



საბმთვალაბმთ სსზოზბადოზბის გბნვითბრბვისბ
 დბ მომბლბმბვისბ რბრთულოზბის ჰრთბმბთ
 ADVANCING CSO CAPACITIES AND ENGAGING SOCIETY
 FOR SUSTAINABILITY (ACCESS)



YOUTH ATTITUDES TOWARDS EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

SURVEY REPORT



EUROCOMMUNICATOR PUBLICATIONS SERIES

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სამთქმალბჟო საზოგადოების განვითარებისა
და მოქმალბჟების ჩართულობის პროექტი
ADVANCING CSO CAPACITIES AND ENGAGING SOCIETY
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INTRODUCTION

The Media Development Foundation (MDF) implements the “Debunking Myths and Informing Public on Euro-Atlantic Integration” project within the framework of the Advancing CSO Capacities and Engaging Society for Sustainability Program (ACCESS) of the East-West Management Institute(EWMI).

The project aims to support the communication of information about the process of Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic integration. The first publication of Eurocommunicator series presents the findings of the survey conducted among youth. The second publication of the same series will provide the assessment of the communication strategy of the Government of Georgia.

The aim of this survey was to study attitudes of youth towards the European integration; to assess the awareness of the process of Georgia’s approximation with European structures and to identify key sources of information from which the youth learn about the issues of European integration.

Based on the findings of the survey, recommendations were developed to help state entities, local and international organizations devise effective information strategy about the process of approximation with Europe.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted through face-to-face interviewing. The questionnaire, used as a research instrument, consisted of open-ended and structured questions.

The survey was conducted in 13 cities: Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Poti, Zugdidi, Ozurgeti, Gori, Telavi, Rustavi, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Marneuli, Dmanisi.

The survey covered 1,086 respondents aged between 17 and 35 years.

The survey was conducted in September 2015.

The distribution of **respondents by age groups**: 17 to 20 years old – 16.9%; 21 to 25 years old – 27.4%; 31 to 35 years old – 28.3%.

The distribution of **respondents by gender**: male 37.8%; female – 62.2%.

The distribution of **respondents by cities** is shown in the table below:

City	Respondents
Tbilisi	578
Gori	20
Zugdidi	40
Ozurgeti	19
Kutaisi	101
Telavi	20
Batumi	60
Akhalkalaki	40
Akhalsikhe	42
Marneuli	43
Dmanisi	43
Rustavi	60
Poti	20
Total	1086

CHART I

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC COMPONENT

The responses to the question – **Which of the listed below corresponds to the highest level of your education?** – were redistributed as follows:

Current employment. Among surveyed youth 13.4% are students; 9.3% are public sector employees; 27.3% are private sector employees; 1.6% are civil sector employees; 6.6% are self-employed; 40.8% are unemployed; 1% study at school.

Chart 1.2. Employment

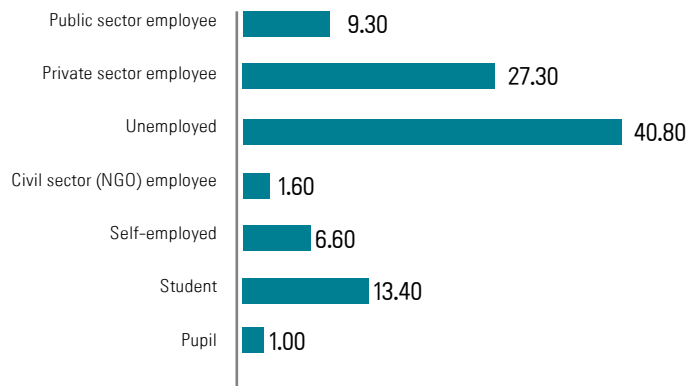
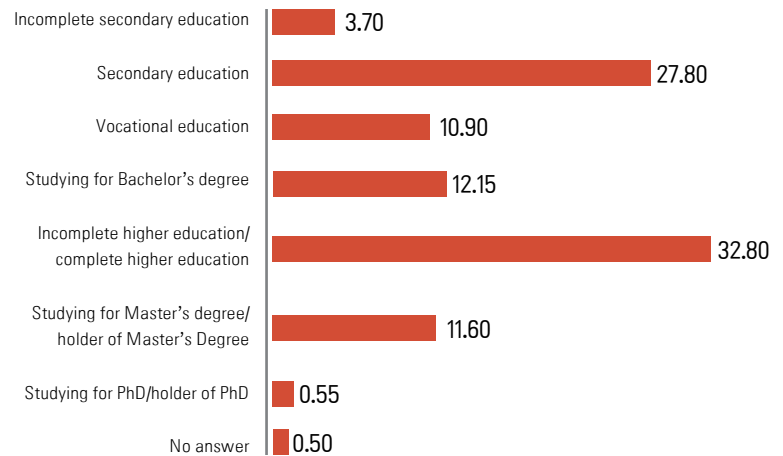


Chart 1.1. Levels of education



KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGES

When rating their knowledge of English language, 11.2% of respondents say their knowledge is excellent whilst 20.4% say it is good; 22% of respondents evaluate their knowledge of English as satisfactory and 28.4% as poor. Some 18% of respondents do not know English at all.

Chart 1.3. Knowledge of English

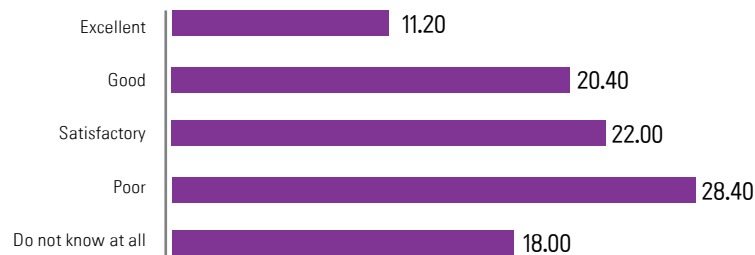


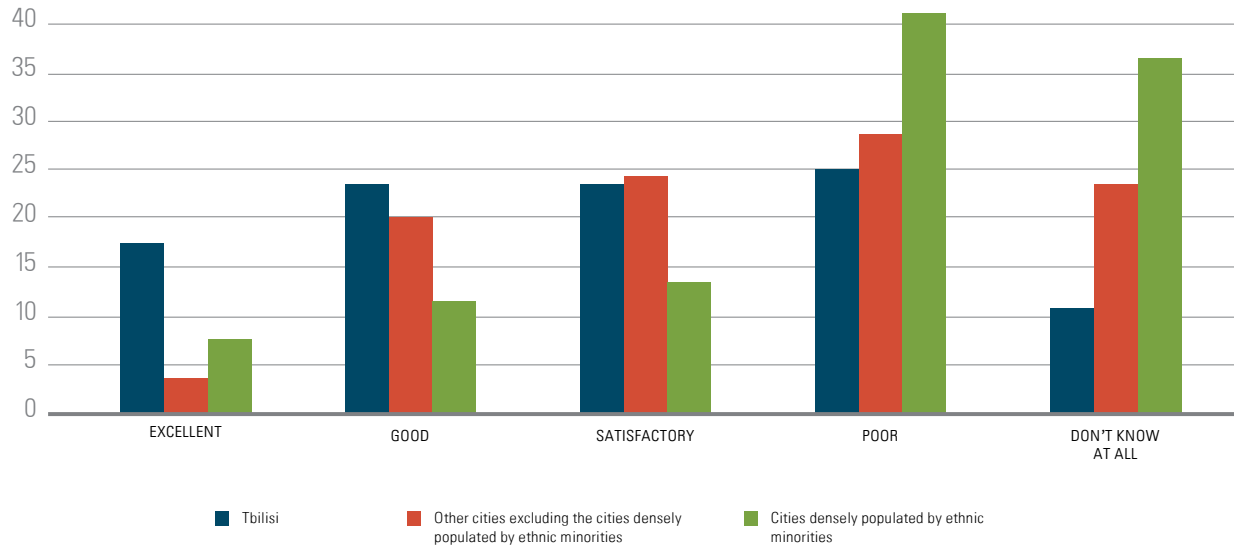
Table 1.1. Respondents' rating of the knowledge of English by places of residence

Knowledge of English language	Total number of respondents	Tbilisi	Other cities excluding the cities densely populated by ethnic minorities	Cities densely populated by ethnic minorities
Excellent	11.2	17.3	3.2	6.5
Good	20.4	23.1	20.5	11.3
Satisfactory	22	23.1	24.9	12.5
Poor	28.4	25.5	28.5	38.2
Don't know at all	18	11	22.9	31.5

The knowledge of English differs by place of residence. A higher share of Tbilisi residents (17,3%) rate their knowledge of English as excellent compared to 3.2% of the youth from other surveyed cities and 6.5% of youth living in the cities densely populated by ethnic minorities.

The shares of the youth rating their knowledge as “Good,” “Satisfactory” and “Poor” are almost equal in Tbilisi and in other cities save for the cities densely populated by ethnic minorities. The share of youth who think that their knowledge of English is good (11.3%) or satisfactory (12.5%) is two times smaller in the cities densely populated by ethnic minorities than in Tbilisi and other cities. Consequently, the cities densely populated by ethnic minorities show the highest shares of youth who say they know the language poorly (38.2%) or do not know at all (31.5%).

Chart 1.4. Respondents' rating of the knowledge of English by places of residence



Respondents rated their knowledge of the Russian language too. The results of the rating look as follows: excellent – 19.6%; good – 25.2%; satisfactory – 27.8%; poor – 17.8%; don't know at all – 9.6%.

The knowledge of Russian varies by place of residence. A higher share of the youth in Tbilisi and in the cities densely populated by ethnic minorities believe that their knowledge of Russian is excellent (24.8% and 27.4%, respectively) compared to 7.1% of the youth from other surveyed cities.

Table 1.2. Respondents' rating of the knowledge of Russian by places of residence

Knowledge of Russian language	Total number of respondents	Tbilisi	Other cities excluding the cities densely populated by ethnic minorities	Cities densely populated by ethnic minorities
Excellent	19.6	24.8	7.1	27.4
Good	25.2	23.7	27.9	25.0
Satisfactory	27.8	22.5	36.1	29.2
Poor	17.8	18.9	19.8	9.5
Don't know at all	9.6	10.1	9.1	8.9

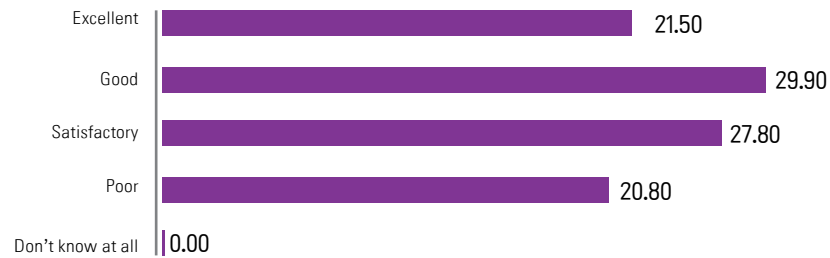
The charts below show the indicators of the knowledge of English and Russian languages by places of residence:

Chart 1.5. Comparison of the knowledge of English and Russian languages



None of those respondents whose native language is not Georgian, say that they do not know the Georgian language at all. According to responses, 20.8% of the respondents evaluate their knowledge of Georgian as poor, 29.9% as good and 21.5% as excellent.

Chart 1.6. Knowledge of Georgian language among those respondents whose native language is not Georgian



Some 1.6% of youth whose native language is not Azerbaijani, know this language while 2.7% of those whose native language is not Armenian, know Armenian.

HAVE YOU STUDIED OR LIVED ABROAD?

Some 8.6% of surveyed youth studied whilst 16.6% lived abroad.

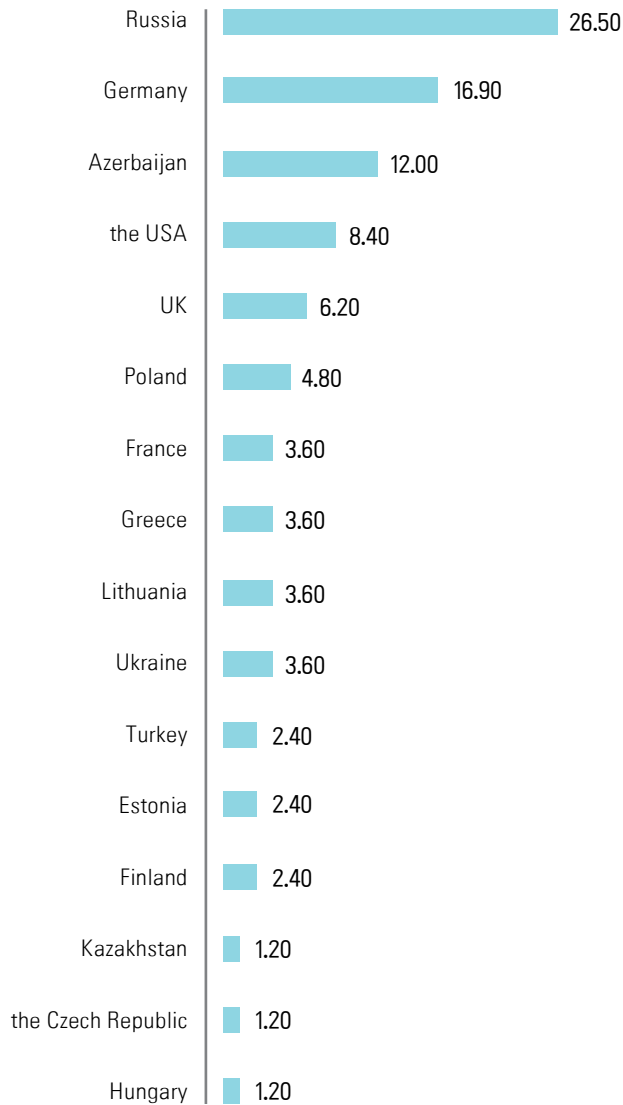
Chart 1.7. Respondents who studied or lived abroad



