

MONITORING REPORT ON MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU 12-POINT PLAN





THE EU 12-POINT PLAN

1. Address the issue of political polarisation, through ensuring cooperation across political parties in the spirit of the April 19 agreement;
2. Guarantee the full functioning of all state institutions, strengthening their independent and effective accountability as well as their democratic oversight functions; further improve the electoral framework, addressing all shortcomings identified by OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe/Venice Commission in these processes.
3. Adopt and implement a transparent and effective judicial reform strategy and action plan post-2021 based on a broad, inclusive and cross-party consultation process; ensure a judiciary that is fully and truly independent, accountable and impartial along the entire judicial institutional chain, also to safeguard the separation of powers; notably ensure the proper functioning and integrity of all judicial and prosecutorial institutions, in particular the Supreme Court and address any shortcomings identified including the nomination of judges at all levels and of the Prosecutor-General; undertake a thorough reform of the High Council of Justice and appoint the High Council's remaining members. All these measures need to be fully in line with European standards and the recommendations of the Venice Commission.
4. strengthen the independence of its Anti-Corruption Agency bringing together all key anti-corruption functions, in particular to rigorously address high-level corruption cases; equip the new Special Investigative Service and Personal Data Protection Service with resources commensurate to their mandates and ensure their institutional independence;

5. Implement the commitment to “de-oligarchisation” by eliminating the excessive influence of vested interests in economic, political, and public life;
6. Strengthen the fight against organised crime based on detailed threat assessments, notably by ensuring rigorous investigations, prosecutions and a credible track record of prosecutions and convictions; guarantee accountability and oversight of law enforcement agencies.
7. Undertake stronger efforts to guarantee a free, professional, pluralistic and independent media environment, notably by ensuring that criminal procedures brought against media owners fulfil the highest legal standards, and by launching impartial, effective and timely investigations in cases of threats against safety of journalists and other media professionals;
8. Move swiftly to strengthen the protection of human rights of vulnerable groups, including by bringing perpetrators and instigators of violence to justice more effectively;
9. Notably consolidate efforts to enhance gender equality and fight violence against women;
10. Ensure the involvement of civil society in decision-making processes at all levels;
11. Adopt legislation so that Georgian courts proactively take into account European Court of Human Rights judgments in their deliberations;
12. Ensure that an independent person is given preference in the process of nominating a new Public Defender (Ombudsperson) and that this process is conducted in a transparent manner; ensure the Office's effective institutional independence.

INTRODUCTION

On June 23, the European Council approved the decision of the European Commission of June 17, according to which, instead of the candidate status of the European Union, Georgia was **granted a "European Perspective"**. At the same time, it was agreed in Brussels to offer a package of 12-point recommendations as a precondition for Georgia to obtain its candidate status.

A firm statement from the Georgian authorities on meeting the established conditions immediately followed the decision of the European Council. The government on the one hand and the parliamentary representation of the ruling party on the other hand officially announced the commencement of works on the implementation of 12 recommendations.

In particular, on July 1, at the central office of the Georgian Dream, the Chairman of the ruling party, Irakli Kobakhidze presented a plan for the implementation of the 12-point recommendations posited by the European Commission necessary to obtain the candidate status.

"The ruling team will ensure the implementation of the 12 points outlined by the European Union in due time and with the appropriate quality," - Irakli Kobakhidze stated at the press briefing (see the Georgian Dream vision of the implementation of each recommendation outlined by the European Commission).

One of the first requirements of the 12-point plan is to soothe the political environment in the country, the so-called "depolarization." Along with informing the public, especially in accordance with the call to depolarize the public domain and political process, special importance is given to the role of the third sector and the media in this process. That is why, in the process of monitoring the implementation of the 12-point plan, we consider it important to describe and evaluate the media coverage, discussions, and analytical content concerning the implementation of the recommendations that the Georgian media presents to the population.

The media monitoring carried out by the organization Virtual Democracy Academy in cooperation with Civic IDEA aimed to study:

- ✓ **How frequently and in what tone (positive/negative/neutral) have televisions and online media covered the process of implementing the 12 recommendations;**
- ✓ **Whether according to the tone of the coverage, there was any bias towards any issue or a position on the part of televisions and online media;**
- ✓ **To what extent the work on the plan was at the center of media attention and in what form was the information distributed to the public;**
- ✓ **Whether a certain balance was maintained between various points of the recommendations in disseminating information to the public or if the media prepared stories and analytical materials only on some specific points;**
- ✓ **Whether the balance was maintained in communicating to the public the positions of different political entities, etc.**

To study these issues, the non-governmental organization - Civic IDEA carried out media monitoring of several television stations and news agencies within the scope of the Project: **"Civil Monitoring of Accountability, Transparency and Anti-Corruption Activities within the Framework of the 12 Recommendations of the European Union."**

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

As part of media monitoring, selected media outlets were monitored taking into account both quantitative and qualitative research components.

For the quantitative research, attention was focused on how often and in what tone (positive, neutral, negative) the implementation of 12 recommendations was reported in the selected media.

For the qualitative research, attention was focused on how the policy of the selected media outlet was followed in the coverage of the issue and whether there was a leaning towards any issue or position. Whether the work on all 12 recommendations was conveyed equally and whether there were cases of unbalanced coverage.

The media monitoring took place between 1 October and 30 December 2022.

The chosen media for the monitoring purposes:



Within the project, the monitoring of the main news broadcasts and political talk shows of four TV channels, as well as three news agencies was carried out.

✓ TV Pirveli programs:

- "Pirvelebi" - the leading news program
- The "News of the Day"
- The "Reaction"
- The "Political news"
- The "Public Policy"
- The "First Line"

✓ Imedi TV programs:

- The "Chronicle" - the leading news program
- The "Imedi LIVE"
- The "Imedi Week"

✓ Public broadcaster programs:

- "Moambe" - the leading news program
- The "Topic of the Day"
- The "Urgent topic on Saturday"
- The "Moambe of the week"
- The "Independent Concept"

✓ PalitraneWS TV programs:

- PalitraneWS - the leading news program
- The "Resume"
- The "360 degrees"
- The "Independent Studio"
- The "Political space"

✓ Information news Agency - The "Interpress News" - interpressnews.ge

✓ „Tabula“ – tabula.ge

✓ „Pirveli“ – pia.ge

THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE MONITORING:

- ✓ The monitoring showed that of 12 recommendations, the issue of "deoligarchization" and all the relevant work on the "deoligarchization" law proved to be the most popular among Georgian media organizations. The mentioned subject was covered most often and with different interpretations by various media outlets. The media's interest in the subject increased as in the proposed legislation, the owners of media outlets, along with other persons, became the target of the proposed legislation;
- ✓ Broadcasting media is extremely polarized. Some broadcasters are biased in favour of the government and its positions, while others are biased in favour of the opposition; **Tmedi TV** covered the EU recommendations extensively. However, the issue itself was not presented to the viewers on many sides and in a balanced manner. The channel was biased towards the government and, therefore, the issue was covered in a tone supporting the government's position. However, the opposition was only mentioned negatively and as a player impeding the country's progress toward European integration. The TV presenters and journalists did not shy away from a cynical attitude towards the opposition, nongovernmental sector, MEPs, and ambassadors. The TV channel did not invite representatives of the opposition party to its programs (only the political party Girchi and the party Citizens were invited);
- ✓ **TV Pirveli** covered the topic of the 12 recommendations of the European Union in a weak and unilateral way, and it is just to note that the representatives of the government, the ruling party refused to visit the TV company. The channel carried only the opposition opinions in its talk shows, while the government's position was offered to viewers in its news broadcasts, albeit in a negative context. TV Pirveli strongly criticizes the government, and the Government's European integration policy has been regarded as negative - obstructing the country's progress;
- ✓ **Palitraneews TV** stood out with a more balanced and neutral tone when presenting the 12-point plan. They covered the views of both the government and the opposition, as well as representatives of the nongovernmental sector. However, most of the news were trivial statements of the government or the opposition representatives. The subject of the 12 recommendations for a few times was the main topic of programs in political "talk shows", and these programs were balanced in content. No bias towards any political party was apparent on the channel while covering the issues. Representatives from different political groups participated in the programs and diversity of opinions

was more or less preserved. However, it should be noted that often the last guest on the program was a government representative. There were no debates on the channel;

- ✓ **Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB)** has spent considerable time on the issue of obtaining the candidate status and the process of implementing the recommendations of the European Union. The broadcaster had several attempts to conduct the coverage of the issue with less intensity, but at the same time – in an unbiased way. However, it was characterized by a tendency toward the government's positions and by more or less loyal attitudes. In addition, they frequently devoted time to the positions of government representatives, both in the main news program and in political talk shows. There is a tendency on the channel to end the stories with assessments by the leaders of the ruling party, the Georgian Dream;
- ✓ Strong political polarization was less felt in online media compared to TV media. However, one of the three selected agencies - the **pia.ge** stood out for its loyal attitudes towards the government, by a positive tone of coverage, while **tabula.ge** expressed less interest in presenting the process in general and was more characterized by a negative tone of coverage. As far as **interpressnews.ge** is concerned, it covered almost all news from all parties. The tone of the coverage was mostly neutral, albeit trivial;
- ✓ The online media outlets selected during the monitoring actively presented the subject of monitoring (work on the 12 recommendations) (except for the Tabula);
- ✓ The biggest challenge of the online media was the superficial coverage of the work on the 12 recommendations; The news agencies selected for monitoring were not able to cover the issues in depth and in many ways.

MONITORING OF TV CHANNELS:

IMEDI TV



Among the TV outlets selected for monitoring, the Imedi TV spent most of its airtime on the recommendations of the European Union and the European perspective, although it covered the topic positively only in connection to the government's position. The channel showed strong sympathy towards the ruling team and the government, while a negative context was used in relation to the opposition. Here, the tone of the coverage was ironic and contained elements of smear. When covering the opposition, the nongovernmental sector, and several MEPs, journalists' texts frequently used cynical expressions.

Of 12 recommendations of the European Union, the leading news release, the "**Chronicle**" devoted most of its time to the **law on "deoligarchization"**. In total, twenty stories were dedicated to this coverage, equivalent to 112 minutes.

20 stories =
112 minutes

Story titles and **narrative**:

- ✓ "Opposition against the deoligarchization law";
- ✓ "Deoligarchization and the trap of the opposition";
- ✓ "Deoligarchization – opposition in dead-end",
- ✓ "The Radicals protecting the oligarchs - what did Bezhashvili write in the alternative deoligarchization law?"
- ✓ "The opposition felt threatened. The demand for deoligarchization has subsided", and the ruling team is still in charge of the implementation of European recommendations. The "National Movement" writes its own version, the others cannot agree with each other..."
- ✓ "The radical opposition discovered at the end that the law was a threat to them, and they no longer like the model similar to that of Ukrainian law, just as the American ambassador does not like it either..."
- ✓ "The opposition, which demanded the deoligarchization draft law, found itself in a dead end".
- ✓ "This is the case when the Ukrainian model is not acceptable to them because this model creates a danger for them and for the funds from which a large part of the opposition is supplied. The oligarchs found themselves where they did not expect to be, and therefore the mood of the opposition is known in advance. It is not easy for them to refuse the money from

Kezerashvili, who was enriched with money stolen from the Georgian army."

