



Media Monitoring of Parliamentary Elections

With financial support from the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), Human Rights Center [HRC] is implementing a media-monitoring project of the coverage of the parliamentary elections during the pre-election period. Within the framework of the project, HRC monitors observe hidden political, social and political advertisements aired by the following TV-Companies: Public Broadcaster, Imedi, Rustavi 2, Kavkasia, Maestro and TV 9.

Media Monitoring of Parliamentary Elections is implemented through financial support from the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) within the framework of a four-year project, Increased Trust in Electoral Process (ITEP), financed by USAID (US Agency for International Development).

The report below covers the period from October 7 to October 21.

Public Broadcaster

October 7-21

Media-Monitor: Aleko Tskitishvili

After the parliamentary elections number of advertisements has significantly reduced on the Public Broadcaster; in fact it was half-reduced. **In the period of October 7-21**, total length of advertisement intervals in the prime time of GPB was 25 518 seconds. Among them, only 155 seconds (about 2, 5 minutes) were spent on the advertisements relevant to our monitoring, where election subjects of governmental institutions were mentioned.

Just to compare, **in the period of September 10-23**, total length of advertisement intervals in prime-time on GPB was 39 761 seconds. Among them, 18 818 seconds (about 314 minutes) were spent on relevant advertisements where election subjects or governmental institutions were presented.

We can compare the new data with the period when pre-election period (August 1-September 31) was not officially announced yet. For example, **in the period of July 2-14**, total length of advertising intervals on GPB was 34 610 seconds; among them 4 334 seconds (about 72 minutes) were spent on the advertisements relevant to our monitoring, where election subjects or governmental institutions were mentioned.

As you see, advertisements relevant to our media-monitoring, where election subjects or governmental institutions are mentioned, are not aired by GPB in fact. In the period of October 7-21 advertisement intervals of the GPB's prime time was dedicated to the announcements of the TV-programs of the GPB itself. It also releases several social advertisements on various issues. Among them is advertisement relevant to our monitoring where governmental institutions – Tbilisi City Hall and Healthcare Ministry are mentioned. It is 25-second long social advertisement of the National Screening Center at the end of which we see logos of the Tbilisi City Hall and the Healthcare Ministry. The advertisement offers free medical tests to citizens and was aired four times in the prime time of the GPB in the period of October 7-21 (total length – 100 seconds). It is noteworthy that social advertisements of the screening center were aired more frequently during the pre-election period too. We already wrote about advertisement of free vaccination of papilloma virus in our [report of the period of July 30-August 12](#). We wrote that advertising roll- “Free Vaccination”, at the end of which we see a logo of the Tbilisi City Hall, aims at the promotion of public welfare and advertises vaccination – effective source to be safe of dangerous papilloma virus, which was provided for free with the support of the Tbilisi City Hall for several months already.¹

Besides this advertisement, we observed advertisement of the GPB, which presents the trends of covering election period on GPB. The journalists of the news program Moambe, presenters of political talk-shows – Accents, Dialogue, Debates, and Media-Monitor are presented in the ad. In parallel to it representatives of international organizations observer missions positively evaluate the work of the GPB during the pre-election period. After the ad-clip we see a text: “Public Broadcaster – impartial, balanced and unbiased.” The ad lasts 55 seconds and was aired only once in the period of October 7-21, namely on October 20.

On October 1, parliamentary elections were held in Georgia. This fact automatically caused halt of political advertisements about election topic on the GPB. However, the GPB stopped airing several social advertisements where initiatives of governmental institutions were presented or their activities or successful projects were advertised. They were frequently aired during pre-election period, particularly before August 1, when Election Day was

¹ <http://humanrights.ge/admin/editor/uploads/pdf/media%20monitoring%20July%2030%20-%20August%2012.pdf>

officially fixed. We wrote in [our previous intermediate reports](#) that signs of hidden political advertisement were detected in those advertisements.² After Interagency Task Force recommended the Public Broadcaster and government to stop airing those video-rolls with social status which advertise projects implemented by the government and might be perceived as election advertisement, the GPB stopped airing them.

Nowadays, when pre-election period finished, airing of those social advertisements was not resumed on GPB. Several advertisements, like the ad about free medical insurance, whose client was Healthcare Ministry, lost its actuality due to new political reality in the country. However, it is interesting that neither entertainment music clips were resumed on GPB; they are: Anaklia Is Eager to Welcome You, I Love Racha, I Love Tbilisi, and I Love Svaneti.

Those clips advertised various governmental projects and contained signs of hidden political advertisement.³ The fact that they are not aired after the election period finished, intensifies our doubt that their purpose was to advertise the achievements of the government.