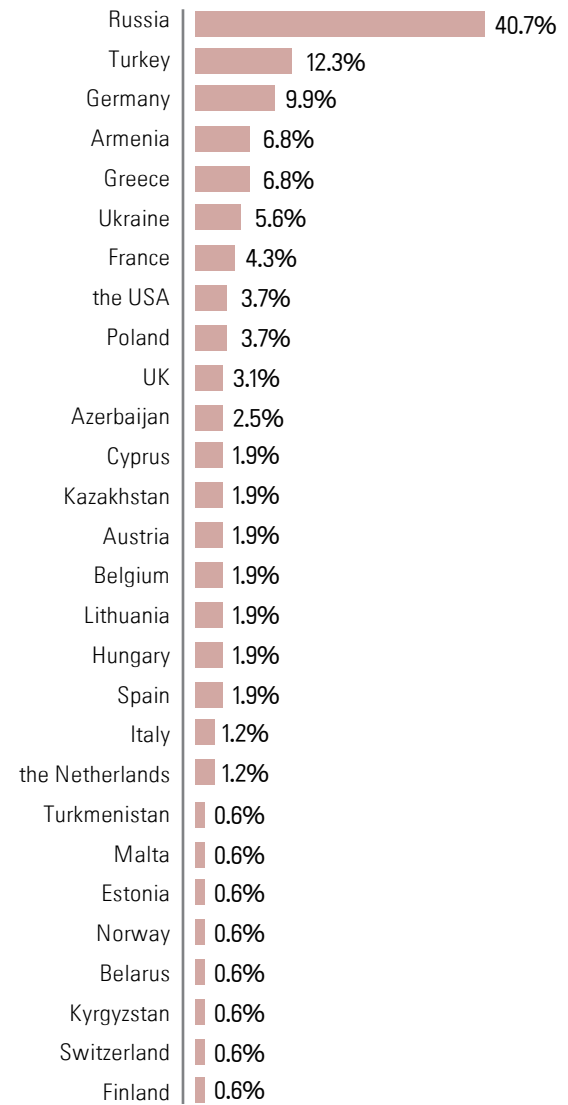
The distribution of those respondents, who studied or lived abroad, by countries is shown in the charts below.

Chart 1.8. Countries where respondents studied or lived

WHICH COUNTRY DID YOU STUDY IN?
 Percentages are calculated from those respondents who studied abroad;
 respondents could provide more than one answer



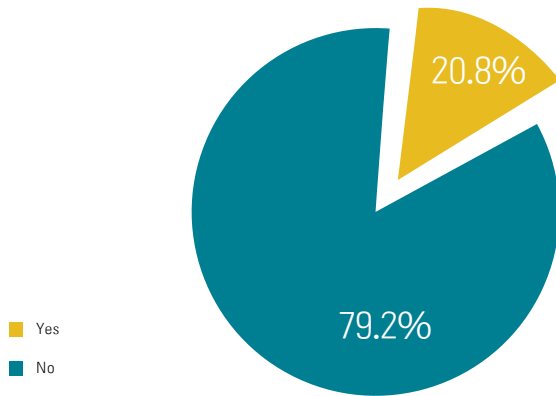
WHICH COUNTRY DID YOU LIVE IN?
 Percentages are calculated from those respondents who lived abroad;
 respondents could provide more than one answer



DOES/DID ANY OF YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS LIVE ABROAD?

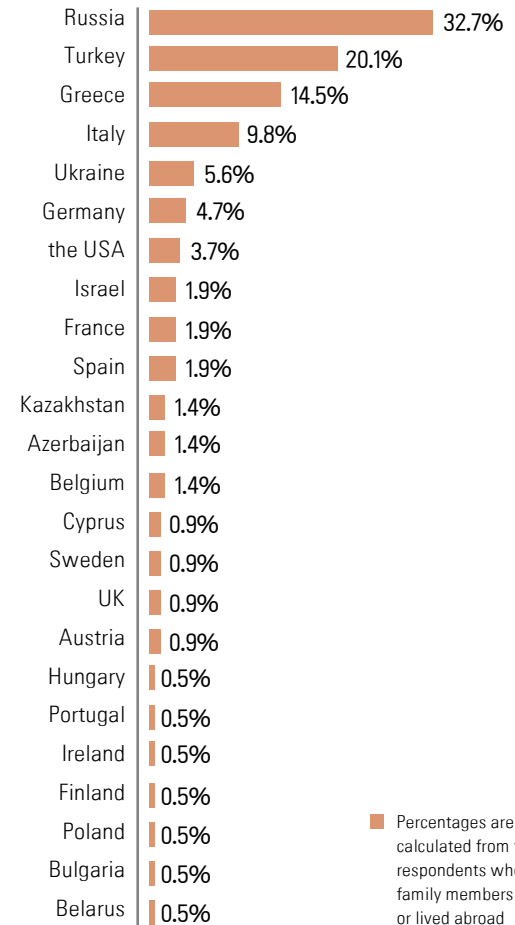
Some 20.8% of respondents say that a member of their family is either living or has lived abroad.

Chart 1.9. Members of respondents' families living or having lived abroad



The distribution of those respondents, whose family members lived or live abroad, by countries is shown in the chart below.

Chart 1.10. Countries where respondents' family members lived or live



Percentages are calculated from those respondents whose family members live or lived abroad

FREQUENCY OF ATTENDING RELIGIOUS SERVICE

The distribution of respondents by their religious denominations is provided in the table below:

Table 1.3. Religious denominations of respondents

Orthodox Church	86.28
Islam	5.25
Armenian Apostolic Church	4.42
Catholic Church	0.64
Protestant	0.28
Other	0.92
None	1.38
No answer	0.83

Religious services are attended once a week or more often by 15.5%, once a month by 20.6%, only on religious holidays by 35.5%, seldom by 24.8% and never by 2.3% of youth living in the surveyed cities.

Chart 1.11. Frequency of attending religious service



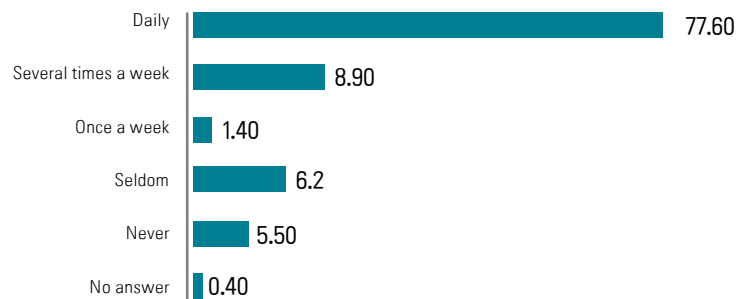
SECTION II

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

FREQUENCY OF THE USE OF INTERNET

The Internet is used daily by 77.6%, several times a week by 8.9%, once a week by 1.4%, seldom by 6.2% and never by 5.5% of surveyed respondents.

Chart 2.1. Frequency of the use of Internet



The frequency of the use of Internet differ between the youth living in Tbilisi and in other cities. The difference is especially notable between Tbilisi residents and those of cities densely populated by ethnic minorities. The Internet is used daily by 83% of Tbilisi youth compared to 59,50% of youth living in cities densely populated by ethnic minorities.

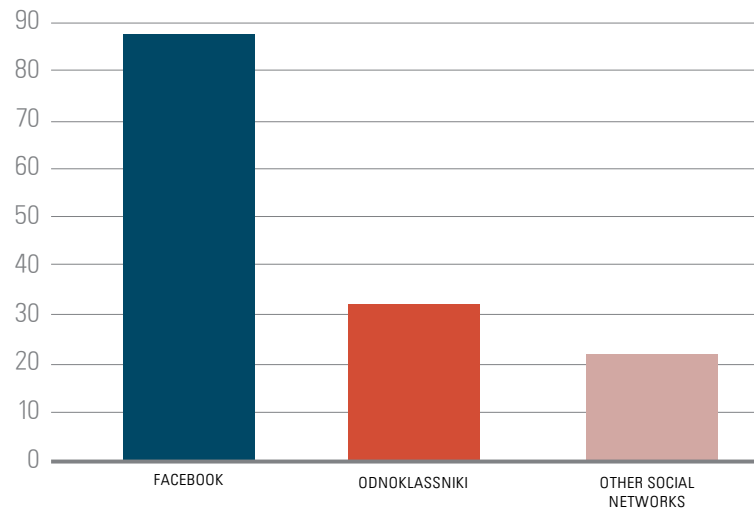
Table 2.1. Frequency of the use of Internet by places of residence

	Total	Tbilisi	Other cities	Other cities excluding the cities densely populated by ethnic minorities	Cities densely populated by ethnic minorities
Daily	77.6	83.00	71.50	77.40	59.50
Several times a week	8.9	7.80	10.20	7.60	15.50
Once a week	1.4	0.70	2.20	1.80	3.00
Seldom	6.2	5.40	7.00	6.50	8.30
Never	5.5	2.90	8.50	6.10	13.10
No answer	0.4	0.20	0.60	0.60	0.60

WHAT DO YOU USE INTERNET FOR?

Most often the youth uses the Internet for social networks. The most popular social network is Facebook which is used by 88.9% of Internet user youth. Some 31.3% use Odnoklassniki and 21.9% other social networks.

Chart 2.2. Use of social networks



The youth of Tbilisi and those cities that are not densely populated by ethnic minorities use Facebook almost equally. In particular, 91.5% of Internet user youth in Tbilisi and 90.8% in other cities use Facebook. A lower share of Facebook users is seen among the youth living in the cities densely populated by ethnic minorities (74.5%).

The picture is opposite in case of Odnoklassniki. This social network is used by only 25% of Internet users living in Tbilisi, 33.9% of those living in other cities and 49.7% of the youth living in cities densely populated by ethnic minorities.

The table below shows indicators of the use of social networks by Internet user youth by places of residence.

Table 2.3. Use of social networks by places of residence

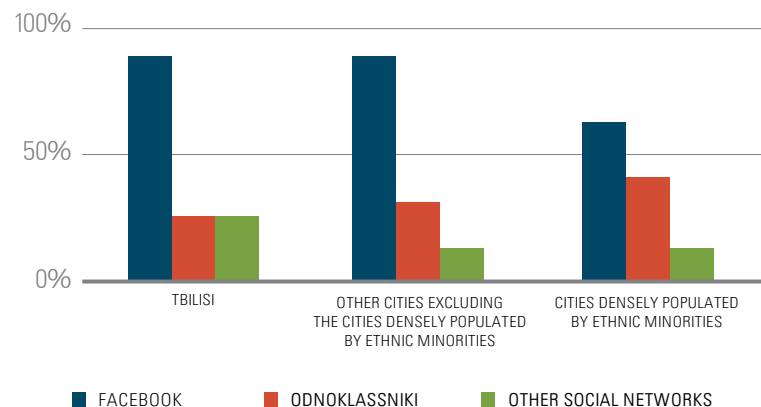
	Tbilisi	Other cities excluding the cities densely populated by ethnic minorities	Cities densely populated by ethnic minorities
Facebook	91.5%	90.8%	74.5%
Odnoklassniki	25.0%	33.9%	49.7%
Other social networks	25.2%	19.3%	17.4%

Email is used by 51.5% of the youth; a small share of respondents participate in discussions and other forums (4.6%); similarly, a small share of respondents (4.3%) use the Internet to express their opinions about political and social issues.

Table 2.3. Purpose of the use of Internet

Email	51.5%
Read blogs	12.5%
Participate in discussions on various forums	4.6%
Express my opinions about political and social issues	4.3%
Blogging	1.6%

Chart 2.3. Use of social networks by places of residence



A list of responses to the question concerning the purpose of use of the Internet included concrete online editions and respondents were asked to specify which of those editions they use as sources of information. The results look as follows:

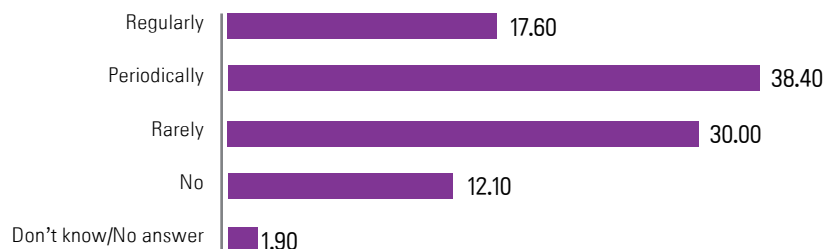
Table 2.4. Online editions used by respondents as sources of information

Interpressnews	16.7%
Netgazeti	9.8%
Info 9	3.1%
Pirweli	2.2%
Sakinformi	1.5%
Georgia & World	1.5%
Sputnik	1.0%
Reportiori	0.7%

DO YOU RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN GEORGIA?

The information about political and social developments in Georgia is regularly received by 17.6%, periodically by 38.4% and rarely by 30% of youth living in the cities. As many as 12.1% of the youth do not receive information about political and social developments in Georgia at all.

