercial.

On September 4, the article about Kakha Kaladze’s election campaign was published with the commercial sign, while medianews.ge published the same article without any indication.

As a result of the monitoring we can conclude that the serious problem of medianews.ge is publishing promoting materials without the relevant indications.

**Coverage of the Subjects on medianews.ge
According to the Tone (%)
19 June - 8 October, 2017**



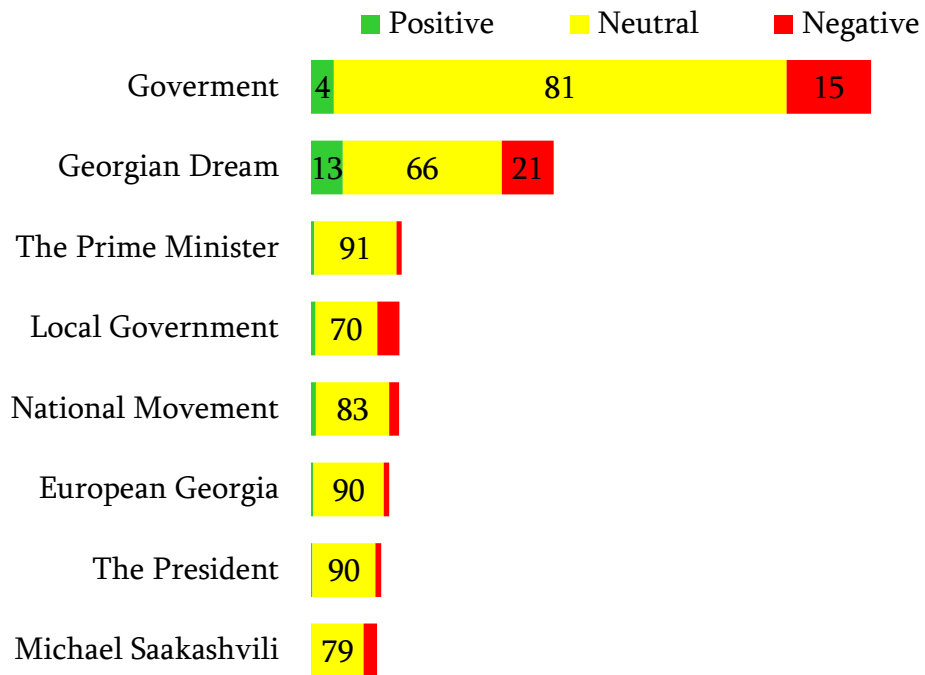
netgazeti.ge

netgazeti.ge- most intensively covered the activities of the Government (34%) and the Georgian Dream (15%). Especially high percentage of indicators of either positive or negative tones had not been revealed while covering any of the other subjects.

Among Tbilisi mayor candidates the independent candidate Aleksandre Elisashvili (38%) was covered most intensively. Neither positive nor negative attitude were not noticeable toward any mayor candidate.

As a result of the monitoring we can conclude that, netgazeti.ge objectively and impartially covers ongoing political processes in the country. It is noteworthy that, the articles prepared within the frames of commercial contract is appropriately separated from the editorial materials.

