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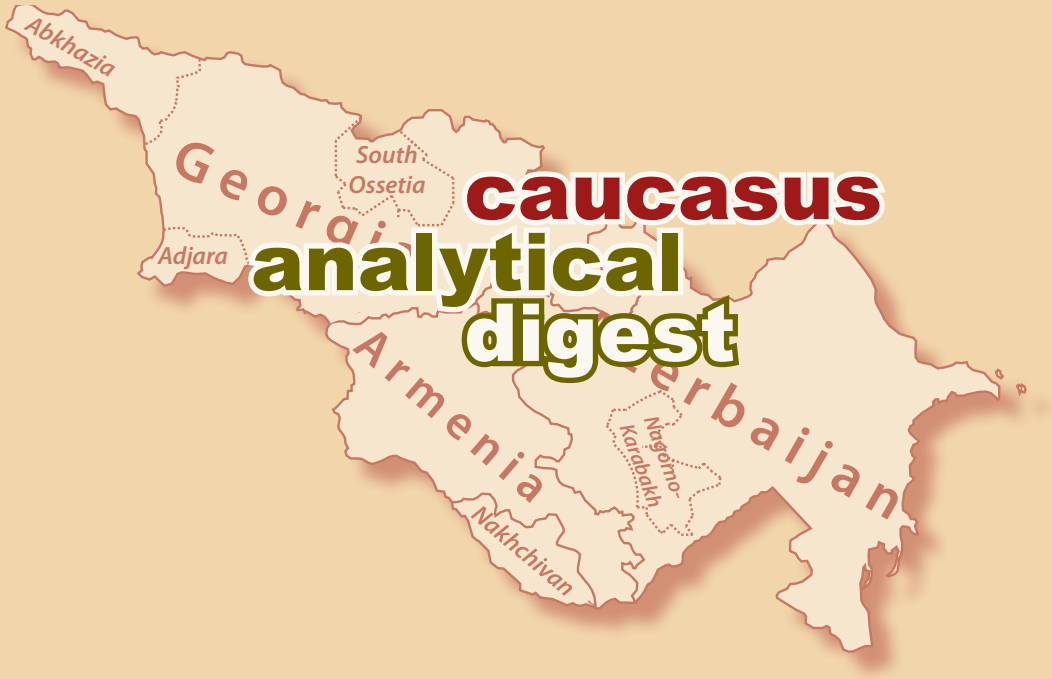

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Traditional Failings versus Non-Traditional Prospects of the Armenian Media

By Arpine Porsughyan, Yerevan

Abstract

Despite the large number of media outlets in Armenia, traditional media remains homogenous in its message. This is especially troublesome in an environment where the majority of the population are passive receivers and do not seek alternative sources of information. With the absolute dominance of government–friendly broadcast media, what are the implications for reporting on the political behavior of Armenians and can new and social media provide a ground for non-elite voices?

The Media Landscape in Armenia

On December 16, 2010, the National Commission on Television and Radio of Armenia announced the results of the broadcast license tender. A1+, one of the few independent media outlets, was denied a broadcast license for the thirteenth time despite calls from the international community prior to the voting for offering broadcast licenses to new outlets to liberalize the media in Armenia. Freedom House Executive Director David J. Kramer remarked that "A thirteenth denial of A1+'s lawful request for a license would be a slap in the face to advocates of free media everywhere."[1] A1+ was denied a broadcast license in 2002 and has been off the air since. Media experts described it as a major setback for media freedom in Armenia.

Despite the relatively high number of traditional media outlets, both state and private, that exist in Armenia—48 television stations including the local ones, 36 newspapers and 17 radio stations—, media in Armenia suffers from a lack of pluralism, openness and professionalism. [2] Freedom House classifies the media in Armenia as *not free* and the IREX Media Sustainability Index reports no changes in the low score over the last year.[3]

The state-run Armenian Public Television and the Armenian Public Radio are two of the few stations that reach a nationwide audience. Many of the private television stations are owned by government-friendly business elites and these broadcasters employ a high degree of self-censorship to avoid losing their licenses.[4] While newspapers provide alternative political views, their circulation is limited—5,000 copies for the most popular newspaper. Radio stations generally focus on entertainment with the only exception being Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

Traditional Media and the Population

What are the viewing habits of the population of Armenia and how much is the population dependent on broadcast and print media? The Caucasus Research Resource Centers' Caucasus Barometer 2009 (CRRC CB), a nation-wide survey conducted annually in the South Caucasus asked Armenians about their media preferences and perceptions. According to the survey data, which are documented in the Opinion Poll Section of this issue, television is the most popular medium in Armenia. The overwhelming majority of the population receives at least one local language television channel and 90 percent of the population claims to watch at least one television news program a day. In contrast, only 34 percent of the population read a newspaper/news magazine at least once a week. The amount of newspaper readership varies between the big cities and the outlying areas—44 percent of capital inhabitants claim to read a newspaper/newsmagazine at least once a week versus 26 percent of rural inhabitants who do the same.

With the dominating popularity of television, it is not surprising that television is the main source of information about current events in the country for 90 percent of the population. Neighbors and friends together are the second main source of information on current events for around half of the population.

However, viewing preferences do not always translate into satisfaction with the quality of the information. In particular, those in the capital with access to alternative sources of information claim that the television channels in Armenia do not present different perspective on

1 Freedom House (December 14, 2010). *Freedom House Calls on Armenia to Liberalize its Broadcast Media.* Retrieved January 17, 2011 from http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=70&release=1293.

2 IREX (2010). *Media Sustainability Index 2010 Armenia.* Retrieved January 3, 2011, from http://www.irex.org/project/media-sustainability-index-msi.

3 Freedom House (2010). *Freedom of the press.* Retrieved December 23, 2010, from http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=16&year=2010 (see Documentation Section in this issue). IREX (2010). *Media Sustainability Index 2010 Armenia.* Retrieved January 3, 2011 from http://www.irex.org/project/media-sustainability-index-msi.

4 Ibid.

the news in the country (34 percent in the capital versus 22 percent in rural areas). Focus groups conducted by CRRC in 2008 with media consumers in Yerevan also showed general dissatisfaction with the way news is presented on local television channels.

"I don't trust TV because it doesn't correspond to reality at all. There are cases when you witness something and they report something totally different." (Female, 18–40, Armenia)[5]

However, a rather large percent of the population falls into the category of passive receivers of information who do not have a strong opinion about the quality of reporting or the accuracy of news on local media channels. Thus, in response to the question "How well do you think TV journalists in Armenia inform the population about what is actually going on in the country," over 60 percent of the respondents took a neutral position or did not know.

Literature on the topic suggests that media influence is especially strong in the environments where the number of alternative sources of information is limited.[6] The population in Armenia also recognizes the influence of broadcast media on the formation of opinion; over 40 percent of Armenians either agree or completely agree that television defines what people think.[7] How then is media interacting with the political behavior of the population?

Traditional Media and Elections

The presidential election of February 2008 and its immediate aftermath delivered yet another blow to the media in Armenia. The favorable coverage of then Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan, when compared to the completely negative coverage of the main opponent, Levon Ter-petrosyan, played a significant role in increasing the level of tensions surrounding the elections. According to the OSCE/ODHIR Election Observation Mission report, the state-owned *H1* did not treat the candidates equally despite allocating comparable airtime to their campaigns in its news coverage. Moreover, the majority of coverage on Ter-Petrossian was negative even though he was the main opposition candidate and was given the most airtime. Public radio adopted a similar approach while the state-owned *Hayastani Hanrapetutyun* newspaper gave clear preferential and generally positive coverage to Sargsyan in some 45 percent of its print space devoted to the elections.[8]

In the aftermath of the contested elections of 2008, the government declared a 20-day state of emergency and imposed tight control on the media. Almost all newspapers in Armenia suspended publication during that time. Most other media outlets followed the stipulations of the state of emergency, broadcasting or printing only official news.

While the international community urges the Armenian government to liberalize its media before the 2012 parliamentary elections, new processes, such as the switch from analog to digital broadcasting which may last until 2015, is creating new obstacles preventing new broadcasters from entering the market.

Traditional Media and Reporting on the "Other"

What is the role of media in shaping public opinion about the countries that have tense relationships with Armenia?

Research shows that reporting both on Azerbaijan and Turkey is generally driven by the state's official positions. Monitoring results of media sources in Armenia and Azerbaijan document how inaccuracies in articles published by the leading newspapers in Armenia and Azerbaijan "don't add any new or necessary information, but rather [they] set a negative context in the public consciousness, which hinders dialogue and mutual understanding."[9] A more recent media monitoring effort of Armenian and Azerbaijani media shows that:[10]

Still, the journalists very rarely acknowledge their responsibility in enhancing existing alienations and, mildly put, mutual hostility between the people of the two counties. Or, while acknowledging it, they continue supporting and often encouraging politicians, academicians, public figures, providing them with the newspaper space and airtime to increase the confrontation. They play a significant role in keeping alive the old stereotypes and stimulating new ones, they distort the reality, complicated as it is, thus impeding mutual understanding and the establishment of trust between neighbors, rendering the advancement of peace impossible.

5 Caucasus Research Resource Centers (2008). Armenian and Azerbaijani International News Coverage—Empirical Findings and Recommendations for Improvement. Retrieved March 5, 2009, from http://epfound.am/index.php?article_id=260&clang=0.

