



**Round Table Discussion**  
**on**  
**the amendments to the provisions concerning the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns in Georgia**  
**(Strasbourg, 26 – 27 February 2007)**

DRAFT (Version of 19 February 2007)

**BACKGROUND**

A group to monitor funding of political parties and electoral campaigns in Georgia was established in Strasbourg on July 2003. The “Strasbourg Memorandum” was the framework document for the Monitoring Group which was signed by all its members. The objective of this Monitoring Group was to review complaints on violations of relevant laws and regulations pertaining to the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns, and make proposals for the monitoring of future elections as well as the improvement of standards in this area. The monitoring group was composed of members of parliament (representing position and opposition parties) and members of the Anti-corruption services in Georgia, and media representatives.

Since 2003 the Council of Europe continued to provide assistance to the process of regulating and monitoring better the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns. It included activities on electoral vote buying, illegal funding of political campaigns and the abuse of State resources (2003) as well as proposals and discussions on amendments of the Organic Law of Georgia “Election Code of Georgia”, the Organic Law “On Political Associations of Citizens”, Criminal Code and Code of Administrative Offences (2004 – 2005). In addition, a recent expert review on the draft amendments to the legislation concerning the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns was provided to the Georgian members of parliament upon their request. The purpose of this review is to provide initial comments and suggestions on the draft amendments to the following acts:

- Organic Law of Georgia on “Amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia on Political Union of Citizens”;
- Organic Law of Georgia on “Amendments to the Election Code of Georgia”
- Law of Georgia on “Amendments to the Law of Georgia on Conflict of Interests and Corruption in Public Service”;
- Law of Georgia on “Amendments to the Code of Administrative Violations”;
- Law of Georgia on “Amendments to the Criminal Code of Georgia”

In Europe, corruption related to the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns and trading in influence is understood to seriously undermine democracy and the rule of law. The Council of Europe, therefore, has addressed this issue on various occasions:

- The Third Conference of Specialised Services in the Fight against Corruption (Madrid, 28 – 30 October 1998) was devoted to the issue of “Trading in influence and illegal financing of political parties”.
- The Committee of Ministers, at its 101<sup>st</sup> Session on 6 November 1997, adopted Resolution (97) 24 on the 20 Guiding Principles for the fight against Corruption. Principle 15 specifically indicates

that States should “promote rules for the financing of political parties and election campaigns which deter corruption”.

- The Parliamentary Assembly, in 2001, adopted Recommendation n° 1516 on the “Financing of political parties”.
- The Venice Commission (European Commission for Democracy through Law) in 2001 adopted “Guidelines and Report on Financing Political Parties”.
- The Committee of Ministers, in 2003 adopted a Recommendation “On common rules against corruption in the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns” (Rec(2003)4).

In light of this, a set of draft amendments concerning three laws of Georgia, prepared by a group of Georgian members of parliament, and followed by a Council of Europe expert review will become the main topic of discussion at this Round Table Discussion activity.

## **OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS**

The overall objective of this activity is to contribute to strengthening of legal framework and transparency of political finance system in Georgia in order to ensure the integrity of the political process.

The expected result of the meeting is an agreement among participants on the final legislative reform package concerning the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns in Georgia and the necessary follow up steps. The outcomes of agreed text on the proposed amendments will constitute a part of a Joint Statement of Agreement, expected to be signed and endorsed by all participants.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

Up to 20 participants, representing different parliamentary groups, commissions, and political parties, NGO's and media representatives in Georgia.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The meeting will take place on 26 -27 February 2007 at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France, Palais de l'Europe, Salle 16.

It will be organised by the Technical Cooperation Division at the Department of Crime Problems (DG 1 – Legal Affairs) of the Council of Europe in cooperation with the Venice Commission.

The working languages of the meeting will be English and Georgian. Due to the technical nature of the activity, and its working sessions, the meeting will be open for media only during the opening session: 09:30-10:00, and at its concluding remarks. A press release will be issued prior to this meeting.