**Covering the Subject on netgazeti.ge
According to the Tone (%)
19 June - 8 October, 2017**



news.ge

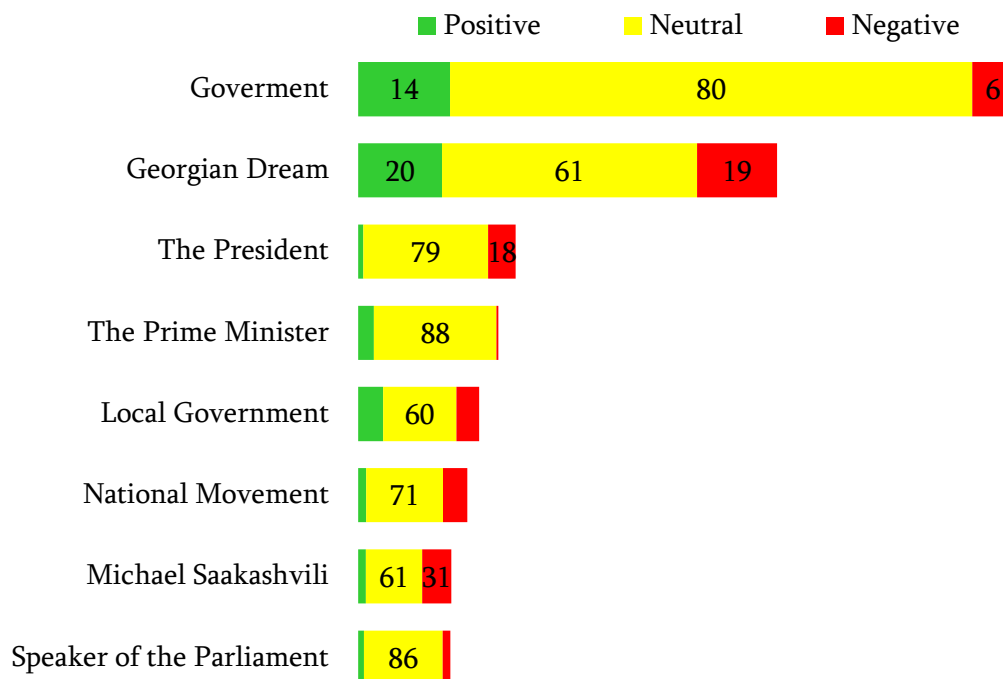
During the given period of monitoring news.ge had not shown either a positive or a negative attitude towards any political force. However, Kakha Kaladze has more coverage than all other candidates; the positive tone also prevails while covering the above mentioned candidate.

news.ge-most intensively covered the activities of Government (32%) and Georgian Dream (20%) Especially high percentage of positive tones had not been revealed while covering any of the subjects. The utterly high percentage of indicators of negative tone were revealed while covering the former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili (55%) and ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili (31%)

We often read on the website about Kakha Kaladze's pre-election meetings. There are occasions when these articles are published on the interpressnews.ge with the commercial marking and on the news.ge without commercial indications. (for example, „ *Kakha Kaladze met with the representatives of religious confesses*” October 5, *Kakha Kaladze met with the*

population of different streets of Krtsnisi district, September 25.) It is essential, that the website clarifies for the readers that the articles are prepared within the commercial contract.

**Converting the Subject on news.ge
According to the Tone (%)
19 June - 8 October, 2017**



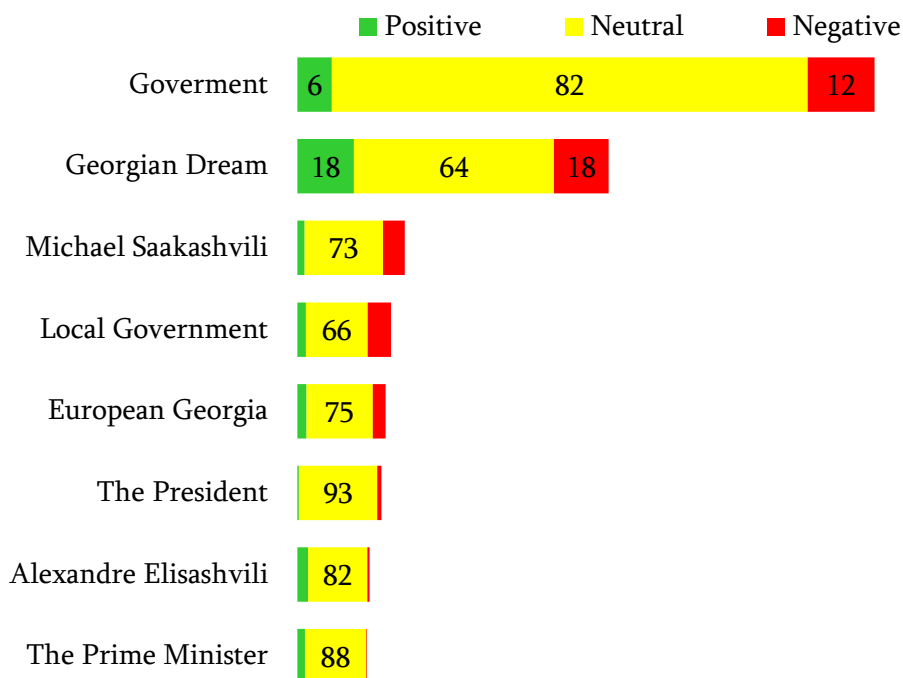
on.ge

During the given period of monitoring on.ge had not shown either a positive or a negative attitude towards any political force. The website protects journalistic standards and ethical norms. On.ge offers diverse multimedia product to their customers.

on.ge-most intensivle covered the activities of Governmnet (33%) and the Georgian Dream (18%) Especially high percentage of positive or negative tones had not been revealed while covering any of the subjects. The website equally and impartially covered the pre-election campaign of Tbilisi mayor candidates.