6 Mughan, A. eds (2002). Democracy and the Media: A Comparative Perspective, New York: Cambridge University Press.

7 Caucasus Research Resource Centers (2009). Caucasus Barometer. Available from www.crrccenters.org.

8 OSCE/ODHIR Election Observation Mission (May 30, 2008). *Republic of Armenia Presidential Elections 19 February, 2008.* Warsaw. Retrieved 23 September, 2008, from http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2008/05/31397_en.pdf.

9 Yerevan Press Club, Yeni Nesil Journalists Union of Azerbaijan & Black Sea Press Association (2005). *What Can a Word Do?: Materials of Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian Press Analysis.* Retrieved September 20, 2008, from http://www.ypc.am/eng/?go=act/studies.

10 "Yeni Nesil" Journalists Union, Yerevan Press Club (2010). Armenian-Azerbaijani relations in media of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Focus groups conducted in Yerevan in 2008 also showed the influence of media on the perceptions of participants about the other side in the conflict.[11] While most of the participants of the focus groups considered media in Armenia biased, they tended to trust official news sources reporting on Azerbaijan or Nagorno Karabakh.

"I may trust independent sources, but when we receive official information we have to trust it. As a resident of this state I should trust official information." (Male, 18–40, Armenia)

The reporting on Turkey is also generally driven by the government position. A recent media monitoring project in Armenia and Turkey revealed that in the majority of cases media follow an "official" agenda in covering Armenian–Turkish relations."[12] Most coverage focuses on special events targeted at the media, official visits or public speeches by officials.

Prospects and Non-Traditional Media

With access to the internet growing, social media is coming to fill some of the gaps in the traditional media, giving space to alternative voices. Over the last two years Armenia saw unprecedented levels of on-line activism. Facebook groups such as "SAVE Cinema Moscow Open-Air Hall" or "Stop changes in maternity leave law" have resulted in real-life social activism. Social media has also encouraged projects on Armenian and Azerbaijani collaboration with blogs and online projects that provide grounds for mutual understanding. In the fall of 2010 two videos on YouTube, one on the humiliation of soldiers in the Armenian Army[13] and a second one about student abuse at one of Yerevan's public schools[14], resulted in official investigations in the Army and the school, respectively.

Non-traditional media is a dynamically changing environment and has the potential for bringing change. Currently only 11 percent of Armenians claim to use the internet on a daily basis,[15] but expanding access to the internet could create a serious alternative to traditional media.

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Arpine Porsughyan currently holds a Heinrich Böll Foundation scholarship.

11 Caucasus Research Resource Centers (2008). Armenian and Azerbaijani International News Coverage—Empirical Findings and Recommendations for Improvement. Retrieved March 5, 2009, from http://epfound.am/index.php?article_id=260&clang=0.
12 Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Global Political Trends Center (2010). A Survey on Turkish–Armenian Relations in Armenian and Turkish Media 2006–2009. Retrieved from http://epfound.am/files/media_bias_joint_report_1.pdf.
13 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOTt2znYS1c&has_verified=1. Retrieved January 10, 2011.
14 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZQAZOojSv8. Retrieved January 10, 2011.
15 Caucasus Research Resource Centers (2009). Caucasus Barometer. Available from www.crrccenters.org.

Media in Azerbaijan: The Ruling Family Dominates TV, the Opposition Has Some Papers

By Arifa Kazimova, Baku

Abstract

The family of Azerbaijani President Aliev maintains tight control over the country's TV stations. Mostly the opposition is limited to a small number of low-circulation newspapers. The opposition papers have no access to official news and frequently resort to publishing unverified information. Only BP and major telecoms are willing to advertise in the opposition press. The situation with the media reflects overall political conditions in the country.

Strict Controls on Television

In Azerbaijan, the ruling family controls almost all television channels. However, the opposition owns a few papers and some web-sites.

There are nine TV channels—the Azerbaijan Television (AzTV), Azad Azerbaycan Television (ATV),

Ictimai (Public)TV (ITV), Lider TV, Space TV, Khazar TV, ANS TV, Idman Azerbaijan and also the newly-inaugurated Medeniyyet (Culture) Channel (opened in February). In addition there are 14 regional TV stations and 13 radio stations.

The Azerbaijan State Television and Radio Company (AZTV) became a closed stock company in 2005, initially raising hopes for positive changes, but to no avail. The decree privatizing AZTV gave 51 percent of its shares to the government, and the remaining part was to be sold to citizens. However the decree has not been implemented in the six years since it was issued.

No changes have taken place in AZTV programming as well. Today the station continues to provide extensive coverage of the activities of the ruling family and government officials. These reports usually are devoted to President Ilham Aliyev's ceremonial activities, where he is shown cutting ribbons in a variety of state facilities and meeting with visiting officials.

These segments are followed by stories depicting the public appearances of first lady Mehriban Aliyeva, who is also president of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation. Subsequently viewers see news reports about Ramiz Mehdiyev, the head of the Presidential Administration, and various ministers inaugurating new roads, schools, parks, theatres, and other public works. The international news broadcast on AZTV and other local TV stations mainly focuses on the aftermath of natural disasters—storms, floods, and tornados—in the USA, Brazil or China. These pieces serve to create the impression of turmoil in foreign countries, but stability and prosperity in Azerbaijan.

Public and Private TV Stations

The situation is similar on Azerbaijan's other stations. Funded by the state budget, Public TV (ITV) makes efforts to limit its news coverage of state officials, but they still receive much more attention than any other political or social figures. Even though ANS boasts that it is an objective, balanced and impartial broadcaster, viewers never see any criticism of the family of President Aliev on this channel even though its founders have no direct links to the governing family. Despite the fact that it is privately owned, ANS TV also dedicates the bulk of its news coverage to the authorities and the ruling party; though it does give a small part of its program time to opposition figures.

The founders of the other TV channels are in some way related to the ruling family. The president's sister Sevil Aliyeva is among the founders of Space TV. Likewise, the founder of Lider TV is said to be a close relative of President Aliyev.

These privately- owned companies sometimes violate basic rules of journalistic ethics. In October 2010, Lider TV broadcast the secretly-filmed sex video of an opposition paper editor as part of its main evening news show. After the appearance of the video, the editor resigned and the newspaper management said it was a provocation against the paper on the eve of the parliamentary elections.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) pointed out ahead of the November 7 parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan that there was a clear tendency among local television stations to reflect positively on the work and activities of state officials, often pointing out achievements and successes, while avoiding any independent and critical opinions on their performance. "For example, only two TV channels, the public broadcaster ITV and privately-owned ANS TV, provided some news coverage in connection with the press conference of the APFP–Musavat bloc on 12 October, during which opposition leaders talked about problems with the registration of their candidate," the OSCE Observation Mission stated.

Despite the institutional structure, problems tend to be resolved informally. For example, the National Television and Radio Council (NTRC) was founded in 2002 to implement state policy regarding television and radio broadcasting and to regulate this activity. The main duties of the Council also include protecting the electronic media's independence and public interests in broadcasting. The nine-member Council is funded through the state budget. But when Lider TV began broadcasting adult videos in prime-time, NTRC Chief Nushirevan Maharramli told US-funded RFE/RL that the Council did not issue any warning to Lider TV, but had instead talked to the TV leadership and the problem had been resolved in this way.

The state maintains firm control of TV and radio frequencies and only issues them to pre-approved companies. Currently, 80 percent of TV and radio frequencies are not in use. Unfortunately, the NTRC does not disclose the list of frequencies used, even though the law requires that it do so on a monthly basis. The Media Rights Institute reported in October 2010 that frequencies are allocated to companies affiliated to the government. According to the report, claiming a frequency without first obtaining the government's consent could yield economic and political problems for the claimant.

The NTRC clearly works in the interests of the leadership. It recently allotted 103.3 FM, which formerly belonged to the BBC, to a new radio station called Araz Radio established by an unknown company called "Golden Prince." Other companies that sought the frequency questioned the transparency of the process and identity of the company that won the right to the frequency.

Calls for Change on Television

Ramiz Mehdiyev, head of the Presidential Administration, criticized local television in 2009. In a prominent article entitled "Problems and duties on Azerbaijan's Airwaves," he called on them to undertake reforms and emphasize analytical and educational programs over entertainment. Mehdiyev stressed that TV and radio stations should play a significant role in protecting national-moral values, propagating greater use of the Azerbaijani language, and promoting the country's culture and historical heritage.

After this article appeared, there were similar appeals to local TV shows by other government officials. But no one called on television to offer balance and objectivity in news and analytical programs, or supported the idea of freedom of expression. As a result of this article, some educational programs were created for middle school students. Simultaneously, a new wave of wedding programs appeared on almost all local stations. The programs sought to broker marriages for those who could not find a suitable mate or afford the wedding expenses.

According to TV rating surveys conducted by the Baku-based AGB company, ANS TV is the most popular TV channel with 27 percent of the audience, followed by Khazar TV—13 percent, ATV—12 percent, Lider TV—11 percent, Space—6 percent, and ITV—5 percent. AZTV was not included in the survey. The percents indicate the portion of the 1,300 surveyed viewers watching a particular channel, i.e, 27 percent of the 1,300 were watching ANS, 5 percent of 1, 300 tuned into ITV, etc.

Similar entertainment programs exist on local FM radio where there is also little political analysis. The radios mainly broadcast music programs and offer little news or commentary to influence ordinary Azerbaijanis' socio-political views. There are a handful of websites (www.azadliqradiosu.az, www.mediaforum.az, www.turan.az) which report honestly on current developments in the country and the world.

