



PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BY CDD WITH RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN GEORGIA 2014 – 2017





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FOREWORD

Dear Reader, I'm Ketevan Chachava, Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Development and Democracy (CDD). It is my great pleasure and privilege to present to you our democratic, impartial, representative NGO and its creative, dynamic and enthusiastic team. CDD was established on February 26, 2008 in Tbilisi, Georgia, so this year we celebrate 10th anniversary. We aim to advance the development of democracy in Georgia by building the public's trust and awareness about electoral processes, rule of law, human rights, tolerance, diversity, public diplomacy and Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic Integration.

At CDD we strongly believe in the importance of dialogue, direct communications, engagement and public diplomacy. The involvement of different groups of society and the unity of all actors is extremely important on the path of Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration, as well as general development of our society. We are an experienced, non-partisan organization with a track record of providing unbiased elections monitoring, in line with international standards and the mandate of our organization. CDD has built credibility and trust among the main elections stakeholders.

CDD is one of the leading domestic elections observation organizations in Georgia. We are a part of all existing working groups concerning the election processes and reforms in our country (*Government, Parliament, interparty working groups, interagency task force, technical working groups and more*). In addition to the work at the national level, CDD has gained credibility in the international arena. Most notably, CDD representatives were invited to join several OSCE/ODIHR observation missions (e.g. Armenia-2012, Albania-2013). CDD is one of the very few organizations in Georgia that has a track record of both domestic and international credibility in elections monitoring.

A clear benefit of the high-trust and non-partisan status of CDD is evidenced in the Political Party Development programs that CDD has implemented since 2013, involving the full spectrum of political parties from across the country. Up to 500 participants from more than 25 qualified political parties were beneficiaries of these educational projects aimed at ensuring a competitive political environment.

Another key direction since CDD's founding has been Voter Education and Active Citizenship of Youth and Women (*empowerment, engagement and awareness raising*). Other important initiatives, information campaigns and successful online platforms (*Decision if Yours, Geoyouth.ge*) have been developed through the years.

We could continue with the examples our successful programs, but this information brochure's focus is to present an exciting and unique working direction of CDD that has become our core priority since 2014.

Religion is an important part of life for many people; even people who are not religious by nature consider it to be important. Depending on the culture and governmental style, its importance can range from a simple influence to complete control of society. Religion played a significant role in political systems in the ancient and medieval society. Even in modern times, in many countries of the world, religion directly and indirectly influences political activities. What effect does religion have on democratic attitudes?

Pazit Ben-Nun Bloom and Gizem Arikan outline the results of three studies they have conducted into the relationship between religion and democracy. They note that while religious belief can undermine democracy by generating more conservative values, religious social behaviour enhances support for democracy by fostering greater trust in institutions and engagement in politics. An interesting finding is that religiosity was found to have a positive impact on democratic norms and values.

Evidence shows that churches hold great potential for deliberative democracy, as religious activity leads to the development of civic skills and civic norms and provides organizational and philosophical bases for a wide range of social movements. In fact, church attendance is found to increase electoral turnout, protest activism, and support for democracy. Empirical and theoretical scholars alike increasingly note the "political ambivalence of religion"; that is, religion can be either a source of undemocratic values or a contributor to the development of democratic skills.

CDD has actively cooperated with the Patriarchate of Georgia (PoG) and clergy for several years, with ground breaking projects such as meetings, training, conferences, TV series "Georgia Member of the European Family" on Patriarchy Television "Ertsulovneba", short films and study visits. We were thrilled that the visits of Georgian Orthodox clergy to Brussels, which media called "historical," had such a great response in Brussels, as well as in our society.

The official statement of the Patriarchate of Georgia, following the first visit in Brussels in November of 2016, emphasized their position concerning Georgia's aspiration towards Euro-Atlantic membership. The statement noted that this is choice of majority of Georgian people and the church respects this choice. Together with partners, CDD conducted an historical inter-religious visit, where for the first time, a delegation of high-hierarchy representatives from the various religious communities of Georgia visited the USA. The delegation was comprised of religious leaders from the Georgian Orthodox Church, Muslim community: Shiite and Sunni directions, Latin Catholic Church of South Caucasus and Diocese of Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Holy Church in Georgia. The projects mentioned above clearly indicate the necessity and effectiveness of dialogue and active communication. For example: The latest CRRC survey from October of 2017 shows that the perception of the EU as a threat to Georgian traditions has decreased by 15% from 2015 to 2017.

