



# ANNUAL REPORT

Election Administration of Georgia



**CEC**

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION  
OF GEORGIA





# ELECTION ADMINISTRATION OF GEORGIA

Annual Report on the Activities of the Central Election  
Commission of Georgia and LEPL Electoral Systems  
Development, Reforms and Training Centre

2017



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# Letter of Tamar Zhvania,



Dear Friends and Partners of Election Administration,

We present a report on the activities of the Central Election Administration of Georgia implemented in 2017. For the Election Administration this has been a year of significant innovations and great initiatives. First of all, we successfully conducted complex – from organizational and administration point of view – Municipal Elections – the Elections of Representative Body of Municipality – Sakrebulo and Mayor of Self-governing City/ Self-governing Community. These elections have already been evaluated by the international observation missions as an important electoral progress and one more step towards democratic development in the country. The Administration managed to create a peaceful environment, where each citizen of Georgia could exercise their right to free elections. Hereby, I want to thank all the citizens, each voter who actively participated in the elections.

I want to express my respect to all the electoral stakeholders who contributed to the electoral process. It needs to be noted, that active participation of the independent observers, media and other stakeholders is a huge support for ensuring transparent and trustworthy electoral process.

In order to help citizens exercise their right to free elections, the activities for increasing election security and credibility have been made an integral part of the Election Administration institutional culture. In this regard, cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia is significant, as it is the second year we plan activities together to ensure safe election environment and peaceful election process.

Rapid development of technologies creates many possibilities for simplifying electoral procedures and increasing effectiveness. In 2017 the Election Administration started implementing new technology initiative that can be used by political parties, initiative groups, local and international observation organizations and media outlets to register via the Internet by special on-line registration program. During the Municipal Elections, 19 registered electoral subjects (23 political unions registered as 19 election subjects) managed to appoint their representatives at all levels of commissions via the Internet.

Apart from that, for the first time in the history of Georgian Elections, there is an ongoing negotiation to implement a pilot project, based on research, during the next elections. Accordingly, modern technologies enable vote counting electronically on the Election Day. Though, this process has always been subject to debates and discussions. Hence, it is really important to do our best to raise awareness of using electoral technologies and share with others the experience received from the practice. As a result of discussions, analysis and consultations, we should take on the challenges related to electoral processes and make concrete decisions based on the needs to achieve future success.

We made significant efforts to support inclusive electoral environment. We offered various services to ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities. It was the first time that deaf and hearing impaired voters could make a video call to the call/informational center of the CEC and receive information in sign language from the operators.

I am very proud of the training programs and initiatives carried out for voters throughout the whole country. These programs and initiatives had distinct goals, including informing voters on the electoral process, raising their awareness and civic engagement. We renewed educational programs based on the research that shows how the past electoral experience helps voters in working out long-term custom and culture of participation in the elections. For that reason, we launched our educational courses at schools and strengthened the programs oriented on young people.

Our efforts of informing voters and using innovative services based on the technologies have already made a result - about a million voters used the CEC service and checked their personal data in the unified voters' list. Apart from that, in 2017, we implemented a new initiative – Talk to Voters – that enabled the population to get more engaged in the electoral processes. During the face-to-face meetings with the population, the Election Administration members found new opportunities to listen to voters' viewpoints, respond to their questions, share more information, improve the CEC services and have a direct dialogue. Besides, the Election Administration's campaign – “Even Closer” – created a significant potential of informed participation of people in electoral processes.

The Election Administration's achievements are the results of selfless work during the last years. I want to express my respect and gratitude towards the Election Administration's staff for their devotion and professionalism. This is a team motivated by a dignified idea – implementing safe, credible and fair elections in Georgia. Despite the fact, that implementation of the activities focused on the future improvement are essential and crucial challenges for developing electoral environment are present, I – as a Chairperson of the Election Administration can proudly say that conducting democratic elections has already become a tradition in Georgia.



**TAMAR ZHVANIA**  
*CHAIRPERSON OF THE CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION*

# Election Administration of Georgia

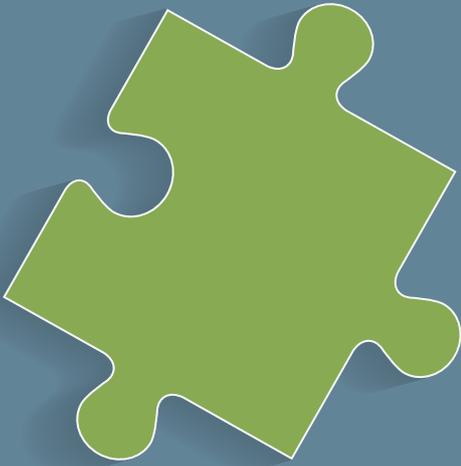
THE ELECTION ADMINISTRATION OF GEORGIA IS AN INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATIVE BODY, WHICH, WITHIN ITS AUTHORITY, IS FREE OF ANY INFLUENCE FROM OTHER STATE BODIES AND ACTS ACCORDING TO THE CONSTITUTION OF GEORGIA AND ORGANIC LAW "ELECTION CODE OF GEORGIA".

Election Administration of Georgia is composed of:

- CEC and its apparatus;
- SEC and its apparatus;
- District Election Commissions;
- Precinct Election Commissions.

The Election Administration ensures the preparation and conduct of elections of the President of Georgia, the Parliament of Georgia, representative body of municipality – Sakrebulo (Local assembly) and an executive body of municipality – Mayor and of referendum, plebiscites. It controls the fulfillment of the election legislation of Georgia on the whole territory of Georgia and its uniform application.

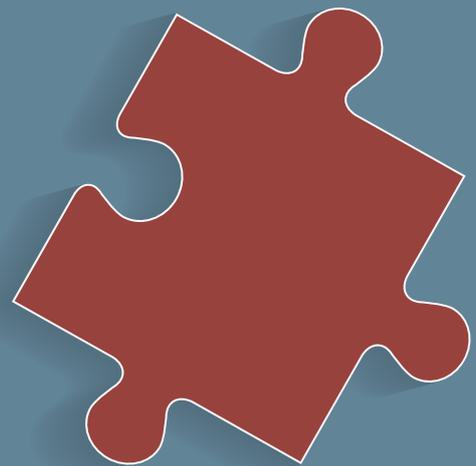
# Mission



To conduct impartial, transparent and professionally administered elections, as set forth by the legislation, and to create an environment where voters and electoral stakeholders can freely exercise their electoral rights.

# Vision

Election Administration provides equally accessible electoral services, ensures the integrity of the electoral process and enjoys a high level of trust within the society; continuously acts innovatively and develops initiatives oriented on the improvement of the electoral environment; Election Administration continuously works to increase management effectiveness and the professional capacity of the Administration.





# Central Election Commission

## Composition<sup>1</sup> of CEC as of November 21, 2017

Tamar Zhvania, *CEC Chairperson*

Giorgi Sharabidze, *CEC Deputy Chair*

Giorgi Javakhishvili, *CEC Secretary*

Davit Gotsiridze, *CEC Member, P/U “Christian-Conservative Party of Georgia”*

David Gurgenidze, *P/U “European Georgia”*

Davit Kirtadze, *CEC Member, P/U „United National Movement”*

Levan Maisuradze, *CEC Member, P/U “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”*

Khatuna Skhirtladze, *CEC Member, P/U “Alliance of Patriots of Georgia”*

Marine Tsulukidze, *CEC Member, P/U “Industry Saves Georgia”*

Giorgi Chikaberidze, *CEC Member, Elected by the Parliament of Georgia*

Irakli Chkoidze, *CEC Member, P/U “United Democratic Movement”*

Zurab Khrikadze, *CEC Member, Elected by the Parliament of Georgia*

Dimitri Javakhadze, *CEC Member, Elected by the Parliament of Georgia*

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the amendments made to the Organic Law of Georgia on “Election Code” in 2017, rule for composing the CEC was changed. This change was made on the next day after publicizing all kinds of summery protocols (publicized according to the CEC rule) on the results of 2017 Municipal Elections. In compliance with the new rule, the CEC is composed of the Chairperson and 11 members. The CEC Chairperson is also the CEC member. Six members are nominated by the President of Georgia and elected by the Parliament. Other six members are appointed by parties. The CEC Chairperson is presented by the President of Georgia and elected by the CEC.



## Composition of CEC as of December 31, 2017

Tamar Zhvania, *CEC Chairperson*

Giorgi Sharabidze, *CEC Deputy Chair*

Giorgi Javakhishvili, *CEC Secretary*

Archil Anasashvili, *CEC Member, P/U “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”*

David Gurgenidze, *P/U “European Georgia”*

Davit Kirtadze, *CEC Member, P/U „United National Movement”*

Levan Maisuradze, *CEC Member, P/U “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia”*

Khatuna Skhirtladze, *CEC Member, P/U “Alliance of Patriots of Georgia”*

Marine Tsulukidze, *CEC Member, P/U “Industry Saves Georgia”*

Giorgi Chikaberidze, *CEC Member, Elected by the Parliament of Georgia*

Irakli Chkoidze, *CEC Member, P/U “United Democratic Movement”*

Zurab Khrikadze, *CEC Member, Elected by the Parliament of Georgia*

Dimitri Javakhadze, *CEC Member, Elected by the Parliament of Georgia*

In 2017, apart from the CEC sessions, the CEC members were actively involved in the activities of various working groups at the CEC (Council of Gender Equality, working groups for ethnic minorities and PWDs), also, in preparing learning materials, discussing legislative initiatives and monitoring informational-educational projects implemented by the Election Administration. They participated in observation missions, international conferences and working meetings.

# CEC's Structural Units

## **Electoral Processes Management Department**

Giorgi Sekhniashvili, *Head of Department*

## **Legal Department**

Giorgi Dzagania, *Acting Head of the Department*

## **Registration and Administrative Department**

Elisabed Velidze, *Head of the Department*

## **Public Relations Department**

Ketevan Dangadze, *Head of the Department*

## **Finance Department**

Otar Buskivadze, *Head of the Department*

## **Voters' List Formation and Information Technologies Department**

Avtandil Tsiskaridze, *Head of the Department*



**Coordination, Planning and Reporting Department**

Sopho Sichinava, *Head of the Department*

**Internal Audit Department**

Valerian Maisuradze, *Head of the Department*

**Human Resources Management Department**

Tamar Shukakidze, *Head of Department*

**Spokesperson**

Ana Mikeladze

**Advisor to Chairperson**

Tamaz Sharmanashvili

**Information Security Manager**

Kakhaber Zhamurashvili

**LEPL - Electoral Systems Development,  
Training Centre**

Natia Zaalishvili, *Director of the Training Centre*

Reforms and

# The Central Election Commission and the Training Centre Express their Gratitude Towards:



The CEC also expresses its gratitude towards every employee of the Election Administration for adhering to professional standards and ethical norms of election officials in their work.



United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for financial support to implement various programs

International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) for cooperation and significant contributions to implement various projects



Council of Europe (CoE) for its support with various programs

The Venice Commission for expert assistance and close cooperation



The European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for their support of the Technical Working Group (TWG) activities in the CEC.



International Center for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS) for organizational and financial support of the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Election Administrations.

In addition, the CEC is thankful to all the organizations and their representatives who participated in 2017 in the activities of the target groups created at the CEC and contributed to the improving process of the electoral environment.

# Preface

At present, the Central Election Commission of Georgia (CEC) enjoys increased level of public trust. The administration of several elections, recognized for its professionalism, contributed to the increase in public trust and improved image of the CEC, both domestically and internationally.

The CEC, its Apparatus and LEPL Center for Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Training Centre (Training Centre) – conduct their activities in accordance with the Organic Law of Georgia “Election Code of Georgia” and in compliance with the Strategic and Annual Action Plans 2015-2019 of the Election Administration. The Strategic Plan defined the following strategic priorities:

**Institutional Strengthening** – strengthen independence, professionalism and the credibility of the election administration, the establishment of an effective budget policy and a continuous organizational and professional development system that contributes to the development of democratic processes.

**Civic and Voter Education** – increase the level of civic engagement in electoral processes, boost voter turnout and promote voters’ informed choice through educational programs.

**Electoral Environment** – create an inclusive electoral environment through active participation of stakeholders in election processes and promote the process of improving legislation.

**Electoral Operations** – organize elections at a distinctly professional level, timely inform public on the election process and results and ensure information publicity.

**In the process of implementation of the activities the CEC is guided by the stated principles of action:**

**Independence** – Election Administration is an independent institution, which operates within the legal framework and free from political influence.

**Transparency** – Election Administration ensures transparency of its work and accessibility of information to voters and electoral stakeholders.

**Professionalism** – Election Administration conducts its activities through qualified, competent human workforce.

**Accountability** – Election Administration is accountable for its actions and reports to voters and relevant institutions on a regular basis.

**Inclusivity** – Election Administration ensures creation of an inclusive electoral environment.

In accordance with the legislation, on the October 21, 2017 the Election Administration conducted Municipal Elections.. According to the evaluation of international and local observer organizations, all the necessary conditions were created for each voter's free expression of will. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) publicized the results of their research and stated that the population's assessment of the local self-government bodies elections was mainly positive. The vast majority of the people questioned in the public opinion survey stated that the electoral environment was well arranged (95%) and secure (93%). Persons responsible to conduct elections at the election precincts were assessed as respectively prepared (87%). The CEC has already submitted reports about the conducted elections to the Parliament of Georgia, as prescribed by the legislation. The reports were also publicized on the CEC website.

The present report covers the activities implemented by the CEC and the Training Centre from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017.

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2 Survey "Public assessment in Georgia" was carried out from November 29 to December 19, 2017. During the survey "representatives were selected" in Tbilisi, small and big urban settlements, villages, regions densely populated with ethnic minorities. While face-to-face interviews 2 298 citizens (responding 48%) were questioned in Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. The average margin of error is +/- 1.9%.

# International Recognition of the Election Administration

## International Electoral Awards 2013-2017

Within the framework of the International Electoral Affairs Symposium, organized by the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS), the CEC and the Training Centre received the following International Electoral Awards:

### International Electoral Award 2013

The Training Centre was awarded in the nomination “First Voter” for the educational project “Training Course in Electoral Legislation”.

### International Electoral Award 2015

The CEC won the award in the nomination “Election Management” for innovative program “Election Process Management System “Armasi” (EPMS).

### International Electoral Award 2016

The CEC won the award in category – “Minority Participation”.

### International Electoral Award 2017

The CEC received awards in two nominations:

“Citizen Engagement” – for the innovative project “Talk to Voters”;

“Electoral Conflict Management” – for implementing a project on election security.

### Joe C. Baxter Award

In 2017, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems awarded CEC Chairperson Tamar Zhvania with Joe C. Baxter award for development of electoral processes.

# Key Achievements of the Election Administration

The October 21, 2017 Municipal Elections held by the CEC, received mainly positive evaluation from the international observation missions.



The Elections were administered in a timely, effective and professional manner at all levels.

The stakeholders stated that accuracy of the voters' lists was highly trustworthy.

In 97% of the monitored polling stations, the process of voting was assessed as good or very good.

At the CEC sessions, applications/complaints were discussed in an open manner, with an active participation of the attendees and in full accordance with all the relevant legislative norms.

The CEC ensured that voters received comprehensive information about voters' registration by means of meetings, video clips and printed materials that were translated for ethnic minorities and in sign language as well.

## International Election Observation Mission<sup>3</sup>



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<sup>3</sup> Congress of OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. Report on preliminary findings and conclusions.



The central Election Commission (the CEC) fulfilled its administrative responsibilities in a timely, effective and transparent manner.

The Election Day was generally carried out in order. The NDI observers noted that in the areas where they attended the elections, the processes were transparent and calm.

Representatives of the Election Commission performed their functions decently during the entire Election day.

### **Observation Mission of the National Democratic Institute**

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The Local Self-Governance Elections were held in compliance with the international standards in Georgia and this was confirmed by the OSCE/ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

**FEDERICA MOGHERINI**  
EU High Representative

February 5, 2018 meeting of the EU-Georgia Association Council

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Election Commission of Georgia and the Georgian history of applying voting as a way of decision making and progress of the society is what makes us - IFES – very proud. Our mission is to ensure that every voice is heard and counted. Georgia – despite its very difficult neighborhood – is an outstanding example of democracy and electoral process in the world

**WILLIAM SWEENEY**

President and Chief Executive Officer of International Foundation for Electoral Systems (September 12, 2017 meeting with delegation from the Parliament of Georgia).



## Challenges and Recommendations

Apart from the positive evaluation of the reports of local and international observation organizations, some deficiencies and relevant recommendations are also underlined. This aims at improving electoral processes and environment. Besides, in these reports, there are some issues having utmost importance for the Election Administration. Among them, there are issues about improving processes of counting votes and drawing up protocols. The Election Administration plans to consider all the important opinions of its partners and, within its competence, take them into account while planning and implementing the future activities. Thus, during the 2018 Elections, there will be all the relevant conditions for citizens of Georgia to express their will freely.

## New Initiatives of 2017

### THE CEC INITIATIVE “TALK TO VOTERS”

The Election Administration implemented its initiative “Talk to Voters” for the first time in 2017. The project was implemented to inform voters on the upcoming Municipal Elections,, as well as improve the communication between voters and district election commission, popularize the EA activities, raise awareness, strengthen its image and develop the services offered to the population. It needs to be noted, that the project was carried out in the municipality centers and villages throughout the county, including the regions densely populated with the ethnic minorities.

At the first stage, 450 informational meetings – “Voters’ day” – were held throughout Georgia: 347 – in the places of public gathering; 103 – in district election commissions. 340 members of district election commissions and 491 volunteers participated in the project. 48 174 citizens participated in the project and 11 458 citizens indicated their opinions in the opinion cards.

At the second stage of the project – Find Yourself, Find Your Election Precinct – members of the Election Administration helped the voters to check their data in the unified voters’ list using modern technologies. 991 924 voters used the services offered by the CEC.

During the third stage of the project – Come to Vote – flyers containing information on electoral procedures were distributed to the voters. The flyers were available in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages.

### ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION PROGRAM

For 2017 Municipal Elections, following the initiative of the CEC and with the financial support of the Council of Europe, electronic registration program<sup>4</sup> was developed. During

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<sup>4</sup> In December 2016, according to the Election Administration Strategy and Action Plan 2017, based on the CEC Chairperson’s order, “Working group responsible for developing and implementing electronic registration programs” was created, composed of the CEC officials, members and staff.

Municipal Elections, this innovative program enabled election subjects to appoint on-line their representatives at all levels of election commissions. 23 political parties participated in this pilot program. These parties used the program and were registered as 19 election subjects. Via the Electronic Registration Program 1 232 representatives were registered in the CEC and district election commissions and 56 082 representatives – in precinct election commissions.

In order to find out how effective the program was, election subjects were questioned and the majority of them evaluated it positively. The program eased the registration procedures for electoral subjects and in addition, enabled the Election Administration to analyze and review the submitted documentation in a timely manner.

The next stage of the program development is to create/establish electronic registration program that allows the observers of international, local and media organizations, electoral subjects, candidates, representatives, authorized parties to appoint commission members.

