

Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan

The first National Human Rights Strategy was adopted by the Parliament of Georgia on April 30, 2014 followed by the Governmental Human Rights Action Plan.

The seven-year strategy defining the national human rights policy resulted from an inclusive drafting process involving the state agencies, international and non-governmental organizations. It was elaborated on the bases of the recommendations from the national human rights institution – the Public Defender's office, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), national and international human rights NGOs, and most importantly the country report "Georgia in transition" by the then EU Special Adviser on Legal Reform and Human Rights in Georgia – Mr. Thomas Hammarberg. Ultimately on the basis of the recommendations above mentioned the strategy determines strategic priorities for 2014-2020.

The Strategy and the Action Plan identify human rights priorities and streamlines the activities of various government agencies, while also making a positive contribution to the coordination of donor support that in turn increases the effectiveness of the government's work in the area of protection of the human rights. The Strategy is built upon three cornerstones — to ensure human rights protection by the state agencies; the development of the system enabling people to enforce their rights; and the awareness raising on human rights.

Governmental Action Plan

Based on the strategy, the government of Georgia has adopted two-year action plan on the protection of human rights and also created an interagency council.

The Action Plan is a comprehensive document covering two first years of the implementation of the Strategy, namely 2014-2015. It lists goals, objectives, activities, responsible agencies, timeframes and indicators. *The Plan is a 'living' document that can be amended depending on the needs, although nothing from the goals and activities can be removed as those two are reflected in Strategy, only new activities can be added.*

The Inter-agency council is chaired personally by the Prime-Minister. The members are all ministers and representatives from judiciary and legislative branch, as well as international and local nongovernmental organizations, which are given deliberative vote. The Inter-agency council monitors the process of implementation of the Action Plan and is a coordination mechanism ensuring effective implementation and further development of the Human Rights Action Plan. The Council reports to the Parliament annually in March – before the hearing of the Public Defender's annual report.

As an additional guarantee for the effective implementation of the Action Plan, the Human Rights Secretariat was created in the Administration of the Government in order to ensure productive Inter-Agency coordination and close monitoring of the execution of the Action Plan. Secretariat is

a focal point for any interested party within the government structure, as well as for international and local organizations working on human rights related issues.

In order to involve civil society in the working process the secretariat created nine working groups focusing on different chapters of the Action Plan. The groups consist of the representatives of the non-governmental organizations and responsible state agencies, as well as interested international organizations. The main issue discussed during the working group meetings is the implementation process of the action plan. The meetings give every member the opportunity to represent their views and recommendations, as well as, to get information on the human rights related issues.

Moreover Prime Minister appointed new assistant to the prime minister on gender equality and human rights issues. The new assistant is closely working with the Human Rights secretariat and as a guarantee of the strong governmental mechanism to ensure the human rights protection and the implementation of the action plan.

The secretariat started its active work in July 2014 including cooperation with local and international organizations, developing specific issues, long-term goals and defining priorities.

At this point, secretariat is actively working on the Action plan and on the final progress report for 2014-2015.

Based on the previous experience, the drafting process has been planned. In order to increase the effectiveness, secretariat all the recommendations that the government of Georgia received from the international organizations and the Office of the PDO processed. These recommendations had been sent to the responsible state agencies in order to collaborate the draft version of the action plan. Afterwards, the human rights secretariat delivering the draft document to the international and non-governmental organizations, aiming to present their comments and remarks. It should be mentioned that comments were provided by using format created by UNDP. It is important for the process that the comments and remarks are discussed with responsible agencies. Therefore to provide well-founded arguments for the suggestions that were not included in the AP.