

February 2017

Georgian Institute of Politics

EXPERT POLLS

Issue #3

Experts Assess the First 100 Days of the Georgian Dream Government

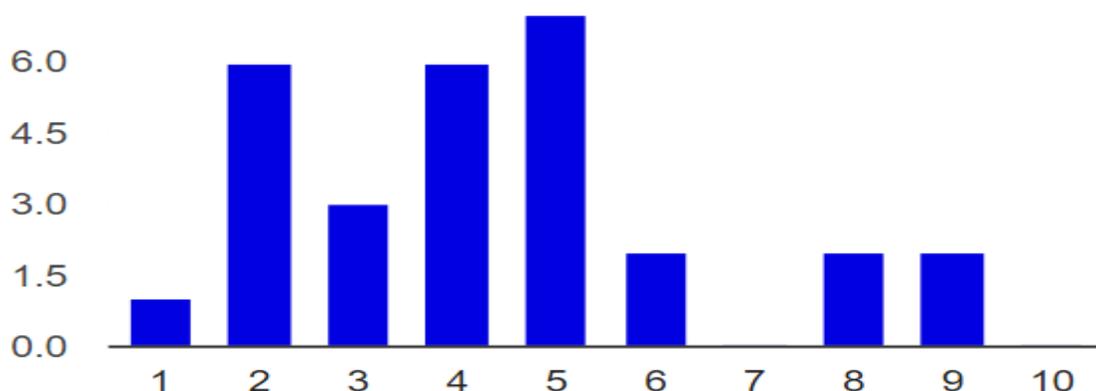
This poll was prepared for the [report](#) “The First 100 Days of the Georgian Dream Government: A Reality Check.” The Georgian Institute of Politics (GIP) surveyed 30 local and international experts about the issues discussed in the report. Respondents were selected based on their active involvement in Georgia’s political processes. The questionnaire was created to correspond with the report and includes four main parts: economic policy, social policy, foreign and security policy, and democracy and human rights.

The survey results paint a mixed and complex picture. Most experts positively assessed the government’s foreign policy (Graph 9) while democracy and human rights policy was assessed most negatively (Graph 10-11). Also alarming is that the majority of experts do not trust the Georgian Dream (GD) government to adopt a more democratic constitution (Graph 12).

Economic policy overall (Graph 2) and the Larization policy in particular (Graph 5) were assessed negatively, but experts have relatively balanced attitudes toward other economic initiatives. Adoption of the Estonian tax reform model and planned economic reforms were evaluated neutrally (Graph 3-4). Experts also neutrally evaluated social policy and planned reforms in the social sphere (Graph 6-7). Most experts, however, are skeptical about the long-term sustainability of the universal healthcare system, Georgian Dream’s landmark social reform (Graph 8).

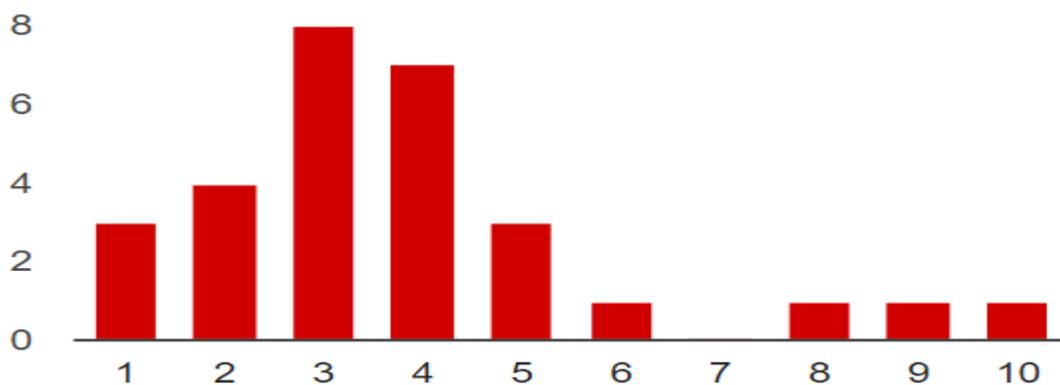
Overall, the majority of experts' evaluate Georgian Dream's first 100 days in power either neutrally or negatively (Graph 1). The majority of respondents assessed the government's overall performance at four or five points out of 10. It should be noted that only 21 percent of the surveyed experts assessed the government positively (six points out of ten or higher) (Graph 1).