#### NEW SERVICE FOR DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED VOTERS

In 2017, new service for deaf and hearing impaired voters was created in the call/



informational center. The banner “video call” placed on the CEC website enabled deaf and hearing impaired voters by making a video call connect to the call center and receive electoral information in sign language from the operators. The project was implemented through cooperation with the Union of Deaf of Georgia.

### TRAINING PROGRAM ON “ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDINGS RELATED TO ELECTORAL DISPUTES”

The CEC and the Training Centre worked out a new training program on “Administrative Proceedings Related to Electoral Disputes”. District election commission chairpersons and secretaries were trained within the scope of the training program. In some cases, members of commissions and regional coordinators were also trained.

The program increased the abilities of district election commission members with regard to administrative proceedings of electoral disputes. This resulted in decreased deficiencies and increased quality in the normative acts issued by commission members during the elections. Also, after finishing the trainings, district election commissions had possibilities to carry out administrative proceedings more effectively.







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Prillar

Institutional  
Strenghtening

# STRATEGIC PRILLAR 1: Institutional Strenghtening

## GOAL 1: ENSURE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

In 2017, in order to ensure effective management, the Election Administration carried out activities to improve planning, monitoring and reporting processes. Internal audit was made in the Election Administration and the organization subordinated to the CEC state control. The Effectiveness of organizational structure was assessed and internal communication system was improved in the Election Administration.

These activities resulted in improving organizational risks management and enhancing financial management in district election commissions.

### Planning, Monitoring and Reporting of Election Administration's Activities

In 2017, deficiencies revealed during the working process and unforeseen circumstances were reflected in the rule. Articles on the EA Strategic and Action Plans, also, articles on an elaboration of a plan for monitoring and evaluation the strategic plan were added to the rule. As a result of the five implemented amendments, chances of duplicating reports on activities carried out during the election and non-election periods were eliminated. The process was systemized for elaborating strategic Plan of the Election Administration and its monitoring and evaluation plan. The rule was renewed and received a new name – “Rule for Planning, monitoring and reporting of the Election Administration's activities”.

According to this rule, the Election Administration's Budget 2018 was planned. Also, the Action Plan 2018 of the Election Administration was elaborated.

After developing this rule, the reporting process has improved in the CEC. During the reporting period, 9 Structural Units and the Training Centre presented 27 reports to the CEC Chairperson. On the basis of these reports, Coordination, Planning and Reporting Department prepared and presented 3 consolidated (2 quarterly and 1 annual) reports to the CEC.

In accordance with the CEC practice, at the end of the reporting year, working meetings were held between the CEC Officials and members, where the heads of the Structural Units presented summary reports on the implemented activities. They evaluated the activities envisaged in the Action Plan and other supportive activities. Besides, they discussed a draft Action Plan of the Election Administration for 2018.

On April 4, 2017, the CEC Chairperson presented a report on the activities of the Election Administration and the Training Centre, carried out in 2016, to about 100 representatives of local and international non-governmental organizations, political parties, state agencies, and media. The report described the process of achieving goals defined in each strategic priority of Strategic Plan 2015-2019 and Action Plan 2016. It also reflected the activities carried out according to these directions.

On October 13 and 18, 2017 the CEC Chairperson presented an interim report on the October 21, 2017 Municipal Elections to the stakeholders and media. The invited guests were informed on the activities implemented by the EA, electoral environment and saw readiness for the elections.

As prescribed by legislation<sup>5</sup>, The CEC prepared and presented the report on October 8, 2016 Elections to the Parliament of Georgia. The report also covered October 8, 2016 Extraordinary Elections of Mayor of Self-governing City Akhaltsikhe and Gangebeli of Municipalities of Self-governing Communities Bolnisi, Kharagauli, Chiatura, Zugdidi, and Tsalenjikha. Apart from that, the report covered October 8, 2016 By-Elections of Sakrebulo of City Tbilisi, Tsalka, Chiatura, Abasha and City Zugdidi Municipalities and the October 30, 2016 Interim Elections of Lagodekhi and Senaki Municipalities.

### The CEC Prepared the Following Reports/Action Plans and Submitted them to the Relevant Institutions:

#### Public Defender

- Report on the CEC's activities carried out in 2016, in accordance with the goal 13.1 "Ensuring Gender Equality and Protection of Women's Rights", envisaged in the Action Plan of the Government of Georgia on the Protection of Human Rights (2016-2017);
- Reports on the CEC's activities carried out in 2014, 2015 and 2016, in accordance with the Action Plan 2014-2016 of Gender Equality Policy of Georgia.

#### The Human Rights Secretariat of the Administration of the Government of Georgia

- Report on the activities carried out by the CEC and the Training Centre in 2016, in accordance with the Action Plan of the Government of Georgia on the Protection of Human Rights (2016-2017);
- According to the questionnaire of the Incheon Strategy of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the report on providing services by the CEC for persons with disabilities and adapted polling stations of Tbilisi city.

<sup>5</sup> According to the article 14, paragraph 1, subparagraph "O" of Organic Law of Georgia "Election Code of Georgia", the CEC is responsible to present a report to the Parliament of Georgia within 60 days after summing up each election results.

### Office of the State Ministry of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality

- According to the Action Plan 2017 and the State Strategy for Civil Equality and Integration, the report on activities carried out by the CEC;
- According to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the report on activities carried out by the CEC.
- According to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Action Plan 2017 for implementing its standards, the report on activities carried out by the CEC;
- Within its competence, the activities carried out by the CEC in accordance with the Action Plan 2017 of the State Strategy for Civil Equality and Integration;
- Within its competence, the activities carried out by the CEC in accordance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Action Plan 2017-2020 for implementing its standards, the report on activities carried out by the CEC;
- According to the Action Plan 2017-2018 of Pankisi Gorge Development, the report on activities carried out by the CEC;
- According to the Action Plan 2018 of the State Strategy for Civil Equality and Integration, the report on activities carried out by the CEC.

### Ministry of Finance of Georgia

- Accounting information (balance) of 2017;
- Report on budget execution in 2017 (six months accounting, reports on budget execution in III and IV quarters).

### Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia

- According to the Action Plan 2014-2016 of Gender Equality Policy of Georgia, the report on the activities carried out by the CEC.

### Internal Audit of the Election Administration and the Organization Subordinate to the CEC State Control

The Internal Audit Department implemented audit of reasonability and effectiveness in Voters' List Formation and Informational Technologies Department, Registration and Administrative Department and Human Resources Management Department. Audit was also implemented in N6 Samgori, N58 Tskaltubo and N79 Batumi District Election Commissions. As a result of the needs identified during internal audit inspection, relevant recommendations were worked out and submitted to the CEC management.

### Document of Organizational Risk Management

In order to create a document for organizational risk management policy of the Election Administration, a working group was created in accordance with the CEC Chairperson's order. The group made a detailed analysis of organizational risks of the Structural Units. Forms were filled in to identify, evaluate and manage organizational risks of the CEC

Structural Units. Based on the information received, 24 common risks were identified. Simultaneously, it was decided to create mechanisms for identifying, evaluating, analyzing and preventing common risks of the Election Administration. The document of organizational risk management is available only for internal organizational purposes.

### Analysis of Monitoring of the Procedures in Terms of Information Security

In order to implement state policy in the information security direction, the Information Security Council of the CEC renewed “Document of Informational Security Policy of the Election Administration of Georgia”.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of risk management in information security direction, a document of “Methodology of Information Security Risk Management” was created. This document reflected weaknesses and threats in the security direction and, consequently, activities were planned for their prevention.

### System of Evaluation of Organizational Structure Effectiveness

In order to reorganize the CEC Structural Units and relevant positions, the Human Resources Management Department implemented structural analysis<sup>6</sup> of the CEC Apparatus. As a result of the analysis, recommendations were presented to the CEC authorities and Heads of Structural Units. The results of the evaluation of the CEC Apparatus Structure Effectiveness and the process of structural reorganization was written in the relevant protocol and established in accordance with the respective legislative acts of the CEC.

Various legal requirements were taken into consideration while evaluating the Organizational Structure. New staff list was created and remunerations were defined according to the Law of Georgia on “Payment in Public Establishment.”<sup>7</sup>

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6 The Human Resources Department implemented analysis of the CEC Apparatus Structure in accordance with the article 125, paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of the Law of Georgia on “Public Service”. Also, in compliance with N215 Ordinance (issued on April 26, 2017) of the Government of Georgia – “On the determination of hierarchical lists of positions of professional public officials and distribution of hierarchical rankings, corresponding hierarchical ranks.”

7 Law of Georgia on “Payment in Public Establishment” will enact in January 1, 2018.

### Reorganization of the Positions of the Election Administration

With regard to the enactment of the Law of Georgia on “Public Service” and in accordance with the reorganization of the CEC Apparatus positions, carried out by the Department of Human Resources Management and the Legal Department, concrete legal acts of the CEC were examined. Based on the reorganization, these legal acts needed amendments. A relevant guideline was worked out and protocol<sup>8</sup> on reorganization process was drawn up. The legal acts were prepared and new contracts were made with the contract employees.

New internal rule of the Election Administration of Georgia was developed, that was legally enforced on September 1, 2017.

### System of Internal Communication of the Election Administration

In order to improve internal communication of the Election Administration, the Human Resources Department created a technical task of the internal informational portal. Based on this task, the Voters’ List Formation and Information Technologies Department developed a demo version for the portal that operates in testing mode.

It needs to be noted, that at the CEC Apparatus there is the on-going last stage of implementing an electronic management system for business processes. A technical task is developed for the informational portal of this system. This task will become a part of the internal informational portal of the CEC Apparatus.

### Improving Financial Management in District Election Commissions

In order to improve effective financial and budgetary policies of the Election Administration and financial management of District Election Commissions, financial activities of DEC’s were studied for the period of 2016 Parliamentary Elections of Georgia. Consequently, a textbook-guideline “Financial Management of DEC’s” was renewed, including, a rule of writing a budgetary application by District Election Commissions and submitting it to the CEC was added to the textbook/manual. The Financial Department held trainings for the DEC Chairs and helped them to study textbook-manual.

The fact that the textbook-guideline was renewed and enforced regulations and innovations were added to it, reduced number of deviations/deficiencies and supported improvement of DEC’s financial management.

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<sup>8</sup> The Human Resources Management Department prepared a protocol on reorganization according to the following documents: the article 125, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Law of Georgia on “Public Service”, N215 Ordinance (issued on April 26, 2017) of the Government of Georgia – “On the determination of hierarchical lists of positions of professional public officials and distribution of hierarchical rankings, corresponding hierarchical ranks”, Ordinance N54/2015 of the CEC (issued on November 25, 2015) and Decree N51/2017 of the CEC (issued on June 28, 2017) on “Determining staff list, remuneration and expenditures of the officials, members and the Apparatus of the Central Election Commission of Georgia”.

### Renewing the Rule of Financing District Election Commissions

For each election, a rule for financing District Election Commissions is approved by the CEC ordinance. The ordinance is supplemented by an annex – a special application – according to which the District Election Commissions manage finances. In order to eliminate the deficiencies revealed during October 8, 2016 Parliamentary Elections of Georgia, a rule for financing District Election Commissions was renewed.

Finance Department developed a “Draft Budgetary Application” for District Election Commissions. District Commissions filled in the applications in test mode supplemented them with notes and submitted. After analyzing this information, budgetary applications were prepared for District Election Commissions and the terms for their submission to the CEC were prescribed. Besides, boundaries/limits for financing DEC’s were defined.

District Election Commissions were asked to fill in the budgetary applications within the financial boundaries/limits and submit them to the CEC. If the amount of money required in an application was above the financial boundaries/limits, Commissions had to present well-grounded request. Finance Department processed received information and prepared statistics on expenditures of District Election Commissions for the 2013-2016 period. On the basis of the statistics, a rule of allocation and using finances by DEC’s was worked out and approved for 2017 Municipal Elections.

Before 2017, the rule of financing the District Election Commissions did not envision the above-mentioned stages. It was the first time in 2017 when budget planning process of the DEC’s was based on their supported-budget application and financial boundaries/limits. The rule supported not only election budget planning but also improved monitoring of the finances allocated to the District Election Commissions.

### Electronic Accounting System of the Administration’s Assets/Reserves

In order to find the capabilities of the electronic accounting system for assets/reserves of the District Election Commissions, a SWOT analysis was carried out. It analyzed strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats related to developing the program. As a result of consultation between the working group created for implementing this project and suppliers of the accounting program, study document was prepared. The document revealed that at this stage, it is not recommended to implement the accounting system for assets/reserves at the District Election Commissions.

### Automatic Electronic Document Management System (e-Document)

At the CEC Apparatus document management is accomplished by the Automatic Electronic Document Management System. During the reporting period, the Registration and Administrative Department of the CEC registered: received – 5 792, outgoing – 2 384, and internal organizational – 1 445 correspondences/documents.

### Converting The CEC Archive Original Documents into Electronic Formats, Integrating Documents in Electronic Archive Program

Instead of converting 10 000 documents, as it was envisioned in the Action Plan 2017 of the Election Administration, 11 681 documents were converted into electronic format and integrated into the electronic archive program. The aim of this process was to enhance the Election Administration's institutional memory and manage the unified database of the permanent documentation.

As a result of the activities carried out by the Registration and Administrative Department, in the electronic archive can be found 49 921 documents of the following 7 categories:

Nº	Name of Document	Years of Issuing Document	Number of Documents
1	The CEC Ordinance	1995-2016	1 259
2	The CEC Decree	2000-2016	4 678
3	Decree of the CEC Chairperson	2001-2016	1 620
4	Order of the CEC Chairperson	2001-2016	7 559
5	Decree of the CEC Secretary	2006-2016	3 894
6	Protocol on the CEC Session	1999-2016	1 146
7	Summary Protocols of Elections	2013 Presidential Elections	3 733
		2012 Parliamentary Elections	7 774
		2010 Elections of Local Self-government Bodies	6 002
		2010 Mayoral Elections of Tbilisi City	829
		2008 Parliamentary Elections	3 307
		2006 Elections of Local Self-government Bodies	6 188
		2004 Presidential Elections	1 932 (Ongoing)
<b>Total</b>			<b>49 921</b>

### Electronic Registry for Documentations of Election Subjects Participating in Elections

In order to increase access to the public information regarding election subjects participating in the elections, information electronic registry was created on the CEC website.<sup>9</sup> In 2017, the Registration and Administrative Department processed and placed in the registry the documentation related to October 1, 2012 Parliamentary Elections of Georgia, June 15, 2014 Elections of Local Self-government Bodies and October 8, 2016 Parliamentary Elections of Georgia.

In order to post election-related documentation on the informational website, the Voters' List Formation and Informational Technologies Department created a special module that was used while processing electoral documents of October 21, 2017 Municipal Elections. Apart from that, an electronic search system for local/international observer/media organizations was posted on the website. In the reporting period, statutes of registered parties/blocs and party lists related to October 8, 2016 Parliamentary Elections of Georgia, October 1, 2012 Parliamentary Elections of Georgia and June 15, 2014 Elections of Local Self-government Bodies, are integrated into the search system.

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<sup>9</sup> See the registry of documents on election subjects participating in the elections <http://partylists.cec.gov.ge/>.

## GOAL 2: HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Training policy and plan were approved in the direction of human resources development and system for retraining employees was created. Also, Certification Exams for Election Administration Officials were conducted.

Significant achievement is the reorganization of the CEC Apparatus positions that was carried out after enacting the Law of Georgia on “Public Service”.

### Raising Staff Qualification

The CEC developed and approved a training policy document to maintain continuous professional development of the Election Administration staff. In January, 2017 training needs were analyzed and, accordingly, the CEC Chairperson approved a training plan . In 2017, 51 staff members participated in 7 trainings/working meetings.

N	Training Name	Implementing Organization	The CEC Structural Unit	Number of Participants
1	State Procurement Training Course	The LEPL -State Procurement Agency;	Financial Department District Election Commission	16
2	Training for Public Officers in Developing Public Policy and Making Decisions	Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies US Agency for International Development (USAID)/Human and Institutional Capacity Development Program (HICD 2020); Mendez England & Associates (ME&A); LEPL – Civil Service Bureau	Department of Human Resources	1

10 Plan for development/trainings of the staff was approved according to the CEC Chairperson’s Decree N01-08, issued on February 16, 2017.

3	Working Meeting with the Inspector of Personal Data Protection Apparatus	Apparatus of Personal Data Protection Inspector	Human Resources Management Department Electoral Processes Management Department Legal Department Registration and Administrative Department Voters' List Formation and Informational Technologies Department The Public Relations Department Information Security Manager	10
4	Seminar on Diversity Management	Promoting Integration, Tolerance and Awareness Program (PITA); UN Association of Georgia (UNAG); US Agency for International Development (USAID); Partners – Georgia	The Training Centre Human Resources Management Department	2
5	Capacity Building Program for Election Administrations	The Association of World Election Bodies	Internal Audit Department	2
6	Winter School “New Voting Technologies”	Council of Europe	Voters' List Formation and Informational Technologies Department	2
7	Mentoring and Teaching Program for the Staff Members	Partners – Georgia	All Departments The Training Centre	18



The CEC Employees Attending the Trainings for Raising Qualification

### Administering the Election Administration Selection/Recruitment Contests

In order to recruit qualified human resources, the following contests were conducted for selecting the CEC Apparatus Officials and Members of District Election Commissions:

Name of Contest	Number of Vacancies	Number of Contestants	Number of Selected Contestants
The CEC Apparatus	5	490	5
Internship at the CEC Apparatus Six Structural Units	38	1 622	38
Permanent Members of District Election Commissions	134	402	132 (two ongoing contests)
Temporal Members of District Election Commissions	73	134	73

### Orientation Program for New Staff and Interns

According to the CEC system, five orientation programs were conducted for 74 new staff and interns selected in the contest. New employees studied the administrative procedures, working standards, code of ethics and internal rules of the election administration.

The Training Centre implemented an orientation program “A Review of Election Procedures and General Training Course” for new staff and interns of the Election Administration. 31 persons participated in two orientation programs carried out in the Training Centre.



Orientation Program for New Staff and Interns

### Creating Institute of Mentoring

The training course “Mentoring and Teaching Program for the Staff Members” was held at the first stage of creating Mentoring Institute during the CEC Apparatus. The CEC Spokesperson, Heads of the CEC Structural Units and the Training Centre attended the course. The course was carried out by the trainers of the non-governmental organization “Partners - Georgia”. The Participants studied the following modules: Mentor’s Functions and Tasks, Necessary Skills and Personal Characteristics to Mentor a Manager, basic Conditions for Effective Mentoring.

### Certification of the Election Administration Officials

The Training Centre organized two certification exams<sup>11</sup> to examine the election legislation’s knowledge of Georgian citizens and select qualified human resources afterwards. The first exam was conducted from February 27 to April 19, 2017, and the second from May 30 to July 14, 2017.



*Certification Exams of the Election Administration Officials*

For the 2017 certification exams, the Training Centre prepared 2 521 tests and ensured these tests along with answer keys were uploaded on the websites<sup>12</sup> of the CEC and the Training Centre for a preliminary introduction.

<sup>11</sup> Training Centre conducts certification exams for election administration officials according to subparagraph “e” of paragraph 3 of article 17 of the Organic Law of Georgia “Election Code of Georgia”.

