ENIGMMA 2 Project – Sustaining Migration Management in Georgia

Study on Media Terminology and the Media Landscape in Georgia with a Focus on Migration
ENIGMMA 2 Project – Sustaining Migration Management in Georgia

Study on Media Terminology and the Media Landscape in Georgia with a Focus on Migration

Prepared by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, Vienna - Austria
Commissioned and funded by the EU

International Centre for Migration Policy Development – October 2018
Editors

Tamar Kintsurashvili

Executive director of the Media Development Foundation (MDF) since 2017, prior to which she served as chairperson of the MDF’s board. Ms Kintsurashvili is the author of numerous publications on hate speech, anti-Western propaganda, media literacy, freedom of expression, media transparency and accountability, and media self-regulation. She is currently Associate Professor at Ilia State University (ISU), where she teaches media ethics and propaganda research methods.

Xenia Pilipenko

ENIGMMA 2 Project Officer, Ms Pilipenko holds an MSc in Economic History and an MA in Global Studies, she has seven years’ experience working on migration policy and capacity building projects in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus.

Violeta Wagner

ENIGMMA 2 Project Manager, Ms Wagner’s background is in international law and she has more than ten years of practical experience working for state administrations in the area of migration and asylum. She has managed migration-related projects in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus for ICMPD since 2011.

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Gonzagagasse 1 6, Marjanishvili street,
A-1010 Vienna Tbilisi
Austria Georgia
www.icmpd.org www.enigmma.ge

International Centre for Migration Policy Development
Tbilisi, Georgia and Vienna, Austria, October 2018

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission of the copyright owners.

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of ICMPD and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

Printed and bound in Tbilisi, Georgia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table of Contents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Acronyms, Abbreviations and Definitions</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Project Background</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Study Background</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Content of Monitoring</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Monitoring Methodology</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Media Landscape in Georgia</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Legal Environment and Media Self-Regulation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Terminology Overview</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Migrants in Georgia</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Migrants from Georgia</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Visa Liberalisation in the Media</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Conclusion</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Outlook and Next Steps</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# List of Acronyms, Abbreviations and Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRRC</td>
<td>Caucasus Research Resource Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoE</td>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECRi</td>
<td>European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENI</td>
<td>European Neighbourhood Instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENIMMA 2</td>
<td>Sustaining Migration Management in Georgia project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU MS</td>
<td>European Union Member States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCJE</td>
<td>Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GeoStat</td>
<td>National Statistics Office of Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNCC</td>
<td>Georgian National Communication Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPB</td>
<td>Georgian Public Broadcaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICMPD</td>
<td>International Centre for Migration Policy Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IREX</td>
<td>International Research and Exchanges Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IREX MSI</td>
<td>International Research and Exchanges Board Media Sustainability Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI</td>
<td>International Republican Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDF</td>
<td>Media Development Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDI</td>
<td>National Democratic Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTV</td>
<td>Russian television channel (in Russian: HTB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACE</td>
<td>Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCMI</td>
<td>State Commission on Migration Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVMR</td>
<td>Television Measurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Project Background

The European Union-funded “Sustaining Migration Management in Georgia” (ENIGMMA 2) project is based on the outcomes of the EU-Georgia Financing Agreement on the programme funded under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) 2016 Technical Cooperation Facility II, signed in Georgia in May 2017. The project builds broadly on the results of previous International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) projects in Georgia, particularly the recently implemented EU-funded “Enhancing Georgia’s Migration Management” (ENIGMMA) project, which supported the Government of Georgia in implementation of migration-related areas of the Visa Liberalisation Dialogue between the European Union (EU) and Georgia.

The ENIGMMA 2 project runs from September 2017 through November 2020. Its main purpose is to further support EU-Georgia relations on the enhancement of mobility and people-to-people contacts, through assisting Georgian partners in assessing and evaluating the impact of the sustainable implementation of the Migration Strategy. This is carried out without prejudice to the Migration Strategy Action Plan and Evaluation Indicators document, and by ensuring efficient application of the provisions established by the Association Agreement between the European Union and Georgia and Association Agenda.