Newspapers' Access to Information

Yeni Musavat, *Azadliq*, *Demokrat*, and *Bizim Yol* are the only opposition papers published in Baku in Azerbaijani amongst 30 dailies and over 100 weeklies. Some of the opposition papers are published only once or twice a month.

The circulations for local papers are tiny, according to their own figures. They range from 5,000 for the Russian-language opposition paper *Zerkalo* to 10,650 for *Yeni Musavat*. Subscribing to government-sponsored papers like *Azerbaijan*, *Yeni Azerbaijan*, *Respublika*, *Xalq qezeti* is obligatory for all organizations sponsored by the state budget; subscription fees are deducted from the salaries of teachers at schools and universities as well as employees at ministries and other budget organizations. However, these papers are rarely seen in the hands of readers in metro stations, buses or parks. Despite the obligatory individual deductions, copies of the government papers are also distributed to the libraries of these organizations.

Opposition papers are mostly read by ordinary people even though not all of them can afford to buy papers which cost 30–40 kopecks (half a dollar) on a daily basis.

The opposition papers mainly cover topics critical of the authorities, including corruption claims related to specific officials. Frequently, they report unconfirmed information or information received from just one source. When asked about the credibility of their sources, these papers refer to the fact that the authorities rarely refute the information they publish. However a number of lawsuits have also been brought against these papers on charges of defamation, which is still a criminal offense even though local and international media advocates have called for less harsh penalties.

The latest lawsuit against the *Yeni Musavat* and *Azadliq* papers was brought by Anar Mammadov, son of Transport Minister Ziya Mammadov, who is a major oligarch. The papers had claimed that Anar Mammadov ordered one of Qabala's restaurants to kill a caged bear and prepare shish kabobs out of its meat. According to the papers, Anar Mammadov paid one million manats for that bear. Now the lawsuit is in court and Mammadov demands compensation of half a million manats.

There have been many cases when government officials or ministers have stated that they "do not read the libels carried in the opposition papers or foreign media outlets like RFE/RL." But in a number of cases, they have given commentaries on what these media outlets have published. For instance, Ali Ahmadov, executive secretary of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party, stated in 2010, on the parliamentary election day that RFE/RL was carrying slanderous information about the Azerbaijani state and does not publish the commentaries sent by government supporters. "They publish only what their own supporters write," he said.

One of the reasons that the papers publish unconfirmed news is the barriers blocking their access to governmental sources. The Law on Obtaining Information was adopted in 2005 which specified a maximum of seven days for organizations to answer any inquiries. But in most cases, the inquiries sent to them are delayed for weeks.

A local NGO, the Social Union for Assistance to the Free Economy, along with several other organizations, sued two ministries—the Education Ministry and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection—for

not responding to the NGO's inquiry, which focused on the amount of money spent reconstructing ministry buildings. The Supreme Court upheld both inquires.

What is the Way Out?

Ads of major companies are mostly seen in official and some of the so-called neutral papers, but they rarely appear in opposition papers like *Azadliq*, *Musavat*, *Bizim yol*, or *Demokrat*. Only some oil companies like BP, and major mobile providers advertise in these newspapers, the volume of the ads amounting to a few hundred dollars a month.

This ad blockade against opposition papers is seen as the major obstacle to economic development and consequently to the independence of the local media. The press is not economically independent because of this situation. The volume of the advertising market in countries like Estonia or Latvia is some 50 million dollars in comparison to 2–3 million dollars in Azerbaijan, even though the latter is an oil and gas producing country.

According to many media experts, offering credits to newspapers is not the way to solve their problems. Mehman Aliyev, director of the Turan Information agency, says the independence of the press depends on that of the whole economy. "Publishing a paper is not a business in Azerbaijan, it's a tool to realize one's political will. Nothing has changed during the recent five years because the basics of the economics have not changed. The monopoly has strengthened in all spheres, there is no competitiveness. Azerbaijan's economy remains closed," he said.

The situation with the media reflects the broader problems facing Azerbaijan. The country's ranking on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index remains very poor in recent years. Currently, it ranks 134 amongst 178 countries. The ratings for freedom of expression and other basic rights remain grave as well. Azerbaijan falls into the Not Free category according to Freedom House's 2010 report. Another major international human rights advocate, Human Rights Watch, in its 2010 report noted that the situation for basic human rights is geting worse (see also the Documentation Section in this issue of the Caucasus Analytical Digest).

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Georgia: Immature Media

By Nino Robakidze, Tbilisi

Abstract

Georgia's media faces numerous problems, including a difficult post-Soviet legacy, frequent interventions from the state, poor legislation, unclear ownership, and difficult access to public information and broadcast licenses. Most independent media cannot operate as businesses because they have problems attracting companies willing to risk government pressure to advertise on their stations. The result is that Georgia has only a semi-free media environment.

A Difficult Legacy

Why has the Georgian media been unable to play the role expected of it? This is a question repeatedly asked throughout Georgian society during the last twenty years. Since the Rose Revolution, the subject has not lost its significance even for a while.

As late as 2003, when I was a student at the Tbilisi State University Faculty of Journalism, future journalists who sought to improve their professional skills and writing abilities were diligently browsing the recommended manual entitled Theory and Practice of Soviet Journalism. This book was older than all of us and recalled a time when The Young Communist and Komsomolstaya Pravda published Lenin's speeches, protocols of Communist Party Congresses, and annual reports for the five-year plans of Soviet collective farms.

Even though our faculty owned a professional video camera and students knew about it, none of them had seen it personally; the camera was carefully stored out of reach because the professors feared it would be broken by untrained hands. For many years, our department was managed by a Communist Party bureaucrat

who was the former head of the Georgian TV and Radio broadcasting company, which served as the main source of Soviet party propaganda. That was still a time when Communist party activists played a prominent role. In 2003, for the second time after 1989, Georgians again sought to leave behind the Communist legacy and the stagnation in public life that it created.

Short-Lived Changes and Then Another Crackdown

Since 2003 at first sight it seems that everything has changed—even the Journalism Faculty of Tbilisi State University has appointed a young and energetic journalist as dean. The media sphere and more specifically Rustavi 2 became key actors in promoting incremental changes. Unfortunately, the "Rose Revolution" provided only a short time for future journalists to return to the ideals of their profession. Everybody believed, but only for a while, that journalism should be serving truth and provide objective information to citizens. During that time, it seemed that "Soviet Theory and Practice" had been consigned to history once and for all.

Indeed, after the revolution, changes in the Georgian media sphere developed in a speedy manner. Already in February 2004, one month after the inauguration of President Mikheil Saakashvili, popular TV programs were shut one after another—"Night Courier" by Eka Khoperia, "Night View" by Inga Grigolia, and the program staring Natia Zambakhidze. During 2004–2005, TV channels, such as "9th Channel," "Iberia," "202," and "Ajara TV" also stopped broadcasting. In the next year, two more popular programs were cancelled: the political talk-show "On the Eve of Election" by Irakli Imnaishvili, and "Free Topic" by Eka Khoperia, who left the program during a live broadcast. Later, both journalists explained their choices, claiming that they came under pressure from high government officials who were meddling in their activities.

Likewise, Georgian print media could not avoid similar problems. In parallel with the popular TV channels and programs, several high circulation newspapers and magazines have disappeared, including Morning Newspaper, The Main Newspaper, The New Epoch and Omega. Representatives of the press encountered serious problems emanating from court decisions, press offices of various ministries and the security police. For instance, the Ministry of Defense forbade a popular military expert and journalist, Koba Liklikadze, from attending briefings at the Ministry. Other representatives of the media encountered problems while attending the briefings of Minister of Internal Affairs Vano Merabishvili.

During this period, the pressure on the media was particularly visible in the regions of Georgia, where representatives of local governments physically assaulted and personally threatened independent journalists.

A January 2005 report prepared by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe noted that "Facts of intimidation and physical assaults increased, in some cases with the participation of high-ranking government officials."

"Journalists are threatened—because of their newspaper articles or TV programs, they are physically threatened, bombs are exploding in their houses," according to the letter Georgian journalists and non-governmental organizations sent to the President's administration on February 3, 2006.

Two years after the Rose Revolution, the Georgian media continued to exist within tight constraints: some journalists were prohibited from attending the president's briefings and public events, and meetings organized by governors, ministers and other public figures. But at the same time, other media outlets always had access to exclusive information from inside governmental circles. Members of the ruling party never rejected the invitations of these media organizations to participate in their programs. At the same time, they consistently refused to participate in the political debates organized by other media sources.

"If prior to the Revolution I was well aware of the important issues that would interest the audience, afterwards it appeared that I did not know anything," remembers the Journalist Nestan Tsetskhladze, who served as a special correspondent of the Rustavi 2 TV Company to the Adjara Autonomous Region while it was controlled by Aslan Abashidze's authoritarian regime. "It is natural that the renovation of the boulevard in Batumi was interesting for the media, but for me problematic issues had a priority. Until this day I hear accusations that the media is covering only bad news. Yes, I am a journalist who considers that reacting to problems is the main responsibility of the media. I did not have a chance to work on these issues and felt that I was transformed into a journalist who is just holding a microphone." Today, Tsetskhladze is the main editor of Netgazeti, one of the most popular internet publications in Georgia. She, like many of her colleagues who refused to simply transmit official statements, chose to work in the independent media. But unlike in the previous times, her current work is known to a much smaller audience.