<sup>12</sup> Exam tests included the following categories of questions: Constitution of Georgia – 600 questions; Organic Law of Georgia “Election Code of Georgia” – 1 800 questions; General skills (verbal section) – 100 questions; General skills (mathematical section) – 21 questions (sample).

People willing to take the certification exams of the election administration officials could register online.<sup>13</sup> The exams were conducted through electronic testing method. Each person taking the test had to answer 30 questions that were generated randomly by the system. In order to obtain a positive assessment, examinees had to earn 24 points. In case of positive results at the exam, the Certificate of the Election Administration Official was issued on the spot.

The Voters' List Formation and Informational Technologies Department ensured the accurate technical conduct of the Certification Exams of the Election Administration Officials. The Training Centre prepared a video clip about the exams that was aired on six television channels. Also, the clip was placed on the CEC and Training Centre's websites and social networks (Facebook page). The video clip was accompanied by the sign language (gesture language) and was available in ethnic minority languages (Armenian and Azerbaijani).

The exams were observed by two local non-governmental organizations.<sup>14</sup>

[The results of two Certification Exams of the Election Administration Officials conducted in 2017:](#)




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# 5,337

*Registered*

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# 1,749

*Appeared*

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# 430

*Participants passed the exam and received the Certificates of Election Administration Officials*

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- <sup>13</sup> Online registration was done on the website of the Training Center <http://www.electionreforms.ge/> according to the regulation on "Certification of Election Administration Officials" approved by the Decree N13/2012 of the CEC on 9 March 2012.
- <sup>14</sup> Two organizations observed the Certification Exams of the Election Administration Officials: Non-commercial Legal Entity "Public Advocacy" (3 observers) and Non-commercial Legal Entity "International Center for Democratic Institutions" (2 observers).

## Employee Health Insurance

In 2017, the majority of the Election Administration employees chose and agreed on the insurance company “Ardi”, to insure themselves and their family members. The number of the people insured was 711, including 447 employees of the Election Administration and 264 family members of the staff.

The CEC ensured working conditions for the family doctors of the Insurance Company at the CEC building in order to save the time of its employees.

## Staff Members’ Participation in Conferences, Training Programs and Working Meetings

In order to facilitate cooperation with the other countries’ election administrations and provide consultation services as well as share experience in election process management, members of the Central Election Commission (CEC), Apparatus personnel, the District Election Commissions (DECs) members, the Training Centre employees took part in 15 international conferences and working meetings.

Date	Topic	Organizing Organization/Country
April 03-15	Training program on sharing and developing existing opportunities related to voting and counting votes	The Association of the World Election Bodies/ South Korea
May 04-10	International Forum for Elections in Seoul	The Election Administration of Korea/Korea
May 8-12	8 <sup>th</sup> International Training for Long Term Observers	OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights/Bosnia and Herzegovina
May 25-26	14 <sup>th</sup> International Electoral Affairs Symposium	International Centre for Parliamentary Studies/ Sri Lanka
June 13-14	Cyber-security and Elections	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance/Netherlands
June 13-14	Round Table “Elections and Cyber-security”	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance/Netherlands
June 24-25	Seminar “Election Trainings”	India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management/ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance/India
September 1-2	3 <sup>rd</sup> General Essembly for Election Administrations Association International Conference “Casting Ballots and election results – use of modern technologies to ensure election transparency”	Election Commission of Romania/ Romania
October 16-17	Round Table “Experience and best practices of the election administration with regard to supporting gender equality in elections and women participation”	The Training Centre of the Election Administration of Moldova, UN Development Programme/Moldova

November 8-10	26 <sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Association of European Election Officials	Association of European Election Officials/ Bulgaria
November 9-10	International Conference “Using Administrative Resources in Electoral Process – the Main Challenge for Democratic Elections”	Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe, Venice Commission, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe/ England
November 15	International Conference “Election Administration System and Ways to Improve It”	The Election Administration of Ukraine, Council of Europe, International Foundation for Electoral Systems and OSCE Mission in Ukraine/ Ukraine
November 28	International Conference “Election Observation and New Technologies in Electoral Processes”	OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights/Austria
November 27 - December 1	Training for Long Term Observers	OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights/Sarajevo
December 5-6	15 <sup>th</sup> International Symposium of Electoral Issues	International Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Jordan’s Independent Election Commission/Jordan



Staff Members’ Participation in International Conferences

## Participation in Observation Missions

With the mission of international observers, Employees of the Election Administration (EA) and the Training Centre observed the elections held in 8 different countries:

- Presidential Elections in France;
- Parliamentary Elections in Armenia;
- Presidential Elections in South Korea;
- Municipal Elections (Local Elections) in Latvia;
- Early Parliamentary Elections in the Great Britain;
- Elections of the Senate of Parliament in Kazakhstan;
- General Elections of Ecuador;
- Presidential Elections in the Kyrgyz Republic.

After participation in the observation missions, the participants presented reports describing the received experience, established business contacts and the future recommendations. The Department of Public Relations of the CEC ensures organizing participation in the observation missions.



Participation of the Election Administration (EA) representatives in the observation missions

## Conferences and Working Meetings Held in Georgia

### Conference “2016 Elections: Experience Learned and Future Goals”

On March 13, 2017, within the framework of 2016-2019 Action Plan of the Council of Europe, a conference “2016 Elections: Experience Learned and Future Goals” was held with the support of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The stakeholders discussed options for improving Election Legislation and electoral environment. Also, they discussed effective ways of fulfilling international and local observers’ recommendations on October 8, 2016 Parliamentary Elections of Georgia and possibilities of improving electoral processes. Besides, the ways to prevent possible challenges during 2017 Municipal Elections were discussed at the meeting.



Conference “2016 Elections: Experience Learned and Future Goals”

### **Forum “Civil Society Development Initiative”**

On September 28, 2017 the Training Centre representatives participated in the forum held by the Civil Society Institute within the framework of the project “Civil Society Development Initiative”. The goal of the project was to improve the civil society environment in Georgia, strengthen civil society organizations, increase their accountability and support their contacts with the other stakeholders.

### **Working Meeting with Delegation of International Consortium (CEPPS)**

On May 22 2017, a meeting was held at the CEC between the CEC authorities and the representatives of the International Consortium oriented on strengthening electoral and political processes. The Consortium representatives were implementing a pilot research on using administrative resources. The participants of the meeting held discussions about using administrative resources during election campaign.

### **Regional Conference “Money in Politics”**

On 19, 2017, the CEC Chairperson participated in the regional conference “Money in Politics” organized by the State Audit Service, the Council of Europe, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutes and Human Rights, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Transparency International – Georgia, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy.

The aim of the event is to identify and address the problematic issues in the field of political finances by the representatives of agencies of political party monitoring and anti-corruption in the Central and Eastern European countries as well as by the representatives of civil society and political parties. In addition, improving existing gaps and finding ways to advance the monitoring was discussed.



Regional Conference “Money in Politics”



### **International Conference “Dialogue on Enhancing Electoral Integrity”**

On June 30, 2017, the international conference “Dialogue on Enhancing Electoral Integrity” was held, organized by the National Democratic Institute and Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM) and in co-operation with the Election Administration of Georgia. At the conference the CEC Chairperson made a speech about achievements and challenges of the Election Administration, co-operation between the election administrations and observer organizations, Voter’s List formation and transparency and, also, about the innovative projects implemented by the CEC in these directions. Representatives of election administrations, international and local observer organizations from 25 different countries attended the conference.



International Conference “Dialogue on Enhancing Electoral Integrity”



### **Working Meeting with Delegation from the Association of World Election Administrations (A-WEB)**

On June 30, 2017, the CEC authorities met the General Director of the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB). At the meeting the parties discussed the future co-operation goals in the direction of organizing election.

### **Working Meeting on “Election Security”**

On July 26, 2017, with the support of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the CEC and the Training Centre held a working meeting “Election Security” with the

authorities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. The parties discussed the activities to be implemented for conducting the Local Self-government Elections in a peaceful and free environment and developing/updating educational projects with regard to security. The participants also held discussions about creating a memorandum between the CEC and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

### Conference “2016 Parliamentary Elections: Lessons Learned and Steps to be Taken Ahead of 2017 Local Elections”

Representatives of the CEC and the Training Centre participated in the conference “2016 Parliamentary Elections: Lessons Learned and Steps to be Taken Ahead of 2017 Local Elections” organized by the local non-governmental organization “Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association”. The participants of the conference discussed violations identified during the pre-election period, on the Election Day, and after the elections, the activities of the election stakeholders along with supporting inclusive electoral environment.



Conference Organized by the “Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association”

### Conference “GEORGIA – EU ASSOCIATION OBJECTIVES“

On December 11, 2017, the CEC Chairperson Tamar Zhvania participated in the conference “Georgia – EU Association Objectives”, organized by the Government of Georgia and the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform. The main topics of the conference referred to local self-government reform, electoral systems, and the results of the Municipal Elections.



Conference “Georgia – EU Association Objectives”

## Memorandums of Cooperation

### Memorandum of Cooperation between the CEC and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia

In order to conduct 2017 Municipal Elections in a peaceful and safe environment, Memorandum of Cooperation<sup>15</sup> was signed between the CEC and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. The memorandum was supported by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. Creation of the memorandum supported, on the one hand, to the conduct of the Elections in a peaceful and safe environment, and on the other hand, to organizing joint training courses and working meetings during the Election period.



*The CEC Chairperson Tamar Zhvania and Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia – Giorgi Mghebrishvili signed the Memorandum of Cooperation*

### Memorandum of Cooperation on Using Administrative Resources during October 21, 2017 Elections

Memorandum of Cooperation<sup>16</sup> was signed by the CEC, the Inter-Agency Commission for Free and Fair Elections and ten local NGOs. One political party also joined the memorandum. By signing the document, the parties agreed on uniform interpretation of articles 45, 48 and 49 and confirmed that they would be guided by the interpretations in the memorandum with regard to the pre-election agitation and administrative and judicial proceedings. The document was developed in cooperation with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) on the basis of working meetings of the Election Administration and local NGOs.

### Code of Conduct of the Election Administration of Georgia and Local Observer Organizations

On September 27, 2017, representatives of the Election Administration and 31 local observer organizations signed the Code of Conduct. The parties agreed that they would be guided by the Georgian Legislation, international standards of elections and the mentioned Code of Conduct in order to support fair and transparent conduct of 2017 Municipal Elections.

<sup>15</sup> Please see the memorandum of cooperation between the CEC and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia on the link: <http://cesko.ge/res/docs/Memorandum19.09.2017.pdf> .

<sup>16</sup> Please see the memorandum on pre-election agitation and administrative resources on the link: <http://cesko.ge/res/docs/Memorandum.pdf>

### GOAL 3: IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Efficient management of the election administration requires proper infrastructure. In 2017, the Election Administration assets/reserves were accounted, electoral infrastructure was improved, all the electoral districts were provided with VPN networks, electronic election management system (“Armasi”) was updated and other activities were carried out. Some innovative programs have been developed and others are being developed. This will improve and simplify functioning of the Election Administration.

Creating the Electronic Registration Program for election subjects is a great achievement.

#### Ensuring District Election Commissions with VPN Networks

On July 1, 2017, the Company “Silknet” provided 51 District Election Commissions with optical cable, in order to improve electronic connection with DEC. The Internet became more stable and steady. As a result, equipment configuration of the existing VPN networks was changed.

#### Upgrade Servers and Increase Capacities of Reserving a Large Amount of Information

During the election period, the CEC servers were significantly strengthened. The Council of Europe financed a project “Electronic Registration Program for political parties, election subjects, candidates, and representatives”. Within the project, two new servers were purchased and a device for reserving big amount of data was purchased additionally resulting in improving capacities of reserving a large amount of information.

#### Electronic Registration Program

For October 21, 2017 Municipal Elections, Electronic Registration Program<sup>17</sup> for election subjects was created initiated by the CEC and co-financed by the Council of Europe. The goal of the program was to enable political parties and initiative groups of voters to fulfill the registration procedures online.

Instructions/rules<sup>18</sup> on using electronic registration program were established for election subjects. Election subjects could appoint, submit applications and register their representatives electronically. Information meetings were held for the political parties’ representatives, they were instructed and given instructions by the CEC. 150 representatives of 73 DEC. were also instructed about using the program.

<sup>17</sup> In December 2016, according to the Election Administration Strategy, Action Plan 2017 and the CEC Chairperson’s order, “Working Group for Developing and Implementing the Electronic Registration Programs” was created involving the CEC authorities, members and employees.

<sup>18</sup> Rules and terms for electronic registrations were approved according to August 22, 2017, 38/2017 Ordinance. The Ordinance was issued on “Rules and Terms on Submitting Applications by Election Subjects to Appoint and Register their Representatives Electronically.”

At the first stage, during the Municipal Elections, the pilot module of the electronic registration program for election subjects was developed and started functioning. The module allowed election subjects to appoint their representatives at all levels of election commissions. 23 political parties joined the pilot program of electronic registration. These parties were registered through the program as 19 electoral subjects. After making an election registration request, each electoral subject was given user's unique name and password. The electronic space allowed them to present necessary documentation for registering their representatives and get familiar with the legal acts, instructions and information related to the election activities. Through the electronic registration program, the electoral subjects registered 1 232 representatives at the CEC and DEC's and 56 082 representatives – at Precinct Election Commissions. Using the program, the election subjects also withdrew and replaced their representatives.

The above mentioned program simplified registration procedures for the election subjects and enabled the Election Administration to process and check the documentation promptly.

In order to study the efficiency of the program, after the elections, an interim assessment was carried out and 14 election subjects were questioned through an electronic questionnaire. Majority of the respondents noted that the program is simple, saves time and material resources, includes much necessary information and the design is good.

The next stage of the program development is to implement electronic registration program modules for observers of international, local and media organizations, political parties, election subjects, candidates and representatives.

### Election Management Electronic System “Armasi”

Election Management Electronic System “Armasi” was upgraded for the Municipal Elections. Developing electronic registration program for electoral subjects automatically caused changes in the existing modules (the CEC/district) of the system “Armasi”. Besides, new modules and submodules were added to the system and used while administering new electronic registration program (elre.cec.gov.ge) by the CEC and electoral districts. Apart from that, the existing modules were changed due to the needs emerged while using the program.

### Systems against Cyber Attack

The risks related to the information assets were identified after considering how to minimize cyber-attacks, upgrade security systems, and ensure protection against global cyber-attacks of 2017 and malware. The existing security system was substituted by a new system of non-sanctioned attacks prevention. In order to ensure continuity of the service, another copy of the system and licenses were purchased additionally.

### Network Monitoring System at the CEC Administrative Building

In order to improve monitoring system of the Election Administration network, a relevant monitoring system was selected and adopted. Through the system, it is possible to analyze the network and servers' functioning and collect statistical data supporting making the right and effective decisions in the direction of information technologies in the future.

The monitoring system also creates possibilities of detecting potential threats in relation to security and reacting to incidents promptly.

### System of Purposeful and Effective Use of Information Assets of Electronic Processing

During the reporting period, taking into consideration the amount of the CEC informational technologies, it became necessary to centralize logging system, in order to increase the effective incident response. Information security manager and the Voters' List Formation and Informational Technologies Department co-operated to ensure central logging program. This creates possibilities to analyze and account received logs automatically.

### Selecting and Implementing Modern Security Systems where Necessary

In order to improve information security, the necessity of implementing additional security systems was studied through co-operation of information security manager and Voters' List Formation and Information Technologies Department. Necessary apparatus for preventing penetration into the network was selected and installed, antivirus system was upgraded in the CEC. Also, in order to improve information security on the CEC websites, SSL cryptographic protocol was implemented and a relevant certificate was purchased.

### Improving Infrastructure of the Election Administration

In order to improve the infrastructure of the Election Administration, Finance Department processed 58 applications/requests on repair works from the Electoral Processes Management Department and DEC's. As a result of studies conducted on the spot by a specially created working group on existing conditions, a work plan and cost estimate were defined. 44 tenders were announced for repair works. 22 tenders were held, 14 – were not held and eight ended with a negative result.

In the reporting period, 22 buildings of DEC's were repaired, the central heating system was installed in 6 DEC's, the water system was repaired in one DEC and internal gasification network was provided in 4 DEC's. For the detailed information, please see in the table.

## District Election Commissions

N	Location	Work Description	Contract Amount	Provider	Means of Procurement
1	Lagodekhi	Repair works	23,174.00	Ltd Aghmashenebeli XXI	Electronic tender
2	Kaspi	Repair works	4,569.00	Ltd Mshenebeli 2013	Electronic tender
3	Gori	Repair works	8,299.47	Ltd Mouravi	Electronic tender
4	Sachkhere	Repair works	19,777.00	Individual Entrepreneur Nikoloz Abramishvili	Electronic tender
5	Khobi	Repair	8,813.00	Ltd T.B. Kapitali	Electronic tender
6	Ozurgeti	Repair	7,268.30	Ltd Gremi 2012	Electronic tender
7	Abasha	Repair	8,886.42	Ltd Tagi	Electronic tender
8	Vani	Repair of Building	7,726.00	Ltd T. B. Kapitali	Electronic tender
9	Lanchkhuti and Chokhatauri	Repair	4,603.99	Ltd Georgian Company	Electronic tender
10	Khashuri	Repair works	17,065.20	Individual Entrepreneur Jemali Chovelidze	Electronic tender
11	Khelvachauri	Repair	14,696.00	Ltd Ambari	Electronic tender
12	Khelvachauri	Repair works	6,918.65	Ltd Ambari	Simplified Procurement 52-6
13	Didube	Repair works	6,436.74	Partnership Alma 2017	Simplified Procurement 52-6
14	Khulo	Repair	9,130.00	Ltd Roda	Electronic tender
15	Tkibuli	Repair	12,487.09	Ltd Kemo	Electronic tender
16	Tskaltubo	Repair	19,782.00	Ltd T.B Kapitali	Electronic tender
17	Ambrolauri	Repair	59,934.00	Ltd Fineza	Electronic tender
18	Tsageri and Lentekhi	Repair	12,631.00	Ltd T.B Kapitali	Electronic tender
19	Adigeni	Repair	5,679.00	Ltd elva.ge	Electronic tender
20	Aspindza	Repair	12,282.00	Ltd elva.ge	Electronic tender
21	Mtskheta	Repair	20,989.73	Ltd Baso Group	Electronic tender
22	Kaspi	Repair works	499.95	Ltd Mshenebeli	Simplified Procurement

Total **2 91,648.54**

N	Location	Work Description	Contract Amount	Provider	Means of Procurement
1	Zestaponi	Installation of internal gasification network	450.08	Ltd Socar Gergia Gas	Simplified Procurement 52-6
2	Tkibuli	Installation of internal gasification network	848.72	Ltd Socar Gergia Gas	Simplified Procurement 52-6
3	Khobi	Installation of internal gasification network	363.00	Ltd Socar Gergia Gas	Simplified Procurement 52-6
4	Gldani	Arrangement of internal gasification network	650.00	Ltd Argi – Group	Simplified Electronic tender
5	Kazbegi Dusheti Tianeti Gori Kareli Lagodekhi	Central heating system installation	43,500.00	Qebuli Qebuli	Simplified Electronic tender
6	Mestia	Water system installation	960.00	Individual Entrepreneur Maizer Berdzenadze	Simplified Electronic tender
			<b>Total</b>	<b>46,771.80</b>	

Please see the information on the repair works carried out in the CEC Administrative building in the table below.