The commercial articles prepared within the commercial agreement are published on on.ge with the relevant indications, however, the indication may not be clear for all readers. These articles are referred as “spread through the distribution service”. The website should indicate, that the article is made within the commercial agreement. We can conclude that, on.ge objectively and impartially covers ongoing processes in the country. The website keeps with the journalistic standards and ethical norms.

**Coverage of the Subjects on on.ge
According to the Tone (%)
19 June - 8 October , 2017**



presa.ge

In the given period of the monitoring presa.ge most intensively covered the activities of the Georgian Dream and the Tbilisi mayor candidate of this party , Kakha kaladze. The cases of gross violations of journalistic standards and athical norms were not revelaed, but we had come across the cases, when the journalists of the publication do not specify the sources of information. The Commercial articles are not separated from the editorial materials on Presa.ge.

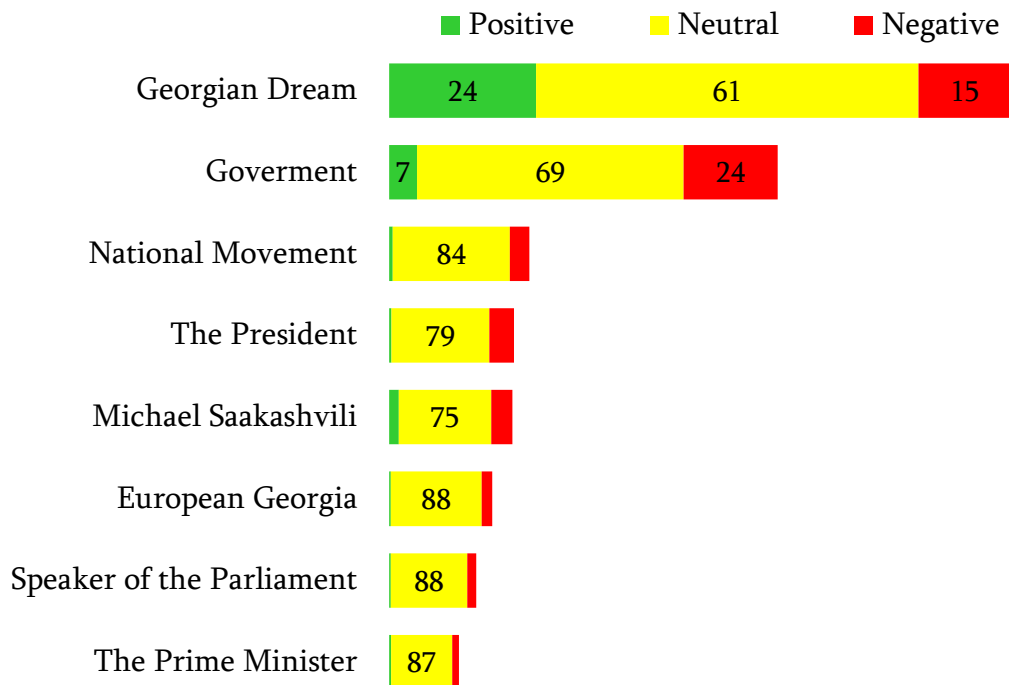
presa.ge most actively covered the activities of the Georgian Dream (32%) and Government (20%). Especially high percentage of positive tones had not been revealed while covering any of the subjects, but high percentage of indicators of negative tone were revealed while covering the former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili (58%). It is noteworthy, that the website devoted four times more coverage to Kakha Kaladze's pre-election activities rather than to all other candidates of Tbilisi mayoral.

There were cases, when the journalist did not specify where the information was obtained from, for example: „ according to the information received from the State Chancellor, dismissal of Subari is related to the growing dissatisfaction of the IDPs..... the coterie stated that Premier Giorgi Kvirikashvili has already made a decision on Sozar Subari's "demoting..." („*Subari goes home*"... *September 5*).