Unclear Ownership

Georgia's media legislation seems surprisingly liberal. However, media company owners agree that it creates possibilities for the government to implement indi-

rect, but obvious pressure on journalists and media organizations.

For many years, journalists and media organizations have discussed the necessity of media ownership transparency. If in countries with a free media it is the traditional obligation of media organizations to publicly announce their owners, Georgian reality is completely different. Georgian citizens do not know who delivers news to them via television, who publishes the newspaper they read each morning, or, in general, who owns Georgian media.

It is particularly difficult to understand who owns the two largest national broadcasting companies and several other TV channels in Georgia. After the Rose Revolution, Rustavi 2 was sold numerous times, with the most recent transaction taking place in June. Today 70 percent of its shares belong to the offshore company Degson Limited, which is registered on the British Virgin Islands. It is almost impossible for an ordinary citizen to have access to even this kind of information since none of the media outlets post it on their websites. Media ownership is in almost all cases secret.

Notwithstanding the fact that the media have been reporting on the sale of Imedi TV, today nobody has much information about the person who stands behind the 90 percent share holder of the organization—Rakeen Georgian Holding. Confusion deepened when the official representative of the Arab investment fund Rakia rejected the assertion that either Rakia or its affiliated companies owned shares of Imedi.

The goals of the owner of Sakartvelo (Georgia) TV company is similarly vague. Officially the company is owned by the Denal Union, which is also registered in an offshore zone. According to the Georgian law on state purchases, Sakartvelo officially cooperates with the Ministry of Defense and most broadcast time is filled with military programs prepared by the Ministry.

Even though Georgian legislation prevents an individual or legal entity from owning more than one license for a television or radio station, it does not oblige the media companies to publicize the actual identity of share holders or partners. This flaw in the legislation makes it physically possible that a real owner of the firm registered in an offshore zone has numerous licenses at his/her disposal.

Georgian legislation also does not regulate what share of the media holding company might be controlled by one individual or legal entity. For example, according to research by Transparency International—Georgia, the "Industrial Group of Georgia" owns 30 percent of Rustavi-2 shares, 45 percent of Mze and 65 percent of Pirveli Stereo. Its affiliated company Georgian Media Incorporated, on the other hand, owns Imedi shares. Hence, at the end of the day, "the Industrial Group" controls two thirds of the entire market.

These developments in the media sphere after the Rose Revolution naturally created a situation in which the national broadcasters Rustavi 2 and Imedi, by different means, became weapons for governmental propaganda. Though, for the sake of justice, one also has to note that none of the existing alternative media sources managed to offer balanced and objective information to society.

The growing concern among media and non-governmental organizations about the suspicious secrecy surrounding the ownership of the national broadcasting company culminated when legislators introduced two bills concerning media ownership to Georgia's parliament—one was authored by the head of the parliament's Legal Committee Pavle Kublashvili, a member of the majority party. The second was the initiative of a group of journalists and lawyers, who worked out the draft with financial support from the "Open Society—Georgia Foundation".

On the basis of these texts, the Legal Committee, with Speaker Davit Bakradze's support, developed a draft law that sought to amend Georgia's existing Broadcast Law. "The aim of adopting the draft law is to increase transparency in the media sphere by imposing some restrictions on license ownership," according to the explanatory letter accompanying the bill. In the future, those additional restrictions will prohibit individuals and entities registered in offshore zones from owning media outlets and shares in them. At the same time, the law will oblige them to ensure transparency and permanently update the publicly available information about their beneficiary owners and key managers.

Public Information and Broadcast Licenses

As Giorgi Chkheidze, an independent expert explains, transparency of media ownership in the Georgian media sphere is the principal and most important issue, although it is not the only problem with the existing legislation. For that reason the problem needs to be addressed in a comprehensive manner: beyond clarifying ownership it is necessary to 1. Simplify the public's ability to access information 2. and resolve a number of issues surrounding broadcast licensing.

According to the results of a study conducted by the Caucasian Research Resource Center and financed by the European Union, Georgian media frequently encounter problems when trying to access public information. Unfortunately, without access to official sources, journalism often has difficulty rising above simple "fortune-telling." The fact that problems related to accessing public information are serious is also proved by the

recently created Georgian web pages such as givemeinfo.ge and opendata.ge.

The non-governmental organization Institute for Development of Freedom of Information is implementing the project opendata.ge in order to ensure more information transparency. As the organization's report points out, only 10 percent of the questions sent to state institutions—ministries, the presidential administration and City Hall—received more or less relevant answers. The organization has filed several cases against the public institutions for their failure to implement the law. Such active participation by the non-governmental sector definitely increases information accessibility. But the problem is that for journalists, the information domain remains restricted. According to research by Transparency International, the Georgian state only satisfies 10 percent of public information requests, while the courts respond appropriately to only 2 percent.

Media experts explain that making public information secret is one of the indirect mechanisms for exerting pressure on independent journalists—without official data it is difficult to prepare investigative or feature articles. For this reason, journalists are often unable to successfully fulfill their obligations to write objective analyses for reasons beyond their control.

President Saakashvili has addressed this issue in public, but it is not clear what kind of action he has taken to remedy the problem. In response to a question posed by a journalist, he said "I agree with you concerning the transparency of public information—this is a problem. Actually, Zurab Adeishvili and I were the authors of this code. I think that you should have this right and this is your leverage, which you should use, I will try by all means to correct the situation. Actually, in recent days I gave an order concerning this." Saakashvili made this statement on 25 January through Kavkasiuri television.. However, despite journalists' interest in having the president's help, it is still not known whether he actually issued an order and to whom. Public information access still remains the most important problems for journalists.

On the same day, during the live program the president was again asked about simplifying the licensing process for broadcasts, but he left the question unanswered. For media freedom, experts explain that the issue is no less important than ownership or information accessibility.

According to the 2009 IREX Media Sustainability Index, the broadcast licensing issue is obviously politicized. A prominent example of this problem was the two-year long dispute surrounding the TV Company Maestro's efforts to obtain a licence. As a specialized license holder, Maestro had no right to broadcast news. However, Alania, even with the same license, was allowed to broadcast such reports. Unlike Maestro Alania was openly loyal to the government and, together with Rustavi 2 and Imedi, actively involved in spreading pro-government propaganda.

Media law experts and NGO representatives frequently criticize the fact that the broadcast regulatory commission uses the mechanisms and leverage available to it for political purposes. As such observers make clear, imposing license restrictions on cable TV stations is absurd because these channels do not use the limited broadcast frequencies controlled by the state.

Along with its tendency to exceed its rights, the regulatory commission's constitution and staff are also frequently criticized. The previous chairman was Giorgi Arveladze, who was a member of the president's inner circle, minister in various periods, head of the presidential apparatus, and the current director of Imedi TV. The current head of the commission is Irakli Chikovani—the former director of Rustavi 2. Even though Chikovani officially claims to have sold his share of Rustavi 2 several weeks before being appointed as head of the commission, no one has been able to confirm the actual transaction.

Notwithstanding the fact that Georgian law gives the parliamentary opposition the right to its own representative on the regulatory commission, this member still reflects the interests of the governing majority. This outcome is mainly determined by the electoral rules according to which the president maintains the decisive voice in the process.

Even though the authority of the regulatory commission only covers the broadcast media, there are problems concerning the licensing, ownership and financial transparency with print and online media as well.

Together with the problem of public information accessibility, the independent press and online media outlets are facing a serious financial crisis. Media organizations trying to provide the public with balanced news are often less attractive for advertisers, who generally steer clear of advertising in the kind of online or print publications that publish investigative articles or offer readers critical analysis of governmental reforms. The journal Liberali, with its print and web edition, is an example of such a publication, as is the online Netgazeti. The main sources of income for both media outlets are the grants provided by international non-governmental organizations for the development of professional and independent media. Unfortunately, the income provided by such grants is so meager that it is not worth highlighting.

Media as a Business

Avoiding political influence and maintaining financial independence remains one of the key challenges for the

Georgian media. Notwithstanding the fact that several media outlets consistently publish their financial information, the audience for independent media sources is small. Objective reasons account in part for this phenomenon, including the concentration of TV broadcasts in the capital city as well as the small number of Georgians who use the internet to obtain political information. However, the main problem lies most probably in the fact that the free media market is still underdeveloped in the country. The fact that independent media should not be taking money from the government, but instead, like all kinds of businesses, should focus on production quality, increasing audience size and generating profits, is widely accepted, but in Georgia, the media does not develop as a business.

In addition to the unsophisticated legislative environment, which prevents media outlets from acting freely on the market, media experts argue that the poor advertising climate makes the situation even worse. Advertising, as one of the financial sources of a free media should ensure the financial stability of the media. However, representatives of independent media outlets openly declare that businesses avoid advertising with them. Regardless of their ratings, advertisers prefer media outlets that do not create problems for the government. Often businesses take this decision without any kind of pressure as they are convinced that if they did otherwise, they would come under governmental pressure.

According to the data of non-governmental organizations, in recent years the leading national broadcasts have been spending more money than they have been earning from advertising. Theoretically this money could be a subsidy from the owner, but since nobody knows precisely who the owners are, we cannot exclude the possibility that budgetary sources are being used to finance private TV companies.

It is also interesting that advertising incomes are higher for the large national broadcasters which most probably also enjoy governmental subsidies. Such direct financial links between the most popular nation-wide broadcast media and the political elite makes the existence of elementary editorial independence impossible within these media.