The action seeks to achieve this overall objective by addressing migration-related identified and potential risks of the visa liberalisation between Georgia and the European Union Member States (EU MS), through supporting the Government of Georgia in implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the Migration Strategy, and by implementing joint measures.

The project is divided into five components corresponding to the respective specific objective and expected results. In this way, it focuses on different support provision methodology, such as:

- **Policy recommendations.** The main output of Component 1 which deals with: supporting the State Commission on Migration Issues (SCMI) in implementation and evaluation of the Migration Strategy by analysing the impact of visa liberalisation on mobility in Georgia; monitoring migration coverage in the Georgian media; providing back-stopping support in analysis and evaluation of the implementation of the Migration Strategy and its impact on migration management in Georgia and carrying out demand driven analytical and research activities;

- **Joint response measures** under Component 2 focusing on implementation of measures to avoid and/or minimise negative and foster positive impact of visa liberalisation in Georgia, implemented jointly by SCMI, ICMPD and EU MS experts;

- **Capacity building** within Component 3 devoted to fostering migration understanding, expertise and education in different areas of migration management;
Expert exchange and cooperation activities under Component 4, with the aim of further deepening Georgia’s European integration in the field of Migration and Asylum.

1.1 Study Background

The Georgian Law on Broadcasting states that a public broadcaster shall reflect in its programmes the ethnic, cultural, language, religious, age and gender diversity of society. Moreover, it is prohibited to broadcast any programmes that present a direct or indirect risk of igniting racial, ethnic, religious or other strife and which are of a discriminatory nature to any group or provoke violence. However, there is currently no effective media monitoring system specifically tasked with tackling increasing migration and public attitudes associated with migratory flows in and to Georgia. This situation called for the establishment of an ad-hoc media monitoring mechanism within the ENIGMMA 2 project.

According to Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) recommendations, Member States are encouraged to establish cooperation with the media on migration, organise seminars and training courses for media professionals on the subject of intercultural education and the problem of intolerance, and systematically evaluate the quality of media output on migrant and ethnic minority matters. Public media should play a responsible role in combating racism and xenophobia through objective migration coverage; and official public relations services should provide full, unbiased information on subjects connected with migrants and ethnic minorities.

It was to this background that the ENIGMMA 2 project implemented a media monitoring activity in cooperation with representatives from Georgian civil society – local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in the media and migration field under the supervision of the project team and international experts. The activity aims at gaining knowledge on how migration-related issues are represented in the media (including in terms of their frequency, content and language). The media monitoring aims at contributing to the genuine transmission of sound and fact-based migration-related information by mass media in Georgia, in the interest of migrant integration and social cohesion, and with a view to counteracting misinformation, intolerance and xenophobia in Georgian society. A powerful tool in the age of globalisation, the media has become one of the main determinants of public opinion. It can therefore either reinforce the image of the migrant as criminal and underline anti-immigrant rhetoric or help to better integrate migrants and serve as a genuine transmitter of their stories, thus counteracting misunderstanding and fear. With this in mind, the activity aims at the specific project objective of gaining knowledge on how migration-related issues (identified below) are represented in the media. It targets national media representatives, civil society, state institutions, migrants and the Georgian general public.