- ✓ "The radical part of the opposition wants to harm Ivanishvili, but as soon as they realized that the law would affect Kezerashvili and others in the opposition, they no longer support it."
- ✓ "The opposition is in its own trap... depends on Kezerashvili's finances."

The narrative of almost all stories tended to be anti-opposition and pro-government.

On the 12th recommendation of the European Union - the **procedure for electing the Public Defender**, Imedi TV reported 16 stories, i.e., 78 minutes in total.

16 stories =
78 minutes

Main **narrative**: "Achieving consensus on a common candidate will be difficult. The opposition wishes that the 12th European Union recommendation is not implemented"... "Is the selection of a candidate for the Public Defender going to be sacrificed the interests of the radicals?" "It was an unprecedentedly transparent process and the government gave the trump card to the opposition - it did not put forward its own candidate; however, the opposition gave the government an ultimatum and offered to choose only from the 3 candidates named by them, which the government does not agree with and says that it will not comply with ultimatums." ["The opposition ultimatum concerning the election of the Ombudsman"](#) - the ruling party offered the opposition to choose between five candidates, but what they get as the answer is an ultimatum. The last round of consultations did not yield any results/the Georgian Dream expects the opponents to soften their ultimatum and the issue will be discussed at the spring session."

Imedi TV dedicated 11 stories to the second recommendation of the European Union – **Electoral reform and parliamentary oversight**, equivalent to 47 minutes of air time.

11 stories =
47 minutes

Narrative: "The radical opposition did not even support the "electoral reform" - the changes prepared according to the European recommendation".

Narrative: "The reform fully reflects and takes into account the observations and recommendations of OSCE/ODHIR, the Venice Commission, and the opposition, but the radicals still do not support it."

The third recommendation of the European Union – **judicial reform**, incorporates the reform of the judiciary, the procedure for electing the Prosecutor General, and the transparent appointment of judges and members of the High Council of Justice. Imedi TV dedicated a total of nine stories to the coverage of the mentioned recommendation, which amounted to 45 minutes.

9 stories =
45 minutes

Narrative:

"The goal of the government is to improve the justice system. The opposition has distanced itself from the working process and is working on an alternative version." "How was the obligation to adopt a law on the procedure for electing the Prosecutor General injected in the 12-point European recommendations?"- Although two years ago both the ruling team and the opposition agreed that the mentioned changes would hinder the justice system, on the way to the candidate status, the Georgian politicians still have to face this issue. At that time, everyone was focused on compromise, and it was also written in Charles Michel's document... While government officials also criticize the method of electing the General Prosecutor and say that it is not a good model, they still adopt the law because it is written in the recommendations of the European Union and the government's priority is to join the European Union. The opposition's wish is the recommendations are not implemented, and the country does not obtain the candidate status".

"European recommendation that is alien to Europe itself..."

Narrative:

"Constitutional amendments passed the first reading despite the dissatisfaction from the ruling party and the disapproval from the opposition. This part of the European recommendations is alien to Europe itself, however, the Georgian Dream decided to support it regardless of the party position... The government says that all legal principles are violated in this law, it is not good, but European integration is the reason why they consider taking aboard this recommendation and accepting the constitutional amendment..." "Under the European recommendations, the legislative body is preparing to vote on another change. The Chairman of the Parliament calls on the opposition to be active, as the case concerns the procedure for electing the Prosecutor General, which requires constitutional changes, and only the Georgian Dream support will not be enough. A change in the procedure for selecting the Prosecutor General is unacceptable for the ruling party, although a political compromise in favour of the European path already exists. For the radical opposition, though the messages from Europe can no longer be followed"...

On the reform of the judiciary: "The ruling party has announced the strategy on the reform of the judiciary" - In order to strengthen the system, the Georgian Dream has identified several requirements. Among them: solving the problem of case overloading and strengthening the institution of the jury trial... The radical opposition has withdrawn from the process, and the alternative draft law was initiated by three parties that have left the Parliament's working groups: "Lelo for Georgia," "United National Movement," and "Strategy Aghmashenebeli"...

On the topic of creating an Anti-Corruption Bureau - the 4th recommendation of the European Union, the Imedi TV dedicated 10 stories - 37 minutes of airtime.

10 stories =
37 minutes

Narrative: "Some in the opposition have boycotted the implementation of the European recommendations. They accuse the ruling party, which is working on the recommendations, of sabotage. The subject of dispute again is the new agency, which will be charged with the corruption oversight functions"...

Actual lines from the author of the story: "Those who have separated from the official process of the implementation of the European undertaking have the political courage to accuse the government of sabotaging the 12 recommendations..."

"The government has been working on the 4th recommendation of the European Union and has decided to create an Anti-Corruption Bureau, but the radical opposition thinks that this change is a sham. The opposition does not like any of the government's laws... The political party "Lelo for Georgia" is sure that their alternative version is exactly what Europe requests, but the ruling party thinks the opposite. The government says that their draft law meets the requirements of the recommendations of the European Union, and the opposition's accusations are baseless... What the opposition is requesting is unconstitutional and aimed at hindrance"...

Imedi TV dedicated only 2 stories (11 minutes in total) to the first point of the European recommendations, namely to the **reduction of polarization**. However, polarization and depolarization were often mentioned in the context of different topics.

2 stories =
11 minutes

Narrative: "The main source of polarization is the opposition; they are trying to hinder the process and prevent the country from receiving the candidate status. The goal of radicals is destruction and destabilization..."

Imedi TV dedicated one story to the **11th point** of the recommendations – taking into account the European Court of Human Rights judgments, under the title - "Rejecting the 11th article of the European recommendations".

Narrative: "Pseudo-Europeans in the Parliament. The political group, which often prides itself on Western-oriented messages, is not among the supporters of implementing Brussels' recommendations. The Reform Group did not support the decision of the Parliament, according to which Georgia should take into account the European Court of Human Rights judgments."

Imedi TV spent a significant amount of time discussing the issue of joining the European Union, receiving candidate status, and the importance of implementing the European Union's 12 recommendations. They spent 440 minutes (7.20 hours) on this topic, which included 65 stories, in addition to programs that focused on specific recommendations. In particular - in the news broadcasts - the visits of the executive body representatives and parliamentary delegations to different countries, resolutions about Georgia, reports, etc. The tone of the coverage was positive towards the government, while news about the opposition, MEPs, US and EU ambassadors in Georgia were broadcast in a negative mood. For example:

65 stories =
440 minutes

- The goal of the government is to fulfil the European undertaking, and the goal of radicals is to act against the country. The radicals do not want the country to receive candidate status.
- The radicals against the country;
- The radicals against the European recommendations;
- Anti-state policy and goals of the radicals;
- Controversial amendments/changes from the MEPs;
- The radicals reject European recommendations – **Narrative:** The Parliament is working on the implementation of 12 recommendations. The opposition rejects everything. The opposition leaves the government alone in the momentous process.
- The hybrid war against Georgia – Fotyga, Kramer, and Goncharenko are developing provocations against Georgia together with the UNM, their messages are a good proof of that.
- **A history paradox** - the author of the resolution himself, Sven Mikser, did not support the resolution on Georgia in the European Parliament. **Narrative:** The European Parliament that is devoid of anything European, the statements made by several Members of the European Parliament mean that they interfere in the justice system of another country.

- What is the value of the resolution, which the author also distanced himself from –**Narrative:** Sabotage on the path of Georgia's European integration.
- A questionable line in the PACE Resolution.
- Implementation of European recommendations.

Narrative: "Radicals obstruct the implementation of those recommendations which are necessary conditions for obtaining the candidate status. Due to the radical positions and ultimatums, Georgia will enter 2023 with still unfinished recommendations... is unable to implement the European recommendations. Most of the recommendations have been implemented, however, some cannot be implemented due to the opposition... The government is awaiting the end of ultimatums and the anti-democratic march of the opposition."

Against this background, when covering the visits of the Prime Minister, ministers, or parliamentary delegations to various summits and countries, a strongly expressed positive tone toward the government dominates. for example, regarding the Prime Minister at the Prague Summit.

The general plot of the stories: The government is doing everything to meet the 12 recommendations and to obtain the candidate status. It has unprecedented support from the European Commissioner, Olivér Várhelyi, and the leaders of various countries: Germany, Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, etc.

In addition to the main news program, the "Chronicle," which airs every day on Imedi TV, the main news program on Saturday is the "Saturday Chronicle," which includes interviews and guests as well as news and stories. The "Saturday Chronicle" devoted several stories to the Public Defender Candidates, the law on "deoligarchization," and the implementation of all 12 recommendations in general. The invited guests were mostly the government officials.

The **narrative** is unchanged in this case as well, the government is working and doing everything for the country to get the candidate status. And the opposition undermines this process.

As for political talk shows and programs, in addition to the main news program, the Imedi TV has one political talk show - the "Imedi LIVE" and a summary program of the week, the "Imedi Week".

The monitoring of the "Imedi LIVE" programs showed that the presenters were engaged in the government PR campaign and, on the contrary, fiercely engaged in an aggressive anti-PR toward the opposition. The assessments and comments made by the presenters in the monologue of the program presenter were not based on analysis, but on sarcasm, cynicism, and insults. Basically, the "evidence source" for their texts came from the "posts" published by various politicians on social networks, and, therefore, they were aimed at discrediting and mocking the opposition and people who are against the government. For example, the monologue in the program of November 16, 2022: "For the opposition, the European Commissioner is a Russian agent, Melia was stabbed in the back - Khabeishvili has appeared on the mat, the fight of gladiators has been announced. Nikanor Melia fans, tough days are ahead - Georgian Zhirinovsky (Levan Khabeishvili) is in your office. Melia had barely left the country for 24 hours when Khabeishvili stormed into the party office and presented himself for the post of chairman. The slogan is as follows: National Movement shall be returned to the owners, meaning that - kind-hearted Khabeishvili shall save the innocent party from the clutches of evil Melia and hand it over to Kezerashvili... The next story should begin like this - more than 2,000 years have passed since the betrayal of Julius Caesar, and as Melia awaits the political judgment in Brussels, he will remember the first time he was stabbed in the back. From now on, the phrase - you too, Brutus?! will change to - you too, Khabe?!... The restoration of the "canopy" lost its relevance, and the shocking announcement of the Trio (Japaridze-Khostaria-Vashadze) did not have a great effect either - when Japaridze and Vashadze were happily smiling with: "there will be no candidate status". Moreover, it turns out that European politicians greeted Nika Melia, who arrived in the political capital of Europe after their visit, with a reproach - why does the Georgian opposition say that the country has no chance to get the candidate status? We are trying to do the opposite, and if possible, ask them not to lie! After the visit of the European Commissioner, the opposition became significantly heftier. Olivér Várhelyi, who positively evaluated the work on the 12 points, drove some radicals into hysterics, making them develop conspiracy theories. Salome Samadashvili announced that Várhelyi is a representative of the Hungarian Prime Minister's party, and therefore, he is an ally of Putin's allies, and thus, the Georgian

Dream cannot deceive anyone. And Zurab Japaridze called the European Commissioner a case illiterate..." - [monologue of the presenters](#).