Chart 2.4. Awareness of political and social developments in Georgia among youth

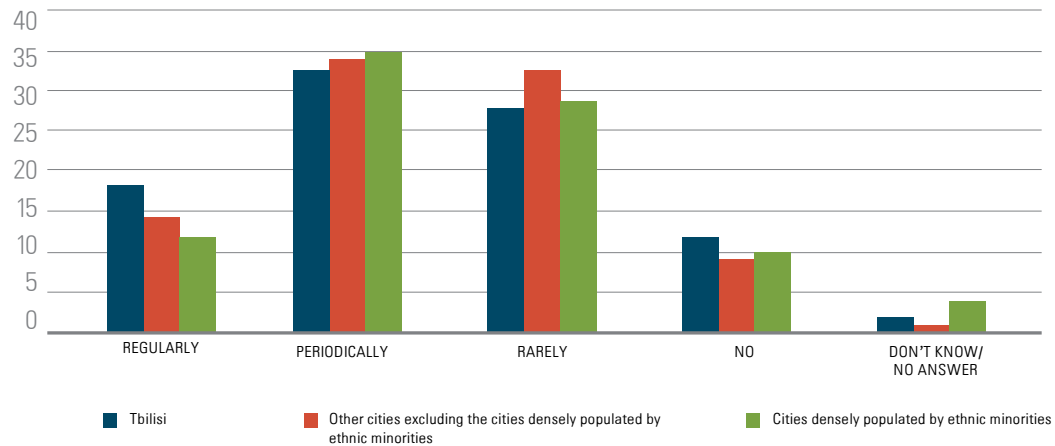


There is an insignificant difference between the levels of awareness of political and social developments in Georgia among the youth living in Tbilisi and other cities. An insignificant difference is also observed in the indicators of the youth living in the cities densely populated by ethnic minorities.

Table 2.5. Awareness of political and social developments in Georgia among youth by places of residence

	Total	Tbilisi	Other cities	Other cities excluding the cities densely populated by ethnic minorities	Cities densely populated by ethnic minorities
Receive information regularly	17.6	19.4	15.6	15.9	14.9
Receive information periodically	38.4	36.9	40.2	39.7	41.1
Receive information rarely	30.0	28.2	32.1	33.5	29.2
Do not receive information	12.1	13.3	10.6	10.3	11.3
Don't know/no answer	1.9	2.2	1.5	0.6	3.5

Chart 2.5. Awareness of political and social developments in Georgia among youth by places of residence

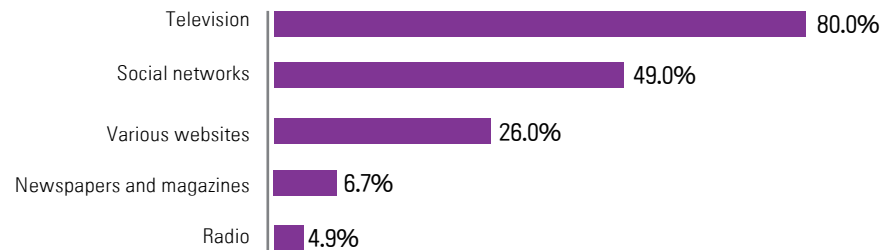


WHICH SOURCES DO YOU USE TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN GEORGIA?

Main sources of information about political and social developments are television and the Internet. Some 80% of the youth get information about political and social developments in Georgia from television, 49% from the Internet and 26% from various websites.

A small share of youth gets information about political and social developments from print media and radio; namely, 4.3% get information from newspapers, 2.4% from magazines and 4.9% from radio.

Chart 2.6. Main sources of information about social and political developments in Georgia

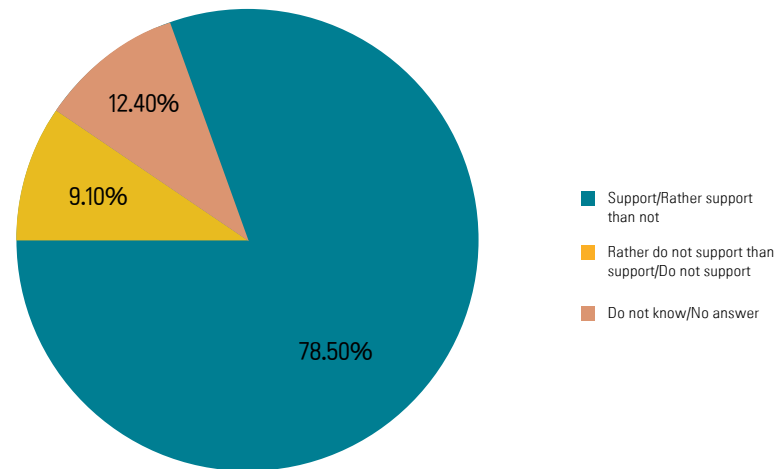


SECTION III

ATTITUDES OF YOUTH TOWARDS AND AWARENESS OF THE PROCESS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

ATTITUDES TOWARDS GEORGIA'S INTEGRATION WITH THE EU

Chart 3.1. Attitudes towards Georgia's integration with the EU



As many as **78.5%** of surveyed youth support Georgia's integration with the EU.

The supporters comprise two subgroups – **those who support and those who rather support than not**. Some 59.1% of respondents support Georgia's EU integration process whereas 19.4% rather support than not.

Some 9.1% of surveyed youth does not support Georgia's integration with the EU. The answers are distributed among two subgroups in the following way: 5.4% of respondents say they **do not support** the process of integration whilst 3.7% say they **rather do not support than support**.

Table 3.1. Attitudes towards Georgia’s integration with the EU

Support	59.1
Rather support than not	19.4
Rather do not support than support	3.7
Do not support	5.4
Don’t know	12.3
No answer	0.1

The attitudes towards the European integration show some differences between the youth living in Tbilisi and in other cities.

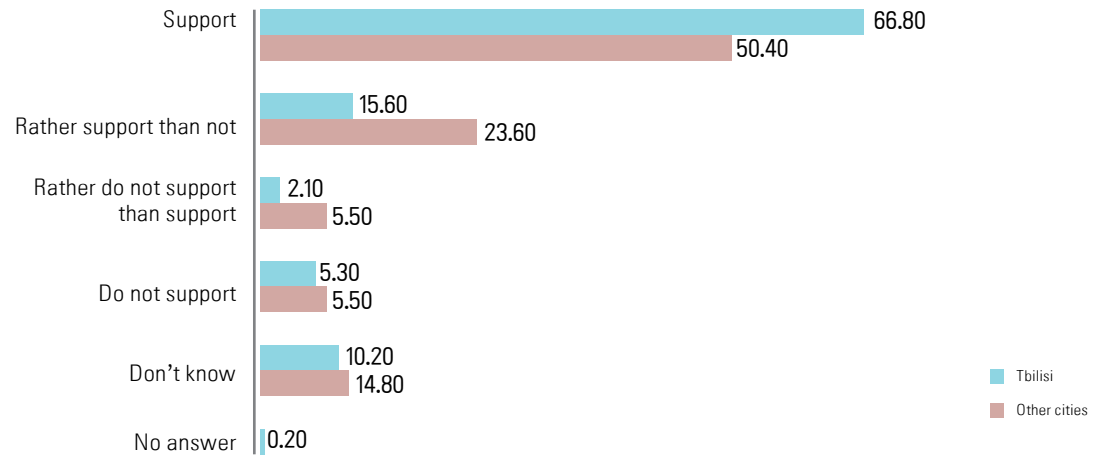
The share of supporters of the European integration is higher among the youth in Tbilisi (82.4%) than in other cities (74%).

In particular, 66.8% of youth in Tbilisi and 50.4% of youth in other cities say they support the process while 15.6% of youth in Tbilisi and 23.6% in other cities say they rather support the process than not.

The shares of those who say they rather do not support than support and do not support the process of Georgia’s European integration are almost identical.

The share of those who answered “Don’t know” is higher among respondents from other cities (14.8%) than from Tbilisi (10.2%).

Chart 3.2. Attitudes towards Georgia’s integration with the EU by places of residence



The share of EU supporters is lower among respondents whose native language is not Georgian (54% in total of those who answer “Support/Rather support than not”); the share of those who say they “Do not support/Rather do not support than support” is a bit higher (19% in total) whilst the share of those who “Don’t know” is notably higher (27%) than the general indicator.

Chart 3.3. Attitudes towards Georgia’s integration with the EU among those respondents whose native language is not Georgian

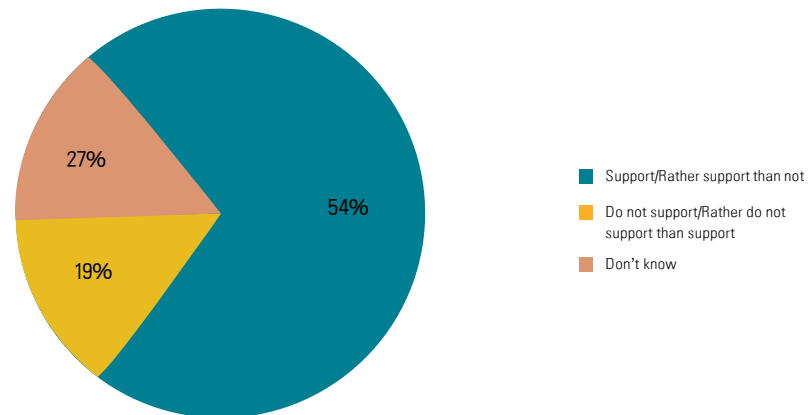


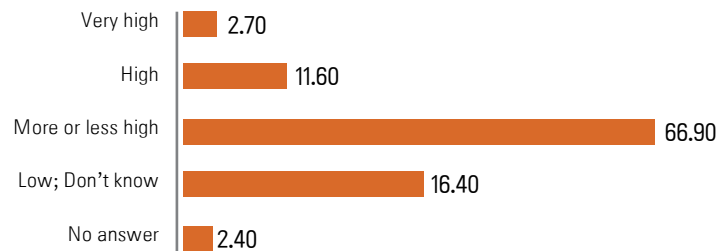
Table 3.2. Attitudes towards Georgia’s integration with the EU among those respondents whose native language is not Georgian

Support	27.1
Rather support than not	26.4
Rather do not support than support	11.1
Do not support	8.3
Don’t know	27.1

AWARENESS OF THE PROCESS OF GEORGIA’S INTEGRATION WITH THE EU AMONG YOUTH

A mere 2.7% of the youth rate their level of awareness of the process of Georgia’s integration with the EU as very high. Some 11.6% evaluate their level of awareness as high, 66,9% as more or less high and 16.4% as low.

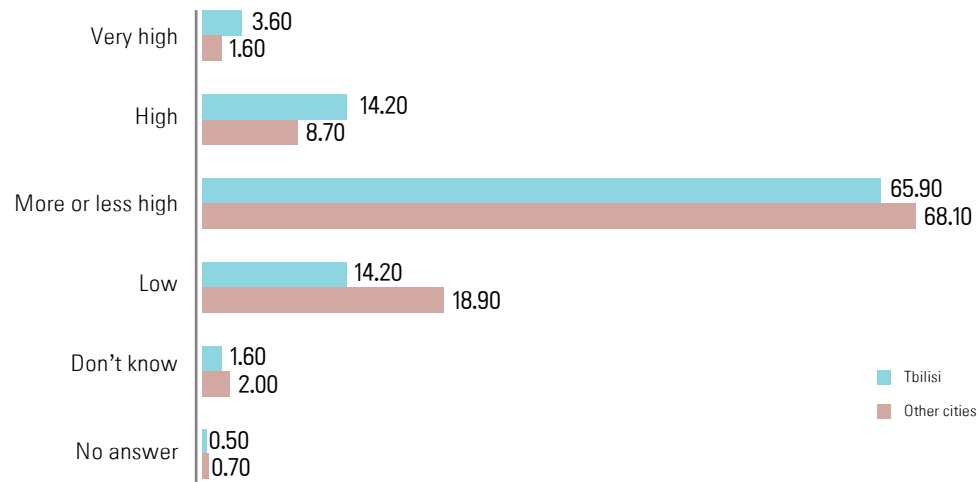
Chart 3.4. Level of awareness of the process of Georgia’s integration with the EU among youth



Indicators of the awareness of Georgia’s integration process with the EU among the youth show some differences.

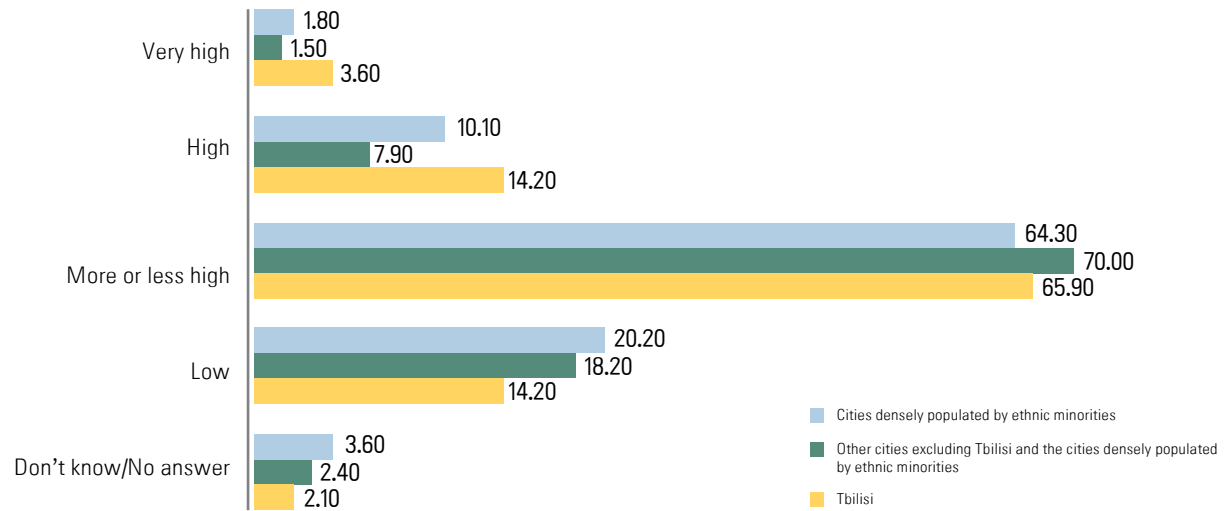
Compared to the youth living in Tbilisi, respondents in other cities feel they are less aware of Georgia’s integration with the EU. The total of 10.3% of the surveyed youth in other cities say their level of awareness of the process is very high or high compared to 17.8% of youth in Tbilisi who say the same. As regards those who are not aware of the process at all, they comprise 14.2% in Tbilisi and 18.9% in other cities.

