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Donor Coordination Meeting

Tuesday, December 4, 2007, 14:00
Conference / Briefing Room (#410)
Parliament of Georgia

AGENDA

- Welcoming note by Mrs. Nino Nakashidze
- Short update of running projects
- Presentation of Reconstructed Parliamentary Web-Site: Parliamentary Reform Projects (by CPR)
- Plans for 2008 (in the light of possible parliamentary elections)
- Miscellaneous

The meeting was chaired by Mrs. Nino Nakashidze, MP, Speaker-Appointed Coordinator for International Donor Projects.

Short update of running projects

Mr. Bacho Nadiradze (CPR) briefed the guests about the initiated program between the Parliament of Georgia and the European Parliament (EP) on the issue related to supporting the professional capacity-building of the Georgian staff members. In the framework of this program, the CPR hosted the visit of the head of the EP Directorate of External Affairs and his assistant in September 2007. They held meetings with several MPs, staff members, and donor organizations to assess the actual needs in the Georgian Parliament in terms of professional development. At a later stage, the EP Directorate for Internal Affairs also got engaged in the organization process and as a result on 19-23 November a one-week study program took place in EP, Brussels. 13 Georgian staff members together with 3 experts from EUSPGeorgia and CPR's 2 representatives took part in the study program. The participants were introduced to the structure and work of the EP and met with representatives from various EP committees, departments and political groups, including meetings with MEPs Marie Anne Isler Beguin, Chair, and Vytautas Landsbergis, Vice-Chair of the EP Delegation to the EU-Georgia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee. This was the first EP study visit of parliament staff from an European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) country.

After the visit the CPR drafted questionnaires/evaluation forms and distributed them among the participants. The results of the evaluation forms, together with the report on the study trip will be presented to the EP, in order to tailor a next study program for the Georgian staffers.

Mrs. Nakashidze stressed the importance of such visits for the Georgian staff members. The visits first of all give the opportunity to collect and share information and learn more on the

spot, and secondly, it is a good motivation tool for the staffers. The Parliament hopes that these types of visits will continue in the future.

In addition, the CPR worked on the reconstruction of the parliamentary web-page, namely the section on international projects. The CPR collected, edited, drafted and rearranged all the documents and with the assistance of the Parliament's PR Department placed them on the web. As a result, the web-site currently provides a variety of information on parliamentary reform projects that can be valuable for the Parliament, the donor community and anyone interested in the issue.

Ms. Sopho Guruli informed the participants that from 2008, a new parliamentary project is launching. The upcoming 3-year project *Capacity Building and Good Governance Program on Strengthening Legislative Oversight of the Security Sector* will be implemented in the Parliament from January/February 2008 by the Centre for European Security Studies (Netherlands) and Centre for European Integration Studies (Georgia). The project will focus on strengthening the parliamentary oversight on defense and security budget.

Mr. Bernhard Schloer (EUSPGeorgia) reported about the activities of the Project:

- Big equipment tender has been completed and equipment will be delivered to the Parliament in 14 days;
- EU Information Centers in Tbilisi and Batumi have been refurbished; their official opening will take place in January 2008;
- Eurovoc's translation has been completed and at this stage it is submitted to the parliamentary committees for review;
- Brochure on E-Signature, drafted by EUSP legal expert, has been published; other publications are under preparation;
- The Project hosted one expert on IT security and experts from Ukrainian Rada are expected to visit the Georgian Parliament ;
- Workshop on draft Civil Service Code was organized with the participation of the authors of the draft, all interested parties;
- Assessment of subscribed web-pages has been done through interviews and questionnaires. As a result, there will be less web-sites subscribed in the future but those that are most frequently used. In addition, access to new web-sites will be provided and trainings planned on the usage of the web-sites;
- In the civic education component, there has been changes in the budget, that is increased up to 250,000 Eur. EUSPGeorgia will subcontract a Georgian NGO to implement this component of the Project;
- Cooperation with other parliaments continues; the Project is working on draft memorandum between the Polish and Georgian Parliament. EUSPGeorgia has been also involved in the organization process of the above-mentioned study visit to EP. As a follow-up, the Project is organizing a roundtable meeting with the participants of all the EUSPGeorgia study visits to discuss the strengths, weaknesses of the tours and possible ways of their improvement. Apart from that, in January-February a visit will be organized to German Bundestag.