We are proud to report a number of important direct and indirect initiatives that were created and successfully implemented due to the work of CDD and its partners, including the development of youth Euro-Club in Vani Orthodox Gymnasium named after St. Nino Equal to the Apostles and the Enlightener of Georgia; the US State Department International Leadership Visitors Program for Georgian Orthodox Priests held in the autumn of 2017; the successful honey-making cooperative "SACHINO" with active participation of Archpriest Petre (Giorgadze) and the financial support of the European Union supported ENPARD program; an initiative to start study programs between western higher education institutions and St. Andrew the First Called Georgian University of Patriarchate of Georgia; English Language classes at CDD for Clergy and the friendships developed through visits among the representatives of different religions leaders.

These tangible outcomes make us proud and we are motivated to continue our work with even more passion. CDD has become an asset for other organizations, helping their projects to be implemented. Our projects have become an inspiration for other countries, as well as for EU East Strat.Com at EEAS, leading to the implementation of similar activities in other countries.

I want to express gratitude to each and every participant, supporter, staff member, expert, speaker, partner and donor of CDD along this very interesting journey. Special thanks go to our long-term partners and friends at the British Embassy Tbilisi and the Embassy of Kingdom of the Netherlands to Georgia, who have been supporting and believing in us since the very beginning. At CDD we share view of Albert Einstein "Insanity Is Doing the Same Thing Over and Over Again and Expecting Different Results." Therefore, we are always open to new ideas, challenges, opportunities and partnerships.

Ketevan Chachava
Executive Director of CDD

INTRODUCTION

The results of a survey released by the International Republican Institute (IRI) in April of 2017 show a slight increase to the high level of support of the Georgian population towards Georgia's aspirations for membership in the EU (March, 2017 - 90%; March, 2016 - 85%) and NATO (March, 2017 - 82%; March, 2016 - 79%). CDD foresees a positive role in actively working with different target groups of the general public and communicating the benefits of being part of the larger European family. Taking into consideration the aggressive anti-western (Russian Federation) propaganda, it becomes clear how important it is to work with different target groups on increasing awareness and busting the myths.

The Patriarchate of the Georgian Orthodox Church is one of the most popular and respected institutions in Georgia. Based on latest polls from the above-mentioned IRI survey, the work of the church is assessed as favourable by 88% of the population, which makes it the most trusted institution in the country. Based on official data available after the 2014 census, 83.4% of total population are Orthodox Christian (3,097,600 persons). Going back to 2012, polls of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) show an interesting picture. To the question, "how important is your religious belief in making daily decisions," the majority of Georgians responded very important (36%) and important (48%). In addition, more than 35% of Georgians attend church almost on a daily/weekly basis, apart from special occasions.





It is crucial to emphasize that the Georgian Orthodox Church and its representatives have a significant role in Georgian society and are respected by the wider public across the country. Cooperating with the church to reach out to the wider public became a priority for CDD in 2014.



“The British Embassy is very pleased to have been able to support these initiatives, together with CDD and other Georgian and international partners. Dialogue, two-way communication and awareness-raising among religious groups, civil society and government are a vital part of taking forward the people of Georgia’s European and Euro-Atlantic choices and to addressing myths and misconceptions.”

H.E. Justin McKenzie Smith
British Ambassador to Georgia

STUDY VISIT OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS FROM GEORGIA TO THE USA



FOR THE FIRST TIME, A DELEGATION COMPRISED OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS FROM THE GEORGIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, MUSLIM COMMUNITY, LATIN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF SOUTH CAUCASUS AND THE DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN GEORGIA VISITED THE USA DURING NOVEMBER, 2017.

"I am extremely pleased and proud to observe CDD's wonderful initiative growing and making so much difference via active engagement with the spiritual leaders of the Georgian Orthodox Church and other religious denominations in Georgia. On the one hand, I am thrilled by the unremitting success of this project as it facilitates continuous dialogue that is indispensable in such a culturally and religiously diverse country as Georgia. This, in turn, helps further unite the nation around national causes and promote pluralism, inclusion, coexistence and tolerance, all of which are critical to the process of nation building and enduring democratic development as well as advancement of deeply rooted European and Euro-Atlantic ambitions.



On the other hand, I have been closely following and long rooting for this initiative, as it was born and nurtured back in the years during my tenure as Georgia's State Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration. Having been heavily invested in the project at its inception phase, its accomplishments now happen to seem more so endearing.

Undoubtedly, the Church remains the most trusted institution in Georgia, while the perceptions and convictions of highly respected religious leaders help shape the public opinion to a considerable degree. Thereby, to grant more legitimacy to Georgia's noble quest to return one fine day into the grand European family of nations, where it rightfully belongs, it becomes all the more important to actively engage the country's religious leaders from the Georgian Orthodox Church, as well as all religious minorities into the process, where constant discussion and communication has no alternative. In this context, the recent historic visit of a very sizable and diverse group of religious leaders from Georgia to the United States - organized by CDD with the financial support of the British Embassy in Tbilisi and in cooperation with a number of important partners, including the Embassy of Georgia in the United States - brought to the discussion table around those issues all the relevant stakeholders, including Georgia's long-time friends and loyal partners from various U.S. government offices as well as esteemed thinkers and experts from the U.S. based think tank community and academia. Those U.S. officials and intellectuals who partook in these discussions were fascinated and encouraged by the demonstrated unity and willingness to strongly back – including through numerous media statements - Georgia's democratic development, domestic and foreign policy agenda as well as the country's robust strategic partnership with the United States.