N	Location	Work Description	Contract Amount	Provider	Means of Procurement
1	CEC Administrative Building	Arrangement of a library	167,594.80	Ltd Ieri	Electronic tender
2		Repair works of storage room	228,222.64	Ltd Piramida X+I	Electronic tender
3		Repair works of the CEC Administrative building	52,983.80	Ltd "M&N"	Electronic tender
4		Repair works of roof	157,754.00	Partnership Alma 2017	Electronic tender
			40,246.00	Partnership Alma 2017	
5		Repair works of the fifth floor in 5 administrative buildings	304,998.12	Partnership Alma 2017	Simplified Procurement 52-6
6		Reconstruction of parking lot fence and generator/car wash	39,711.25	Ltd Interteknologi	Simplified Procurement 52-6
7	Repair works of the 6 <sup>th</sup> floor of the CEC	424,243.00	Ltd Alma 2017	Electronic tender	
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,415,753.61</b>		

In order to arrange the Election Administration's infrastructure, in 2017, 35 contracts were signed on carrying out repair works. These contracts included – 53 simplified electronic tenders (SET); 24 electronic tenders (ET); 1 simplified procurement (SP). 7 contracts were made in accordance with paragraph 6 of Article 52 of the Election Code of Georgia. The total amount of procurement of repair works was 1 714 723 Gel.

### State Procurement

Within the scope of 2017 state procurement plan, 89 tenders were announced. 59 tenders were held, 15 tenders were not held, 15 tenders ended with negative results.

The tenders economized 329 809 Gel.

## GOAL 4. STRENGTHENING IMAGE

In order to strengthen public image of the Election Administration, the CEC defined main directions of information/image campaign. The campaign involved informing voters, relations with media outlets, informing stakeholders, organizing election-related events, as well as positioning the CEC as a regional leader by providing consultation/expert services in election management sphere.

Implementing effective information/image campaign and informing voters on electoral processes is deemed to be a great achievement.

### Implementing Information/Image Campaign

For the reporting period, Public Relations Department updated image/advertisement concept of the organization that aimed at strengthening communication between the Election Administration and voters, popularizing the EA activities, increasing awareness and reinforcing the image. New slogan – “Even Closer” – underlines strengthening communication between the Election Administration and voters. Based on this concept, the EA implemented image/advertisement campaign for the following projects:

- Talk to Voters;
- Electoral Development School;
- Courses for Election Administrator;
- Elections and Young Voter.

To inform the society about the above mentioned projects and strengthen the Election Administration image, 5 video clips were made and posted on central as well as regional TV channels.

Main directions of information campaign were defined for the Municipal Elections. The campaign involved informing voters, relations with media outlets, informing stakeholders and organizing election-related events. The campaign aimed at informing voters on the Election Administration activities and the services that were offered by the EA to voters during the elections and on the polling day. Based on the updated PR campaign, the following materials were created and posted:

- 14 video and audio clips – on central and regional TV and radio channels;
- Advertising banners – on central and regional news agencies' web-pages;
- 14 outdoor banners – around Georgia;
- Information/image materials – in print media.

In accordance with the CEC information/image concept, a new slogan was created – “At Your Service” that, together with the existing slogan “Service of Democracy”, was used during the PR campaign. All informational videos were provided with sign language translation. All the election materials were translated on the languages of ethnic minorities (Armenian and Azerbaijani).

## Public Communication

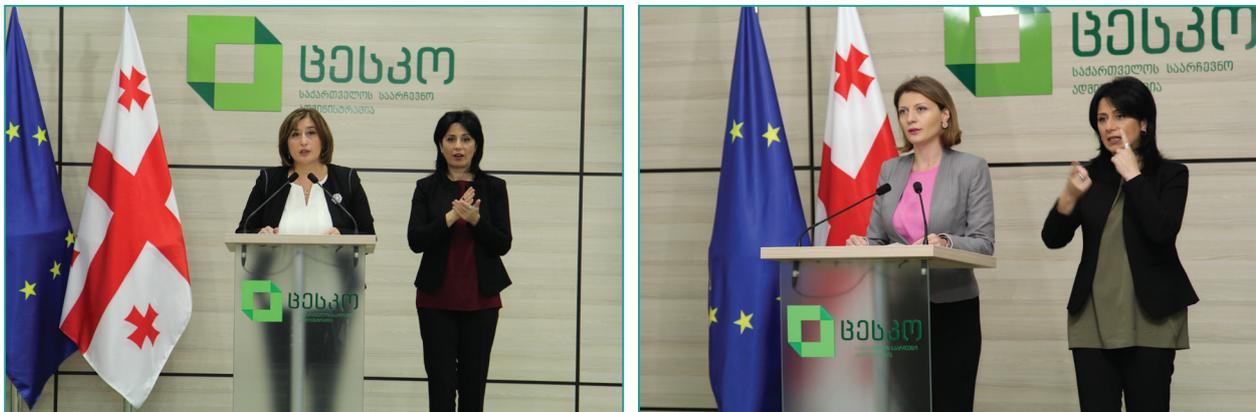
The Public Relations Department ensured information delivery to media, all stakeholders and the society on the CEC activities, through press releases, via website and social networks and by the direct contact with media representatives and stakeholders. The Department informed stakeholders on the results of the CEC sessions and other processes in the establishment.

Newsletters were prepared, translated into English, posted on the websites and sent to all the stakeholders. All the important information was published on the website in English as well as in Georgian. The CEC website in Abkhazian Language was also functioning. In 2017 the following materials were prepared and posted on the website:

- 277 news on the Election Administration activities;
- 51 press-releases on the results of the CEC sessions;
- 9 Newsletters.

About different issues media sources covered the following: 14 informational statements;

- 16 interviews;
- More than 180 comments;
- 31 briefings.



*On the polling day all the informational briefings of the CEC Chairperson and the Spokesperson held at the CEC were also accompanied with sign language*

## Social Media

In 2017, the Public Relations Department regularly administered social network pages of the CEC and the CEC Chairperson, monitored functioning of the pages and constantly updated news on the Election Administration activities. The design of the pages was partially upgraded. Questions from the users were promptly responded.

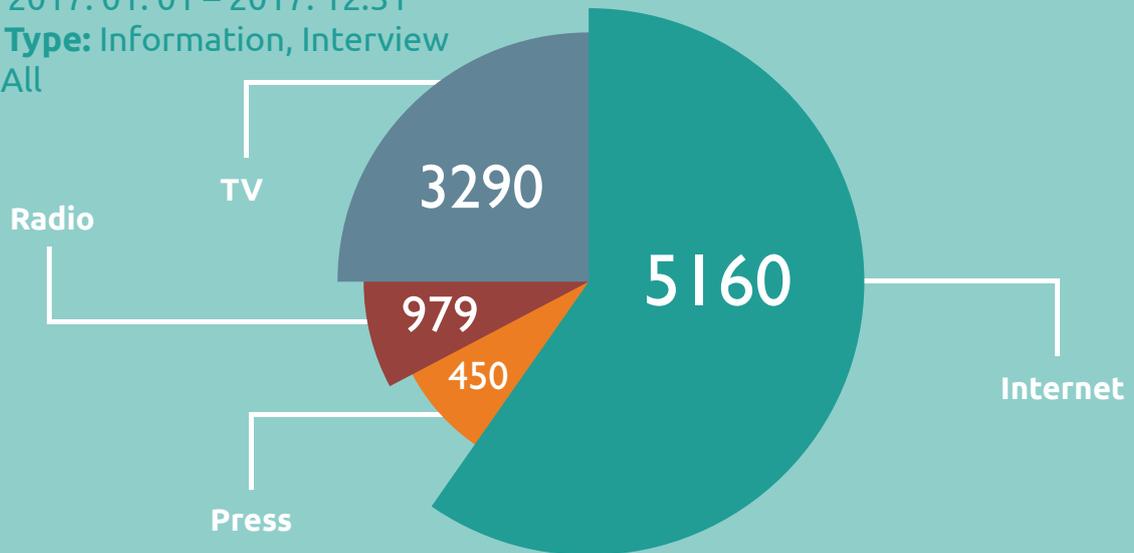


## Indicators of Number of Objects

**Period:** 2017. 01. 01 – 2017. 12.31

**Article Type:** Information, Interview

**Media:** All



### Offering Consultation Mechanisms and Sharing Best Practices with the Election Administrations of other Countries

In order to share the experience and best practices of the Election Administration, in 2017 the CEC and the Training Center carried out consultations to the following delegations:

- The Delegation of the Election Administration of Kazakhstan;
- The Delegation of the Election Administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- The Delegation of the Election Administration of Sri Lanka;
- The Delegation of the Election Administration, the Training Center and Parliamentary Members of Moldova.

The CEC and the Training Center representatives shared with the members of the delegations the information on the activities of the Election Administration of Georgia as well as mission, vision work and development, of the Training Center. During the meetings, special focus was made on the fact that educational programs were carried out, methodologies were developed and training materials were created to educate different target groups including young voters about elections and raise their electoral culture.. Within the framework of educational visit, the members of the Delegation of Moldova attended an educational program implemented for the political parties' representatives. At the meetings future perspectives were defined for supporting development of training centers in the abovementioned countries.

The members of the Delegations positively assessed work of the Election Administration of Georgia and the Training Center and noted that the Training Center is one of the first and successful projects in the electoral sphere of Europe.



The Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina wants to create the similar training center. We want to share your experience and knowledge in this respect. We also talked about the Memorandum of Understanding, which will simplify and the process of experience sharing. I hope this will strengthen the cooperation between the election administrations of our countries.

**SAAD ARNAUTOVICH**  
*Delegation Member of the Election Administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina*

*(During the visit of the Delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Georgia)*



Delegations of the other countries' Election Administrations during their educational visits at the CEC and the Training Center

Annual International Meeting of Election Management Bodies



On February 27-28, 2017, Georgia hosted 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Election Management Bodies on "Innovative Services and Effective Electoral Procedures". It was organized by the CEC with financial support of the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and with cooperation of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).



7<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Election Management Bodies.

At the annual meeting the sides discussed the following issues: technologies and elections – best practices and experience, innovative services, European standards of electoral processes and electronic management of the Election Administration. The participants positively assessed the meeting and noted that it had developed as a substantial platform for sharing international experience. 94 representatives of 20 countries' election administrations, 11 international organizations, the US Embassy and 3 companies oriented on electoral technologies participated in the annual meeting.

See the Information on the Annual Meeting Expenditures in the table below:

Name of goods/services	N of agreement/invoice	Provider	Amount
Transportation	012/D	Ltd VT Georgia	14 239
Food service, degustation of Georgian cuisine and conference package	21.02.2017	Ltd Park Hotel	34 766
Organizing events to see cultural attractions	24/02/2	Physical Person Otar Chukhrukidze	3 125
Flags and stands for flags	13/02/1 - 23/02/4	Ltd Emcolour Group	140
Banner	23/02/3	Ltd Emcolour Group	850
Souvenirs	14/02/1	Ltd Bao+	1 710
Gift sweets	21/02/1	Ltd Badagi	780
<b>Total</b>			<b>55 610</b>

19 **Countries participating in the event:** Albania, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, India, Jordan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Moldova, Republic of Maldives, Pakistan, Romania, Georgia, South Korea, Ukraine, Philippines, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan.

**International organizations participating in the event:** International Centre for Parliamentary Studies, Association of European Election Officials, the Council of Europe, Venice Commission, Project Delian (Canada), International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), International Republican Institute (IRI), National Democratic Institute (NDI), Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), US Embassy in Georgia and United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

**Companies oriented on electoral technologies:** Emperor Technology, A.Daga Steel & Industrial Corporation, Copenhagen Election A/S.



### Exhibition “History of Elections in Georgia 1919-2012“

In 2017, electronic version of exhibition “History of Elections in Georgia” was created at the CEC and posted on the website. The archived materials of the exhibition are related to history of elections held in independent Georgia from 1919 to 2012. The materials include the following electoral documentation: election ballot, list of candidates, statistics, expenditures, legal acts, historical documents. The exhibition also involves agitation and photo materials.<sup>20</sup>

The electronic webpage of history of elections in Georgia was developed by the Public Relations Department in cooperation with the Voters’ List Formation and Information Technologies Department.

### Publication “First Universal Democratic Elections in Independent Georgia”

In 2017, for the first time, a publication “First Universal Democratic Elections in Independent Georgia” was published. The publication was created through cooperation between the CEC and Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and with financial support of United States Agency of International Development (USAID) and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). The publication is dedicated to the Constituent Assembly elections of Democratic Republic of Georgia, held on February 14-16, 1919. The Public Relations Department ensured the design and translation of the publication into English.

<sup>20</sup> See the documental materials about the elections held in independent Georgia on the link: <http://history.cesko.ge/index.html>



*Presentation of the Publication “First Universal Democratic Elections in Independent Georgia”*

On April 12, 2017, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University hosted the presentation of the edition.

### Social campaigns

In 2017 the CEC Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, commission members, heads of structural units and CEC staff took part in the following social campaigns: **Blood donation campaign** – The Election Administration staff participated in the blood donation campaign “You Saved Life Today” that was carried out within the framework of unanimous donors’ action of the Blood Bank’s Institute of Hematology and Transfusiology.

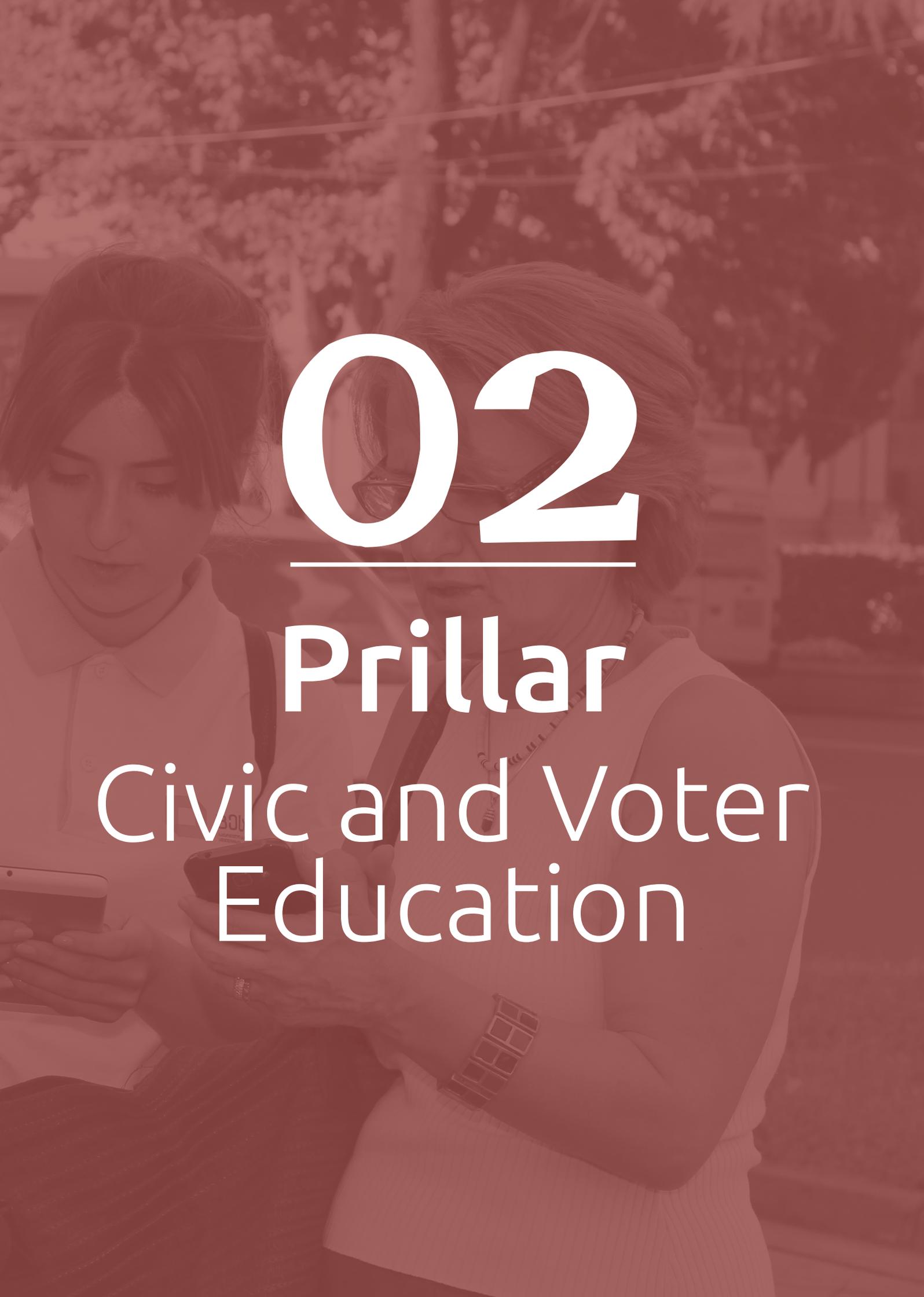
**World Down Syndrome Day** – Within the framework of the conference “My Voice in the Society” dedicated to the World Down Syndrome Day, the representatives of the CEC staff visited the social enterprise “Babale” and saw handmade works created by the persons with Down Syndrome.

**Christmas and New-Year** – the CEC Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson congratulated the beneficiaries of Charity Foundation “Way of Future” with the upcoming holidays and gave them Christmas Tree, sweets, food and presents.



The CEC staff participate in the social campaigns.





02

Prillar

Civic and Voter  
Education

## STRATEGIC PILLAR 2. Civic and Voter Education

### GOAL 1. IMPLEMENTATION OF CIVIC AND VOTER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Implementation of civic and voter educational programs is very important for the Election Administration. In 2017, six educational projects were carried out. There was a substantial decision made – electoral development school started functioning in Akhmeta Municipality for the youth from Pankisi Gorge and also, for the youth from Akhgori Municipality living in Tserovani – the village of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

The area of educational projects implementation has widened and number of participants in the programs has increased compared to the previous years. This is a significant result of the CEC activities.

#### Supporting Integration of Electoral Educational Module in Civic Educational Program at Public Schools

On the basis of 2017-2023 National Educational Plan and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, the CEC and the Training Center planned to integrate electoral educational module within the basic and middle levels of civic education. The module is developed by the Election Administration and aims at promoting elections among youth and increasing their civic engagement in social-political life. Working meetings were held and plans were made for the future. Implementation of the project is planned for 2018 in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science.

