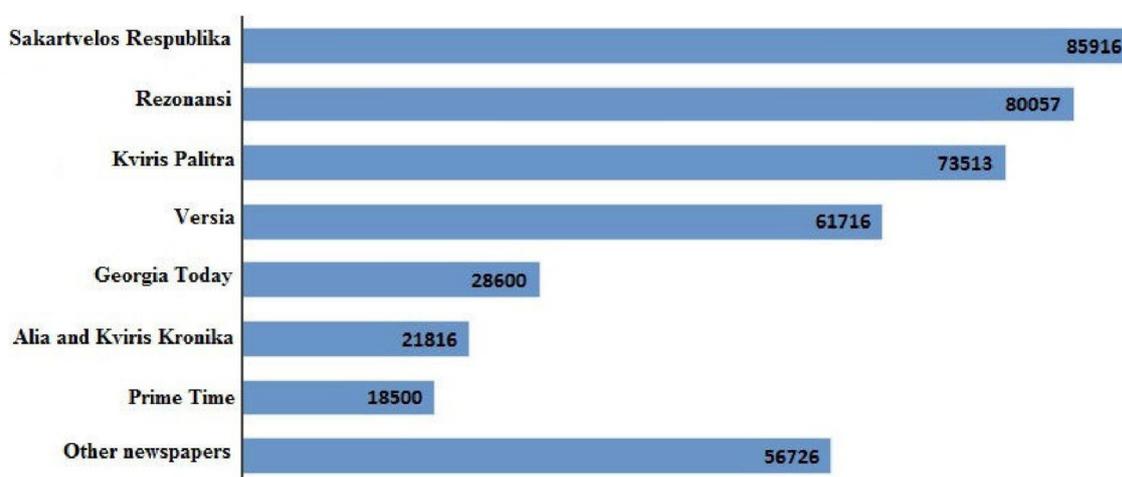


**Summarizing paragraph:** As far as print media is concerned, two major problems have been revealed: 1. The practice of distribution of budgetary funds by public agencies among this type of media outlets is obscure because the circulation of editions is non-transparent, the area of their dissemination is unclear and therefore, it is difficult to define the criteria for selection of media outlets; 2. Some newspapers do not clearly separate articles and editorials financed by public or other agencies that misleads consumers.

### 4.1. STATISTICAL DATA

The largest funding allocated to national print media – GEL 85 916 – comes to Sakartvelos Respublika newspaper, followed by Rezonansi – GEL 80 057; Kviris Palitra – GEL 73 513; Versia – GEL 61 716; Georgia Today – GEL 28 600; Alia Holding member newspapers Alia and Kviris Kronika – GEL 21 816; Prime Time – 18500 and others – GEL 56 726.

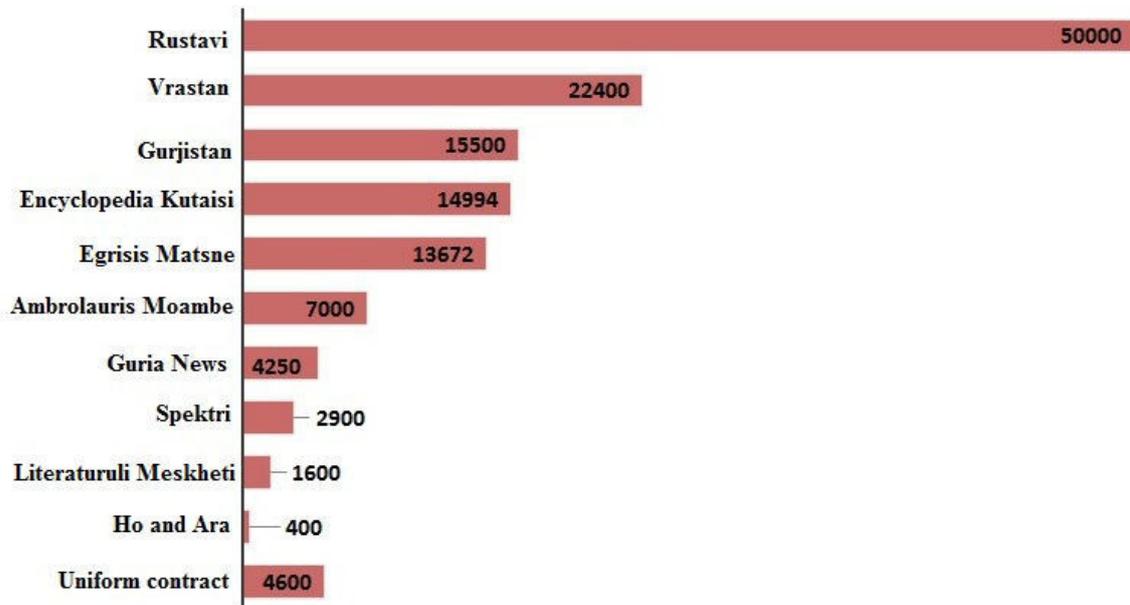
**Chart 4.1. Public funds allocated to national newspapers for advertisements, 2015**



