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საქართველოსთვის  
The European Union for Georgia



# Research of Media Coverage of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections

## Monitoring of the news programmes of radio stations

### Final Report

15 June - 21 November 2020



INTERNEWS  
GEORGIA

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## About the project

As part of the EU/UNDP ‘Study and Research on Election Media Coverage for the 2020 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia’ project, Internews Georgia monitored various print media from 15 June through 21 November 2020.

The evening news programmes of the 10 following radio stations were monitored: ‘Sakartvelos Radio’ (Public Broadcaster), ‘Tavisupleba’, ‘Imedi’, ‘Maestro’, ‘Palitra’, ‘Pirveli Radio’, ‘Hereti’, ‘Marneuli’, ‘Dzveli Kalaki’ (Kutaisi) and ‘Samkhretis Karibche’ (Akhaltsikhe).

## Monitoring Methodology

The purpose of monitoring the evening news programmes of these radio stations was to identify whether or not their coverage of political parties during the pre-electoral period was carried out under equal conditions and respected journalistic standards.

The monitoring involved both quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative monitoring defined countable and measurable indicators: the time dedicated to various subjects, the tone of coverage (positive, neutral, negative), the direct or indirect nature of coverage (i.e. whether subjects are talking themselves or are being talked about) and the gender of subjects (male or female).

Qualitative monitoring focused upon data that was difficult to measure: the timely coverage of events, the distortion of information, biased coverage, tendentiousness, a basis in fact, the diversity of sources of information, the manipulation of sound or music, respect for ethical and professional standards, and any other factor relevant to the quality of the information published.

The monitoring targeted the political parties and politicians who took part in Georgia’s 2020 parliamentary elections, including the Government (central, local, Ajarian), the Prime Minister and the President, and was carried out not only on radio programmes concerning the election but also on all kinds of materials which mentioned the subjects of monitoring.

This report covers the results of the monitoring of the evening news programmes of the chosen radio stations between 15 June and 21 November.

## The monitoring of the selected radio stations revealed the following:

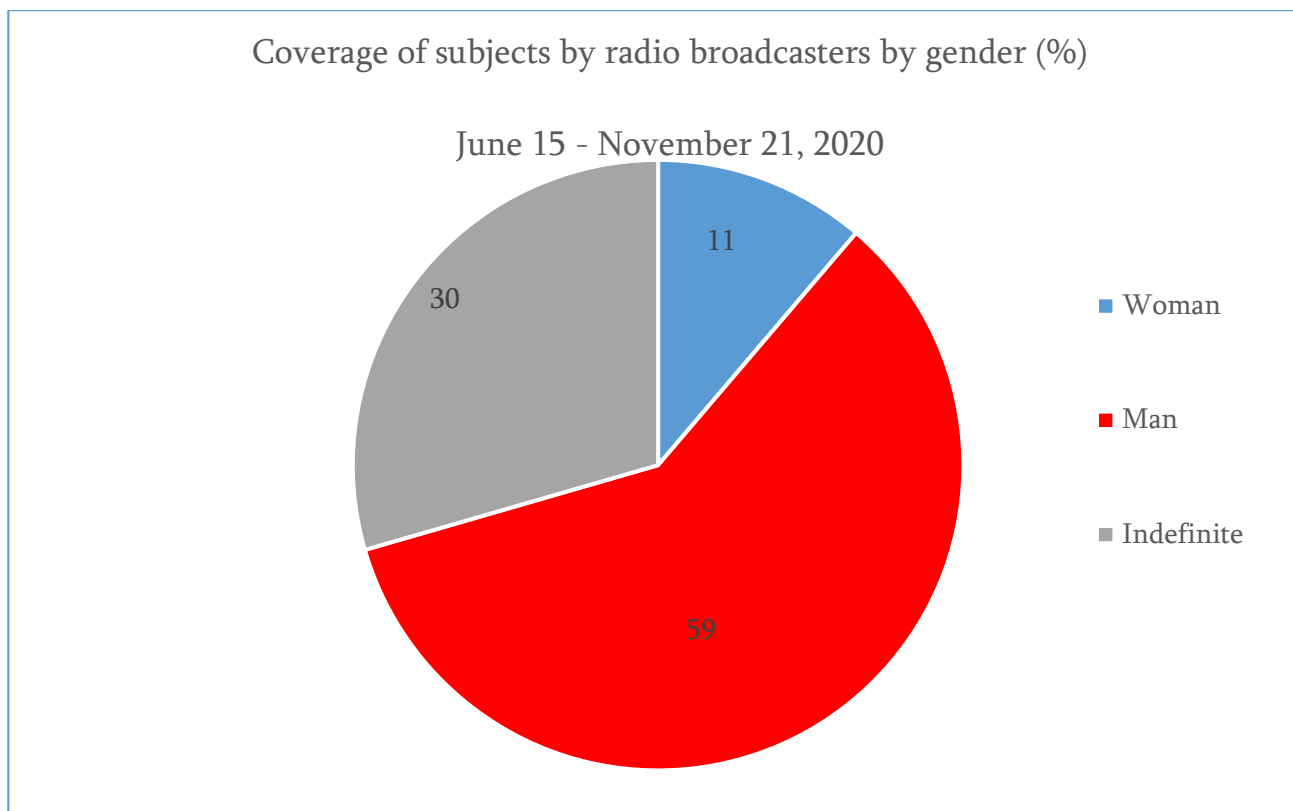
- Most radio stations displayed an impartial attitude towards political groups, and their news programmes were mostly balanced. That said, the quality of these news programmes remains quite low and their content very dry and superficial. In most cases, these programmes broadcast nothing new or topical, and stories lacked a specific topic, series of problems or focus;
- Most radio stations did not create exclusive content: different stations covered the same topics, and only very seldom broadcast exclusive information. This gave the impression that the radio stations were not really trying to compete with each other in terms of news content: no journalist appeared to harbour the ambition to be the first, to obtain more or additional information, or to offer listeners a higher quality programme than other radio stations;
- The topicality of the topics or themes of news programmes was defined by the statements of politicians, and not by information obtained by journalists. The news programmes very often only broadcast general statements made by respondents;
- Compared to previous years, the share of indirect coverage of subjects has increased: most news consists of quoting the public statements of politicians.
- Journalists were broadcasting information obtained from politicians without further analysis or fact-checking. They did not use opportunities to enrich the news with statistics, archive materials, civil sector surveys or any other additional data;
- Most radio stations devoted only very little air time to ongoing events in Georgia's regions, to social issues and minority problems or indeed to the opinions of politicians regarding these subjects.
- Between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November, when the opposition was holding rallies and was accusing the ruling party of electoral fraud, coverage of the 'Georgian Dream' became significantly more negative.
- Between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November, coverage of the NGO sector and experts increased, as journalists attempted to provide listeners with expert opinions on ongoing processes.
- Radio stations did not contribute to the spread of gender stereotypes. No sexist or homophobic statements were heard on air, and no statements containing hate speech or threats towards any gender type were identified.
- There were no gross violations of journalistic ethics, and no cases of manipulation with sound or music were detected.

## Gender Sensitive coverage

The project also involved the monitoring of gender-sensitive coverage, with attention being paid to the kinds of coverage or terminology that directly or indirectly (surreptitiously) strengthen established gender stereotypes in society.

Female politicians and candidates enjoyed 5 times less air time than their male counterparts in the news programmes of the selected radio stations.

Chart. Coverage by gender.



The monitoring revealed that radio stations did not contribute to the spread of gender stereotypes. No sexist or homophobic statements were heard on air, and no statements containing hate speech or threats towards any gender type were identified.

## ANNEX. Charts.

