



Inside IRIS Georgia

Inside *IRIS Georgia* is a monthly newsletter published by IRIS Georgia, a USAID contractor implementing the Rule of Law Program in Georgia.

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Calendar on freedom of information

In order to get the word out about new Freedom of Information (FOI) reforms in Georgian law, one group has created an innovative illustrated calendar.

Within the framework of the IRIS-funded project on the implementation of (FOI) provisions in administrative agencies, the IRIS grantee, the UN Association of Georgia



(UNAG), produced a calendar that explains various FOI articles of the General Administrative Code with examples from daily life situation. Every page of the calendar contains a cartoon and a

story that is linked to the respective article of the Code.

UNAG will distribute 2,000 copies of the calendar free of charge to public agencies and local NGOs. For more information, please contact UNAG at 2 Dolidze St., Tbilisi
Tel: 33 25 16, 33 52 16
E-mail: una@una.ge

Free training for NGOs

IRIS Georgia cooperated with the Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia (CSRDG) on the implementation of the project, "Support to Anti-corruption Initiatives in the Regions of Georgia," funded by the Eurasia

Foundation. IRIS Georgia delivered free training on freedom of information in six cities – Gori, Akhaltsikhe, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Poti and Ozurgeti. The training was intended for the NGOs that implement the above-referenced project in

respective regions with the financial support of Eurasia Foundation and Open Society Georgia Foundation.

The training was delivered by IRIS Georgia's Attorney Maia Kopaleishvili.

New brochure from IRIS Georgia

IRIS Georgia's Program Attorney Maia Kopaleishvili created a brochure on administrative contract. Based on Georgian and foreign legislation, the publication explains the legal nature and particularities of

administrative contract and its relation with civil contract, describes the link between administrative contract and administrative act, outlines the particularities of judicial review of administrative contract as

a subject of administrative dispute, and other legal matters related to this legal document.

The brochure is available for download from the Resources section of IRIS Georgia website at: www.iris.ge

Featuring IRIS grantee**UN Association of Georgia (UNAG)**

UNAG meeting with local authorities in regions

The UN Association of Georgia (UNAG) is implementing an IRIS-funded 11-month project, "Implementation of Freedom of Information (FOI) Provisions of the General Administrative Code in Public Agencies." Covering 11 cities/towns and three villages, the project aims to encourage openness of government activities and involvement of local citizens in decision-making. Beneficiaries of the project include both public officials and local residents.

At the initial phase of the project, UNAG, through its

contact persons, conducted a FOI assessment at selected public agencies. The Assessment Reports, including recommendations, were sent to the heads of the agencies.

The main Work Group of the project, together with IRIS Georgia's experts, organizes workshops in each of the selected cities/towns and villages. One of the priorities of the Work Group is preparing model documents, such as office manuals for FOI Persons and draft FOI Reports. As an additional activity, the Group started

drafting legal documents. One of them is the law on information release fees.

Active interest from public agencies in the FOI provisions resulted in the formation of a consulting service run by the Work Group, which responds to verbal and written requests for information.

Within the framework of the project, UNAG will also support development of a number of Freedom of Information Offices in the selected regions. The FOI Persons working in these offices will be provided with necessary equipment and literature.

Cooperation with other organizations**NDI/IRIS seminar for local government officials**

NDI/IRIS seminar in Bakuriani

On March 25-27, 2003, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), in close cooperation with IRIS Georgia, held a seminar for representatives of local governments in Bakuriani, Georgia. This was the second event within the framework of NDI-IRIS cooperation, which aims to inform members of local councils (Sakrebulo) on the legal means for ensuring transparency and public participation in decision-making process on local levels.

The Bakuriani seminar

brought together 19 representatives of nine regions of Georgia. IRIS Georgia's Senior Legal and Policy Advisor David Usupashvili, together with the Legal Advisor of the Anti-corruption Bureau of Georgia Paliko Kublashvili, led the seminar during two working days. The participants of the seminar brought up the most recent decisions of the respective local councils and the plans of socio-economic development of the regions. They were also asked to discuss

village/city specific problems and identify specific areas that could be addressed with specific actions.

Based on these materials, information and relevant legislation, the participants designed concrete action plans, for instance:

According to the current legislation a citizen needs to go to 14 different local government agencies (fire inspection, sanitary inspection, water supply agency, electricity supply agency, police, etc.)