16.11.2022

As for the guests of the program, members of the ruling party and experts affiliated with the government, as well as representatives of culture/art and literature, who hold positive feelings towards the ruling authority, were always invited on the air. The "Imedi Live" is aired 3 times a week, and for three months, Vakhtang Megrelishvili, a member of Girchi, and Levan Ioselian, the leader of the Citizens party, were the guests of the program only once. There were no representatives of other opposition parties. It should be noted that in addition to the subjects on the candidate status and the implementation of recommendations discussed with the representatives of these two opposition parties, the presenters and guests mainly talked about the National Movement party and the ongoing processes in the opposition - all in a negative context.

High-ranking interviewees were often in the program too: ministers, the Chairman of the Parliament, Vice-speakers, and MPs.

The **narrative** in all of them was one: The opposition wants the country not to receive the candidate status and they are doing everything for this, damaging the image of the government inside and outside the country and trying to derail the process. In turn, the government is fully committed to implement the 12 recommendations.

The program topics also carried this narrative:

- The anti-state plan of the opposition;
- [Destructive plan of the radicals](#);
- [The law on deoligarchization, the opposition has supported the oligarchy](#) - interview with Irakli Kobakhidze.

30/10/2022

3.11.2022

The program "[Imedi Week](#)" dedicated several special news reports to the 12 recommendations of the European Union and, in general, to the issue of receiving the candidate status.

- [The absurdity of deoligarchization – The Absurdity of deoligarchization](#);
- [Law on deoligarchization - the double standards of the radicals](#);

9.10.2022

16.10.2022

- **Attack on the European Commissioner - Olivér Várhelyi's visit and critical evaluations from the opposition;**
- [The radicals in their own trap;](#)
- [Mikser against Mikser;](#)
 - [The Oligarch Kezerashvili's tragicomedy;](#)
- **Prime Minister's visit to Hungary;**
- **Report that is out of touch with reality** - Report of the European parliamentarians.

27.11.2022

18.12.2022

2.10.2022

In all news reports, a strongly negative and critical mood was apparent towards the opposition and several MEPs, and a positive tone towards the government was felt. The program had the same plot as all the other programs and news broadcasts on Imedi TV.

It should be noted that the representatives of the opposition (except for Girchi and Citizens) do not go on the air of Imedi TV political programs, and only the government officials and people affiliated with the government sit in their TV studios.

Conclusions:

Imedi TV has extensively covered the implementation of EU recommendations as well as the entire topic of European integration. However, the issue was conveyed one-sidedly, and this specific subject was used for voicing official narratives, attempting to demote the opposition, and advocating a completely one-party agenda rather than for in-depth analysis of the points of recommendation, debates on different points of view between different political groups, or creating analytical products.

The channel was biased towards the government and, therefore, the issue was covered in a tone that supported the government's position. The opposition was mentioned only in a negative context and as a player that hindered the country in the process of European integration. Additionally, several MEPs as well as the US ambassador to Georgia, Kelly C. Degnan, were mentioned in a negative context. Therefore, in the presence of such a narrative, the main point - why the implementation of these 12 points is vital for our country, what benefits the state and each of its citizens receive, what difficulties and challenges will be

prevented by receiving the candidate status, and how much it will bring us closer to the single European market, as well as bring us in line with our constitutionally stated goal of becoming members of the European Union – was completely lost.

TV PIRVELI

Between 10 October and 30 December, among the TV companies selected for monitoring, particularly in the main news program - "Pirvelebi", TV Pirveli spent the least amount of time covering Georgia's implementation of the 12 recommendations for EU accession.

The TV Pirveli negatively conveyed all aspects of the subject of the monitoring and came out as a supporter of the views of the opposition. They were characterized by a strongly expressed critical and negative mood toward the government. The positions of the government representatives were expressed only in their brief statements. It should be taken into account that the representatives of the Georgian Dream have been boycotting the channel for several years and have refused to appear on that TV channel. Accordingly, there was no representative from the government in any of their programs.

In particular, the TV channel made a total of 13 stories to cover the 5th recommendation - "**deoligarchization**" - in the main news program - "**Pirvelebi**", which amounted to 70 minutes.



13 stories =
70 minutes

Narrative: ["Deoligarchization without Ivanishvili"](#)¹ - there will be no "debidzinisation". Yet Another rejection of the European Union from the Georgian Dream. The Georgian Dream is deliberating the draft law in the parliament, which practically leaves no chance of declaring Ivanishvili as an oligarch. Instead of deoligarchization, the government adopts a new law aiding political repression and grants political immunity to their breadwinner. It actually means cheating the EU..."

¹ From 13:54 min. to 23:54 min.

The Georgian Dream has made the law a commercial object - either the opposition supports the draft law prepared by the Georgian Dream, or it will fail... The government is using the text of the European recommendation for political blackmail...", "Deoligarchization of a different kind... The government will use the law against the opposition... This means that the law affects everyone except Ivanishvili, and the register of oligarchs will be compiled by Irakli Garibashvili...", "The European Parliament clarified to the government that Ivanishvili is an oligarch. Influential MEPs tell the government that if the law does not affect Ivanishvili, it will mean nothing to them. Because he affects the political and economic environment. However, the law is going to affect everyone, except Ivanishvili." "[The Georgian dream is retreating](#),² the draft law on the deoligarchization will be sent to the Venice Commission."

Narrative: As a result of severe criticism and pressure from the West, the ruling team is forced to wait for the Commission's recommendations and only then submit the draft law for the third reading.

28.11.2022

The 12th recommendation of the European Union - **the election of the Public Defender**, was presented by TV Pirveli in 10 stories, that is, 47 minutes of their air time were devoted to the coverage of the above recommendation.

10 stories =
47 minutes

Narrative: "The country is without an Ombudsman - the government and the opposition cannot reach a consensus. The opposition says that the government is not looking for a realistic Public Defender, they are afraid of a Public Defender who is going to be critical to them, and they are doing everything to prevent an agreement. The government says that they are working, and they are doing everything, but the opposition wants to disrupt the process, and they are not going to make any concessions"... The Georgian Dream against the Public Defender candidates"... "Who will become the Ombudsman?" An attempt at political bargaining - there is not even a theoretical chance of selecting a Public Defender. The election of the Ombudsman was postponed to the spring session."

² At 40:13 min.

Only four stories were devoted to creating an **Anti-Corruption Bureau** on the TV channel, equaling 18 minutes.

4 stories =
18 minutes

Narrative: "The Georgian Dream is to create an Anti-Corruption Bureau; However, it will not have investigative functions and Garibashvili will appoint its head. The European Union's recommendation required something completely different, and the Georgian Dream implements the recommendation superficially. The opposition says that it is complete nonsense to create such a Bureau..." The Georgian Dream does not intend to discuss the option of an alternative draft law to create an Anti-Corruption Bureau. The Committee on Procedural Issues has rejected Lelo's initiative. The Georgian Dream has turned one of the requirements of the European Union for their benefit ..."

"The dispute over the creation of the Anti-Corruption Bureau."— The Anti-Corruption Bureau will be under Garibashvili's supervision. The Prime Minister, who has been exposed to many corrupt transactions, will appoint the head of the bureau himself. The Parliament fully transferred this authority to the PM. The entity, which is supposed to investigate corruption crimes and expose criminals, will work under the control of the government, thus completely losing any credibility. The creation of an Anti-Corruption Bureau is one of the recommendations of the European Union, but the Georgian Dream turned it to its advantage."

The "Pirvelebi" made 3 stories on the reform of the justice system, in particular, concerning the **procedure for electing the General Prosecutor** - 16 minutes were dedicated to this recommendation.

3 stories =
16 minutes

Narrative: The government is trying to disrupt the process. They do not like their own draft law... Murusidze's magnificent return. The "Clan" took back the driving reins. it is explicitly written in the recommendations of the European Commission that the "Clan" must be removed from the system, otherwise, we will not be able to get the candidate status... This tramples the recommendation of the European Commission... The second coming of Murusidze - with this step the government sent a threat to the rest of the judges as well as to the West. The Georgian Dream has declared war on its Western partners. Even the chance to receive the candidate status has been lost..."

Only one, a five-minute story was reported on the second recommendation of the European Union – the **Electoral Reform**.

1 stories =
5 minutes

Narrative: "Violation of the political terms – The Georgian Dream is working on electoral reform in such a manner that it is unlikely they will lower the barrier. They have an ultimatum: until the National Movement becomes sensible, this subject cannot be taken into account..."

In addition to the coverage of specific recommendations, in general, 21 stories were devoted to the topics of the EU candidate status and EU integration in the main news broadcast of TV "Pirveli", amounting to 120 minutes.

21 stories =
120 minutes

The topics of the news reports were:

- **The ruling team does not want to talk publicly about whether or not they are going to implement the 12-point plan or how they are going to do it.**
- Agents: The Georgian Dream on MEPs.³

30.11.2022

Narrative: The Georgian Dream calls those MEPs agents, who call Ivanishvili an oligarch.

- Storming the European Parliament⁴ - The government criticizes the resolution adopted by the European Parliamentarians and completely devalues its meaning.
- **The ministers of foreign affairs of the European Union are dissatisfied with the government of Georgia.**
- **Prime Minister's visit to Hungary - Orban, the PM, and the birds.** Europe's most pro-Russian ruler becomes the Prime Minister's main ally.
- **A critical report by the European Parliament** - The European Parliament clarified to the government that Ivanishvili is an oligarch.

³ At 37:29 min.

⁴ From 40:03 min. to 44:31 min.

- **MEPs appeal to Zourabichvili** - they told her that Nika Gvaramia is a political prisoner, and Zourabichvili is silent.
- **A Verdict for the Georgian Dream**- Georgia must be freed from Bidzina Ivanishvili's informal influence – a resolution adopted by the European parliamentarians.
- **A report of the European Parliament - Tsulukiani confronts Europe**. Another season of attacks on MEPs has been opened.
- **The European Union has started a stopwatch** - the visit of the European Commissioner to Georgia - the last warning to the Georgian Dream. Implement the 12 points together with the opposition, otherwise, Brussels will not accept it.

As for the political talk shows and programs, the 12 recommendations of the European Union, some specific topics, and the candidate status were given the most time by the program - "**News of the Day**" on TV Pirveli.