Advertising materials are published on presa.ge without a special prescription. For example, on 5 September, six websites selected for the monitoring, published the identical article on Kakha Kaladze's meeting with the British ambassador. Some of these six websites have the promotional indications, some of them had inappropriate indications, while others including presa.ge did not indicate that the article was commercial;

The article published on October 4, relating to the meeting of mayor candidate of „Georgian Dream "with the population of Ozurgeti was published on the livepress.ge with the special indication, while presa.ge published the same article without indication of an advertisement.

Covering the Subject on presa.ge
According to the Tone (%)
 19 June - 8 October, 2017



qartli.ge

qartli.ge - did not reveal a specially positive or negative attitude towards any political forces in the given period of monitoring. The site intensively covered the social and political problems of the region.

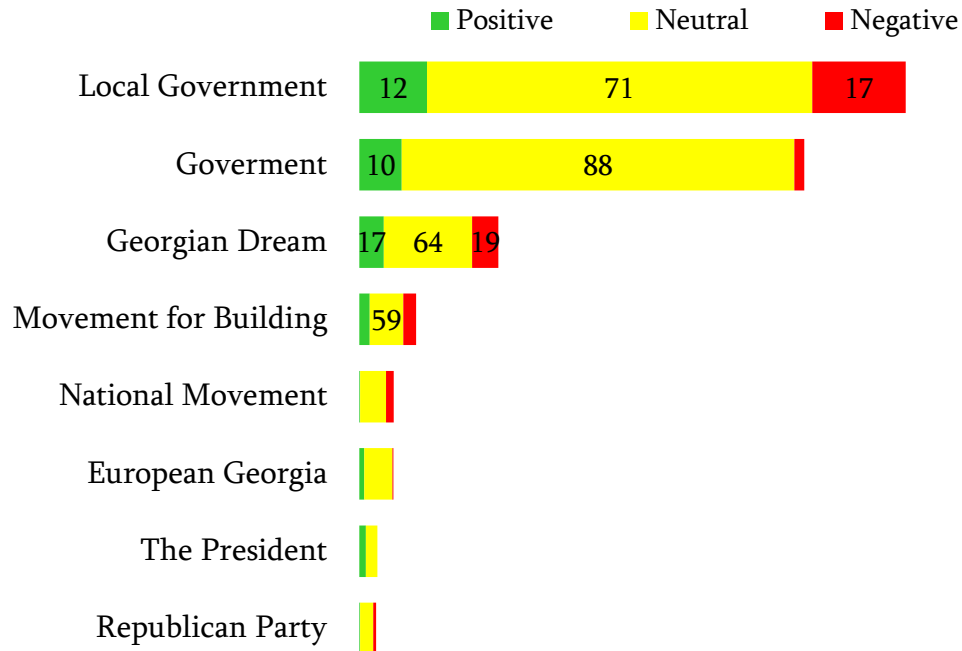
qartli.ge has most intensively covered the activities of local government (40%), government (33%) and Georgian Dream (10%). Especially high percentage of positive or negative tones had not been revealed while covering any of the subjects.

qartli.ge actively covered projects implemented in the region as well as critical assessments of incomplete works. Pre-election activities of Gori mayoral candidates are objectively covered.

The advertising materials prepared within the commercial agreement are appropriately separated from editorial articles on qartli.ge, however, the sign of an advertisement is placed

at the end of the article, and it could be unnoticeable for the readers. It is best to place the indicator on the website so that it can be easily visible for all readers.

Coverage of the Subjects on qartli.ge
According to the Tone (%)
 19 June - 8 October, 2017



reginfo.ge

reginfo.ge did not reveal positive or negative attitude towards any political forces in the given period of monitoring, although the site slightly prevailed in the negative tone indicators while covering the local self-government.