Graph 1: On a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) how would you judge the overall performance of the new Georgian government in the first 100 days of being in power (November 2016 - January 2017)?

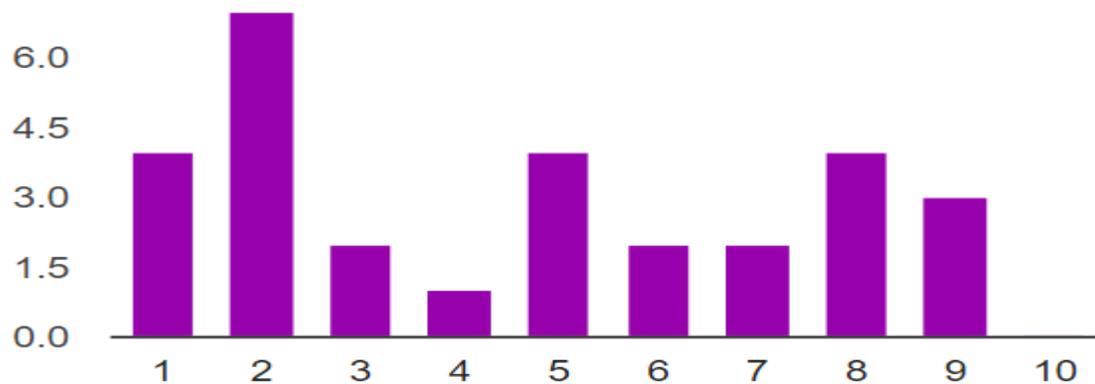


In the economic sphere, most experts negatively assessed the government's economic policy for the first hundred days. The largest group of experts assessed economic policy with three of 10 points (Graph 2). Experts also negatively assessed the economic component of the Georgian Dream's election program, but in this case the respondents have more balanced views (Graph 3). Successful implementation of planned reforms was identified as a main challenge for the new government.

Graph 2: On a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) how would you judge the performance of the new Georgian government in economic policy (tax reforms, unemployment, Larization policy) in the first 100 days of being in power (November 2016 - January 2017)?

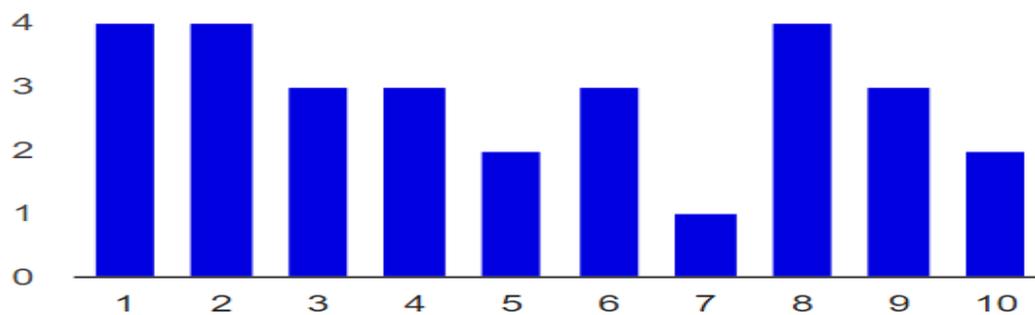


Graph 3: On a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) how would you assess the economic program of the GD government (creation of 200,000 new jobs, tax reforms, 3.5-billion-dollar road construction program, investments in infrastructure and energy)?

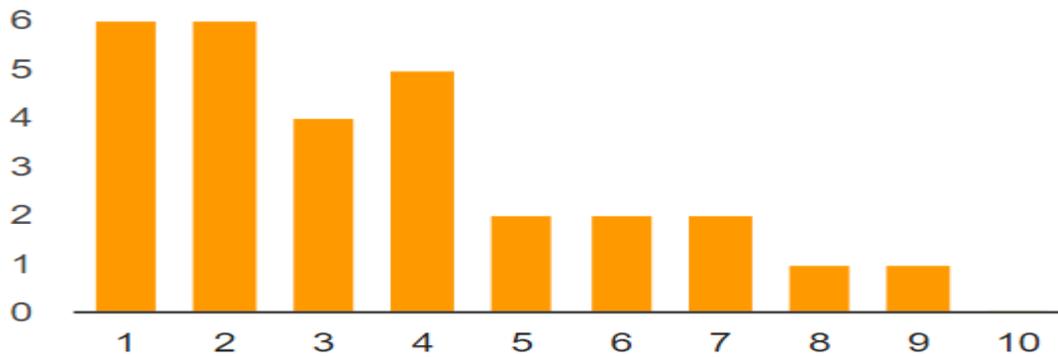


In the economic sphere, experts were more positive about adopting the Estonian tax model (Graph 4). As for the government's new tax proposal, opinions are almost equally divided, but it was the only issue which received the highest possible assessment. On the other hand, the Larization policy was criticized by a majority of experts (Graph 5).