It has to be noted that "News of the Day" is aired every day. Some program topics were:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| ✓ Law on "deoligarchization", | 22.12.2022 |
| ✓ Election of candidates for the Public Defender, | 20.12.2022 |
| ✓ Reform of the Justice system, | |
| ✓ Electoral reform, | |
| ✓ Creation of an Anti-Corruption Bureau, | |
| ✓ How the 12-point plan is being implemented - the resolution/report adopted by the European parliamentarians, | 13.12.2022 |
| ✓ Visit of Olivér Várhelyi, MEPs, | |
| ✓ Statements of the US Ambassador and the EU Ambassador to Georgia, | |
| ✓ Georgia's European perspective, | |
| ✓ Prime Minister's annual report - how the 12 recommendations are being implemented. | |

Also, the representatives of the opposition had the opportunity to talk about the alternative draft laws they had been working on, to which, in total, 24 programs were fully devoted.

24 programs

It should be noted that regardless of the main topic of the program and in the context of various topics, for example, in the context of current political processes, the trial of Nika Gvaramia - founder of TV Company "Mtavari", and the third president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, in the context of the current political processes in the opposition, or other domestic and foreign policies, the presenters of the program and their visitors often mentioned and talked about the necessity and importance of implementing all 12 recommendations, in general.

Main Narrative: The government does not follow the recommendations, all their reforms are a cover-up and do not foresee fundamental changes, we have no progress in the implementation of the 12-point plan, the Georgian Dream is hindering European integration, and we will not be able to get the candidate status under the Georgian Dream.

In the program - the "Reaction" - the law on "deoligarchization" was twice one of the main topics of the program and, in general, with the name of deoligarchization - Debidzinization. Also, in the context of Nika Gvaramia's trial, considerable time was devoted to the justice system reform, to the resolution of the European parliamentarians, sanctions, and oligarchs, and the European perspective of the country in general, to Olivér Várhelyi's visit - 7 programs were made in total.

7 programs

In the "Reaction" too in the context of various topics, as well as in the "News of the Day" program, the guests mentioned the need to receive the EU candidate status and mentioned all 12 recommendations - with the same narrative.

In the program - "Public Policy", the justice system reform was discussed twice as one of the topics, in the context of Murusidze-Gvritishvili's return and Nika Gvaramia's trial. One program was dedicated to the European perspective of the country against the background of the anti-Western statements of the Georgian Dream and one program was devoted to the implementation of 12 recommendations. In addition, four programs were dedicated to the resolution and report of the European Parliament - on all of the above subjects.

4 programs

Narrative: We are losing our leading position in the region and moving away from Europe. The opposition is doing everything; the government does not want to implement the plan.

The program – "**Political News**" devoted one program to the law on "deoligarchization"; 2 programs to electing candidates for the Public Defender, and in the last program, among the summarizing topics of the year, one of the topics discussed was the 12 recommendations of the European Union. However, as in other programs, here too, in the context of different topics, the guests often mentioned all 12 recommendations. Four programs were devoted in full to the discussion around the issue.

| 4 programs in total

In the program - "First Line**",** the European perspective and 12 recommendations were **14 times** one of the topics of the program. Several times the topics were the law on deoligarchization, the issue of electing the public defender, the issue of creating an Anti-Corruption Bureau, and the reform of the justice system. The resolution/report of the European Parliament.

Narrative: The government does not want to get the candidate status; the 12 points are being fulfilled superficially. The Georgian Dream creates the illusion of following the recommendations.

Conclusions:

TV Pirveli covered the topic of 12 recommendations of the European Union with relatively low intensity, and one-sided. Specifically, only the opinions of the opposition, a part of non-governmental organizations and experts, political scientists, and representatives of various fields with opinions close to theirs were presented on the talk shows, while the position of the government was offered to the audience only in news broadcasts and in a negative context. The government's European integration policy was assessed as negative and hindering the country's progress.

When covering the issue one-sidedly, there was no in-depth analysis of the recommendation points - to generate debates on the different views between different political groups or to create analytical products.

Here, it must be noted that, unlike Imedi TV, where the TV channel is simply closed for the majority of opposition representatives, there is a boycott of the

ruling party on TV Pirveli, and therefore, the fact that their representatives do not participate in the programs is the fault of the Georgian Dream party's declared choice rather than the television.

PALITRANEWS TV

PalitraneWS TV spent three months covering the European Union's twelve recommendations. In comparison to other television companies, it was distinguished by its neutral tone and balanced news.

During the monitoring period - from 1 October to 30 December, of the 12 recommendations, PalitraneWS devoted the most time to the last - 12th recommendation of the European Union - the process of selecting **candidates for the Public Defender** - in the main news release. A total of 32 stories were devoted to it on the channel, amounting to 117 minutes (1.57 hours).



32 stories =
117 minutes

Main Narrative: The position of the government is that if the opposition voices its will, it is possible to elect a competent candidate. The government is ready for this...the mood of the opposition is that this process is a sham, and the government wants to elect its own candidate. Parliament was unable to elect the Public Defender. The recommendation has not been implemented... mutual accusations between the government and the opposition.

The news outlet - PalitraneWS, apart from the 12th recommendation, devoted the most time to the **5th recommendation - deoligarchization**, manifested in the fact that 24 stories were devoted to discussing the topic – that is 95 minutes (1.35 hours) of air time.

24 stories =
95 minutes

Main Narrative: Neutral. "The opposition talks about the anti-European nature of the law... they call it a cover-up, and the ruling party reminds their colleagues that the Ukrainian version of this law got approval from Europeans..." The Georgian Dream is sending the draft law on

deoligarchization to the Venice Commission. The stories contained comments from both the opposition and the government representatives. Narrative: The [Georgian Dream sends the draft law on deoligarchization to the Venice Commission](#), according to the EU representation, sending the draft law to the Venice Commission is a positive step, the opposition calls the government's actions juggling, and the ruling party is expecting a positive opinion from the European Commission... Irakli Kobakhidze: It was not necessary to send the draft law to the Venice Commission at all, but since such a request arose, we took it into consideration."

Although in October, in the main news program of Palitraneews TV, of 12 recommendations, most stories were devoted to the **2nd recommendation of the European Union - effective work of state institutions, parliamentary oversight, and electoral legislation** - the results of three months of monitoring show that the news outlet devoted a total of 16 stories to the issue (55 minutes of air time). **Main Narrative:** Neutral. The positions of all parties were represented.

16 stories =
55 minutes

The results of three months of monitoring show that in its news broadcast, Palitraneews TV devoted a total of 13 stories to the issue of the **3rd recommendation – the reform of the justice system** (the law on common courts, the procedure for electing the Prosecutor General, the reform of the High Council of Justice).

13 stories =
45 minutes

Main Narrative: The opposition says that the government does not pay any attention to the recommendations from the third sector and the opposition. According to the government, the procedure for electing the Prosecutor General is legally flawed, but the implementation of the recommendation is more important and therefore they are making this political decision.

In October, the Palitraneews made 6 stories in its main news program on the **4th recommendation of the European Union - the independence and strengthening of the Anti-Corruption Bureau, creation of the Anti-Corruption Bureau**, amounting to 31 minutes of air time.

6 stories =
31 minutes

Main Narrative: The document on legislative changes submitted after three months of work **by the ruling team was met with criticism. The opposition criticizes the appointment by the Prime Minister of the candidate for the head of the Bureau.** The third sector is also dissatisfied. The government approves the document. ["Parliament approved the draft law concerning the creation of Anti-Corruption Bureau on its third reading at the plenary session."](#)

Narrative: opposition representatives find the draft law initiated by the Georgian Dream unacceptable because they believe that it does not meet the 12 recommendations of the European Commission. The government is of the opposite opinion. They say that the change fully meets the European recommendation."

As for other recommendations: in October, in the main program, the air time was spared to report on the **9th recommendation of the European Union** - strengthening gender equality and combating violence against women, however, it happened only once, and briefly - lasting only **1 minute and 20 seconds**. Also, the 1st recommendation – **depolarization** – was mentioned twice, in total, **7 minutes were spent** on it.

It has to be noted that, in addition to specific recommendations, in the leading news program of the TV company, several stories were made on the perspective of Georgia's accession to the European Union, the candidate status, and its importance. For example, [what stage is the implementation process of the 12-point plan of the European Council on?](#)

Narrative: "Deoligarchization, depolarization, selection of an independent Ombudsman, and a free media environment - these are the main challenges that Georgia faces on its path to EU membership."

In addition to specific recommendations, in general, the subject was covered together with various topics. In particular - during the adoption of critical resolutions by the European Parliament; following the statements of the US Ambassador and the EU Ambassador to Georgia; during the visit of the European Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi; during the debates held in

the European Parliament; during the statements of the European parliamentarians. Also, during the speech of the Prime Minister in the parliament under the interpellation procedure. In total, 22 stories were devoted to the **perspective of integration in the European Union and its importance** in general, which amounted to a total of 92 minutes.

As for **political talk shows**, in the program - "**Political Space**", which is broadcasted once a week, **6 times** was the **issue of deoligarchization** one of the main topics of the program. The [European recommendations, deoligarchization, and the Venice Commission](#).

The Narrative of the opposition representatives: "The government is prepared to put the country and the candidate status at risk, in order to retain power..."

The Government Narrative: "The opposition is undermining the process, while the government is doing everything it can." The program's main topic was also the procedure for electing the Prosecutor General - twice - and the procedure for electing candidates for the Public Defender - three times. Several recommendations, namely the electoral system, polarization, and justice system reform, were mentioned by the guests and the host of the program in the context of various topics.

It should be noted that the host of the program asks rather critical questions to both the opposition and government representatives.

In addition to discussing specific recommendations, the main topics of the "Political Space" program were, in general:

- **How are the recommendations of the European Union implemented? Are we making any progress in implementing the 12 recommendations?**
- **The resolution of the European Parliament and the 12 point recommendations.**
- **Olivér Várhelyi's visit and how we implement the recommendations.**

Members of both the opposition and the government were represented in the program. However, there was no debate or discussion involving both parties.

In the program "**360 degrees**", which is broadcast 3 times a week, **deoligarchization** was discussed as the main topic 3 times, and also the process of electing candidates for the **Public Defender** was discussed 3 times. In particular, who will become the Public Defender? Election of the public defender, how the recommendations are implemented – the issues that failed to get votes.

Also, the program devoted several airtimes, in general, to the prospects and importance of receiving candidate status.