1.2 Content of Monitoring

After the approval of the Migration Strategy of Georgia in 2015 and the introduction of the visa-free regime with the EU in March 2017, there is a clear need to further support Georgian institutions in their implementation of the Migration Strategy. This is also true for institutions’ monitoring and evaluation of the impact of visa liberalisation, including in regard to general changes in the Georgian population’s

---

aspiration for European Union membership after the introduction of the visa-free regime. Therefore, the following areas are included in the monitoring:

- **The present pre-study with an analysis of the media landscape, media consumption and migration terminology** used in the Georgian media. The pre-study provides background information on the Georgian media, focusing especially on the main media sources in the country, including in terms of media consumption. Further, it analyses the practice of using specific terms in relation to migrants, in particular which terminologies are used in the Georgian language in regard to migration and migrants, highlighting whether there is a negative, positive or neutral connotation to broadcasts on migration issues. It also focuses on the media’s self-regulatory framework on anti-discrimination provisions and offensive terminology;

- **Migration-related monitoring of the media** implemented by the project partners in cooperation with Georgia-based NGOs active in migration and media areas, with a focus on general coverage of visa liberalisation in Georgia (the impact of visa liberalisation, attitudes towards visa liberalisation, presentation of the EU and its regulations, presentation of Georgians making use of visa liberalisation), as well as coverage of migration between Georgia and the EU, including the perception of migrants;

- Creation of a **comprehensive data-set of Georgian media coverage** on international and internal migration, the content and language of which has been analysed;

- **Analysis of the impact of media migration coverage and terminology** used to shape public attitudes;

- **Establishment of a sustainable media migration coverage monitoring tool** and a state institutions/media/civil society cooperation mechanism in the area of migration.

The final products of the media monitoring activity are the present pre-study on media terminology and the media landscape in Georgia with a focus on migration, as well as the main media monitoring study on the representation of migrants and migration issues in the Georgian media. The main study will provide recommendations for policy making and further follow-up.

### 1.3 Monitoring Methodology

The media monitoring analysis takes a mixed methodology approach in order to deliver a better understanding of the media situation in Georgia regarding migration issues. By mixing both qualitative and quantitative methods, more diverse data can be gathered by the researchers in order to get more in-depth information and knowledge on the subject. Qualitative research for the study includes monitors analysing the context of the news, including visuals, tacit messages, language used, monitoring of prime time talk shows with a focus on perception of migrants and xenophobia, etc. Focus group discussions are organised once it is established how messages in identified monitoring areas are delivered by the media. The discussions are arranged to determine how specific groups of the Georgian population perceive these messages based on their particular social setting. Focus groups are conducted according to geographic locations – Tbilisi and Kutaisi (because of the international airports in these cities) compared to Adjara and Samkhte-Javakheti (because of an often observed critical attitudes towards the European Union in these regions) – and age groups; it will be interesting to see if there is a contrast
between attitudes among the youth in these regions and those prevailing among their elders. Quantitative research includes data collection from the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) polls in the United States of America (USA), ALEXA, Nielsen ratings and other media monitoring organisations or individual researchers.

This report is based solely on desk research. The analysis covers international assessments of the Georgian media environment, audience measurement data, legal and self-regulatory frameworks, and early studies on media coverage of migrant-related issues. The final goal of the pre-study is to incorporate its findings into a media monitoring methodology and select media monitoring subjects based on media consumption habits and diversity of editorial policies.
Georgia remains a “partly free country” with regard to media freedom, according to the Freedom House *Freedom of the Press 2017 Index* measuring progress of countries worldwide based on legal, political and economic environment criteria. At the same time, Freedom House indicates that “Georgia continues to have the freest and most diverse media environment in the South Caucasus”. The International Research and Exchanges Board Media Sustainability Index (IREX MSI) shows a slight slip for Georgia in overall score (compared to all other countries monitored) from 2.42 in 2016 to 2.34 in 2017, due to concerns over plurality and media business environment. However, despite this slight decline, on the back of its improved overall MSI score over the last six years (from 1.88 in 2012 to 2.34 in 2017) Georgia is in the category of Near Sustainable countries, being a regional leader compared with neighbouring Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia.

The MSI from the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) ranks countries on a scale from 0 to 4 and classifies all countries into four broad categories: “Unsustainable, Anti-Free Press” (0-1); “Unsustainable Mixed System” (1-2); “Near Sustainability” (2-3); “Sustainable” (3-4). The Index assesses the four indicators based on five objectives: 1. Free speech; 2. Professional journalism; 3. Plurality of news sources; 4. Business management; 5. Supporting institutions.

