

Communicating EU: the role of media in Georgia and the Visegrad countries

4 July, 2019,

Venue: Biltmore Hotel, Meeting room #8

29 Shota Rustaveli Ave, Tbilisi

Georgia's European integration has been embedded in the country's constitution, and has provided powerful incentives for positive internal reforms in governance and democratization. However, its success is based on the Georgian citizens' support to demanding reforms, and desire to get closer to the EU. At times of raising right-wing populism in the EU and Georgia, further fuelled by active anti-Western propaganda and disinformation spread by Russia, communicating the EU related issues can be a challenging task for the local media. How does media select the topics, sources and ways for reporting EU? To what extent do journalist consider the anti-Western propaganda a challenge in their work? Do they cooperate successfully with the state institutions – and how could this cooperation be improved? Finally, are these challenges specific to countries like Georgia, or do the EU member states face similar challenges? The conference brings together think tanks and researchers from Georgia, Poland, Slovakia and Czech Republic to discuss media's editorial policies for the EU reporting, share experiences from the Visegrad countries, and analyse how state-media cooperation could strengthen strategic communication of Georgia's Europeanization.

Conference program

09.30 - 10.00 Registration & Coffee

10.00 - 10.30 Welcome

- **Dr. Kornely Kakachia**, Director, Georgian Institute of Politics (GIP)

Keynote speaker:

- **H.E. Petr Mikyska**, Ambassador of the Czech Republic

10.30 - 12.00 Reporting EU: media's editorial policies, presentation of the report

The first panel will present a report prepared by project partners: GIP, GLOBSEC, Institute of Public Affairs and Masaryk University. The study focuses on the experiences of the media in Georgia and three Visegrad countries – Slovakia, Poland, and Czech Republic when reporting on EU-related issues. The panel will address the following questions:

- To what extent the reporting on the EU-related themes is part of the editorial agendas of the media outlets in Georgia and the three Visegrad countries? Is it a conscious decision to highlight the EU issues, or is it part of everyday coverage?
- How is Russian disinformation and anti-EU propaganda treated by the media



professionals? To what extent the editors and journalists see disinformation and anti-western propaganda as a challenge when reporting about the EU?

- What are the similarities and differences (if any) in the editorial agendas of the media in Georgia, Slovak and Czech Republics and Poland when addressing the above-mentioned issues?

Moderator: **Renata Skardziute-Kereselidze**, Deputy Director, GIP

- **Ekaterine Basilaia**, Affiliated Researcher, GIP
- **Filip Pazderski**, Senior Policy Analyst, Institute of Public Affairs, Poland
- **Dr. Petra Kuchyňková**, Assistant Professor, Masaryk University, Czech Republic
- **Jan Cingel**, Head of the European Neighborhood Programme, GLOBSEC Policy Institute, Slovakia

12.00 - 12.15 Coffee break

12.15 - 13.45 Strategic communications about the European issues: government and media as the main messengers, how to coordinate and foster relations?

Informing the public about the European Union is a complex task that the government shares with other actors, including media organizations. The awareness raising campaigns have been considerably successful in mobilizing support for Georgia's EU integration among the broader society. However, it has not been necessarily as successful in informing the public on what this support should be based. Local media organizations are in the unique position to reach out to the audiences in Georgia's regions, yet they face challenges, such as lack of resources, limited access to sources and anti-Western propaganda. The panel will address the following questions:

- What is the role of media in strategic communication for European integration? Is there a gap between national and local media?
- How effective is communication between government and media on the EU issues? How could it be improved?
- How can the government address the needs of media organizations while covering the EU and Georgia's Europeanization?

Moderator: **Giorgi Muchaidze**, Executive Director, Atlantic Council of Georgia

- **Levan Kakhishvili**, Policy Analyst, GIP
- **Lasha Tughushi**, Director, Liberal Academy Tbilisi
- **Nazibrola Rekhviashvili**, Journalist, FactCheck

13.45 - 14.00 Conclusion

14.00 Lunch reception

[More about the project](#)

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