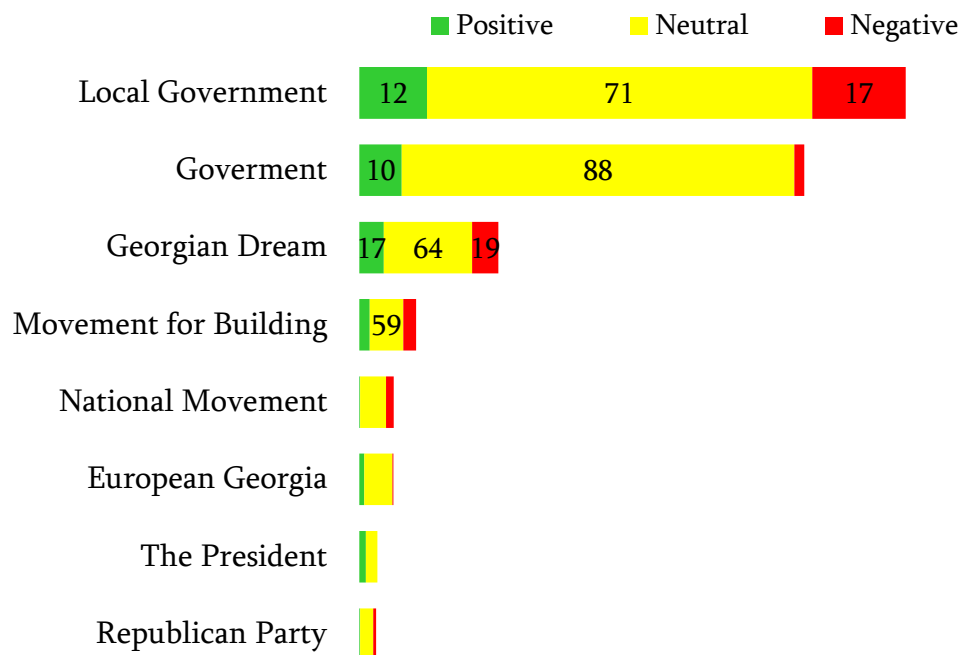
reginfo.ge has most intensively covered the activities of the Government (42%), Local Government (14%) and the Georgian Dream (14%). Especially high percentage of positive tones had not been revealed while covering any of the subjects, but high percentage of indicators of negative tone were revealed while covering the Local Government (33%).

During the given period of the monitoring, articles about budget spending were often published on reginfo.ge. (e.g. „Head of Forest Agency took 13 premiums and bonuses on

August 22, 19 premiums and bonuses of in two years by the head of Borjomi municipality, August 23, and „Head of Eredvi and Azhar municipalities were transferred apartments at the amount of 1 GEL”, August 28).

As a result of the monitoring we can conclude that reginfo.ge impartially covers ongoing processes of the country. The website very actively and critically covers the issues related to spending budgetary funds.

**Covering of the Subject on qartli.ge
According to the Tone (%)
19 June - 8 October, 2017**



sknews.ge

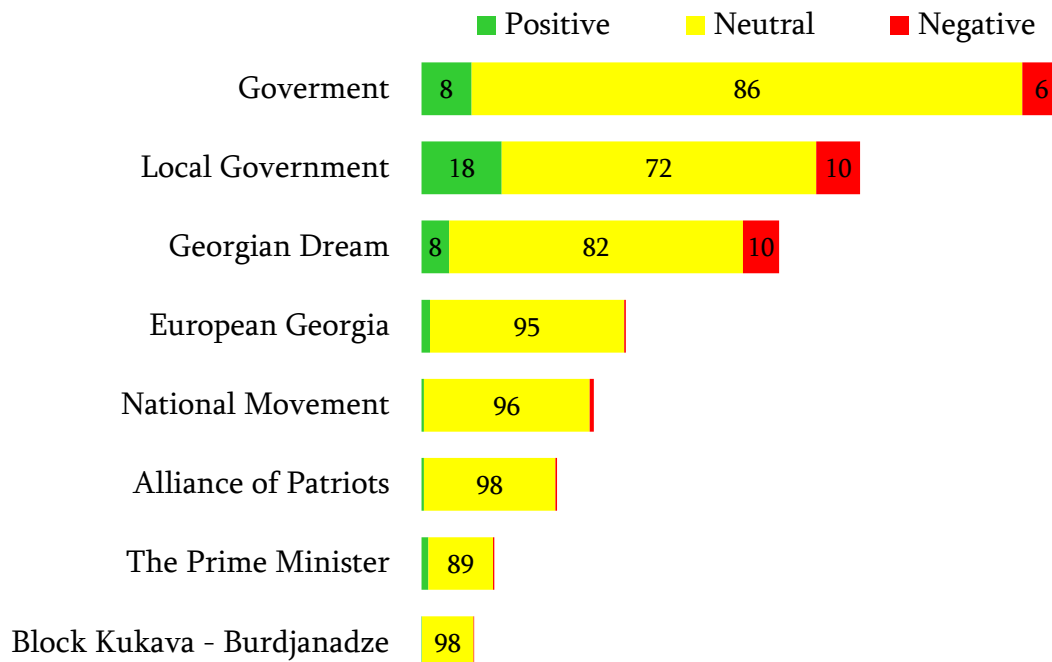
In the given period of the monitoring sknews.ge did not show either a positive or a negative attitude towards any of the political forces. The website protects journalistic standards and ethical norms. sknews.ge offers to their customers diverse multimedia product.