Main topics:

- **Shocking notes in the draft resolution - implementation of recommendations and the European perspective;**
- **Messages from European parliamentarians;**
- **Olivér Várhelyi's visit and main messages;**
- **The process of implementing 12 recommendations of the European Union; How are recommendations implemented?**
- **Resolution of the European Parliament and polarization;**
- **Results of implementation of the European recommendations.**

In the program "**Independent Studio**", broadcast once a week, the most time in three months was devoted to the 12 recommendations of the European Union and the European perspective. The program is also characterized by the visits of high-ranking guests from the government - the chairman of the parliament, Deputy speakers, and MPs. Also, foreign policy experts, etc. However, as in all other programs, there was no debate or discussion between the holders of different opinions. The host of the program stands out for well-prepared and for critical questions put to both - the government and opposition representatives. The balance was maintained. The mood – neutral. The topics of the program were:

- **Deoligarchization, the issue of electing candidates for the Public Defender;**
- **How recommendations are implemented;**
- **Oligarchs and Georgia;**
- **Deoligarchization - a Georgian way;**
- **Messages from Brussels - a critical resolution from the European Parliament;**

- **Is the candidacy of the European Union in jeopardy? What did the government do in terms of implementing the 12 recommendations?**

In the program - "**Resume**" which is broadcast 5 times a week, the issue of electing the Prosecutor General was the main topic just once; the process of electing candidates for the Public Defender – twice; the law of "deoligarchization" and the Venice Commission - once. Specific recommendations were not often discussed as separate topics, although several topics of the program were:

- **The process of implementing the 12-point plan;**
- **A hefty resolution of the European Parliament, the messages from the MEPs;**
- **Olivér Várhelyi's visit and messages;**
- **How the government fulfills the European recommendations;**
- **Relations with Europe, European recommendations, and the path to the candidate status;**
- **The perspective of integration into the European Union;**
- **Interview with the MEP, Markéta Gregorová.**

Narrative: "In 2023, this will be the main topic of relations between Georgia and the European Union, how far the reforms are being implemented, and whether Georgia is ready to receive the candidate status. You know how I support the granting of candidate status to Georgia, and I believe that Georgia should receive this status, but this will not end the reform wars. On the contrary, granting the candidate status will increase the will and motivation for reforms, and progress and comprehensive reforms must continue, and Georgia must move forward on the path of reforms. So, there are many reforms on Georgia's path, but also many hopes... I hope Georgia gets the candidate status! Yes, it will happen for you!"

28.12.2022

In addition to the main topics, in general, along with current political or foreign policy topics, the guests and presenters in the program also touched upon all 12 recommendations. Although the program is broadcast every weekday, it is safe to note that the main topics of the program were often not devoted to the 12 recommendations of the European Union. The tone of the program was more or less neutral. To a greater extent - supportive of the views of the opposition.

Conclusions:

Palitranevs TV spent a considerable amount of time covering the 12 recommendations of the European Union for three months. It was characterized by a neutral tone and balanced news. Representatives from different political teams participated in the programs, and the diversity of opinions was more or less preserved. However, it should be noted that often, the last guest on the program was a representative from the government, and the representatives from the opposition were not allowed to respond to the accusations made against them. There are no debates on the channel. That is why there were cases where the opposition members were not in the programs, and only the government representatives spoke about the European Union's recommendations (for example, the Chairman of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili). Sometimes it was vice versa.

GEORGIAN PUBLIC BROADCASTER

The Public Broadcaster tried to cover events relatively less intensively but neutrally; however, it was often biased and loyal to the government's position, giving more airtime to government representatives, both in the main newscast and in political talk shows.

During the media monitoring period, from October 1 to December 30, the Public Broadcaster devoted the most stories and time in its the leading news program "**Moambe**," to the 12th recommendation of the European Union recommendation on the **Public Defender election procedure** and process. Specifically, the channel devoted 23 stories totaling 112 minutes to it.



23 stories =
112 minutes

Narrative: "The government and the opposition cannot reach a consensus on the candidacy of the Public Defender. The government says that the opposition wants to derail the process. The opposition says that the government does not want to elect an independent candidate..." "The government is offering the opposition five candidates, which is categorically unacceptable to the opposition..."

["Parliament has failed to elect a Public Defender](#)

Narrative: The process of electing a public defender failed. Parliament could not select any of the 19 candidates... The process came to a standstill after the Georgian Dream offered its opponents a list of five candidates and an agreement on any of them, which was rejected. The government blames the opposition for the failure of the ombudsman elections and considers this a victim of a third-sector ultimatum. Most opposition parties supported three candidates presented by nongovernmental organizations, whose candidacy was initially excluded by the ruling party. A new contest will be announced, and consultations will continue in February. Parliament should attempt to elect a Public Defender in the spring session."

The tone of the stories produced on this issue was more neutral, presenting the positions and comments of both opposition and majority representatives. However, more time was devoted to covering the government's position, and the stories mostly ended with their comments.

In total, the public broadcaster devoted 14 stories to **"deoligarchization,"** with a total duration of 87 minutes. When covering the issue, the Public Broadcaster tried to present the position of all sides but spent much more time covering the government's position and their comments than the opposition; also, the narrative of journalistic texts reflected more the government's position. For example, on November 2, 2022, the leading news program Moambe devoted a **10-minute** story to the [draft law on "deoligarchization."](#) In addition to the texts of the news presenter and the author of the story, only **1 minute and 15 seconds** were allocated to the comments of the opposition representatives, while almost **4 minutes (3.92 seconds)** were devoted to comments by members of the government.

14 stories =
87 minutes

On the same issue, a **narrative** of other stories: "The analog of the Ukrainian law on "deoligarchization," welcomed by Europe, is unacceptable to the opposition. According to the opposition, this draft violates European recommendations and will affect everyone except Ivanishvili. Despite its opponents' objections, the government intends to pass the draft law and claims that it meets European recommendations..."

"The government will send the 'deoligarchization' law to the Venice Commission, and the process in the legislative body will be stalled..."

The Public Broadcaster devoted 13 stories to the 2nd European Union Recommendation on **electoral system reform** and **strengthening parliamentary oversight**, which took 76 minutes of air time.

13 stories =
76 minutes

Journalist's text: "The electoral reform and the preliminary opinion by the Venice Commission become the cause of other political passions. Radical statements are made by the opposition parties, which from the very beginning separated themselves from the working group created by the government to prepare electoral reform and developed an alternative draft..."

Narrative: "Part of the opposition reads more remarks and says that the Venice Commission positively assessed only a small part of the reform, while the government, on the contrary, states that assessments are positive and changes are positively assessed by the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR..." "It was impossible to reach a political consensus on the draft electoral reform adopted by parliament in the second reading. The opposition was also present in the hall. Even though after reading the Venice Commission's preliminary opinion, several changes were made to the document, and some comments by opponents were taken into account, the opposition still abstained from supporting it. The main controversial subjects are the way of electing the CEC chair and the form of immigrants' participation... The opposition claims that changes proposed by the Georgian Dream cannot be considered reform and will not change the electoral environment. But, according to the ruling team, the opposition's criticism is unfounded because fundamental changes are being made to the Election Code, eliminating the theoretical risks of electoral fraud..." The story devotes more time to assessments of the government. It begins with a narrative in support of the government and ends with comments by government officials in which criticisms of opposition representatives are "annulled."

Regarding **the 3rd recommendation, judicial reform**, the Public Broadcaster devoted 9 stories to discussing this particular issue, which amounted to 47 minutes.

9 stories =
47 minutes

Narrative: "Work on the European Commission's most acute recommendation has been completed. A working group set up by the government developed changes based on the recommendation. The government says these are legitimate and good changes that meet the 12-point plan, and all the changes have been taken into account..." "The judicial reform has become a cause for criticism by the opposition. The opposition believes that there are no real, significant changes..."

The Public Broadcaster devoted 8 stories, i.e., 28 minutes in full, to the 4th European Union recommendation **to create an Anti-Corruption Bureau and strengthen the Special Investigative Service and Personal Data Protection Service.**

8 stories =
28 minutes

Narrative: "The fourth point of the European Commission's recommendations becomes the cause of internal political passions and protests. We have in mind the recommendation that instructs the country to strengthen the independence of the Anti-Corruption Bureau and effectively investigate cases of elite corruption. The legislative package drafted by the Georgian Dream to implement this point displeases much of the opposition. The initiative of the ruling team suggests creating an Anti-Corruption Bureau, the head of which would be appointed by the Prime Minister from among the candidates selected by a competition commission. Part of the opposition calls into question the independence of the future bureau and offers the government an alternative initiative... The government believes that the draft law they prepared will become an effective mechanism to combat corruption, while the opposition does not want real change; the implementation of the 12-point plan is of no value to the opposition, and it is unacceptable for them to implement the plan... The goal of the opposition is to damage the process". The story presents the positions and comments of all sides, but, as in other cases, it begins and ends with comments by government representatives.

It is worth mentioning that the Public Broadcaster devoted **one story** to the amendments drafted by the opposition party, namely the party- "Lelo for Georgia". The tone of the coverage was neutral.

5 stories =
26 minutes

The Public Broadcaster devoted 5 stories to the **polarization** problem, which amounted to 26 minutes. Mostly neutral tone and narrative, taking into account the mutual accusations of the opposition and the government, as well as the context of the addresses of MEPs and ambassadors. It should be noted that the broadcaster mentioned the issue of polarization along with various topics.

The Public Broadcaster devoted one 5-minute story to **Point 11** by the European Commission.

1 story =
5 minutes

Narrative: "Point 11 by the European Commission is declared to have been implemented.⁵ The point suggesting that Georgian courts should proactively take into account decisions of the European Court of Human Rights in their deliberation was adopted in 3 readings by 101 votes. It was a rare exception when the government and the opposition came to a political consensus, and the discussion of Point 11, unlike other points, passed without noise and protest. However, the votes of Strategy Aghmashenebeli and other members of the Reform Group were not included in the number of votes registered in favor of the draft law. The argument that they supported [the draft law] even though they could not enter the hall or push the button during the vote for various reasons is unconvincing for the Georgian Dream, ... Giorgi Vashadze said one thing before his trip to Brussels, but in Tbilisi, his team did another - they did not support the 11th recommendation of the European Commission. Among the supporters were all the opposition parties, except for them". The parliamentary political group Reform Group includes independent MP Teona Akubardia, Republican Party, and Strategy Agmashenebeli. The tone of the story was negative concerning the position of the opposition.

Overall, the Public Broadcaster devoted quite a lot of time, about 300 minutes, to the integration into the European Union, the adoption of candidate status and activities, visits, and meetings of the government, the opposition, and MEPs/ambassadors in this direction during the implementation of the recommendations (40 stories and inclusions). It should be noted that when covering the visits of the

40 stories =
300 minutes

⁵ From 30.12 min. to 34.52 min.

Prime Minister, ministers, and parliamentary delegations to various summits and countries, the broadcaster had a distinctly positive tone towards the government.