On various occasions, the participant U.S. officials and acclaimed experts in the field involved in the study program by CDD stressed the exceptional nature and significance of the project and its goals, and reaffirmed their full support behind this endeavour.

Needless to say, I cannot overemphasize the significance of such initiatives, and we all look forward to the continuation of what has successfully started and evolved into a series of extensive discussions on Georgia's strategic goals involving the country's esteemed religious leaders. And for that I highly commend CDD for its continuous devotion to the cause of promoting dialogue and trust among various religious denominations in Georgia, and bringing the pieces together by helping further foment the unity of the country's prominent and influential religious leaders behind Georgia's national interests and irreversible aspirations."

H.E. David Bakradze
Ambassador of Georgia to the United States of America



Under the study visit, meetings were held with the Sharon Hudson Dean, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy; Chaplain Brent Scott (RDML, CHC, USN), Deputy Chief of Navy Chaplains and USMC Chaplain; Chaplain John Kalantzis (CAPT, USN); Chaplain George Youstra (COL, USAF) Joint Staff Chaplain; Policy Country Director; Thomas O. Melia, Fellow Human Freedom at George W. Bush Institute, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, Democracy and Labour responsible for the bureau's work in Europe, South and Central Asia, and the Middle East; H.E. Richard Miles, Former Ambassador of the USA to Georgia and more.



“I think this is how the Georgian public feels – the only deterring factor against our territorial occupation is United States, our strategic partner. So, this relationship is very important for us. It is also important for them to know more about us. You may read a lot of hearsay, but every one of you should know that the Georgian Church will always stand where Georgia needs us to stand to protect its territorial integrity.” “We have met many interesting people and looked at many issues from different perspectives. The primary significance of this visit is to illustrate to our American friends that the Orthodox Church of Georgia will not grant anything to our opponents. We will not abandon our freedom as we face the enemies. The United States is our strategic partner and has never betrayed us. On the other hand, the Russian Federation has been fighting against our freedom for many years now. In this context, the support from the United States is very significant for Georgia.”



**Vicar of His Holiness and Beatitude, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia Ilia II,
Chairperson of the Financial and Economic Council of Patriarchate of Georgia
Bishop of the Bodbe, Iakob (Iakobishvili)**



“We have always been at the forefront of the Western values. What we have in common with the west is the respect of human beings and the significance that a human possesses for us. We have to do everything to ensure that every person, despite his or her religious beliefs is respected. There are not only Orthodox Christians in our delegation, but also the representatives of other traditional religious communities in Georgia, such as Catholic Church, Armenian Apostolic Church, and Muslim Community. This means that we all respect one another and see need to cooperate with the West.”

**Bishop of Margveti and Ubisa
Melkhisedek (Khachidze)
Georgian Orthodox Church**



“We, people have different opinions, our religious beliefs are different too, but despite these differences we live under one sky, in one country, which means people's cultural coexistence, means respecting each other's opinion, listening to each other. Meetings like this bring people closer to each other.”

“I believe that the structure and idea of our delegation's visit is unique and exemplary. Our diverse delegation exemplifies love and peaceful coexistence between different human beings in Georgia.”

**Metropolitan of Poti and Khobi,
Grigoli (Berbichashvili)
Georgian Orthodox Church**

„We got acquainted with new people, with the representatives of different organizations and state officials, besides that we had the opportunity communicate with our spiritual brothers from Georgia. It is great that we are talking with each other, not about each other.“

**Bishop of the Georgian Diocese of Armenian
Apostolic Orthodox Holy Church –
Varzgen (Mirzakhanyan))**



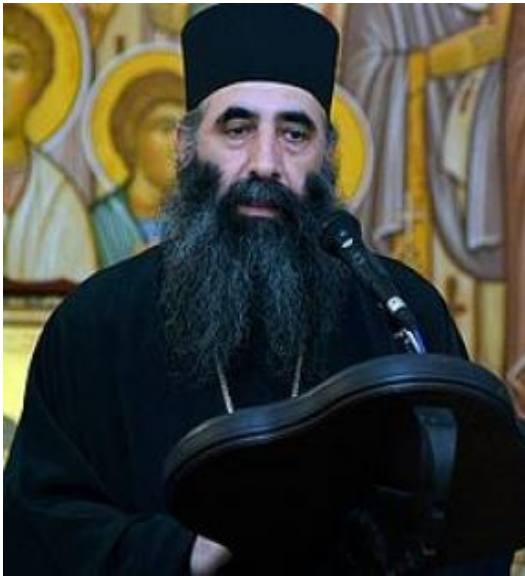
“This is a very important visit as we are represented here together. Our relations among different religions will be even closer and significant in the future.”