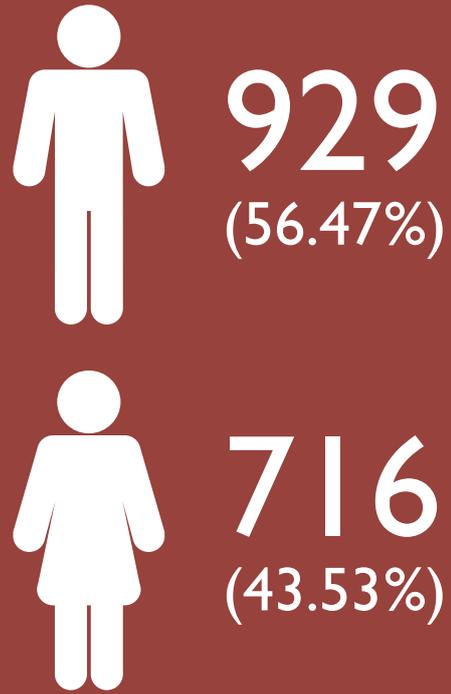
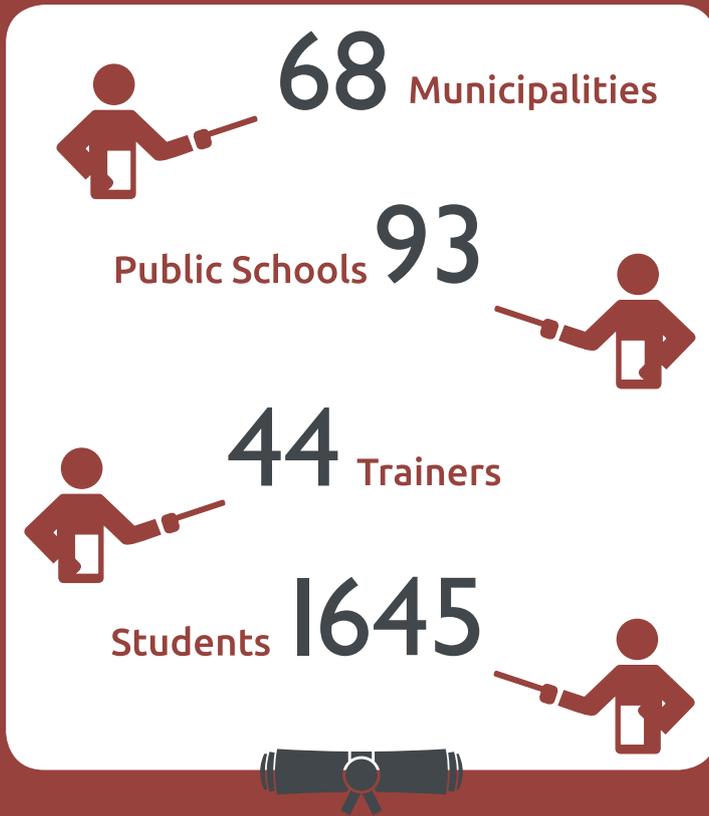
#### Educational Programs

The CEC and the Training Center implement educational programs for different target groups of voters. This supports increasing level of citizens' engagement in electoral processes, raising their active participation and making informed choice. In 2017, six educational programs were carried out involving 9 011 participants.

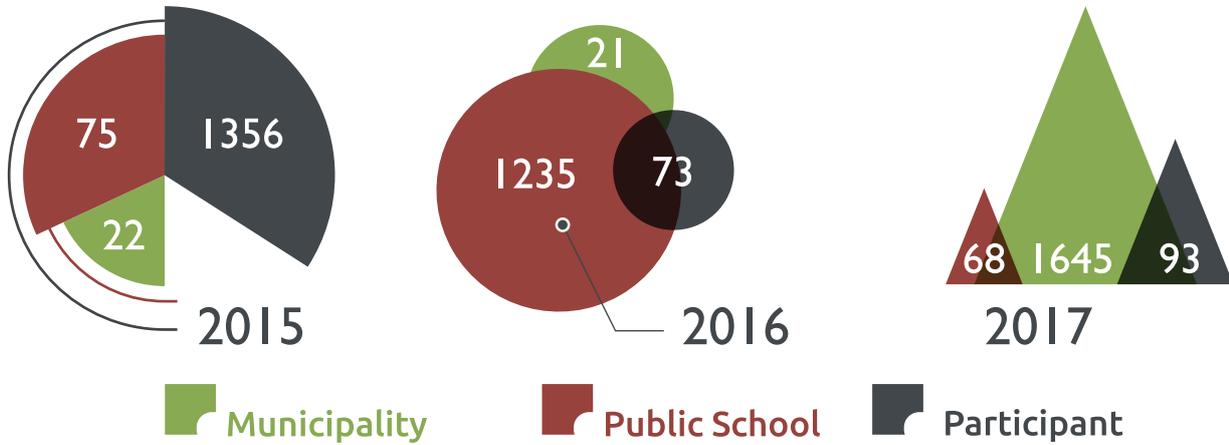
#### Informational-Educational Program “Elections and Young Voter”

In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, the CEC and the Training Center implemented one additional stage of informational-educational project “Elections and Young Voter”, that aimed at raising civic awareness and civic responsibilities among youth.

The project was carried out by 44 trainers trained at the Training Center. At public schools the trainers discussed modules with students, in accordance with the concept of the informational-educational course. These modules were related with: excursion in Election History and Modern Life, Elections and Democracy, Election Administration and Voter, Election Stakeholders. At the end of the course the school students held mock (elections and were given certificates on project participation.



## ELECTIONS AND YOUNG VOTER



Participants of the Informational-Educational Project "Elections and Young Voter"

### Educational Course “Electoral Law”

In 2016-2017 years, educational course of the Training Center – “Electoral Law” was carried out. The course aimed at deepening necessary professional knowledge of students in electoral law, developing their practical skills and raising their civic awareness.

On February 27, 2017, the Training Center held a working meeting for the lecturers who implemented the above mentioned educational course at the higher educational institutions in Tbilisi and regions of Georgia. The lecturers were given information on the main directions of the course implementation and methodology. They also received text-books and presentations of the lecture course.

In 2017, the program was implemented in 13 higher educational institutions of Tbilisi and regions of Georgia<sup>21</sup>. The course covered the following modules: History of Georgian electoral law; sources and principles of electoral law; election systems; status and system of the Election Administration; pre-election campaign; election finances; election monitoring and media; electoral disputes; presidential elections in Georgia; parliamentary elections in Georgia; elections of Supreme Council of Adjara, elections of representative body of local self-government – Sakrebulo; elections of Mayor of self-governing city/self-governing community; referendum and plebiscite.

The training was carried out with combined methodology: E-learning (visual E-programs were used and the movie „Polling Day Procedures” was screened); verbal and practical teaching; role plays (simulation of precinct election commission’s first session, mock polling day).

Educational Course “Electoral Law”			
February 22 – July 31	10 Universities	462 Students	Women – 288 (62.33%) Men – 174 (37.67%)
September 15 – December 31	7 Universities	288 students	Women – 185 (64.24%) Men – 103 (35.76%)
<b>Total:</b>	<b>13 Universities</b>	<b>750 students</b>	<b>Women – 473 (63.1%) Men – 277 (36.9%)</b>

21 The educational program was implemented in 13 higher educational institutions of Tbilisi and regions of Georgia: Samtskhe-Javakheti State University; Telavi Jacob Gogebashvili State University; Akaki Tsereteli State University; Tbilisi Open University; Guram Tavartkiladze Teaching University; Grigol Robakidze University; Ilia State University; David Aghmashenebeli University of Georgia; Gori State Teaching University; Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University; East University of Europe; Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University; Ltd Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani Teaching University.

### Law Clinic

The Training Center carried out learning course in the context of law clinic in the field of electoral law. The course aimed at deepening essential professional knowledge of students, developing their practical skills and raising their civic awareness. Electronic presentations and additional text-books of students were developed for the learning course. The learning process was implemented in 4 stages: I stage – theoretical and practical learning, II stage – distance learning, III stage – role plays, IV stage – final exam.

Law Clinic			
March 16 – June 15	3 Universities	2 Trainers	25 students

### Informational Educational Project “Informed Young Voter”

Within the framework of memorandum of cooperation signed by the Central Election Commission, it's Training Center and higher education institutions, the Training Center launched a project “Informed Young Voter”, which aimed at increasing civic awareness of 18-21 years old young voters and support active participation of the first-time young voters.

Within the project, 8 trainers of the Training Center conducted seminars for students and introduced them with topics such as elections and its role in country's democratic processes, main principles for conducting elections, electoral stakeholders and their authorities, voting procedures. The participants were given relevant certificates.

Informed Young Voter				
May 2-23	9 Universities	8 Trainers	370 students	Women – 235 (63.51%) Men – 135 (36.49%)
October 16-20	9 Universities	7 Trainers	525 students	Women – 396 (75.4%) Men – 129 (24.6%)
Total	13 Universities <sup>22</sup>	8 Trainers	895 Trainers	Women – 631 (70.5%) Men – 264 (29.5%)

<sup>22</sup> The educational program “Informed Young Voter” was implemented in 13 higher educational institutions: Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University; Ilia State University; Tbilisi Open University; David Aghmashenebeli University of Georgia; Telavi Jacob Gogebashvili State University; Guram Tavartkiladze Teaching University; Akaki Tsereteli State University; Grigol Robakidze University; Samtskhe-Javakheti State University; Black Sea International University; Gori State Teaching University; Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University; Sukhumi State University.

## Learning Project “Electoral Development School”

### **Partnership of the Election Administration of Georgia and the Council of Europe within the Framework of Electoral Program**

The Council of Europe (CoE) implements an electoral program in Georgia. One of its main partners is the CEC. In 2016, the CEC for the first time received a direct grant to support the implementation of the project “Electoral Development School”. Within the framework of the program, the CEC carried out an informational campaign, ensured registration of the people interested in the project and organization of a qualified learning course.

The project was positively assessed and cooperation with the Council of Europe continued. In 2017 direct grant enabled the Election Administration to widen area of the project and hire 23 most successful graduates in the EA for two months.

The CEC and its Training Center, in cooperation with and with financial support of the Council of Europe (CoE) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), implemented the project “Electoral Development School”. The project aimed at increasing civic engagement of youth at age 18-24 and promoting of elections.

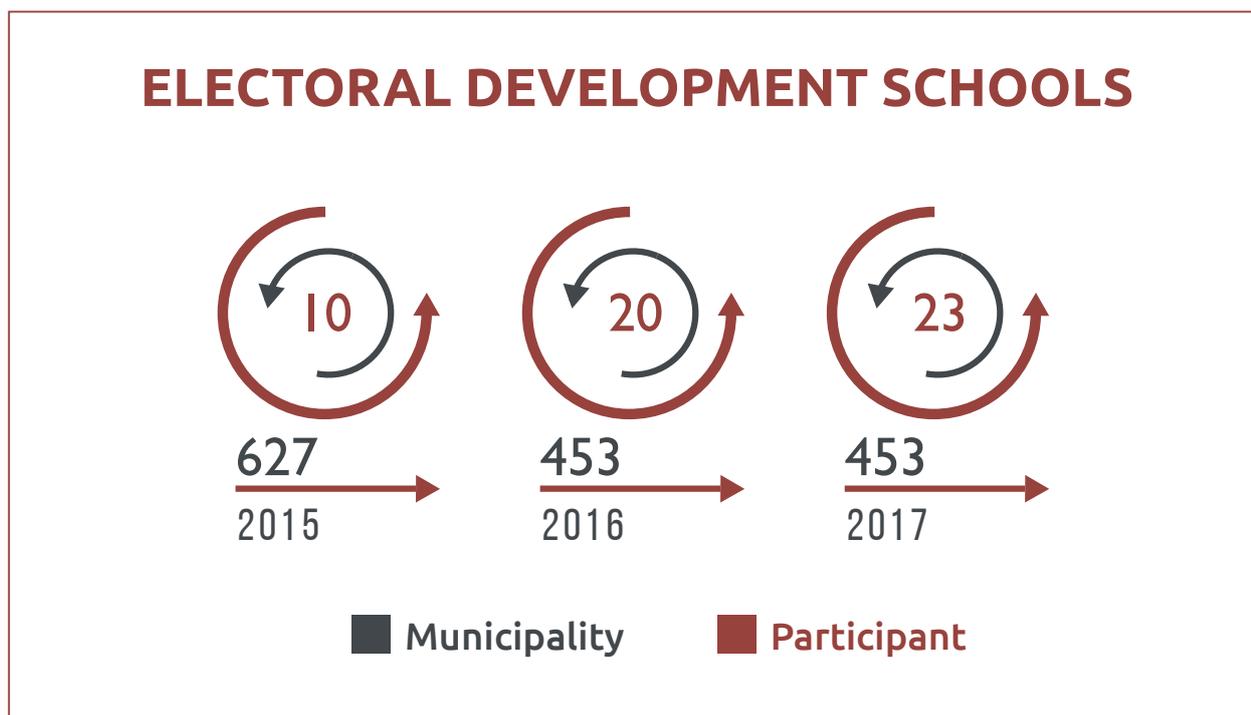
In 2017, the project was extended and the learning course was conducted in 23 municipalities<sup>23</sup>. A significant decision was made – the school started functioning in Akhmeta Municipality and youth from Pankisi Gorge participated in it. This created additional means for representatives of the ethnic minority living in this high mountainous and complicated region to engage in the life of the country. The learning course was also conducted for youth in Tserovani – the village of IDPs in Akhgori municipality.

Recommendations and experience of the participants and trainers were taken into consideration and, consequently, topics and learning modules were updated. These modules were related with election systems, election administration, principles of democratic elections, elective bodies in Georgia, election stakeholders, election transparency and accessibility, gender equality and elections of the Euro Parliament. The learning course was designed for two weeks and conducted by the trainers of the Training Center, re-trained within the framework of the trainers’ trainings.

<sup>23</sup> The project “Electoral Development School” was conducted in 23 municipalities: Ambrolauri, Akhgori (Tserovani/village of refugees), Akhaltsikhe, Akhmeta, Batumi, Borjomi, Gardabani, Gori, Gurjaani, Dusheti, Zestaponi, Zugdidi, Telavi, Marneuli, Ozurgeti, Rustavi, Samtredia, Sachkhere, Signaghi, Senaki, Poti, Kobuleti, Kutaisi.

In the framework of the Council of Europe grant, another innovation was implemented. After completion of the training course, 23 most successful graduates were selected. They had opportunity to work for the Electoral Processes Management Department at the CEC as contracted employees and received practical experience in some District Election Commissions for 2 months. It should be noted, that majority of the graduates from the “Electoral Development School” expressed their will to be employed at the Election Administration. More than 300 of them were elected as members of istrict and precinct election commissions through contest. Other part of the graduates was employed within the projects of political parties and local observer organizations. It’s crucial that the graduates of the “Electoral Development School” are actively involved in the CEC projects as volunteers.

“Electoral Development School” 2017				
July 17 – 28	23 municipalities	48 trainers	453 youth	Women – 286 (63.13%) Men – 167 (36.87%)

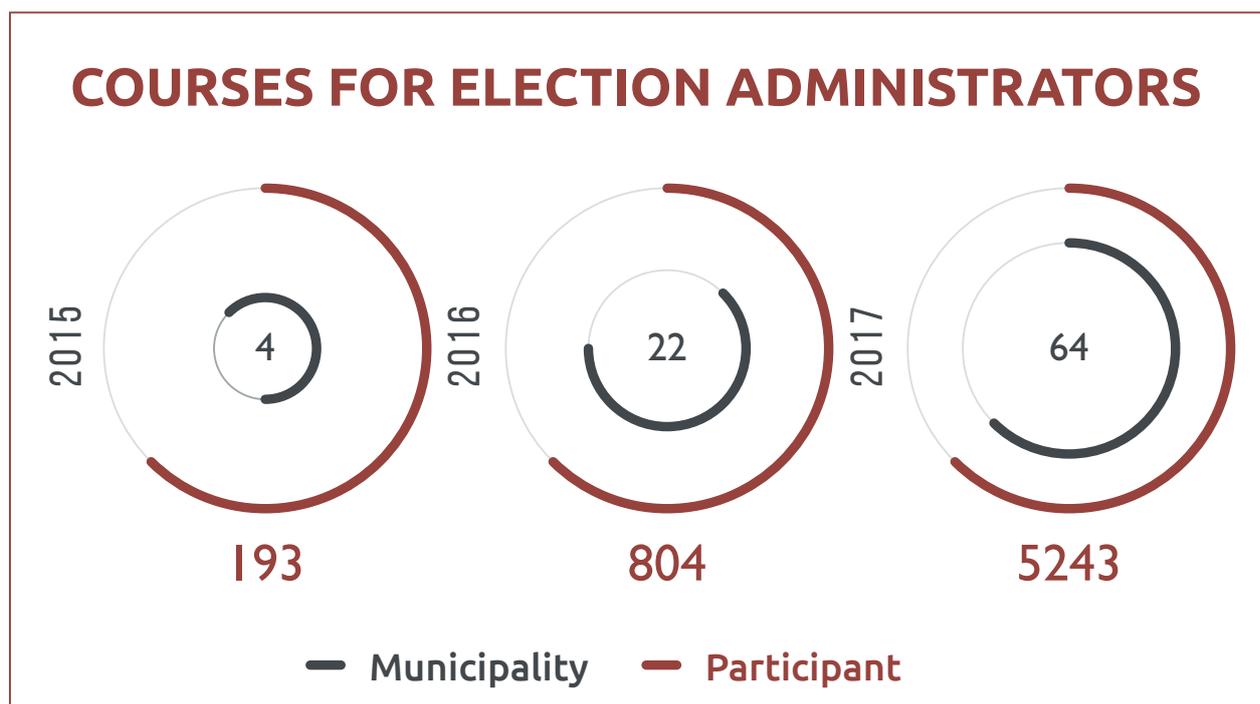


**Learning Project “Courses of Election Administrator”**

In 2017, the Central Election Commission of Georgia and its Training Center carried out informational/educational project “Courses for Election Administrator”. The course aimed at raising civic awareness on election-related topics and facilitating the formation of qualified human resources in the Election Administration. According to the project concept, the Training Center renewed the educational program and its materials. On 15-25 May and July 31 – August 2, 2017, ToT trainings were conducted.

The educational course was designed for 2 days. The students were introduced with the following topics during the training course: activities of a member of precinct election commission before polling day; pre-polling procedures; polling process; closing a polling station; procedures before opening ballot box; opening ballot box; procedures before drawing up summery protocol on election results; drawing up summery protocol on polling results; publishing a summery protocol.

“Courses for Election Administrator”				
May 29 – June 26	63 Municipalities	62 Trainers	2 178 Participants	Women – 1 678 (77.04%) Men – 500 (22.96%)
August 7 – 17	All municipalities	81 Trainers	3 065 Participants	Women – 2 352 (76.74%) Men – 713 (23.26%)
Total	All municipalities	81 Trainers	5 243 Participants	Women – 4 030 (76.86%) Men – 1 213 (23.14%)



## Goal 2. Increase Level of Electoral Culture

The Election Administration considers the increase of electoral culture is vital. In 2017, various educational programs were implemented for electoral stakeholders, educational/informational film “Polling Day Procedures” was updated and Doors Open days were held.

Within the framework of the CEC initiative “Talk to Voters”, members of District Election Commissions held public meetings and informed voters on the CEC services. This is a significant result of the CEC activities.

### Educational Programs for Stakeholders

#### Trainers of Party Representatives

From June 28 to July 16, 2017 in cooperation with the International Republican Institute (IRI), the CEC Legal Department’s staff participated in the trainings. The trainings were related to the 2017 Municipal Elections and were held for representatives of political parties (potentially participating in the elections) and potential commission members to be appointed in election commissions by political parties. The CEC representatives made a presentation for the participants on amendments to the Election Code made by the Parliament of Georgia, also on comparison between old and new legislative norms. The training supported uniform understanding of the amendments made to the Election Code.

