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THE DRAGON DANCE



CHINESE INFLUENCE IN GEORGIA'S MEDIA AND ACADEMIA

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THE DRAGON DANCE

Research Subject:	Chinese Influence in Georgia's Media and Academia
Research Monitoring Period:	01.04.2023 – 01.11.2023
Research Methodology:	The research is based on qualitative research methodology: desk research, content analysis (media monitoring), qualitative case study methodology and comparison tactics, as well as in-depth interviews and focus groups.
Media Outlets under Monitoring:	Mtavari Channel TV Pirveli Public Broadcaster TV Imedi POSTV BM.GE Chinesestories.ge Sinomedia.ge Sinologia.ge Sputnik Georgia

PEARLS OF PROPAGANDA:

"Donald Trump, Viktor Orban, Vladimir Putin, Jair Bolsonaro - the list of rulers for whom post-communist China is a source of inspiration is long. Order is here, disorder is hated here, strength is respected here. For them, as well as for people for whom money and security exceed human rights, China embodies the soul of time."



"In the 1990s, Japan seemed to be the only country that had any chance of becoming a superpower and possible hegemony, even if only from an economic point of view. However, by the end of the 1990s, China had entered the international, very closed club of the most powerful nations with fantastic speed and huge strides, and since then, has not stopped this astounding advance, which puts into big question the seemingly inviolable absolute monopoly of the United States.

Never in human history has an economically, socially, politically backward country, as China was 2-3 decades ago, been transformed with such speed into an economic, military, political giant, which in the very near perspective is quite realistically challenging the primacy of the greatest power on the planet."

“I will say without exaggeration that President Xi Jinping is indeed an exemplary leader. He has a far-reaching vision and is a wise man who has done great things for his great nation. He is implementing very ambitious projects and reforms for your country and people. I consider him a leader who gives inspiration ...” -

Irakli Gharibashvili.

“We have begun to really care about our sovereignty. Ask, and it will open up for you. When a door closes - this is Georgia's fate - many other doors open.”

“The implementation of this statement gives Georgia a unique opportunity (as I mentioned yesterday) to return and expand its multi-vector nature, conditioned by its geopolitical code.”

The research overviews the development of Sino-Georgian academic cooperation, highlighting key initiatives and changes that have taken place following the signing of the China-Georgia Strategic Partnership Statement. This includes significant advancements in educational collaborations, such as scholarships, joint educational projects, and the promotion of Chinese language programs within Georgian educational institutions.

Besides, the research underscores the impact of Chinese investments and the role of Chinese entities in transforming Georgian higher education, exemplified by the rebranding of Guram Tavartkiladze Teaching University to the Georgian International University (GIU) under the ownership of Chinese stakeholders.

The paper examines the influence of platforms like Sinomedia, which actively promote Chinese educational initiatives, competitions, and language courses in Georgia. This platform, created by Georgian graduates of Chinese universities, plays a significant role in disseminating information about educational opportunities and achievements related to Sino-Georgian cooperation.

Moreover, the study addresses the security risks associated with increased academic cooperation with the PRC, urging Georgian educational institutions to recognize these risks as the partnership develops. It also details various events and initiatives, such as international competitions and partnerships with Chinese agencies, that reflect the PRC's growing influence in the Georgian academic landscape.

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INTRODUCTION

China in the Media and Academic Sectors of Georgia

"Georgia supports the global civilization initiative proposed by China"; "Georgia welcomes the One Belt, One Road initiative proposed by China" - these phrases are taken from the 2023 China-Georgia Strategic Partnership Agreement document, which was declared by Chinese President Xi Jinping during the visit of the Prime Minister of Georgia to China (July 2023).

During the same period, Georgia was waiting for a decision on its candidate status for EU membership, while EU and NATO integration remains an external goal declared in Georgia's constitution. The period of these eclectic foreign games also covers the empirical field of the presented research, which, using Georgia as a case study, reflects traces of China's soft power, with both low and aggressive visibility.

What makes Georgia particularly interesting? And especially during this period?

It is interesting not only because we observe the influence of a large state with a declared communist system (China) on a small state with a declared liberal democracy (Georgia), taking into account that authoritarian countries (such as China) use "double standard approaches" - "Another country's defective democracy in the service of its own communist-authoritarian system" - which ultimately gives us an analysis of the interaction of political systems based on different ideological foundations.

It is also interesting because information operations researchers agree that especially after the COVID-19 pandemic (though not for that reason alone), China "began to duplicate the Russian model of aggressive disinformation."¹

The analysis of practice has already shown so far that the period of China's transition to aggressive actions was also characterized by originality.² For example, research on Georgian-language media in 2022 showed us that these actions manifested in the following results:

¹ T. Sloan, K. Kozlovsky - "Systematic Analysis of Disinformation Cases: Russia and China" - Tbilisi 2012

² There was a belief that there were many differences between China and Russia. China was considered to be trying to create an image of a responsible global power state, promote its constructive role, promote "Chinese success," and portray the superiority of the Chinese. Accordingly, Chinese propaganda (unlike Russian propaganda, which is not focused on building Russia's reputation but trying to damage the reputation of the opposing country) was based on creating a positive image of China, which it managed to do by focusing on technology, economy, and culture.

Complete removal of the PRC
from content that carries a negative context;

Shaping the image of China
as a particularly benevolent country;

And most importantly:

**Emphasizing China's superiority against the backdrop of and in
parallel with attempts to discredit the West.**

This last trend has given us in the Georgian-language media, parallel to each other and sometimes coordinating each other, anti-Western and pro-China narratives.

The 2022 research (on which the comparison tactic of the presented study is also based - see below) has clearly shown us that the "low visibility" approach has been replaced by the so-called "Wolf Warrior Diplomacy" a quote from a movie (站狼 - Zhàn Lang), whose protagonist's message is "Whoever offends China will pay for it".

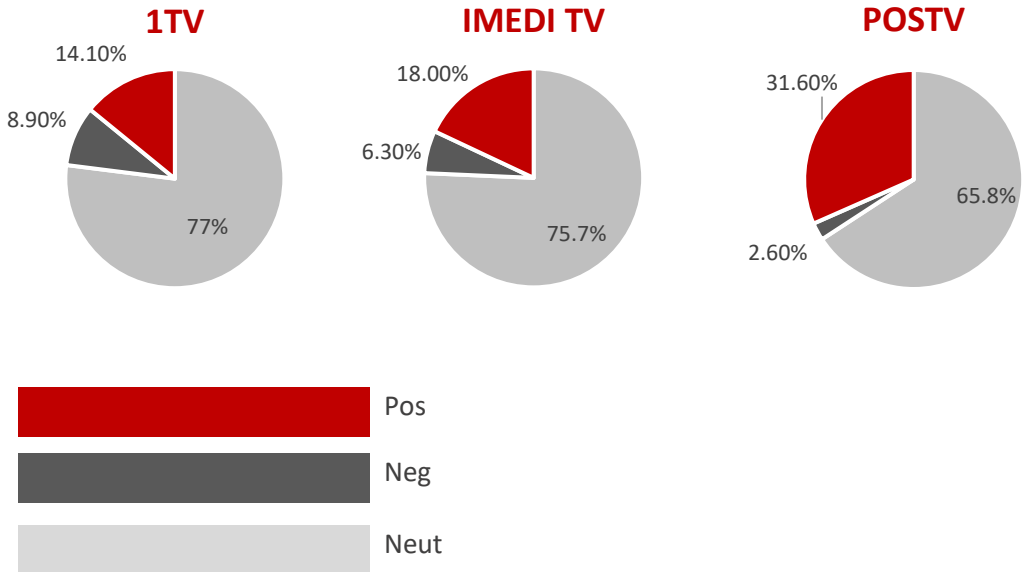
On the "Dragon Dance": observing the transformation of China's foreign policy in 2023 through the example of Georgia is all the more particular because the pursuit of more significant influence from the PRC coincides with the prioritization of strategic partnership with China by the Georgian government itself, which may strengthen the so-called Chinese effects and consequences of "Wolf Warrior Diplomacy" and the "Dragon Dance."

RESEARCH FINDINGS

A detailed institutional analysis of broadcast media showed that in 2023, compared to 2021-2022, the frequency of funding received from Communist China or its affiliated business authors increased in Georgian broadcast media. In this regard, we have the growth of both pro-government and opposition broadcasters.

Specific editorial approaches to covering China appeared in both pro-government and opposition broadcast media. The 2021-2022 research showed that the media used a chaotic and inconsistent approach in their coverage of China news. However, since the strategic partnership with the PRC became a government interest, the tone of positive coverage of China in pro-government media has increased, and the indicator of negative coverage has decreased. In contrast, the opposite has happened in opposition media.

The figures of pro-government³ broadcasters:



In the movie *China Reborn*, aired by the Public Broadcaster, we find the following text:

"Xi [Jinping] is not going to make concessions to realize his dream: Hong Kong, Tibet, Uighur, Taiwan—nothing should stand in the way of China's unity, whatever Western countries' opinion on the matter.

Donald Trump, Viktor Orban, Vladimir Putin, Jair Bolsonaro—the list of rulers for whom post-communist China is a source of inspiration is long. Order is here, disorder is hated here, and strength is respected here. For them, as well as for people for whom money and security exceed human rights, China embodies the soul of time."

TV Imedi, editorial text:

"The People's Republic of China is one of the world's most powerful and influential states. There is probably no family on the planet where you cannot find an item with the inscription - Made in China. This fact best illustrates the country's economic influence on every continent in the world."

"When many economies worldwide are on the brink of recession, China continues to grow, and after a global pandemic and lockdowns, the country's economic growth has been 5.2 percent this year."

³ When classifying broadcast media as pro-government or opposition, we rely on media monitoring reports of reputable organizations, such as: <https://www.qartia.ge/ka/mediamonitoringi/article/91778-satelevizio-akhali-ambebis-post-saarchevno-monitoringis-angarishi>

POSTV, editorial text:

"America's biggest problem right now is China, with its growing economic resources; very soon, the Chinese economy will overtake the American economy."

"There is a perception in the EU that we stand with America to the end, and the other part realizes that the EU depends on both America and China because they have huge trade turnover with each other."

Along with media monitoring, the research team recorded in-depth interviews with senior editorial team members of four TV companies: Mtavari Channel and Sinologia.ge, BMG, and Public Broadcaster.

The in-depth interviews allowed us to delve deeper into the editorial approaches of the Public Broadcaster. The interviews revealed that the positive indicator of coverage of the Chinese topic on the Public Broadcaster is mainly due to the left-socialist ideology of a particular editorial team. Apart from ideological consensus and interest, there are no attempts to influence China, even in the equipment supply (for example, Chinese companies showed no interest in the tender announced in the process of re-equipping the public broadcaster). Regarding the channel's mission and legal obligations, we heard the following from the in-depth interview:

"The legal issue is one thing, but how objective the coverage can be is another. Can the country be (referring to the legislative record that the public broadcaster must ensure that it promotes integration into the European Union and NATO) so unambiguous in this context that is emerging today concerning the challenges we may find ourselves in with the changing order. We must remember that the environment in which we live is constantly changing, and we may face new challenges; this is my personal opinion. I don't think, in this context, we have the right to talk about China with the same rhetoric that NATO is talking about. From the perspective of trade and exports with the PRC in 2022 and 2021, it will sometimes be the first country and sometimes the second country, which is a very important factor for us. I think the public broadcaster should take into consideration, think about and set its own policy at the board level."⁴

With focus groups (media experts, persons from the academic, students), it was confirmed that pro-China narratives generated by pro-government media reach the audience. Though these narratives were viewed critically by focus group participants, they had no difficulty sharing them, and some of them directly echoed the theories heard in the interviews with the Public Broadcaster representatives, namely:

"The world order is changing, the hegemony of America and the West is changing, and the partnership between Russia and China will become stronger."

"China will help us in dialog with Russia, in restoring territorial integrity, against the backdrop that America has never done so."

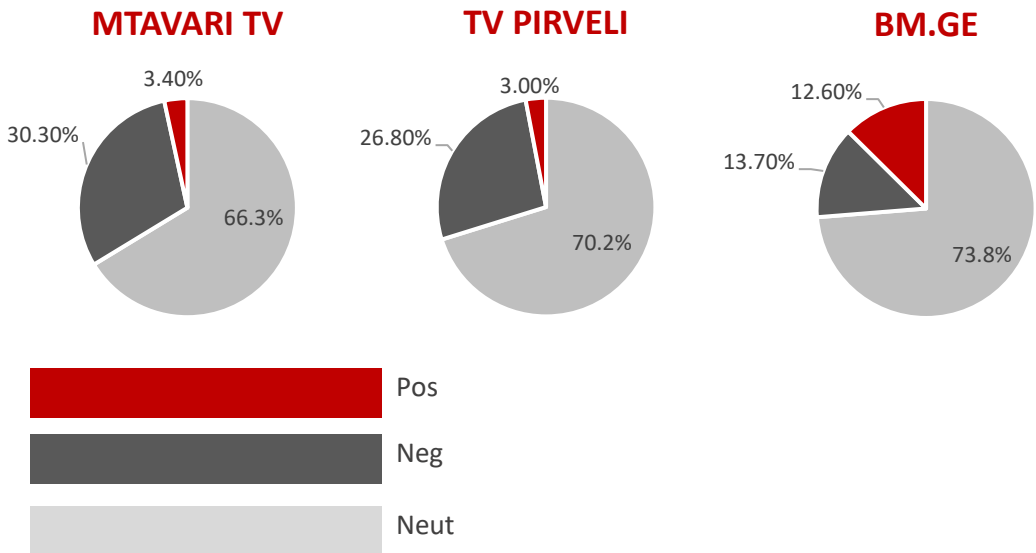
⁴ In-depth interviews were conducted with four senior media managers - a producer, an editorial decision-maker. Methodologically and in accordance with them, we do not name them. The in-depth interviews involved Mtavari Channel, Public Broadcaster, BM.GE, and Sinpmedia, Dates: 05.04.2024 – 11.04.2024

"Despite 30 years of strategic partnership with America, we don't have visa-free travel, while China has abolished visas so soon."

"Chinese tourists carry flowers to the monumental statue of Mother of Kartli."

Research has shown that along with pro-government agendas in pro-government media, political-ideological approaches also influence the rise of pro-China and anti-Western content in the media, and these narratives do reach the target audience.

Opposition broadcasters' figures:



Mtavari Channel, the text of the expert:

"Any major project that China lobbies and implements is aimed at reducing the influence of the West and at reducing the impact of NATO. The [fact that] China always produces such projects carries certain risks ...

China is not [a democratic state] and does not recognize the democratic order to which Georgia aspires and which is necessary for European integration. China is the best as an economic partner, but economic partnership does not end only with economic goals; it always develops into specific political goals."

TV Pirveli, the text of the expert:

"They had questions about why the Communist Party of China and not America is becoming Georgia's strategic partner. Everyone was wondering how Georgia could accept such a strategic partnership without ratification. Also, everyone was wondering how China, which during the pandemic conducted a huge disinformation campaign against Georgia's medical sector, did it. How can we strategically partner with China, which sent delegations to occupied Abkhazia? The strategic partnership

with the Communist Party of China has made it clear to everyone in the West that the Georgian government is waging an anti-Western campaign."

An interview with a representative of an opposition channel revealed that opposition broadcast media still lack a coherent approach to covering the China issue, where the creation of in-depth content, including critical narratives, is linked to the ideological approaches and skills of specific people working in these organizations.

Focus groups have shown that narratives created with deep criticism of the PRC are less likely to reach the target audience.

Both quantitative and qualitative data indicate a sharp polarization of Georgian broadcast media. Our research methodology (see below) theoretically considers both the media polarization model and the four theories of the press (Soviet communication theory, authoritarian theory, social responsibility theory, and libertarian theory). However, our research confirmed that there is another different model of the press: the capitalist model/theory of the press. In this regard, our research emphasizes a niche business media - BM.GE, which was chosen for our research for special reasons (due to the initiation of a memorandum of cooperation with the Chinese channel CCTV). The quantitative ratio of coverage of China by BM.GE is as follows.

Quantitative data clearly goes in accordance with qualitative data. Through its business approach, BM.GE can provide in-depth criticism of China, positively biased coverage, and neutral coverage again biased in favor of business, namely:

1. The business channel criticizes China's policies when it produces geopolitical content. An example is the interview with Tinatin Khidasheli (see excerpt below).
2. BM.GE covers China positively when analyzing business news. The channel constantly emphasizes China's growing economy and the prospects of the Middle Corridor.

BM.GE covers current processes within the country in a relatively neutral but with a bias towards business interests. An example is the coverage of the strike of workers employed at the Rikoti Pass project in Georgia, where BM.ge provides a platform for the Chinese employing company to give details on the existing labor conditions, to disapprove of workers' reporting of their dissatisfaction in the media, and to encourage employees to communicate with management.

Excerpts:

"First, these are political objectives, which is where this strategic document starts and political objectives mean that the Georgian government has laid another mine on the way to the European Union. Do they not want to get candidate status? Of course, they realize that it is politically beneficial for them, but they fear that we will be refused, so they need a plan b. Secondly, they know for sure that if the European Union grants us the candidate status, its decision will be heavier and loaded with more democratic obligations. Accordingly, the Georgian government actually started to play on the fact that a plan had developed in someone's head to blackmail the EU and that if the EU refused us, there would always be an alternative in the form of the PRC. "- Tinatin Khidasheli told to BM.GE

"The Middle Corridor is very important. It will be a very interesting alternative route in the near future. We have to be creative; we have to act fast," - Irakli Gharibashvili, then the country's Prime Minister.

An in-depth interview with a representative of BM.GE showed us that the channel's cooperation with CCTV has not occurred at this stage. The channel is currently developing towards other countries (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey) and sorting these priorities according to trade prospects for Georgian business.

This approach to business media coverage and development exactly follows the channel's mission, formulated in the in-depth interview as follows:

"Informing taxpayers in Georgia and now in the region. Coverage on a regional scale to provide comprehensive economic and business information."⁵

Focus groups have shown that positive information about the PRC in business news successfully reaches "taxpayers," such as media expert groups and academic sphere representatives. Still, the focus group conducted with young people showed that people, especially those living in the Georgian regions, who have contact with projects implemented by Chinese enterprises and are aware of the problems of their employees, develop a critical attitude towards pro-business media content. We also need to single out the group of people from the academic sphere who have been to China at least once. Their attitude is mostly critical:

"Being in China, I experienced all the characteristics of China, including access to information; I even searched for myself using a VPN and could not find it." Soviet behavior. A large photo of Putin at a research center, a multimedia photo of Putin turning into a photo of his meeting with Xi Jinping."

Online Media

A qualitative study of online media replicated the results of the 2022 monitoring. In particular:

Compared to the results of the 2021-2022 monitoring, the amount of content in the pro-China media increased, and China's economic and political role on a global scale was clearly emphasized. It is noteworthy that on Sinomedia, in parallel with the presentation of China's global peacekeeping role, we see criticism of the US not only in terms of its policy towards Taiwan. The theme of education and culture is also used in some cases to show the PRC's key role in the world and its superiority over Western culture.

The pro-Kremlin media outlet Sputnik Georgia continues to be a platform for promoting China in Georgia and presenting it to the audience in an extremely positive tone. Along with active Russian propaganda, Sputnik Georgia is an active tool for spreading the interests of China, which, along with actively discrediting the West, promotes its own version of creating a new geopolitical center through

⁵ In-depth interviews were conducted with four senior media managers - a producer, an editorial decision-maker. The in-depth interviews involved Mtavari TV, Public Broadcaster, BM.GE, and Sinomedia, Dates: 05.04.2024 – 11.04.2024

various topics. To this end, it uses easy-to-read content along with manipulative articles containing political analysis.

The Chinese stories platform is different from the aforementioned pro-China platforms. It continues to provide cultural, traditional and educational content about China, although it operates in a more personal blog format than standard informative media.

A separate point worth mentioning is the Sinology platform, whose content study, as well as in-depth interviews, showed us that, in this case, we are not dealing with a coordinated pro-China platform but with a person interested in China and his group of like-minded people, who periodically share China-related analytical materials.