Mrs. Nakashidze noted that if the visit is for the Georgian MPs, in this case it shall be postponed due to possible parliamentary elections in spring. In addition, Mrs. Nakashidze informed the guests that Mrs. Tamar Beruchashvili, Deputy State Minister for Euro-Atlantic Integration, has an initiative of opening an EU info corner in the National Library. Mrs. Nakashidze asked EUSPGeorgia if the Project could assist in providing literature, etc to EU info corner once it is established. Mr. Schloer suggested that EUSPGeorgia provides with electronic documents and Geplac (leading think tank in EU-related issues) provides with materials in hard copy.

Mrs. Manana Salukvadze (UNDP) informed the Parliament that UNDP prepared annual report of its activities and will submit it to the Parliament at the upcoming UNDP project board meeting. As well as that, UNDP evaluation mission is preparing an assessment draft on the Project's operation.

Among other activities, UNDP Project:

- Provided support to the Parliament's Representation in Western Georgia, namely, a series of trainings/workshops were conducted for majoritarian MP bureaus on parliamentary oversight issues.;
- Trained 409 staff members during the year, more than 60 employees from the National Library;
- In the framework of the Project's National Library assistance component, UNDP held a presentation of e-club, e-terminal and new web-page at the Library. All of these mechanisms assist the citizens to receive free of charge information on the library and various topics of their interest.
- Had to postpone the creation of educational subsite of parliamentary web-page due to recent political developments in the country;

According to Mrs. Nino Lagvilava (UNDP Gender and Politics Programme) the Programme conducted the following activities:

- Survey on Gender and Georgian Society is being conducted;
- Georgian Constitutional review through gender parameters was prepared;
- Competition was announced for the best gender sensitive journalist work, award coming soon;
- Survey was conducted of 200 business companies and ministries to identify the best gender balanced organization; award ceremony will be held on 24 December;

Mrs. Lagvilava also informed the participants of the meeting that NAP (National Action Plan) for Gender Equality was adopted by the Government of Georgia and Inter-ministerial Commission on Gender Issues was established.

Ms. Nina Khatiskatsi (TI Georgia) reported that due to the recent political developments in the country, the activities within the TI Georgia's Majoritarian Project have been postponed as the beneficiaries of the Project are majoritarian MPs.

In the framework of TI Georgia's another project, preliminary results of monitoring of misuse of administrative resources during pre-election campaign was prepared and will be introduced at the Press-conference on 5 December.

As well as that, TI Georgia plans to conduct a survey on public perception towards the Parliament in January after the presidential elections are completed. The organization will also prepare newspaper insert which will describe the work and activities of majoritarian MP (MPs' attendance, voting culture, parliamentary activity, etc.). Because of the upcoming election, the organization decided to also include in the newspaper insert the financial declarations of majoritarian MPs.

TI's plans on the survey and newspaper insert raised discussion between Mrs Khatiskatsi and Mrs. Nakashidze. The two sides had different views regarding these initiatives. The consensus was not reached at the meeting and shall be resolved in the future.

Ms. Natia Jikia (NDI) reported on the NDI activities:

- Supporting Constructive Policy Debate. The Institute worked with the Regional Policy, Self-Government and Mountainous Regions Committee to conduct two public hearings in the Adjara Region in August 2007. These public hearings were organized

to discuss the draft “Law on Citizens’ Participation in the Local Government Activities” and gather feedback on implementation of the new “Law on State Supervision over Local Government Authorities.” In preparation for the public hearings NDI met with representatives of the Committee on Regional Policy, Self-Government and Mountainous Regions, and cooperated with the Center for Effective Governance and Territorial Arrangement Reform (CEGSTAR). Also, NDI worked closely with the Adjara Supreme Council and the municipal government of Khelvachauri. Local government officials said this was the first time citizens were able to communicate directly with their elected representatives and discuss their concerns at a public event.

In September, 2 roundtables were organized jointly by IABP and NDI, where IABP Honorary Chairman Mr. Bruce George (MP, UK House of Commons) talked on accountability and communication issues with representatives of the majority and opposition factions.

- NDI Parliamentary Internship program. NDI launched its 4th parliamentary internship program in October 2007. 10 interns have been selected through a competition and assigned to different factions, committees, and departments at the Parliament.
- Pre-election delegation coming. NDI pre-election delegation, headed by NDI president, Ken Wollack, visited Georgia on 10 December and held meetings with civil and political leaders in Georgian. The delegation produced a statement, where the pre-election situation was assessed in Georgia and recommendations were drawn.
- Parliamentary Rules of Procedure (RoP). RoP is put on hold. NDI will continue to work with the Parliament on finalizing the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament after elections.

