

May 6, 2017

**Address of the Member Organizations of the Georgian National Platform of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum to the Parliament of Georgia**

Constitutional Commission has completed its work on the revision of the Constitution of Georgia and has presented a new draft Constitution of Georgia. Wide-ranging public hearings are planned, in addition to debates in the Parliament before the voting takes place. The Commission offered us a new electoral system, according to which the parliamentary mandates will be distributed only to those political parties, that manage to get at least 5% of votes. At the same time, if the quantitative sum of mandates received by political parties is less than 150, undistributed mandates go to the political party, which has amassed the most votes in the elections.

The presented draft eliminates mixed-electoral system and the Parliament is elected on the basis of proportional electoral system, which is indeed, a welcome decision. However, despite this positive change, the new method of mandate redistribution cannot ensure proportional representation of political parties in the Parliament and establishment of sustainable multiparty system. Furthermore, we believe that the presented system violates **the most basic fair electoral principle – equality**.

As we understand it, for mandate distribution the principle of proportionality is replaced by the principle of quotes, with high likelihood, that the number of undistributed mandates will be high. As historical experience demonstrates, approximately 20.1% votes were on average lost during every election held between 1995 and 2016. Hence, the party that got the most votes, would get a bonus of minimum 7 and maximum 92 mandates. It is clear that **this principle will substantially violate the principle of proportionality and equality**.

Furthermore, we believe that prohibition of electoral blocks will drastically increase the number of votes lost, given how weak party system in Georgia is, coupled with the lack of financial resources and 5% electoral threshold, while the presented rule of mandate distribution evidently favors the winning party.

Given all of the above mentioned, we, the member organizations of the Georgian National Platform address you with the following propositions for your consideration:

- To bring the rule of mandate distribution in line with the principle of fair elections, with the condition to maintain only proportional method for the parliamentary elections, and to distribute undistributed mandates using the method of proportionality, and
- Reduce electoral threshold to 3%

***Signatories:***

1. European Initiative - Liberal Academy Tbilisi
2. Free Choice
3. United Public Movement "Multinational Georgia"
4. Europe Foundation
5. International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy

6. Article 42
7. Georgian Young Lawyers' Association
8. Transparency International Georgia
9. Institute for Development of Freedom of Information
10. Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC)
11. The Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia
12. Media Development Foundation
13. World Experience for Georgia
14. Georgia's Reforms Associates
15. Association and Radio "Green Wave"
16. Media Monitoring Centre of Georgia
17. Human Rights Centre
18. International Center for Civic Culture
19. Studio Re
20. Penal Reform International
21. New Generation for Democratic Georgia
22. Women's Political Resource Center
23. IDP Association "Consent"
24. Samtskhe-Javakheti Regional Association "Toleranti"
25. Foundation "Multi- Ethnic Resource Centre on Civic Education Development"
26. People's Harmonious Development Society
27. Association of Tea Producers Georgia "Georgian Tea"
28. Foundation "Multi- Ethnic Resource Centre on Civic Education Development"
29. Partnership for Human Rights
30. Association for the Farmers' Rights Defence
31. Institute for Policy Studies
32. Institute for the study of nationalism and conflict
33. EU-Georgia Business Council
34. Civil Development and Human Rights Center
35. Georgia Press Association
36. Human Rights Priority
37. Community Development Academy
38. Civil Development and Human Rights Center
39. "School-Family-Society" Association
40. Student Youth Council
41. Association for the efficient use of the Georgian energy resources
42. International Center of Geopolitical research
43. Repatriates' Union
44. Civil Society and Democracy Development Center
45. Teachers' Union "Education and Universe"
46. Local Democracy Agency
47. International Business Development and Investment Promotion Centre
48. Association "Mercury"
49. Association "Imedi"
50. Levan Mikeladze Foundation
51. Youth Alternative
52. The Greens Movement of Georgia/Friends of Earth-Georgia
53. Civil Society Institute
54. Association "Dea"

55. Association “Atinati”
56. Center for Development and Engagement
57. Civil Society Development Association
58. Civil Forum for Peace
59. Association „Healthy Children”
60. Save The Future Generation
61. Journalism Research Center
62. Tbilisi Human Rights House
63. Enterprise Innovation Development Center
64. Caucasian House Georgia
65. Institute for Euro-Atlantic integration and strategic studies
66. Civil Society Development Institute
67. Association of Youth Journalists “New Vision”
68. Imereti Union of Science - “SPECTRI”
69. Civil Council on Defense and Security Issues
70. Union "Ecotech"
71. Energy Efficiency Foundation
72. Biological Farming Association “Elkana”
73. International Center for Advancement of Research, Technology & Innovation (ICARTI)
74. Georgian Trade Union Confederation
75. Caucasus Environmental NGO network (CENN)
76. Association European Studies for Innovative Development in Georgia
77. Railway Workers New Trade Union
78. Junior achievement of Georgia
79. Bridge of Friendship – Kartlosi
80. Energy Efficiency Centre Georgia
81. Journalism Resource Center
82. Peaceful and Business Caucasus
83. International Center for Environmental Research
84. European Integration Forum
85. Rural Communities Development Agency
86. Women's Initiatives supporting Group
87. Georgia Alliance for Safe Roads
88. International Center for Democratic Initiatives
89. International Society "Caucasian Mosaic"
90. Cultural-Humanitarian Fund "Sukhumi”