Independent online publications such as Netgazeti (notable for its neutral and ethical coverage) occasionally offer in-depth and extensive critical texts on China. Still, audiences have much greater access to advertising pieces about China, published as advertisements on their own pages.

Excerpts from Netgazeti

"It's very difficult to have a strategic partnership with China right now. China is trying to undermine our democracy and make us dependent on it. In the war started by Russia in Ukraine, China is not an ally but rather supports Russia," Tenzer told Netgazeti. He says he is not specifically familiar with the case of Georgia, but he knows that Chinese companies are building roads in Georgia. According to Tenzer, economic dependence on China is a challenge not only for Georgia but for any country. He gave an example of how Montenegro found itself in Beijing's "debt trap". - Netgazeti.

"Today, Georgian wine is among the top ten wines imported in China, although there is still a long way to go to improve its position. The existing trade and economic relations between the two countries leave a reason for the hope that in the future we will see the Chinese market more interesting and significant than many other countries." – Netgazeti



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Key Findings on the PRC's Academic Influence in Georgia

During the research period, following the signing of the China-Georgia Strategic Partnership Statement, small but critically important steps were taken in education, which gives us reason to believe that these relations will continue to grow and develop. Despite the limited coverage of China-Georgia academic relations in the traditional Georgian media, platforms like Sinomedia significantly advance educational connections and associated initiatives between the two states. Alongside these developments, there is an increase in government initiatives such as scholarships and co-educational projects.

Yet, Georgian educational institutions must understand the security risks associated with such cooperation, especially when the partnership with China continues to develop, and the results become more “tangible.” Along with the progress of Sino-Georgian academic relations, it is critical to recognize the role of Chinese entities in transforming Guram Tavartkiladze Teaching University into the Georgian International University - GIU. This rebranding, which began in June 2023, is a clear example of Chinese investment and influence in Georgian higher education since the controlling package of the Georgian University is owned by a Chinese citizen and chair of the China Foreign Education Group. Moreover, the university's cooperation with various Chinese entities (for example, Chinese agencies in Hong Kong), which is reinforced by partnership agreements, emphasizes the multifaceted nature of Sino-Georgian academic relations and the growing role of Chinese stakeholders in shaping the educational landscape of Georgia, the detailed review of which will be provided further in the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the focus group participants' discussion of the content of Georgian media and relations with China in general, the following recommendations were announced:

1. Strengthening the content covering global politics and international relations in the media;
2. Separation of economic and political issues in the coverage process and avoidance of harsh demonization of economic relations in the content because of the political component;
3. Conducting trainings for media and academic representatives;
4. Guidelines for media and instructional pieces;
5. Improving literacy in Tic Toc;
6. Developing advisory terminology;
7. Embedding the theme in entertainment content, such as the TV series *My Wife's Girlfriends*;
8. Strengthening the media literacy component in schools.

METHODOLOGY

The research is based on qualitative research methodology: desk research, content analysis (media monitoring), qualitative case study methodology, and comparison tactics, as well as in-depth interviews and focus groups.

Desk research includes both compilative analysis of research already conducted by the authors in this direction and analysis of additional, newest sources and documents.

To analyze the content, we used the eight-month period from 1.04.2023 to 1.11.2023 as the media observation period. This period covered almost equally the time before and after the official and long visit of the Georgian Prime Minister to China. The same period coincides with the periods of the war in Ukraine and the conflict between Israel and Hamas, which is vital for the study.

We searched for content using Internet search engines and tools, using keywords relevant to the research ("Belt", "Strategic Partnership", "Middle Corridor", "China", "Chinese", "China Market", "Xi Jinping", "PRC", etc.), as well as specifying the media spectrum. More precisely, during the selection, we considered the polarization of Georgia's media system and observed the TV channels with the highest ratings (according to data of TMI and TVMR). From the most rated channels, according to authoritative media monitoring, we took two opposition channels - "Mtavari Channel" and "TV Pirveli" and two pro-government channels – "TV Imedi" and "POSTV". We also added BM.GE to the context after [they started] cooperation with Chinese CCTV.

We conducted media monitoring and analysis [of the activities] of the Public Broadcaster, which is crucial for our research because, according to the Law on Broadcasting, the Content related obligations of the Public Broadcaster (Article 16) explicitly state that the broadcaster is obliged to "promote mainstreams of the foreign policy of Georgia, as well as the integration of Georgia into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization ('the NATO') and the European Union".

We chose TV media given the fact that TV media remains the dominant information medium in Georgia.

In the qualitative analysis, we focused on journalistic standards recognized by the "Western model"; false information, distortion of facts, unbalanced coverage, unfairness, inaccuracy, bias, visualization, and any other method that could be used for propaganda.

We used qualitative methodological comparison tactics [to compare] the data we obtained from the research with the data of previous research we conducted.

We also used comparison tactics when analyzing the media system in the desk research. In particular, the media market of Georgia was the focus of the system research; here, as a result of analyzing data from the National Communications Commission, we identified business companies linked to or owned by China that are advertisers in the Georgian media market. We also updated the information about the owners of TV companies and compared it with the data from the previous period.

The second stage of the research included in-depth interviews, which we started after obtaining the first findings of the content analysis. These interviews were conducted with representatives of media organizations under monitoring.⁶

Based on the structure and types of questions, we chose a semi-structured interview for the purposes of our research. Our aim was, against the background of the findings identified as a result of content analysis, to obtain detailed, in-depth, and consistent information from pre-selected respondents about their experiences and perceptions that would allow us to establish certain social regularities and draw general conclusions.

For the purpose of conducting in-depth interviews in a qualitative and efficient manner, we developed a so-called discussion plan, a kind of working tool that helped us control the interview process so that we would not miss important questions and get maximum information from the respondents on the issues of interest to us.

At the same stage, we conducted a focus group with a similar strategy, with an average of 6 participants each, with the following industry selection: 1. Representatives of organizations working towards media development; 2. Representatives of the Academy; 3. Students.

CHINA, MEDIA OWNERSHIP, AND SOURCES OF FUNDING

In this part of the research, based on factual information, you will learn that China and affiliated business companies are not only among the media owners, but the frequency of media funding by such entities is increasing (e.g., in 2023 vs. 2022.)

Taking into account the methodology, we additionally processed the data of 566 companies in 2023 from the National Communications Commission's special database, which contains information on quarterly payers of more than 7 thousand GEL in Georgian media.

After comparison, it was found that compared to previous years, the number of people ordering advertising or other types of services in mass media for the amount above GEL 7000 has increased. **For detailed information, see Annex 1.**

The database on the National Communications Commission's website was processed. The data have been verified by declarations of conformity and according to extracts from the business register. We compared data from 2022 and 2023.

In total, we processed data from 233 media companies (TV, radio, etc.). As a result of the research, [it was found that] among the media owners, three out of 233 media companies were affiliated with representatives of the business sector of the People's Republic of China. **For detailed information see Annex 1.**

⁶ In-depth interviews were conducted with four senior media managers - a producer, an editorial decision-maker. Methodologically and in accordance with them, we do not identify them. The in-depth interviews involved Mtavari Channel, Public Broadcaster, BM.GE, and Sinologia, Dates: 05.04.2024 – 11.04.2024

MEDIA MONITORING

In this part of the research, we introduce a detailed monitoring report of both broadcast and online media for the period 01.04.2023 - 01.11.2023.

Public Broadcaster



Media platform:	Public Broadcaster
Platform:	website - https://1tv.ge/
Monitoring period:	01.04.2023 – 01.11.2023
Monitor:	Natali Nemsadze
Number of pieces studied:	213
The topics of the pieces:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Strategic partnership signed with the PRC;2. China and the war in Ukraine;3. "BRICS";4. China from the perspective of GeoStat statistics.

1. The media actively covered the strategic partnership signed with China in the form of textual news. It is worth noting that, in this respect, the statements of the ruling party or those who positively assessed the partnership were mainly covered.
2. On the channel, we find pieces based on information disseminated by various government agencies. Such pieces have a similar inscription at the bottom: "Information disseminated by the press service of the Ministry of Economy."
3. **To some extent, the pieces prepared on BRICS present this alliance as a counterbalance to the G7.**
4. The extensive TV program presents China in a positive light. Textual news is mostly neutral, but there are some negative ones.

During the reporting period, a search on the Public Broadcaster's website using keywords revealed 213 pieces. The channel published materials on strategic relations with China, the BRICS alliance, the war in Ukraine in the context of China,

and Sino-Russian relations. We encountered pieces prepared on the basis of GeoStat statistics, etc.

Neutral - 164

Positive - 30

Negative - 19

Strategic partnership signed with China:



Nikoloz Samkharadze - China is a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Its position on the issue of territorial integrity is important and decisive. It is our ally.

Nikoloz Samkharadze presents the strategic partnership with China as a factor contributing to the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity.

"China is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, one of the five members, and therefore, its position on the issue of territorial integrity is very important and decisive. Here, China is naturally our ally, as the issue of territorial integrity is also the number one priority for it, based on the issue of Taiwan. Accordingly, in this case, our interests and those of China coincide. We both want the basic principle of the UN territorial integrity and inviolability of borders to be preserved," Samkharadze said.

To some extent, this view develops the journalist's question, where we see a hint that the Sino-Russian partnership prevents the threat posed by Russia.

"Answering Giorgi Gvimradze's question, how important it is that China and Russia become each other's partners in the political part, and this partnership in a certain sense should also mean prevention of aggression coming from Russia because Russia should not want to oppose China's interests, in this case in the Caucasus region. Nikoloz Samkharadze noted that the more a big country is interested in peace, stability in Georgia, and even the safe development of the Middle Corridor, the better for Georgia's security."- as stated in the piece.

On the channel, statements of the Georgian Dream representatives regarding strategic partnership prevail.

The channel broadcasts quotes from Irakli Zarkua, Eka Sepashvili, Gia Volski, Maka Bochorishvili, and other Georgian Dream leaders on this topic. Statements by Western and American partners pointing out the dangers of entering into a strategic partnership are rare. Criticism by opposition representatives is also rare, although we find the following pieces.



Roman Gotsiridze: Deepening economic relations with China is undoubtedly good; discussing this issue with a particular conspiracy theory is incorrect.

Even though Roman Gotsiridze represents the National Movement, his quote does not reflect the sentiments of other opposition representatives. Considering this comment, signing a strategic partnership with China is definitely a positive development.

Quote from this piece:

"In general, China puts a lot of different content into the content of the strategic partnership, and it is not like what the U.S. puts in. Every other EU member state signed a similar agreement with China and even Ukraine. Therefore, deepening trade and economic relations with China is a good thing. Still, in this case, we should be cautious about investments aligning with common interests with our Western strategic partner countries, such as the Anaklia project, etc. So, these issues should be approached cautiously, but deepening economic relations with China is definitely good. It is incorrect to discuss this issue from a special conspiracy theory," Gotsiridze said.

From Girchi, we hear a critical statement from the opposition about strategic partnership - this is the comment of a member of Girchi on this issue.



Alexander Rakviashvili: We need to be very careful in settling relations with China

"We should remember that China is the most aggressive and tyrannical country in the world, much worse than Russia, and we are lucky that it is not our neighbor. From this point of view, it is a great political danger, and we should be cautious in settling relations with China," said Girchi member Alexander Rakviashvili.

Examples of positive coverage of this issue:



Beka Odisharia: Unfortunately, part of the Georgian political establishment is represented by people who have no idea of geopolitics and are inclined towards serfdom.

"China is a country that does not tend expansionism. China tends to civilizational development. China is the only country that has overcome poverty, and it is very important for us to take an example from this huge country, from its very credible leader," Odisharya said.



Giorgi Tsagareishvili: The Prime Minister's visit to China is historic. Everyone in today's world should realize that Georgia can be a profitable and reliable partner.

"Considering all this, we can put a very high price on this visit. China is a superpower. It is no exaggeration to say that it is the biggest geopolitical player not only on the continent and in the region but also globally. Therefore, signing an agreement on strategic cooperation with such a country and strategically taking relations to a new level corresponds to the interests of both countries and, first of all, corresponds to the interests of Georgia, without hiding it," Tsagareishvili said.

China and the war in Ukraine:

We find a piece on the channel that emphasizes China's positive role in negotiations over the ongoing war in Ukraine..

”

Chinese Ambassador - China's published document "On Political Solution to the Crisis in Ukraine" has been internationally recognized, and the Ukrainian side has also praised China's efforts.

”

Emmanuel Macron - China plays the main role in establishing peace.

”

Henry Kissinger - Peace talks between Russia and Ukraine could begin before the end of this year.

Quote from the piece: "Now that China has entered into negotiations, I think that negotiations will take place before the end of the year. We will be talking about negotiation processes and even real negotiations. China will come back into the international system. It cannot be excluded from the international system," Henry Kissinger said.

”

Irakli Gharibashvili: China is trying to become a mediator between Ukraine and Russia. I welcome any efforts of any leader of any country to push countries to peace.

”

"Financial Times" - Ukraine's allies call China's participation in the meeting held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, constructive

Quote from the piece: "According to the Financial Times, the meeting in Jeddah ended without concrete results, although China's participation in the meeting was perceived as a turning point for Kyiv and the main occasion of the event."

In addition, we find a negative context for China in several pieces on the war in Ukraine:

”

President of the Czech Republic: China cannot be trusted to establish peace between Russia and Ukraine because it is profitable for Beijing to continue the war;

”

U.S. Intelligence: China is supplying Russia with military and dual-use technology for use in the war against Ukraine.

We also find such a piece where China accuses America of "pouring fuel on the fire" in the war in Ukraine. The Chinese ambassador to Georgia made the statement of the following content:

"The fate of the Middle East should be decided by the people living there. On the other hand, we face such facts when the U.S. pours oil on the fire and interferes in the internal affairs of other countries. The same thing is happening in the case of Ukraine; the U.S. is adding oil to the fire because by military aid, unilateral sanctions, and other means, it constantly contributes to the escalation of the crisis".

The mentioned news story is extensive and limited only to relaying the ambassador's extensive quote. There is no U.S. position or journalistic position on this issue in this piece.

Materials on BRICS:

During the monitoring period, the channel prepared several pieces on BRICS. "BRICS - a counterbalance to the G7?" is one of them.

"Will BRICS become a counterbalance organization to the G7?" - With this question the journalist starts the piece. The story follows. The piece mentions that the first non-virtual BRICS meeting after the pandemic is taking place. It is also noted that Sergey Lavrov is attending the meeting instead of the Russian president, as a warrant has been issued for Putin's arrest.

In the story, the journalist says that the goal of China and Russia is to make this alliance *"a counterbalance to Western dominance in global institutions."*

"BRICS was founded in 2009 and currently unites five countries. The bloc represents more than 40% of the world's population and a quarter of the world economy, while the G7 advanced democracies account for 44% of the world economy," - the journalist [states].

"We should effectively utilize BRICS plus cooperation and speed up the expansion process. Let more countries join the BRICS family, pooling wisdom and strength to make global governance more just and reasonable," Xi Jinping.

It is also noted in the piece that *"not all members of the bloc are in favor of rivalry with Western countries, including America."*



Financial Times: G7 must recognize that it cannot rule the world

The material contains an article by a foreign publication that talks about the "collapse" of the G7.

"According to the publication, neither global cooperation nor domination of the West seems possible to realize, which can lead to "division" and "anarchy", writes the broadcaster in the piece.

A quote in the translated piece of the Financial Times compares the G7 and China, emphasizing China's superiority. It says, *"For some developing countries, China is a more important economic partner than the G7: Brazil is an example."* It emphasizes that the G7's share of the world economy will decrease while China's share, by contrast, will increase.

"Moreover, both the U.S. "unipolar" moment and the economic dominance of the G7 are a thing of the past. However, it is also true that the latter remains the most

powerful and cohesive economic bloc in the world. For example, it continues to produce all of the world's leading reserve currencies. Nevertheless, between 2000 and 2023, its share of world output (in purchasing power terms) fell from 44 percent to 30 percent, while the share of all high-income countries fell from 57 percent to 41 percent. At the same time, China's share will rise from seven to 19 percent. China is now an economic superpower. Through its Belt and Road Initiative, it has become a major investor (and creditor) in developing countries, but it is expected that it will have to deal with the bad debts familiar to the G7 countries. For some developing countries, China is a more important economic partner than the G7: Brazil is an example."

The piece also discusses BRICS. The article points to BRICS's great potential and its members' desire not to depend on the "whims" of the United States and its allies.

"It seems that BRICS is now on its way to becoming a global grouping. Obviously, what unites its members is the desire not to depend on the whims of the U.S. and its close allies, who have dominated the world for the past two centuries." This quote is cited by the public broadcaster in the piece.

It is interesting to see the cover photo itself, which is how the media published the piece.



„ფაინენშელ თაიმსი“ - დიდმა შვიდეულმა უნდა აღიაროს, რომ მსოფლიოს მართვა არ შეუძლია

13:23, 25.05.2023



Source: <https://1tv.ge/news/fainenshel-taimsi-didma-shvideulma-unda-aghiaros-rom-msoflios-martva-ar-sheudzlia/>

Materials from government agencies:

There are often materials on the channel stating that the information is disseminated by a specific ministry or agency.

Examples:

1. <https://1tv.ge/news/saqartvelo-klimatis-mwvane-fondis-sabchos-37-e-shekhvedras-maspindzlob/>
2. <https://1tv.ge/news/nikoloz-samkharadze-rac-ufro-meti-strategiuli-partniorobis-shetankhmeba-eqneba-saqartvelos-skhvadaskhva-sakhelmwifostan-mit-uketesi-iqneba-chveni-erovnuli-interesebis-dacvistvis/>
3. <https://1tv.ge/news/levan-davitashvili-arabta-gaertianebul-saamiroebtan-ekonomikuri-partniorobis-shetankhmeba-akhali-etapis-dasawyisia-or-qveyanas-shoris-urtiertobebshi/>

< უკან **საქართველო „კლიმატის მწვანე ფონდის“ საბჭოს 37-ე შეხვედრას მასპინძლობს**






ითათქ.

„კლიმატის მწვანე ფონდი“ (GCF) მსოფლიოს უდიდესი ფონდია, რომელიც განვითარებად ქვეყნებს ეხმარება კლიმატის ცვლილებასთან დაკავშირებული მიზნების განხორციელებაში.

თბილისში მიმდინარე GCF-ის საბჭოს 37-ე შეხვედრას ესწრებიან შესაბამისი სამინისტროების მაღალი რანგის წარმომადგენლები სხვადასხვა ქვეყნიდან (აშშ, პაკისტანი, გერმანია, იტალია, კანადა, საფრანგეთი, შვედეთი, შვეიცარია, ნორვეგია, დანია, არგენტინა, ჩინეთი, დიდი ბრიტანეთი, ესპანეთი, იაპონია, ეგვიპტე და სხვა).

ინფორმაციას გარემოს დაცვისა და სოფლის მეურნეობის სამინისტრო ავრცელებს.

ეკოლოგია სამოვადოება კლიმატის მწვანე ფონდი ოთარ მამუგია

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America vs. China and Taiwan - a story from "42 Parallels"

The piece negatively presents America. The description of the piece also states the following: *"In recent years, the United States has imposed technological sanctions against China in an attempt to slow China's progress and prevent it from catching up with America."* It is also emphasized that America's interest in Taiwan is related to high-tech microchips and that America does not want China to catch up with its development in this area.

"Moving chip production from Taiwan to America does not reflect well on America's image as an ally and security guarantor, but what other choice does America have that China threatens to attack Taiwan if America continues to impede its technological progress? Of course, America is not going to "allow China to make further technological progress and jeopardize America's global hegemony; it prefers to shift production from Taiwan to itself, reduce the island's importance, and thus remove it from the agenda as a leverage point for China" - says the journalist in a story in the program "42 Parallels".

Attention was drawn to the fact that unlike all other commentaries used in the piece, President Joe Biden's speech in the original voice was left without Georgian dubbing and was accompanied only by Georgian subtitles. In the soundbite, Biden seems to be stuttering. Russian sources of disinformation often point to Biden's age, point out mistakes made during the conversation, ridicule him, etc. This story can be seen as an example of how to give this kind of impression to make the audience sarcastic about the U.S. president. This example seems to carry just such a narrative.