Mrs. Ashley Moran (NDI) added that NDI plans to work with the Parliament of Georgia to expand its parliamentary record database by making it searchable and transparent. NDI also plans to continue its work with different parliamentary factions by providing number of skills development trainings. In addition, after the parliamentary elections, the organization plans to conduct orientation/introductory trainings for newly elected MPs.

Mrs. Salome Shapakidze (IABP Georgia) reported that IABP Georgia has been actively cooperating with the Commission on Territorial Integrity on the issue of Economic Rehabilitation of Conflict Zones. A special project “Product from the Conflict Zone” has been drafted which will promote the products coming from the conflict zones.

As also noted by NDI, IABP Honorary Chairman Mr. Bruce George (MP, UK House of Commons) chaired 2 roundtables on holding government accountable: one with opposition, another with majority.

IABP Georgia plans to do the assessment and change the composition of its working group in order to compose it with the MPs who will be actively engaged in the organization’s activities. In 2008 IABP plans to invite the Vice-Chairman of the European Parliament (EP) to Georgia and in addition, conduct exchange visits between the MPs of the Georgian Parliament and European Parliament.

Mrs. Marie-Carin von Gumpfenberg (OSCE) informed the participants of the meeting that the Bavarian Regional Parliament (Landtag) expressed its wish to send Landtag’s budget committee to the Georgian Parliament in order to organize peer-to-peer meetings. In addition, the Landtag is willing to invite Georgian MPs to Munich so that their Georgian colleagues get acquainted with the working of the Bavarian Parliament. But due to the possible parliamentary elections in spring, the visits shall take place after the elections, tentative month is May. As well as that, OSCE-hired expert Professor Zeh (former director of German Bundestag) will be available as soon as the work on modification of Parliamentary Rules of Procedure (RoP) resumes.

As regards, the election-related issues, Mrs. Gumpfenberg reported that after the meeting of Georgian parliamentarians with the OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission in Vienna, it was decided to opt for only proportional electoral system, abolishing the majoritarian one. As for the election monitoring, ODIHR will be engaged in this activity.

Presentation of Reconstructed Parliamentary Web-Site: Parliamentary Reform Projects (by CPR)

Ms. Sopho Guruli (CPR) made a presentation of newly reconstructed parliamentary web-site, namely the section on International Projects. The reconstruction was done jointly by the CPR and Parliament's PR Department. The newly reconstructed section covers comprehensive information on donor activities in the Parliament. The sub-sections include:

- News: important events and activities, such as seminars, trainings, presentations, etc.
- Current Projects: general information on individual project's activities; operation in 2006 and 2005.
- Completed Projects: information on already completed projects, as well as various gifts or grants received by the Georgian Parliament from its foreign partners;
- Donor Coordination Meetings: Minutes of all the donor coordination meetings;
- Photogallery: separate photogallery for each donor project;
- Publications: publications of different projects with the link to the texts of publications;
- Contacts: detailed contacts of each project, office addresses, emails and phone numbers.

Agreements Reached and Requests Made:

- *Mrs. Nakashidze stressed the importance of study visits for the parliamentary staff and expressed her hope that the donor projects will continue this type of assistance in the future as well;*
- *Mrs. Nakashidze asked the EUSPGeorgia to postpone the visit of the Georgian MPs to German Bundestag due to possible parliamentary elections in spring;*
- *Mrs. Nakashidze asked the EUSPGeorgia if the Project could assist the National Library in providing relevant literature to its upcoming EU info corner. Mr. Schloer agreed to provide with the electronic documents; he also expressed his will to discuss with the Geplac the possibility of delivering materials in hard copy.*

List of Participants

Name	Organisation
Nino Nakashidze	Parliament of Georgia
Sophie Guruli Bacho Nadiradze	CPR
Ashley Moran Natia Jikia	NDI
Manana Salukvadze	UNDP
Bernhard Schloer	EUSPGeorgia
Salome Shapakidze	IABP Georgia
Nina Khatiskatsi	TI Georgia
Nino Lagvilava	Gender and Politics (UNDP)
Marie-Carin von Gumpfenberg	OSCE Mission in Georgia
Hanspeter Nintzel	German Embassy
Vakhtang Kobaladze	SDC