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Cooperation with other organizations

NDI/IRIS seminar for local government officials

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and obtain 14 different signatures in order to get a permit for constructing even a small storage building in his backyard. In reality this means that a citizen has to pay bribes in all of those agencies or pay to a “middleman”, who will get all the signatures. The participants agreed that changing such legislation is beyond the competence of the local councils, because most of those agencies operate according to the national legislation and are accountable to their

respective national head offices. However, it was also agreed that, until the necessary measures are taken on the national level, the local councils could adopt some decisions that would increase quality of service, decrease corruption opportunities and make citizens' life easier. For example, the local councils can issue a normative administrative act (since after the signatures are obtained, the permits are finally issued on behalf of local government,) obliging all of those 14 agencies to hold joint meetings of their

authorized representatives twice per month for considering citizens' applications for construction permits. In such a case a citizen would present all the required information in one place and would obtain the permit with all the necessary signatures from the same place.

There were several other similar actions identified for different regions. The participants were informed about IRIS funded legal consulting centers in the regions, where they can get necessary help when preparing such decisions.

Other news

Georgian team makes it to the finals

From 8 to 17 March, 2003, a team from Tbilisi State University International Law and International Relations Department, with financial assistance from ICRC Delegation in Tbilisi, participated in the Jean Pictet Competition in International Humanitarian Law, which took place in Nafplion, Greece. It is a competition involving students from schools of law, political sciences and military schools aiming to improve their knowledge of the law of war through role-play and simulations.

Every year, English-speaking and French-speaking sessions allow teams to compete during one week. The best teams of each session meet for the international final. As usually referred to, it is like a world cup championship in this field of law. It was the first time that Georgia participated in this competition. Team consisted of three members, Tamar Tomashvili, Nino Suqnidze and Tinatin Goletiani, coached by IRIS Georgia Attorney Eka

Tkeshelashvili.

It is a great honor to realize that our team, having no prior experience in this type of competition, achieved enormous success, managed to win finals of English-Speaking sessions together with the University of South Wales, Australia, and to make it to the final finals of the competition. We hope that participation of Georgian teams in Jean Pictet Competition will become a tradition.



*Jean Pictet Competition
in International
Humanitarian Law*

Introducing IRIS Georgia staff

Robyn Jordan, Project Director



Robyn Jordan

Robyn Jordan (*J.D. - College of William and Mary; B.A. - Vanderbilt University*) is IRIS’s Project Director for the Georgia Rule of Law project and works primarily in College Park, where she oversees activities in Georgia and coordinates the work with USAID in Washington and with our U.S. and European based partners.

As an attorney, she has extensive experience working in Eastern Europe including Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Georgia. Her past experience includes work with AMEX International, Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance, and the Foundation for International Community Assistance.

IRIS Georgia calendar of events – April 2003

Date	Events
April 3	ROL Meeting at USAID
April 8	GYLA/Rustavi Town Hall Meeting “Women and Health”
April 11	GYLA/Tbilisi FOI Workshop Liberty Institute Human Rights Roundtable in Kutaisi
April 12	GYLA/Tbilisi FOI Workshop IRIS/JTC Administrative Law Training
April 13	GYLA/Tbilisi FOI Workshop IRIS/JTC Administrative Law Training
April 14	GYLA/Dusheti Workshop on Police GYLA/Gori Town Hall Meeting in Kaspi
April 16	GYLA/Gori Town Hall Meeting in Kareli GYLA/Kutaisi Town Hall Meeting in Tkibuli
April 18	Liberty Institute Human Rights Roundtable in Akhaltsikhe
April 19, 20	IRIS/JTC Administrative Law Training
April 21	GYLA/Kutaisi FOI Workshop
April 22	GYLA/Gori FOI Roundtable
April 23	GYLA/Ozurgeti Town Hall Meetings in villages IRIS/UNAG Site Visits to Poti and Ingiri on FOI Implementation
April 24	GYLA/Gori Town Hall Meeting in Borjomi Liberty Institute Press Club Session
April 25	GYLA/Kutaisi Town Hall Meeting in Tskaltubo
April 26, 27	IRIS/JTC Administrative Law Training
April 29	GYLA/Dusheti Roundtable on Freedom of Religion GYLA/Telavi Town Hall Meeting for Students

Editorial Policy

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