The public broadcaster has reacted to the research conducted in EU countries in the form of text news. The channel's headline reads as follows: "[EU] citizens want Europe to be neutral in the U.S.-China conflict and rely less on U.S. security guarantees."

According to the research conducted in EU countries, citizens want Europe to be neutral in the U.S.-China conflict and rely less on U.S. security guarantees

In this piece, based on the research, the channel offers further conclusions regarding China:

1. They do not see China as a power that wants to undermine Europe, nor do they believe in the Biden administration's "democracy vs. autocracy" narrative.
2. Europeans have no doubt that Russia and China are working together on the world stage.
3. In almost all countries where the research was conducted, the predominant view is that the risks and benefits of Europe's trade and investment relations with China are balanced.
4. The research shows that Europe's proximity to the U.S. does not mean that it is ready to support it against China in a hypothetical conflict over Taiwan.

We believe that the publication of the research itself in this form in this piece is problematic. In particular, the reader has no information about the quantitative indicators or forms of the research. When we read, "The research shows that Europe's perceived closeness to the United States does not mean a willingness to support the United States against China in a hypothetical conflict regarding Taiwan," it is not clear what "shows" means, i.e., what percentage of people share this view, what the margin of error of the research is, etc.

Such interpretation of the research in this form allows for extensive manipulations. It does not create a complete picture for the reader, and the conclusions drawn from the research make a positive attitude towards China. In contrast, other research questions or the general picture are unknown.

Another article included in our monitoring is devoted to analyzing why Finland is the happiest country. To answer this question, the public broadcaster relies on experts' explanations and existing research.

Why Finland is the happiest country in the world - expert explanation #1tvScience

This piece explains why Finland is the happiest country, what criteria are used, and more. The article also discusses examples of other countries in the analysis process and why the happiness index is not high in countries with similar levels of income inequality.

The article is interesting because it is in this comparison that we can find the People's Republic of China. Although it is given little space, the author's findings are quite meaningful. In particular, the article states, "**People in China are not as scared as they are often portrayed in the West.**"

"Dossier"

"The program "Dossier" is a TV-video library of important episodes of the political, cultural, and social life of different epochs and countries embodied in the documentary genre. This is a library of video documentary dossiers in which we will collect stories and events that influenced the creation of our era as it is today." This is an excerpt from the description given by the "Dossier" program on the website.

During the monitoring period, a two-hour program about China was included. At this monitoring stage, we did not come across any similarly timed piece about the European Union or NATO. - Since America, NATO or European Union were not search queries for the monitoring, we independently checked if there was piece about them in the same program.

During the monitoring period, we found programs with the following titles:

- #Dossier "US. Weapons of Hate"
- #Dossier "The Hidden Face of American Art"
- #Dossier "British decolonization, the art of leaving in the English way"

For our research tasks, we present an episode devoted to China.

Dossier „ China Reborn “

It is an unusually long 2.5-hour piece for the television space, devoted entirely to China.

The movie is divided into two parts. The first part is about the history of the Chinese Empire and the second part is about the events of 1934-2022. In the movie, people from different universities are interviewed, particularly from Columbia University, Hamilton University, Manchester University, and other universities. The movie focuses on showing the path China has followed and how China was able to become a powerful state despite many internal and external conflicts. With a relatively short running time, the movie unambiguously positively covers the activities of China's current ruler, Xi Jinping.



| #დოსიე „თავიდან შექმნილი ჩინეთი“

23:15, 22.05.2023



Excerpts about President Xi Jinping:

"Xi [Jinping] is not going to make concessions to realize his dream: Hong Kong, Tibet, Uighur, Taiwan - nothing should stand in the way of China's unity, whatever the Western countries' opinion on the matter.

Donald Trump, Viktor Orban, Vladimir Putin, Jair Bolsonaro - the list of rulers for whom post-communist China is a source of inspiration is long. Order is here; disorder is hated here, and strength is respected here. For them, as well as for people for whom money and security exceed human rights, China embodies the soul of time. - Quote from the movie

As the presenter himself tells us, direct or indirect discussion about China has been offered before in the programs Chung Ko, The World Through Xi Jinping's Eyes, China Conquers the West, and Taiwan's Digital Democracy.

"Our interest in this amazing country and its people is completely natural. Especially when we are presenting one of the sections of the Silk Road, which today may even have surpassed centuries in its geopolitical and geo-economic importance," says the presenter.

"In the 1990s, Japan seemed to be the only country that had any chance of becoming a superpower and possible hegemony, even if only from an economic point of view. However, by the end of the 1990s, China had entered the international, very closed club of the most powerful nations with fantastic speed and huge strides. Since then, it has not stopped this astounding advance, which puts into big question the seemingly inviolable absolute monopoly of the United States.

Never in human history has an economically, socially, and politically backward country, as China was 2-3 decades ago, been transformed with such speed into an economic, military, and political giant, which, in the very near perspective, is quite realistically challenging the primacy of the greatest power on the planet, says the presenter.

The presenter notes that the prediction that China will become the first country in terms of economics is quite reasonable. The focus is on its economic, military, and space power.

"The West itself has created an economic and political monster and now anxiously watches its completely incomprehensible, unusual, unpredictable for the Western mind actions, although, as usual, it still tries not to remember that this Chinese "monster" only 200 years ago was one of the most beautiful, powerful and prosperous empires in the history of humanity, which Europe had been methodically destroying since the 18th century, in order to later, at the end of the 20th century, revive it like Mary Shelley's Dr. Frankenstein, metamorphosed into its own economic and political monster. As we know, for the past 20 centuries, from ancient times to the Industrial Revolution, China was already the largest superpower on the planet, much earlier than the United States and Europe," says the presenter

Quotes and materials from the movie itself:

"The strong and motivated Chinese created their country from over again."

"For 2,000 years, no matter which dynasty has been in power, losing or regaining land, the world has revolved around it. Beyond the center are the peoples under Chinese influence- the Japanese, Koreans, and Vietnamese -who have paid tribute to the empire for centuries. Behind this so-called sinicized world were the Indians, Arabs, and Europeans, called barbarians."

The above quote is followed by a definition of the term "barbarian," which describes any non-Chinese culture.

Description of the Opium War:

The movie tells the history of China in chronological order. The piece also talks about the Opium War. According to the movie, in 1860, the West (British and French) occupied the summer residence and destroyed the treasures there. In the film, the capture of the palace by the British and French is described as follows:

"The Europeans have one goal: to steal and destroy these marvels. British and French soldiers brought up to a million objects to Europe and finally set fire to the earthly paradise of the Qin Dynasty emperors to show who was the real master here."

An interview with a former ambassador to China:

When asking a question, the presenter says the following: *"The West is a hazardous part of the world. I sometimes joke in quotes that God forbid they get hungry; otherwise, they do something when they are in a very dire situation, and China has never done anything like that."*

The presenter says that China cannot take Russia's side in one sweep because, in his opinion, China will fall apart without the West. China also needs the West, maybe even more.



Media platform:	Imedi TV company
Platform:	https://www.imesi.ge/
Monitoring period:	01.04.2023 – 01.11.2023
Monitor:	Natali Nemsadze
Number of pieces studied:	206

During the reporting period, 206 publications were found on the website of Imedi TV company using keywords. Unlike the previous monitoring, where we actively encountered the so-called "click" collection of news about China, there is no such news within this research's framework. China primarily appears in the issue of Irakli Gharibashvili's visit and signing of the strategic partnership agreement. There are also stories about natural disasters in China. The tones are distributed as follows:

Neutral - 156

Positive - 37

Negative - 13

The main finding is that, compared to the previous monitoring, we no longer find any news items in Imedi stories that might refer to China in a derogatory way.

Examples from previous monitoring:

1. *In China, TV channels were forbidden to show men with "insufficiently masculine" appearance;*
2. *A 55-year-old Chinese man has been trying to get into the same university for 40 years;*

33,863 people were locked out of Shanghai Disneyland after a guest tested positive for coronavirus. - Examples from the previous monitoring .

Based on Imedi's editorial policy of disseminating pro-government stories, the channel is characterized by a sharply positive tone toward China. We also find news that Western organizations are **working on balancing relations with China**.

The somewhat changed rhetoric towards China likely stems from the Georgian Dream policy. China is also at the center of the attention of the TV company precisely because of the Georgian Dream policy and agenda.

"A historic visit of the Prime Minister" is how Imedi TV most often assesses Irakli Gharibashvili's visit to China and its significance. It is indicative that these words are

used by representatives of the Georgian Dream and Irakli Gharibashvili himself when speaking about the visit.

Unlike Mtavari Channel, on Imedi, we do not actually see criticism of Western and American partners, saying that by signing a strategic partnership, Georgia is alienating itself from the West.

However, instead, we find such pieces as:

1. The West is working to improve relations with China;
2. The head of the U.S. Department of Commerce and Trade is in China;
3. U.S.-China relations;
4. The U.S. has removed 27 Chinese companies from the "black list."



Source: <https://www.imedi.ge/video/136046/dasavleti-chinettan-urtiertobebis-gaumjobesebaze-mushaobs>

We believe that such pieces serve to justify the strategic agreement signed between Georgia and China against the background of criticism from Western and American partners. With such news, the TV company is trying to show the viewers that the West and America are also cooperating with China, moreover trying to "improve relations".

Interview of Irakli Gharibashvili on the Chinese TV:

On August 12, Imedi TV, in various news programs in 9 clippings, aired an interview of then Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili with Chinese TV.

Nowhere in these pieces is there any mention of the criticism that followed the signing of this partnership. The journalist's introductory text is followed by excerpts from interviews where a positive tone towards China and Xi Jinping prevails.

"Historic visit to China"

"Of course, I will start the program with China. The country, which is the first in the world with a population of almost one and a half billion people, and the second world economy, is becoming a strategic partner of Georgia. It is a fact that the Georgian Dream team, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, has strengthened its position in the top partnership league," the journalist said.

"The visit of Irakli Gharibashvili to the People's Republic of China is historic in its significance. It is a historic face-to-face meeting with President Xi Jinping, during which it was openly stated that a new stage is beginning."

Journalist Sandro Gamsakhurdia focuses on China's economic influence and strength, emphasizing China's growth in the world economy. The same piece refers to the opening of the Shota Rustaveli monument in China.

"The People's Republic of China is one of the world's most powerful, influential countries, with a population of one billion 412 million and a developed economy. The number one exporter in the world. The country with the largest trade surplus. Its trade position in the World Economy is growing year by year. China is the second largest economy in the world; the first position is held by the United States of America, where precisely the People's Republic of China is considered the main exporting country. Many leading experts and reputable reports predict that China's economy will take the top spot in that same decade in 2028-30. **There's probably not a single home on the planet where you won't find an item labeled "Made in China" - a fact that best reflects the country's economic clout on every continent in the world.** While many economies worldwide are on the brink of recession, China is still developing, with economic growth of 5.2 percent this year after a global pandemic and lockdowns."



Source: <https://www.imesi.ge/ge/video/134037/istoriuli-viziti-chinetshi>

In the piece, the journalist emphasizes that the country's priority, along with development, is the preservation of traditions - "The state's main priority remains preserving history and traditions." Georgian Dream also often refers to traditions and

their protection. It also draws attention to the fact that many Western countries have strategic partnerships [with China].

Nowhere in the 16-minute piece is there any mention of assessments of the opposition or Western partners or of the dangers that may result from the strategic relationship that has been signed.

National Day of China

The TV company devoted four pieces to covering this topic in different news programs. Irakli Gharibashvili's speech was the leading in all four pieces.

"The Prime Minister of Georgia spoke at the official reception dedicated to the 74th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Irakli Gharibashvili drew attention to China's culture, history, and achievements and noted that Georgia—with its distinguished history, unique traditions, and progressive aspirations—recognizes the strong ties with China," the journalist wrote.

Imedi's editorial policy is characterized by a sharp bias towards the Georgian Dream, which leads to the fact that audiences, through the language of Irakli Gharibashvili, are often provided with content containing excessive praise of China, such as, in this case.

"China's cultural richness clearly demonstrates the power and influence of tradition in shaping human identity. Chinese culture, spanning millennia, includes Confucianism, the emphasis on respect and hierarchy, Taoism's harmony with nature and balance, and the role of tea in food and hospitality. Chinese calligraphy extols aesthetics, and the Great Wall of China symbolizes history and singleness of purpose. It is truly amazing how China, based on the wisdom of its ancestors, has seamlessly blended traditional values with the latest technology and innovative strategies to become a driving force in the global economy. It is truly admirable how China, based on the wisdom of its ancestors, has seamlessly combined traditional values with the latest technology and innovative strategies to become a driving force in the global economy. This harmonious blend of old and new shows that China's progress is determined not only by its future ambitions but also by its ability to embrace its historical legacy as a source of strength and inspiration," - said Irakli Gharibashvili.

In this speech, Gharibashvili emphasizes that China is true to tradition - **"without impediment combining traditional values with the latest technologies."**

Then PM Gharibashvili's Interview:

"I will say without exaggeration that President Xi Jinping is indeed an exemplary leader. He has a far-reaching vision and is a wise man who has done great things for his great nation. He is implementing very ambitious projects and reforms for your country and people. I consider him a leader who gives inspiration ..." - Irakli Gharibashvili.

Covering Gharibashvili's speech, Mtavari Channel noted that authoritarianism exists in China. The [Mtavari] channel criticized the reference to Xi Jinping as a "true leader," while Imedi cited the quote without reservation.

Historical visit to China and the technological miracle at the opening ceremony of the 31st Summer University Games - a monologue by Irakli Chikhladze

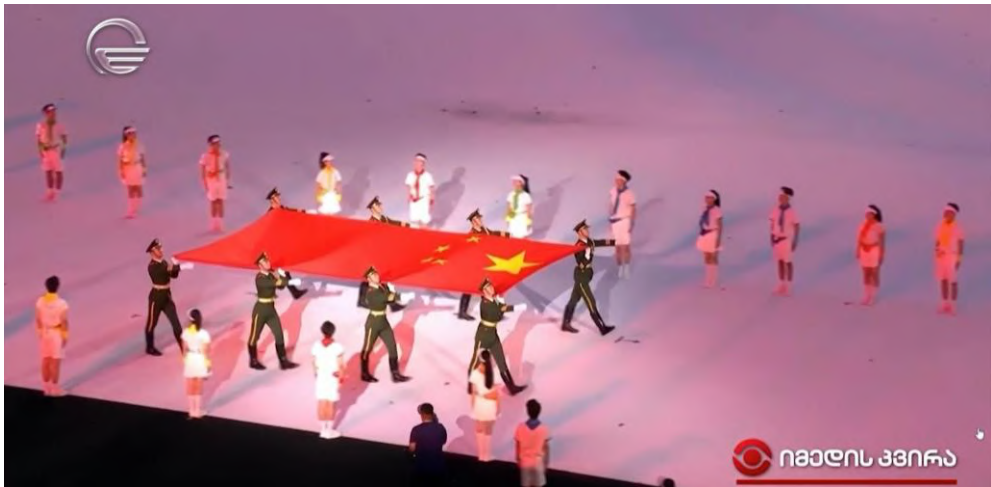
In the piece, the journalist denigrates the opposition's critical statements about the strategic partnership signed with China, calls their content absurd, and urges opposition representatives to "deepen awareness." "It is also emphasized that:

1. China is the world's second-largest economy.
2. It is predicted to become the first in 2028;
3. It is the first exporter in the world;
4. China has partnerships with other countries in the world.

"Over the last two days, we have heard such nonsense from specific politicians and civil sector representatives that if I were them, I would first deepen my knowledge and then start talking and discussing strategic partnerships so that they would not look more ridiculous in front of the public in a competent manner. China's strategic partners are easy to find on social media or Google searches. About 100 countries cooperate and partner with the People's Republic of China."

"China's economy, I will remind you again and tell you that it is the second largest economy in the world, although it is predicted and announced that it will be the first economy by 2028."

After this introduction, the journalist discusses the 31st Summer University Games opening ceremony in China and calls the event a "technological miracle."



Source: <https://www.imesi.ge/ge/video/134039/istoriuli-viziti-chinetshi-da-teqnologiuri-saotsreba-zapkhlis-31e-sauniversiteto-tamashebis-gakhsnaze--irakli-chikhladzis-monologi>

"This is what the opening is called! I will try to share some very interesting details with you. We got this information, of course, from the Chinese press."

The journalist characterizes the opening ceremony with several epithets: "mystical show," "technological revolution," "solemn and magical opening" and emphasizes that eco-friendly materials were used for fireworks and lighting.

*"The general director of the opening ceremony said in an interview before the opening ceremony that the fireworks were made of environmentally friendly materials, the pyrotechnics had low sulfur content and no heavy metals, which significantly reduced the amount of sulfates produced in emissions. **The organizers even thought about it.**"*

At the end of the piece is a collage of about one and a half minutes of the opening ceremony.

In addition to political topics, during the monitoring period, several news stories about natural disasters in China were published, although the tone of these materials was neutral.

1. Natural disasters in China;
2. Natural disasters in Hong Kong and China;
3. More than 36,000 people evacuated due to a typhoon in China.

Negative coverage:

U.S.-China Relations

Joe Biden is issuing another warning about China. According to the President of the United States of America, Beijing is now like a time bomb because of its economic problems, which can explode at any moment. According to Joe Biden, China is currently experiencing financial problems that make it unpredictable. The White House leader explained that he did not want to harm official Beijing but preferred to develop rational relations with it.

Secret talks between China, Russia and Iran

Iran is holding secret talks with China, while Russia is trying to obtain sanctioned missile fuel - Politico publishes an article with this title. According to the article, the purpose of the ongoing secret talks between China, Russia, and Iran is to replenish stocks of a chemical compound for ballistic missiles.

There are 13 pieces with a negative tone. In the previous monitoring report, this number was over 30.

Mtavari Channel



Media platform:	Mtavari Channel
Platform:	https:// mtavari.tv/
Monitoring period:	01.04.2023 – 01.11.2023
Monitor:	Natali Nemsadze
Number of pieces studied:	176

During the reporting period, 176 pieces using keywords were detected on the Mtavari TV website. As in previous research, most of the pieces had a neutral tone. The negative tone was eight times more prevalent than the positive tone.

Neutral – 116; Positive – 6; Negative – 53.

The Mtavari Channel works with daily news, and the daily update has news that also corresponds to the current topics of that day or period. Since the monitoring period included Gharibashvili's visit to China and the signing of the strategic partnership agreement, most of the materials are dedicated to these issues.

The following topics were also included in the monitoring period:

1. Strategic partnership signed with China - evaluations of the theme [Negative];
2. Visit of Western and American leaders to China;
3. Introduction of visa-free travel to China by Georgia;
4. China in the context of the war in Ukraine;

Findings:

1. Mtavari Channel covers China in sharply negative terms and views it as an ally and partner of Russia;
2. Mtavari Channel's rhetoric about drawing parallels between China and Russia has not changed compared to the previous research;
3. Experts and opposition parties criticize the strategic partnership with China.

"Russia's ally China", "Xi Jinping's authoritarian regime", "The Kremlin's ally China", "The Kremlin's most reliable global partner, " - similar terms refer to China in the materials discussing the strategic partnership signed between China and Georgia and about threats from the partnership. We met similar terminology in the previous monitoring period as well.

The rhetoric of the Mtavari Channel has not changed, drawing parallels between China and Russia. On the contrary, this rhetoric has even intensified.

However, it should be noted that the materials emphasize the importance of economic cooperation with China; the criticism of the materials aired on the channel is related to the conclusion of a strategic partnership and the political component of cooperation. For example, in the piece published on October 6, 2023 - "Interest in Anaklia port - threats from China, declared by Gharibashvili as a strategic partner", the journalist emphasizes that economic cooperation with China is a positive process for Georgia.

"It is important to distinguish between economic and strategic partnership with China; naturally, economic relations with China as a giant market are a positive step for our country, and the foundation for this was laid back in 1992. For example, China became Georgia's largest export partner last year, and in terms of imports, it is the third largest. But what changes when it comes to strategic partnership with a country with a declared authoritarian regime and a growing authoritarianism?"