Chart 3.5. Level of awareness of the process of Georgia’s integration with the EU in Tbilisi and other cities



The level of awareness of the EU integration process is higher in Tbilisi; however this indicator is almost similar among the youth living in other cities, including those densely populated by ethnic minorities.

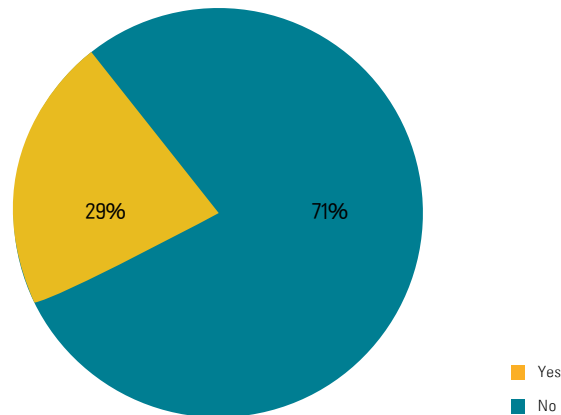
Chart 3.6. Level of awareness of the process of Georgia’s integration with the EU by places of residence



SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT GEORGIA’S INTEGRATION WITH THE EU

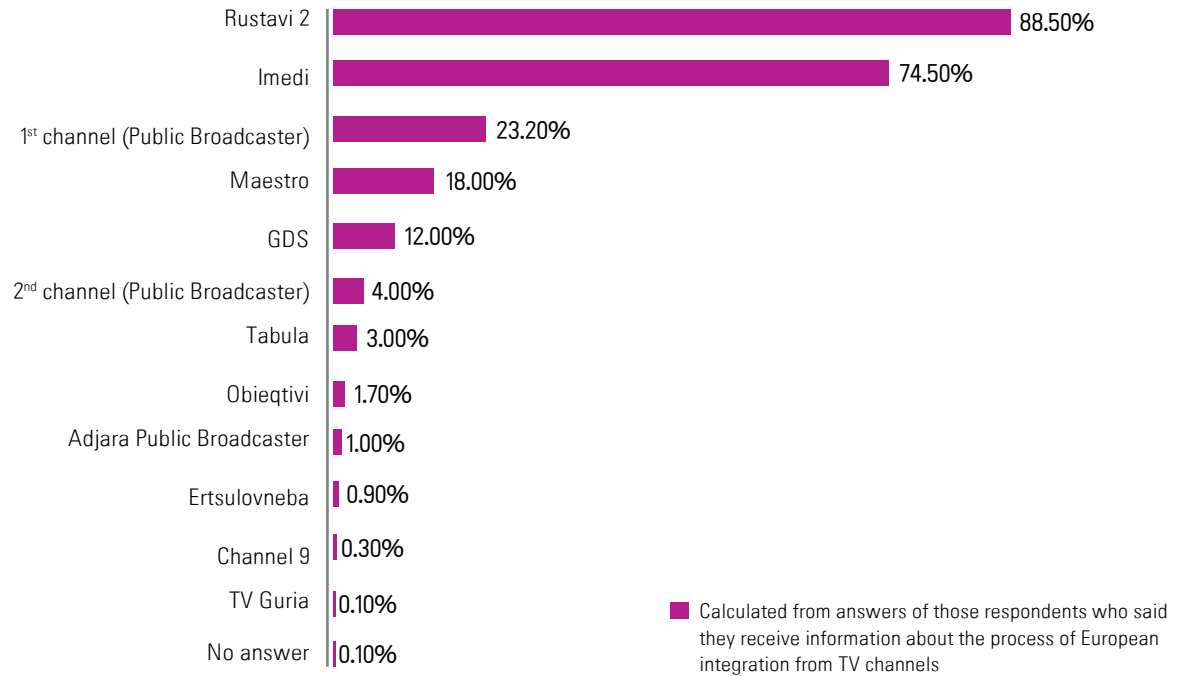
Some 29% of interviewed youth get information about Georgia’s EU integration from Georgian TV channels.

Chart 3.7. Sources of information about Georgia’s integration with the EU – Georgian TV channels



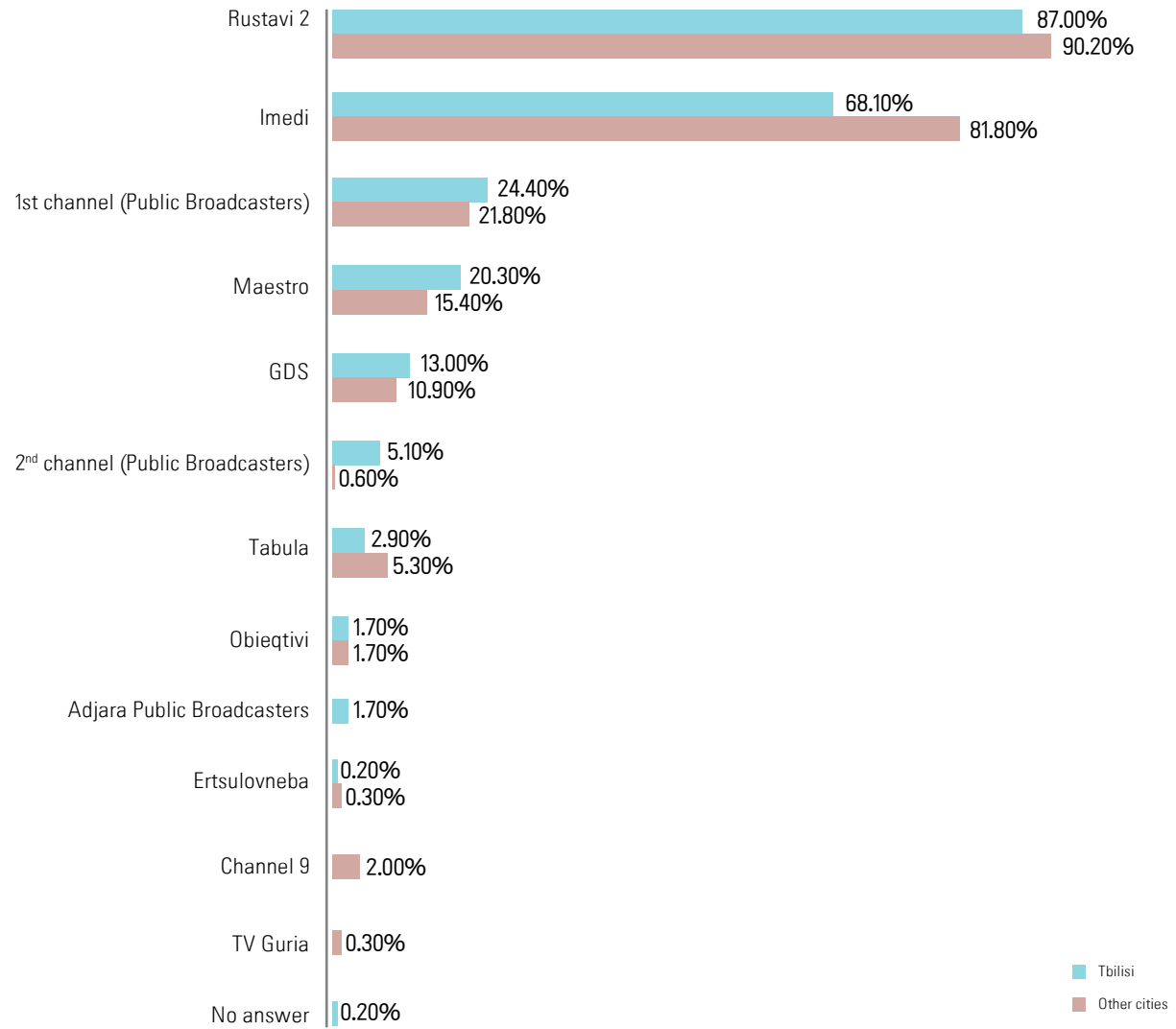
The respondents who receive information about the process of European integration from TV channels specified the channels they get this information from. The answers are distributed as follows:

Chart 3.8. Sources of information about Georgia’s integration with the EU by Georgian TV channels



TV channels which represent sources of information about EU integration process for respondents receiving such information from television are distributed by place of residence as follows:

**Chart 3.9. Sources of information about Georgia’s integration with the EU
by Georgian TV channels and places of residence**



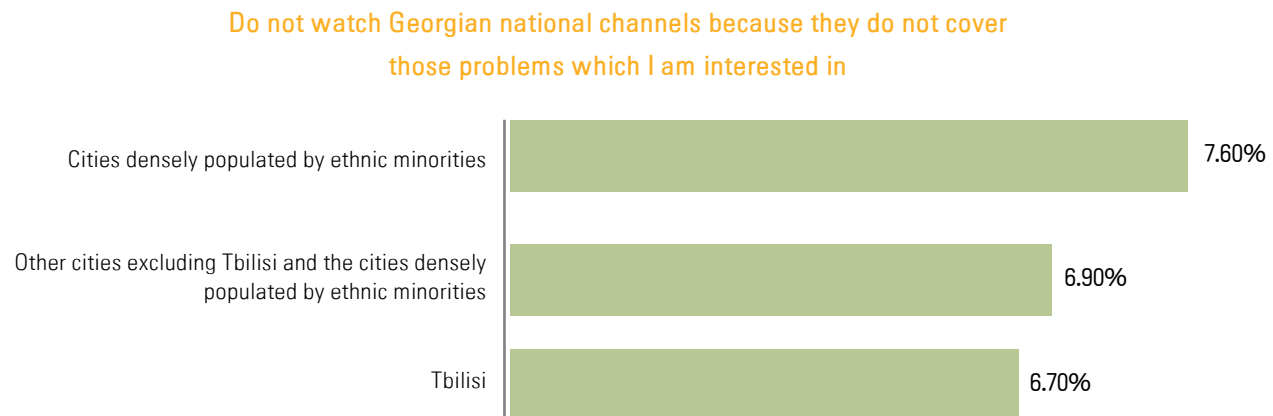
Calculated from answers of those respondents who said they receive this information from TV channels.

Do not know the state language and do not watch Georgian TV channels

As many as 22.9% of the youth living in the cities densely populated by ethnic minorities do not watch Georgian national channels because they do not know the state language and cannot understand the content.

Do not watch Georgian national channels because they do not cover those problems which I am interested in

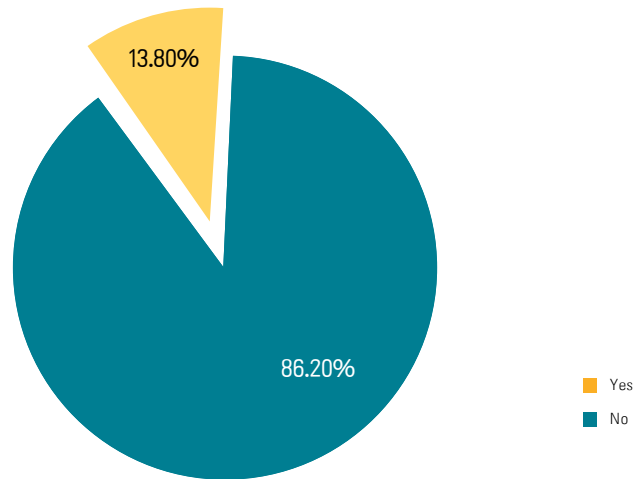
Some 6.9% of respondents say they do not watch Georgian national channels because they do not cover those problems which they are interested in. This indicator does not virtually differ by place of residence though it is a bit higher in case of cities densely populated by ethnic minorities (7.6%).



DO YOU RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT GEORGIA'S INTEGRATION WITH THE EU FROM NON-GEORGIAN TV CHANNELS?

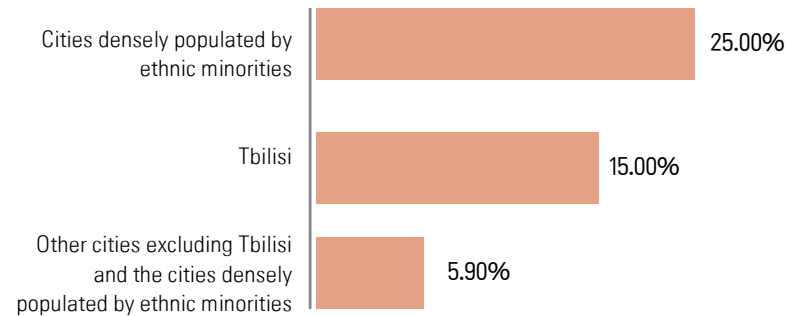
Some 13.8% of respondents receive the information about the issues of European integration from TV channels that are not Georgian ones.

Chart 3.10. Receiving information about the EU integration from non-Georgian TV channels



Apart from Georgian TV channels, the information about the process of European integration is received from other channels by 15% of respondents living in Tbilisi, 25% of respondents living in the cities densely populated by ethnic minorities and by 5.9% respondents living in other cities.

Chart 3.11. Receiving information about the EU integration from non-Georgian TV channels by places of residence



The distribution of answers of those respondents who get information about the issues of European integration from non-Georgian channels too is the following:

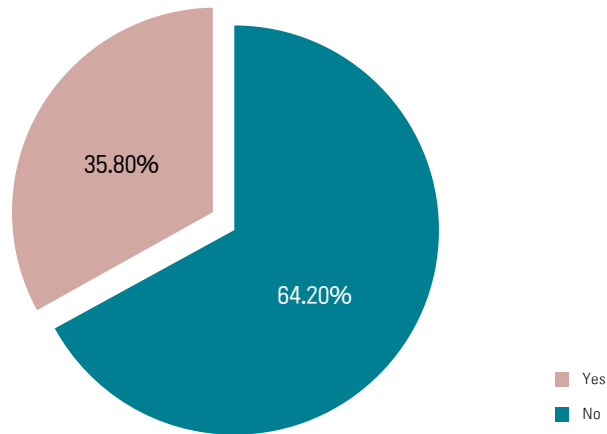
Table 3.3. Receiving information about the EU integration from non-Georgian TV channels

	Tbilisi	Ethnically Georgian regions	Ethnically non-Georgian regions
English-language channels	65.1%	26.3%	4.8%
Russian channels	49.4%	78.9%	73.8%
Azeri channels	2.4%		16.7%
Turkish channels	2.4%		23.8%
Armenian channels	1.2%		52.4%

Do you receive information about Georgia’s integration with the EU from the Internet?