It is also remarkable that Georgia Public Broadcasting, which is formally under society's control, is openly financed from the state budget. Despite these abundant resources, Georgia Public Broadcasting has not succeeded in producing a competitive news division, which would gain society's trust.

Russian-Language Broadcasting

On January 25, at 6:00 p.m. the Georgian government launched its first Russian-language broadcaster, First Caucasus News—PIC TV, claiming that it would provide balanced and impartial information. The new television company, aimed at an audience across the North and South Caucasus, operates on the basis of Georgia Public Broadcasting and devoted its first three hours to President Mikheil Saakashvili.

Whatever its original intentions, the show about the president on the new broadcaster highlighted the tough situation in the Georgian media sphere. Technical support for PIC TV came entirely from the Rustavi 2 group—studio, management, cameramen. Rustavi 2 also broadcast the presidential program on its own channel as well. Rustavi 2, Imedi, and Georgian Public Broadcasting journalists provided live reporting from different regions across Georgia because PIC TV did not have its own Georgian-speaking journalists.

During the three hour broadcast, the presidential show was accompanied by a running feed on which the audience could transmit its opinions via sms text messages. Throughout the show, no critical messages were displayed. By contrast, such messages can often be seen on other TV talk shows, which according to president are "broadcasting from the planet Mars."

The three nation-wide broadcasters Rustavi 2, Imedi and Georgian Public Broadcasting implemented the presidential project without any specific problems; the three most popular TV channels do not have competitive attitudes toward each other. However, this project once again made clear why Georgia, ranks close to the bottom in the list of partly free media countries compiled by Freedom House.

About the Author

Nino Robakidze is a freelance journalist, frequent contributor to the journal Liberali, and a lecturer at the Caucasus School of Media.

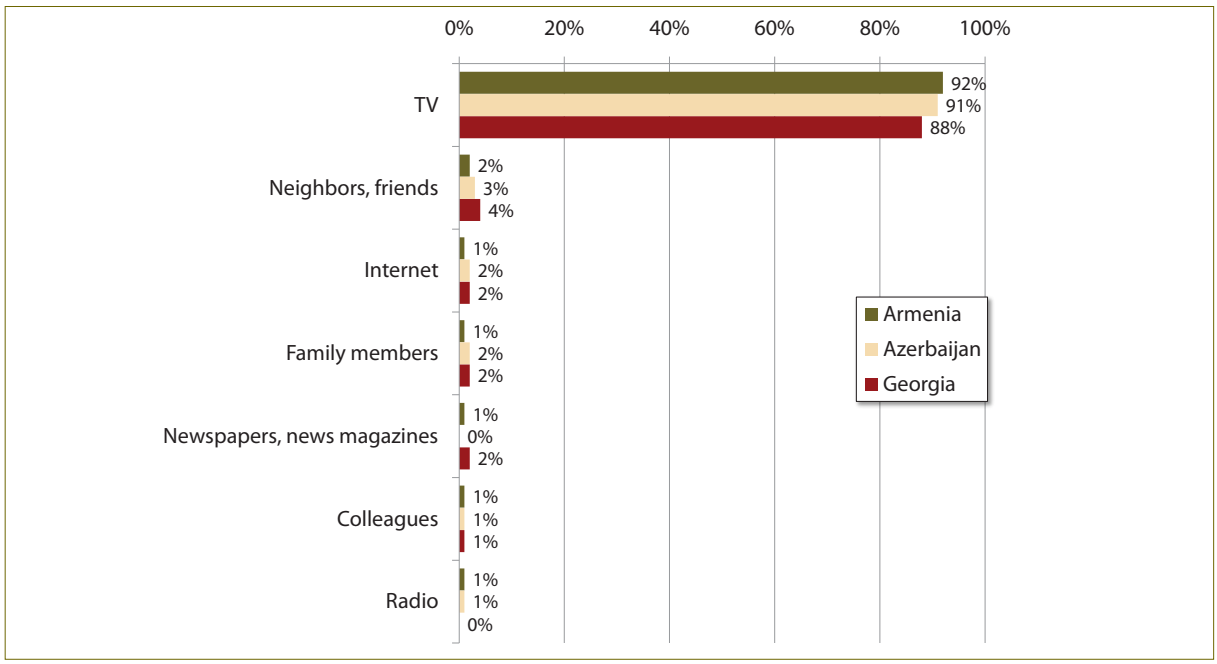
OPINION POLL

Public Use and Perception of Mass Media in the South Caucasus

The following data are from the 2009 Caucasus Barometer survey. For more information about the Caucasus Barometer, visit the Caucasus Research Resource Centers' website: http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/overview/

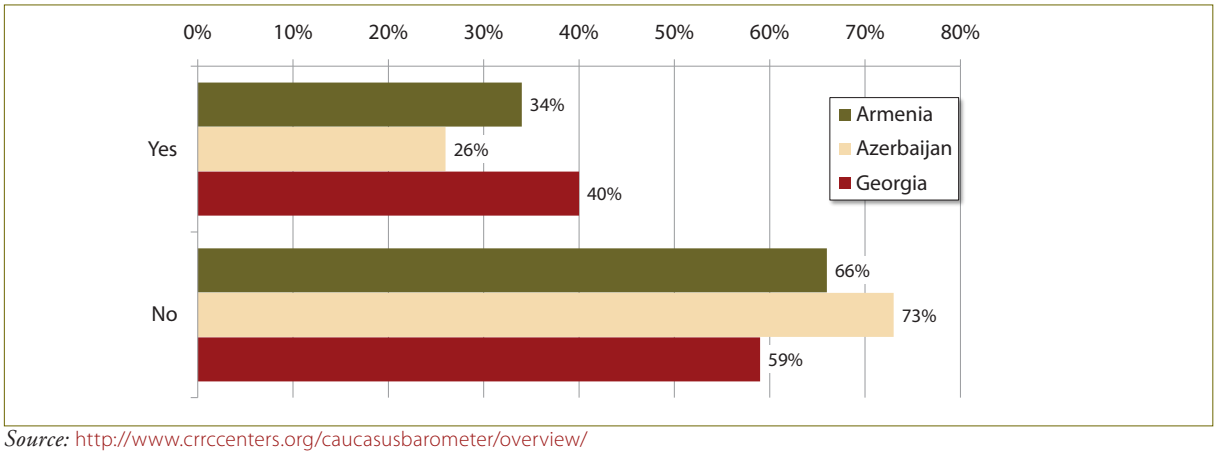
Public Use of Mass Media

Figure 1: What are your main sources of information for receiving news about /country's/ current events?



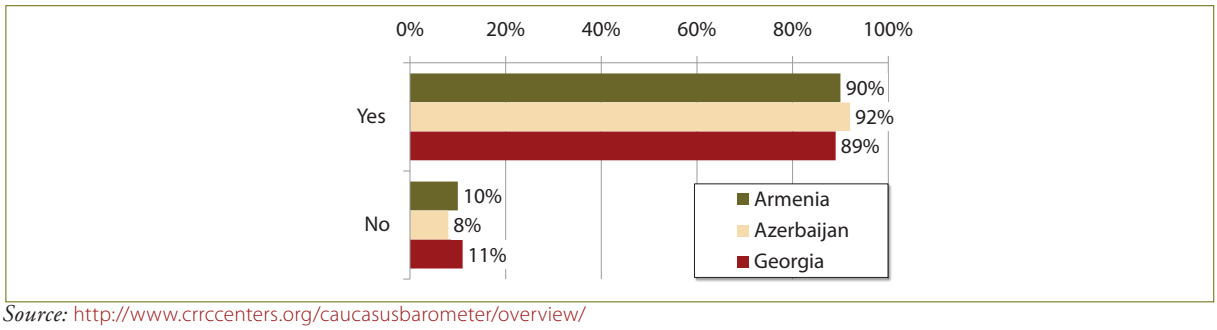
Source: http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/overview/

Figure 2: Do you usually read a newspaper or a news magazine *at least once a week* to obtain news about current events in /country/?



Source: http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/overview/

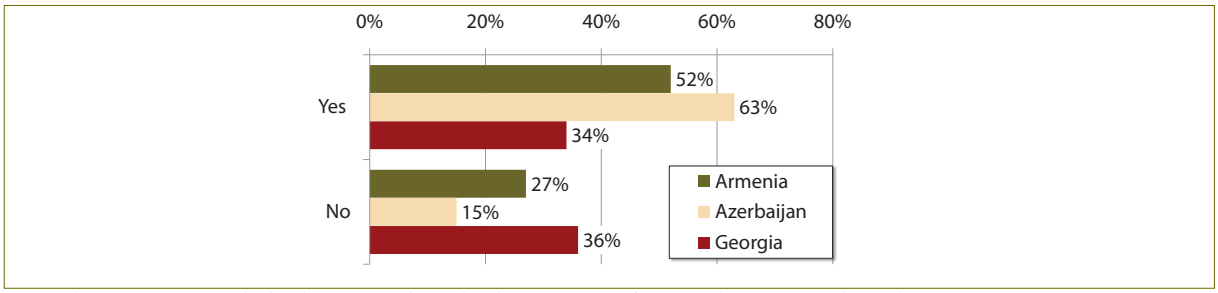
Figure 3: Do you usually watch at least one TV news program or one TV show *per day* to obtain news about current events in /country/?