During the monitoring period, the Mtavari Channel covered the statements of Western and American partners, who pointed out the threats to strategic partnership and Georgia's change of course.

Examples:

1. "We will continue to monitor the next steps" | [U.S.] Department of State on Georgia-China Strategic Partnership;
2. When everyone is trying to become more economically independent from China, Georgia is still switching sides - Cramon;
3. Gharibashvili is destroying his own nation - Kinzinger reacts to the Prime Minister's visit to China;

We also find statements criticizing China and its ruler in connection with the war in Ukraine:

1. Annalena Baerbock called Xi Jinping a dictator;
2. Ukraine listed three Chinese oil and gas production companies as "international sponsors of the war";
3. "China cannot be trusted to make peace between Russia and Ukraine It is to Beijing's advantage to continue the war." | Pavel

If, for example, according to the assessment of Mtavari Channel, Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili was met in China "pioneer-like" ("Leaving aside the pioneer Soviet reception of Irakli Gharibashvili in Beijing"), Imedi TV actively shows the viewers the meeting ceremony held in China in a positive context.

Based on the editorial policy of the channels, Mtavari Channel and Imedi TV covered the interview of Irakli Gharibashvili given to China Central Television with different emphases and frequencies. While Imedi devoted a special issue of "Chronicle" to the 27-minute interview and additionally covered separate fragments of the interview in 9 clippings, in the case of Mtavari Channel, a piece was prepared - "Chinese aspirations of Gharibashvili and aspiration to authoritarian rule - what the interview of the Prime Minister tells us." In the piece, the channel offers the position of several experts and opposition representatives who assess the strategic document signed between Georgia and China.

On August 15, Mtavari Channel published twice a piece about Irakli Gharibashvili's work as an advisor in a Chinese company involved in many international scandals. The materials are based on the journalistic investigation of Radio Liberty.

"The materials of the journalistic investigation confirm that the Prime Minister of Georgia is directly interested in establishing close economic relations with Beijing."

The screenshot shows a news website interface. At the top, there are navigation links in Georgian: "ახალი ამბები", "ვიდეო", "მანუსკრიპტი", and a logo for "მთავარი არხი". There are also search and live broadcast indicators. The main content area features three news items, each with a video thumbnail and a text summary:

- 15 AUG, 21:38 PM**: ღარიბაშვილის ჩინური სამსახური | რა სქემებზე მუშაობისთვის მიიღო მან 410 ათასი ლარი თაღლითობაში მხილებული კომპანიისგან
ირაკლი ღარიბაშვილი ჩინური ინტერესები. გურნალისტური გამოძიების მასალები ადასტურებს, რომ საქართველოს პრემიერმინისტრი პირდაპირ არის დაინტერესებული ბეკინთან მჭიდრო ეკონომიკური ურთიერთობების...
- 15 AUG, 15:28 PM**: ღარიბაშვილის ჩინური სამსახური - როგორ გახდა ის მთავრობაში დაბრუნებამდე თაღლითობაში მხილებული კომპანიის მრჩეველი
...სადაც პრემიერმა სი ძინაინს შეხვდა და ჩინეთი საქართველოს ახალ სტრატეგიულ პარტნიორად გამოაცხადა, კრემლთან დაახლოებულ სი ძინაინს კი ჩინეთის ტელევიზიისთვის...
- 12 AUG, 21:33 PM**: ღარიბაშვილის ჩინური მისწრაფებები და ლტოლვა ავტორიტარული მმართველობისკენ - რას მიანიშნებს პრემიერის ინტერვიუ
...ავტორიტარული მმართველობისკენ - ჩინეთის ცენტრალური ტელევიზიისთვის მიცემული 27-წუთიანი ინტერვიუ პრემიერის ზრახვებს ფარდას ხდის. ირკვევა, რომ ღარიბაშვილის შთავაზების წყარო სი ძინაინია...

Visa-free regime for the Chinese

(Visa-free regime for the Chinese |
Gharibashvili's decision and another geopolitical statement)

Contrary to Irakli Gharibashvili's claim that the introduction of visa-free travel with China will increase tourism revenues and promote economic efficiency, the piece includes comments from experts who assess the decision negatively and say that it is a geopolitical statement that distances Georgia from the West.

"In China's perception, strategic partnership means entering a low-income country through soft power, driving it into debt and then maximally implementing its policies. Georgia finds itself in the most difficult situation because, in fact, China is entering a strategically important, geopolitically very important territory, which, first of all, will try to control shipping. It means that our relations with the West will end."- Giorgi Kublashvili, Member of the Diplomats Club, former Georgian Ambassador to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

In a piece proving that the introduction of a visa-free regime is a geopolitical statement, Giga Bokeria says the following:

"We remember Thea Tsulukiani's black-hundred statements regarding visa-free regime in general, which the previous government introduced for citizens of rich countries, and in particular for China, its most successful and wealthy part, citizens living in Hong Kong or those Chinese citizens who already had American or EU visas."

All of this has been attacked from the black-hundred position, and now they are going to allow visa-free travel for Chinese citizens. That is clearly a geopolitical statement and not an economic statement."

After introducing the visa-free regime, the channel also prepared a piece about the increase in the number of Chinese tourists in Georgia. In the piece, experts assess the growing number of Chinese tourists and the establishment of companies by them as a threat and "draw a parallel with the abundance of Russian tourists".

Tour operators do not exclude the fact that people arriving from China can, like Russian citizens, buy real estate in Georgia, open companies, and stay in Georgia for a long period of time – we read in the piece.

The piece also mentions the economic benefits of cooperation with China, although it emphasizes that Georgia will have to pay a political price for these economic benefits.

"Any big project that China lobbies and implements is aimed at reducing the influence of the West, reducing the influence of NATO, it carries certain risks that China always implements such projects... China does not support or recognize the democratic system that Georgia aspires to and is necessary for European integration. As an economic partner, China is the best, but economic partnership does not end only with economic goals; it will always develop into certain political aspects" - Andro Gotsiridze, cyber security expert.

The reporting period of the research does not include the period when China introduced visa-free travel.

Examples of positive coverage:

Materials of a positive tone on the Mtavari Channel in this context do not exceed a dozen and are mostly found when the channel broadcasts the comments of the authorities' representative directly in the form of a quote.

Using this principle of coverage, we find materials with a similar title - "Xi Jinping - inspiring leader - Gharibashvili".

The piece extensively contains comments from Irakli Gharibashvili during his interview with Chinese TV.

Although this particular news item does not provide any additional information and is limited to a quote from Gharibashvili, in other pieces, Gharibashvili's interview is discussed in detail, and the audience can listen to experts' assessments.

In the case of this piece, there is only a quote - *"China can freely become Georgia's first trade partner - Gharibashvili."*

On the channel, we occasionally encounter topics such as: 1) In China, a record temperature of 52.2 degrees has been recorded; 2) 11 people died as a result of the collapse of the roof of the school gymnasium in China; 3) 6 people, including three children, were killed in a knife attack on a kindergarten in China; 4) Floods in China kill 5 people, more than 1,500 evacuated

The tone of these stories is not negative, but given that the story itself is negative news, it may extend to China itself as a country. However, it cannot be said that the Mtavari Channel has any editorial policy in this direction.

POSTV



Media platform:	POSTV
Reporting period:	01.04.2023 – 01.11.2023
Monitor:	Irma Tcharakashvili
Number of pieces studied:	76

Within the framework of the research, POSTV was monitored for the first time.

During the research period, POSTV materials were researched through the channel's official social media pages (POSTV, POSTV-news, POSTV_analytics) and Google search.

Main findings of the research: Out of 76 pieces under monitoring, 2 had a negative tone, 50 were neutral, and 24 were positive.

The monitoring results show that POSTV follows a specific course, commenting on the same topic; politicians, experts, and analysts use the same terminology in their assessments and invoke the same issues. For example, in the case of the strategic agreement, three main areas are identified: China's economic power, the existing strategic agreement between the European Union and China, China and America's struggle towards economic power, and others. *(see below for more details)*

In the case of POSTV, neutral and positive tones prevail towards the topic of China. The issue of deepening strategic cooperation with China is assessed from a historical perspective, and the Georgian government's actions and steps are positively evaluated in the coverage. Along with positive coverage of China, the West and Georgia's relations with America, NATO, and the European Union and prospects are mentioned in a sharply negative tone. There are also news reports in which an EU member does not share the position of the U.S. and supports the "one China" policy. However, it is often emphasized that China has a strategic partnership agreement with the EU.

In covering China, there is an emphasis on the country's economic power and the advantages of the trade perspective, and it is often emphasized that China has a strategic cooperation agreement with Ukraine, EU countries, etc.



"France wants better access to the Chinese market and more 'balanced' trade relations, not 'separation' from the world's second-largest economy."

Shalva Ramishvili and co-hosts discussed the strength of the Chinese economy in a nearly hour-long broadcast of the program "Conservatory". China is presented as a counterweight to America, with emphasis on the following areas:

- *The biggest problem for America right now is China, with its growing economic resources; very soon, it will be discovered that the Chinese economy will overtake the American economy.*
- *There is one sentiment in the European Union that we stand behind America to the end, and the other part realizes that the European Union depends on both America and China because they have a massive trade with each other.*
- *China doesn't want to establish its values. China wants to trade.*

The issues related to China are mostly discussed by the same experts and politicians: analyst Davit Kartvelishvili, member of People's Power; Vato Shakarishvili, founder of the public movement Georgia First of All; and analyst Zaal Anjaparidze. They emphasize China as the country with the second-largest economy in the world.

As for China, the Prime Minister's visit was covered extensively, as was his speech at the business forum - mostly in a positive context.

In the newscast of July 28, which started with coverage of the said visit and was called a "historic visit" by the anchor, a journalist intervened from the spot. More than 10 minutes were devoted to this topic. During the days of the visit, the meeting and the speech were covered in as much detail as possible, both in video and text format.

The coverage of the visit and discussion of the topic of the strategic partnership agreement was topical for several days, with assessments and comments expressed mainly by members of the government team. The words spoken during the meeting between former Georgian Prime Minister and Chinese President Xi Jinping were published separately.

China is not only about trade and economy; it also plays a vital role in the new multipolar world order. The key to Georgia's survival, development, and integration lies in balancing interests, not standing on one foot in an "open door" for 30 years! For some from the north, for some from the west, but the sun really rises from the east!" - this is how Vato Shakarishvili, founder of the public movement "Georgia First", refers to the visit.

China is not only about trade and economy; it also plays a vital role in the new multipolar world order. The key to Georgia's survival, development, and integration lies in the balance of interests, not standing on one foot in an "open door" for 30 years! For some from the north, for some from the west, but the sun really rises from the east!" - this is how Vato Shakarishvili, founder of the public movement "Georgia First", refers to the visit.

Shalva Ramishvili's 51-minute program "Conservatory" on July 29 was dedicated to the visit: ***"The topic should have been general, but I was surprised, pleasantly surprised, happy to tears with the visit of our Prime Minister to China, reception, meeting with Xi Jinping". Xi Jinping's meeting is a very big story. What Xi Jinping said is a very big statement that we are strategic partners.***" This is how the

presenter starts the program and continues talking about the visit with the guests in a positive tone.

Another assessment of the presenter is interesting - *"We have begun to really care about our sovereignty. Ask, and it will open up for you. When a door closes - this is Georgia's fate - many other doors open."*

While representatives of opposition parties claim that the strategic agreement does not address Georgia's territorial integrity, analyst Gia Abashidze assesses China as a defender of Georgia's sovereignty.

"In general, assessing this dimension, I would note the following - China becomes another partner and defender of Georgia in the international arena and, first of all, in supporting our sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Monitoring results show that the strategic agreement received positive assessments on the air of Post TV. Still, it can be said that these assessments are of a superior quality, and China's importance for Georgia is also elevated to the superior quality. Analyst Zaal Anjaparidze believes this agreement is an ice-breaker and "the realization of this statement gives Georgia a unique opportunity (as I said yesterday) to restore and expand the multi-vector nature conditioned by its geopolitical code."

Russia's war in Ukraine and China's role in ending this conflict have not been left out of POSTV's information policy. According to Davit Kartvelishvili, a member of the People's Power public movement, as part of this process, China's special representative for Eurasian affairs has been making visits to Ukraine and other European countries, during which he voiced the need for a ceasefire and maintaining control over the territories currently occupied by Russia as Beijing's primary position. We read there too that with Li Hui's visit, "Beijing has "reserved" for itself the function of mediator and looks forward to a better future to renew its "service." And the Kremlin has also voiced its messages:

"Li Hui's mission has been completed at this stage. Its short-term result is that the West and Ukraine can't reach a consensus on Moscow's stated negotiation conditions, but this mission did not remain entirely unsuccessful."

"Beijing has "reserved" the function of mediator for itself and looks forward to a better future in which to renew its "service."

In addition to informative news, China's position towards Ukraine is also topical in the program "Historical Perspective," where the host - Nukri Shoshiashvili - devotes his monologue to talking about Crimea and answers the question - to whom Crimea belongs - with a quote from the Chinese Ambassador to France: *"It depends on how we look at this question. There is a history: Crimea originally belonged to Russia, Khrushchev gave it to Ukraine"*. It should be noted that the beginning of the video creates a specific mood in the viewer.

In the context of a positive mood, POSTV aired the Georgian song "lao-Uao," performed by Chinese children. Although the video shows only the song and the text is neutral-official, the content evokes a positive attitude and attracts the audience.

The coverage of introducing a visa-free regime for Chinese citizens traveling to Georgia was not left aside. The Prime Minister commented on the air that this

decision would lead to tourism development and deepening trade relations with China.

In the case of POSTV, we also find posts where China is not mentioned in the news text, but Xi Jinping is present in the photo.

In connection with Georgia's independence, commentary on China's role is covered on the channel.

"I have the impression that the statement of the plenipotentiary ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Georgia in March of this year - "We are ready to mediate for Georgia Georgia in matters of restoring territorial integrity" - did not go unnoticed by Moscow. Georgian-Chinese talks on establishing strategic relations were added to this, and, here is the first result: Dmitry Medvedev voiced the possibility of Russian-Georgian talks. But - without mediators," says David Kartvelishvili, a member of the People's Power public movement.

Increasing Anti-American Sentiment

When we cover China, we often come across the US-China relationship. The context is different; in some cases, China opposes the US, sometimes it is mentioned as a trading partner, and in some cases, the focus is on the US involvement in the Taiwan issue.

The channel's social media page published an extended commentary by Chinese Ambassador to Georgia Zhou Qian, in which he says that some countries under the leadership of the U.S. "trample on China's sovereignty and territorial integrity" - referring to Taiwan.

Discussing China-U.S. trade relations, the channel covers the visit of the U.S. Secretary of Commerce to Beijing. The anchor focuses on Gina Raimondo's call that it is crucial for the two largest economies to have a stable relationship and that the reason for the visit is the agreement reached between the Chinese and U.S. presidents at the 2022 G20 Bali summit. The coverage ends with the following phrase: *"Washington is trying to ease years of tensions between the two largest economies, restore ties and mend relations with Beijing. The appeal."*

When discussing China, the United States Embassy in Georgia and the President of Georgia are mentioned in a negative context.

"This is a purposeful anti-state campaign in the press, bought by agents of influence, led by the U.S. ambassador," says movie director Goga Khaindrava.

As for the coverage of the theme of the President, the news space in the reporting period was devoted to the interview of President Salome Zourabichvili with the LCI agency, which the anchor presented as follows:

"Salome Zourabichvili, who ran away abroad, is putting the country into diplomatic confusion. A president who violates the constitution is attacking her strategic partner, the President of China. When asked if she hopes that Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping will ever be brought to trial, Salome Zourabichvili replies that it would be a historic result that would put certain questions to rest."

TV Pirveli



Media platform:	TV Pirveli
Reporting period:	01.04.2023 – 01.11.2023
Monitor:	Irma Tcharakashvili
Number of pieces studied:	198
Tones:	negative - 53, neutral -139, positive – 6

Within the framework of the research, TV Pirveli was monitored for the first time.

Main findings of the research:

The monitoring revealed the channel's policy of drawing close parallels between Russia and China. The TV channel covers China at the intersection with the government, which is related to the visit of the Prime Minister or members of the government to China, strategic partnerships, the introduction of a visa-free regime for Chinese citizens, and others. In the pieces published during the monitoring period, the government's wrong policy is related to deepening relations with China.

During the reporting period, the website of TV Pirveli was searched for the following keywords: China, Chinese, to China, Xi Jinping, Beijing, and Middle Corridor. Most of the pieces had a neutral tone, and the negative tone exceeded the positive tone by about seven times.

Published materials mention China, along with Russia, as a dictator and communist party. During the monitoring period, the following topics were also covered, such as:

- **Chinese dinner with Putin;**
- **Strategic partnership;**
- **Visa-free regime for Chinese citizens;**

- Chinese participation in the construction of the Anaklia port;
- Prime Minister's working visit to China;
- Abashidze-Karasin format.

The banquet, held in China on October 18 as part of the Belt and Road Forum, was widely covered. According to media reports, Georgian Minister of Economy Levan Davitashvili and Georgian Ambassador to China Archil Kalandia attended the event together with Vladimir Putin.

China was mentioned in neutral and negative tones when covering the topic. It should be noted that the Government of Georgia, the Minister of Economy, and members of the ruling team were mentioned in a negative tone. China's negative tone was related to Russia's, as they were considered on the same level.

"They had questions about why the Communist Party of China was becoming a strategic partner of Georgia and not America. Everyone wondered how Georgia could accept such a strategic partnership without ratification, and everyone also wondered how China, which conducted a huge disinformation campaign against the medical sector in Georgia during the pandemic and sent delegations to occupied Abkhazia, could have a strategic partnership with them. The strategic partnership with the Communist Party of China has made it clear to everyone in the West that the Georgian government is waging an anti-Western campaign." - said Alexander Krevo Asatiani, Deputy Secretary for External Relations of the United National Movement.



Many European leaders decided not to attend this forum because China and Russia, in the same tandem, are considered a threat to the strategic document of the United States of America.

Representatives of the opposition wing see strategic relations with China as an obstacle to the EU.

"I don't know what you listen to, but we listen to what the European Union tells us, and we know for sure that the country's path to the European Union cannot go through China," - Salome Samadashvili, MP from the Lelo party, addressed the Foreign Minister with such words.

According to Salome Samadashvili, a partnership with China is harmful to the country at this stage, as the Chinese leader is in close contact with the first person of Russia. Besides, we often find close parallels between Russia and China in the coverage of events.

"The agreement on strategic relations with China directly raises the question of why nothing is said about China supporting our country's de-occupation and restoring its territorial integrity. Attacks on the West, attacks on the United States and the European Union, and the other hand, the so-called strategic rap-

prochement with China, which is exactly what the Russian Federation is doing," says Lelo leader Badri Japaridze.

Strategic partnership with China has become another subject of criticism from opposition parties. As we have already noted, criticism and negative assessments are caused by the cooperation between China and Russia, as well as the fact that the strategic cooperation document does not emphasize support for Georgia's territorial integrity and does not mention the occupation.

"When the European Union is based on three principles with China - partnership, competition, and global rivalry, when our choice is democratic development, how will you sign that you will share forms of governance with China and the Communist Party of China?" said Teona Akubardia, an opposition MP.

Regarding Georgia's territorial integrity, one of Karasin's interviews was widely reported, in which he stated that Russia is working with countries such as India and China on the issue of recognizing the independence of the occupied territories, and he is confident that they will get approval for recognition from these countries at the last stage.

In this content, the government's position was covered in an unambiguously negative context, and Karasin's statement appears in the background of almost all news.

Along with negative assessments of the visit to China and the signing of the strategic partnership agreement, there are also cases of mentioning China in a positive tone on TV Pirveli, which is related to the scheduling by the government of more flights with China and the introduction of a visa-free regime. While commenting on these topics, the positive economic influence of China is emphasized.