**Administrator of
the Apostolic Administration of Latin Rite Catholics
Bishop – Giuseppe Passotto**



THE DELEGATION VISITED CAPITOL HILL AND THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WORLD'S LARGEST LIBRARY WHICH HAS GEORGIAN ARCHIVES.





„This visit has a special significance, because the representatives of the traditional religions in Georgia are represented here, including: the representatives of Holy Synod of Georgian Orthodox Church, the leader of Catholic Church in Georgia, the Leader of Armenian Church in Georgia, the leaders of the Muslim community including Shia and Sunni denominations. This unity creates a very good presence and appearance of Georgia.“

**Vicar of His Holiness and Beatitude,
Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia Ilia II,
Metropolitan of Akhaltsikhe and Tao-Klarjeti
Theodore (Chuadze)**

“CDD’s initiative has been ground breaking in terms of positively affecting religious leaders’ perceptions on Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Our Center is proud to be a partner of CDD in this important undertaking from the very beginning. Considering the high trust and influence on opinion-shaping, which religious leaders enjoy among Georgia’s population, it is extremely important to have them actively engaged in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration.

The study visit to Washington DC., which CDD has organized in partnership with the Information Center, has been a unique project that gave very tangible results; the messages in support of Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic integration, made by high-ranking religious leaders as a follow up of the visit, have been very strong-worded and clear, and had a significant outreach.

The project was also exceptional in terms of bringing together all important stakeholders: governmental bodies, civil society, religious organizations, diplomatic corps and international organizations; all of them worked in a well-coordinated and coherent manner for reaching the common goal.”



Nino Bolkvadze
Director of Information Center on NATO and EU



IN PHILADELPHIA, THE DELEGATION HELD AN IMPORTANT AND EMOTIONAL MEETING WITH GEORGIAN DIASPORA. THE DELEGATION EXPERIENCED A PERFORMANCE BY THE GEORGIAN NATIONAL DANCE GROUP “MAMULI” FUNCTIONING IN THE US.



A RECEPTION HONOURING THE DELEGATION WAS HOSTED BY H.E. DAVID BAKRADZE, AMBASSADOR OF GEORGIA TO THE UNITED STATES AT THE EMBASSY OF GEORGIA TO THE USA.

INTERNATIONAL INTER-RELIGIOUS CONFERENCE IN THE USA



THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WAS HOSTED IN WASHINGTON DC. BY THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY (NED) IN NOVEMBER, 2017. CONFERENCE WAS CONDUCTED UNDER THE PROJECT: "STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY THROUGH ENGAGEMENT WITH THE GEORGIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH: SUPPORTING CIVIC EDUCATION, ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PROVIDING A PLATFORM FOR OPEN DISCUSSION WITH WIDER RELIGIOUS LEADERS". PROJECT WAS IMPLEMENTED BY CDD WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE BRITISH EMBASSY TBILISI & GOOD GOVERNANCE FUND. TOPICS DISCUSSED INCLUDED DEMOCRACY & RELIGION AND DISINFORMATION & PROPAGANDA.



“It is very important for America to be connected with Georgia, not just with the government of Georgia but with the society, the institutions, the civil-society organizations, and different religious groups, especially the Orthodox Church. Americans need to understand Georgia better because it’s playing a critical role today in regional and international politics. Georgia is a small country, but it’s strategically located in a difficult neighbourhood, with neighbours that can be very troublesome. That makes Georgia’s effort to establish a real democracy - with political, religious, and cultural pluralism – extremely important. Georgia is a model for other countries in the region, and it also provides a refuge for democrats at risk - democracy activists who work in repressive environments and are often forced into exile. If Georgia can succeed in building democracy, it can help promote a more stable and peaceful region. I think It’s very important for Americans to understand that. I also think that it’s important for Georgians, especially Georgian religious leaders, to see and understand the United States. America is a country that has always taken religion very seriously, something that the French writer Alexis de Tocqueville saw when he visited the United States in 1831. He wrote that religion was the bedrock of American democracy because he thought it shaped the character of the people and what he called “the habits of the heart.” While Americans believe in the separation of church and state, we don’t believe in the separation religion from society. That’s why we’re very honoured to be receiving the largest and most diverse delegation of the Georgian religious leaders that has ever visited the United States. We’re very happy to have organized a discussion on religion and its relation to democracy with intellectuals who have thought deeply about this subject. I hope that this will be the first of many discussions we have together that will deepen the relationship between our two countries and our two peoples.”