---

2. **Media Landscape in Georgia**

---

Footnotes:


The survey conducted by the NDI in 2017 indicates that the majority of respondents (88%) receive information about Georgian politics and current affairs from television, while the internet is the chosen source of information for 47%, print media for 7% and radio for only 1%.

Seventy-two television and 38 radio channels were operating in the Georgian media market in 2016, according to data from the Georgian National Communication Commission (GNCC). The National Statistics Office of Georgia (GeoStat) indicates that 317 print publications (newspapers and magazines) were on the market in 2016, with a combined annual circulation of 60.4 million. An exhaustive list of online news agencies and other online publications is not available, although IREX MSI 2017 does provide data on major news agencies.

Television Measurement (TVMR) Georgia, officially licenced by Nielsen Television Audience Measurement, has revealed the two most rated TV channels of 2017. The table below shows the ratings for major television channels providing news and current affairs programmes, and also information on the most trusted Georgian information channels, according to the NDI 2017 survey.

Table 1  TV Ratings and Trust in Media, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News TV Channels</th>
<th>TVMR Georgia TV Ratings</th>
<th>Trust in Media (NDI polls)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SHR - Audience Share</td>
<td>AMR - Average Minute Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imedi TV</td>
<td>28.08%</td>
<td>5.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rustavi 2</td>
<td>26.76%</td>
<td>5.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB)</td>
<td>3.63%</td>
<td>0.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maestro</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV Pirveli</td>
<td>1.83%</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obiektivi TV</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjara Public Broadcaster</td>
<td>1.14%</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: TVMR Georgia, NDI

The Alexa Global ranking system provides data on the most rated Georgian websites. News portal Ambebi.ge (28th place, daily pageviews - 2:34, daily time on site - 4:34) is the top rated news site followed by On.ge (40th place, daily pageviews - 4:14, daily time on site - 11:34), among 50 top informa-
tion sites in the country ranking system. Other news agencies and information sites randomly checked in the system have the following readership: Interpressnews news agency (51st place, daily pageviews - 2:64, daily time on site - 4:55), PIA.ge (101st place, daily pageviews - 1:50, daily time on site - 2:55), Reportiori.ge (150th place, daily pageviews - 2:20, daily time on site - 3:59).

There is no reliable, verifiable data on print media circulation and number of copies sold, since newspapers and magazines do not indicate circulation on published copies. Facebook numbers revealed the following data on number of subscriptions to print and online newspapers: Prime Time (322,247), Asaval-Dasavali (130,848), Kviris Palitra (109,759), Georgian Times (92,251), Georgia and the World (23,015). The majority of these newspapers (Prime Time, Asaval-Dasavali, Georgian Times, Georgia and the World) are tabloids and two of them (Asaval-Dasavali, Georgia and the World) have openly declared xenophobic and homophobic editorial policies. The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) country report on Georgia for 2015 cites Asaval-Dasavali as an example of a publication notorious for hate speech, while other local reports suggest that Asaval-Dasavali and Georgia and the World are ill-famed for their hate speech towards various ethnic, religious and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) groups.  

16 As of 15 April 2018.
3. Legal Environment and Media Self-Regulation

Article 56.3 of the Law of Georgia on Broadcasting (henceforth the Broadcasting Law) prohibits the transmission of programmes that contain material inciting hatred, discrimination, or are offensive to a person or a group on the basis of ethnic, religion or other belonging. Programmes intended to illustrate and document problems of existing hatred or discrimination are exempt. The Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB) is the only channel with content-related obligations under Article 16 of the Broadcasting Law to “reflect ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, age and gender diversity of the society in programmes”.¹⁹

Since 2009, mixed media self-regulation regimes have been in operation for broadcast, print and online media. The Broadcaster Code of Conduct was developed by a body with statutory power, while print and online media are entirely self-regulatory and operate free of any specific statutory rules on a voluntary basis.

