



03 October 2022

Tbilisi, Georgia

## ***Enhancing Local Capacities for Effective Implementation of Human Rights in Georgia***

### ***Second Meeting of the Forum of Exchange***

#### **DECLARATION**

We, the members of the Forum of Exchange, a unique platform of local authorities which aims to generate dialogue on human rights implementation at local level and discuss challenges, solutions, and ways forward, and which was established in December 2021 in the framework of the Project on “[Strengthening Participatory Democracy and Human Rights at Local Level in Georgia](#)” implemented by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in cooperation with the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia within the [Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia 2020-2023](#),

**Considering** the aspiration of the National Strategy of Human Rights 2022-2030 of Georgia to genuinely ensure the protection of social equality, rights to quality health care, education, clean and healthy environment, reduction of regional disparities, and the strengthening of democracy, security, and stability,

**Bearing in mind** the Constitution of Georgia that formally recognises Georgia as a social state and confers on the national and local authorities the responsibility to protect social rights,

**Recalling** the right of local authorities, enshrined in the European Charter of Local Self-Government, to be consulted, insofar as possible, in due time and in an appropriate way in the planning and decision-making processes for all matters of concern,

**Stressing** that local authorities are the authorities closest to citizens, and can better respond to the needs and challenges citizens face as right holders, and therefore recognising the fundamental role of the local level in fulfilling human rights and promoting participatory democracy, and by doing so responding to existing needs,

**Referring** to the evidence collected and analysed throughout the Baseline Assessment process carried out between March and July 2022 among the thirteen members of the Forum, as well as the outcomes of the discussions held during the meeting of the Forum of Exchange on 3 October 2022,

**AGREE** that further efforts are required, based on a multilevel approach to human rights and fully embracing the responsibilities at local level, to *enhance* the following:

- ◇ Needed capacities for optimally fulfilling human rights-related obligations in order to ensure the promotion and protection of group rights (particularly gender equality, rights of the persons with disabilities, rights of the child and youth, and other underrepresented groups);
- ◇ Delivery of public services – the provision of adequate prevention and protection services for those in need, and the identification of and outreach to vulnerable groups;
- ◇ Delivery of good governance – the maintenance of an inclusive and participatory environment in the development of human rights policy documents, strategies, action plans and social programmes;
- ◇ Effective participation of local authorities in the development of national human rights policies, frameworks, and governance.

Taken the above into consideration, we, the representatives of the local authorities of Georgia, members of the Forum of Exchange, **DECLARE** our joint willingness and readiness to engage as fully-fledged stakeholders in *co-operation* and *dialogue* on the issues of human rights with all levels of governance in Georgia and participatory democracy, and as local leaders for change in our respective constituencies.

To achieve this objective, we **CALL ON** the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia to facilitate the process of:

1. capacity development on human rights and civil participation at local level with a view to enabling local authorities to reflect human rights topics in key strategic documents, consider them in planning and budgeting, effectively monitor the implementation process, and assess the impact of local policies;
2. building effective and efficient structures for horizontal (between local authorities) and vertical (between local and central authorities) cooperation and exchange for strengthening local democracy and human rights implementation;
3. engagement of local authorities in the design and consultations on the Action Plan on the National Strategy of Human Rights 2022-2030 of Georgia.

**The Members of the Forum of Exchange:**

1. **Bolnisi** represented by **Davit Sherazadishvili** (Mayor)
2. **Borjomi** represented by **Otar Arbolishvili** (Mayor)
3. **Chokhatauri** represented by **Davit Sharashidze** (Mayor)
4. **Dedoplistskaro** represented by **Nikoloz Janiashvili** (Mayor)
5. **Dmanisi** represented by **Koba Muradashvili** (Mayor)
6. **Marneuli** represented by **Kenan Omarovi** (Mayor)
7. **Oni** represented by **Sergo Khidesheli** (Mayor)
8. **Tbilisi** represented by **Giorgi Tkemaladze** (Chairperson of Sakrebulo)
9. **Tetritskaro** represented by **Giorgi Tsiklauri** (Mayor)
10. **Tsalka** represented by **Ilia Sabadze** (Mayor)
11. **Tskaltubo** represented by **Genadi Balanchivadze** (Mayor)
12. **Zestaponi** represented by **Vasil Gvelesiani** (Mayor)
13. **Ozurgeti** represented by **Avtandil Talakvadze** (Mayor)