"I want to tell you that the government's decision to abolish visas is positively perceived and has already impacted the results. Today, the flow with China has increased significantly. Still, you know that comprehensively, if we have more direct lines with Chinese cities, we are sure that we will be able to generate a real passenger flow and get significant results in tourism," - said Levan Davitashvili, Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia.

"China is one of the centers of attraction in this world, where the economy is dynamically developing. It is interesting for Georgia both in terms of economy and balancing certain regional threats," this is how Georgian Dream MP Beka Davituliani reacts to deepening cooperation with China.

However, the channel's positive coverage of China is several times outweighed by negative assessments related to the introduction of visa-free travel.

"This is clearly a geopolitical statement, not an economic one. In today's situation, when Georgia should be striving to become a member of NATO and a member of the free world to defend itself against Russian aggression, instead, making such a statement against Russia's ally China is a step against our national

interests," is how the leader of European Georgia Giga Bokeria assesses the statement of the Prime Minister (Irakli Gharibashvili was prime minister at the time), who announced the establishment of a visa-free regime with China. Bokeria believes establishing a visa-free regime with a country allied with Russia is a step against national interests.

"Defer the West's influence and fulfill the Russian task" — Salome Samadashvili, a member of the Lelo party.

"I think that such heavy pressure and hanging on the economies of Russia and China is tough, including politically and economically," said opposition MP Khatia Dekanoidze.

As we have noted, TV Pirveli is consistent with the main topics in its information policy, both in news format and detailed coverage. After the Prime Minister's visit to China, the issue of Chinese investors coming to the port of Anaklia became topical. Along with a neutral tone, negative tones prevailed in the coverage of this topic.

"The possible inflow of Chinese capital into the Anaklia port project will bring disastrous results" - Grigol Gegelia, one of the leaders of the Lelo party.

We encounter China and Chinese citizens when covering not only political but also criminal topics. "TV Pirveli has consistently, until the verdict, covered the topic of a Chinese national who, according to media reports, tricked Thai women into working at Zestafoni."

"A Chinese national arrested on human trafficking charges has been remanded in custody by court order." - The accused was reportedly employed on an ongoing construction at the Rikoti Pass.

The ongoing construction on Rikoti has been the subject of China's repeated mention in a negative tone regarding the death of a construction worker and road construction in Phuti village. TV Pirveli has produced both news and detailed reports regarding the fact that the people of Phuti village are in great danger.

"A report has been disclosed that clearly states that the construction under the village of a tunnel connecting to Rikoti could cost the loss of homes and more lives.

A Chinese company uses explosive technology to build a tunnel directly under the village. Each new deafening explosion is a source of fear for locals. Cracks appear and are added to the walls of houses, and the ceiling collapses on people's heads." The media also systematically covered the population's protests.

"A report has been disclosed that clearly states that the construction under the village of a tunnel connecting to Rikoti could cost the loss of homes and more lives. A Chinese company, using explosive technology is building a tunnel directly under the village. Each new deafening explosion is a source of fear for locals. Cracks appear and are added to the walls of houses, and the ceiling collapses on people's heads." The media also systematically covered the population's protests.

Another tragic case of road construction, this time with the construction of a highway in Kakheti, was also covered in a negative tone. The Chinese construction company was mentioned as responsible, and safety standards were questioned.

In the period before the Prime Minister visited China, we can see neutral assessments by government representatives and members of the ruling party on the channel TV Pirveli, which covered the visit rather limitedly; a couple of single pieces (2-3) were prepared, and the coverage was dominated by negative assessments by opposition MPs:

"Gharibashvili said that Georgia's doors are open for Chinese companies - a 27-minute interview and not a word about the occupation";

"Economists assess Irakli Gharibashvili's interview with China Central Television and explicitly state that Georgia has chosen the wrong direction in the new world agenda. Georgia did not side with America and Europe, and the Georgian government chose the Chinese and Russian economies."

After the former Prime Minister's visit to China, several extensive materials were prepared about Irakli Gharibashvili's cooperation with Chinese companies, mainly in a negative tone. The channel prepared several extensive materials about Irakli Gharibashvili's activities in a Chinese company after his first resignation as Prime Minister.

"Why has China become the main ally of the Georgian Dream? The scheme is deciphered, and it becomes clear that Irakli Gharibashvili bears great financial and political accountability to China. The Georgian Prime Minister, who signed a strategic partnership agreement with China, received over 400 thousand GEL from the Chinese company involved in the scandal. This is the company where Gharibashvili was hired after [the end of his tenure] as Prime Minister. He received a large salary, and after returning to the government, he entrusted the rehabilitation of the country's largest facilities to the Chinese," - we read in the published materials.

It is important to note that from 26.07.2023 to 12.08.2023, when the Prime Minister's visit to China was covered, only one piece of the prepared materials had a positive tone. The piece contained extensive quotations from the welcoming words of former Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili and Xi Jinping.



Media platform:	https://bm.ge
Social platform:	https://www.facebook.com/www.BM.GE
Monitoring period:	01.04.2023 – 01.11.2023
Monitor:	Nina Kheladze
Amount of content:	446
Tones:	negative - 61; neutral - 329; positive - 56.
The topics of the pieces studied :	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic partnership with China 2. The Middle Corridor and its potential 3. Anaklia Port 4. Cooperation between sanctioned Russia and Communist China 5. Cooperation between China and the EU 6. U.S.-China relations 7. Modern technologies and manufacturing of semiconductors 8. Logistics, transport 9. Jack Ma and the economic implications of China's policies 10. WeChat and digital technologies 11. Possible meeting between Putin and Davitashvili in China 12. Protest on Rikoti and Chinese companies in Georgia 13. Apple, India, China 14. China-Russia, the European Union, and Ukraine. 15. TikTok

Context

After it became known that BMG would sign a memorandum of understanding with the Chinese media outlet CCTV on November 26, 2023, [BMG] media outlet became an additional object of our research.

Giorgi Isakadze, the publication's general producer, announced the beginning of cooperation with China's largest media group.

The general producer of the media outlet, Giorgi Isakadze, announced on air that cooperation with China's largest media group would begin soon.

"BMG will sign a memorandum of understanding and license agreement with China's largest media group, CCTV, next week." (26.11.2023, Source : <https://BM.GE/news/bmg-chinetis-umskhviles-mediajguf-cctv-stan-tanamshromlobas-itsyeps>)

It is also important to note that in the news disseminated by the media, China was actively mentioned in the analysis or preparation of news about trade, tourism, infrastructure, automotive, and other industries before this date. China and the country's economic performance have always had a place in the news produced by BMG. When talking about the motives for cooperation with the Chinese media group, the following content was cited:

"This will not only allow us to receive and have access to the endless content produced by CCTV on a daily basis, but the partnership also includes the presentation and distribution of business content produced by BMG to a Chinese audience of over one billion viewers and subscribers," - Giorgi Isakadze (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/bmg-chinetis-umskhviles-mediajguf-cctv-stan-tanamshromlobas-itsyeps>).

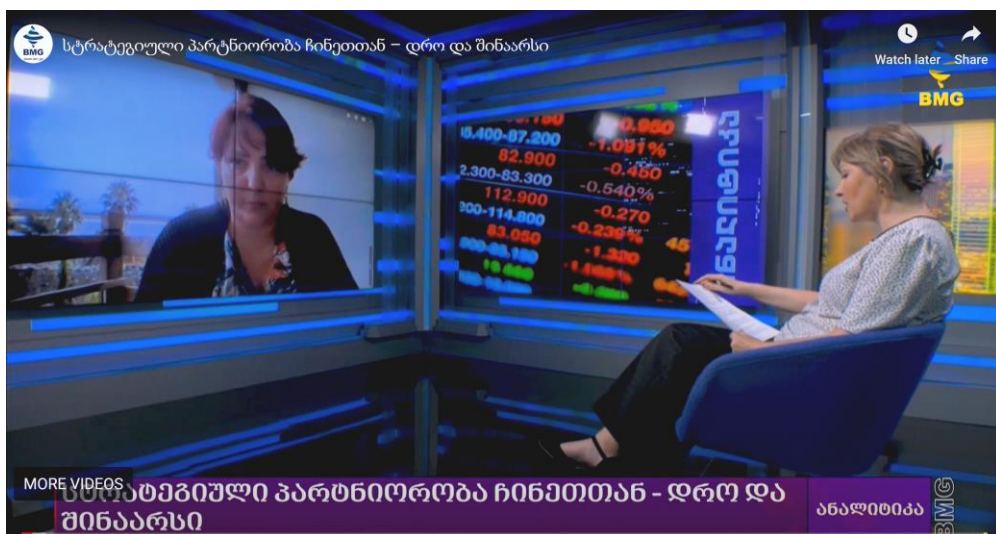
As for the memorandum of cooperation, despite a detailed study of media news during the monitoring period, no sharp trend was revealed. What dynamics the collaboration with Chinese CCTV has acquired, the viewers will remain unknown, as no news in this direction has been published since November. And, referring to China, citing indicators or otherwise, the dynamics of coverage of China in the editorial team remained approximately the same.

Strategic partnership with China

BMG, as a niche media focused on coverage of business and economy, has been actively covering China and China-related news in various fields due to China's growing economic influence even before the signing of the China-Georgia strategic partnership agreement. Still, this trend has intensified after the new partnership phase between the two countries. The media devoted more than 20 pieces to the signing of this agreement and its analysis.

During this period, the tone of the materials disseminated in the media was mostly neutral and positive; however, in the following days, the media tried to analyze the strategic partnership with China from a broad foreign policy perspective, along with the views of other strategic partners, in several analytical programs and news.

For example, the program #Analytics with Elene Kvanchilashvili critically analyzed strategic cooperation with China. In an approximately 20-minute interview with Tinatin Khidasheli, Chairperson of Civic IDEA and former Minister of Defense, the audience hears criticism backed by several arguments, including from the perspective of a country in the process of seeking EU Candidate Status.



Source: <https://bm.ge/news/strategiuli-partnioroba-chinettan-dro-da-shinaarsi>

"First, these are political objectives, which is where this strategic document starts and political objectives mean that the Georgian government has laid another mine on the way to the European Union. Do they not want to get candidate status? Of course, they realize it is politically beneficial for them, but they fear we will be refused, so they need a plan b. Secondly, they know for sure that if the European Union grants us the status of a candidate, it will be another, heavier, and loaded with more democratic obligations. Accordingly, the Georgian government actually started to play on the fact that a plan had developed in someone's head to blackmail the EU and that if the EU refused us, there would always be an alternative in the form of China." - Tinatin Khidasheli told BMG (Source: <https://bm.ge/news/ratom-dag-vchirda-chinettan-strategiul-donemde-tanamshromlobis-ayvana-da-ratom-akhlatina-khidashelis-mosazreba>).

When analyzing the strategic partnership with China, the media platform offers audience assessments from different perspectives and positions. For example, from the opinion of former Georgian Ambassador to China Mamuka Gamkrelidze, the audience learns that the importance of the document for the Georgian audience is exaggerated because:

"Strategic partnership attracts excessive attention from the Chinese side, but we should also consider that the Chinese are ceremonial people; they like to hang medals.

In fact, strategic partnership means nothing on earth. For example, Great Britain is a 21st-century global comprehensive partner of the People's Republic of China - behind these beautiful words, there is nothing but economic relations because they need each other" - Mamuka Gamkrelidze. (Source: <https://bm.ge/news/strategiuli-partnioroba-bevrs-arafers-nishnavs-gamyrelidze-saqartvelo-chinetis-tanamshromlo-baze>)

The Middle Corridor and its potential

The tone of economic cooperation between Georgia and China is relatively different. During the monitoring period, the visit of Georgian Deputy Prime Minister Levan Davitashvili to the economic forum in China, which was accompanied by a possible meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, was covered as a high-profile incident. The media gave Levan Davitashvili himself a detailed explanation as to why he did not leave the forum in protest and also offered readers the comments of the Mayor of Tbilisi, Secretary General of Georgian Dream Kakha Kaladze, who called the possible meeting between Davitashvili and Putin in China an information manipulation.

The media presented a detailed explanation by Levan Davitashvili himself as to why he did not leave the forum in protest and also offered readers a commentary by the Mayor of Tbilisi, Secretary General of the Georgian Dream Kakha Kaladze, who called the possible meeting of Davitashvili and Putin in China an information manipulation.

"In China, we attended a reception hosted by President Xi Jinping and were there at his invitation.... Georgia has been participating in the Silk Road Initiative' One Road, One Belt' international forum since its inception," said Georgia's Deputy Prime Minister Levan Davitashvili. (<https://BM.GE/news/ratom-ar-datova-vitse-premier-ma-forumi-romelsats-putinits-estsreboda-davitashvilis-pasukhi>)

"My position is very simple. The Belt and Road project, headed by the President of China, is important for us and interesting for the country". - Kakha Kaladze, Mayor of Tbilisi. (Source: <https://bm.ge/news/kakha-kaladze-sitsruea-rom-chinetshi-davitashvilsa-da-putins-shoris-piradi-komunikatsia-shedga>)

The media also intensively informs the audience about the Middle Corridor project, the countries interested in the project, their economic and political calculations, the involvement or interest of the PRC and the European Union, and the prospects and obstacles Georgia sees.

Along with the analysis, the government also provides the audience with the sentiment: *"The Middle Corridor is very important. It will be a very interesting alternative route in the near future. We have to be creative, we have to act fast,"* said Irakli Gharibashvili, then the country's Prime Minister. (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/yazakhettan-da-azerbajantan-sruli-gageba-gvaqvs-rogor-gavzardot-shua-derefnis-tsarmadoba-gharibashvili>)

The transmission of government narratives without analysis leaves the audience with an exceptionally positive perception, both in the case of the prospect of Sino-Georgian relations and in the case of assessments of China and the Chinese leader.

Among them are the compliments to the Chinese leader Xi Jinping paid by Irakli Gharibashvili, who held the position of Prime Minister of Georgia at that particular moment:

"President Xi Jinping is indeed an exemplary leader. He has a far-reaching vision and is a wise man who has done great things for his great nation. We fully support

his initiatives." (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/si-dzinpini-brdzeni-adamiania-da-sru-lad-vuchert-mkhars-mis-initsiativebs-gharibahvili>)

We find a positive context of China-Georgia relations in many journalistic materials. In particular, during the monitoring period, a text of the former Prime Minister of Georgia containing gratitude to Xi Jinping was published:

"Mr. President, I am also grateful to you and your government for supporting my country. China was one of the first to recognize Georgia's independence in 1992 when we regained independence. Then we established diplomatic relations between our two countries." (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/quotsavachro-da-ekonomikuri-kav-shirebis-gagrmavebis-ideis-ertguli-vartquot---garibashvili-chinetis-prezidents-shexvda/139623>)

However, critical analytical materials were found alongside the same content during the reporting period. In the analytical content, the media often referred to the PRC as a country with a communist government.

Particularly regarding the Middle Corridor topic, in parallel with the government's elevated sentiments, the media in the reporting period tried to offer unbiased analysis, including from an economic point of view. For example, an interview with World Bank Regional Director Charles Cormier gives the audience an analysis from this perspective.

"The Middle Corridor is already the fastest land route between Western China and Western Europe. Of course, we know the northern corridor is longer, but it is already established and proven" - Charles Cormier. (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/male-gamovaqveynebt-kvlevas-shua-derefnis-potentsialis-shefasebaze-msoflio-banki>)

During the reporting period, the media covered the Chinese state-owned company's position regarding a protest by workers on an ongoing infrastructure project at the Rikoti Pass.

In its lengthy response, the company explains its working conditions, disapproves of employees reporting their dissatisfaction in the media, and encourages employees to talk to management.

At the beginning of the above-mentioned news item, one paragraph describes the strikers' claims, but we do not find extensive information about the protest itself proportional to the reaction.

Cooperation between sanctioned Russia and Communist China, the EU, and the U.S.

We find a critical tone towards the PRC in the coverage of events related to Sino-Russian relations, including increased economic cooperation in light of the sanctions imposed on Russia because of Russia's war in Ukraine and, for example, increased rates of energy purchases, partnership with the banking sector, product shipments, etc.

For example, in an article entitled "China saved \$10 billion this year by importing sanctioned oil," we find the following quote:

"The Chinese government is actively continuing to receive economic benefits from the sanctions imposed by the West." (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/sanqtsirebuli-navtobis-importit-chinetma-tsels-10-miliardi-dazoga>)

During the same reporting period, the media publishes another story from which viewers learn that the PRC has dramatically increased its oil imports from Russia after the invasion of Ukraine.

"With a 55% increase in imports, Russia has overtaken Saudi Arabia to become China's largest oil supplier." (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/chinetma-rusuli-navtobis-importi-gazarda/135077>)

In addition, on the BMG platform, you will find a criticism of the "peace plan" developed and presented by the Chinese government, which the communist country developed to resolve the Russian-Ukrainian war. In an article titled "No panacea, Russia and Ukraine must come to a compromise to end the war - China," China's plan is criticized and assessed as "extremely pro-Russian."

"In addition to Ukraine ceding territories, the Chinese government calls on the UN to immediately lift all sanctions and restrictions against the Russian Federation in parallel with a ceasefire.

It is worth noting that the PRC did not support the joint UN resolution, by which 141 countries of the world demanded a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Russian military forces from the territory of Ukraine.

According to experts, China's peace plan is extremely pro-Russian and cannot be taken seriously." (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/panacea-ar-arsebobs-omis-dasas-ruleblad-rusetma-da-ukrainam-kompromiss-unda-miagwion---chineti/134281>)

WeChat, Tik Tok, Apple and digital technologies

The media covers China-related topics mainly in the form of statistics in various trade sectors. However, some pieces include the attitudes of the world's democracies towards these technologies in the wake of China's technological development. Similar content includes news created by BMG regarding banning Chinese WeChat in Canada. In the same news item, the reader will read that Chinese WeChat and Russian Kaspersky antivirus are in the same risk category.

"According to Digital Security Canada, these apps contain risks of surveillance and improper disposal of user data, so those in contact with sensitive information should limit their use of WeChat and Kaspersky." (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/kanadis-mtavrobis-tsarmomadgenlebs-wechat-is-da-kaspersky-s-gamoyeneba-aekrdzalat>)

The media's tone on this news and other content is neutral. The press cited the Communist Chinese Foreign Ministry's position that there is no evidence for the accusation.

"There is no evidence that the Chinese government is using WeChat for surveillance on other countries," - China's Foreign Ministry said. (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/kanadis-mtavrobis-tsarmomadgenlebs-wechat-is-da-kaspersky-s-gamoyeneba-aekrdzalat>)

There is a neutral and balanced tone when talking about Japan-China relations; for example, the news that Japan is investing more in chip manufacturing and limiting exports to China also mentions the Chinese government's stance:

"Minister Qin Gang reacted by urging Japan to refrain from implementing the official Washington vector," - China's Foreign Ministry. (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/iaponia-mikrochipebis-warmoebis-mimartulebit-investiciebs-82-it-zrdis/131138>)

In contrast to the above, news stories related to Apple's decision somehow to replace China with India for its own products can be read with a critical tone. The news story, presented in various formats, includes Apple CEO Tim Cook's visit to India to celebrate the opening of Apple's first official store.

The high-profile news story says that the U.S. company's decision to shift its focus from China to India is backed by a list of challenges in China, including frequent protests by factory workers and more.

"There are several reasons for Apple's change of China vector. The first is political and is related to the complex relationship between the U.S. and China, which could theoretically escalate at any time, either because of Taiwan or Ukraine. In addition, due to Covid-19 cases, zero-sum policies and frequent factory protests, China has recently become a volatile country for manufacturing businesses." (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/saqmianisagamo---tim-kukma-indoetshi-apple-is-pirveli-magaz-ia-gaxsna/39390>)

In the news prepared by BMG regarding China, we come across the UK's decision to fine the popular Chinese social network TikTok 16 million dollars. In the same news, the media cited the reasoning behind the British regulator's decision that children under 13 can register on the Chinese platform without [the consent of] parents, which is against British law.

The media cite other examples of how the developed world reacts to the said platform.