The learning process was carried out for six groups and 316 participants of the political unions participated.

#### Working Meeting with the Representatives of Executive Bodies

From July 31 to August 1, 2017 a working meeting was initiated by the CEC and organized by the Legal Department. The Training Center was also actively involved in the process. The meeting was conducted for heads of legal (legal provision) departments/structural units of the executive bodies of the Government (Ministries), state subordinated institutions, State Audit Office, Prosecutor’s office of Georgia and the State Security Service. Also, the meeting involved members of the Inter-Agency Task Force under the Ministry of Justice of Georgia.

During the training program the representatives of the agencies were informed on the following issues: prohibitions of use of administrative resources, prohibitions of use of budget finances and pre-election agitation of public officials. Amendments made to the Election Code were also discussed at the meeting.

29 public officials participated in the working meeting.



*Working meeting with representatives of local self-government bodies*



### **Training for Representatives of Local Self-Government Bodies and Regional Administrations**

On August 29-31 and September 6-9, 2017, the Legal Department and the Training Center of the CEC conducted training for lawyers of local self-government bodies and representatives of regional administrations. The training topic was “the role of local self-government bodies in the election process and prohibition of use of administrative resources”. The officials were informed on the following issues: role of bodies of municipalities in the election process; trust towards elections and role of officials (prohibition related to public servants); prohibition of use of position or official status; prohibition of use of administrative resources; prohibition of use of budgetary funds. The participants received text-books prepared by the the Training Center.

Eight trainings were conducted in the resource centers of Tbilisi and regional resource centers of the Election Administration (Bolnisi, Telavi, Borjomi, Kutaisi, Senaki, Batumi); 95 officials of self-government bodies (District Administrations, Mayor’s Offices, Local Assemblies) and administrations of State Trustees/Governors participated in the training.

### **Working Meeting with Judges of Collegiums of Administrative Cases of Regional Courts, City Court and Court of Appeals**

On September 22-24, 2017, a working meeting was conducted by the Legal Department and supported by the Supreme Court of Georgia. The meeting was co-financed by the US Agency for International Development, the International Foundation for Electoral systems, the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe and the Embassies of France and Switzerland in Georgia. Judges of collegiums of administrative cases of regional courts, City Court and Court of Appeals participated in the meeting. The participants were informed on the amendments to the Election Code, innovations related to the Election Code and, also, on the subordinate normative acts of the CEC that regulated lots of issues related to the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies. At the meeting international practice was discussed by the experts from the Federal Court of Switzerland, France’s Council of State and European Court of Human Rights of Strasbourg.

90 judges participated in the working meeting.

### **Educational Program for Representatives of Central and Regional Media**

On September 25-28, 2017, a training program was conducted for representatives of regional media outlets (regional print media, online newspapers and broadcasters). The program was implemented in cooperation with “Georgian Regional Media Association” and “Journalism Resource Centre” and with financial support of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). The participants got acquainted with the following issues: the role of media in the election process and election legislation innovations; E-day and photo/video shooting regulations; use of administrative resources; election legislation innovations; international experience and basic schemes of election coverage; elections and gender equality; promotion of inclusive electoral environment. The training program was conducted in Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi and 55 journalists participated.

On September 30 and October 1, 2017, the educational program on electoral issues was conducted for media journalists from central TV and radio channels and internet media. 25 journalists from 20 media organizations participated in the learning program. In total, 80 journalists participated in the educational program.

### **Training for Lawyers of Electoral Subjects**

On October 4-10, 2017, the Legal Department representatives participated in the training for lawyers of electoral subjects, organized by International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). The Legal Department representatives informed the participants on amendments made to the Organic Law of Georgia “Election Code of Georgia” and the issues related to prohibition of the use of administrative resources and electoral disputes. 50 lawyers of electoral subjects participated in the training.

### **Training for Representatives of Election Subjects and Observers of Local Observer Organizations**

On October 10-11, 2017 staff members of the CEC Legal Department and the Training Center conducted training programs for representatives of election subjects (political party, electoral bloc and initiative group of voters) and for local observer organizations registered at the CEC. The aim of the informational/educational training was to inform electoral stakeholders on the election issues and facilitate effective implementation of their functions. The participants were informed on the following issues: rights of election subjects and observers; procedures of polling day; election security; electoral disputes; legislative innovations. The training participants received relative educational materials.

41 persons participated in the training, including 8 representatives of electoral subjects and 33 observers of local observer organizations.

### Training for the Representatives of Penitentiary System

Within the joint project of the Training Center and Penitentiary and Probation Training Center, training was conducted for the personnel of the penitentiary institutions. The aim of the training was to conduct training of trainers (TOT). As a result, participants of TOT provided training for other employees of the penitentiary system. The issues of the training were related to the organization of election procedures at prisons and establishments of deprivation of liberty, rules for posting agitation materials, rules for informing accused/convicted persons eligible to vote, voting procedures at election precincts and by mobile ballot boxes. The participants received text-books prepared by the Training Center and Penitentiary and Probation Training Center.

10 persons participated in the training.

### Distance Learning Program for Stakeholders

In order to inform electoral stakeholders and raise electoral awareness for the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies, distance learning program was updated and posted on the websites of the CEC and the Training Center. It gave the stakeholders opportunity to receive information on E-day procedures and on the rules of work of Precinct Election Commissions, while, the testing module integrated into curriculum represented an additional resource to verify the knowledge on election issues.

### Study Film “Polling Day Procedures”

The Training Center updated the study film “Polling Day Procedures” for the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies. The aim of the study film was to provide PEC members and stakeholders with uniform and detailed information. The film reflected the rights of persons authorized to be present in the polling stations. The stakeholders were also informed on the procedures PEC members should implement before opening the polling process and after closing the election precincts. The study film was designed with sign language translation. Also, it was designed with sub-titles in English and ethnic minorities’ languages (Armenian and Azerbaijani).

### Events for Promoting Elections

The Central Election Commission and the Training Center regularly held the doors open days and provided information to the stakeholders on the election administration and on the process of organizing election. Within the framework of the program, the participants met with the CEC Chairperson, Director of the Training Center and other officials. They also visited the photo exhibition of the CEC – “History of Elections in Georgia”.

### **In 2017 eleven doors open days were held in the CEC and the Training Center:**

- February 3, 2017 – regarding Global Elections Day, for students of the Black Sea University;
- February 23, 2017 – for students of the Civic Education Weekend School, GYLA;
- February 24, 2017 – for Azerbaijani youth;

- April 25, 2017 – for students of Law School of Grigol Robakidze State University;
- May 4, 2017 – for students of Kant’s Academy;
- May 30, 2017 – for students of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Sokhumi State University and Caucasus University, who studied learning course in electoral law in the context of law clinic at the CEC Training Center;
- October 11, 2017 – for students of ethnic minorities, with the initiative of non-government organization “the Union of Azerbaijan Women of Georgia”;
- October 13, 2017 – for young people of “Ethnics and Multiculturalism Studies Center”;
- November 8, 2017 – for students of Kant’s Academy;
- December 13, 2017 – for members of “Young Lawyers’ Club” of NI24 Public School;
- December 19, 2017 – for students of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.



*“Doors Open Days” organized by the CEC and the Training Center*

### Day of Tolerance

Within the framework of the Tolerance Week, the representatives of the Election Administration and the CEC held a meeting for the last grade students of the Backwood International School. A seminar was conducted on the essence of elections and voter’s role in electoral process. In the seminar the students were also informed on the implemented activities for the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies that facilitate inclusive electoral environment for persons with disabilities.

The students participated in a mock polling process and involved at all the stages a voter should go through at a precinct on election day.



*Meeting for the last grade students of the Backwood International School*

### **Umbrella Campaign**

In order to encourage voters' active participation in the elections, for the second round of the Municipal Elections, the Training Center representatives held the "Umbrella Campaign" in the regions. On November 7, the Campaign was held in Khashuri and Borjomi and on November 8-9 -in Kuataisi, Ozurgeti and Martvili. The Training Center gathered many voters under the "electoral umbrella", where they expressed their readiness for active participation in the second round of the elections. For the purpose of demonstrating their kind will, voters placed in the ballot box symbolic green cards with the note - I am an active voter.

The campaign participants received the brochures on voting procedures and branded materials of the CEC.

### **The CEC Initiative "Talk to Voters"**

In 2017 the Election Administration carried out new initiative "Talk to Voters" that aimed to increase awareness of the population on the Municipal Elections, strengthen communication between District Election Commissions and voters, promote awareness raising about the Election Administration activities, , strengthen image and, also, improve the services offered by the EA.

At the first stage of the project, 450 meetings were held in 73 electoral districts throughout Georgia, including 347 meetings at places of public gatherings; 103 "Voters' Days" at DEC. 340 DEC members and 491 volunteers participated in the project. In total, 48 174 citizens were reached through the program and 11 458 citizens completed special feedback forms -opinion cards.

At the second stage of the project the campaign "Find yourself – Find Your Election Precinct" was implemented. The representatives of the Training Center and the Election Administration assisted voters to check their personal data in the Unified Voters' List. At places of public

gatherings, the voters were informed how to check the data using modern technologies (the CEC website [www.voters.cec.gov.ge](http://www.voters.cec.gov.ge), Android and iOS applications, quick payment terminals (NOVA, TBC), tablets). The citizens also received specially prepared informational flyers. During the third stage of the project – Come and Vote – flyers describing election procedures were distributed at the places of public gatherings. It should be noted, that the project was carried out in the centers of municipalities and villages across Georgia, including regions densely populated with ethnic minorities. Flyers were also available in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages.

The conducted meetings were covered by the Central TV channels, as well as in print and on-line media. The project was promoted at the CEC official web-site on the banner “Talk to Voters” as well as in social networks (CEC official pages in Facebook and Twitter). Image/informational video clip was prepared for the project and aired in 27 TV companies.



*The CEC Initiative “Talk to Voters”*

### Goal 3. Support Civil Society Engagement

The Election Administration constantly implements the projects in order to support civil society engagement, ensure transparency of election process, raise awareness of the society and develop accountability principle of the EA. In 2017 the Election Administration held grant competitions and implemented election capacity building program for representatives of political parties. Working groups of the CEC were actively involved in the process. The increased number of the representatives of political parties participating in the election capacity building program is considered as significant achievement.

#### Grant Competitions

##### **Support Political Parties' Election Capacity Building for the 2017 Municipal Elections**

On February 3, 2017 a grant competition was announced according to the priority announced by the CEC<sup>24</sup> – “Support political parties' election capacity building for the 2017 Municipal Elections”. Within the framework of the grant competition, according to the decision of the grant commission, the Training Center financed 19 non-governmental organizations. The organizations conducted informational/educational programs for the representatives of political parties throughout the country. The program involved the following modules: international standards of elections; Georgian electoral system related to municipal elections; registration of stakeholders, their rights and obligations in election processes and electoral ethics; carrying out election campaign/agitation and prohibitions related to them; managing conflicts and international standards of resolving electoral disputes; communication, team work and accountability; inclusive elections.

The Training Center made its own contribution in the process of implementing the grant projects and ensured teaching of the following modules for the representatives of political parties: election cycle and managing electoral processes; polling day and guiding principles of voting process; trust towards elections (electoral integrity) and election security. Also, the Training Center ensured sign language translation during the learning process.

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<sup>24</sup> Grant competition priority is defined according to NI/2017 Decree of the CEC, issued on January 20, 2017.

### Support Political Parties' Election Capacity Building for the 2017 Municipal Elections

May 1 – August 1	19 trainers	42 political parties (20 qualified, 22 – non-qualified)	2 276 representatives
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In order to increase the civil society engagement, ensure proactive cooperation with the local non-governmental organizations and transparency of the grant competition processes, a grant competition commission was established, in accordance with the “Rule of Issuing Grants”. The commission was composed of the representatives of academia with relevant experience, international organizations, international non-governmental organizations and budgetary institutions.

#### Grant Competition Announced on May 31, 2017

On May 31, 2017, the CEC Training Center announced and organized grant competition, in accordance with the following priorities defined by the CEC:

**First Priority** – informing voters on 2017 Municipal Elections. 44 grant applications were submitted on the issue.

On the basis of the decision of grant competition commission, 14 projects were financed; financial capacity amounted to 389 892 GEL.

**Second Priority** – Supporting participation of vulnerable groups and women in the process of 2017 Municipal Elections. 43 grant applications were submitted on the issue.

On the basis of the decision of grant competition commission, 13 projects were financed; financial capacity amounted to 241 516 GEL.

The financed grant projects were implemented from August 1 to September 30, 2017 and covered all the regions of Georgia.<sup>25</sup>

On September 16 and November 18-19, 2017, 46 non-governmental organizations, financed by the Training Center (according to the “Rule of Issuing Grants”) within the framework of the grant competitions announced on February 3 and May 31, 2017, made presentations on the process of implementation of the projects. At the meeting the participants discussed the grant projects as well as the results, challenges, advantages and revealed initiatives related with the implemented projects.

<sup>25</sup> For information on the financed directions of the grant competition, defined by the CEC, please, follow the link: <http://electionreforms.ge/res/docs/%E1%83%93%E1%83%90%E1%83%A4%E1%83%98%E1%83%9C%E1%83%90%E1%83%9C%E1%83%A1%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%A3%E1%83%9A%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98.pdf>.

### Ensure Budgetary Funding for Political Parties

In order to promote development of political parties and establish a healthy, competitive political system the CEC and the Training Center funded political parties on the basis of the Organic Law of Georgia on “Political Unions of Citizens”. The financial support covered the conduct of researches, training programs, conferences, business trips, regional projects, voters’ civic and electoral education projects. For more information on electoral subjects’ funding, please see the table below:

N	Political Union	Financed by the CEC	Financed by the Training Center
1	Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia	2 081 214	351 791
2	Conservative Party of Georgia	209 626	49 884
3	Movement – Industry will save Georgia	475 459	49 884
4	Republican Party of Georgia	209 626	49 884
5	Free Democrats	512 196	175 896
6	National Forum	209 626	49 884
7	United National Movement	1 026 637	141 359
8	European Georgia	952 913	175 896
9	Christian-Conservative Party of Georgia	573 665	162 564
10	Democratic Movement – United Georgia	241 620	87 950
11	United Democratic Movement	910 999	309 891
12	Alliance of Patriots of Georgia	804 698	188 392
13	Union of Georgian Traditionalists	87 024	29 317
14	Free Georgia	87 024	29 317
15	Freedom	87 024	29 317
16	Political Movement of Armed Veterans and Patriots of Georgia	87 024	29 317
17	Christian-Democrats	87 024	29 317
18	Labor Party of Georgia	472 812	169 021
19	Movement State for People	195 516	87 950
20	Civic Platform – New Georgia	195 516	87 950
21	Movement for Free Georgia	57 762	19 372
22	National-Democratic Party	31 571	12 915
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>9 598 004</b>	<b>2 317 068</b>

## CEC Working Groups/Gender Equality Council

### Technical Working Group

In order to ensure publicity of activities among electoral stakeholders, the Technical Working Group (TWG) is established at the CEC. The group consists of representatives of international and local NGOs and representatives of diplomatic missions accredited to Georgia, who work on electoral issues.

In 2017, in cooperation with the program of the European Union and UNDP, seven meetings of the Technical Working Group (TWG) were held at the CEC. In the context of the meetings, the participants discussed projects and activities implemented in the election field.

### Working Group on Issues Related to Persons with Disabilities

In the CEC, a standing working group is created to facilitate an equal electoral environment for persons with disabilities (PWDs). The group is composed of the CEC members, heads of structural units, representatives of international and local NGOs and different state agencies. In 2017 the standing working group held 3 meetings at the CEC.

The participants discussed the following issues: implementing innovations in the electoral process, coordinated collaboration with state agencies to adapt election stations, educational projects, defining accessibility of adapted CEC website for blind voters. Besides, in the context of the working group, presentation was made on new service for representatives of Union of the Deaf of Georgia. Using the service deaf and hearing impaired voter can make a video call at the CEC call/informational Center and receive information in sign language translation.

### Working Group on Ethnic Minority Issues

A working group is established within the CEC to facilitate an equal electoral environment for ethnic minority voters, comprising members of the CEC, heads of structural units, representatives of international and local NGOs and state agencies.

In 2017, two working meetings were held on the following topics: activities implemented by the Election Administration for ethnic minority voters, projects for increasing election engagement and awareness of the ethnic minority voters for 2017 Municipal Elections.

### Gender Equality Council

A Gender Equality Council is created at the CEC, which is composed of the CEC members, representatives of structural units and the Training Center. In 2017, two meetings were held with the representatives of NGOs on the following issues: presenting the CEC gender equality policy document and discussing Action Plan 2017 of the election administration and information in gender context on the candidates of electoral subjects and voters' initiative groups for October 21, 2017 Elections of Local Self-government Bodies.



A blue-tinted photograph of a man and a woman looking at a document together in a public space. The man is on the left, smiling, and the woman is on the right, looking down at the document. They are both wearing patterned tops. The background shows a blurred street scene with other people walking.

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Prillar  
Electoral  
Environment

## STRATEGIC PILLAR 3. Electoral Environment

### GOAL 1. PARTICIPATION IN IMPROVING LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Election Administration actively participates in improving legal framework of the electoral environment. In 2017, the CEC prepared legislative proposals, training programs on legislative issues and electoral disputes.

The Parliament of Georgia took into consideration the CEC legislative proposals which is considered to be highly important.

#### Prepare Legislative Proposals

In order to improve the electoral environment and legislative framework, almost every year the CEC draws up proposals and views about technical-procedural issues of the election legislation. In 2017, based on the analysis of information and recommendations requested from the structural units, the Training Center and all DEC's, the Legal Department prepared a draft legislative amendments. This draft, together with the explanatory note, was submitted to the Parliament of Georgia as legislative proposal.

The CEC submitted the following draft amendments to the Parliament of Georgia:

- Together with the explanatory note, Draft Organic Law of Georgia on “Amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia on the Election Code of Georgia”;
- Together with the explanatory note, Draft Organic Law of Georgia on “Amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia on Political Union of Citizens”;
- Together with the explanatory note, Draft Organic Law of Georgia on “Amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia on Local Self-government Code”;
- Together with the explanatory note, Draft Organic Law of Georgia on “Amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia on State Compensation and State Academic Stipends”.

After submitting the mentioned draft, the CEC representatives took part in the committee hearings at the Parliament of Georgia. It should be noted, that the legislative body took into consideration the majority of the CEC proposals.

After enacting the amendments, a guide was prepared to comply the CEC legal acts with the Election Code of Georgia. The guide defined list of legislative acts to be submitted to the CEC for approval. Besides, a document of comparison between old and new norms was developed and submitted to the representatives of political unions. Based on the mentioned

document, presentation was delivered at the working meetings and stakeholders were informed on the innovations.

Besides, the CEC draft ordinances were prepared on amendments to the regulations of the CEC, DEC and PECs.