As far as the regional newspapers are concerned, the largest funding for advertisements and publishing of information was allocated to Rustavi – GEL 50 000, followed by Vrastan – GEL 22 400; Gurjistan – GEL 15 500; Encyclopedia Kutaisi – GEL 14 994; Egrisis Matsne – GEL 13672<sup>46</sup> Ambrolauris Moambe – GEL 7 000; Guria News – GEL 4 250; Spektri – GEL 2 900; Literaturuli Mesketi – GEL 1600 and Ho da Ara – GEL 400. A uniform contract worth GEL 4 600 was signed with Guria News, Batumelebi, Samkhretis Karibche, Spektri, Mtavari Tema Samegreloshi, Akhali Gazeti, Rustavi, Egrisi and Svaneti for purchasing advertising services.

<sup>46</sup> This figure includes GEL 4 797 allocated for subscription which is not counted in other cases.

Chart 4.3. Public funds allocated to regional newspapers for advertisements, 2015



#### 4.2. CONTRACTUAL TERMS WITH PRINT MEDIA

The terms of contracts signed with print media involve the obligations on posting, generally, advertising materials, as well as more specifically, banner ads or advertising articles and preparing advertising materials. It should be noted that when it comes to the contracts signed with TV media, audience coverage (TV ratings) is a precondition for such contracts; however, the situation is quite different with respect to print media, where contracts basically do not contain a clause about newspaper circulation and dissemination areas. At the same time, it should be noted separately that print media is actually non-transparent and as a rule, it does not indicate circulation in its editions. It should also be noted that unlike broadcasters, print media has no legal obligation to declare about its revenues. The only source, where information about print media earnings can be obtained is the procurements of public agencies.

#### 4.3. FORMS AND CONTENT OF PLACING BUDGET-FUNDED ADS/INFORMATION MATERIALS IN NEWSPAPERS

When analyzing the contracts signed between public agencies and newspapers, special attention was paid to the forms and content of placing advertising materials (articles). Based on delivery receipts, we looked through those editions of several newspapers, including Kviris Kronika, Rezonansi, Prime Time, Sakartvelos Respublika and Kviris Palitra using the principle of random sampling, where it was planned to place advertising materials of budgetary organizations.

The following tendencies have been revealed as a result of our observation:

- **Budget-funded articles.** The most budget-funded articles were published in Rezonansi newspaper. This publication is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> by number of contracts signed with newspapers in 2015 (80 057). Sakartvelos Respublika newspaper, which is ranked 1<sup>st</sup> and detailed information about which is provided in the part involving anti-Western and homophobic media outlets, used to publish only tender proposals and announcements clearly separating them from editorial content.
- **Separation of advertising from editorial.** The rules and practice of separation of advertising from editorial are different by individual publications:
  1. Prime Time newspaper provides no marks that will help readers separate funded materials from editorial content.
  2. Although Rezonansi newspaper indicates about advertising materials on its last page, in the frame above the rubric of jokes, the content of the rubric titles is misleading, because it does not enable to separate advertising from editorial. For example, it is difficult for the readers to perceive the following rubrics “Business Press”, “Projects”, “Press Conference”, “Events”, “Express Interview” as funded materials.
  3. Newspapers Alia and Kviris Kronika<sup>47</sup> indicate on the last page that the materials printed with ®, D and O symbols are financed by the client. Kviris Palitra newspaper also indicates on its last page that the materials published with a R symbol have advertising content. However, in practice these rules work quite differently. For example, on December 21-27, Kviris Kronika and Kviris Palitra newspapers published articles as envisaged by the contract with the Public Service Development Agency. A material published by Kviris Palitra titled “Over 200 public and private services in a comfortable environment” had a R symbol marking an advertisement at the end, whereas the material prepared by Kviris Kronika on an identical topic “Public centers – public and private services for rural population” had no sign marking an advertising article (see photo page 33).
- **Positive (promo) titles.** Rezonansi newspaper, which is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> by number of contracts with budgetary organizations, published a number of ordered articles in a rubric “Business Press”. The titles of articles contain such features as “unique”, “comprehensive”, “impressive”, etc. (see table 4.1). The name of the rubric “Business Press”, as well as the fact that a part of advertising articles has been prepared by the newspaper journalists is misleading and does not provide an opportunity to separate editorial from advertising content.

**Table 4.1: Paid articles published in “Business Press” rubric of Rezonansi newspaper in 2014-2015**

Public Agency	Title of an article
Project Management Agency at the Ministry of Agriculture	Unique opportunities of fruit-growing emerge in Georgia for the first time.

<sup>47</sup> Presently, it is published with a name Kviris Alia

**Ministry for Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees** Up to 2 thousand compatriots, who returned from emigration, received comprehensive aid.

**National Wine Agency** Popularity of wine tours is increasing rapidly.

**National Tourism Administration** Impressive growth – number of international visitors to Georgia increased by 10% in August.

**National Tourism Administration** Tourism has increased significantly over the past two months.

- **Paid interviews.** A certain practice of publishing paid interviews was revealed when the form of publication does not enable to perceive a material as advertisement. For example, on March 23, 2015 Prime Time newspaper published an interview in its rubric “Exclusive” with Agriculture Minister Otar Danelia titled “New Project from the Ministry of Agriculture”, which was not clearly separated from editorial content. In the lead of the interview the author, who also publishes other materials for the newspaper, writes the following introduction: “While political opponents look for the reasons frequently trying to cause a storm in a teacup, the Ministry of Agriculture continues to work on new projects.” Like Prime Time, a paid article funded by the Ministry for Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees was also published in Rezonansi newspaper on June 10, 2014 in the rubric “Express News.” The interview with former Deputy Minister Sandro Bregadze titled “Sandro Bregadze: IDPs Need Special Attention” was conducted by the newspaper correspondent and it was misleading, because it did not enable to perceive it as a paid material. It is a separate issue how expedient it is to provide budgetary funding for the materials, which aim to disseminate the attitudes of officials towards separate developments, rather than to inform citizens on the activities or certain services provided by the state.



- **One-sided materials of identical content in various newspapers.** On September 17, 2015, two newspapers simultaneously published the articles with identical content, which provided one-sided coverage of complaints made by Merab Turava, judge of the Constitutional Court, against the Chairman of the Constitutional Court and other counterparts. The article run by Rezonansi newspaper titled “Judge Merab Turava Accuses the Constitutional Court of Exerting Purposeful Pressure” was published in the rubric of paid advertising “events”; another newspaper Akhali Taoba also published an article titled “Merab Turava Accuses Giorgi Papuashvili and the Constitutional Court of Pressure”. The material was published following the Constitution Court’s ruling to partially satisfy the constitutional lawsuit filed by ex-Mayor of Tbilisi, Gigi Ugulava, which was not signed by Merab Turava because of his illness. The both articles included biographies of some judges of the Constitutional Court to illustrate their links to the opposition United National Movement party. When asked in writing, who had funded the article published in a paid rubric “Events”, Rezonansi newspaper did not answer and Merab Turava rejected the fact in a phone conversation with MDF that the publication was financed.