Some 35.8% of respondents get information about the European integration from the Internet.

Chart 3.12. Internet as a source of information about the European integration



The question whether they have visited the below listed websites which specialize in the issues of European integration the answers were the following:

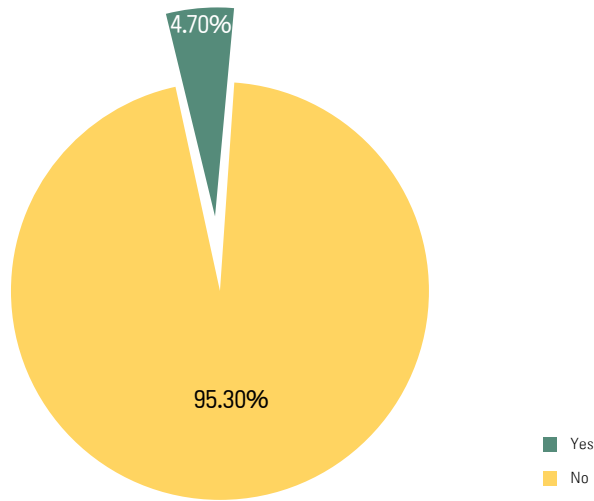
Table 3.4. Awareness of the websites about the European integration

Websites	Yes
Information Centre on NATO and EU www.natoinfo.ge	38.3
Delegation of the European Union to Georgia www.eeas.europa.eu	20.6
EU Monitoring Missions in Georgia www.eumm.eu	11.6
Office of the State Minister of Georgia on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration www.eu-nato.gov.ge	18.3
Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs www.mfa.gov.ge	40.6
Website of the Ministry of Agriculture www.moa.gov.ge or Facebook page	21.1
Websites of other ministries	6.2
Myth Detector on MDF web portal www.eurocommunicator.ge	4.4
Europe for Georgia – Everything about EU Association Agreement www.eugeorgia.info	14.4
About visa liberalization www.info-visa.ge	21.1

DO YOU RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT GEORGIA’S INTEGRATION WITH THE EU FROM RADIO?

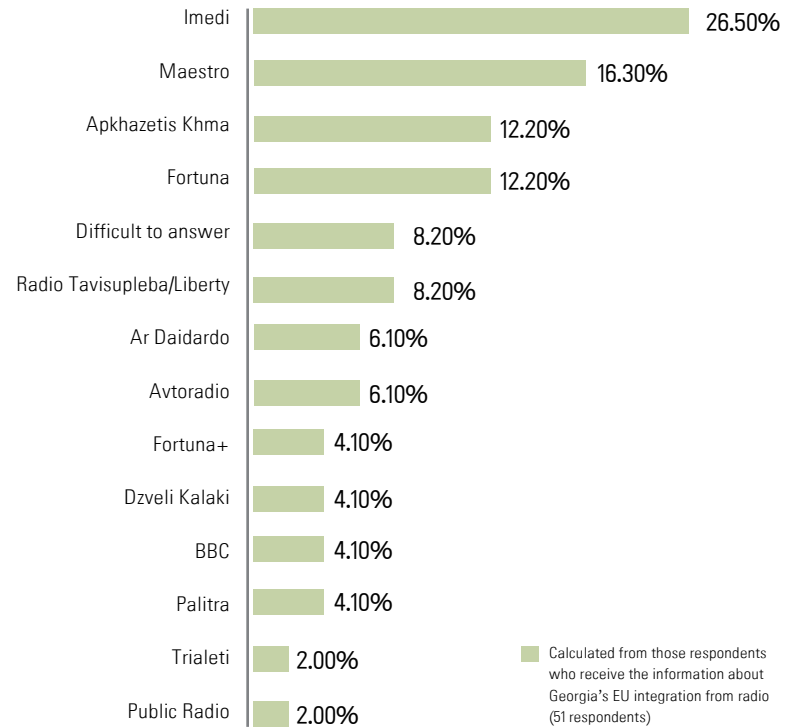
Some 4.7% of respondents get the information about Georgia’s EU integration from radio.

Chart 3.13. Source of information about Georgia’s integration with the EU – radio



The respondents who say they receive information about the process of European integration from radio were asked to specify which radio stations they get this information from.

Chart 3.14. Receiving information about Georgia’s integration with the EU by radio stations



The distribution of answers of those respondents who get information about EU integration from radio by place of residence is the following:

Table 3.5. Receiving information about Georgia’s integration with the EU by radio stations and places of residence

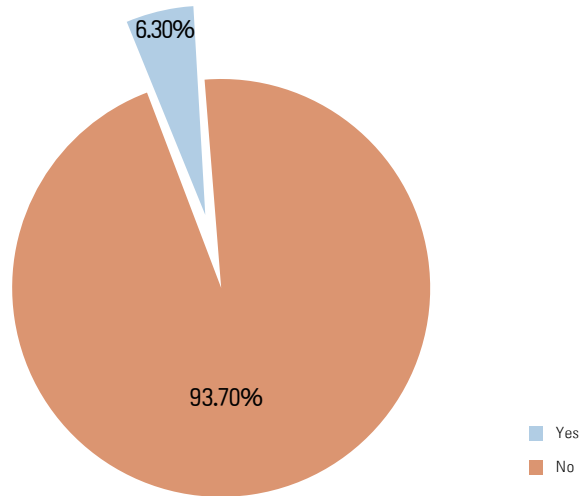
	Tbilisi	Other cities
Maestro	22.2%	9.1%
Imedi	18.5%	36.4%
Apkhazetis Khma	14.8%	9.1%
Radio Tavisupleba	14.8%	
Fortuna	11.1%	13.6%
Ar Daidardo	11.1%	
Palitra	7.4%	

	Tbilisi	Other cities
BBC	7.4%	
Avtoradio	7.4%	4.5%
Fortuna+	3.7%	4.5%
Dzveli Kalaki		9.1%
Trialeti		4.5%
Public Radio		4.5%
Difficult to answer	7.4%	9.1%

DO YOU RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT GEORGIA'S INTEGRATION WITH THE EU FROM PRINT MEDIA?

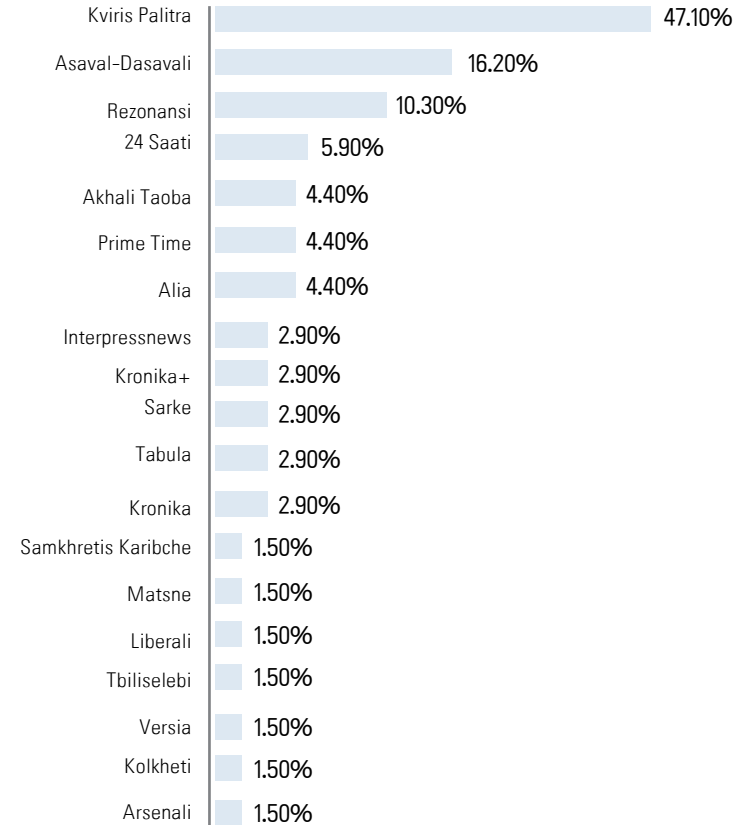
Some 6.3% of interviewed youth get the information about Georgia's EU integration from print media.

Chart 3.15. Source of information about Georgia's integration with the EU – print media



The respondents who say they receive information about the process of European integration from print media were asked to specify which print media they get this information from.

Chart 3.16. Receiving information about Georgia's integration with the EU from print media



Note: A segment of respondents named Interpressnews which is a news agency and 24 Saati which is no longer published as a print edition and is available online alone.

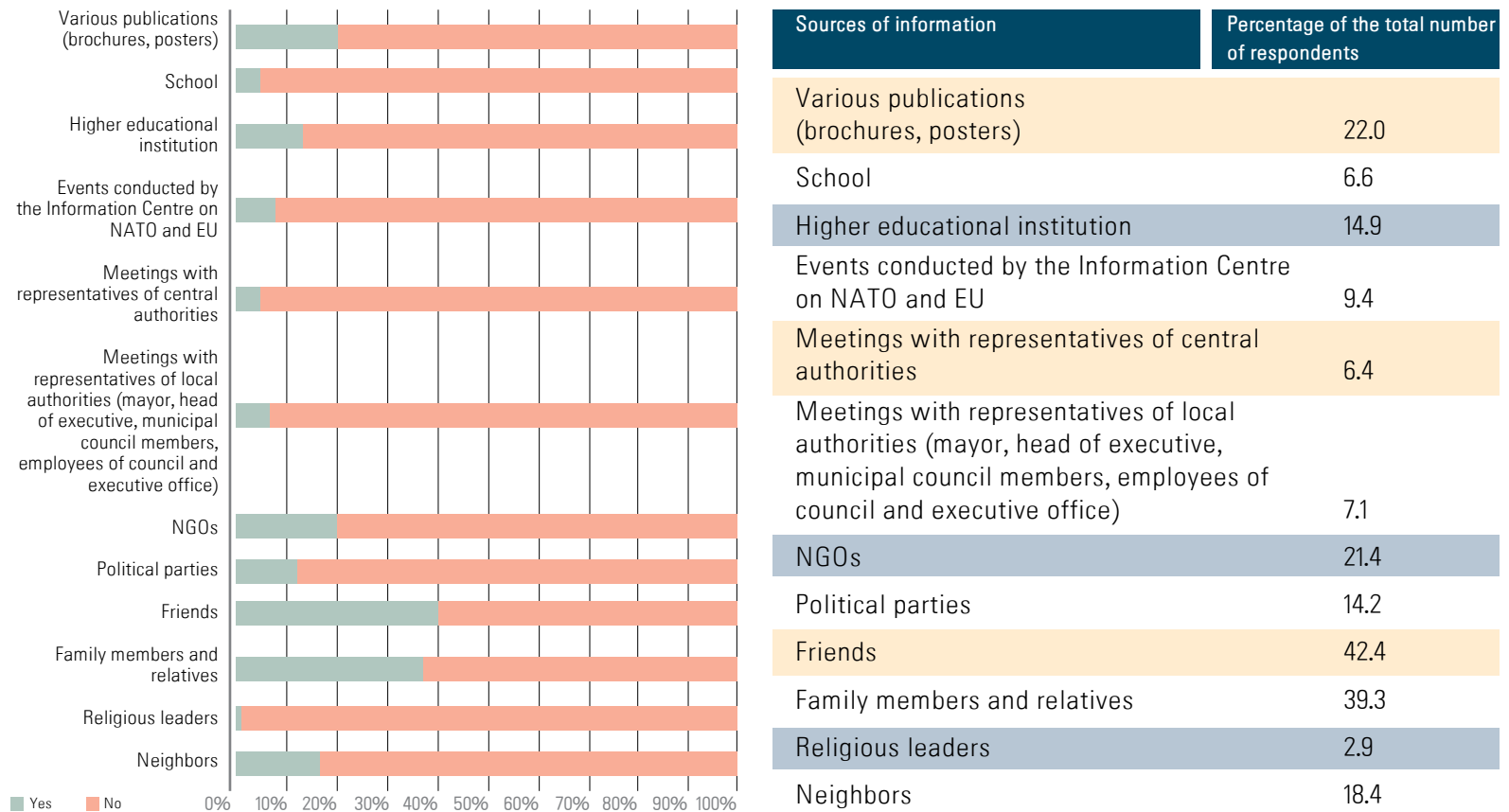
Have you received information about Georgia’s integration with the EU from the following sources?

Quite a large share of respondents receive information about Georgia’s integration with the EU from informal sources: friends (42.4%), family members and relatives (39.3%), neighbors (18.4%).

Some 22% of respondents receive the information from various publications, 21.4% from NGOs, 14.9% from higher educational institutions and 14.2% from political parties.

The chart below shows the shares of respondents receiving information from this or that source.

Chart 3.17. Other sources of information about the EU integration



RESPONDENTS' ASSESSMENTS OF BENEFITS AND THREATS OF GEORGIA'S INTEGRATION WITH THE EU

Through an open-ended question, respondents were asked to specify those benefits and threats which, in their views, might be associated with the process of Georgia's integration with the EU.

The open-ended question was formulated in the following way:

In 2014, Georgia signed the Associations Agreement (AA) with the European Union, which envisages a further deepening of cooperation with EU member states. In your opinion, what benefits and threats might the process of integration with the EU bring to Georgia?