"Criticism of TikTok and its parent company ByteDance is growing worldwide. U.S. lawmakers say the social platform is actively violating data protection policies and sharing users' personal information with China's ruling communist government." (<https://BM.GE/news/britanetshi-tiktok-s-16-milioniani-jarima-daekisra/131050>)

Jack Ma and Communist China

Published news reports also criticize the relationship between the communist government of China and the founder of the Chinese business giant Alibaba.

For example, the behavior of the communist government of China towards Jack Ma (founder of Alibaba) has been called retaliation. The context is also given to the Bund Economic Summit, where an influential Chinese businessman explicitly criticized the Chinese government. In another article on a similar topic, the author mentions the political and economic context and reminds the audience that Xi Jinping has already been elected for a third term as China's leader, which was made

possible by "constitutional amendments". <https://BM.GE/news/ekonomikaze-partiis-kontroli-gadzlierdeba----si-dzinpini-/133414>)

"A few months later, Alibaba became a target company of a regulatory commission that was fined \$2.8 billion for antitrust violations, which is also a record." (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/alibaba-s-dashla-da-jek-mas-dabruneba--ra-xdeba-chinetshi/130931>)

"The fintech company is requesting the regulator's necessary license to register as a financial institution, allowing Ant Group to operate in the country without any problems. More than a year has passed since the application was submitted, but the regulator is still delaying the license issuance. According to the company's statement, the above actions are directly related to Jack Ma. They are part of the retaliation by the Communist government of China." - The mentioned company is a member of Alibaba Holding. (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/chinetis-maregulirebeli-ant-groupze-licenziis-gacemas-achianurebs/133454>)

EU, China, Russia

During the monitoring period, the media actively covered the issues of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and full-scale war in the context of Sino-Russian relations. Among them was the European Union's intention to impose sanctions against those Chinese companies accused of helping the Russian Federation in the war against Ukraine. The media refers to the information of the Financial Times, according to which seven Chinese companies are planned to be sanctioned in the first stage.

"Each is actively involved in supplying the Russian Armed Forces with equipment and critically important production parts and materials." (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/eu-rusetis-daxmarebashi-braldebuli-chinuri-kompaniebis-sanqcirebas-gegmas/133431>)

During the reporting period, the media also wrote (in the context of the war in Ukraine) about Russian fuel and, given specific regulations and maximum prices, emphasized that China is in the process of recovering economic activity and it is also the largest consumer of energy, *"and Russia is its main supplier."* (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/birjaze-navtobis-fasebi-mkvetrad-izrdeba/131669>)

The media platform periodically provides the audience with analytics through news and active topics, using other media outlets as sources. For example, based on CNBC, the media broadcasts information, including an analysis by economist Nouriel Rubin regarding global macroeconomic risks. The analysis includes the issue of U.S.-China relations, which, according to the analysts, are deteriorating by the day.

"The economic rapprochement between China and Russia will have an extremely negative impact on the world economy because it will lead to the restriction of free trade and globalization," - the article concludes. (Source: <https://BM.GE/news/quot-sabanko-krizisi-swored-axla-iwyeba-ashsh-shi-recesia-gardauvaliaquot---nuriel-rubini/131806>)

Media platform:	https://netgazeti.ge
Monitoring period:	01.04.2023 – 01.11.2023
Monitor:	Mariam Kvavadze
Number of pieces studied:	42
Tones:	negative - 10; neutral - 20; positive - 12

During the observation period, most of Netgazeti's stories about the PRC were categorized as news and had a mostly neutral tone.

The editorial team covers news related to China mostly without context and does not talk about the previous history of the topic _"background." Some of these stories are based on other media, mainly on information disseminated by different TV channels.

For example, in the piece on October 28, 2023, we read that Davitashvili did not answer questions about the banquet in China, which he attended with Putin. *"We are talking about the banquet held on October 18 in China within the framework of the forum "One Belt, One Road," information about which was first published by "Tabula" in Georgian media on October 27."*

"Today, October 28, Levan Davitashvili himself did not answer the Mtavari Channel question whether he faced any inconvenience while attending the event with Vladimir Putin."



სიახლეები საზოგადოება ხელოვნება ეკონომიკა კომენტარი სამხრეთ კავკასიის ამბები

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დავითაშვილმა არ უპასუხა კითხვებს ჩინეთში გამართულ ბანკეტზე, რომელსაც პუტინთან ერთად ესწრებოდა

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The materials of Netgazeti show that in addition to Georgian media, the editorial team also relies on foreign press and disseminates information they process. "On the night of November 30, as a result of an operation by the Security Service of Ukraine (known as SBU), a section of the 'only important railroad' Russia-China was blown up," Ukrainian Pravda reported, citing a source in the security services."

Regarding this material from November 30, 2023, it should be noted that the Ukrainian side did not confirm this, and the Russian side gave an entirely different reason. The editorial team also mentioned this in the text.

Promotional materials

As in 2022, in 2023 well, Netgazeti separates advertising and editorial content, including China-related topics. On July 21, 2023, a China-related advertisement about Georgian wine appeared. The title of the article indicates that it is an advertisement. This piece has more views and reposts than editorial content on China-related topics.

The article talks about the improvement of economic relations with China. Its context is exclusively positive:

"Today, Georgian wine is among the top ten wines imported in China, although there is still a long way to go to improve its position.

The existing trade and economic relations between the two countries leave reason for hope that in the future, we will see the Chinese market more interesting and significant than that of many other countries."

"This is why we believe gaining a foothold in the Chinese market is worth the effort. Although traditional markets are of great importance to us, Georgian wine has the opportunity to position itself even better on the Chinese market. With the right work for the Chinese market, it becomes feasible to become a worthy alternative to traditional markets. "The more diversified the Georgian wine market is, the better," says Mikhail Songulashvili.

Netgazeti worked intensively on the issue of the Anaklia port and often discussed relations with China.

For example, according to reports of August 2, the acting president of the National Bank, former Minister of Economy Natia Turnava, positively assessed relations with China.

Netgazeti asked a critical question: *"Natia Turnava was asked why the government did not do everything to build the Anaklia port with American investment, to what extent it is possible now with Chinese investments, and whether she sees danger in this case."*

"This question is not within our competence at the moment. As far as China is concerned, I can say that in terms of further development of the financial sector and macroeconomic stability, the diversification of our external markets and partners is a positive development. Other than that, I think the government is providing comprehensive answers," - Turnava said.

1. "Xi Jinping " _July 28, 2023.
2. "Strategic Partnership with China: Perspective with Risks" _(benefits and risks)_ July 29, 2023.
3. "It is known what the strategic partnership with China includes " _July 31.
4. "There will be consultations with everyone" - whether Anaklia will be built with Chinese investment - August 1, 2023.
5. "Gharibashvili in China spoke about the port of Anaklia" _August 1, 2023.
6. "Chinese Ambassador confirms China's interest in Anaklia port" _ September 6, 2023.
7. "Minister confirms the interest of Chinese companies in Anaklia port" _ September 11, 2023.
8. "Chinese and Swiss companies want to build Anaklia port" _September 22, 2023.

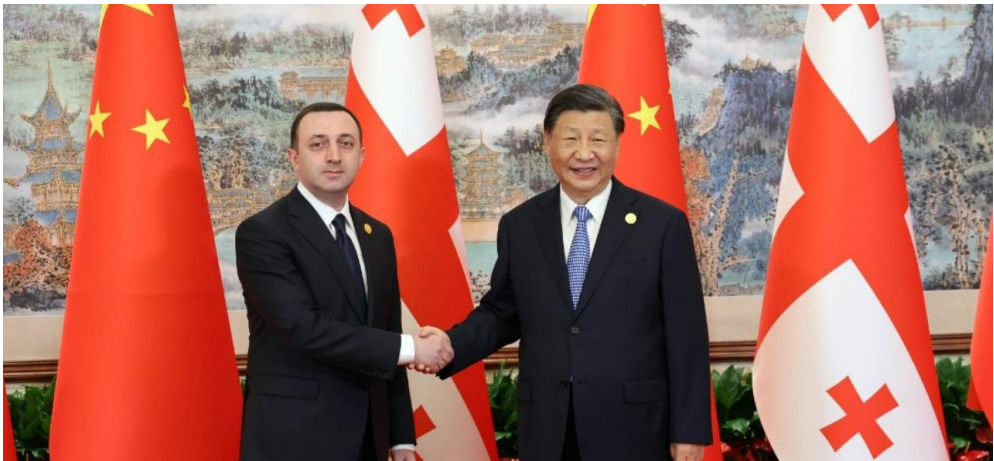
Netgazeti publishes information in the form of news in a positive tone when the Prime Minister speaks about the strategic partnership between Georgia and China, indicating that Sino-Georgian relations are developing healthily and successfully.

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"Georgia highly values its friendship and partnership with China. I am grateful for your decision to elevate our relations to a strategic partnership, which I am sure will bring concrete results and benefits to both sides. Georgia is committed to deepening trade and economic ties with China in many areas, and we are pleased that important documents will be signed," - the Prime Minister said (July 28, 2023).

However, in the same edition, **there are critical materials about the PRC's policy**; for example, French political scientist, former director of the Aspen Institute, and lecturer at the Paris Institute of Political Studies Nicolas Tenzer speaks about the

strategic partnership agreement between Georgia and China, that economic dependence on China is a challenge not only for Georgia but for any country. He also touched on Montenegro: in 2015, China gave Montenegro a loan to build a road connecting the port of Bari on the Adriatic coast to Serbia. The country ended up with a huge debt, and the road construction is not yet finished. *"This is one of the risks for countries that have an economic partnership with China,"* Tenzer said.

The same article provides an extensive, long-read, in-depth critical analysis of China policy based on reliable foreign sources: "The Road from Nowhere to Nowhere" - How Montenegro Got Its Chinese Debt.

News provided in a negative tone about China and Georgia are:

1. "This is a disproportionate text" - Gogolashvili on strategic partnership with China - July 31, 2023.
2. Viola von Cramon criticizes Georgia for rapprochement with China - July 31, 2023.
3. Corneli Kakachia on Tbilisi's strategic partnership with China - July 31, 2023.
4. Degnan: caution is needed in making political commitments to China - August 21, 2023.
5. "Looks good on paper, but is poorly implemented" - Fried on partnership with China_ September 4, 2023.

Netgazeti published a new piece on July 12 in which we read that Bishop Iacob mentions Chinese products in a strongly negative context. The reference is to the poisoning of Patriarchal locum tenens Reverend Shio.

"I'm not thinking of bad things; God bless [Reverend Shio]. Let's look at the cause. It could be Chinese goods; you know what happened regarding the toys. I don't know what metal he had in his blood, but there's too much fuel in there...it is...any of you could have [metal in his blood]. I can't rule out any version. [Reverend Shio] didn't have any enemies in the Patriarchy. Why would he have any? He's a locum tenens, a chorepiscopal bishop; why would he have an enemy," Iacob said.

"We are working to get China and India to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia," reads Netgazeti news. August 29, 2023.

This news is also superficial, without context, and the reader may not understand it - what the editorial team wants to say to its readers with this news "We are working to get China and India to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia," • Grigory Karasin • South Ossetia • Netgazeti.ge.

These materials are characterized by the same superficiality and lack of context:

1. Gharibashvili called China's approach to Russia • Ukraine war reasonable • Irakli Gharibashvili • Russia's War in Ukraine • Netgazeti.ge.
2. Putin met with the Chinese defense minister; they discussed cooperation - Putin met with the Chinese defense minister; they discussed cooperation • Russia • China • Netgazeti.ge.
3. China sends its representative to Ukraine to settle conflict • Russia's war in Ukraine • China • Netgazeti.ge.
4. Xi Jinping's visit has concluded - what did Russia and China agree on? • Russia • China • Netgazeti.ge.

ChineseStories



Media platform:	https://chinesestories.ge/
Facebook:	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063558728011
Monitoring period:	01.04.2023 – 01.11.2023
Monitor:	Nina Kheladze
Amount of studied content:	30
The topics of the pieces studied:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Study and exchange programs in China;2. history;3. Tourism;4. Politics, flights with Russia.

Important circumstance:

1. As the 2022 research showed, almost no material posted on the media website has a publication date. Accordingly, the social media address listed on the website is used to monitor the materials: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063558728011>.
2. The platform continues disseminating cultural, traditional, and educational content about China and operates in a more personal blog format than standard media.

As for China-related content, unlike in the previous monitoring period (2022), the platform mainly uses a Facebook page, and instead of textual content, we find video content. The content continues to have a positive tone; we find educational, cultural, and tourism content.

The platform shared an address by then-Prime Minister (30.07.2023) Irakli Gharibashvili and public gratitude to the President of China.

On the page, you will also find tourism content material, along with information about Chinese food and traditions. For example, "Nienkao (年糕) is a traditional Chinese sweet made of rice, also called rice cake by foreigners."

During the reporting period, the platform actively published content about tourism in China and Chinese tourists in Georgia. The content of the page states that China has so far "not done anything bad" to Georgia:

"A tourist is someone who comes, travels, has fun, spends money, and leaves. Often, people do not take my education and profession in China seriously. I am very sorry with people in this category, but:

1. China and the Chinese have not yet done anything wrong to Georgia and Georgians;

2. My homeland is Georgia, and if someone does something bad to it, I will not love that person, and I will not be like some non-state-minded traitor to the homeland."

Education

The media continues sharing information about educational opportunities in China with Georgian audiences.

According to the information published on the website, Zhejiang International Studies University announces admission in several directions. Still, in this particular case, there is no mention of a sponsored exchange or other type of program.

Even more about sponsored study programs in China is written on the pages of another media outlet we monitor, which we met for the first time in the form of shared content (during the monitoring period) on the China Stories Facebook page. https://chinesestories.ge/ka/54-chedziangis-saertashoriso-swavlebis-universiteti-acxadebs-studentebis-migbas.html?fbclid=IwAR0m5ToJyJ560ziFK_CN0xtBXVrZdvOzslrU-ysLTlxXu2Tmvoc8ctccv3Q

Georgia's Western integration, EU candidate status, and European course are apparent value choices of the platform; however, against this background, the media actively pays attention to the activities of the Chinese embassy in Georgia.

Media platform:	https://sinomedia.ge/
Facebook:	https://www.facebook.com/sinomedia.ge/
Monitoring period:	01.04.2023 – 01.11.2023
Monitor:	Nina Kheladze
The topics of the pieces studied:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. China's role in the global economy; 2. China's global peacekeeping role, military power and influence; 3. The United States and its confrontation with China; 4. Gastronomy and tradition, education and culture;

Main findings of the monitoring:

In the current monitoring period, unlike the previous one (2021), which coincided with a new coronavirus pandemic, when media content production has significantly decreased, the amount of content has increased, and China's economic and political role on the global scale is clearly outlined. It is noteworthy that along with the presentation of China's role in the global world, we see criticism of the US in similar content on the site, not only concerning the policy towards Taiwan.

The theme of education and culture is also used in some cases to show China's pivotal role in the world and its superiority over Western culture.

China's role in the global economy

International exhibitions of consumer equipment, China's high-tech development, economic growth support and new transportation projects, investment, railway infrastructure, bridge construction, automobile industry, and international exhibitions.

1. The article "New transportation projects to support economic growth" provides the following data:

"According to the latest Ministry of Transportation (China) data, transportation investment has notably increased over the past ten years. In 2021, the total investment amounted to 523.8 billion dollars, an increase of 50%."

"According to the government, many transportation projects are planned. Investment in the first batch of projects reaches 833.7 billion yuan." (Source: <https://sinomedia.ge/ახალი-სატრანსპორტო-პროექტ/>)

When reading an article with a strongly positive tone and elements of praise, it is difficult for the audience to remain indifferent to the country's economic development and its model.

2. Another article emphasizing the development of high technology and China's role in international trade focuses on the Consumer Products Expo scheduled to be held in China in early 2023. The article presents China's role in the consumer goods market in a superior quality. (Source: <https://sinomedia.ge/ხაიკუს-გამოფენა34/>)

"On April 11-15, a large-scale consumer products exhibition will be held on the Chinese island of Hainan. The exhibition platform is the best opportunity for global consumer goods companies to enter the Chinese market."

"An integral part of the exhibition is the Yuanxiao mascot, consisting of two Hainan gibbons. This year's new mascot design is known as 'Mechanical Yuanxiao,' which combines high technology, advanced production, and Hainan culture."

3. China's economic growth is one of the active thematic mechanisms showing the success of this country, for which the pandemic period is often taken as a benchmark, and growth is shown based on this benchmark. The tone of articles on this topic is entirely positive. Even when the appearance of a small hurdle is inevitable, the reason is the international environment and the domestic "inadequate demands" of other countries in terms of foreign trade and "weakening global growth." We find similar quotes in an article published on 27.04.2023 titled "China's Economy, the Path from Recovery to Growth." (Source: <https://sinomedia.ge/ჩინეთის-4567ეკონომიკა-2023-გზა-ა/>)

"In terms of exports, the country's foreign trade is currently under pressure, but China is expected to achieve its goal of stability and improvement in the quality of foreign trade within a year."

Although positive factors are emerging in China's economic performance, the foundation for economic recovery is still not solid. China's economy is facing many difficulties and challenges, including a difficult international environment, weakening global growth, insufficient domestic demand and structural problems that limit China's development."

China and Georgian media:

Meeting of Chinese Ambassador to Georgia Zhou Qian with Georgian media

The piece focuses on the views of China and a particular ambassador on conflicts, the Ukrainian-Russian war, etc. However, it is not apparent whether any journalist asked a critical question or what the Ambassador's response was. (Source: <https://sinomedia.ge/ჭოუ-ციენის-შეხვედრა/>)

China's global peacekeeping role, military power and influence

1. China's peace diplomacy and global role are presented regarding the conflict in Ukraine and negotiations between Saudi Arabia and Iran. It is emphasized that "China chooses peace" and supports "sovereignty." Among them, it is actively noted that China has clearly expressed its policy of supporting sovereignty towards Georgia.

"China chooses peace," - Chinese Ambassador to Georgia Zhou Jian said at a meeting with the media. The diplomat spoke about the need for peaceful settlement of conflicts in the world, including the war in Ukraine. As he explained, China chooses between peace and war, dialog and sanctions, fire and defuse the situation, between peace, dialog and de-escalation. Zhou Qian reiterated his support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and said that China also supports a negotiated settlement of territorial conflicts in Georgia. " (Source: <https://sinomedia.ge/ჭრე-ციენის-შეხვედრა/>)

2. China's growing influence in Central Asia and military interests

An interview with former Georgian Ambassador to China Mamuka Gamkrelidze analyzes the meeting between Putin and Xi Jinping and China's military activation as a counterweight to the Aukus organization. The respondent concludes that China's influence in the Central Asian region is growing, as evidenced by Xi Jinping's initiative to hold a summit of Central Asian states after his return from Moscow.

"Until now, military influence in this region belonged to Russia, while economic influence belonged to China. Now, the PRC's military importance has also increased significantly. This replacement process started after the U.S. left Afghanistan, which is what caused China to become more active in the Middle East. China's opening of one military base in Djibouti and two in Tajikistan, as well as the construction of a port in Pakistan's Gwadar, demonstrate its desire to establish itself as a world power," - he said. (Source: <https://sinomedia.ge/სი-ძინჯინგი-და-პუტინი/>)

3. China's military resources, exercises, high-tech combat weapons - in the content of this topic, the Sinomedia piece still sees a strong China and readiness to destroy the enemy in case of confrontation.

"The command forces are ready and able to confront the enemy if necessary and suppress both the separatist actions of "Taiwan independence" and foreign interference," the spokesman said. (Source: <https://sinomedia.ge/ერთობლივი-მახვილი/>)

4. China's special role is addressed in the article "Chinese President meets with ambassadors of 70 countries", which, in addition to quantitative dimensions, discusses China's global ideological role as a defender of "common values of humanity" emphasized.

"He also noted the country's commitment to protecting the common values of humanity, promoting understanding and friendship among different peoples, and jointly solving global problems." (Source: <https://sinomedia.ge/სის-შეხვედრა-ელჩებთან/>)

The United States and its confrontation with China

1. Taiwan

The material prepared in connection with the meeting of Georgian media with the Chinese Ambassador to Georgia also criticizes the U.S. policy regarding Taiwan.