Source: http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/overview/

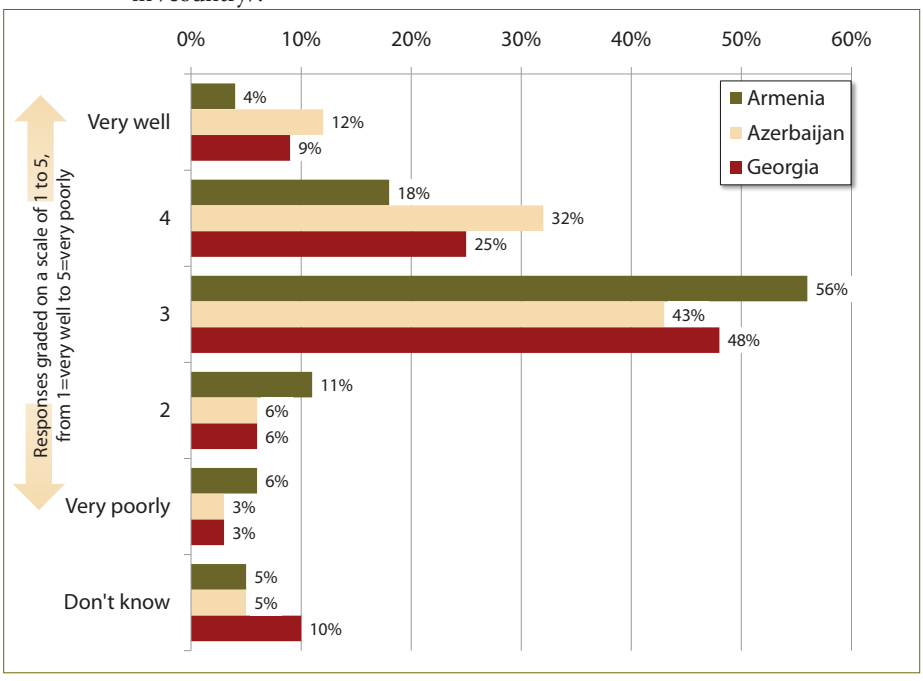
Public Assessment of the Quality of Mass Media Reporting

Figure 4: In general, do you think that /country's/ TV channels for which you have reception present different perspectives on news in /country/?



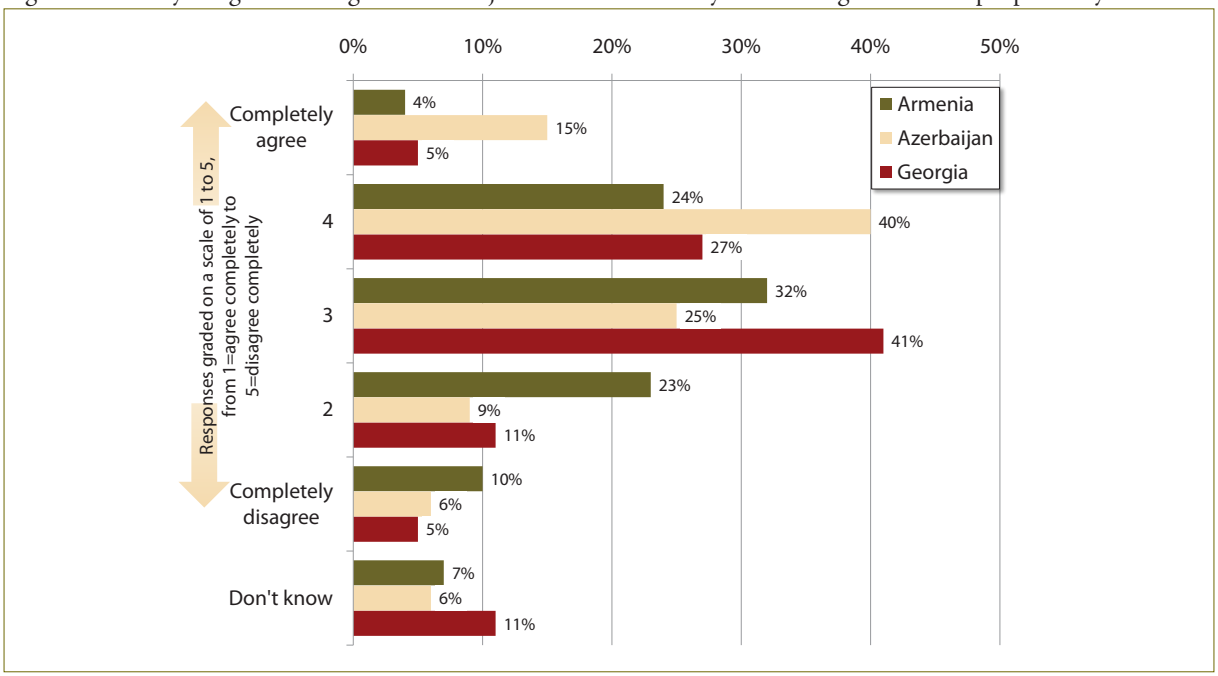
Note: This question was asked only to respondents that have reception for more than one TV channel.
Source: http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/overview/

Figure 5: How well do you think TV journalists in /country/ inform the population about what is actually going on in /country/?



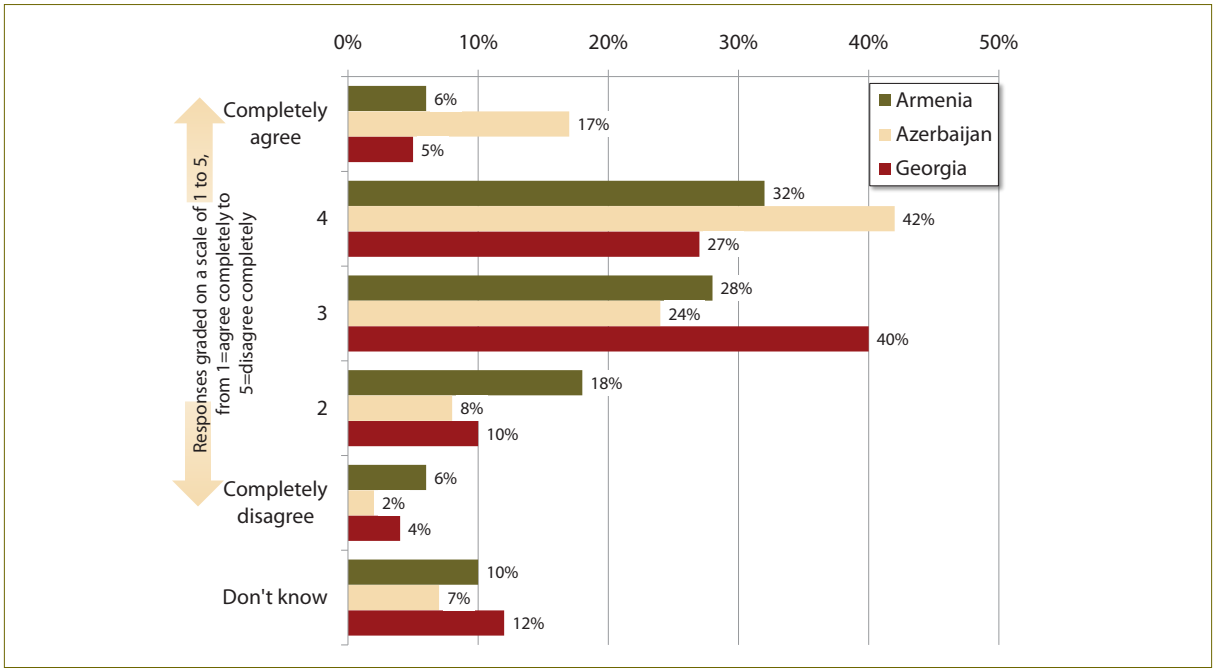
Source: http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/overview/

Figure 6: Do you agree or disagree that TV journalists in /country/ are serving interests of people like you?



Source: http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/overview/

Figure 7: Do you agree or disagree that TV in /country/ determines what people in /country/ think about current events?



Source: http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/overview/

DOCUMENTATION

Assessment of Media Freedom in International Comparison

Freedom House: Freedom of the Press

Prepared by: Freedom House (Washington, USA)
Established: 1980
Frequency: Annual
The data refer to the respective previous year.
Covered countries: at present 195
URL: http://freedomhouse.org

Brief description:
Countries are given a total score from 0 (best) to 100 (worst) on the basis of a set of 23 methodology questions divided into three subcategories. The degree to which each country permits the free flow of news and information determines the classification of its media as "Free," "Partly Free," or "Not Free." Countries scoring 0 to 30 are regarded as having "Free" media; 31 to 60, "Partly Free" media; and 61 to 100, "Not Free" media.