As many as 62% of respondents (674 respondents) expressed their views regarding the benefits the EU integration process will bring to Georgia. The total of 1,098 opinions expressed about the benefits were grouped into 30 issues through thematic analysis.

Table 4.1. Respondents' views about benefits of Georgia's integration with the EU

Benefits of Georgia's integration with the EU – respondents' views	Percentages of those respondents who expressed their views about benefits
Development of the country, improvement of living standards, economic growth	63.8%
Visa-free travel	38.6%
Increased opportunities to obtain education in Europe	14.5%
Strengthened security of the country	12.3%
Restoration-protection of territorial integrity	4.6%
Decreased unemployment	4.2%
Possibility of free trade with other countries	4.2%
Introduction of international standards in every field	3.3%
Development of business	2.4%
Raised awareness about Georgia	2.2%

Development of agriculture	2.1%
Increased support from Europe	1.9%
Protection of cultural heritage	1.5%
Access to international markets	0.9%
Employment outside the country	0.7%
Familiarization with European culture	0.7%
Increase in investments	0.7%
Harmonization of legislation with the European one	0.6%
Independent decision making on the country's foreign relations	0.6%
Decrease in customs duties	0.4%
Management of migration	0.4%
Development of health care sector	0.4%
Accession to the Eurozone	0.3%
Import of healthy products	0.3%
Decrease in prices	0.3%
Increase in the degree of liberty of the country	0.3%
Emergence of European business in the country	0.1%
Increased access to information	0.1%
Higher prospects of joining NATO	0.1%
Regulated labor relations between employers and employees	0.1%

Some 31% of respondents (336 respondents) see threats in Georgia's integration with the EU. As many as 400 opinions were expressed about the threats the integration process may bring to Georgia.

Table 4.2. Respondents' views about threats of Georgia's integration with the EU

Threats of Georgia's integration with the EU - respondents' views	Percentages of those respondents who expressed their views about threats
Georgian traditions, national identity may be endangered threat of losing Georgian identity will increase	30.1%
Decreased security, increased threat from Russia	27.5%
Increase in migration	12.5%
Deterioration of relations with Russia	7.8%
Europe will use the country's military resources, deploy military bases	6.6%
Religious sects will strengthen	4.8%
The country and its citizens will find it difficult to meet EU requirements	3.6%
Legalization of homosexuality, granting freedom to persons of untraditional sexual orientation	3.0%
Perversity, immorality will increase	3.0%
The country's independence will be endangered	3.0%
Legalization of same-sex marriage	2.4%
Occupied territories will never be returned	2.1%
Import of smuggled goods	1.8%
Loss of Russian market	1.5%
Increased dissatisfaction among the country's citizens	1.5%
Threat of terrorism	1.5%
Globalization will swallow up the country	1.5%
Prices will increase on everything	0.9%
Increase in foreign refugees	0.9%
Deterioration of economic condition	0.9%
Introduction of Euro in Georgia	0.6%
Decrease in jobs	0.6%

Georgia will be forced to determine its foreign policy course	0.6%
Internal political opposition will increase	0.3%
Local educational institutions will be closed down	0.3%
Europe may get hold of our territories	0.3%

LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT AMONG YOUTH (ACCORDING TO “MYTH DETECTOR”)

This section of the questionnaire was designed to evaluate the level of awareness of the youth about the main issues of the Association Agreement (AA) and to find out how misinforming about threats of Georgia’s EU integration, spread by media and through means of media, affects them.

Questions were structured by spheres. Each question was followed by several statements representing a mix of true statements concerning issues envisaged by the AA and false statements concerning the threats of Georgia’s integration into the EU, spread by media and through means of media.

To formulate false statements, we used myths that were revealed through the Myth Detector component of the project, Debunking Myth and Informing Public on Euro-Atlantic Integration, implemented by the Media Development Foundation.

Statements were grouped by seven spheres:

1. Agriculture and food security
2. Human rights
3. Cultural heritage
4. Conflict settlement
5. ID cards
6. Visa free travel regime
7. Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area between Georgia and the EU

Respondents were offered three response options: “True,” “Wrong,” “Don’t know.”

The following trends were outlined:

Save few exceptions, **correct statements were considered “True”** by 53%–67% of respondents.

Correct statements were considered “Wrong” by 4.1%–14% of respondents.

Save few exceptions, **wrong statements were considered “True”** by 8.7%–29% of respondents.

A general trend seen in almost all areas is that a rather high share of respondents – one third, on average, say that they do not know whether the statements are wrong or true. This trend is especially apparent in the following areas: **conflict settlement** (with the share of response “Don’t know” ranging from 37.8% to 48.3%); **Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area between Georgia and the EU** (the share of response “Don’t know” ranges from 33.9% to 49.3%).

However, the share is also high of respondents who take false statements in the human rights group for true statements. For example, 29.7% of respondents think that the statement “The change in traditional roles of women and men will endanger Georgian family” is true compared to only 42.3% who think the opposite.

Those wrong statements which were most frequently taken for true statements or could not be identified whether been true or wrong were the following:

- Customs benefits will actually apply to a small part of Georgian products (Don’t know – 49.2%)
- Apart from resolution and public statements, the EU and Western institutions cannot provide Georgia with real assistance (Don’t know – 42.3%)
- In the event of joining the EU, Georgia will have to forget about the reintegration of occupied territories (Don’t know – 43.1%)
- Euro-Atlantic integration will turn Georgia into a military base of Turkey (Don’t know – 48.3%)
- The EU has regulations requiring to implant electronic chips in newborns (Don’t know – 44.5%)

Offering the statements concerning various issues that are envisaged in the Association Agreement makes it possible to assess how informed or misinformed respondents are about an issue; this, in turn, allows to place greater emphasis, when planning information campaigns targeting the youth, on those issues which need to be communicated in a more intensive way.

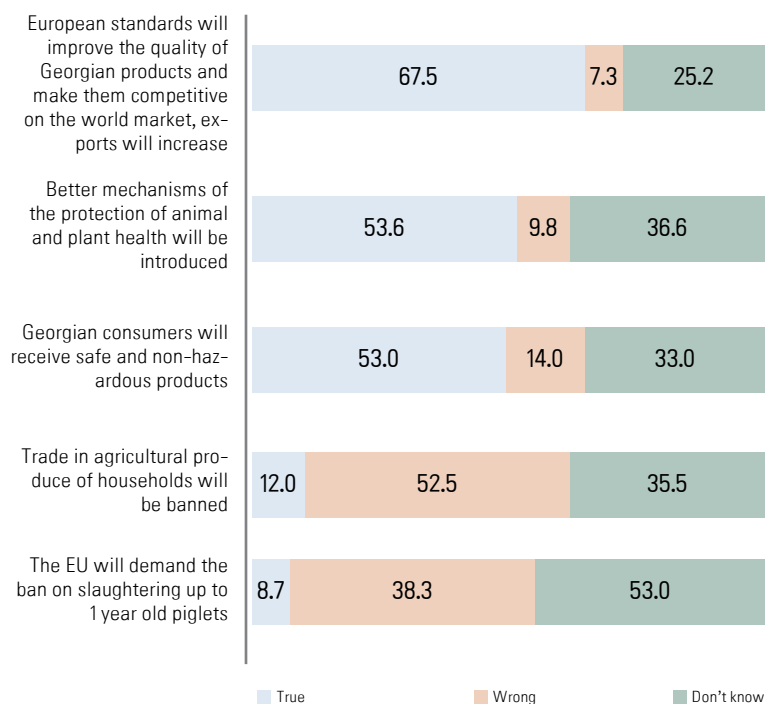
The tables and charts below provide detailed data on each statement.

Each group contains both true and false statements. For better visualization, false statements are written in bold letters.

HOW WILL THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AA AFFECT THE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY SECTORS?

Table and Chart 5.1. AA on agriculture and food security

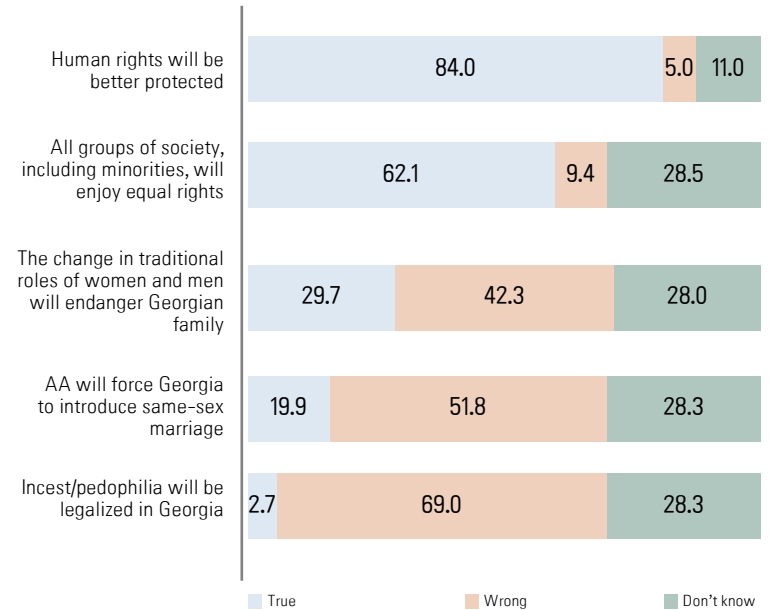
	True	Wrong	Don't know
Better mechanisms of the protection of animal and plant health will be introduced	53.6%	9.8%	36.6%
Trade in agricultural produce of households will be banned	12.0%	52.5%	35.5%
European standards will improve the quality of Georgian products and make them competitive on the world market, exports will increase	67.5%	7.3%	25.2%
The EU will demand the ban on slaughtering up to 1 year old piglets	8.7%	38.3%	53.0%
Georgian consumers will receive safe and non-hazardous products	53.0%	14.0%	33.0%



WHAT CHANGES WILL GEORGIA'S INTEGRATION WITH EUROPE BRING ABOUT IN THE SPHERE OF HUMAN RIGHTS?

Table and Chart 5.2. AA on human rights

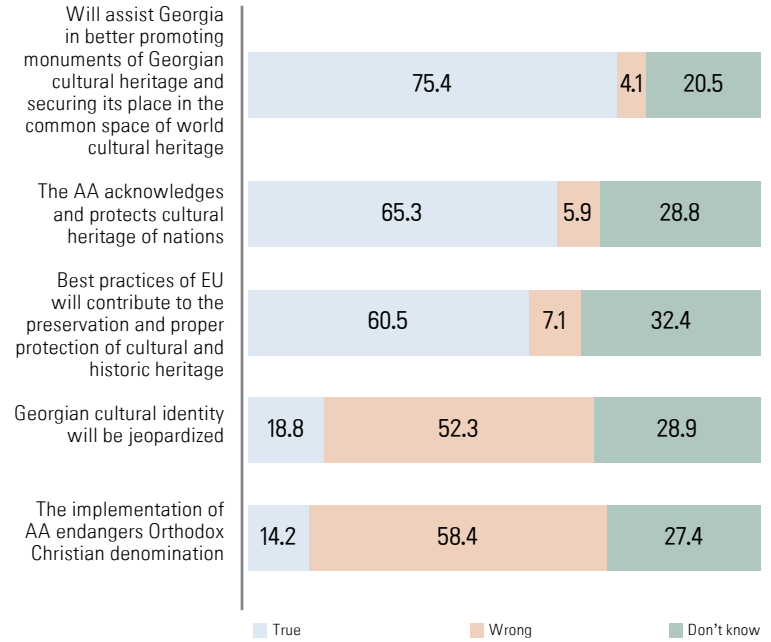
	True	Wrong	Don't know
Human rights will be better protected	84.0%	5.0%	11.0%
AA will force Georgia to introduce same-sex marriage	19.9%	51.8%	28.3%
All groups of society, including minorities, will enjoy equal rights	62.1%	9.4%	28.5%
Incest/pedophilia will be legalized in Georgia	2.7%	69.0%	28.3%
The change in traditional roles of women and men will endanger Georgian family	29.7%	42.3%	28.0%



HOW WILL THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AA AFFECT THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS CULTURAL HERITAGE?

Table and chart 5.3. AA on cultural heritage issues

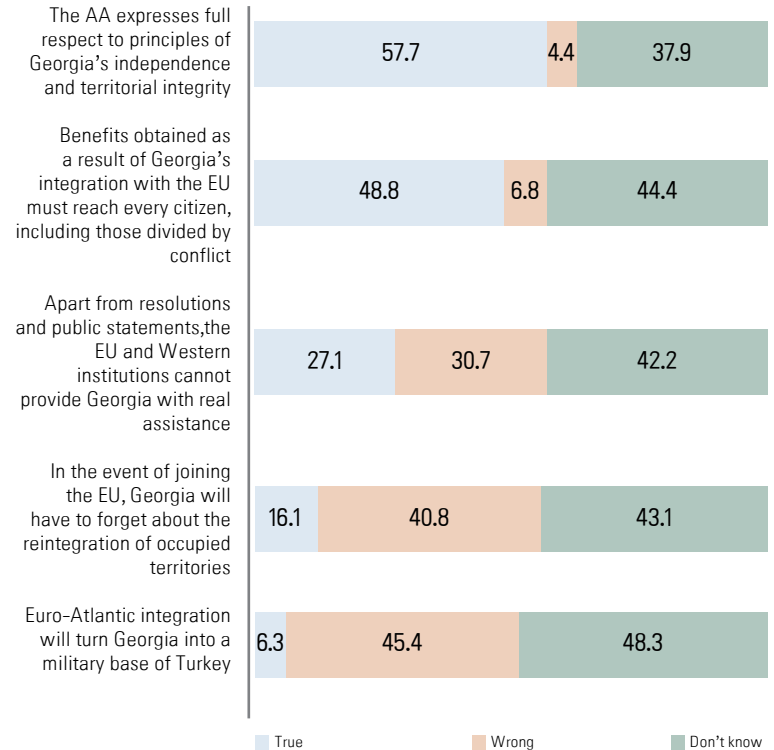
	True	Wrong	Don't know
The AA acknowledges and protects cultural heritage of nations	65.3%	5.9%	28.8%
Georgian cultural identity will be jeopardized	18.8%	52.3%	28.9%
Best practices of EU will contribute to the preservation and proper protection of cultural and historic heritage	60.5%	7.1%	32.4%
The implementation of AA endangers Orthodox Christian denomination	14.2%	58.4%	27.4%
Will assist Georgia in better promoting monuments of Georgian cultural heritage and securing its place in the common space of world cultural heritage	75.4%	4.1%	20.5%



HOW WILL THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AA AFFECT THE CONFLICT SETTLEMENT SPHERE?

