



Report on 5th Annual Meeting of Election Management Bodies

Batumi, Georgia

24- 26 February, 2015

The Central Election Commission of Georgia (CEC) hosted the 5th Annual Meeting of Election Management Bodies on February 24-26 in Batumi, Georgia. The conference organized in close cooperation with International Center for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS) gathered the representatives of 19 election administrations from different countries, various international organizations working on election issues as well as vendor companies that specialize on election technologies. The theme of the conference - “Inclusive Elections” - gave an opportunity to the participants to discuss and share their experiences and achievements in making elections available for everyone, especially for groups with special needs, women, youth and ethnic, religious and other minorities.

Tamar Zhvania, Chairperson of the Central Election Commission of Georgia, Matt Gokhool, Chief Executive of ICPS and Niels Scott, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Georgia, made opening remarks at the conference underlining the importance of the inclusive elections.

The participants of the conference, mainly electoral commissioners, presented their success stories and electoral practices offering advice on how to manage election in the manner that allows all vulnerable groups to cast their votes and minimize any possible setbacks. Participants also focused on increasing woman and youth participation and involvement of ethnic minorities in electoral processes.

The meeting also allowed the representatives of vendor companies to present new possibilities of advanced electoral procedures through the use of cutting-edge technologies. Companies represented at the meeting included Smartmatic, ScytI, Morpho, HSB Identification, Ideco, Supercom and Dermalog.

At the end of the two-day conference the CEC of Georgia, its Training Center and ICPS, in cooperation with Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary of Mexico and Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania, presented the joint initiative of establishing the International Association of Election Training Organizations (IAETO). At the same meeting the Memorandum of Intention on IAETO was signed, envisaging appropriate exchange of experience and expertise among members with the objective of improving training and capacity building in the electoral field.

Election management bodies (EMB) from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, India, Kenya, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Moldova, Nepal, Romania, South Africa and Ukraine together with the international organizations, such as National Democratic Institute (NDI), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Council of Europe (CoE), International Foundation

for Electoral Systems (IFES), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), Association of European Election Officials (ACEEEO) and European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES) participated in the event.

Each year the conference enlarges its network of cooperation attracting new EMBs for participation. This time the conference involved 92 participants, including representatives of the election administration of India and Afghanistan, who took part in the conference for the first time this year. The overall goal of the annual meeting is to support communication amongst election management bodies and foster cooperation between the participating states on election issues.