sknews.ge has most intensively covered the Government (27%), Local Government (18%) and Georgian Dream (15%). Especially high percentage of positive or negative tones had not been revealed while covering any of the subjects.

sknews.ge actively and impartially covered the pre-election campaign of mayoral candidates for all parties. (e.g. „*Vaja Chitashvili, a mayoral candidate of Akhhaltsikhe of “European Georgia”*”, July 18; „*Irakli Baramidze, a mayoral candidate of Akhhaltsikhe of “United National Movement”*”, August 6).

As a result of the monitoring we can conclude that sknews.ge objectively and impartially covered the ongoing processes of the country. It is noteworthy, that website has the variety of sources of information in separate articles.

**Coverage of the Subjects on sknews.ge
According to the Tone (%)**
19 June - 8 October, 2017



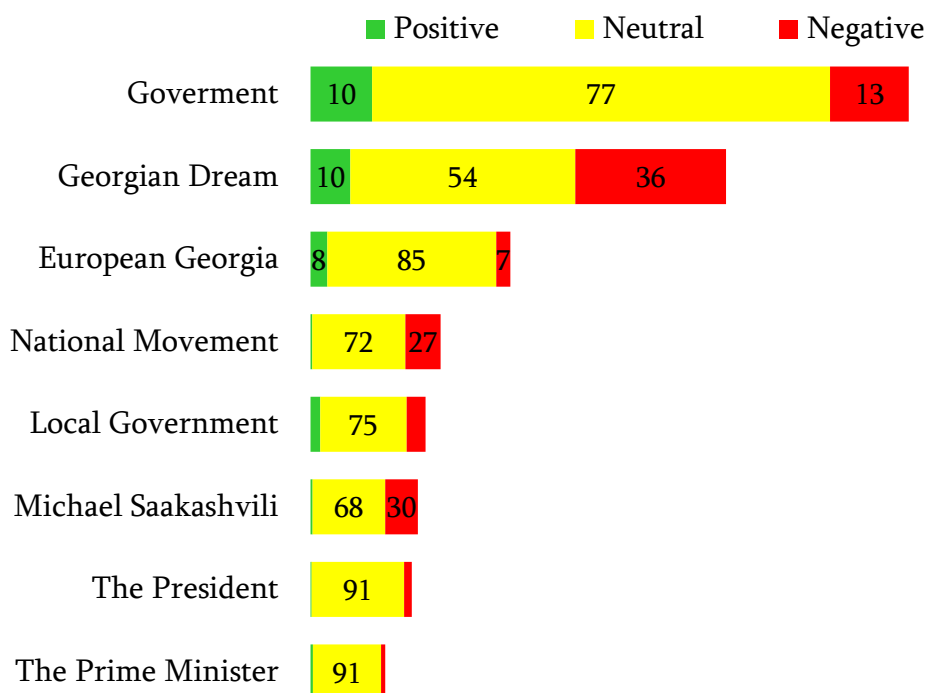
tabula.ge

In the given period of the monitoring a relatively negative attitude towards the ruling party and United National Movement was noticeable. The instances of grave violations of journalistic standards or ethical norms have not been detected on the website.

tabula.ge has most intensively covered Government (29%), Georgian Dream (20%) and European Georgia (10%). High percentage indicators of negative tone were revealed while covering the former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili (51%), Georgian Dream (36%), ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili (30%) and United National Movement (27%). Especially high percentage of indicators of positive tones had not been revealed while covering any of the other subjects.