The Broadcasting Law sets specific rules for the establishment of self-regulatory mechanisms for all authorised broadcasters regardless of their legal formation. Pursuant to Article 50 of the Law, the Georgian National Communications Commission adopted the Broadcaster Code of Conduct on 12 March 2009, which is mandatory for all licence holders. The Code of Conduct obliges each authorised broadcaster to launch a complaints commission and appeal body, thus allowing interested parties (media consumers) to appeal in case that the media outlet concerned violates any of the Code’s provisions. The regulation of content is solely at the discretion of the broadcaster or self-regulatory appeal body set up by a broadcaster or broadcasters’ association. The GNCC does not have the power to reconsider decisions of the broadcaster’s appeal body regarding content, but it is entitled to intervene in the case that procedures prescribed by the legislation have been violated. In such cases, the GNCC has the power to impose sanctions.

Chapter IX of the Code, on Diversity, Equality and Tolerance, contains anti-discrimination provisions and concerns groups such as ethnic, religious and other minorities. According to Article 31, “Broadcasters shall refrain from publishing any material likely to incite hatred or intolerance on the grounds of race, language, gender, religious convictions, political opinions, ethnic origin, geographic location, or social background”. There are no specific provisions in the Code regarding offensive terminology towards migrants. Article 33 provides general recommendations on offensive terminology stating that “broadcasters should avoid causing offence to any religious, ethnic or other groups by using, among others, certain terminology and images”.²⁰

According to information provided by the GNCC, in 2016, self-regulation bodies of national and regional broadcasters addressed 13 complaints; some of which did not specify a disputed clause from the Code of Conduct, which makes it impossible to classify the type of complaint involved. Four of the 13 complaints concerned discrimination, namely three complaints about discrimination against LGBT representatives and one on the ground of gender. The GNCC’s 2016 report does not specify any cases of xenophobia or discrimination on the ground of religion. Since the adoption of the Code of Conduct by the GNCC in 2009, the commission has not conducted any information campaigns to raise citizen awareness of the appeal body within the self-regulation mechanism. Consequently, the awareness of citizens about this instrument, an aim which is envisaged by the legislation, is low and a lack of applications has been observed.

Georgian print and online media are entirely self-regulatory and operate free of any specific statutory rules, on a voluntary basis. The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics (GCJE) is an independent body established by individual journalists and managers who have developed ethical standards (The Charter of Journalistic Ethics) within the profession. The GCJE seeks to develop and promote ethical and professional standards of journalism by dealing with consumers’ complaints and educational activities. Principle 7 of the Charter states: “Journalists must understand the dangers of encouraging discrimination on the part of the media; therefore, he/she must exert every effort to avoid discrimination of any person on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political and other opinion, national or social origin, or any other grounds”. Among the 134 cases examined by the GCJE in the period 2010 to 2017, 31 cases concerned discrimination, including seven cases involving xenophobia, two concerning Islamophobia and one case of alleged racism. It is worth noting that the majority of complaints were initiated by non-governmental organisations working on minority rights.

In 2006, the Georgian Public Broadcaster developed its own in-house Code of Conduct. Article 15 of the Code, on reporting diversity, suggests not using words, statements or pictures that might lead to discrimination of an individual or a part of community by race, skin colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, cultural or social origin, family, property, birth or other status, residence, state of health, age, or any other signifier. Subparagraph 15.6 on terminology recommends editorial staff to “avoid such terminology that may be offensive for representatives of a specific ethnic or religious minority”. The subparagraph does not include any specific terminology related to migrants but provides suggestions in relation to some specific ethnic groups, for instance, using “Jew” instead of “Kike” and “Azeri” instead of “Tatar”. Both of the aforementioned words have negative connotation in the local context. “Kike” is derogatory slang for Georgian Jews and was in general use in the previous century. The term “Tatar” draws on historical trauma and is associated with the Mongol invasion of Georgia in the 8th century. The term has been employed as an offensive term in relation to ethnically Georgian Muslims, Azeri Muslims and Kist Muslims living in Georgia. Focus groups conducted among Muslim youth in Georgia showed that ethnic Georgian Muslims from the Adjara region were extremely negative toward being labelled as “Tatars”.