Topics for general stories and live broadcasts:

- Prime Minister's visit to the European Political Union summit in Prague;
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the visit of the Georgian delegation;
- Visit of Georgian parliamentary delegation to Berlin - International Congress of European Social Democrats and Declaration;
- Georgia at the Summit of the Crimean Platform - one of the topics - the progress achieved and the steps taken to implement the 12 recommendations;
- The process of European integration and the expectations of the opposition⁶ - the tone of the story is negative in relation to the opposition. Narrative: "The opposition, returned from Strasbourg, declares political Armageddon for Georgia, in which it accuses the ruling team - speculation about the timing of the assessment of the implementation of recommendations... The letter of the three opposition parties, the Trio (Vashadze-Khostaria-Japaridze). According to a statement by the Trio, the assessment of the 12 points will be postponed due to the fact that there is no progress in the implementation of the recommendations and Georgia will be unable to obtain candidate status... The ruling team accuses part of the opposition of campaigning against Georgia's European perspective and artificially undermining the process. Despite numerous appeals from international partners, there are still two parallel processes going on around the recommendations of the European Commission rather than an inclusive..."
- Controversial amendments to the European Parliament resolution - Report of the Committee of the European Parliament;
- The visit of the first diplomat of the EU Presidency country to Tbilisi, the visit of Olivér Várhelyi and different assessments, Várhelyi's messages;
- Statement by the Prime Minister to the Parliament - what the government is doing to implement the 12 recommendations.
- Resolution of the European People's Party - critical assessments;

⁶ From 11.35 min. to 19.58 min.

- Visit of parliamentary delegation to Portugal, Germany, Netherlands and Luxembourg;
- The Eastern Partnership Ministerial meeting;
- At the end of December, the deadline announced by the Georgian Dream to implement the European recommendations expires - the work done, the claims of part of the opposition, and the response of the ruling team. Responses are quite varied;
- Debate on Georgia in Strasbourg - a sharp resolution adopted by the European Parliament, with critical amendments on Georgia.

The Public Broadcaster's leading news program, "Moambe," covered the topics of the 12 recommendations and stories about the work process in a more or less neutral tone. The positions of all sides were presented, but more time was devoted to the government's position. There was also a tendency to end stories with comments from government officials.

As for **political talk shows**, the Public Broadcaster in the program **"Urgent topic on Saturday"**, during the three months **5 programs** devoted to the candidate status and the 12 recommendations of the European Union. Specifically, the themes of the program included:

- Who is an oligarch? The law on "deoligarchization" - welcomed by Europe and displeased the Georgian opposition; Arguments of the opponents and the position of the ruling party, which initiated the project. Guests: Sandro Rakviashvili - one of the leaders of the Girchi party; Mikhail Daushvili - representative of For Georgia party and Gia Tsagareishvili - representative of Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia.
- **Olivér Várhelyi's visit and positive evaluations.** The path to candidate status from a European perspective. What has been done? What is the government doing, and what it still has to do to fulfill the European recommendations? What is the path to European integration? The only guest of the program is a representative of the government - Irakli Kobakhidze, Chairman of the Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia.
- What is the current state of implementation of the 12 recommendations, what do the opposition and the ruling team agree on, and what fate awaits the draft law on the deoligarchization submitted to the Venice Commission. Guests:

Sandro Rakviashvili - one of the leaders of the Girchi party; Irakli Kadagishvili - representative of the Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia.

- [The OSCE/ODIR decision on the 2nd European Union recommendation became known.](#) Electoral reform. **Narrative:** Secret meetings of some of the opposition parties in boycott mode with the ruling party; They say one thing and do another. Guests: Levan Ioseliani, one of the leaders of Citizens party; Aluda Gudushauri, a majority member.
- [Parliament could not elect a Public Defender](#) – why the process failed. Who was ready for a consensus, and who for an ultimatum. Guests: Sandro Rakviashvili - Girchi political party; Teona Akubardia - independent MP and Mikhail Sarjveladze - Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia.

Government representatives were guests in five out of 5 programs. In one program, only Irakli Kobakhidze spoke about the steps taken by the government to implement the 12 recommendations. In the remaining four programs, among opposition representatives, 3 times a member of the political party “Girchi”, once a member of the “Citizens” party, once a representative of the “For Georgia” party, and once an independent MP, Teona Akubardia, participated in the program. There were no representatives of other political parties.

In the **"Independent Concept"** TV program, **six programs** over three months were devoted to the perspective and recommendations for accession to the European Union.

Three programs were attended by representatives of the opposition: Vakhtang Megrelishvili, a member of the Girchi party, Levan Ioseliani of the Citizens party, and Badri Japaridze, a member of the Lelo party.

A government representative was present in five of the 6 programs. In two of these programs, only a government representative was present. Three programs were attended by representatives of the opposition: Vakhtang Megrelishvili, a member of the Girchi party, Levan Ioseliani of the Citizens party, and Badri Japaridze, a member of the political party “Lelo for Georgia”. There were no representatives of other opposition political parties. One program focused on the Public Defender's candidacy's two representatives. The program host tried to maintain a neutral mood but did not distinguish himself by asking critical questions. Specifically:

Preparing for the adoption of Ukrainian law on deoligarchization. Guests: Vakhtang Megrelishvili, a member of the Girchi Party, and Mikheil Sarjveladze, an MP from the Georgian Dream.

What should be the new Public Defender? – the program's guests, candidates for Public Defender Ana Abashidze and Iago Khvichia, were together in the studio (this was the only time the two guests were together in the studio).

11.10.2022

How the 12-point implementation plan is progressing – the only guest is Speaker of Parliament Shalva Papuashvili.

18.10.2022

Expected legislative changes with consideration of European recommendations
European Union's **4th recommendation - strengthening anti-corruption institutions and special investigative services** - guests: Deputy Speaker Levan Ioseliani and an MP from the Georgian Dream David Matikashvili.

1.11.2022

Government Narrative: "Georgia is the flagship of the fight against corruption in the region; we follow the recommendations of the European Union and adopt appropriate laws." Second guest Levan Ioseliani - **Narrative:** "We are passing a law that no one likes. These recommendations will not be implemented the way I would like them to be".

European Parliament's amended report on Georgia – only the government representative, Vice-Speaker Gia Volski, was a guest.

8.11.2022

Narrative: He criticizes the report and several MEPs. Gia Volski: "There are positive aspects as well in the report, but it loses touch with the reality in our country. It is an attack on Bidzina Ivanishvili".

The visit of the European Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi and 12 recommendations.
Guests: an MP from the Georgian Dream, Beka Davituliani, and one of the "Lelo for Georgia" leaders - Badri Japaridze.

15.11.2022

The program "**Topic of the Day**" devoted five broadcasts to the European perspective and recommendations. Government representatives were present in two programs. Compared to other programs, "Topic of the Day" more often presented the views and positions of opposition party representatives. It should also be noted that against the background of other programs of the Public

Broadcaster, the presenter of "Topic of the Day" was distinguished by more or less pointed questions both for the government and opposition representatives. The specific topics of the program and the guests:

- The main issue of the "Topic of the Day" program on October 5 was the Georgian Dream without a one-party majority (creating the People's Power movement and leaving the majority). Still, one of the questions that were given a lot of time was whether the People's Power would support the legislative changes prepared to implement the 12 recommendations of the European Union. Why was it not possible to have a unified working process around the EU recommendations in three months, which was the primary call of the international partners. The guests were Aleko Elisashvili, a member of the Citizens' Party, and Dmitry Khundadze, a member of the People's Power.
- Two parallel processes and alternative draft laws prepared around the EU's 12 points. "Despite requests from international partners and appeals from partners, it was impossible to work together. The opposition, separated from the working groups of the government, still works independently. In four months, 4 controversial points have been identified, the implementation of which is differently perceived by the ruling team and opponents. Judicial reform, electoral reform and deoligarchization..." Guests: MP Tamar Charkviani and one of the leaders of the party "Lelo for Georgia" - David Usupashvili. The government representative did not participate in this program.
- Controversial choice of Conference of Judges - "The return of Levan Murusidze and Dmitry Gvritishvili to the High Council of Justice has again become a cause for passion and protest in the third sector and the political spectrum. Their re-election to the Council as judges is seen by the opposition and non-governmental organizations as a strengthening of the so-called clan rule. But the government accuses its opponents of attacking the court... Will this decision affect Georgia's European perspective, considering that the country is waiting for the EU status, and to obtain it, one of the 12 recommendations of the European Union concerns exactly the court". Guests: Guram Imnadze, chairman of the Coalition for an Independent and Transparent Judiciary and Levan Murusidze, judge member of the High Council of Justice.

| 5.10.2022

| 12.10.2022

| 26.10.2022

9.11.2022

- Critical Draft Resolution of the European Parliament Guests: Salome Samadashvili, Political Secretary of the Lelos party and Archil Talakvadze, Vice-Speaker of the Parliament.
- After June, what the government has done to implement the recommendations - The outcome of the work done on all 12 recommendations. The only guest was the government representative Mamuka Mdinaradze, the Chairman of the Georgian Dream faction.

21.12.2022

In the program "**Moambe of the week**," there was **no single** story on the 12 recommendations. Only in one program, the main topic of one story was the role of a country awaiting candidate status in Europe's energy security.

Conclusion:

The Public Broadcaster spent a significant amount of time considering candidate status and the process of implementing European Union recommendations. Although less intensely, the broadcaster attempted to cover the events objectively. It gave up airtime to representatives of all political forces, the third sector, and other fields; however, it was characterized by a biased and loyal attitude toward the government's position, which was primarily reflected in the more airtime given to their position and in journalistic texts, both in the leading news program and in political talk shows. There have been cases where only government representatives have participated in programs. Stories of the newscasts mostly concluded with comments from the government, and the programs ended with the participation of members of the ruling team. There were no debates between government representatives and the opposition on the channel.

It should be noted that during a portion of the monitoring period - from November 20 to December 18 - the Public Broadcaster was broadcasting the World Football Championship, so political talk shows were not aired during this time period; additionally, the leading news program "Moambe" was aired at various times.

ONLINE MEDIA

INTERPRESSNEWS NEWS AGENCY



The Interpressnews news agency stands out among other agencies for its coverage of the 12 EU recommendations, and it is the agency that disseminates the most varied information. In particular, it has published **over a hundred** news items in three months about EU recommendations, the European perspective, and the importance of candidate status.

Specifically, on each recommendation:

Between October 1 and December 30, about 250 news items concerning the **law on deoligarchization** were published on the agency's Web site. The news items mainly focus on the comments and positions of opposition and government representatives, as well as the comments from non-governmental organizations and experts. In addition to comments by politicians to journalists, the news source is the opinions and comments of guests from various programs of Palitramedia. The main **narrative of the opposition and NGO representatives**: "No one in the European Union is that stupid as to count facade and cosmetic changes as systemic changes," the Georgian Dream draft law on "deoligarchization" is a facade, and it will be a mechanism to punish the opposition... It will affect everyone except Ivanishili..."

Government Narrative: "The opposition does not want to pass a law on deoligarchization; some talk about it openly, while others cover it up with made-up arguments. "The radical opposition is politically traumatized and motivated only by political revenge. They wanted to use the law of "deoligarchization" for this purpose, but then they found potential oligarchs in their ranks..."