Graph 4: On a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) how would you assess the Estonian corporate tax model introduced by GD on January 1, 2017?

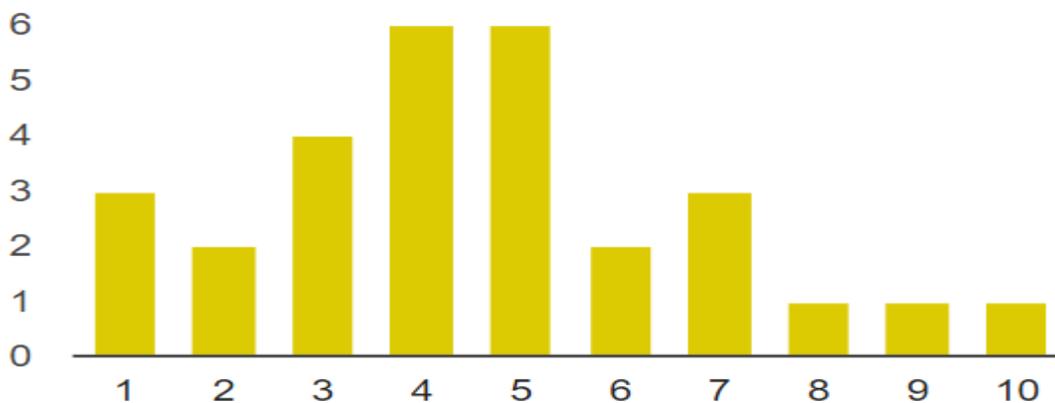


Graph 5: On a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) how would you assess the Larization policy implemented by GD on January 1, 2017?

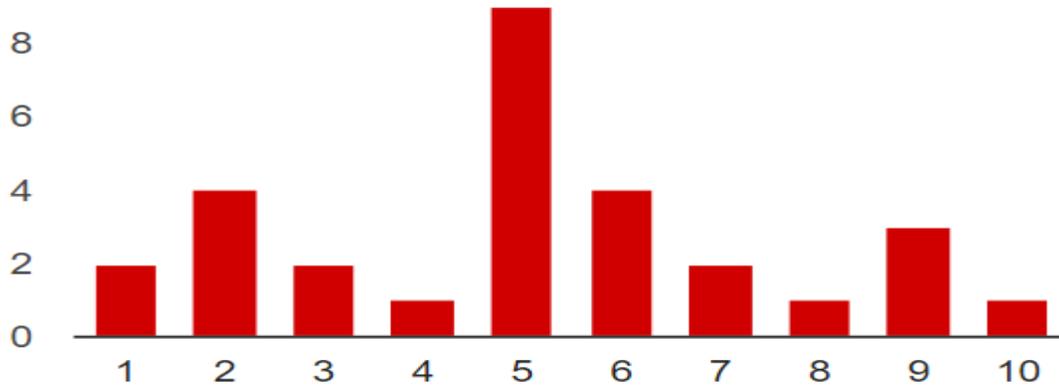


Experts neutrally assessed the government’s social policy during the first 100 days, but a few nuances are notable (Graph 6). The majority of respondents gave four or five points to the government’s social policy. Opinions about specific social policy initiatives implemented by the Georgian Dream are divided. For example, experts gave more or less neutral assessments of the portion of Georgian Dream’s election program devoted to social policy (Graph 7), but have very skeptical attitudes toward the long-term sustainability of the universal healthcare system—a landmark reform of GD that depends on rapid and stable economic growth in order to be sustainable (Graph 8).