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For any additional information please contact:

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| <b>Sunday</b>  |   |
| <b>25/02/2007</b>  | Arrival of participants   |
| <b>Monday</b>  |   |
| <i>Co-Chair: Igor GAON, SRSG-Tbilisi and Mr Mikheil MACHAVARIAN, Deputy Chairman of Parliament</i>             |   |
| <b>09:30</b>   | <b>Opening Session</b>  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opening address by Ms Margaret KILLERBY, Head of Crime Problems Department , Directorate General of Legal Affairs, Council of Europe</li> <li>▪ Opening address by Mr Mikheil MACHAVARIAN, Deputy Chairman of the Georgian Parliament</li> <li>▪ Opening address by Mr Alexander SEGER, Head of Technical Cooperation Division, Department of Crime Problems, Directorate General of Legal Affairs, Council of Europe</li> </ul> |
| <b>10:00</b>   | <b>Coffee break</b>   |
| <i>Co-Chair: Igor GAON, SRSG- Tbilisi and Mr Mikheil MACHAVARIAN, Deputy Chairman of Parliament</i>            |   |
| <b>10:15</b>   | <b>Introduction</b>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mr Mikheil MACHAVARIAN: Issues and rationale behind the proposed legislative amendments</li> <li>▪ Mr Davit KIRKITADZE: Presentation of proposed legislative amendments</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Co-Chair: Alexander SEGER, Head of Technical Cooperation and Mr Pavle KUBLASHVILI, Member of Parliament</i> |   |
| <b>11:00</b>   | <b>European and international standards on financing of political parties and electoral campaigns—what to expect when drafting legislation and its implementation in practice</b>   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mr Quentin REED, Council of Europe Expert (United Kingdom)</li> <li>▪ Mr Marcin WALECKI, Council of Europe Expert (Poland)</li> <li>▪ Mr Hans Heinrich VOGEL, Member of the Venice Commission (Sweden)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>12:00</b>   | <b>Discussion (Questions and Answers)</b>   |
| <b>12:30</b>   | <b>Lunch break</b>  |
| <i>Co-Chair: Alexander SEGER, Head of Technical Cooperation and Mr Pavle KUBLASHVILI, Member of Parliament</i> |   |
| <b>14:30</b>   | <b>Working session (1): Comments/Review on proposed amendments package</b>  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reading and Comments by participants</li> <li>▪ Comments by Council of Europe Experts</li> <li>▪ Revision and finalisation of draft provisions text</li> </ul>   |
| <b>16:15</b>   | <b>Coffee break</b>   |
| <i>Co-Chair: Alexander SEGER, Head of Technical Cooperation and Mr Pavle KUBLASHVILI, Member of Parliament</i> |   |
| <b>16:30</b>   | <b>Working session (2): Comments/Review on proposed amendments package</b>  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reading and Comments by participants</li> <li>▪ Comments by Council of Europe Experts</li> <li>▪ Revision and finalisation of draft provisions text</li> </ul>   |
| <b>18.00</b>   | <b>End of the first day</b>   |

**27/02/2007**

**Tuesday**

*Co-Chair: Ms Ardita ABDIU, Programme Manager and Mr Irakli IASHVILI, Member of Parliament*

**09:00**

**Working session (3): Comments/Review on proposed amendments package**

- Reading and Comments by participants
- Comments by Council of Europe Experts
- Revision and finalisation of draft provisions text

**10:30**

**Coffee break**

*Co-Chair: Ms Ardita ABDIU, Programme Manager and Mr Irakli IASHVILI, Member of Parliament*

**10:45**

**Preparation of agreement on final legislative package and follow up actions**

**Tour de Table**

**11:45**

- Reading and signing of the Joint Statement of Agreement on the final legislative package

**12:15**

**Concluding remarks**

**12:30**

**Press Conference given by Georgian Parliamentarians**

**13:00**

**Lunch Break and End of the Day**