### Legal Analysis on the Conducted Elections and Preparing Recommendations

After studying and analyzing legislative acts drawn up by the DEC during October 8, 2017 Parliamentary Elections, the Legal Department processed the gaps and developed recommendations. Following these recommendations the quality of the DEC legal acts was improved

### Analyzing Reports of the Local and International Organizations on the Conducted Elections

The Coordination, Planning and Reporting Department of the CEC analyzed reports of the observer organization on October 8, 2016 Parliamentary Elections. These organizations were: Mission of the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), International Republican Institute (IRI), National Democratic Institute (NDI), International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), Center for Democracy and Development (CDD) and United Public Movement "Multinational Georgia" (PMMG). The issue of the reports' analysis was the recommendations of the observer organizations to the Election Administration.

The document was posted on the CEC internal disc and is available for the CEC staff members.

### Upgrading Guidebook to Dispute Resolution and Document of Uniform Practice

In accordance with the amendments made to the Organic Law of Georgia on "Election Code of Georgia", for the Municipal Elections, the Legal Department revised guidebooks related to electoral disputes, use of administrative resources and uniform practice. The documents were updated in cooperation with non-governmental organizations. Also, on September 8, 2017, the CEC acknowledged the document of uniform practice related to the use of disciplinary measures. The mentioned documents were distributed to all electoral stakeholders.

### Educational Program "Administrative Proceedings of Electoral Disputes"

Representatives of the Training Center and the Legal Department developed new educational program "Administrative Proceedings of Electoral Disputes" and trained DEC's Chairpersons and Secretaries. In addition, in some cases, the trainings were conducted for commission members, representatives of Electoral Processes Management Department of the CEC and regional coordinators.

Within the framework of the program, the participants got introduced to the following issues: administrative proceedings at DEC related to discussing applications/complaints submitted on the polling day, making decisions on administrative violations, uniform practice of use of disciplinary measures. The trainees also got introduced to the reports of the International Election Observation Mission of OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) and its recommendations on DEC’s activities.

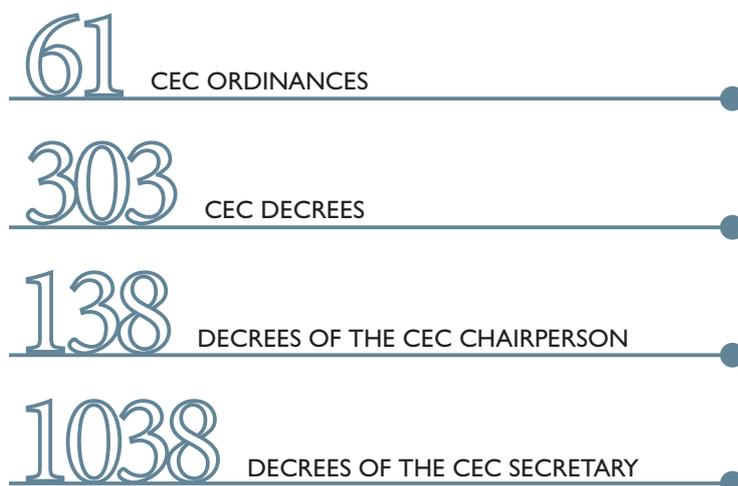
The large-scale program raised the qualification of the DEC’s members, related to administrative proceedings of electoral disputes that reflected on decrease of flaws in legislative acts drawn up by them during the elections. Besides, the training enabled the DEC’s to carry out administrative cases even more effectively.

DECs Officials’ Capacity Building Program on Administrative Proceedings of Electoral Disputes			
June 15 – 26	4 stages 7 groups	156 participants	Women – 88 (56.41%) Men – 68 (43.59%)

### Legal Maintenance of CEC Activities

The Legal Department regularly provided legal consultation to the CEC staff, the Training Center, the District Election Commissions (DECs) members, local and international observers and representatives of election subjects. In addition, consultation and legal advice was provided to DEC’s members regarding applications/complaints. The legal department prepared the CEC legal acts as well as conducted legal expertise on those acts.

In 2017, the CEC held 51 sessions and issued 1 585 legislative acts, including:



*The Registration and Administrative Department of the CEC ensured preparing protocols on the CEC sessions, preparing draft decrees of the CEC Chairperson and the CEC Secretary and compiling relevant documents.*

## GOAL 2. ENSURE ELECTORAL INTEGRITY

The Election Administration ensures electoral integrity and credibility according to the Election Integrity Management Plan. Based on the plan, in order to ensure election security, memorandum of cooperation was signed between the Central Election Commission and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.

A significant innovation is a development of monitoring and evaluation plan for Election Integrity Management Plan of the Election Administration.

### Election Integrity Management Plan of the Election Administration

The Election Administration, within its competence and responsibilities, manages election integrity according to the methods and guiding principles defined by the “Election Integrity Management Plan of the Election Administration”. Though, ensuring election integrity is a responsibility of variety of stakeholders including the EA, all the state agencies supporting electoral processes, as well as, lawmakers and decision-makers, political parties, election subjects, civil society representatives involved in the electoral processes, media outlets, voters and international community contributing to development of election democracy in Georgia.

In 2017, monitoring and evaluation plan for Election Integrity Management Plan of the Election Administration was developed and approved, that ensures management of possible risks, implementation of right management at all levels of the Election Administration, evaluation of shortcomings related to integrity as well as defining the strategies to reduce risks and relevant measures.

### GOAL 3. ENSURE AN INCLUSIVE ELECTORAL ENVIRONMENT

One of the strategic goals of the Election Administration is to promote an inclusive electoral environment.

During the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies, electoral documents and informational materials were available to the representatives of ethnic minorities in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages. Persons with disabilities were provided with the information. Also, election precincts were equipped with various supporting tools.

A significant innovation is developing a new service, namely, deaf and hearing impaired voters could make a video call to the call/informational center and receive information in sign language from the operators.

#### Informing Persons with Disabilities

In 2017, the CEC ensured persons with disabilities receive information by informational video that was aired on central TV station, as well as on regional channels. The CEC informed voters with disabilities on the services created for them.

**Video Call Service** – After filling in a special registration application on the CEC official website, deaf and hearing impaired voters could make a video call to the CEC call/informational center and receive information on electoral procedures in sign language from the operators. In total, 82 persons registered and received information on electoral issues. The CEC, in cooperation with the NGO “Union of the Deaf of Georgia”, carried out informational campaign on the service provided to deaf and hearing impaired voters living in Tbilisi, Telavi, Kutaisi, Zugdidi and Batumi.

**Adapted Website** – The CEC ensured adaptation of the CEC official website for visually impaired persons. By integrating additional functions, the following characteristics of the website were envisaged and adapted to their needs including background – dark black, font color– white, green and yellow, font size – indefinite.

**Election newsletter** – Information on the election subjects participating in the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies was processed into text versions and posted on the CEC website.

**The CEC News Briefings** – On the Election Day, the CEC news briefings, accompanied by sign language, were livestreamed on TV channels. It should be noted, that the Election Administration is the first institution in Georgia that established the practice of airing news briefings with sign language on TV channels.

### Retraining the Election Administration Employees (Trainer, District/Precinct) on Supporting Inclusive Electoral Environment

From August 29 to October 11, 2017, in cooperation with representatives of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the CEC and the Training Center retrained the Election Administration trainers for the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies. Afterwards, they conducted the training course for members of district and precinct election commissions.

Along with other issues, an educational module on “the protection of norms of etiquette, speaking and behavior with PWDs” was discussed at the training. The updated learning module also included electoral rights of beneficiaries of the support.

166 trainers, including 15 leading trainers were retrained. The training was conducted for members of district and precinct election commissions.

### Services Available to Persons with Disabilities

According to the information from DEC, 3 353 persons with disabilities participated in the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies. On the polling day, on October 21 (1 round) and November 12 (II round), the following services tailored to the needs of PWDs were available:

- Blind Voters – Tactile ballot guide. On October 21, more than 400 blind voters used tactile ballot guides.
- Visually Impaired Voters – 2 magnifying sheets at every election precinct. On October 21, more than 2000 visually impaired voters used magnifying sheets.
- Deaf, Hearing Impaired and Beneficiaries of Support – Poster on voting procedures was placed at every polling station. On October 21, 150 deaf/hearing impaired voters and 265 beneficiaries of support participated in the elections.
- Wheelchair User Voter and Voter with Limited Mobility – Special ballot booths at 1 156 adapted polling stations. Also, based on voter’s request, portable (rolling) ramp was placed at some polling stations. 181 voters using wheelchair participated in October 21 Elections.

### Regular Collaboration with Self-government Bodies and District Election Commissions to Adapt Polling Stations

With regard to adaptation of polling stations for the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies, a working meeting was held at the CEC. Representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, Tbilisi Municipality City Hall and the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia participated in the meeting. Based on the information received from responsible agencies, out of 3 644 polling stations (10 polling stations were created in exceptional cases) of 73 election districts, 1 156 (31.72%) polling

stations (simple adaptation, portable (ramp) were available for wheelchair user voter and voter with limited mobility. 250 polling stations were available in Tbilisi and 906 – in the regions.

### Informing Ethnic Minority Voters

All the informational video clips, including a special video clip about available services, created by the CEC for the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies, were translated in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages and aired on regional TV stations.

During the Elections, the CEC ensured that information on available services and election participation was posted in the Armenian newspaper “Vrastani” and the Azerbaijani newspaper “Gurjistani”.

In the regions densely populated with ethnic minorities, Armenian and Azerbaijani voters could use search system ([voters.cec.gov.ge](http://voters.cec.gov.ge)) of the unified voters list in Georgian, as well as in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages.

At the call/informational center, voters could receive information in Georgian, as well as in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. Four operators from ethnic minorities were employed at the call/informational center (2 Azerbaijani and 2 Armenian operators). Along with hiring, the CEC ensured their qualification was raised with regard to election issues.

### Translation of Election Documentation for the Ethnic Minorities

For the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies, documentation was translated and printed for ethnic minority’ voters in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages (Georgian – Azerbaijani, Georgian – Armenian and Georgian – Armenian – Azerbaijani). These documents include ballot paper and unified voters’ list (desk version and wall version); also, informational materials for voters.

For Armenian and Azerbaijani members of precinct election commissions, who were not fluent in Georgian language, the following electoral documents were translated and printed: guidelines/instructions for members of PECs; memo/instruction of commission Chairperson; functions of commission member regulating flow of voters; rights of PEC secretary on the polling day; functions of commission member registering voters; functions of commission member supervising ballot box and special envelopes; functions of commission member accompanying mobile ballot box. Besides, educational film “Polling Day Procedures”, with sub-titles in Armenian and Azerbaijani, was prepared for members of PEC.

### Letters of Thanks



Within the framework of project “Active Citizen – Guarantee of Democracy”, implemented by the “Union of Azerbaijani Women of Georgia”, the CEC Chairperson Tamar Zhvania, the CEC Deputy Chairperson Giorgi Sharabidze and Head of Coordination, Planning and Reporting Department – Sophio Sitchinava were awarded Letters of Appreciation, for collaboration and for supporting the implementation of ethnic minorities civil rights.

## GOAL 4. SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENT WITH GREATER GENDER EQUALITY

The Election Administration carries out its activities according to gender equality principle. The EA continued implementing gender policy and supporting women involvement in political and social life. Trainings and working meetings were held at all levels of the EA to introduce gender policy. Electoral information was processed in the context of sex-disaggregated data.. The CEC and the Training Center renewed training modules on gender issues for the projects “Electoral Development School” and “Legal Clinic”.

A significant achievement is reflecting gender equality aspects in the training materials and programs of the Election Administration.

### Introducing Gender Equality Policy of the Election Administration

Members of the Election Administration’s Gender Equality Council, created at the CEC, held meetings with the Chairpersons of 73 DEC’s and introduced them with the main directions of the EA gender equality policy.

The Chairperson of the Election Administration’s Gender Equality Council was actively involved in the discussions and round tables about gender equality issues, held by the Public Defender of Georgia, the civil sector and academic institutions.

### Reflecting Gender Equality Aspects in the Training Materials and Programs of the Election Administration

The CEC and the Training Center updated training modules on gender issues of educational projects “Electoral Development School” and “Legal Clinic”.

With participation of the Training Center, a seminar on “Women’s Needs and Municipal Elections” were held in the municipalities of Marneuli and Akhaltsikhe. The participant women were informed on the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies, also, on the role of citizens when implementing competencies and self-governance of the representative body – Sakrebulo and Mayor. Educational-informational meetings were held in the framework of the East-West Management Institute (EWMI) project “Formation of a Voter Group of Ethnic Minority Women” which is implemented by Levan Mikeladze Foundation and is co-financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The CEC Chairperson Tamar Zhvania and the CEC Member Zurab Khrikadze – the Chairperson of the Election Administration’s Gender Equality Council – held an educational course for the students of GIPA School of Journalism and Media Management. Module “Gender equality in elections and politics” was integrated in the course.

### Conference “Challenges and Opportunities of Women Political Participation in Georgia”

On June 21, 2017, conference “Challenges and Opportunities of Women Political Participation in Georgia” was held and organized by the Council of Europe and the Election Administration. The CEC Chairperson and the Chairperson of Gender Equality Council informed the participants on gender policy of the EA, envisaging gender equality while composing the EA and implemented activities. 26 persons participated in the conference.



Conference “Challenges and Opportunities of Women Political Participation in Georgia”

### Public Debates on “Gender Policy of Self-Government Elections”

On October 2, 2017, within the framework of the project “Fight against All Forms of Discrimination in Georgia”., a public debate was held organized by the Public Defender of Georgia and supported by the EU. The CEC Member Zurab Khrikadze – the Chairperson of the Gender Equality Council – participated in the debates. He presented to the participants the EA gender policy and gender statistics of the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies.

### Raising Awareness of Stakeholders on Gender Equality Issues in the Context of Elections Training “Gender Equality and Elections”

On June 1, 2017, the Chairperson of the Gender Equality Council of the Election Administration held a training “Gender equality and elections” for the students of the Legal Clinic at the Training Center. The participants were informed on the following issues: support the development of gender equality in election environment, including women representation and their political involvement. The training raised awareness on the topic among young people.

18 students of the legal Clinic participated in the training.

### Consider Gender Equality and/or Support it while Organizing Grant Competitions

On May 31, 2017, the Training Center announced the grant competition and defined, supporting the participation of women and vulnerable groups in 2017 Elections of Local Self-government Bodies, as one of the directions for funding by the CEC. The mentioned envisaged the implementation of informational programs oriented on supporting the integration of women and vulnerable groups in the election process. It was desirable to reflect gender aspects in the project.

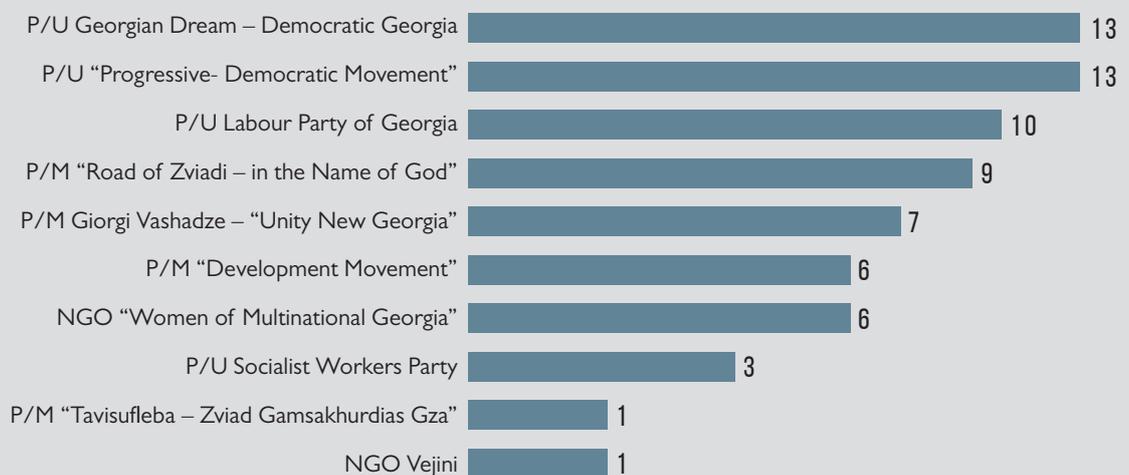
In total, 43 grant applications were submitted in this direction. 9 projects supporting women participation were financed. The budget for these grants amounted to 165 967 Gel.

### Training for Potential Women Candidates on Electoral Procedures

On September 25-27, 2017, the CEC and the Training Center carried out a training program for potential women candidates willing to participate in the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies. The informational-educational program aimed at supporting women's active participation in electoral processes and informing them on election issues.

The participants were informed on the following issues: gender equality in the elections; electoral system of the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies, mechanisms for realizing passive suffrage, summing up election results and allocating mandates, pre-election campaign and administrative resources, and electoral disputes. The participants received text-books – “Polling Day Procedures” – prepared by the Training Center and the document on amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia “Election Code of Georgia”, elaborated by the CEC Legal Department. Three training sessions were held involving 69 potential women candidates presented by political parties and voters' initiative groups.

#### Statistics of Training Attendance of Potential Women Candidates, according to Nominating Subjects



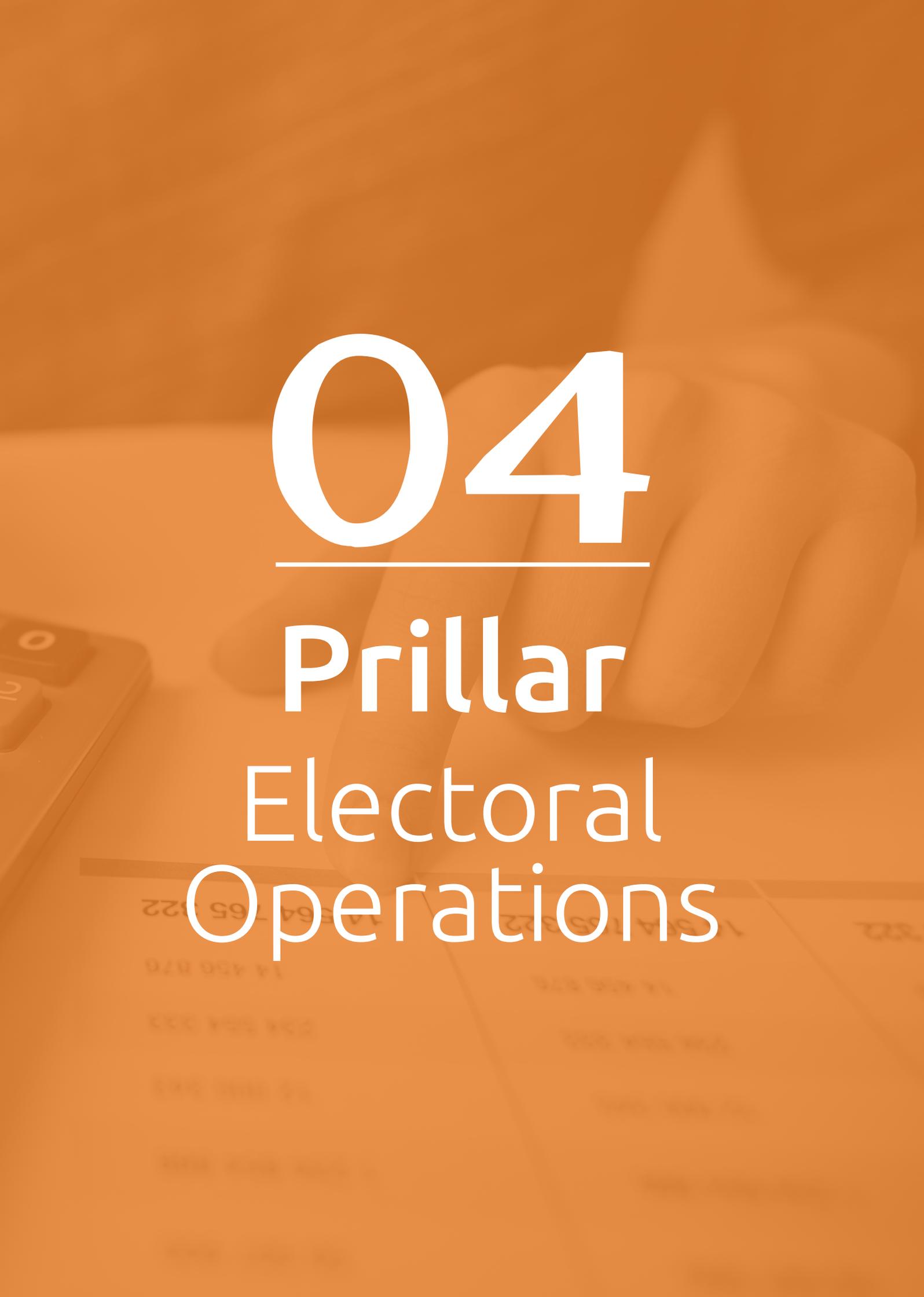
### Processing Electoral Information According to Gender

The CEC processes statistical information considering gender aspect. The information is accessible for all the stakeholders in the banner “Gender Equality” on the CEC website. For the first time, gender statistics for elections of 2010-2017, posted on the CEC website, was translated into English.