"He (Chinese Ambassador to Georgia Zhou Qian) also spoke about the Taiwan problem and accused the U.S. of aggravating the situation. Qian compared the Taiwan problem to the problem of Abkhazia.

The Chinese Ambassador to Georgia criticized the U.S. for escalating the conflict by supplying weapons and also talked about the negative impact of the policy of intimidation by nuclear weapons." (Source: <https://sinomedia.ge/ჭოუ-ციენის-მეხვედრა/>)

2. Negotiations between Saudi Arabia and Iran

When presenting China as a global political player and a state playing a peaceful role, we often find that it is contrasted with America. In the aforementioned piece, the audience is informed about China's effectiveness in the negotiation process between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and at the same time, the audience is told that American diplomacy has failed.

"It was a big victory of Chinese diplomacy, while it was a failure of American diplomacy," said the interview respondent, Mamuka Gamkrelidze, secretary general of the European Democrats and former Georgian ambassador to China. (Source: <https://sinomedia.ge/სი-ძინფინგი-და-პუტინი/>)

The extensive interview also provides facts about Chinese military representations in Central Asia after the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan.

"This replacement process began after the U.S. left Afghanistan. This was the reason for China's intensification in the Middle East. The opening of one Chinese military base in Djibouti and two in Tajikistan, as well as the construction of a port in Gwadar (Pakistan), demonstrates China's desire to establish itself as a world power" - Mamuka Gamkrelidze, Secretary General of European Democrats, former Georgian Ambassador to China.

Gastronomy and tradition

Gastronomy, as an industry with substantial economic potential, is presented as part of the One Belt, One Road concept. The article also highlights the history and real-time demand for Lamian noodles and mentions China's Belt and Road Initiative, which is presented as an opportunity for Chinese Lamian noodle producers to "explore new business opportunities." (Source: <https://sinomedia.ge/ლამიენის-ატრია/>)

Education

1. During the reporting period, the media also worked with educational issues in addition to political and economic topics. However, even in the publication of content in this sphere, we read political content that continues to emphasize China's superiority in the confrontation between China and the West. The article "TSU graduates received full funding from Beijing University of Technology" tells of Georgian students who chose Chinese higher education over European higher education and traveled to China despite the pandemic.

"Although they were both offered the opportunity to do a postdoc at the prestigious Vilnius University after being invited by SUSTech, both Nino and Demetre refused to go to Vilnius and decided to return to China despite the difficulties associated with the pandemic (including quarantine, self-isolation, and many strict rules). The Chinese Embassy made an exception; the consulate issued them visas, and they both returned to China in March 2021." (Source: <https://sinomedia.ge/თსუ-ს-კურსდამთავრებუ45ლებ/>)

2. "Chinese Language Bridge", a joint event of the Confucius Institute of Free University and the Chinese Embassy, was also covered by Sinomedia during the reporting period. The default content has a highly positive tone, emphasizing the youth's interest in Chinese culture and language and their participation in joint activities between the two countries.

"In the second round, a quiz was held, with contestants answering questions about Chinese culture and language in Chinese and presenting various performances to the judges in the final part." (Source: <https://sinomedia.ge/თავისუფალ-უნივერსიტეტში2/>)

Culture

1. "Chinese children sing in Georgian while visiting the Embassy of Georgia" - multimedia material shows Chinese children singing in Georgian.

"A few days ago, the Embassy of Georgia in the People's Republic of China hosted the most beloved children who recently performed the Georgian children's song "Iao-Uao" on Beijing TV." (<https://sinomedia.ge/იაო-უაოს-მომღერალი-567ბავშვ/>)

2. Photo from a film exhibition dedicated to the 115th anniversary of Georgian cinematography, held in Beijing.



Source: <https://sinomedia.ge/პეკინში-გაიმართა-ქართული/>

Media platform: Sputnik-Georgia



Platform:	The news section of the media was studied
Facebook:	https://www.facebook.com/sinomedia.ge/
Monitoring period:	01.04.2023 – 01.11.2023
Monitor:	Nina Kheladze
Number of pieces studied:	58
The topics of the pieces:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Shanghai Cooperation Organization;2. Taiwan;3. U.S. troop withdrawal from Afghanistan;4. Covid 19 and a new strain;5. "Sensational" family Chinese medicine and useful [medicinal] plants;6. Electric cars;7. Discontent between the Biden administration and Europe;8. War in Ukraine;9. Beijing Olympics;10. Photo contest, with the option to fill out an application in Chinese;11. Space

Main findings of the monitoring:

Sputnik Georgia, a pro-Kremlin media outlet, acts as a platform for promoting China in Georgia and presenting it in a highly positive tone to the audience. Along with active Russian propaganda, Sputnik Georgia is an active tool for spreading the interests of China, which, along with actively discrediting the West, promotes its own version of creating a new geopolitical center through various topics. For this

purpose, it uses manipulative articles containing political analysis and easy-to-read content.

During the reporting period, China was the object of active coverage by the mentioned media, and not only in matters of direct political content. This media actively portrayed China as one of the most attractive and centuries-old cultures of traditional medicine, useful [medicinal] plants, and health care.

Observing Sputnik Georgia, one can conclude that during the reporting period, the media mentioned China exclusively in a positive context, regardless of the focus and news event.

The exception is the material discussing the boycott of the Winter Olympics in Beijing. In the article, the reader can see how many countries and for what reason are declaring a diplomatic boycott of the Olympics, including the Uyghurs issue named by the Australian government.

In addition to reporting in a positive tone, the pieces published on the pages of Sputnik Georgia reflect China's position in geopolitical and economic processes. They portray China as a powerful, fearless, rapidly developing country that is "not afraid of America."

"China welcomes cooperation with the U.S. but is not afraid of confrontation with it, and in case of confrontation, it will 'fight until victory,' said the country's Foreign Minister Wang Yi."

Trade between Georgia and the PRC (export of products from Georgia) and other economic cooperation: Chinese investments in the electric car sector

During the monitoring period, Sputnik Georgia wrote about China in positive and neutral tones, including space, the Chinese New Year, calligraphy, and painting contests.

"The contest, titled "Let's write a new chapter of China-Georgia friendship together and paint a bright future for the two countries," is held in honor of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries and strengthening friendship and ties between the two nations."

During the reporting period, Sputnik Georgia also published an FBI warning about Chinese espionage. *"FBI chief says Chinese spies are following companies everywhere."* The article does not cite China's official position. Still, a selection of quotes points to the PRC's unlimited resources to monitor everything *"in cities and towns, from Fortune 100 companies to startups - they are interested in everything—aviation, artificial intelligence, pharmaceutical products, etc."*

America, Russia, China, Europe

"NATO's insane strategy: on the way to double containment of Russia and China," an article posted in the analytical section of Sputnik Georgia, criticizes NATO and its strategy to strengthen Ukraine and its vision towards China.

"It is a bit surprising to see their confidence that the West has the strength to defeat Russia when it is clear to any realist that Moscow will not back down and give up its goals.

Even more interesting are NATO's goals and strategy through 2030. If Russia is the main threat, all forces should be directed to fight it. But in addition to the threat from Russia, the concept includes China for the first time, although not as an enemy."

Russia and China have changed Asia—the U.S. is losing it. The article develops the view that Asia and Asian problems should be handled by Asians themselves, including Russia as a "powerful Eurasian state."

"After the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, the era of direct external interference in the region's affairs is coming to an end - And it is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization that will assume full responsibility for its security."

When talking about geopolitical issues, the propaganda media tries to demonize the role of America and NATO and at the same time portray them as a weak, defeated geopolitical player, including Afghanistan as an example:

"No matter how much opposition exists among its individual members (of the Shanghai Union), it is almost always possible to find a mutually beneficial solution or not, an option that excludes confrontation - especially if without it, non-Asian powers will not be given the opportunity to provoke conflicts. What the U.S. is currently trying to do in India is pull it into the QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue involving the U.S., Japan, Australia, and India) format, which is driven by strongly anti-China objectives. Hopefully, the Afghan saga of the States will show India (which supports GaN and refuses to dialog with the Taliban) the perils of cooperating with the Americans on regional issues."

In the article "Putin's tundra is burning—Biden criticized the leaders of Russia and China," Sputnik Georgia offers its readers the criticism of the first persons of Russia and China by the U.S. President. Here, as a kind of exception, it provides an alternative position of the other side, which positively presents the leaders of Russia and China, who "refused to go to Glasgow because of the coronavirus pandemic." (Source: <https://sputnik-georgia.com/20211103/putins-tundra-ewvis-baidenmarusetisadacinetis-liderebi-gaakritika-261744852.html>)

"In addition to Putin, he also criticized Chinese leader Xi Jinping for refusing to attend the climate summit in Glasgow, calling it a mistake on their part."

"In contrast, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson expressed respect for the decision of the leaders of Russia and China, who refused to travel to Glasgow because of the coronavirus pandemic, Deutsche Welle writes. He also noted that a high-ranking Chinese delegation was attending the COP26 conference.

As for Vladimir Putin, he addressed the Glasgow Climate Summit via video broadcast and explained what measures are being taken in Russia to preserve forests."

Opinion: Biden allows himself a lot in Europe - in the publication with this title, the media developed the opinion about possible discontent between America and

Europe, which, according to the article, is related to the policies of the new U.S. President Joe Biden, although America's indifference to Europe, according to the media, was also formed under the two previous administrations. (Source: <https://sputnik-georgia.com/20211129/baidenma-sabolood-gaafuwa-haeri-evropasi-262458407.html>)

"To seriously go against the will of the United States seems to require a figure on the scale of Charles de Gaulle. He could give up the dollar, could withdraw the NATO headquarters and American bases from his country, could negotiate with China and the USSR on his own."

Sputnik Georgia often publishes the author's opinions, which, with complete bias, unethical epithets, and subjective views, carry a propaganda narrative about Russia, as if America has become poorer and economically much weaker than China and Russia.

"The lives of the American people are deteriorating rapidly; unprecedented inflation threatens to discredit the dollar and impoverish the country. The only chance for survival seems to be plundering rich countries like Russia and China." (Source: <https://sputnik-georgia.com/20211213/surt-tu-ara-amerikelebs-rusetan-omi-262820036.html>)

In materials related to the Olympics, Sputnik Georgia's content discusses the West's diplomatic boycott in a single context of the Olympics held in the Soviet Union and then in Russia when the West announced a diplomatic boycott of the Event.

"But, as before, the West uses such methods. First, they tried to boycott the Summer Olympics in Beijing in 2008 and then the Winter Games in Sochi in 2014. They also tried to punish the current Beijing Olympics diplomatically." (Source: <https://sputnik-georgia.com/20220203/didi-politikur-tamasebi-pekinsi-264112490.html>)

War in Ukraine

A few weeks before Russia launched a war in Ukraine (the article was published on November 29, 2021), Sputnik Georgia, in its review of U.S.-European cooperation (Opinion, by Alexander Khabarov), offers readers a narrative as if America has replaced France and Germany with Ukraine and is playing with the "Ukrainian detonator." (Source: <https://sputnik-georgia.com/20211129/baidenma-sabolood-gaafuwa-haeri-evropasi-262458407.html>)

"The United States has long ago pushed aside the French and Germans playing a supporting role, took Kyiv under its wing, and now it is playing with the Ukrainian detonator. If something happens there, all of Europe will have a problem."

In another piece offered in the opinion format (author: Victoria Nikiforova), the author uses the phrase "phantom country" as an epithet for Ukraine. Regarding Ukraine, the author uses several discriminatory, pejorative definitions, with the

determination corresponding to a failed state, which, just like in the previous article, is described as the object of manipulation by the United States, "loaded" with "explosives."

"For the last thirty years, it was a phantom country, a country shrouded in darkness, an eerie and ridiculous mirage, which, with its embroidered vyshyvankas, mova (Ukrainian language), and torchlight processions, loomed around the old Soviet gas pipelines. It was a country-pipe. Now, the pipe is empty, and all this mirage has dissipated like smoke. All that is left is "Ukraine", an occupied territory, a suitcase without a handle, which, in the last days before it is abandoned, the American masters hastily stuff with explosives. It is not even a pawn but a checker that Russia and America are moving in their Great Game."

The material, which was also made public almost two months before the start of the war, clearly points to Russia's plans concerning Ukraine and the escalation of this confrontation to the scale of the U.S.-Russian conflict. In an opinion piece published on the pages of Sputnik Georgia, the author refers to Ukraine as "Ukraine" (with English pronunciation) and wonders to what extent America is ready to go to war with Russia over Ukraine.

"This is a story about U.S.-Russian relations. It is the negotiations of our top officials, our latest warnings, and our military and diplomatic activity. Accordingly, the big question of our time is: What do Americans think about all this? Are they going to go to war for Ukraine? And if so, how seriously?"

In the same article, in the context of the war in Ukraine to discredit America and justify the planned invasion of Ukraine, we find an attempt to take away Ukraine's identity:

"Today, America is in danger of losing influence in a domino effect. In Washington, they cannot help but see that the good Taiwanese are pulling out Chinese flags from their stashes, and the honest Ukrainians are Russians."

After the war started by Russia in Ukraine on February 24, Sputnik Georgia mentions China in the context of Russian sanctions. Regarding Russia and the regions of Ukraine occupied by it, propaganda media offer readers the following wording:

"Russian President Vladimir Putin, in response to the requests of Donetsk and Luhansk to recognize their sovereignty, signed the relevant decrees on February 21".

CHINA'S INFLUENCE IN GEORGIA'S ACADEMIC SECTOR

Introduction - Strategic Partnership with China in the field of Educational

Among the soft power tools of the People's Republic of China, the exploitative actions carried out in a foreign state's academic and educational sectors occupy a distinguished place. Western countries who acknowledge the risks associated with the Chinese Communist Party's foreign influence operations, including in the sectors mentioned above, are consequently trying to create effective containment policies by closing Confucius Institutes and developing special guidelines. Meanwhile, the processes in Georgia have been developing in the opposite direction. The country has been looking for ways to increase relations with Chinese educational institutions (and beyond). It should be noted here that China-Georgia academic cooperation is already quite diverse. It includes research opportunities, exchange programs for students and staff, scientific programs, joint conferences and workshops, and a wide range of language, cultural, and joint Master's degree programs at both university and academic levels. However, on July 31, 2023, the PRC-Georgia Strategic Partnership Statement and the inclusion therein of provisions regarding the strengthening of ties in the fields of education and science gave rise to assumptions that the cooperation between the countries would reach new standards.

Specifically, here is what we read in paragraphs 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6 of the Strategic Partnership Statement:

3.4. The two sides will enhance their cooperation in science and higher education. They will promote exchange of teachers and students, strengthen cooperation in science and commercialization of new technologies and implement joint projects.

3.5. The two sides support universities in both countries in carrying out practical cooperation such as joint training programs, and encourage universities to make full use of high-quality digital education resources and combine online and offline channels for cooperation. The two sides will promote student exchange and joint cultivation by making good use of government scholarships and other channels.

3.6. Both sides attach importance to language exchange and cooperation, encourage schools of both countries to carry out Chinese and Georgian languages teaching, stand ready to strengthen exchanges and training of language teachers and support the building of Confucius Institutes (Classrooms)

Following the signing of the Strategic Partnership, significant efforts have been made to promote the teaching of the Chinese language in higher education programs and schools. For example,

- On December 4, 2023, under the agreement between the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia and the Government of Shandong Province of China, two more scholarships were allocated for Georgian students to allow them to study in China.

- On December 16, 2023, the Minister of Education of Georgia, Giorgi Amilakhvari, attended the closing event of the International Education Center, where he presented the awards to several countries, including the Chinese embassy. On the official website of the Ministry of Education, we read that through the Partnership Cooperation with China, the International Education Center successfully implements various academic programs.
- On April 11, 2024, Giorgi Amilakhvari met the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Georgia Chou Tsien. “At the meeting, the parties discussed the implementation, within the scope of the signed cooperation memorandum, of joint educational projects at the general education level and the ways to seek educational resources to promote the teaching of the Chinese language.”



The concrete measures implemented after the endorsement of the China-Georgia Strategic Partnership Statement indicate the readiness to undertake significant commitments to strengthening the two states' collaboration in education.

Sino-Georgian Academic Cooperation from the Georgian Media Perspective

Information regarding the Sino-Georgian academic and educational relations and the activities carried out within the scope of these relations receives little attention in the Georgian media. In this regard, particularly noteworthy and relevant is the online platform Sinomedia, created by Georgian graduates of Chinese universities, the platform we reviewed in our previous media report **“China’s “Wolf Warrior” Policy in the Media – the Case of Georgia,”** and which is actively promoting Chinese state educational initiatives, competitions, academic programs, language courses and other similar activities in Georgia. Within the research period, the information circulated by Sinomedia refers to three different Georgian universities, two of which run the Confucius Institute and the third one - the Confucius Classroom. The information published by Sinomedia refers to the accomplishments of Georgian

graduates in China, as well as international competitions and events held by Confucius Institutes in Georgia. For example,

- According to Sinomedia, on April 23, 2023, after completing their Master’s program at the Beijing Institute of Technology, the Tbilisi State University graduates started working in the molecular biology field at the Department of Pharmacology of the Medical Faculty of the Southern University of Science and Technology of China (Southern University of Science and Technology, SUSTech, Shenzhen). At the same time, they were actively engaged in research on the creation of RNA⁷ immunization technologies at SUSTech.
- On April 27, 2023, the Confucius Institute organized the Chinese Language Day event at the Free University, where the director of the institute, Su Kuoying, gave a presentation on Chinese calligraphy.



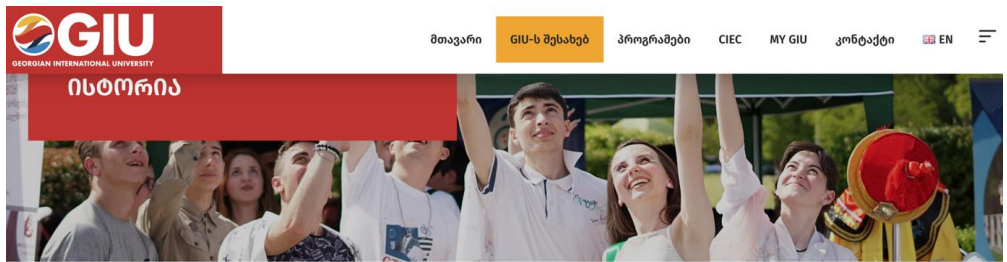
- Sinomedia offers articles on the fact that on June 9 and 10, 2023, an international competition - the Chinese Language Bridge - was held for schoolchildren by Confucius Institutes at Alte University and Free University, with the support of the Chinese Embassy in Georgia. The winners of the competition went on a study visit to China. Moreover, the final stage of the competition, which was held at Alte University, was attended by the Political Counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Georgia, Mrs. Xiu Haicheng, as well as Embassy representative Xiu Chongxin, representative of the Teach and Learn with Georgia project of the Ministry of Education of Georgia, Professor Avtandil Kiknadze of the China Studies Center, Professor Liu Kuangwen, Honorary Chair of the Public Relations Department of the Georgian Silk Road Culture Center, Alta University Manager, Tamta Nikoladze, Dean of the School of International Relations, Ani Gvetadze, Director of the Confucius Institute, Chang Wengang and directors of the Kutaisi Confucius Class, Giorgi Datuashvili and Chu Zhenping.

⁷ RNA - ribonucleic acid is a single-stranded nucleic acid that "carries out" code instructions in the DNA. Link: <https://www.genome.gov/genetics-glossary/RNA-Ribonucleic-Acid>

Despite the scarcity of information on cooperation in education, Sinomedia obviously is not the only media that caught our attention. From the traditional media records, it is essential to remember the news week that preceded the signing of the Strategic Partnership. In particular, Imedi TV and other government channels dedicated long and extensive stories to the anticipated visit of Prime Minister Gharibashvili to China, the plans for the next visit, and finally, unsurprisingly, the channel intensely covered the visit itself. Among the crucial events that came under special attention from the Georgian media was the opening ceremony of Shota Rustaveli's bust at Beijing University, which was complemented by the statement of the Minister of Education of Georgia, Giorgi Amilakhvari. According to the statement, "Georgia is moving to the highest stage of relations with China, this is a strategic partnership, and it is within the framework of the Strategic Partnership that cooperation in the direction of education and science is also expanding. According to Giorgi Amilakhvari, the rapprochement of Georgian and Chinese universities and financing of exchange programs for students and professors will create even more opportunities for Georgian education and science." Based on the statement, we can assume that in the next few years, China-Georgia academic relations will deepen, which automatically implies that the influence of the People's Republic of China in this field will grow against the backdrop of complete disregard by Georgian educational institutions of risk factors related to such kind of cooperation.