---

24 Ibid.
26 Ibid., p. 38.
The Law of Georgia on the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons\textsuperscript{27} provides legal definitions of terms such as “alien”, “stateless person”, and “asylum seeker”. The Law of Georgia on Compatriots Residing Abroad and Diaspora Organisations\textsuperscript{28} includes definitions of “compatriot residing abroad” and “diaspora”, while the Law on Repatriation of Persons Involuntarily Displaced by the former USSR from the Georgian SSR in the 1940’s\textsuperscript{29} defines the status and qualifying conditions for the terms “forcefully exiled person” and “repatriate”. However, usage of these terms and their connotation varies in common language and from tabloid (sensational and lurid media) to mainstream media (which is regarded as being more reliable). There are also differences in attitudes related to foreign migrants and migrants from Georgia. Unlike immigrants, whom have been the subject of recent studies – and whom it has been found are mainly either negatively portrayed or ignored by the Georgian media, there is no available study on the coverage of migrants from Georgia. However, from personal observations we can assume that attitudes towards emigrants would be more favourable due to the common ethnic identity.

4.1 Migrants in Georgia

Mainstream media mainly uses neutral terminology\textsuperscript{30} towards migrants (e.g. citizen of Syria, Turkey, asylum seeker, etc.), while tabloid media covers migrant-related issues in a xenophobic context.\textsuperscript{31} Anti-migrant rhetoric was on the rise in 2017 due to the emergence of the far-right movement Georgian March.\textsuperscript{32} The first protest organised by Georgian March demanded the deportation of “illegal immigrants” and an overall toughening of the country’s immigration laws. With the term “illegal foreigners”, the organisers of the march referred to representatives of particular nationalities – immigrants from Iran, various Arab and African countries and others; calling on them to leave Georgian territory.\textsuperscript{33}

A visible distinction can be observed in the rhetoric of the far-right groups between attitudes towards migrants from African and Asian countries and those from Western nations. The distinction also pre-

\textsuperscript{30} Neutral: coverage relies on description alone and is free from either positive or negative connotation.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 1.
vails in the Georgian tabloids and Russian-language media, which is a major source of information, particularly for minority settlements in the country (especially in the Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions). The study Coverage of Muslim-related Topics in Georgian, Russian, Azerbaijani and Turkish Traditional and New Media\textsuperscript{34} shows that reporting on terrorism and conflict in the Middle East is more prevalent on Georgian and Russian language television channels than coverage addressing religious or migrant issues (see chart below).

\textbf{Chart 4} \
\textbf{Coverage of Muslims and related Topics on Georgian and Russian TV Channels – MDF, 2017}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart4}
\caption{Coverage of Muslims and related Topics on Georgian and Russian TV Channels – MDF, 2017}
\end{figure}

The study also revealed the major negative terminologies used mainly in relation to migrants from Asian and African countries. These terms are:

- “Inundation of migrants”, “criminal gangs”, “criminal dwelling”, “crowd of Muslims”, “European Caliphate”;  
- “Invasion of barbarians”, “uncontrolled flow of migrants – Trojan Horse of terrorists”, “provoked flow of migrants”.

The report also indicates that some Georgian tabloids and Russian state-owned and Russian-language media are linking crimes and terrorism to Islam and migrants of eastern nationalities; and promoting the idea that European policy towards migrants creates fertile ground for terrorism:

**Georgia and the World**: “The tolerance that some [EU] countries show towards the nests of Islamism on their territories is totally incomprehensible”.