Figure 1: Freedom of the Press 2010

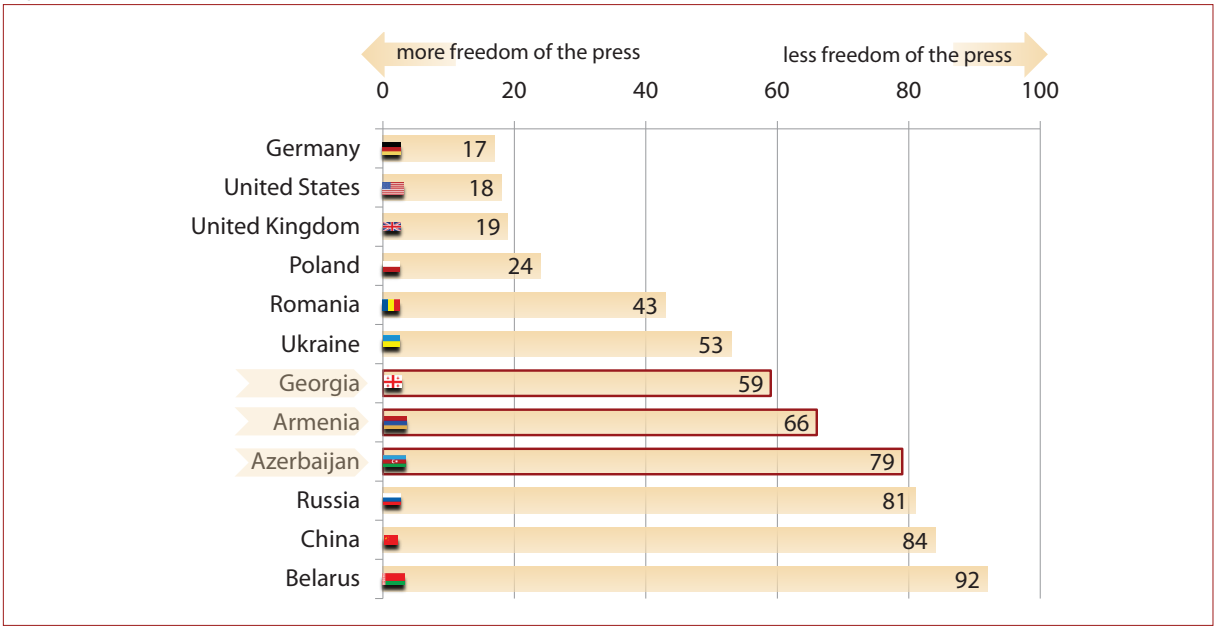
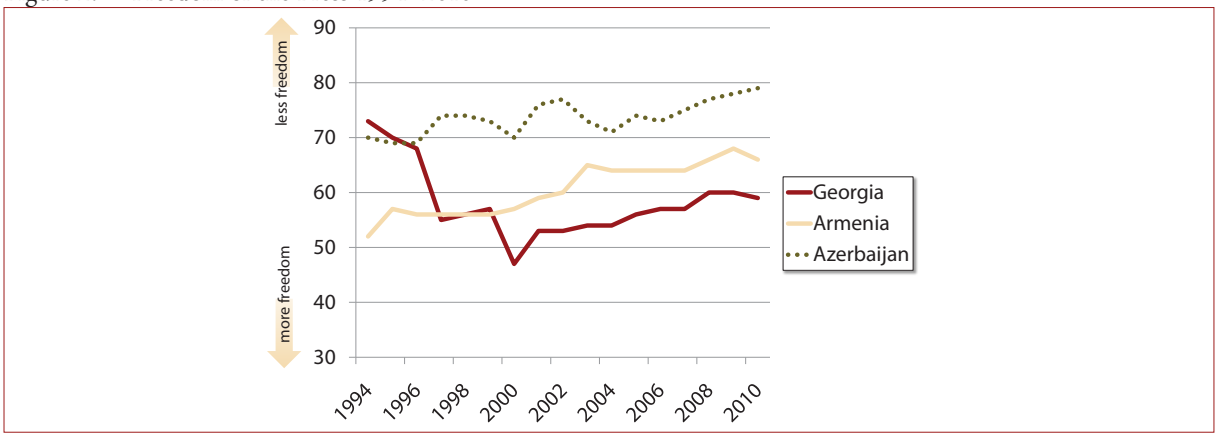


Figure 2: Freedom of the Press 1994–2010



Freedom House: Nations in Transit

Prepared by: Freedom House (Washington, USA)
Established: 1997
Frequency: Annual
The data refer to the respective previous year.
Covered countries: at present 29
URL: http://freedomhouse.org

Brief description:
Nations in Transit measures progress and setbacks in democratization in countries and territories from Central Europe to the Eurasian region of the Former Soviet Union. The rating covers seven categories: electoral process; civil society; independent media; national democratic governance; local democratic governance; judicial framework and independence; and corruption. The ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest and 7 the lowest level of democratic progress.

Figure 3: Nations in Transit: Media 2010

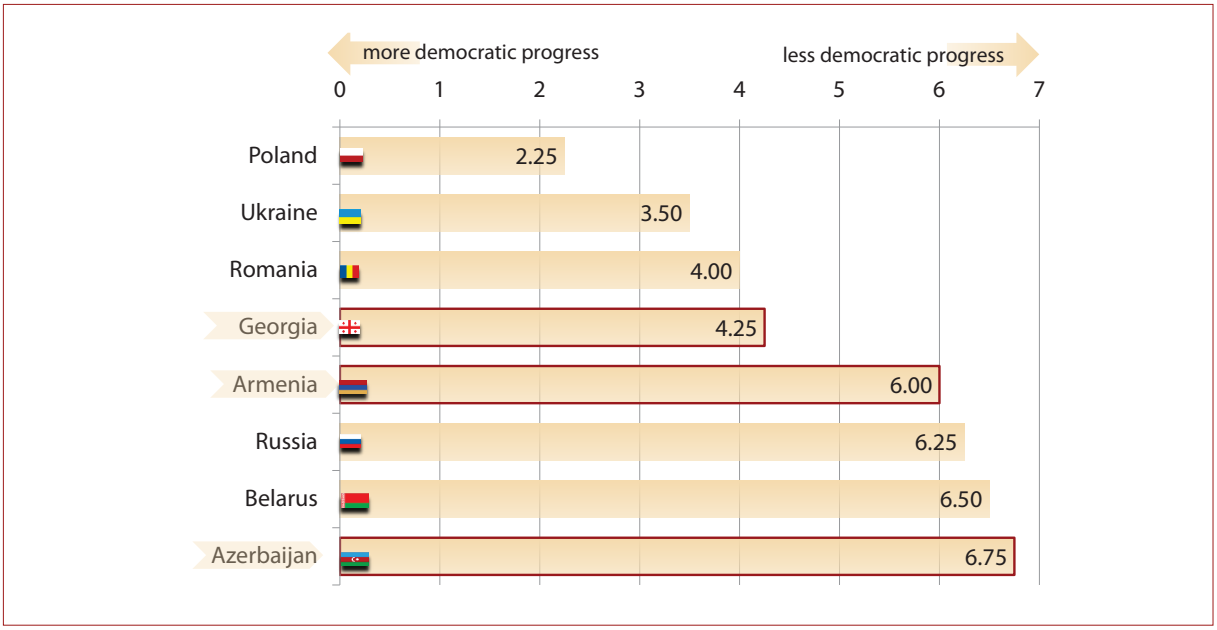
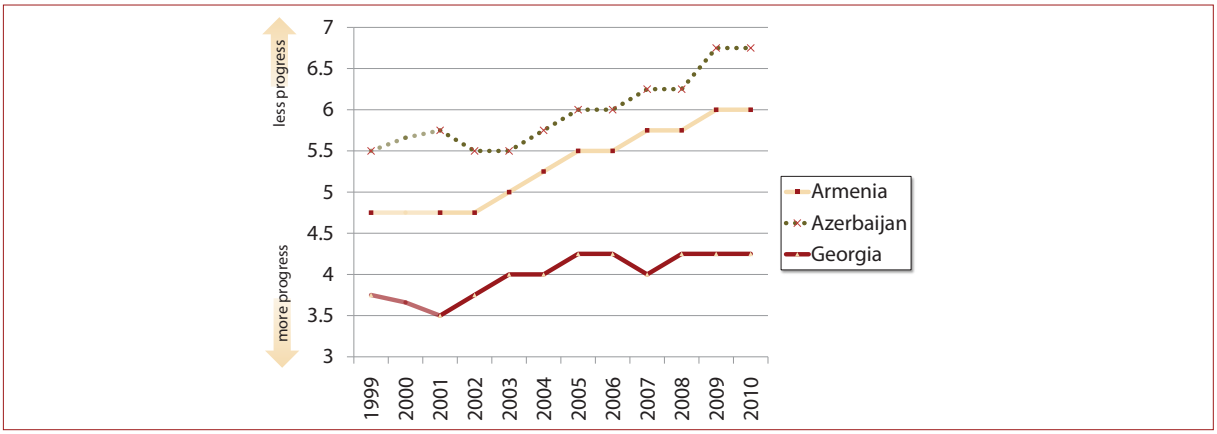


Figure 4: Nations in Transit: Media 1999–2010



NB: For 2000 no values were established.

Press Freedom Index

Prepared by: Reporters without Borders (Paris, France)
Established: 2002
Frequency: Annual
September to September in the year of publication
Covered countries: at present 173
URL: http://www.rsf.org

Brief description:
The index measures the state of press freedom in the world. It reflects the degree of freedom journalists and news organizations enjoy in each country, and the efforts made by the state to respect and ensure respect for this freedom. Each one has a ranking and a score which together sum up the state of press freedom there. Reporters Without Borders compiled a questionnaire with 50 criteria for assessing the state of press freedom in each country. It includes every kind of violation directly affecting journalists (such as murders, imprisonment, physical attacks and threats) and news media (censorship, confiscation of issues, searches and harassment). The questionnaire was sent to partner organizations (14 freedom of expression groups in five continents) and 130 correspondents around the world, as well as to journalists, researchers, jurists and human rights activists. A scale devised by the organization was then used to give a country-score to each questionnaire.

