



ევროკავშირი
საქართველოსთვის
The European Union for Georgia



Research of Media Coverage of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections

TV talk-shows Post-election Monitoring Report

February 1 - March 31, 2021



საქართველოს ჟურნალისტური
ეთიკის ქარტია

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About the Project

In the aftermaths of Parliamentary elections 2020, The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics monitored talk-shows on national TV broadcasters. The aim of the monitoring was to assess the quality of the coverage of election-related issues. Monitoring was conducted within the frameworks of the UNDP-implemented project “Research of Media Coverage of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections of Georgia”, with the financial support of the European Union, from February 1, 2021 to March 31, 2021. The following twelve TV channels were monitored: Channel One (Georgian Public Broadcaster), Adjara TV (Georgian Public Broadcaster), Mtavari Arkhi, Rustavi 2, Imedi, Formula, TV Pirveli, Maestro, Obiektivi, Kavkasia, Palitra TV and POSTV.

Methodology

The aim of this monitoring was to assess the degree to which ethical or professional standards were upheld by the media in the coverage of electoral actors and important social and political issues.

The monitoring consisted of only qualitative research component and focused on the following: relevance of the selected topics of the shows, qualification and relevance of the invited guests to the topic of discussion, biases in the selection of guests; the ability of the anchor to conduct the show, his/her preparedness for the discussion, relevance of her/his questions, whether anchor gave the opportunity to the guests for spreading fake news; whether the show was used to spread hate speech. In general, whether the viewers got any additional information that would help them make an informed opinion.

Researchers monitored the political parties and politicians that participated in Parliamentary elections 2020 and won mandates in the legislature, as well as those political figures that were actively involved in the post-electoral political processes.

Taking into account the post-electoral political context the following topics were selected for the monitoring: the boycott of the Parliament, the reform of the electoral system/administration, financing of political parties, repeat parliamentary elections, upcoming local self-governance elections, rallies, the case of the UNM Chairperson Nika Melia, changes in the government, political dialogue under the mediation of EU.

Key Findings:

- During the reporting period, it was revealed that the broadcast media was sharply polarized.
- Representatives of the ruling party refused to visit some of the media channels.
- During the monitoring period, the talk shows of the “First Channel” of the Public Broadcaster, “Adjara Public Broadcaster”, “Rustavi 2” and “Palitra TV” were the exceptions, which were frequently visited by representatives of the opposition and the government.
- From the comments of the talk show hosts we can conclude that the representatives of the “Georgian Dream” refused to visit “Formula”, “TV Pirveli” and “Kavkasia”, while they often visited “Imedi” and “POSTV”. Members of the ruling party were not represented on the “Mtavari Channel” either.
- The narratives of „Imedi“ and „POSTV“ coincided with the messages of „Georgian Dream“. „TV Pirveli“ and „Mtavari Channel“ showed bias opinions towards the opposition.
- „Obiektivi TV“ still remains the platform of the „Alliance of Patriots of Georgia“. In almost all programs, party members spoke and agitated in favor of „Alliance of Patriots of Georgia“. The talk show hosts openly expressed their support for this party. The channel was broadcasting anti-Western propaganda and hate speech.
- In the programs where the „Georgian Dream“ representatives were the respondents, the members of the ruling team were mostly the last guests, which allowed them to criticize their opponents.
- Except some TV channels, talk show hosts or their guests used terms related to mental health in an offensive context, which led to reinforcing mental health-related stigmas.
- During the reporting period, „Maestro“ did not broadcast a socio-political program.