**NTV (titles)**: “Radicalisation of Europe”; “European Caliphate”. Vadim Glusker, reporter: “What else has to happen in Europe [in addition to a terrorist attack in Barcelona] to make it finally wake up and get rid of its negligence. We have seen a similar picture of no law enforcement representatives on the streets in Berlin, Stockholm, London and now in Barcelona”.

**Russian Channel One** (reporter, Anton Volski): “Residents of London seem to have moved two millennia back to the epoch in which the city was surrounded with a high wall to defend it against invasions of barbarians [the city has experienced a terrorist attack] ... However, today, Britain has more enemies inside it [migrants] than outside it... There is the cause of terrorism, indeed, of every type of terrorism... They say that the razed building is only the first warning; because of politicians’ actions there is an urgent need for refurbishment of not only the building but the entire country” (25 June 2017).

### 4.2 Migrants from Georgia

Migrants from Georgia are usually referred to as “emigrants” or “diaspora” and with a positive or neutral connotation if ethnic Georgians are being referred to. A different approach has been observed in relation to Meskhetians who were forcefully sent into exile from the Soviet Socialist Repub-
lic of Georgia by the former USSR in the 1940s and are now seeking repatriation. The Meskhetians’ origins are widely contested in Georgia. “There is little agreement as to whether the Meskhetian Turks are in fact ethnic Turks, or rather ethnic Georgians who at some stage in history adopted or had to convert to Islam”. After their deportation to the region, the locals in Central Asia mostly referred to themselves in terms of their original place of settlement in the Caucasus, such as “Georgians” and “Azerbaijanis”. Official Soviet documents label the Meskhetians as “Turks”, “Caucasians” and in some cases “Uzbeks”. In Georgia they usually are referred to as “Meskhetian Turks” or “Mohammedan Meskhetians”. The term “Mohammedan” is negatively perceived by Georgian Muslims, as it was used in the Middle Ages to describe a Muslim and is today an archaic term not favoured by Muslims; “Mohammedan” also means a follower of the Islamic prophet Mohammed and is considered insulting to Muslims, according to focus group findings.

Mainstream media mainly reports on visa liberalisation in the context of EU-Georgia cooperation and the Association Agreement. However, some Georgian tabloid media outlets attempt to link Georgia’s EU Visa Waiver to refugee camps, an “imposed EU obligation” to receive migrants, dangerous criminals, and the Islamisation of Georgia similar to that which is alleged to have taken place in the EU:

*Saqinform*: “Europeans have been turned into refugees in their own countries. [...] The same will happen to Georgia, which is already inundated with Arab, Indian, Chinese and African migrants”.

*Georgia and the World*: “Defenders of so-called western values, tolerance and multiculturalism want to have a similar situation here as in France (which has a “Mosque of the Virgin Mary”), Belgium, Germany or Denmark”.

Some media outlets also claim that, similar to Baltic States, visa liberalisation will generate a large wave of migration, which would be a threat to the country’s existing demographics. Dissemination of fake content on criminal behaviour among migrants in EU countries is a widespread practice not only in tabloid media outlets, but also on social networks (such as the Facebook pages) of far-right groups.  

---


Conclusion

This pre-study reveals that the Georgian media landscape is pluralistic, providing a wide range of views and different types of media platforms. Journalists mainly follow ethical and professional standards prescribed in codes of conduct and ethical principles. However, some media outlets are hotbeds of sensationalism and hate speech in relation to migrants and certain ethnic, religious, or gender groups. While journalistic codes of conduct and ethical guidelines do contain anti-discrimination provisions, no specific regulations have been developed as part of the self-regulation on coverage of migrant issues or the non-use of offensive terminology in relation to this group.

