



Institutionalised citizen participation: an instrument for democratic governance

Holiday Inn (1 Twenty-six May Square)

Tbilisi, Georgia

15 June 2017

Context

A reform of the local government system in Georgia took place in 2014. Following the recommendations of the decentralisation strategy of 2013-2014, the Government introduced a new chapter on “institutionalised mechanisms of citizen participation” in the Organic Law of Georgia on the “Code of local self-government”, with the aim to bring local authorities closer to citizens.

In light of the recent announcement by Georgian Authorities on the development of a new decentralisation strategy, the conference will aim to discuss the effectiveness of the aforementioned mechanisms, and identify prospects for further improvement of the local government system and decentralisation in Georgia. Concrete recommendations for improvement of the Code of local self-government related to public participation will be developed with a view to contribute to the preparation of the new decentralisation strategy.

The conference will gather together representatives of the Georgian Government and Parliament, of the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG), mayors and gamgebelis, local councillors, as well as members of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (the Congress), civil society, media and international organisations.

The conference is organised jointly by the Congress and NALAG, within the thematic programme “Strengthening institutional frameworks for local governance”. This programme is funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe, and implemented by the Council of Europe, through the Partnership for Good Governance for 2015-2017 for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.

Contacts

Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

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National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG)

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*The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation.
It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union.
The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is an institution of the Council of Europe,
responsible for strengthening local and regional democracy in its 47 member states.
Composed of two chambers – the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions – and three committees, it brings
together 648 elected officials representing more than 200 000 local and regional authorities*

<http://www.coe.int/t/congress>

Draft programme

Thursday 15 June

09:30 *Welcome coffee and registration of participants*

10:00 *Opening and welcome*

Moderation: Marité Moras, Head of Unit, Co-operation Activities and External Relations Department, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

- Irakli Matkava, First Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure
- Davit Narmania, Mayor of Tbilisi, Head of Georgian Delegation to the Congress
- Carlo Natale, Deputy Head of the European Union to Georgia
- Cristian Urse, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Tbilisi

Introduction of the aims and programme of the conference

- Davit Jikia, President of the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG)

11:15 *Citizen participation in local decision-making: the foundation for improved local governance*

The session will focus on the situation, legislation, functioning, (good) practices, challenges and drawbacks in Georgia and other European countries

Moderation: Ion Beschieru, Programme Manager, Council of Europe Office in Moldova

Keynote speech by: Martina Trettel, international expert

Inputs from:

- Nikoloz Rosebashvili, Head of Department for Relations with Regions and local self-government agencies, the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure
- David Melua, Executive Director of NALAG
- Vaja Chokheli, Mayor of Dusheti municipality
- Andrew Dawson, Member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

12:15 *Citizen participation: an integral part of the decentralisation framework*

Keynote speech by: Nino Tvaltvadze, national expert

Input from:

- David Melua, Executive Director of NALAG

Discussions

The floor will be open to debate on the effectiveness of the existing tools for citizen participation.

→ Lunch (13:30– 14:30)

14:30

Creating an enabling environment for increased citizens participation

Experiences from localities in Georgia and other European countries in developing mechanisms to stimulate civic involvement

Moderation: Nino Zurabishvili, Advisor to NALAG, Former member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

- Andrew Dawson, Member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
- Gocha Gochiashvili, Mayor of Kaspi Municipality
- Giorgi Meskhidze, President of Civitas Georgica, national expert
- Kakha Jamburia, Mayor of Lagodekhi Municipality

Discussions

The floor will be open to questions and feedback

→ *Coffee break (15:30 – 16:00)*

16:00

Women in local politics: broadening the scope of participation

Moderation: Tamar Taliashvili, Member of Tbilisi City Council, Member of the Executive Board of NALAG

- Andrew Dawson, Member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
- Lela Kitesashvili, Mayor of Tianeti Municipality
- Maka Meshveliani Programme Manager, UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality, United Nations Development Programme in Georgia
- Nana Sokhadze, Member of Ambrolauri City Council
- Elene Rusetskaia, Women's Information Center

Discussions

The floor will be open to questions and feedback

17:30

Conclusions and next steps

- Marité Moras, Head of Unit, Co-operation Activities and External Relations Department, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe
- Davit Jikia, President of NALAG

→ *Joint dinner (19:00)*

List of participants

1. Representatives of the Government of Georgia

Irakli MATKAVA, First Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure

Grigol LILUASHVILI, Member of Parliament, Head of the Parliamentary committee on Local Government

Mearb KVARAIA, Member of Parliament, Deputy Head of the Parliamentary committee on Local Government

Mamuka CHIKOVANI, Member of Parliament, Deputy Head of the Parliamentary Committee on Local Government