Carl Gershman, President of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

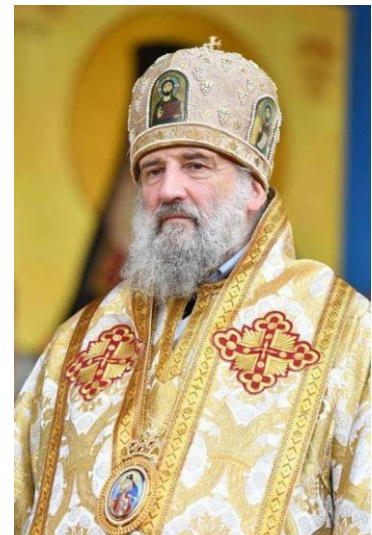


"We hope that the conferences like the one with NED and trips of this nature will bring us closer to each other and help us in continuing our peaceful coexistence. Everything begins with religion, and as religious leaders, we must explain to our parishioners that there is no tension or animosity or any need of them between religions in the country."

**Mufti of whole Georgia
Beglar Kamashidze
Muslim Community**

"As the United States Congress often conducts research on religious conditions in the world, our message to the US is that there is no serious religious problem in Georgia. There were particular instances of religious intolerance, but these were provoked by several individuals who wanted to exaggerate and portray the problem as larger than it is. However, these provocations will not affect our historic tolerance towards all religions in Georgia."

**Metropolitan of Rustavi- Ioane (Gamrekeli)
Chairman of the Education Center Named after St. King David
the Builder of the Patriarchate of Georgia**



"As someone who works in the United States as a bishop, I would say that the West is no threat to our religion or to any other religions that are represented in Georgia. It is the opposite. We have been living together for centuries as a free nation. We have to appreciate the freedom that is given by god to a human being and in no way, limit his or her freedom of choice, and respect each and every person."

**Bishop of Georgian Diocese of
North America - Saba (Intskirveli)
Georgian Orthodox Church**

A group of religious leaders from the Georgian Orthodox Church, Muslim community, Latin Catholic Church of South Caucasus and Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Holy Church in Georgia attended and heard a panel of very interesting speakers: William A. Galston, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution; Husain Haqqani, Director for South and Central Asia, Hudson Institute; George Weigel, Distinguished Senior Fellow, Ethics and Public Policy Center; Carl Gershman (moderator), President, National Endowment for Democracy; Shanthi Kalathil, Director, International Forum for Democratic Studies; Robert Orttung, Associate Research Professor, George Washington University; Christopher Walker, Vice President, National Endowment for Democracy; Miriam Lansky (moderator), Senior Director, National Endowment for Democracy; H.E. David Bakradze, Georgian Ambassador to the United States..



The attendees expressed the need for and value of holding similar inter-religious conferences, creating opportunities for dialogue, discussion and recommendation. Having a similar international conference yearly or even more often on different topics was suggested by several members of delegation.



"Disinformation is a big problem for everyone regardless of its origin, whether it is coming from an individual, a group of people or a government. In its nature, disinformation is negative, and I believe that those who are spreading disinformation should be held accountable. Unfortunately, disinformation became very powerful recently. I mentioned that during 2008 war, I witnessed such disinformation efforts from the Russian media outlets. To answer the question on whether the Orthodox Church of Georgia is under Russian disinformation, I am convinced that every religious person feels unhappy when a person does not possess a religious sentiment or feel accountable for his/her actions. The question whether Georgian Orthodox Church is a victim of disinformation or whether it spreads disinformation is itself disinformation".

Metropolitan of Gori and Athens – Andria (Gvazava)

Georgian Orthodox Church

PROJECT WAS IMPLEMENTED BY
THE CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY WITH THE FINANCIAL
SUPPORT OF THE BRITISH EMBASSY TBILISI & GOOD GOVERNANCE FUND.



British Embassy
Tbilisi



განვითარებისა და დემოკრატიის ცენტრი
CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY

PROJECT SUPPORTERS:



STUDY VISITS OF THE GEORGIAN ORTHODOX CLERGY TO EUROPEAN AND EURO-ATLANTIC INSTITUTIONS



IN 2016 AND 2017, CDD ORGANIZED TWO STUDY VISITS OF THE HIGH-RANKING DELEGATION OF GEORGIAN ORTHODOX CLERGY TO THE EUROPEAN AND EURO-ATLANTIC INSTITUTIONS TO BRUSSELS. HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS AT NATO HQ, EU INSTITUTIONS, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WERE HELD. A DOCUMENTARY FILM HAS BEEN DEVELOPED COVERING WHOLE VISIT.



Study visits by the Georgian Orthodox Clergy became one of the most visible and truly important projects. About 70 TV, radio and online stories were produced by Georgian media about the visit, which was referred to as an “Historical Visit”. Radio Freedom called visit an “unforgettable event of 2016”.