As of yet, no comprehensive research on media coverage of migrants or EU-Georgia visa liberalisation issues has been conducted. However, studies on hate speech and Muslim-related issues do reveal use of derogatory language and offensive terminology targeting migrants of eastern origin. Nor is there any data available on coverage of migrants from Georgia or the language used in reporting on expatriates. The pre-study findings indicate a need to conduct more focused research, learning how the media portrays migrants, which terminology is applied and how the EU visa liberalisation process is presented in the Georgian media.
Due to the lack of a comprehensive study of migrants to Georgia in general, and the absence of any available studies on emigrants, the media monitoring will contribute to filling the existing gaps and provide stakeholders with evidence-based policy recommendations. Within the framework of the EU-funded ENIGMMA 2 project it is planned to conduct a comprehensive study on coverage of migration and visa liberalisation issues in the Georgian media. Mixed methodology involving quantitative and qualitative data analysis will be utilised. Based on pre-study findings, 14 media outlets will be selected from television,\textsuperscript{50} online\textsuperscript{51} and print media.\textsuperscript{52}

The study will focus on migration between Georgia and the EU – from Georgia – and, if applicable, migration between Georgia and other countries – if it directly or indirectly links in with the EU visa liberalisation process. In the case of general coverage of EU-Georgia visa liberalisation, the impact it has had and the attitudes towards the process, and its regulations and benefits, will be observed. Monitoring will measure how often these topics are covered, evaluate the tone of the coverage (positive, neutral or negative)\textsuperscript{53} and the direct and indirect reporting\textsuperscript{54} in relation to the selected topics.

The qualitative analysis of news items and Georgian-language talk shows will evaluate terminology used in relation to migrants, migration, and diaspora; the use of hate language; any lack of sources/biased reporting; cases of misinformation; and the anti-Western context.

For the terminology element of the study, monitoring will assess: the differences that occur when (foreign) migrants in Georgia are referred to as opposed to Georgian migrants; the extent to which negative terminology revealed by previous studies is widespread in certain media outlets; how Georgians abroad are referred to (as “emigrants”, “expatriates”, “diaspora members”, etc.). The media monitoring has already been carried out, with the period of monitoring lasting three months, from 1 April to 1 July 2018.

Based on preliminary findings of the media monitoring, terminology used by media outlets in relation to migrants will be selected and tested in focus groups. Two age groups (18-35 and 36-55 years old) will be selected and two focus groups will be organised in four Georgian cities – Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi and Akhalkalaki, with the participation of at least eight persons in each group (64 persons in total). The focus groups will pave the way for developing final recommendations targeting media outlets and media professional organisations with the aim of improving inclusive media reporting on migrants issues.

\textsuperscript{50} Rustavi 2, Imedia, Georgian Public Broadcaster, Obieqtivi TV.
\textsuperscript{51} Ambebi.ge, On.ge, IPN, PIA, Reportiori.ge, Georgian Times.
\textsuperscript{52} Asaval-Dasavali, Kviris Palitra, Prime Time, Georgia and the World.
\textsuperscript{53} Positive: the subject covered is featured in a positive light; Neutral: the coverage relies on facts alone and is free from positive or negative connotation; Negative: the subject covered is featured in a negative light, allegations and criticism are one-sided and the entire report carries negative connotation.
\textsuperscript{54} Direct reporting: the whole report is dedicated to topics determined in advance (visa liberalisation and migration); Indirect reporting: the story is about other topics but reference is made to visa liberalisation or migration.
References


Saqinform, Georgia Can’t Refuse Russia’s Offer, 6 July 2017. (In Georgian) http://saqinform.ge/news/33992/“ruseTs+sheuZlia%2C+saqarTvelos+iseTi+ram+shesTavazos%2C+razec+is+uars+ver+ityvis”+-+saqinformi.html
ENIGMMA 2 Project –
Sustaining Migration Management in Georgia

Study on Media Terminology and the Media Landscape in Georgia with a Focus on Migration

International Centre for Migration Policy Development, 2018