Table and chart 5.4. AA and conflict settlement

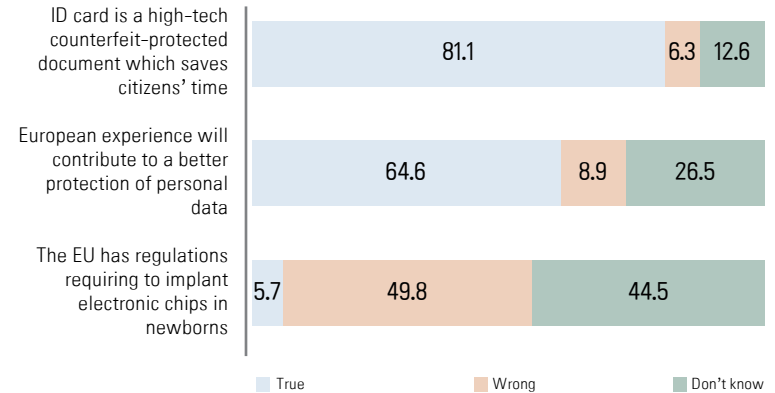
	True	Wrong	Don't know
The AA expresses full respect to principles of Georgia's independence and territorial integrity	57.7%	4.4%	37.9%
Apart from resolutions and public statements, the EU and Western institutions cannot provide Georgia with real assistance	27.1%	30.7%	42.2%
In the event of joining the EU, Georgia will have to forget about the reintegration of occupied territories	16.1%	40.8%	43.1%
Benefits obtained as a result of Georgia's integration with the EU must reach every citizen, including those divided by conflict	48.8%	6.8%	44.4%
Euro-Atlantic integration will turn Georgia into a military base of Turkey	6.3%	45.4%	48.3%



DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS REGARDING ID CARDS?

Table and chart 5.5. AA and ID cards

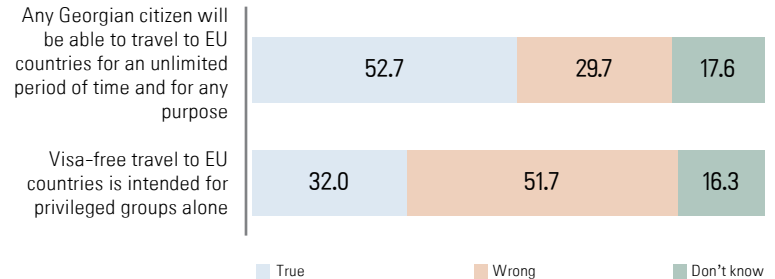
	True	Wrong	Don't know
ID card is a high-tech counterfeit-protected document which saves citizens' time	81.1	6.3	12.6
European experience will contribute to a better protection of personal data	64.6	8.9	26.5
The EU has regulations requiring to implant electronic chips in newborns	5.7	49.8	44.5



IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULTS OF VISA LIBERALIZATION?

Table and chart 5.6. AA and visa free travel

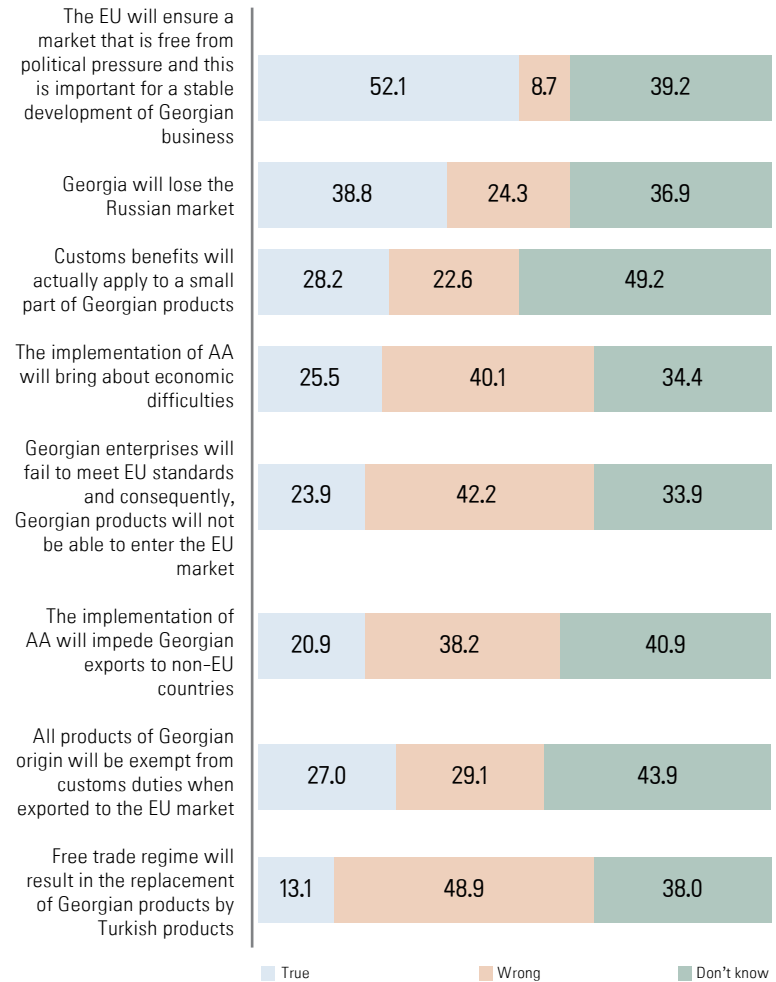
	True	Wrong	Don't know
Visa-free travel to EU countries is intended for privileged groups alone	32.0	51.7	16.3
Any Georgian citizen will be able to travel to EU countries for an unlimited period of time and for any purpose	52.7	29.7	17.6



IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULTS OF DEEP AND COMPREHENSIVE FREE TRADE AREA (DCFTA) BETWEEN GEORGIA AND THE EU?

Table and chart 5.7. AA and DCFTA

	True	Wrong	Don't know
All products of Georgian origin will be exempt from customs duties when exported to the EU market	27.0	29.1	43.9
Georgian enterprises will fail to meet EU standards and consequently, Georgian products will not be able to enter the EU market	23.9	42.2	33.9
The implementation of AA will bring about economic difficulties	25.5	40.1	34.4
The implementation of AA will impede Georgian exports to non-EU countries	20.9	38.2	40.9
The EU will ensure a market that is free from political pressure and this is important for a stable development of Georgian business	52.1	8.7	39.2
Customs benefits will actually apply to a small part of Georgian products	28.2	22.6	49.2
Free trade regime will result in the replacement of Georgian products by Turkish products	13.1	48.9	38.0
Georgia will lose the Russian market	38.8	24.3	36.9



PRIORITIZING ISSUES DEFINED IN THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT

Respondents were asked to choose three issues from a list of issues defined in the AA, which they consider especially important for them.

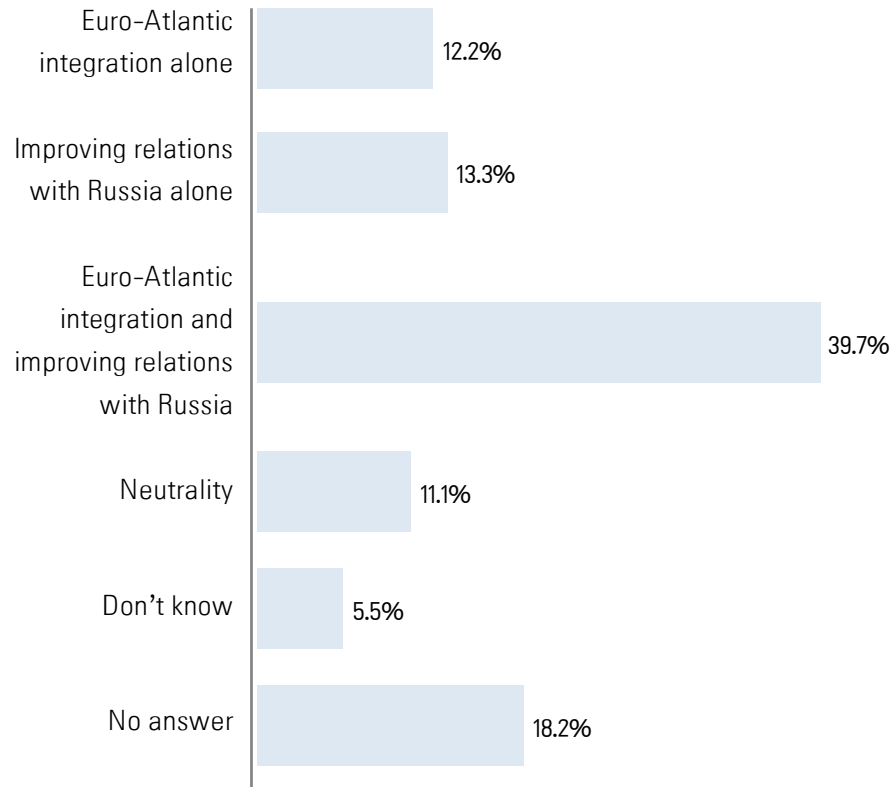
Answers to a corresponding question were provided by 62% of the interviewed (674 respondents in total). According to the answers, the issues provided in the list were prioritized in the following order:

Table 6.1. Priority issues of the AA

Issues by priority	Percentage of answers provided to the question
Visa-free travel	78.0%
Increased access to European education, enhancement of exchange programs for academic personnel and students	60.8%
Creation of deep and comprehensive free trade area which will lead to a better access to the European market for Georgian entrepreneurs and to European goods and services for Georgian consumers	27.1%
Cooperation in peaceful settlement of conflicts	25.0%
Cooperation in the sphere of human rights	22.3%
Cooperation in tourism	20.6%
Cooperation in agriculture	18.0%
Fight against international crime and terrorism	5.1%
Cooperation in environmental protection	5.0%
Management of migration and effective fight against human trafficking	3.8%
Cooperation in cultural heritage protection	3.7%
Prevention of illegal drugs trade and active fight against it	2.4%
Introduction of EU norms and standards in road, rail, air and sea transportation	1.9%
Enhancement of independent statistics service	1.2%

In your opinion, which of the below statements corresponds to the foreign policy course of the current government of Georgia:

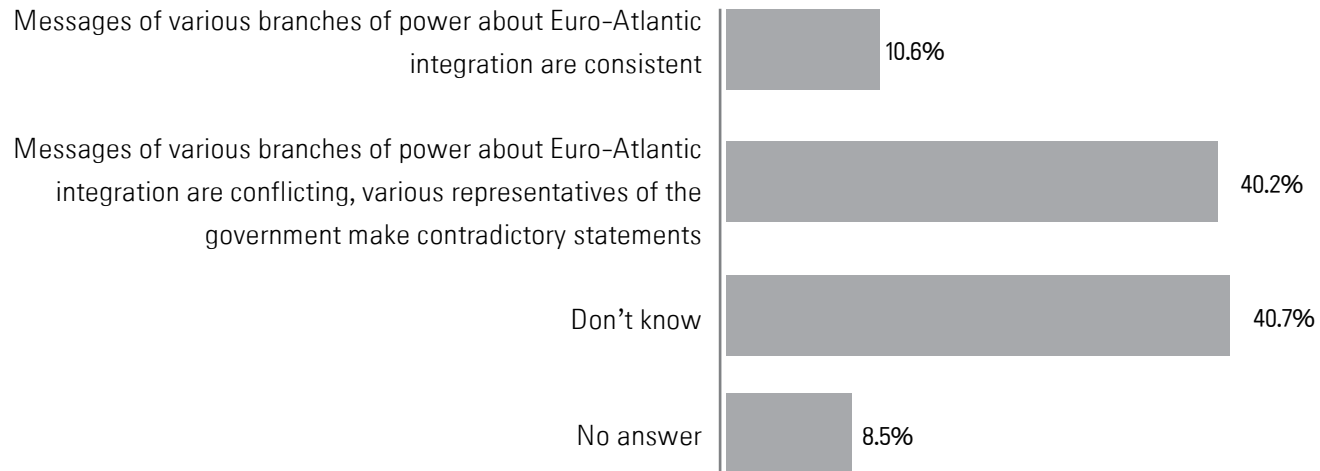
Chart 6.1. Evaluation of foreign policy course of the government of Georgia



MESSAGES OF VARIOUS BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT ABOUT EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION

Some 10.6% of the youth regard messages of various branches of power about Euro-Atlantic integration as consistent whereas 40.2% believe that these messages are conflicting and various representatives of the government make contradictory statements. As many as 40.7% of respondents do not have answers to this question.