Interpressnews published about 190 news items on **the 12th recommendation of the European Union - changing the procedure for the election of the Public Defender and candidates**. Comments from the opposition, the non-governmental sector, experts, political analysts, and government representatives. The sources used are comments made in the Parliament and other official meetings, as well as interviews of guests who came to the "Day's Newsroom" program of Palitraneews and comments of guests in various programs of Palitramedia. The **narrative** of

government and opposition representatives is identical to the information that Palitrane news broadcasts.

The agency devoted about **143 news** items to **judicial reform, the courts, and the procedure for electing the Prosecutor General;**

To the **creation of an Anti-Corruption Bureau - 57 news;**

To the **polarization - depolarization issue - 148 news;**

To the **electoral reform - 68 news;**

To gender equality and violence against women - 1 news;

In general, to the recommendations of the European Union, the European perspective, and the importance of candidate status - about **110 news.**

It should be noted that Interpressnews actually published no analytical articles about the work on the 12-point recommendation implementation plan. During this period, only a few interviews with various experts and political analysts were posted on the site, which, among other things - along with the discussion in the context of domestic and foreign policy, also touched upon the issue of monitoring. In addition, two interviews with candidates for Public Defender were published:

[Interview with Kakha Gogolashvili](#) – "If Georgia does not obtain EU candidate country status before the war in Ukraine is over, the world will settle differently, and our European perspective will become much more difficult."

| 10.11.2022

[Interview with Ekaterine Tsimakuridze](#) – "Work on none of the 12 recommendations has been completed, work on three recommendations has not yet started, and the main responsibility for the implementation of the recommendations lies on the government."

| 13.10.2022

[Interview with Vakhtang Dzabiradze](#) – "With the return of Murusidze to the Council of Justice, the government told us - I do what I want and how I want, I make decisions, and I don't care about anybody's opinion, neither inside the country nor outside it."

| 24.10.2022

[Interview with Sergo Makharadze](#) – What agenda does Sergo Makharadze intend to work within the Ombudsman's office if elected - the plans of a candidate for Public Defender.

| 31.10.2022

[Interview with Marika Arevadze](#) – Candidate for Public Defender Marika Arevadze - "In terms of protecting rights, Georgia is facing significant challenges, just as the institution itself is facing challenges."

| 4.11.2022

[Interview with Gia Khukhashvili](#) – "No one in the European Union is that stupid as to count facade and cosmetic changes as systemic changes."

| 17.11.2022

<u>Interview with Aleksandre Tvalchrelidze</u> – "It may even happen that Europe will turn a blind eye to the acute internal conflict."	19.11.2022
<u>Interview with political analyst Ramaz Sakvarelidze</u> – "Our candidate status depends on new political schemes of the world rather than on 12 points that our opposition has supported to Europe."	22.11.2022
<u>Interview with David Sikharulidze</u> – "History does not remember that any country has joined NATO or the European Union by force... The 12 points of European recommendations, which we had to make progress to, not only are not implemented but the opposite steps are taken ..."	1.12.2022
<u>Interview with Kakha Gogolashvili</u> – "European Parliament increases the possibility of Georgia's integration into the EU; now it's our turn."	3.12.2022
<u>Interview with Lado Papava</u> – "Lado Papava - I am not a supporter of 'conspiracy theory', but there are no serious arguments why Brussels did not grant Georgia EU candidate status."	22.12.2022
<u>Interview with MEP Markéta Gregorová</u> , a guest on PalitraneWS TV's "Resume" program – "I hope Georgia gets candidate status! I think, yes, it will happen for you!"	28.12.2022

Conclusion:

The analysis of quantitative data on interpressnews.ge revealed high rates of positive mood in the coverage of the 12 EU recommendations. The media outlet covered the issue impartially and, in most cases, neutrally.

Even though the website most actively covered issues and activities to implement the 12 recommendations of the European Union for three months, most of the information prepared in news format was superficial statements and comments of government representatives or the opposition. Comments from different opposing sides were covered separately, which were not technically linked with each other. Hence, the reader often had no opportunity to read various opinions and balanced reports and messages within individual articles or news items. There were practically no analytical articles on this issue published on the website, only several interviews with individual experts and political analysts.

The news agency pia.ge published **about 170 news items** from October 1 to December 30 about the 12 EU recommendations and the process of working on the plan. In most cases, the media outlets covered the issue in favor of the government's position.

In addition to specific recommendations, some news items published by the agency referred to the importance **in general of the 12 recommendations** for the country and the necessity to implement them, as well as to obtaining candidate status. Most of them, however, were mainly prevailed by comments from government representatives and experts defending the government's interests,

with the following narrative – only the government does everything to implement the recommendations, while the opposition does not engage in working groups, does not take responsibility, and harms the process. "For the opposition, the implementation of the 12 points is not important, but their task is to prevent it somehow; they see a way out in the non-assignment of candidate status... "

Here is some news for demonstration:

"While the opposition is boycotting the working groups set up around candidate status, the entire Georgian Dream government and the parliamentary team is doing everything they can to get candidate status..."

"The radical opposition, led by the National Movement, has a specific narrow partisan interest to prevent the country from implementing the 12 points, to disconnect from the process, and to try in every possible way to damage the reputation of this work by destructive means. The government has presented a specific plan for each point, and beyond what has already been done, this trend and process will continuously proceed in the future...."

"The European Union proposed the 12 points, and by the end of this year, we had written a plan that we strictly followed. Where we could take steps with unilateral responsibility, we acted everywhere precisely with 100%..." Where constructive opposition was needed, we, unfortunately, didn't see it."

"They see the failure to grant candidate status as a political chance to muddle the country and drag it into another war, which we can't allow."

The website is particularly marked by criticism of the European Union, MEPs, US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly C. Degnan, both from government representatives and government-affiliated experts: for example,

"Every citizen already knows that candidate status is a matter of political bargaining, otherwise compared to Moldova, we are ahead in all parameters, European institutions confirm this" ... Guram Macharashvili.

| 11.11.2022

"It turns out that we have to bow our heads, stand in a corner, admit our mistakes, apologize, kneel at its feet, lick shoes and thus gain the status of a sacred candidate" ... Zaal Anjaparidze.

| 9.11.2022

"Signs are accumulating that the European Union is not going to grant Georgia candidate status until it sees the government it wants here," – Zaal Anjaparidze.

| 11.11.2022

"MPs' statements are largely biased - after the corruption scandal, the credibility of the European Parliament has suffered a lot," – Gia Volski.

| 13.12.2022

"Where is the guarantee that even lower-level MEPs have not sinned a little, and thus committed a greater sin against us, by their biased resolutions, for some reward?" – Levan Nikoleishvili.

| 10.12.2022

"U.S. Ambassador Kelly Degnan comes into the arena again; how does she know that Ukraine has revoked the deoligarchization law?" - Levan Nikoleishvili.

| 22.11.2022

As for statements by representatives of other political parties or non-governmental organizations, experts, the news agency pia.ge covered very little. For example, "We are talking about the European Commissioner nominated by Orban's party; Orban is the only one who seems to have a normal attitude toward Bidzina Ivanishvili - Salome Samadashvili, on Olivér Várhelyi."

| 15.11.2022

Agency pia.ge devoted 81 news items to the fifth recommendation of the European Union - **"deoligarchization"** during the study period.

Most articles are statements by government officials and experts defending the government's position, made on Imedi TV and POST.TV, or statuses posted on

Facebook. It is rare to find comments from official briefings or events at government agencies.

Narrative: "In fact, deoligarchization in Georgia is not suiting only with the radical opposition; they are not comfortable with the fact that Kezerashvili is called by his proper name and restricted some things." – **Irakli Kobakhidze** They could not hide the fact that the radical opposition in Georgia is against deoligarchization, and the government is for deoligarchization..."

17.11.2022

"There was an attempt by MEPs and some opposition members to make the deoligarchization law directly affect Bidzina Ivanishvili" – **Eka Sepashvili.**

17.11.2022

The website often features news on monitoring issues based on comments, statements, and posts published on Facebook by experts affiliated with the government: Nino Pochkhua, Zaal Anjaparidze, Gia Abashidze, Tamta Megrelishvili, Levan Nikoleishvili, Edisher Gvenetadze, members of the People's Power movement - David Kartvelishvili and Zurab Kadagidze. For example, their main "deoligarchization" narrative

Narrative: "The radical opposition with its NGOs and the media does not want the law on deoligarchization to be passed. The only reason is that the oligarchs are only on their side. They are protecting Kezerashvili."

"The draft law welcomed by the Europe doesn't please Saakashvili's war party because it realized too late that deoligarchization concerns their political sponsors." – **Gia Abashidze.**

3.11.2022

"How long ago it was that the European Parliament welcomed the law on deoligarchization adopted by Ukraine. Our destructive ones will have no complaints about the adoption of this law in Georgia". – **Nino Pochkhua.**

3.11.2022

"An oligarch is a universal concept, and you have Kezerashvili - a classic example of that! That's why there's a stir among the radicals." – **Zurab Kadagidze.**

4.11.2022

Narrative: "A businessman who finances the opposition cannot be considered an oligarch - this narrative cannot be "justified" by you pat-radicals! So relax and wait for the processes of deoligarchization. You will be in great pain. But what do we do?"

In addition to statements by the government and its affiliated experts, the agency covered, to a lesser extent, statements by members of the Girchi and Citizens political parties and even fewer - statements by members of former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia's For Georgia Party.

In particular, "the boomerang, which was aimed at Ivanishvili by the opposition, the Georgian Dream has escaped and now hits Khazaradze and Chuta Tsereteli" - **Aleko Elisashvili** on the law of deoligarchization.

| 21.11.2022

"The reckless criticism of European Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi by some colleagues from the opposition is unacceptable." – **Aleko Elisashvili**.

| 16.11.2022

"Ivanishvili must return to public politics" - **Vakhtang Megrelishvili**.

| 3.10.2022

"If you have the declared goal of becoming a member of the European Union, you should not criticize the European Union." - **Levan Ioseliani**.

| 19.10.2022

As for statements by representatives of other political parties or non-governmental organizations, experts, pia.ge has published very little.

The news agency pia.ge prepared 24 news items on point 3 of the 12 recommendations - **judicial reform**.

Narrative: "Everyone knows very well that not only does the court not impede European integration, but it also has a rating of over 50% in terms of trust in Georgia, which is an incredibly high result..." (Mamuka Mdinaradze) .

| 28.12.2022

"Tragic is the procedure for the election of the Prosecutor General, which completely ignores the best practices of democratic countries. Such absurd and vague recommendations reinforce the suspicion that the European Commission made not an institutional, objective, but a political and subjective decision when it did not grant candidate status" – **David Chikhelidze**, head of the Center for Democratic Change.

| 21.10.2022

"Beka Davituliani on the procedure for the election of the Prosecutor General: where and why [this rule] appeared in the Agreement of April 19 remains a bit unclear; the opposition and the government did not have such a proposal."