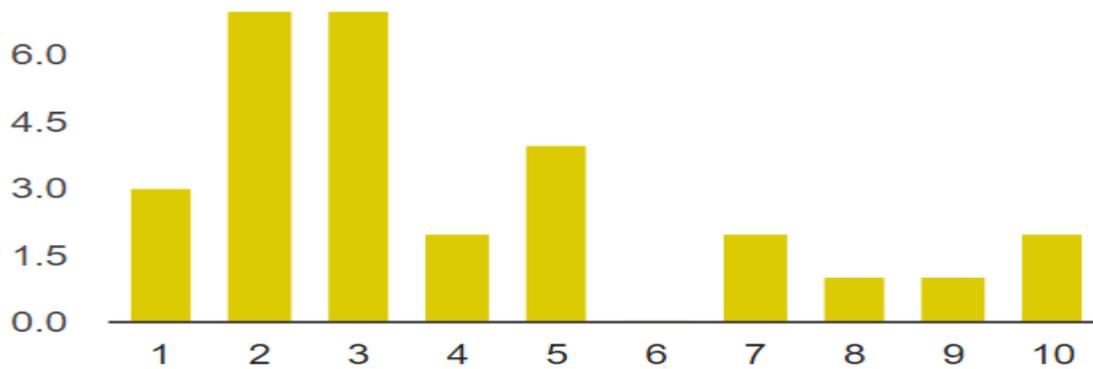
Graph 6: On a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) how would you assess the social program of the GD government (universal healthcare, increase in salaries for teachers, collective pension system)?



Graph 7: On a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) how would you assess GD's social policy as set out in its election program (universal healthcare, increase in salaries for teachers, collective pension system)?

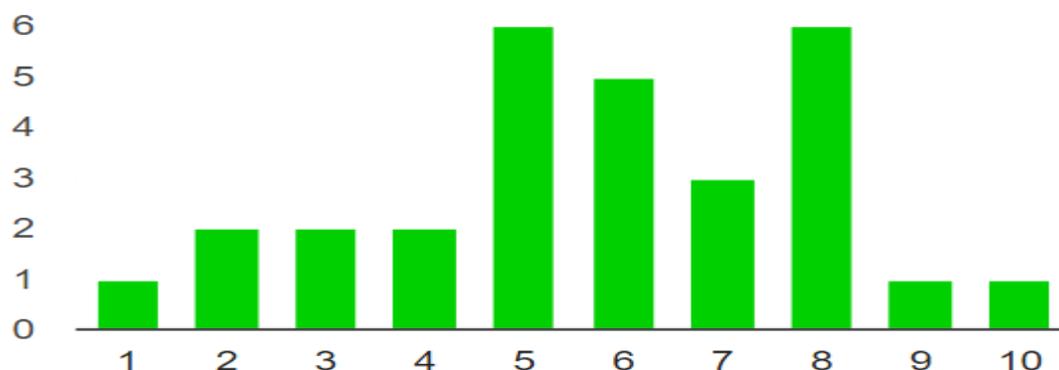


Graph 8: On a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) how would you assess the long-term sustainability of the universal healthcare system?



Interviewed experts were most positive about the new Georgian Dream government's foreign policy. In fact, foreign policy is the only area where respondents' assessments were mostly positive (Graph 9). According to the survey results, most political analysts were satisfied with GD's pragmatic and rational foreign policy, which seeks Euro-Atlantic integration while normalizing Georgia's relationship with Russia at the same time.

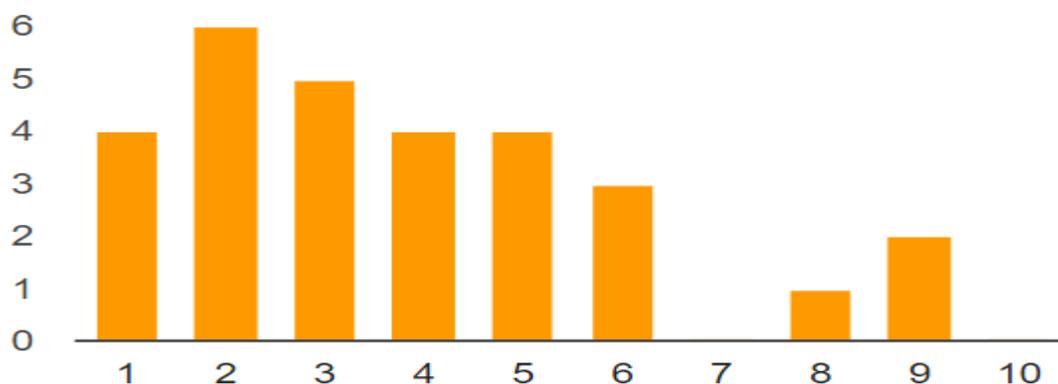
Graph 9: On a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) how would you judge the performance of the new Georgian government in foreign policy (managing relations with Russia and the West) in the first 100 days of being in power (November 2016 - January 2017)?