“Conducted dialogue was very interesting, covering what should we expect from Association Agreement and generally from European integration. Discussion covered Georgian reality, identity, culture and traditions. We have received very interesting, hopeful and qualified messages on all these issues as from NATO as well as from EU Institutions.”

**Bishop of Belgium and Kingdom of Netherlands
Dosithe (Bogveradze)
Georgian Orthodox Church**



“We had meetings in NATO and in EU Institutions. We think these meetings were essential for us as well as for them. Both sides consider it desirable to have direct communication, interaction and straightforward messages towards each other as in this manner we will be able to introduce perceptions of EU and NATO towards Georgia to our society, as well as bring here messages of our people, our country and our church has towards them. We believe these meetings were positive and welcomed from both sides. We think these relationships will continue.” “During face to face meetings, it was underlined that every country, every nation joins EU with own values. So, it was often spread in our society that our values might be under threat via Association Agreement or from European Union. We received explanation and we received assurance that there is no such a threat or statement in existing agreement.”

**Metropolitan of Zugdidi and Tsaishi
Gerasime (Sharashenidze)
Chairman of the Foreign Relations
Department of the Patriarchate of Georgia**

“I was very pleased and honoured to meet this high-ranking delegation of Georgian Orthodox Church. I am aware of the essential role that the Georgian Orthodox Church plays in your country and the enormous contribution it has made over many centuries to the development of the Georgian identity, culture and Georgian History in general and it is important to have a dialog with such an important societal force when we discuss an issue that is so important for the Georgia, as Georgia’s future relations with the European Union. It’s good that Georgian Orthodox Church has shown its interest and is so supportive of Georgia’s relations with Europe. I think also because the European Union is an organization and group of countries based on the values, values that we share with Georgia.”



Dr. Thomas MAYR-HARTING,
Managing Director for Europe and Central Asia
EEAS-European External Action Service, Brussels.





"I think this is the first time we've had a visit like that. The deputy secretary general met the Patriarch in Tbilisi so this is a follow-up to that and we are grateful that they came. Second thing, I would say

that they are extremely well informed. We had an in-depth discussion of the internal political situation in Georgia, the challenge that the internally displaced people face and I commended them for the role that the church plays in taking care of this people. That's something we know and recognize. Of course, they are quite well informed on security in the Black Sea region, on NATO-Georgia relations. We discussed all of that. I think that the most important point for me from this meeting is that they stressed that the position that they hold is to support the Georgian people."

James Appathurai

NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia





“The results of the visit exceeded all expectations. I would like to mark that this initiative was well assessed and received positive feedback in the NATO headquarters. I think similar visits should continue in the future, because they are very important and crucial in terms of awareness raising and establishment of public opinion.”

H.E. Alexander Maisuradze, Head of the Mission of Georgia to NATO





“It is really important that after we go back to our diocese, we will explain to our parish, that myths about NATO must should be abolished, as many of those are made up and don’t correspond to reality. Our aspiration towards Europe was our aim in order to maintain safety and peace in the region where Russia has repeatedly demonstrated its aggression. As a result, part of our territories is occupied. In our vision, only guarantee of our country’s safety and development is membership in Euro-Atlantic Institutions.”

**Bishop of Georgian Diocese of
North America - Saba (Intskirveli)**

Georgian Orthodox Church



“CDD actively cooperates with the Patriarchate of Georgia and clergy already for several years. We think that involvement of different groups of society and unity of all actors is extremely important on the path of Georgia’s European and Euro-Atlantic integration. We are glad that the visits of Orthodox clerics in Brussels, which media called historical, had such a great response in Brussels, as well as in our society. We think that the official statement of Patriarchate of Georgia, following first visit was essential. They emphasized their position, concerning Georgia’s aspiration towards Euro-Atlantic membership; this is choice of majority of Georgian people and the church respects this choice. The above-mentioned project indicated necessity and effectiveness of dialogue and active communication.”

Archil Kanchaveli,
Executive Director of CDD
(2016 -2017)



After the visit the Patriarchate of Georgia made an official statement ***“It turned out that both at NATO and EU, they had a wrong perception of the Georgian Church, and we also had a wrong impression about their policy toward a number of issues,”*** the statement reads. ***“Concerning Georgia’s aspiration towards Euro-Atlantic membership, this is choice of Georgian people and church respects this choice”*** This is basically the first official statement from PoG, which is stating that they support the choice of the Georgian people concerning European and Euro-Atlantic Integration.

It truly exceeded all expectations of the organizers to see representatives of Georgian Orthodox Church so openly talking and discussing results and findings of the visit with the general public, including via media.