Rustavi 2

Media-Monitor: Salome Achba

In this period of media-monitoring total length of advertisement intervals on Rustavi 2 was 68 859 seconds. However, no political advertisement was aired by the TV-Company in the report period. The number of social advertisements also significantly reduced.

There was only one advertisement with assumed social advertisement in the report period. The ad was about tax payment and the text is as follows:

“Revenue Service is kindly reminding you that if total income of you and your family members exceeded 150 00 lari per year, you should visit website www.rs.ge and fill in property declaration of a physical person. In addition to that, if your income does not exceed 2 000 lari but you own a plot, you are obliged to fill in the property declaration.

If you filled in the declaration last year but this year you do not own the same property, visit the website, follow instructions and indicate this information in it. Otherwise, last year tax will be imposed on you.

Deadline for filling in the property declaration for physical persons is November 1, 2012.”

² <http://humanrights.ge/admin/editor/uploads/pdf/English-2.pdf>

³ <http://humanrights.ge/admin/editor/uploads/pdf/English-2.pdf>

The advertisement lasts 49 seconds and it was aired 7 times. According to its context, this advertisement assumedly has social status because it contains information necessary for the society. (Rustavi 2 has not yet provided us with the list of advertisement which they have granted social status).

The only subject of the advertisement is Revenue Service. Tone of coverage is completely neutral.

Media-monitoring of the post-election period revealed an interesting trend – assumed social advertisements, which were aired before the elections and where signs of hidden advertisement were detected by group of monitors, were not aired in the report period (Made in Georgia, Defense Ministry – Total Care for People, etc).

Imedi

Media-Monitor: Manana Vardiashvili

In the period of October 7-21, we did not observe any advertisements relevant to media-monitoring because parliamentary elections were held on October 1 and TV-Companies stopped airing pre-election advertisements. Besides that, it is noteworthy that Imedi-TV stopped airing advertisements which contained signs of hidden political advertisements⁴. It intensifies our doubt that those ads aimed at advertising the government's activities before elections.

As for total length of advertisement intervals on Imedi, it was 74 315 seconds in the report period.

Kavkasia

Media-Monitor: Inga Varsimashvili

During the report period total length of advertisements in the prime-time of the TV-Company Kavkasia was 4 672 seconds. No advertisement relevant to our media-monitoring was aired by the TV-Channel during the report period.

Kavkasia airs only one pre-election TV-Program prepared by Regional Broadcasters Association “Elections 2012,” which invited candidates for the position of the Georgian Public Defender and their views about the activities of the ombudsman were discussed in the program.

⁴ <http://humanrights.ge/admin/editor/uploads/pdf/24%20september%20-%207%20october%20eng.pdf>

Since election process finished in Georgia, Kavkasia no longer airs debates between election subjects. Several times, Davit Akubardia's program Spektri invited ministers-to-be who informed population about their future activities in the ministries.

Signs of hidden advertisement were not detected in the programs.

Maestro

Media-Monitor: Shorena Latatia

In this period of media-monitoring total length of advertisement intervals and announcements was 17 694 seconds on Maestro TV; among them 82 seconds were spent on the advertisements relevant to media-monitoring.

“Combat of torture is absolute right; state is authorized to investigate them! The investigation shall be prompt and effective. Horrified society and hundreds prisoners request to impose legal and political responsibilities on Bacho Akhalaia, Khatuna Kalmakhelidze, Dimitry Shashkin, Davit Chakua, Data Akhalaia, Zurab Adeishvili and Murtaz Zodelava,” the advertisement reads; after that famous public figures state: “Do not humiliate personal dignity! Investigate! Expose perpetrators! Restitute justice! No to Impunity! No to torture! At the end we see logo of the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association. To see the video visit the link: <http://goo.gl/99MMg>

In the frame of this advertisement, 922 seconds were spent on the government; tone of coverage was negative and type – indirect.

TV 9

Media-Monitor: Giorgi Janelidze

In the report period, total length of advertisement intervals on TV-Company TV9 was 42 086 seconds. Among them, 22 635 seconds were spent on advertisements in the first week of the report period and 19 451 seconds in the second one.

No advertisement relevant to our media-monitoring, which could be connected with pre-election or post-election period with its style, context or other form, was aired by TV-Company in the report period.

However, we should note one significant and catchy circumstance: whilst before October 1 advertisement net of the TV9 was occupied only by announcements of TV-Company's programs, pre-election advertisements or social video-clips, after the elections commercial

advertisements started to eventually appear in advertising intervals of the TV 9. So, we have feeling that changed political climate in the country after October 1 parliamentary elections changed the trends of advertising market too: business-groups got more active and braver to place their advertisements in the TV-Companies which were previously perceived as “oppositionist ones.”



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