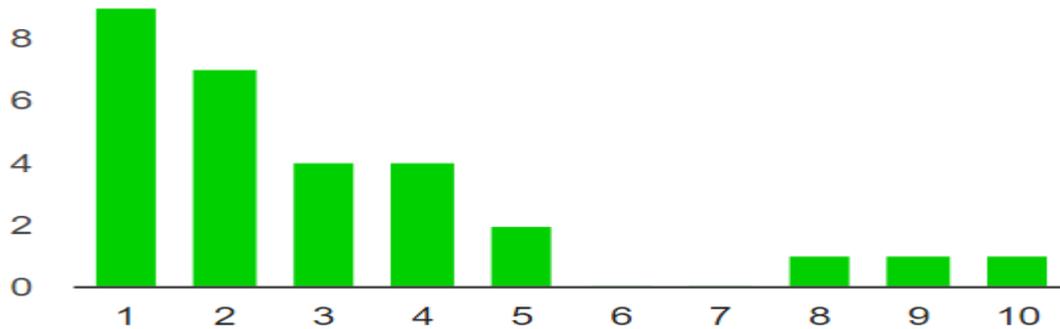
Assessments were drastically different concerning issues of democracy and human rights. According to the experts, this area is the government's Achilles heel. Respondents assessed most of the new government's policies related to democracy and human rights negatively or very negatively (Graph 10).

The government's policies in the area of media pluralism were overwhelmingly assessed negatively (Graph 11). Also alarming is that most experts are skeptical about future democratic development. In particular, respondents do not expect the Georgian Dream government to adopt a more democratic constitution (Graph 12).

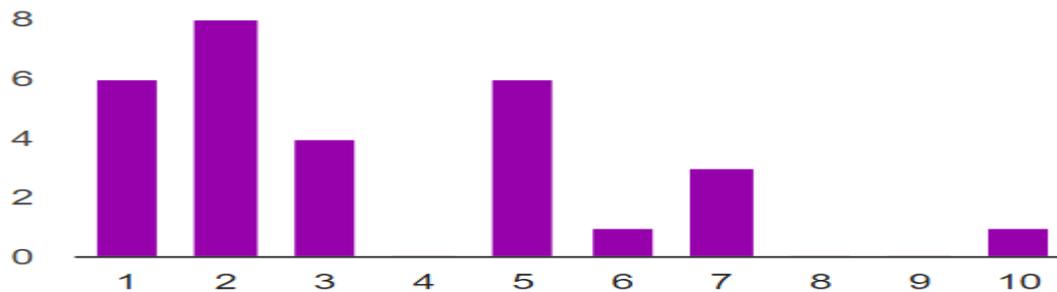
Graph 10: On a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) how would you judge the performance of the new Georgian government in the areas of democracy and the rule of law (discussion on constitutional amendments, media pluralism, human rights) in the first 100 days of being in power (November 2016 - January 2017)?



Graph 11: On a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) how would you assess the situation with media pluralism in the first 100 days after the elections (new head of the Georgian Public Broadcaster, merger of private TV outlets, problems with Rustavi2)?



Graph 12: Based on actions and statements in the first 100 days, on a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best) to what extent would you expect the GD government to adopt a more democratic constitution?



In conclusion, it can be said that the majority of experts' opinions are largely in line with the findings of the [100 day's' report](#) published by GIP on February 22. Both the authors of the report and the majority of surveyed experts identify the new government's main challenges to be in the areas of economic development and democracy. Foreign policy, despite some troublesome issues, is the least polarized sphere.

The GD government's social policy initiatives were evaluated neutrally by experts. However, respondents are pessimistic about the long-term sustainability of the universal healthcare system. Indeed, as assessed in GIP's report, the universal healthcare system's long-term sustainability will be impossible without rapid and sustainable economic growth.

GEORGIAN INSTITUTE OF POLITICS (GIP)

Tbilisi-based non-profit, non-partisan, research and analysis organization. GIP works to strengthen the organizational backbone of democratic institutions and promote good governance and development through policy research and advocacy in Georgia.