Kakha Kaladze (50%) was most actively covered among Tbilisi Mayor candidates. Among Tbilisi Mayor candidates the highest percentage of negative tone was revealed toward Kakha Kaladze (36%) and high percentage of positive tone went to Elene Khoshtaria (14%).

Coverage the Subjects on tabula.ge
According to the Tone (%)
19 June - 8 October, 2017



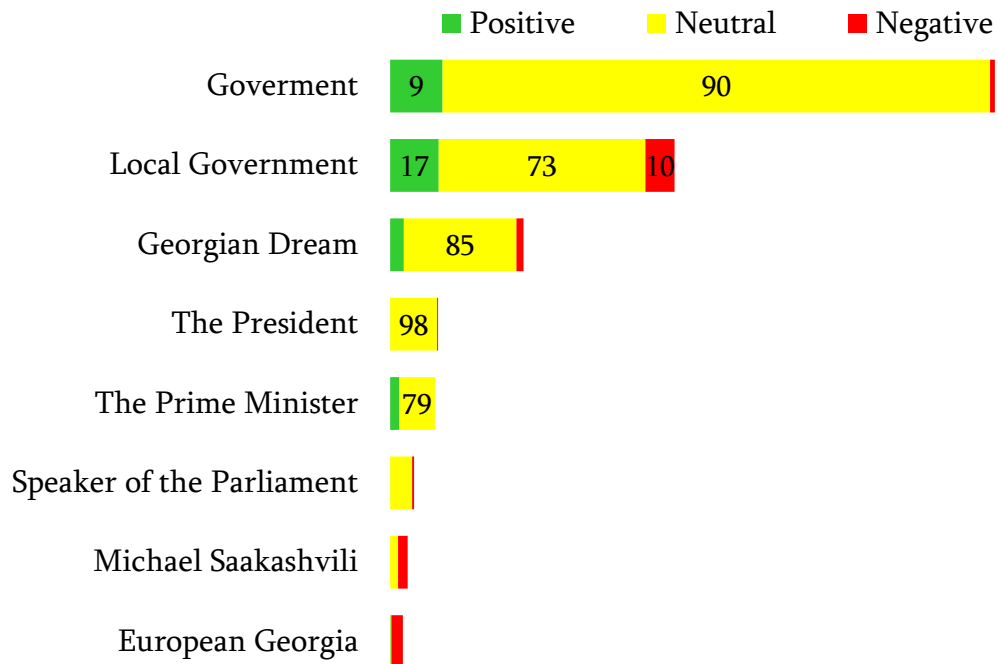
telegraph.ge

During the given period of monitoring telegraph.ge did not show either a positive or a negative attitude towards any political force, although there was a lack of comprehensive and critical analysis of social and infrastructural projects in the region.

telegraph.ge-most intensively covered the activities of Government (50%), local government (24%) and Georgian Dream (11%). High percentage of indicators of either positive or negative tones had not been revealed while covering any of the other subjects.

The activities of various political parties were covered with less frequency on telegraph.ge. It is noteworthy that over two-thirds of the articles published on the website were dedicated to the activities of the central and regional government. While covering of these issues, there were less critical analysis and diversity of sources of information in separate articles.

**Coverage of the Subjects on telegraph.ge
According to the Tone (%)
19 June - 8 October, 2017**



Conclusion

Compared to the monitoring results carried out in previous years, Georgian online media has been improved in terms of balancing the coverage of political forces as well as protection of journalistic standards and ethical norms. In the regional publications there are no cases of gross violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms.

The main challenge is the lack of comprehensive coverage and analyses of different issues. The websites, in most cases, only cover the statements of politicians and representatives of various government agencies. However, in regional publications, there are more critical and multilateral analysis of social and economic problems. Also, there are various information sources in regional publications in separate articles; While discussing regional problems, we often see the opinions of government officials as well as local people in separate articles.

The serious challenge of online media is improper separation of advertising materials, prepared within the commercial agreement, from the editorial articles. Such cases are often seen while covering the pre-election campaign of Tbilisi mayor candidate of Georgian Dream - Kakha Kaladze. There are frequent cases, when these articles simultaneously are published on several websites and only part of them indicate that they are advertising.

Online media rarely encounters critical questions toward election subjects and critical analysis of their promises. In most cases, websites publish the pre-election promises of different candidates invariably and without analysis.