It is also worth mentioning the second important official statement, made by the Patriarch of Georgia, which was published after the decision regarding visa liberalization for Georgians was made by the European parliament. That statement reads as follows: ***“We are delighted that the citizens of Georgia were given an opportunity to travel visa-free to the EU / Schengen countries. This is recognition and appreciation of our achievements, and at the same time, a challenge for our country. Our people should feel more responsibility and commitment in representing themselves respectfully in the European zone. Our actions speak for us, for our country. It is our duty to try not only to get benefits from the European zone, but also to contribute to the process of development. This will be achieved by introducing and sharing our culture, our history and traditions with Europe. So, the arena is large and we need to take prudent steps. We congratulate everyone on this achievement and we ask God to give us faith, strength, peace and prosperity.”***

“Almost at every meeting, it was underlined that Europe never attempts to influence opinions on family, nor on any other human or traditional values. Every country makes individual choices and legitimates what is more acceptable for its culture and its traditions. Hearing this, was truly special for us as was the whole visit itself. I want to express my gratitude towards the organizers of this visit. We hope that we will have an opportunity to meet again and become even more informed about Europe and European union.”



**Vicar of His Holiness and Beatitude, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia Ilia II,
Metropolitan of Akhaltsikhe and Tao-Klarjeti Theodore (Chuadze)**



“Let’s call it the beginning of a dialogue between Georgian Orthodox Church and EU structures. A similar dialogue has never taken place before and it is very welcomed. What can be gained from the dialogue is information sharing, receiving information from the primary source about what EU does for Georgia, for Georgian people and how big is its aid. This dialogue is also important for gaining an understanding that we have lots of common values and a lot that unites us. The EU stands on fundamental Christian principles, values this union was built on. It is significant that we are talking about these issues openly, that clergy will bring the information obtained from the direct source back to Georgian society. Also, they will see what the EU represents, the values it stands for, how similar we are and how important the EU’s political, economic, social and moral support is for Georgia.”

H.E. Natalie Sabanadze,
Georgia's Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU

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British Embassy
Tbilisi



განვითარებისა და დემოკრატიის ცენტრი
CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY

PROJECT SUPPORTERS:



Kingdom of the Netherlands



TV SERIES “GEORGIA, MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN FAMILY”



TV SERIES “GEORGIA, MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN FAMILY” WAS AIRED BY PATRIARCHY TELEVISION “ERTSULOVNEBA” FOR ONE YEAR ON MONDAYS DURING PRIME-TIME. IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT, 18 EPISODES OF 45 MINUTE WERE PREPARED AND BROADCASTED; EACH EPISODE WAS RE-RUN DURING DIFFERENT AIR TIMES, FOR WIDER COVERAGE.

THE TV PROGRAM COVERED ALL THE MAIN POINTS OF THE EU-GEORGIA ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT: **DCFTA, AGRICULTURE, TOURISM AND INFRASTRUCTURE, CULTURAL HERITAGE AND GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS, EDUCATION, SPORTS AND YOUTH AFFAIRS, ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY, FOOD SAFETY, CONFLICT RESOLUTION, VISA LIBERALISATION.**

THE TV SERIES “GEORGIA MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN FAMILY” RECEIVED APPROXIMATELY 250,000 VIEWS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA AND WAS SEEN BY APPROXIMATELY 300,000 FAMILIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

THIS PROJECT WAS IMPLEMENTED WITH FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF NETHERLANDS IN GEORGIA IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PATRIARCHY TELEVISION ‘ERTSULOVNEBA” AND DEMOCRACY LAB.





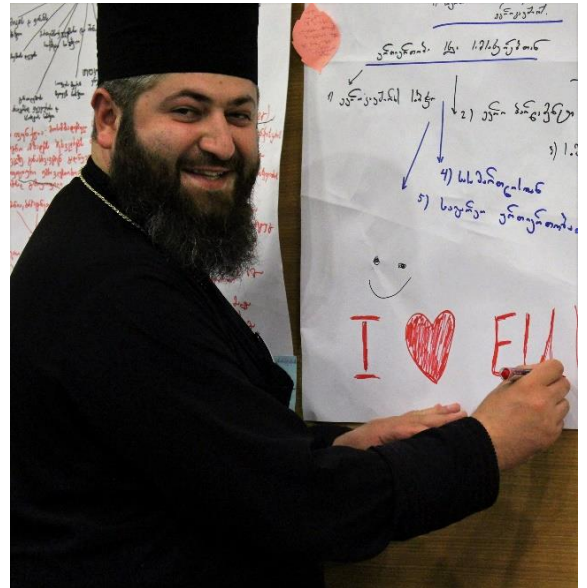
“Since 2014 we have been cooperating with CDD, the State Ministers Office for European and Euro-Atlantic integration, the Information Center on NATO and EU and diplomatic partners on projects related to religious groups and the approximation of Georgia to the EU and NATO, and we gladly continue. Providing factual information about the EU and Association Agreement is an important part of our work in Georgia. We aim to reach out to all groups that may be interested in this topic, and thanks to CDD and its executive director Mrs. Ketevan Chachava, we have been able to connect to highly respectable representatives of the Georgian Orthodox Church. Over the years, we shifted the focus a little. First the clergy of the Georgian Orthodox Church, later the viewers of Patriarchy TV “Ertsulovneba”. This year we focus on the religious schools, their staff, teachers and pupils. The Embassy thoroughly enjoyed the cooperation with CDD and the interaction with the clergy. We trust it rendered a better perspective of the religious community on what European and Euro-Atlantic integration entails and it gave us better insight in Georgia’s values and traditions.”

