

საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



Statement of non-governmental organizations involved in the development of Code on Local Self-Government

Development of the local self-government is one of the most essential preconditions for the European countries development. Self-governing bodies, which are well aware of the problems faced by local dwellers, as well as citizen-oriented territorial entities, local self- government entities with sufficient budget authorities (self-governing cities

and communities), represent the basis for a sustainable and democratic development of the country. Carrying out a comprehensive reform of the local self-government is the fundamental principle for proper development of Georgia. This will establish European governance in the country and will contribute to the process of further integration of Georgia into the European Union (EU).

On March 1, 2013, the Government of Georgia approved the "Basic Principles of the Strategy for Decentralization and Development of Self-Government for 2013-2014". The basic principle of the reform is "the most active and direct involvement of the citizens in the management process. The Government of Georgia considers the decentralization process as the key aspect for establishing democracy and its institutions in the country."

Based on the government strategy announced, the draft "Code of Local Government" was produced resultant to the active collaboration between the Advisory Council for Self-Governance Development and Regional Policy of the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia and NGOs' working group.

While elaborating the draft law, experts gave due regard of both views and concerns of the central government officials as well as the present reality, different positions and opinions of all the stakeholders have been reconciled via certain consensus, and whereupon the phased implementation process of the reform has been planned and single issues of principle have been eventually agreed.

Meeting between the Prime Minister of Georgia and the Advisory Council for Self-Governance Development and Regional Policy was held on September 26, 2013, where the Prime Minister highlighted his unequivocal support for the necessity of the local self-government reform and the conceptual issues stipulated in the draft law. We believe that the most important objective is to have the electoral system reform of the local self-government completed till the beginning of 2014 that might be precluded if Local Government Code would adopted with delay.

Therefore, by expressing support for the principal part of the draft law on "Code of Local Government", we call on the government of Georgia to initiate the draft bill in the Parliament of Georgia on timely basis.

Since achieving independence, Georgia has been once again given a real opportunity

to take effective actions for the formation of an independent, based on European democratic values, local government. This will significantly contribute to the evolvement of EU-Georgia relations.

We hope that this process will be carried out properly and the current government will not repeat mistakes made by their predecessors in relation to local self-government reform.

Below is the list of non-governmental organizations involved in the process of developing the "Code of Local Government":

1. *Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC)*
2. *Network of Local Democracy Agencies/Centers*
3. *Georgian Young Lawyers' Association*
4. *Information Center in Gori*
5. *Union of Democrat Meskhs*
6. *European Initiative - Liberal Academy Tbilisi*
7. *The Center for Effective Management Systems and Technological Development of Regions*
8. *Independent Journalists' House*
9. *Center For Sustainable Development of the Caucasus Mountain Regions*
10. *Association "Civitas Georgica"*
11. *Centre For Training and Consultancy (CTC)*
12. *Public Movement "Multinational Georgia" (PMMG)*
13. *Green Caucasus*
14. *Transparency International Georgia*
15. *Public Defender*
16. *International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)*
17. *Non-governmental organization "Sida"*
18. *Civil Integration Foundation*
19. *International Centre for Civic Culture*
20. *Civil Society and Democracy Development Center*
21. *Civil Society Institute*
22. *Civil Society Research and Development Center*
23. *Strategic Research and Development Center*

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- 24. *Open Society Georgia Foundation*
- 25. *Union of Self-Governing Cities*