In 2017, after the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies (I and II rounds), the CEC processed the following gender statistics:

- On persons registered in the unified voters’ list, turnout from the list, voters participating in elections;
- Candidates and elected members nominated by the election subjects based on the proportional and majoritarian electoral systems;
- Candidates and elected Mayors nominated for a position of Mayor of Self-governing City/ Self-governing Community;
- Observers, representatives of media and election subjects;
- Composition of Election Administration (the CEC, district, precinct).





04

Prillar  
Electoral  
Operations

## STRATEGIC PILLAR 4. Electoral Operations

### GOAL 1. ORGANIZING/CONDUCTING ELECTIONS

In 2017, October 21, 2017 Elections (I and II rounds) of Representative Body of Municipality – Sakrebulo and Mayor of Self-governing City / Self-governing Community were held.

In order to provide material resources for the Elections, existing reserves were considered and the number of necessary goods/services were determined.

A necessary electoral inventory was centrally allocated at the DEC. A significant result is the organization and administration of the 2017 Elections of Local Self-government Bodies.

#### Organization/Administration of the Elections of Representative Body of Local Self-government – Sakrebulo and Executive Body of Local Self-government – Mayor/Gamgebeli

First round of the regular Elections of Representative Body of Municipality – Sakrebulo and Mayor of Self-governing City/ Self-governing Community was conducted on October 21, 2017, and the second round – on November 12. The Election Administration managed to administer the election processes in full compliance with the legislation and in accordance with approved schedule of election activities. As prescribed by the law, the CEC presented a report on the conducted elections to the Parliament of Georgia. The report was also posted on the CEC website.

#### Upgrading Unified Voters' List

In 2017, the Voters' List Formation and Informational Technologies Department ensured the data on voters received from agencies was processed main and factual addresses were integrated with the CEC database and voters' list was formatted). The list of the agencies is determined by the article 31, paragraph 5, of the Organic Law of Georgia "Election Code" and include: State Services Development Agency of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia; Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia; Ministry of Defense of Georgia; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia; Ministry of Penitentiary and Probation of Georgia; Social Service Agency of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia. In 2017, the unified voters' list was updated seven times.

**Number of Voters in the Unified Voters' List:**

As of February 1 – 3 469 724 voters;

As of May 1 – 3 459 532 voters;

As of July 15 – 3 461 225 voters;

As of October 21 (first round) – 3 442 455 (preliminary), 3 440 123 (final) voters;

As of November 12 (II round) – 328 272 voters;

As of November 1 – 3 463 984 voters.

For the elections, applications of voters from election districts were processed and statuses were written (e.g. resides abroad, deceased, change of precinct). The statistical data after processing applications: satisfied – 1686, not satisfied – 177).

## GOAL 2. RAISING QUALIFICATION OF THE DEC AND PEC MEMBERS

In order to organize the election process in a professional manner, it is important to raise the qualification of the election commission members. In 2017, for the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies training programs were updated and training cycle was carried out. Apart from the basic program, various target trainings were conducted on different issues.

A significant achievement is the capacity building of the DEC and PECs.

### Trainings for DEC Members

According to the trainings' concept, trainings for the DEC members were carried out in two stages:

**I stage of the training** – Training of the entire personnel of commission. Learning topic: Activities of DEC before and after the polling day. Training attendance coefficient – 94 %.

**II stage of the training** – Training of the entire personnel of commission. Learning topic: Activities of the DEC on the polling day. Training attendance coefficient – 92 %.

### Trainings for PEC Members

Trainings for the PEC members were carried out in four stages:

**I stage of the training** – Training of the entire personnel of commission. Learning topics: First session of the PEC and rule of electing officials (first session instructions (episodic staging)).

**II stage of the training** – Training of the entire personnel of commission. Learning topics: Activities of PEC before and after the polling day. Policy of supporting electoral involvement of voters with disabilities on the polling day; applications/complaints on the polling day; conflict management. Training attendance coefficient – 74 %.

**III stage of the training** – Training of commission officials. Learning topics: rights of PEC officials (including work with electoral documents, draw up summery protocol), applications/complaints on the the polling day; election security. Training attendance coefficient - 92 %.

**IV stage of the training** – Training of the entire personnel of commission. Episodic staging of the polling day. Training attendance coefficient - 84 %.

**Additional Trainings** – Trainings were held for the replaced (new) PEC members, who were and for the ones who could not attend the scheduled trainings. . Learning topics included PEC activities before the polling day, PEC activities on the polling day, and applications/complaints on the polling day. Training attendance coefficient – 37 %.

Trainings for Members of the PECs Created in Exceptional Cases – Trainings were held for members of the PECs created in exceptional cases. Learning topics included PEC activities before the polling day, PEC activities on the polling day, and applications/complaints on the polling day. Training attendance coefficient – 67.2%.

### Training on Correspondence and Registration Processes

In order to improve correspondence and registration processes in DECAs, based on the analysis of election legislation and various normative/legal acts,<sup>26</sup> the Registration and Administrative Department prepared presentation materials and guidance documents (instructions). For DECAs' members working meetings were held aiming at introducing legislative norms of correspondence and registration processes, standardizing business processes, reducing potential risks of activities.

73 members of DECAs participated in the working meetings.

### Training on Legal Writing

From May 22 to June 2, 2017, in cooperation with the Electoral Processes Management Department, with financial support of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the Legal Department organized a training in legal writing for regional coordinators and Heads of DECAs. The training was conducted by the experts invited by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems and professors of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. As a result of the training, the qualification of the Heads of DECAs was raised with regard to issuing legislative acts. It should be noted, that during the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies, only 37 Heads of DECAs received remarks on the legislative acts drawn up by them.

The training was conducted for 4 groups in Kobuleti and Tbilisi and 73 Heads of DECAs and 10 regional coordinators participated.

### Training on Legal Amendments

On July 28, August 2-6 and 9, 2017, Officials of the Legal Department held working meetings for Heads of DECAs, Commission secretaries and the staff (regional coordinators) of the Electoral Processes Management Department. The participants of the meeting were informed on the amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia "Organic Law of Georgia" made during the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies, and also, on new and old legislative norms. The working meetings were held in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Poti, Telavi and Borjomi and 156 persons participated.

<sup>26</sup> Development of instructions of document management and registration processes for DECAs was implemented on the basis of the Organic Law of Georgia on "Election Code", Order of the President of Georgia on "Approving and enacting unified rules for document management", the General Administrative Code of Georgia, and also, "Rule for document management of district election commissions" approved by the CEC Chairperson's Order 01-113, issued on August 24, 2016.

### Training on Legislative Issues, Electoral Disputes and Management of Registry of Complaints

On September 11-18, 2017, officials of the Legal Department held trainings/working meetings for the staff (regional coordinators) of the Electoral Processes Management Department, heads of DEC's and lawyers. The participants' qualification was raised on the following issues: rules and procedures of submitting and discussing complaints on the polling day, use of administrative resources, uniform practice of using disciplinary measures, recommendations for the process of managing registry of complaints. Draft Decrees to be issued by the DEC's during election period were discussed at the meetings. Based on the received recommendations, registry of complaints was upgraded.

The trainings were held in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Poti, Telavi and Borjomi and 170 persons participated.

### Media Relations Training Course

On October 5-7, 2017, Head of Project of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, Deputy Head of the Project and expert of the Foundation conducted a training for Heads of DEC's on the topics: media relations and techniques of giving interviews.

54 Heads of DEC's participated in the training.



**GOAL 3. PUBLICIZING ELECTION RESULTS IN A TIMELY MANNER**

In order to boost trust of the population towards the election results, it is important to provide accurate election-related information in a timely manner.

In 2017, the results of the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies (I and II rounds) were timely publicized.

A significant achievement is providing the society with preliminary and final results of the Elections of Local Self-government Bodies in a timely manner. Preliminary results of the first round of the October 21, 2017 Elections of Local Self-government Bodies were presented by the CEC Chairperson at 03:20 and 11:00 on October 22. The CEC Spokesperson presented the preliminary results from all the DEC's at 18:00 on October 22.

**Analysis of Opportunities of Using Modern Technologies in the Processes of Voting and Counting Votes**

On August 27-28, 2017, at the CEC a working meeting was held with the representatives of the Association of World Election Bodies. Within the framework of the meeting, the Director of Projects of the Association of World Election Bodies, representative of the Informational Technologies Department and the projects' manager presented procedures of counting votes electronically at the polling stations. Also, necessary technical and program means were presented. During joint working process, perspectives to implement mentioned new system in Georgia were discussed. As a result of the meeting, the future steps were planned and the project implementation plan was developed. The CEC Chairperson and the General Secretary of the Association of World Election Bodies signed a memorandum of cooperation. The sides agreed on cooperation in the direction of using modern election technologies. Within the framework of the memorandum, the CEC members and heads of structural units were informed on the presented technical equipment and respective technological processes.

## GOAL 4. PROVIDE STAKEHOLDERS WITH TIMELY AND ACCURATE ELECTION-RELATED INFORMATION



November 14, 2017. Opening of the First Session of Tbilisi Sakrebulo

The Election Administration ensures accessibility of the election information for voters and electoral stakeholders and openness of its activities. Also, it provides voters and relevant institutions with accurate electoral information in a timely manner. During the Elections, the call/informational center worked extremely efficiently and informed the population in Georgian, English, Azerbaijani and Armenian languages.

A significant improvement is observed in providing the information on 2017 Elections of Local Self-government Bodies to stakeholders.

### Announcing/Processing Election Results and other Public Statistical Data

The Central Election Commission (CEC) of Georgia uses a special webpage to publicize election results.<sup>27</sup> After voting process is completed, the District Election Commissions (DECs) upload summary protocols drafted by the Precinct Election Commissions (PECs) in the Election Process Management System (EPMS) “Armasi”. Upon receipt each summary protocol is uploaded on the webpage. On the polling day, at the CEC summary protocols of election results were uploaded in the special electronic program. The process was livestreamed through a 360-degree video camera. Any interested party was able to observe online the process via social networks [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), [www.cesko.ge](http://www.cesko.ge), and [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).

<sup>27</sup> For publicizing the election results a special website is created <http://results.cec.gov.ge/>.

### Electoral Disputes

In order to improve the process of solving electoral disputes, the CEC updated guidebooks/text-books on electoral disputes and uniform practice. The Training Center developed a training module. In 2017, for the first time, the trainings on administrative procedures related to electoral disputes were held for the heads of DEC's, deputy heads and lawyers.

During the reporting period the applications/complaints received on the polling day from the DEC's were processed and statistical information was prepared. It was posted in the registry of complaints, on the CEC website<sup>28</sup> and, also, sent to stakeholders.

In 2017, the Legal Department representatives represented the CEC in 16 court processes as defendants.

The court made 10 decisions in favor of the CEC. In one case plaintiff was partially satisfied, in 3 cases – satisfied and 2 cases are still pending. During October 21, 2017 Elections of Local Self-government Bodies, 7 court cases were held with participation of the CEC and all the decisions were made in favor of the CEC.

In 2017, 50 applications/complaints were submitted to the CEC, 2 of them were partially satisfied, 37 – not satisfied, 11 – not discussed.

### The CEC Call/Informational Center

The CEC call/informational center provided voters and stakeholders with electoral information by means of telephone, on-line chat and text messages. In 2017, the CEC call/informational center implemented 15 329 different services, namely: received 11 271 calls ; on-line chat – 2 167; 855 outgoing calls ; 800 voice information services ; 154 text messages; 82 video calls.

During the election period, as a result of contests, 27 operators were employed at the call/informational center, including 4 PWDs, 4 persons from ethnic minorities, 2 operators – specialists of sign (gesture) language. The operators underwent intensive trainings conducted by the representatives of the CEC structural units and the Training Center on the following issues: Internet phone CRM, search system, on-line chat, the CEC website, the Election Administration Strategy, election stakeholders, effective communication and service, Election Code, polling day procedures and electoral disputes.

The Voters' List Formation and Informational Technologies Department ensured the call/informational center worked effectively. The telephone system was updated and started working in the test mode, operator's page was created in the program, the license – related to the new telephone system was purchased and implemented.

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<sup>28</sup> For the complete information on election applications/complaints follow the link on the CEC website:  
<https://sachivrebi.cec.gov.ge/>

At the call/informational center, the statistical data is regularly processed and available on the CEC official website.

### Issuing Public Information

The Election Administration (EA) is guided by the “rule of proactive announcement of public information” when processing and issuing public information. The Legal Department annually prepares the report about the public information issued by the EA of Georgia, sends it to the relevant public agencies and posts on the “Legislative Herald of Georgia” (“Sakartvelos Sakanonmdeblo Matsne”).

Secretaries of the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the District Election Commissions (DECs) issue public information.

### Report on the Public Information Issued by the Election Administration (the CEC/DECs (Election Commissions) in 2017

1. 1403 requests to issue public information were submitted.
2. 1363 decisions are made by the persons responsible for providing public information to ensure accessibility of public information in election commissions and proactive publishing of information (according to the regulations of the election commissions–secretaries of the commissions).
3. 40 decisions are made on refusal to satisfy the request to issue the public information.
4. Request for amendment of the public information was not submitted. Consequently, decisions on satisfying/refusal to satisfy requests for amendment of the public information were not made by responsible persons.
5. The election commissions did not make decision to close their sessions.
6. The Election Commissions collected, processed and stored the data provided by the defined institutions on the basis of article 31 of the Organic Law of Georgia “Election Code of Georgia”. The relevant responsible persons issued public data 63 times, as for personal data – none was issued.
7. Public officers of the election administration did not violate the requirements provided by the General Administrative Code of Georgia on freedom of information. Consequently, disciplinary liability was not imposed to any responsible person.
8. Responsible persons relied on the Organic Law of Georgia “Election Code of Georgia”, the Laws of Georgia on “Personal Data Protection”, “Information Security” and the General Administrative Code of Georgia when they refused to issue public information. None of the sessions were closed.
9. Out of 40 decisions made on refusal to issue public information only 1 was appealed.
10. The election commissions did not cover expenses related to the process and issue of the public data by the Election Administration, as well as the decision on refusal to issue public information or the expenses related to the appeal of the decision of the election commissions to close their sessions, including the amount paid in favor of the party.

# Conclusion

In 2017, the Election Administration conducted Municipal Elections. Assessment of the elections made by the local and international observer organizations was mainly positive. The elections were well-organized and administered, that enabled voters to express their will freely and raised public trust towards the elections.

In the Action Plan 2017 of the Election Administration, the implementation of 86 activities was envisaged. These activities were mainly implemented in a professional and timely manner.

In the context of assessing indicators, 77 activities were implemented entirely.

**The following 6 activities were partially implemented:**

- Improving the internal communication system of the EA;
- Implementation of the electronic management system of business processes at the CEC Apparatus;
- Creating the mentoring institute;
- Creating the electronic registration program for observers of international, local and media organizations;
- Creating the electronic program of planning and reporting;
- Processing/using election results and other public statistical data.

The mentioned activities are planned in the Action Plan 2018 of the Election Administration.

**Implementation of the following 2 activities was terminated:**

- Improving the system of accounting the Administration's resources/reserves electronically.
- Establishing effective mechanisms for attracting/keeping qualified staff.

Implementation of the first activity was considered as unnecessary, as for the second one – it was terminated because of the ongoing reform in the public service.

**One activity was not implemented:**

Supporting conduct of internal elections in various organizations/ institutions.

The activity was not conducted because there was no request from organizations/ establishments.

Besides implementation of the activities envisaged in the plan, the CEC structural units and the Training Center also implemented other activities that significantly supported processes of institutional strengthening of the Election Administration, educating citizens and voters, developing inclusive electoral environment and providing the stakeholders with accurate electoral information in a timely manner.

The CEC evaluated the process of organizing the elections and implementing the Action Plan 2017 of the Election Administration. On the basis of the received experience, priorities and activities to be implemented emerged that were reflected in the Action Plan 2018. In 2018, apart from the other vital activities, the following innovations and changes are planned:

#### Innovations in the election processes:

- For the first time in the election history of Georgia, during 2018 By-elections, a pilot project will be implemented, namely, vote counting will be carried out electronically by using modern technologies on the polling day;
- According to the Election Integrity Management Plan of the Election Administration credibility, an innovative electronic monitoring system of the polling day incidents will be developed and piloted.

#### Direct Communication with Voters

- In accordance with the updated concept, holding public meetings with the population across the country;
- Face-to-face conversations with voters on elections and activities of the Election Administration;
- Providing the population with more information on the CEC services.

#### Services

- Simplifying process of election registration for the electoral subjects – developing/ implementing electronic registration program for observers of international, local and media organizations, political parties, election subjects, candidates and representatives.

#### Process of Accountability

- Implementing the process of accountability in the DEC's;
- Implementing interim assessment of the Strategic Plan 2015-2019;
- Creating/implementing the electronic program of planning and accountability.

#### Human Resources Management

- Creating the mentoring institute;
- Increasing access to electronic certification process for election officers;
- Creating regional certification center and conducting relevant exams.

In October 2018, regular Presidential Elections of Georgia will be conducted. The Election Administration plans to offer professionally administered elections to the society, take a leading position in the region and strengthen the tradition of implementing democratic elections in the country.

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This document is prepared by the Coordination, Planning and Reporting Department of the Central Election Commission (CEC) on the basis of the reports presented by the CEC's structural units and Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Training Centre – Legal Entity of Public Law (the Training Centre).

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