Narrative: "Since it says so in the recommendations, we are forced to pass a law that almost no one likes or believes is right. One side and the other side when it says it's bad for Georgian justice."

20.10.2022

The agency devoted about 20 news items to another recommendation of the European recommendations - **the issue of the election of a Public Defender**. Mostly comments/ statements by the government and experts.

Narrative: "We allowed the opposition to nominate candidates for Ombudsman, and in the end, they got to the point where they support no one but three candidates selected based on clan principle." – **Irakli Kobakhidze**.

21.12.2022

"The purpose of several parties is to keep us from electing a Public Defender, in which case they will have their favorites left in the office of the Public Defender..." Rich NGOs selected three candidates based on the clan principle, and one of the three did not even dare to come for an interview, being so incompetent." "What depended on the ruling team to elect the Public Defender, all the recommendations are practically implemented, no consensus decisions have been made ... the opposition is precluding the recommendation."

On the 2nd point of recommendations - **electoral reform**, the agency prepared 8 news items on it. Some of them represent information disseminated by the official body. For example, "the working group on the revision of the Election Code considered the joint preliminary report of the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR and discussed specific issues based on the recommendations." Also, the statements by government representatives about changes to the Election Code in general, the usefulness of the electronic voting procedure, and criticism from the OSCE/ODIR were covered.

In particular, "we wanted to adopt the Election Code by December 15-16, before the meeting of the European Council, but the Venice Commission did not give us an answer until December 13." When a request is made in an expedited manner, we know that often the opinion is sent back even within a week. In this case, why they need two months, I do not know." – **Irakli Kobakhidze**.

18.10.2022.

On the first point of the EU recommendations - on the issue of **polarization** - the agency published 9 news materials, mainly statements by government representatives or their affiliated experts. For example, "the key to depolarization is that

the 'national movement' must continue to weaken. We will facilitate this process, and it must lead to final depolarization" – **Irakli Kobakhidze**.

| 19.11.2022

The agency pia.ge publishes 7 news items on the 4th recommendation of the European Union - the creation of an **Anti-Corruption Bureau**, mainly the information disseminated by the press center of the Georgian Parliament. For example, "Parliament considered in the second reading a prepared package of legislative amendments on the issue of institutional strengthening of anti-corruption activities." –as well as statements by government representatives and statements by members of the Citizens and For Georgia parties. For example, "we are dealing with a joke typical for the Georgian Dream" - **Kakha Kemoklidze** on the decision to create an Anti-Corruption Bureau.

| 15.11.2022

| 26.10.2022

And the agency publishes 2 news items on the 11th recommendation of the European Commission - **the reflection of Strasbourg Court decisions in the Georgian justice system**. One news item is that "the Parliament adopted in the third reading the draft amendments to the "Law of Georgia on General Courts", and the second is a statement of an opposition MP explaining why she could not support the amendments - "I supported the 11th recommendation on the first and second readings. I was not in the hall during the third reading. Our political group supported these changes," – **Khatuna Samnidze**.

| 20.10.2022

Conclusion:

The news agency pia.ge published more than 170 news items about the process of working on the 12 recommendations and the EU plans in general. In most cases, the media outlet covered the issue in a biased manner. There were frequent cases when the information was more favorable toward the government's position and demonstrated sympathy for the ruling team and the government. Negative and critical attitudes were observed in relation to the opposition, the non-governmental sector, MEPs, and ambassadors.

The diversity of sources of information does not distinguish the agency. Most news consisted of statements, comments, and statuses on social networks of government representatives and experts defending the authorities' interests. On the website, readers had no opportunity to read different opinions and balanced messages in separate articles or news items. In fact, the agency did not publish analytical articles on the issue.

TABULA NEWS AGENCY



From October 1 to December 30 **tabula.ge news agency**, among the news agencies selected for monitoring, devoted the least time to the coverage of 12 recommendations to be implemented for Georgia to get a candidate status for EU membership. The 12 recommendations of the European Union and the working process were covered with about 90 news items.

The agency published the most news on the **law on "deoligarchization"** - 28 news items. On this issue, in addition to official news, such as "[Parliament adopted the law on deoligarchization in the first reading.](#)" Tabula more often covered comments and statements of government representatives. Still, a negative attitude towards the government was observed, which was mainly expressed in the headlines. for example,

["Kobakhidze: Where else can one find such influence of the oligarchs as in certain countries of the United States and Europe?"](#) | 17.11.2022

["Tsagareishvili: Ivanishvili became an oligarch after he turned those thugs to flight in 2012?"](#) | 11.10.2022

["Ohanashvili: Draft law on deoligarchization cannot physically be applied to Ivanishvili."](#) | 3.10.2022

["Tsulukiani on the opposition: they should be held legally responsible by deoligarchization for uncountability."](#) | 7.10.2022

["Zarkua on deoligarchization law: just like the cat was digging, digging - that's what happened to the opposition."](#) | 3.11.2022

["Volsky: our approach to deoligarchization is so fair that it made the opposition uncomfortable."](#) | 3.11.2022

The agency also covered statements by U.S. Ambassador to Georgia Kelly C. Degnan and European parliamentarians supporting the anti-government position against Ivanishvili and deoligarchization. For example,

["Degnan on deoligarchization: you can't take something without adapting it to Georgia"](#) | 5.10.2022

"Degnan: Ukraine withdrew deoligarchization law from Venice Commission". | 22.11.2022

"Juknevičienė: everyone understands that deoligarchization, first of all, implies de-Bidzinization." | 11.10.2022

"Gregorová on deoligarchization: If it doesn't affect Ivanishvili, it's done incorrectly." | 4.11.2022

EU: Before adopting the Law on Deoligarchization, request and execute the opinion by the Venice Commission." | 21.11.2022

It should be noted that Tabula, unlike other agencies, devoted one analytical article to the issue of deoligarchization, with the title - "The law of deoligarchization without That One." The article discusses: what does Georgia's deoligarchization law mean? What is forbidden to a person who entered into the register of oligarchs, and what does the Ukrainian analog mean? Also, what kind of property does one need to own to be an oligarch, and who is an oligarch, according to Georgian politicians? What do the partners say? However, the article is accompanied by a photo (photo manipulation) in which Bidzina Ivanishvili is presented humiliatingly and mockingly. | 16.12.2022

Tabula published **20 news items** on the EU's 12th recommendation, the issue of **the election of the Public Defender**. Most of the news items consisted of the statements of the candidates for the Public Defender at the meeting of the Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights Protection and Civil Integration. However, the agency mainly chose speeches and quotations of the candidates as headlines, which created a cynical attitude among the readers. For example, the headlines in the news items:

- "Ombudsman candidate on religious minorities: I will prioritize Christianity";
- "Ombudsman Candidate: I will defend the rights of any citizen, but I don't support Pride";
- "Ombudsman candidate: I'm a coach; my coach friend recommended me [to enroll in Russia]."
- "Ombudsman Candidate: I've been in church all these years and haven't looked at the law.";
- "Ombudsman Candidate: The Lord God is the master of my body.";

- "Khvichia: I have an inner conviction that the coronavirus is laboratory rather than natural.";
- "Khvichia: I will not fight to enforce someone's right to go somewhere for sexual Pride.";
- "Ombudsman candidate: Ombudsman protection will be needed not only for Ivanishvili but also for Trump"...

Tabula also covered government representatives' statements on electing candidates for Public Defender. For example, "Papuashvili on Ombudsman Elections: trying to bring the Georgian Dream into the mainstream is undemocratic."

| 12.12.2022

"Mdinardze: opposition rejects five selected candidates, so tomorrow we will not be able to elect an Ombudsman" The agency did not cover statements by representatives of the opposition party on this issue.

| 21.12.2022

The agency published 10 news items on the issue of **judicial reform**. 10 news items news items mostly commented on by representatives of the opposition, with the **narrative**: "If the "Clan" remains in court, the recommendation will not be considered fulfilled. The mood of the coverage is negative. For example, "Melia: by electing Murusidze and Gvritishvili, the government announces an open battle with the West."

| 24.10.2022

"Lelo on Murusidze-Gvritishvili: deliberately destroys the chance of EU candidacy."

| 24.10.2022

Tabula published 6 news items on the first EU recommendation - **polarization**, mostly statements by government representatives – "Irakli Kobakhidze: actually polarization is not a problem, it's part of democracy."

| 3.11.2022

It published **1 news item** on **electoral reform** and **2 news items** on the creation of **the Anti-Corruption Bureau**.

Apart from the issues of specific 12 recommendations, Tabula devoted most of the published news to the general importance of European integration and obtaining candidate status (covering comments of government and opposition representatives). And also, statements of MEPs, the EU ambassador to Georgia, the US ambassador to Georgia regarding the implementation of recommendations, and retaliatory criticism of government representatives to

MEPs and ambassadors. It covered critical resolutions adopted by the European Parliament regarding Georgia.

Here is some news for demonstration:

<u>"Bokeria on Várhelyi: nothing changes for the better for Georgia, from the fact that he didn't criticize us".</u>	16.12.2022
<u>"Sanctioning Ivanishvili, releasing Saakashvili and Gvaramia - European Parliament Resolution" .</u>	21.12.2022
<u>"Garibashvili: the opposition is not involved in the implementation of the 12 points; depolarization is their obligation" .</u>	15.11.2022
<u>"Vashadze, Khoshtaria and Japaridze address the Georgian Dream with 31 questions about EU recommendations" .</u>	31.10.2022
<u>"Várhelyi: I see that the Georgian government is actively working on implementing all 12 points".</u>	15.11.2022
<u>"Garibashvili: we implemented the 12 EU priorities thoroughly, correctly and efficiently".</u>	26.12.2022
<u>"In Tsulukiani's opinion, the European Parliament document is "grounds" for the denial of granting the status of candidacy."</u>	9.11.2022
<u>"Herczynski on 12 points: the government must be open, the opposition must work with them constructively"</u>	15.11.2022

Conclusion:

From October 1 to December 30, Tabula published about 90 news items about the process of obtaining EU candidate status and implementing the 12 recommendations.

As a result of the monitoring, the negative attitude of tabula.ge towards the representatives of the Georgian Dream was revealed. In particular, former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili was mentioned in a negative context (in headlines, with photo manipulation). Although the media outlet did not often publish

statements by government representatives during the three months, the news headlines were primarily in a negative context. It should also be noted that the media outlet did not intensively publish statements by representatives of the opposition, and we can say that the balance in this regard was maintained. Most news was derived from TV programs, and only quotes were given. Tabula.ge paid little attention to the process of working on the plan to implement the 12 recommendations.

As part of the project "Civil Monitoring of Accountability, Transparency and Anti-Corruption Activities within the Framework of the 12 Recommendations of the European Union," a report on monitoring of media coverage has been prepared by the Virtual Democracy Academy in cooperation with Civic IDEA.

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