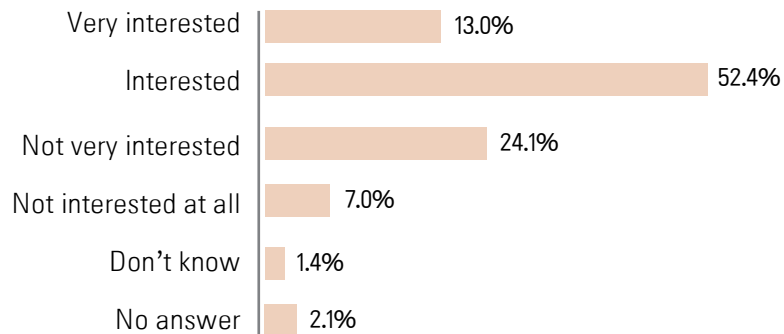
Chart 6.2. Consistency of messages of representatives of authorities



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT GEORGIA'S INTEGRATION WITH THE EU?

Some 13% of respondents are very interested in learning more about the process of Georgia's EU integration; 52.4% are interested; 24.1% are not very interested and 7% are not interested at all.

Chart 6.3. Youth's interest towards learning more about Georgia's integration with the EU



HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GEORGIA'S INTEGRATION WITH THE EU?

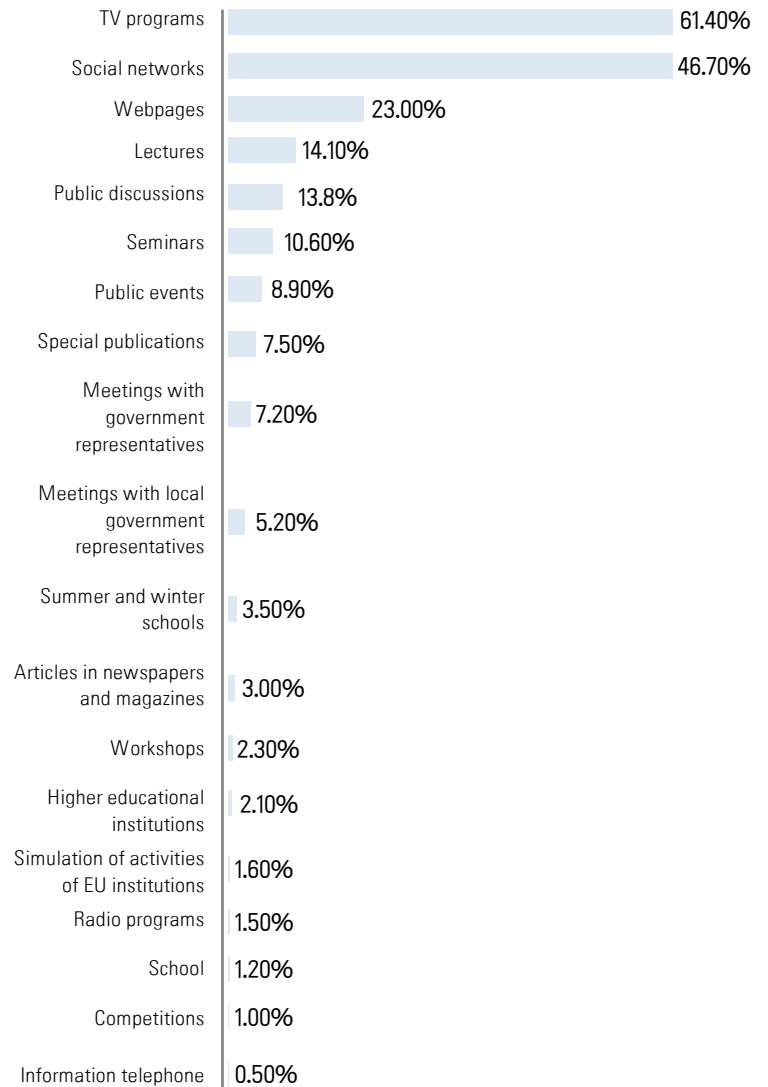
From an offered list, the respondents chose the ways through which they would like to receive information about the process of EU integration.

The list included those modes of communication which are envisaged in the “EU Integration Communication and Information Strategy of the Government of Georgia for the Period of 2014–2017.” This will allow to evaluate whether the offered modes of communicating information about Georgia’s EU integration are convenient for the youth.

A large share of the youth prefer to receive information from the Internet, in particular, via social networks – 46.7% and via various webpages – 23%, which make up the total of 69.7% of youth. Another preferred way of receiving information is through various TV programs (61.4%).

Detailed data on preferred ways of communication is provided in the chart below.

Chart 6.4. Ways of receiving information about EU integration



LIST THOSE EU INTEGRATION-RELATED ISSUES YOU WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION AND EXPLANATION ABOUT?

Through an open-ended question, we tried to identify those EU integration-related issues which the youth would like to get more information and explanations.

The total of 52.5% interviewees (570 respondents) provided their answers to the open-ended question. As many as 776 issues were named, which were grouped into 48 areas.

Table 6.2. EU integration-related issues about which the youth would like to receive more information and explanations

Issues related to Georgia's EU integration process, which are interesting for youth	Percentage of answers provided to the question	Issues related to Georgia's EU integration process, which are interesting for youth	Percentage of answers provided to the question
Visa-free travel	34.7%	Issues related to sexual minorities; whether gay prides will be held and same-sex marriage legalized	1.8%
Exchange programs and education in Europe	20.3%	Whether the religion will be protected	1.8%
Impact of EU integration on the country	9.6%	Tourism issues	1.8%
Effect of EU integration on the country's economy	7.7%	Effect on business	1.4%
Human rights	6.8%	Regulation of environmental protection issues	1.2%
Employment in Europe	6.8%	To what extent would it be possible to sort out relations with Russia in case of integrating into the EU	1.1%
Prospects of restoration of territorial integrity	6.3%	What is being done to join the EU	1.1%
Georgia's obligations	5.6%	Labor relations of European labor law	0.7%
The definition and essence of free trade	5.4%	Statistical data of EU member states	0.7%
Whether the cultural heritage will be protected	2.8%	What will happen if Georgian companies fail to meet EU requirements	0.5%
The country's security policy	2.8%	Whether the country will maintain its identity	0.5%
Approximate date of joining the EU	2.3%	Migration issues, what will prevent migration	0.5%
Foreign relations	2.1%		
Regulations	1.9%		
Healthcare and social affairs issues	1.9%		

Issues related to Georgia's EU integration process, which are interesting for youth	Percentage of answers provided to the question
What will happen to the national currency	0.5%
The development of which sphere will be a priority	0.5%
Agricultural product standards	0.4%
Whether the rights of persons with disabilities will be protected	0.4%
Whether Georgian driver license will be valid in Europe	0.4%
Level of unemployment in Europe	0.4%
Whether it will be possible to move to Europe and for how long	0.4%
Who will qualify for visa-free travel	0.4%
Why should we choose Europe	0.4%
How do European bodies function	0.4%
Quality of food products	0.2%

Issues related to Georgia's EU integration process, which are interesting for youth	Percentage of answers provided to the question
What will happen to Abkhaz and Ossetian population	0.2%
Possible changes in prices	0.2%
Trafficking	0.2%
What is the difference between Russia and Europe	0.2%
What will the EU do to defend Georgia from Russian aggression	0.2%
How do European bodies function	0.2%
The regulation of issues of refugees	0.2%
Definition of terms concerning the EU integration	0.2%
Issue of decriminalization of marijuana	0.2%
Issues related to military service	0.2%

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Georgia's integration with the European Union is supported by 79% of youth. Comparing this survey with the public opinion poll conducted by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in August 2015, it may be said that the support of Georgia's EU integration is stronger among the youth (79%) than among the general population. According to the NDI's countrywide survey, the support for the EU has decreased to 61%.

MORE YOUTH-FRIENDLY COMMUNICATION

It should also be noted that the level of awareness of issues related to the EU integration is not high among the youth which may have resulted from insufficient amount and intensity of public outreach activity rather than the lack of interest towards this topic on the part of youth. In total, only 14.3% of interviewed youth believe that their level of awareness of the country's EU integration process is either very high or high compared to 65.4% of respondents who are interested or very interested in learning more about this issue (52.4% interested and 13% very interested).

Recommendation: When implementing the EU Integration Communication and Information Strategy, relevant public entities should differentiate modes of communication by target groups and when reaching out to youth apply different modes of communication and provide them with larger amount of information about the European integration.

USING TV AND SOCIAL MEDIA MORE INTENSIVELY

TV and social media were named by the youth as the main source of information and the preferred mode of communication in the future. It should also be taken into account that Russian TV channels are more popular in the regions and often attract youth for their entertainment programs. As regards social networks, Facebook is more popular than Odnoklassniki both in Tbilisi and in the regions. However, Odnoklassniki still captures quite a significant segment of youth in regions, especially in those populated by ethnic minorities.

Recommendation: The result-oriented communication with target groups of youth should proactively employ TV and social media, especially Facebook. Along with the use of traditional means of information it is desirable to fit up these media with public forum function so that to enable youth to express their views, discuss and debate the issues they deem important.

Georgian-language online resources need to be further developed while the increase in popularity of existing ones should be supported. While seeking creative forms of spreading information through the Internet, attention must be paid to simple and easy ways of perceiving and receiving information (for example, infographics, interesting short articles, short videos, animation, et cetera).

State bodies must pay larger amount of attention to the spread of information via Internet and should not limit themselves to merely providing information in a very formal manner. They should seek more user-friendly formats; use social networks as the means of feedback from target groups rather than the channel of supplying information alone.

MAKING GREATER EMPHASIS ON REGIONAL YOUTH

Youth living in the regions feel they are less aware of the issues of European integration than the youth living in Tbilisi.

Recommendation: In planning information campaigns attention should be paid to effective ways of communicating information to the youth in regions and enhancing activities to this end. Meetings organized in the regions should be interactive as to enable youth to engage in discussions and express their views and opinions rather than be passive receivers of information.

INTENSIFIED TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The situation with the knowledge of English and Russian languages differs between Tbilisi and the regions including those populated by ethnic minorities where the knowledge of Russian language prevails over that of English.

Recommendation: The knowledge of the language of international communication becomes even more important against the backdrop of hybrid war which is proactively waged by the Russian-language media outlets and represents one of key challenges faced by the Western world. To use English as the means of communicating and receiving information, it is important to improve the quality of teaching English and relevant educational programs. In this regard, the effective implementation of the “Teach and Learn with Georgia” project which started in 2010 and involves volunteer native English-speaking teachers becomes of utmost importance.

ENHANCING BROADCAST IN ETHNIC MINORITY LANGUAGES

When planning the information campaign it is important to bear in mind that the information released by Georgian national channels do not reach 30% of the youth living in the regions densely populated by ethnic minorities (22.9% of youth do not watch Georgian language channels because of the language barrier whilst 7.6% do not watch them because Georgian channels do not cover their problems).

Recommendation: Communication on the European integration issues should be made in the language that ethnic minorities understand. The Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB) has to play a special role in this regard as it is required, on the one hand, to “Promote main directions of Georgia’s foreign policy, including the integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (hereinafter NATO) and the European Union”¹ and on the other hand, to broadcast in minority languages. The GPB should fully bring program priorities in line with the requirements of the law and provide public with programs of corresponding content.

In the setting where EU member states discuss a possibility of creating a common Russian-language TV channel as one of the ways to counteract Russian propaganda², it is recommended to consider the experience of the Russian-language channel PIK which operated on the basis of the GPB and targeted Russian-speaking audience both inside the country and in the post-Soviet space. The existence of such a platform is important to inform those citizens of Georgia which communicate in Russian.

DEBUNKING NEGATIVE EXPECTATIONS REGARDING IDENTITY AND SECURITY

When asked about possible threats coming from the European integration, respondents emphasized such issues that are more intensively promoted by media outlets³ distinguished for their anti-western rhetoric. These are the threats of losing national identity and traditions as well as of increased danger from Russia and related security challenges.

Recommendation: Open discussions with the involvement of youth need to be conducted on the issues of identity; comprehensive information about the Western understanding of multiculturalism and the international instruments of protection of national identity and cultural heritage should be provided. Along with informing the society of Euro-Atlantic instruments of security, the government messages on foreign policy priorities need to be more clear-cut, consistent and less confusing as the answers of respondents have shown. Ambiguity in this area strengthens the opinion that the Euro-Atlantic integration instead of bringing security guarantees to Georgia and prospects of its democratic development only intensifies threats from Russia.

PROVIDING GREATER AMOUNT OF OBJECTIVE INFORMATION ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES AND MYTHS ABOUT EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Although the share of respondents who believe in myths spread by media and through means of media is not high, the share of those who do not know whether this or that myth is true or false is high. Consequently, they do not have comprehensive information about certain controversial issues.

¹ Paragraph M of Article 16 of Law of Georgia on Broadcasting.

² Russia’s manipulation of information on Ukraine and the EU’s response, European Parliament, May 2015. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/559471/EPRS_BRI\(2015\)559471_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/559471/EPRS_BRI(2015)559471_EN.pdf)

³ See, Anti-Western Propaganda, Media Development Foundation, 2014–2015. <http://mdfgeorgia.ge/uploads//Antidasavluri-ENG-web.pdf>

Recommendation: There is a need to inform society about specific issues which are revealed through media monitoring and public discussions. This survey revealed a wide specter of such issues: from exemption of customs duties on Georgian products to issues of security and territorial integrity, electronic chips and the deployment of Turkish forces in case of integration into NATO.

MAKING STRONGER EMPHASIS ON THE BENEFITS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The survey revealed a specter of issues that the youth would like to learn about more. These issues concern concrete and tangible benefits that are important for the development of the country such as: visa-free travel, exchange educational programs and education, economic development, et cetera.

Recommendation: The government's communication strategy must not be focused on the denial of negative information but must emphasize those benefits that Georgian citizens may enjoy in case of fulfillment of obligations assumed under the Association Agreement. In this regard, publicizing success stories will help citizens see future prospects. It is also important that information about benefits of the European integration is communicated not only by separate ministries but the information, including about relevant obligations, is equally available to society through educational, cultural or other programs too.