Figure 5: Press Freedom Index 2010

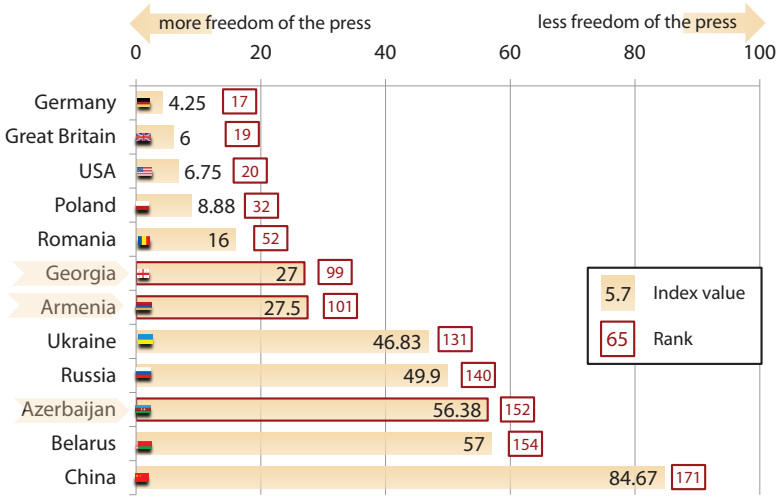
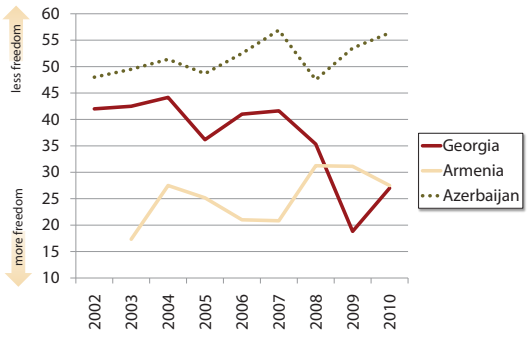


Figure 6: Press Freedom Index 2002–2010



CHRONICLE

From 9 February to 10 March 2011

9 February 2011	Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev calls for more vigilance in the fight against corruption and asks citizens to contribute to the campaign during a visit to Azerabaijan's western regions of Qazakh and Tovuz
10 February 2011	A rally takes place in front of the Iranian embassy in Azerbaijan's capital Baku to protest what are perceived as anti-Azerbaijani statements made by officials and clerics in the Iranian media as well as closer ties between Iran and Armenia
11 February 2011	Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili says in an annual state of the nation address to the Georgian Parliament that Georgia is planning to have a free trade agreement with the EU by 2015
12 February 2011	Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili speaks of the idea of creating a "United Caucasus" during a meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu in Tbilisi, noting the importance of open borders in the region and discussing a simplification of border crossing between Turkey and Georgia
13 February 2011	The Armenian Defense Ministry says that four military personnel have been arrested in connection with the death of a soldier
15 February 2011	Georgia and Qatar sign an air transport agreement allowing for an unrestricted number of flights between the two countries
16 February 2011	U.S. Director of National Intelligence James Clapper says that Georgia's efforts to reach out to the North Caucasus republics in the Russian Federation contribute to tensions in the region along with Russia's military presence in the breakaway region of Abkhazia and South Ossetia
16 February 2011	The Georgian Finance Ministry says that seven employees of the Labor and Social Protection Ministry have been charged with negligence and nine employees of several insurance companies charged with fraud for the misappropriation of government insurance payments to Georgian families
16 February 2011	Hundreds of demonstrators in the Nardaran village in Azerbaijan near the capital Baku protest against a lack of gas and electricity
17 February 2011	Newly appointed US ambassador in Azerbaijan Matthew Bryza says that there can be no military solution to the conflict over the disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh
17 February 2011	Armenia and Georgia agree to jointly control their three border crossings
17 February 2011	US secretary of state Hillary Clinton meets with Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze in Washington
18 February 2011	Armenian opposition leader Levon Ter-Petrossian warns the Armenian leadership to hold new elections or face the same kind of unrest as in the Arab states during a rally in Yerevan
19 February 2011	Georgia signs a memorandum with the daughter company of the Turkish Agaoglu Group on the construction of three hydropower plants on the river of Paravani in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia
21 February 2011	The breakaway region of Abkhazia launches a population census
21 February 2011	Georgia and the breakaway region of South Ossetia exchange seven detainees from each side
22 February 2011	The Georgian Defense Ministry says that one Georgian serviceman was killed and two others wounded as a result of a mine explosion in Afghanistan
22 February 2011	The Georgian Parliament passes a resolution asking the chief prosecutor's office to "react appropriately" to the report of an ad hoc commission charged with studying the circumstances of the death of Georgia's ousted President Zviad Gamsakhurdia in 1993 that noted inconsistencies in the official investigation
24 February 2011	US Deputy Secretary of State James B. Steinberg visits Georgia and meets with Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, Secretary of National Security Council Giga Bokeria and Deputy Foreign Minister Sergi Kapanadze
24 February 2011	Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev dismisses a military commander after the death of seven servicemen in a shooting incident in Azerbaijan
25 February 2011	Georgian Interior Ministry Vano Merabishvili meets with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on a visit to Baku

25 February 2011	Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov says on a visit to Athens that Azerbaijan intends to increase natural gas supplies to Greece
25 February 2011	Hundreds of drivers of minibuses or "marshrutkas" protest against increased daily fees to be paid by the drivers on transportation routes in Georgia's capital city of Tbilisi
25 February 2011	Several traffic policemen are fired in Azerbaijan on corruption charges
26 February 2011	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian meets with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in St. Petersburg for talks including among other issues the disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh
28 February 2011	Parliamentary deputies of the Armenian opposition Zharangutyun (Heritage) party walk out of Parliament after accusing Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian of trying illegally to prolong its term
1 March 2011	An opposition rally is held in Armenia's capital of Yerevan with opposition leader Levon Ter-Petrossian calling for early presidential and parliamentary elections
1 March 2011	Leaders of the opposition Georgian Party says that a revolution in Georgia is inevitable if Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili does not implement changes in the justice system, media, police as well as the business and electoral environments.
1 March 2011	Head of the Georgian Orthodox Church Ilia II calls on Russia and Georgia to start dialogues at various levels
2 March 2011	The Azerbaijani Prosecutor General's office launches a hotline for citizens to report on instances of corruption
4 March 2011	The fifteenth round of the Geneva talks is held
4 March 2011	Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin says that Russia has deployed Tochka-U rockets in the breakaway region of South Ossetia "temporarily" for training purposes
4 March 2011	Azerbaijani youth activist Bakhtiyar Hajiyev, an initiator of a Facebook campaign for one day of protest against the Azerbaijani government, is detained for one month in prison
5 March 2011	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev held talks on the disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh in Russia's Black Sea resort of Sochi
7 March 2011	Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili says at a meeting with pensioners in the Georgian town of Rustavi that the minimum pension will be increased from September of 2011
10 March 2011	The Georgian government distributes "food vouchers" of 30 Georgian laris (about 17.5 US dollars) to up to one million families

ABOUT THE CAUCASUS ANALYTICAL DIGEST

Editors: Iris Kempe, Matthias Neumann, Robert Orttung, Jeronim Perović, Lili Di Puppo

The Caucasus Analytical Digest (CAD) is a monthly internet publication jointly produced by the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Tbilisi (www.boell.ge), the Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen (www.forschungsstelle.uni-bremen.de), the Resource Security Institute in Washington, DC (resourcesecurityinstitute.org/) and the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich (www.css.ethz.ch) with support from the German Association for East European Studies (DGO). The Caucasus Analytical Digest analyzes the political, economic, and social situation in the three South Caucasus states of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia within the context of international and security dimensions of this region's development. CAD is supported by a grant from the Heinrich Boell Foundation.

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Heinrich Böll Foundation

The Heinrich Böll Foundation, affiliated with the Green Party of Germany, is a legally independent political foundation. The regional office for the South Caucasus was opened in 2003. Its main objective is to contribute to the forming of free, fair and tolerant societies in the region. The Foundation supports and facilitates cooperation of individuals and organizations throughout the region who, based on the principle values of human rights, search for the change of undemocratic and intolerant attitudes in societies and politics, for the transformation of ethno-political and territorial conflicts into the direction of fair and non-violent solutions and for the sustainable development of people and communities. The Foundation encourages critical public debate to make processes of decision-making democratic and transparent.

Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich

The Center for Security Studies (CSS) at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich) is a Swiss academic center of competence that specializes in research, teaching, and information services in the fields of international and Swiss security studies. The CSS also acts as a consultant to various political bodies and the general public.

Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen

Founded in 1982, the Research Centre for East European Studies (Forschungsstelle Osteuropa) at the University of Bremen is dedicated to socialist and post-socialist cultural and societal developments in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. One of the core missions of the institute is the dissemination of academic knowledge to the interested public. This includes regular e-mail service with nearly 20,000 subscribers in politics, economics and the media.

The Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, The Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University

The Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies is home to a Master's program in European and Eurasian Studies, faculty members from political science, history, economics, sociology, anthropology, language and literature, and other fields, visiting scholars from around the world, research associates, graduate student fellows, and a rich assortment of brown bag lunches, seminars, public lectures, and conferences.

Resource Security Institute

The Resource Security Institute (RSI) is a non-profit organization devoted to improving understanding about global energy security, particularly as it relates to Eurasia. We do this through collaborating on the publication of electronic newsletters, articles, books and public presentations.

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