H.E. Jos Douma
Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Georgia

SERIES OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR AWARENESS RAISING, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT & MYTH BUSTING

THANKS TO THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS IN GEORGIA, THE BRITISH EMBASSY TBILISI, THE GOOD GOVERNANCE FUND (GGF), THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY (NED) AND THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO GEORGIA, AND IN ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF POG AND THE EDUCATION CENTER OF PATRIARCHATE OF GEORGIA NAMED AFTER DAVID THE BUILDER, CDD HAS IMPLEMENTED SEVERAL GROUND - BREAKING PROJECTS TO ADDRESS LACK OF AWARENESS, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND MYTH BUSTING. THE PROCESS INCLUDED A PILOT PHASE, ACTIVE FEEDBACK SESSIONS AND DIVERSE METHODOLOGY FOR ADULT LEARNING.





THE EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS CONDUCTED FROM 2014 TO 2017 INCLUDED MEETINGS, OPEN LECTURES, WORKSHOPS AND INTENSIVE TRAINING SESSIONS AND WERE A GREAT SUCCESS. THE PROJECTS DIRECTLY REACHED OUT TO UP TO 3000 REPRESENTATIVES AND AFFILIATES OF THE GEORGIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH (BISHOPS, PRIESTS, MONKS, NUNS), AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND PARISHIONERS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY (TEACHERS, MEMBERS OF ADMINISTRATION AND STUDENTS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS UNDER THE PATRIARCHATE OF GEORGIA).



“Georgian People, made their choice since olden times by adopting Christianity and herewith connecting to Europe... It's Natural that we should learn from Europe, get experience, which led to the leadership of Europe in this field.”

**Metropolitan of Rustavi Ioane (Gamrekeli)
Chairman of the Education Center Named after
St. King David the Builder of the Patriarchate of Georgia -**

Topics covered by these educational projects have been included the EU – Georgia Association Agreement; DCFTA; visa liberalization process; Georgia – EU history of relations; EU institutions and decision-making process; international treaties on human rights; relations of religious organizations and governments in the EU member states; NATO; and NATO – Georgia relations and future perspectives. These topics were covered by invited experts, high officials of the government and representatives of diplomatic missions in Georgia.



During the project implementation, CDD gathered invaluable feedback and needs assessments from participants. The step-by-step development of the project activities and new phases of the educational programs based on that feedback and needs assessment led to the success of the projects and confidence building for the CDD team.

Approximately 93% of the participants assessed the information received as greatly needed and stated a willingness to participate in future educational and awareness raising activities conducted by CDD.



“... It is really important that after we go back to our diocese we will explain to our parish, that myths about NATO and EU should be abolished as many those are made up and does not correspond to reality... only guarantee of our country’s safety is membership in Euro -Atlantic Institutions...”

Bishop of Georgian Diocese of North America - Saba (Intskirveli)
Georgian Orthodox Church

“I want to underline that in today’s reality when different non-governmental/civic organizations state their opinion about one or another issue regarding development of the country and life of society, the church nevertheless has the duty and right, as the church itself represents historically established biggest non-governmental/civic organization and institution. We believe, that in civil life the position of church must be taken into account, it’s voice has to be heard and of course directed forward strengthening, progress and brighter future of our country.”



Metropolitan of Gori and Athens-Andria (Gvazava)



“We are returning to our historical roots... it is really important that Association Agreement with EU was signed. It is a political phenomenon, which has important positive political, economic and other impacts on our country and also, I have to underline a great spiritual value of the agreement as we are returning to our roots, with our Christian culture, which is European in its essence. You all heard the position of his holiness our Patriarch, who blessed this process. We have to bear in mind and pay attention to the achievements that have been made in this direction. The EU can be endangered if society starts distrusting the country's choice and one can observe some tendencies. It seems that our nemesis does not like the progress we have made in our path towards the EU.”

**Metropolitan of Poti and Khobi
Rector of New Georgian University
Grigol (Berbichashvili)**

14 January, 2018 (Cathedral of Poti)







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