Chinese Rebranding of the Georgian University

The key novelty of the academic part of the research is the connections of Guram Tavartkiladze Teaching University in China. Since June 14, 2023, Guram Tavartkiladze Teaching University underwent a rebranding and currently operates as the Georgian International University - GIU.



საქართველოს საერთაშორისო უნივერსიტეტი – GIU უკვე მრავალი წელია, იმ მდიდარი ტრადიციების გამგრძელებელია, რომელსაც, თავის დროზე, უმაღლესი სასწავლებლის დარსებისას ჩაეყარა საფუძველი და დღემდე ამ პრინციპების ერთგული რჩება. უნივერსიტეტი მზნად ისახავს, შექმნას ინოვაციური ცოდნის პლატფორმა საერთაშორისო საგანმანათლებლო სივრცეში, უზრუნველყოს პრაქტიკულ კვლევებზე დაფუძნებული მაღალი ხარისხის განათლება, სტუდენტებისა და პერსონალის საერთაშორისო ურთიერთობების დიაპაზონის გაფართოება და დივერსიფიცირება.



Since 2008, a plethora of changes have been made in terms of the name, logo and other similar issues and in relation to the shares of the educational institution.

Even though both the owners and the amount of their shares in the university have often changed, it is worth emphasizing that in July 2020, the company, called *Georgia International Education Investment* (r/c: 406274008) became one of the owners of the university with 38% of shares. Soon, on July 7, 2020, the latter became the owner of the controlling shares of the educational institution (90% of shares). Eventually, even before the rebranding, the Georgia International Education Investment fully acquired the university and became its sole owner.

Georgia International Education Investment is particularly interesting to us since, from the moment of its establishment until today, its 100% share owner has been a citizen of the People's Republic of China, **Kuang Zengzhong**. We need to acknowledge that the same person is associated with a large international educational holding - **China Foreign Education Group**⁸ - which, according to the official website of the GIU, became the university's founder in 2020. As stated on the Chinese International Education Group website, it is this Chinese educational agency that Guram Tavartkiladze Teaching University merged with.

Its education industry

Higher education: four undergraduate

Guangzhou Foreign-related Vocational University (in preparation), Hainan Foreign-related Chinese Vocational University (in preparation), Xinyang Foreign-related Vocational University (in preparation), Georgia Tbilisi University of Education (merger and acquisition)



The same holding founded The Chinese Institute of International Education, which has an office at the Georgian International University. It should also be noted that the director of Georgia International Education Investment LLC is Eliso Elisashvili, who also used to hold various leadership positions both at the Georgian International University and at Guram Tavartkiladze Teaching University.

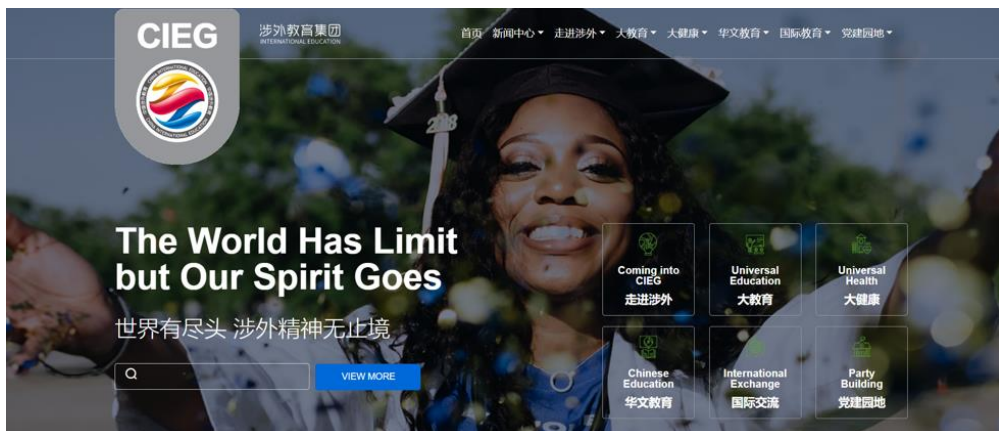
It has to be specifically mentioned here that on July 6, 2020, the educational institution, then still known as Guram Tavartkiladze Teaching University, applied to the Public Registry and requested to keep confidential information such as the purchase price determined by the share acquisition agreement and its payment

⁸ China Foreign Educational Group is an organization founded in Hong Kong in 1999. It has been carrying out various types of educational activities worldwide for 25 years. On their website we read: "The group adheres to the „World Begins Here“ school philosophy, implements the international development strategy of 'Export and Import', promotes Chinese education in the Belt and Road Initiative member states, and builds an international vocational education system aimed at fostering competitive students at the international level." For more information see: https://www.ciegr.com/zjsw/introduction-to-cieg/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAR2F2VpSC8N0I3N73vwZ-NllyS5IWJq9F8-p6o503TDLqdl1OhX8RGAP2SQ_aem_AUKxwPq2l2JE9j6wulQHtrVXq2gTThnRIK1cjD5h5BD27BP_WHmtaevnqJ61lrioPOXkK2ruiPCORDA5FLURuE1d

terms during the sale of shares. The university pointed out that the latter was a commercial secret and did not constitute public information - the argument was endorsed by the Public Register, and appropriate actions were taken. (See the decision of the National Agency of Public Registry # B20051194/3 (11/07/2020))

As mentioned earlier, according to the GIU official website, the owner/investor and the president of the board of directors of China International Education Group is a Chinese citizen **Kang Zheng**. It should be noted that this is the same person who, according to the extract from the Register of Entrepreneurs and Non-entrepreneurial (Non-commercial) Legal Entities, is indicated as the owner of Georgia International Education Investment LLC. According to his message, which is also available on the website, it is with the support of the China International Education Group that GIU can take its place among the most advanced and sought-after universities internationally. In his message, he also emphasizes that students will be able to learn Asian languages, including Chinese, along with English, which will render them more competitive in the international market. The university's international partners are the main gateway to the global market. It should be noted that after Ukraine, it is with the Chinese authorities that the university signed international partnership agreements. In particular, the list of international partners includes:

- Ancient Wines (China) <https://geocultureasia.org/>
- Georgian Culture Asia Association (China) <https://geocultureasia.org/>
- China International Education Group (China) <https://www.ciegr.com/>
- Guangzhou International Economics College (China) https://www.gziec.org/?page_id=17213 (represents the affiliated college of China International Education Group)
- TANG International Education Group (China) <https://www.linkedin.com/company/tang-international-education-group/>





The Georgia International University also actively cooperates with Chinese agencies in Hong Kong. One of them is the leading Chinese state television channel **ViuTV**, whose representatives visited GIU in December 2023 and filmed the university students together with Hong Kong students in a TV series. In addition, during the same period, the chancellor of GIU, Eli Elisashvili, went to Hong Kong to participate in the fourth International World Chinese Language Conference. During the visit, she signed a memorandum of understanding with China's Belt and Road International Cooperation Development Working Committee. According to the memorandum, the parties will cooperate to establish the Belt and Road training and re-education center.



Appendix 1

Data from 233 media companies (television, radio, etc.) were processed. According to the results of the research, among media owners, three media outlets out of 233 companies were affiliated with representatives of the business sector of the People's Republic of China.

Cortes Gidago LLC

- Identification number: 204907985, established on – 01.12.1997.
- Director of the company - Mikhail Tarakhchev 01024024195.
- Frequency (MHz) - 96.3;
- under the brand name **Radio Jako** - sports direction.
- According to the radio's Facebook page, regional broadcasting was suspended after November 2022 and resumed in January 2024. Radio Jako is owned 3% by Cortes Gidago LLC.
- Explanation: Representatives of the People's Republic of China are recorded in GBTIMES OY company in Finland, which owns 51% (controlling stake)

MS Group LLC

- 404941756 - established on 20.04.2012.
- Director of the company - Konstantine Tarakhchev 01024035088.
- Broadcast topics - medicine/sport
- Brand name - **Radio Muza Fm 95.9**
- Founded by former First Lady of Georgia (2004-2013) Sandra Roelofs [1].
- Broadcast languages: Georgian, English, Russian, Abkhazian.
- License issued in 2017 until 2027.

Hamburg LLC

- Identification number 405179925 - established on 06.12.2016
- In 2019, according to the most recent extract, the company's director is Nana Alavidze 35001075000, and the owner is Mikhail Tarakhchev 01024024195, who is directly represented in the previous two companies. Also, as of 2018, Mikhail Tarakhchev is listed as the director, and the owner is 404941756, MS Group Limited Liability Company, 50% owned by Jia Huilan China - G61683631 and the remaining 50% is owned by Mikhail Tarakhchev.
- Type of broadcasting - private radio broadcasting No. B110;
- Technical parameters of broadcasting: FM 98.5
- Brand name - **Radio Shokoladi**
- The license was suspended in 2022 due to non-payment of the license fee, although broadcasting has been discontinued since 2021.

The research process showed that those media outlets (Cortes Gidago LLC, MS Group LLC, Hamburg LLC) in which Chinese influence was noticeable have not yet renewed their broadcasting licenses.

Taking into account the methodology, in order to study the share of the People's Republic of China and its affiliated business sectors in the advertising market of Georgia, the databases of the National Communications Commission were processed in 2023, which reflects all companies and individuals ordering advertising (integration, sponsorship) to broadcasters. From the processed data of 2427 advertisers, it was found that 2334 are registered in Georgia. Out of 93 foreign companies, 8 are affiliated with China:

Hualing international special economic zone

I/C.: 404934381

Date of registration: 15.03.2012.

Director: Xiaojin Shao, P/N: 01092004214.

Basisbank I/C: 203841833

Date of registration: 11.09.1996.

Directors (as of 2021):

General Director - David Tsaava, 62001023793;

Director of Operations - Rati Dvaladze, 01020004938;

Commercial Director - Giorgi Gabunia, 01030020654;

Deputy General Director - Hwei Li, G38335210 /China/;

Chairman/Member of the Supervisory Board: Zun Zhang, G48711373 /China/;

Member of the Supervisory Board: Zaiki Mi, G20517221 /China/ (Co-Chair);

Member: Zhu Ning, 452098387 /USA/ (Co-Chair);

Member: Zaza Robakidze, 01024006266 /Georgia;

Member: Mia Mi, 565658045 /USA/ (Co-Chair)

BB Leasing – 406233534 – Georgia

Date of registration: 27.12.2017.

- Management body: Supervisory Board.

- Chairman/member: Zaiki Mi, 01192005128 /China/

- Vice-Chairman/member: David Tsaava, 62001023793

- Vice-Chairman/Member: Hui Li, 01692005600 /China

Explanation: In the case of Bazisbank and BB Leasing - Hwei Li is in the Management

Embassy of the People's Republic of China

I/C: 203853231, Georgia.

- China

Justin

I/C: 406294987, Georgia.

Director/Owner: Jianru Liu (G54182547, 01391004510)

Hualing Vibrant

I/C: 406274678.

Director: Yubo Chao, 01691036345 /China/

Owner, 100% shareholder, manager of JSC Hualing International Special economic zone, 404934381

Hualing, building materials hypermarket

I/C: 406263378

Director: Yifan Su, 01691025313 /China/

Owner: 100% shareholder, JSC Hualing International Special economic zone, 404934381 100%

Miso Intellexpress (former Eurocredit)

I/C: 202353176

Prior to 2015, the partners included ZUK CHINA STONE WORKS LIMITED LLC, Hong Kong, 1574286.

Taking into account the methodology in the second stage of the study, we additionally processed data on 566 companies for the year 2023 from the Communications Commission's additional database, where information on quarterly payers of more than 7 thousand GEL to Georgian media is available.

As a result of mutual comparison, it is revealed that the number of people ordering advertising or other types of services in the media for an amount above GEL 7000 has increased compared to the previous reporting year:

I quarter of 2023		
TV Company Pirveli	Hualing, building materials hypermarket (406263378) - Georgia	Advertising 7,000-50,000
Public broadcaster	Basisbank (203841833) - Georgia	Sponsorship 7,000-50,000

II quarter of 2023		
TV Imedi	Hualing international special economic zone (404934381) - Georgia	Advertising 7,000-50,000
TV Company Pirveli	Hualing, building materials hypermarket (406263378) - Georgia	Advertising 7,000-50,000

III quarter of 2023		
Public broadcaster	Basisbank (203841833) - Georgia	Sponsorship 7,000-50,000

IV quarter of 2023		
TV Imedi	Hualing, building materials hypermarket (406263378) - Georgia	Product placement 7,000-50,000
Media-holding Georgian Times	Embassy of the People's Republic of China (203853231) - Georgia	Advertising 7,000-50,000
Public broadcaster	Basisbank (203841833) - Georgia	Sponsorship 7,000-50,000

In 2023, the Public Broadcaster's data for each quarter shows Basisbank as a source of funding - with a mark of 7000-50000.

As of the second quarter of 2023, Chinese Medicine Center - China, which is mentioned under the same name in the customer register, entered the base of quarterly payers for more than GEL 7000. As a result of checking of the company at the National Agency of Public Registry, it was found that Chinese Medicine Center LLC "Chinese Medicine Center - Beijing", was founded on 01.12.2022 by David Tshuguryan at the address: Vladimir Lobzhanidze Street N1, Tbilisi. The sole director of the company is David Tshuguryan, a citizen of Armenia - AV0483515. The mentioned LLC has various types of advertising and media placements on local TV channels.

II quarter of 2023		
Silknet	Chinese Medicine Center (406390873) - China	Advertising 7,000-50,000

III quarter of 2023		
	Chinese Medicine Center (406390873) - China	Advertising 7,000-50,000
TV Formula	Chinese Medicine Center (406390873) - China	Advertising 7,000-50,000

IV quarter of 2023		
TV Company Pirveli	Chinese Medicine Center (406390873) - China	Advertising 7,000-50,000
TV Formula	Chinese Medicine Center (406390873) - China	Advertising 7,000-50,000

Appendix 2

Excerpts from the focus groups:

"I lived in South Korea for five years and felt the Chinese propaganda there, a combination of soft and hard power. Different tactics. Global Times is a Chinese propaganda international media. Real reports are written here, openly, unlike Chinese state agencies."

"I had a negative intersection with China in the academy; Scientific journals were launched en masse, pretended to work in the United States, offered to join the editorial board, and finally said that publication in the journal was payable. There were doubts about credibility. It was more business than science"

"Being in China, I tried all the characteristic features of China, including access to information; I even searched for myself using a VPN and could not find it." Soviet behavior. A large photo of Putin at a research center, a multimedia photo of Putin turning into a photo of his meeting with Xi Jinping."

"Along with Russia, I have been actively noticing China in the central news spaces for the last two years, and the topic has become even more active in parallel with the failure of our EU membership candidacy. Georgian Dream started to look for some alternatives, and the media also encouraged this."

"The first contact I had with employees of Chinese state-owned companies was in 2018 in Kharagauli, when a subsidiary of China State Railways was doing railroad work there. Workers accused this company of violating labor conditions. There, it looked good there - what China is all about. Last year was the first time I noticed the concept of China as the new center of gravity in the pro-government media."

"The attitude toward Russia is different. I don't have the same about China, only when it is combined with Russia. For example, learning Chinese sounds good, but learning Russian sounds shameful."

"China claims global influence and is also very wary of a tandem with Russia. Take Africa, for example, the replacement of Russian money, including in the media. After that, some donors felt Africa was lost. But it may not be bad for Africa domestically."

"In my opinion, China as an object of political analysis is very dangerous, a threat to a system based on rules and, secondly, it is a system based on undemocratic values."

"That Russia and China will act in combination in Georgia is a realistic scenario. China does not pursue a cast-iron policy like Russia, but uses mainly economic tools. The Asian Development Bank cooperates well with non-democratic regimes. We have to be careful: debt loop, Sri Lanka example."

"I don't even recall a negative talk show that asked: what we are doing, people."

"Our media is vulnerable. If big money comes from China, what, can't they buy it?"

"A student told me that we have Chinese media, paying my salary. If there is money, we will have a pro-Mongolian one created. I think China has started an aggressive policy, it is no longer shy."

"Georgian media should not be firefighters in today's politics. China will be, it is the second world economy, Georgian media should show this globally. Today there is an anti-Western China, tomorrow it can be different. Western media tell you: yes, we should have trade, but with round-the-clock caution."

"Adjara has always been interesting to China, for example, with its tea culture."

From the point of view of education, it is important that since 2016, relations and contacts with the Chinese educational space have intensified. In 2016, the ambassador visited the university, and several agreements were signed. Several scientists were also in China working on biodiversity issues. In addition, one professor of international relations was in China to deepen ties. In 2023, the Chinese ambassador visited the university; a memorandum has not yet been signed but is planned. In 2020, he was invited by the Dean of the Faculty of Human Sciences, the topic of language teaching was discussed, and then it was decided to develop a Chinese language program, which is still an elective course today. Students don't show much interest, but China is interested in the university".

"For me, my first contact with China is the Silk Road and the culture, development and profound philosophy that follows this path. When addressing this nation and country, we must always consider its depth. The West is always wrong about one thing, it does not know deeply the mentality of the countries it opposes, it happens with Russia, it happens with China. It is a very industrialized country. Here, the new generation may have reflexes at the mention of China with low-quality, poisonous substances and objects."

"Danger, China is coming with the eastern expansion; it's a patient expansion. The danger, which is called the Chinese danger plus China, is simultaneously a balance, a deterrent for Russia. The Chinese threat could come into this process; it's all very dangerous."

"Against the background of the Ukrainian-Russian war, interest in Georgia is even greater. The port of Anaklia is a direct example of this. Danger comes from China, as well as good. It requires a wise policy. China cannot be completely ignored and cannot be kept out."

"We have to separate the educational space and the economic space, etc. (China) is so active from a technological point of view that it will be perfect to jointly implement many interesting projects, take internships, and share their technologies."

"All this cannot be accepted blindly, and admission to the educational space should be cautious. We are a very small nation, and maintaining this balance is crucial to preserving our identity. It will be very difficult to ignore them completely today. What is required is caution, not neglect. The same is true for Chinese language teaching. Engaging and partnering in our educational space with our interests in mind. Opening up cultural space. Relations should be built according to the Euro-Atlantic direction".

"The Republic of China was the first republic to recognize Georgia's independence, one of the first. China is among the top five countries that are important economic supporters and partners."

"We are a small country, and we need the support of big countries with strong economies. Is that a positive or a negative? I would say it's negative because it's still a communist country."

"[The Chinese company] had extensive contact regarding Rikoti. Because of the different terrain, deep research is needed. Still, the current projects are superficial. What happened last winter was due to this factor. Chinese companies deserve a low evaluation."

"If you don't have Tik Tok, you can't be a businessman, you can't succeed. I have Tik Tok". I learn about Chinese culture through this platform. Whoever owns the social network controls everything. Cyberwar is more important than physical war."

"Today we have an ideological war, each state is trying to impose its ideology on the other, so the Tik Tok platform is a way to impose its ideology. We are talking about a large scale here. Almost more than half of the people around me use Tiktok."

"TikTok is just an entertainment platform targeted at Generation Z and has become a source of income, replacing television. The algorithm is perfect. Registration is easy; one user can create multiple accounts. In terms of personal data, it is vulnerable like the others. I didn't realize it was Chinese because it's free space, although negative content is prevalent."

"This is a communist state that has close relations with our main enemy. We should not have a very close policy with it; as a Georgian, I prefer to receive investments from the West rather than from China, which in the future may absorb our small country economically, although this does not mean that we should ban everything Chinese."