Nikoloz ROSEBASHVILI, Head of Department for Relations with Regions and local self-government agencies, the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure

Natalia JALIASHVILI, Administration of the Government of Georgia

Ana DZOTSENIDZE, Third Secretary, Division of Council of Europe, Department of International Organisations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

2. Representatives of Local Government

Giorgi AHVLEDIANI, Deputy Chair of Tbilisi City Assembly

Lela KITESASHVILI, Mayor of Tianeti municipality

Giorgi ALIBEGASHVILI, Head of Tbilisi City Assembly

Giorgi LOBZHANIDZE, Mayor of Oni municipality

Pikria AVALIANI, Rustavi City Council

Nugzar MALAGURADZE, Member of Tbilisi City Assembly

Rima BERADZE, Member of Tbilisi City Assembly

Revaz MAMULASHVILI, Mtskheta Municipality

Gogi BARBAKADZE, Mayor of Dmanisi municipality

Tamta MEGRELISHVILI, Tianeti Municipal Council

Vaja CHOKHELI, Mayor of Dusheti municipality

Ioseb MEGUTNISHVILI, Head of staff of Telavi municipal council

Tamar DALAKISHVILI, Tetrtskaro Municipality

Shota MURGULIA, Mayor of Kutaisi

Gocha DGEBUADZE, Mayor of Senaki municipality

Giga NIKOLEISHVILI, Deputy Mayor of Tbilisi

Gocha DZIMISTARISHVILI, Member of Ozurgeti city council

Sulkhan OKROPIRIDZE, Head of Kobuleti municipal council

Gocha GOCHITASHVILI, Mayor of Kaspi municipality

Tamar TALIASHVILI, Tbilisi city Assembly

Giorgi GURASPASHVILI, Mayor of Khasuri municipality

Merab TCHANUKVADZE, Mayor of Ozurgeti municipality

Karlo JAMBURIA, Mayor of Lagodekhi municipality

Davit SHERAZADISHVILI, Mayor of Bolnisi municipality

Gocha KAJIA, Mayor of Khobi municipality

Nino SOKHADZE, Member of the Ambrolauri municipal council

Platon KALMAKHELIDZE, Mayor of Telavi

Merab TOPCHISHVILI, Mayor of Marnelui municipality

Dimitri KIPHIANI, Mayor of Borjomi municipality

Nato KITIASHVILI, Deputy Mayor of Tbilisi

3. Representatives of Civil Society Organisations

Mamuka ABULADZE, NGO Euro Caucasus
Levan ALAPHISHVILI, Center for Strategic research and Development
Revaz BARBAKADZE, Rustavi civil participation project
Tinatin BOLKVAADZE, Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF)
David CHICHINADZE, CEGSTAR
Misha CHITADZE, Gori Information Center
Zviad DEVDARIANI, Civil Development Agency (CiDA) (tbc)
Revaz EGADZE, NGO “East-West”
Nodar JIKIA, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)
Tamar KAPANADZE, Research Center for Legal and Social Rights
Koka KIGURADZE, Regional Development center
David LOSABERIDZE, NGO coalition for Local Self-Government
Giorgi MESKHIDZE, Civitas Georgika
Elena RUSSETSKAIA, Women’s Information Center (WIC)
Vaja SALAMADZE, Civil Society Institute (CSI) (tbc)
Lizi SOPHROMADZE, NGO Coalition for Regional Development

4. Representatives of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

Davit NARMANIA, Head of the Delegation of Georgia to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Mayor of Tbilisi
Andrew DAWSON, Member of the Delegation of the United Kingdom to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Councillor of Frodsham, Cheshire

5. Experts

Zviad ARCHUADZE, Georgia
Micahel DJIBUTI, Georgia
Kakha GURGENIDZE, Georgia
Alexander SVANISVNILI, Georgia
Martina TRETTEL, Italy
Nino TVALTVADZE, Georgia
David ZARDIASHVILI, Georgia
Nino ZURABISHVILI, Georgia

6. United Nations Development Programme (tbc)

Shombi SHARP, Deputy Resident Representative in Georgia
Gigi BREGADZE, Democratic Governance Team Leader
Marika SHIOSHVILI, Project Manager
Maka MESHVELIANI, Component Manager

7. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (tbc)

Olivier BÜRKI, Regional Director of Cooperation

8. European Union Delegation to Georgia

Carlo NATALE, Deputy Head of the European Union Delegation to Georgia

Dominika SKUBIDA, Programme Manager

9. Representatives of the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia

David JIKIA, President of the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia, Mayor of Rustavi

David MELUA, Executive Director, the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia

10. Council of Europe

Council of Europe Headquarters in Strasbourg

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

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