



# INSIDE IRIS GEORGIA

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## Training for Internews Staff

September 18-23, media expert Magda Walter conducted a training for the Internews team, which produces documentaries under IRIS's public awareness task.



During the intensive five-day training, participants were introduced to techniques and modern standards and forms

of documentary filmmaking. Special attention was also paid to techniques of script-writing and production.

Participants drafted guidelines for production of upcoming films and discussed topics for future documentaries. Ms. Walter will continue to assist Internews in creating documentaries under its grant with IRIS. Imedi TV will broadcast the films on Tuesday evenings this autumn.



## Young Economists Awarded New Grant



The Association of Young Economists of Georgia began their new project "Implementing New Licensing Legislation" in August 2004.

The project aims to support license-issuing procedures, their conformance to the General Administrative Code and newly established laws and to raise awareness among entrepreneurs, the business community and others affected by license- and permit-related legislation.

The project target sectors - construction, transportation, food products, manufacturing and commodity export/import - were selected through such criteria as the scope of the target group, the approach of state agencies to the issue and anti-corruption opportunities.

Four workshops, eight training sessions and five conferences will be conducted for state agency representatives and entrepreneurs. Participants will have an opportunity to learn about licensing rules, relevant requirements and the procedures required by the General Administrative Code. AYEG will establish a hotline to provide recommendations and instructions for interested callers, especially entrepreneurs and the business community in general. The guides "How to Obtain a License/Permit" will be published for selected sectors and distributed to entrepreneurs and interested groups.

AYEG has already begun project activities. September 4-7, the Young Economists held a workshop in Bakuriani for the state agency representatives who issue permits in the construction sector.

Workshop participants discussed the draft guide "How to Obtain a Construction Permit" and developed a guideline, highlighting steps and procedures to be followed by the entrepreneur in order to receive a permit. Up to 14 different state agencies involved in the issuance of permit were identified.



The draft regulations were presented to the participants. State agency representatives accepted the related recommendations, and it is anticipated that the recommendations will be adopted after further discussion.

## New Georgian Law On Freedom of Speech and Expression

On June 24, 2004, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a new Law on Freedom of Speech and Expression. Article 3 of the law maintains that “the state recognizes and protects freedom of speech and expression as an eternal and supreme human rights value.”

Further, Article 5 defines when a person shall not be liable for defamation (i.e., within the limits of political debates; during a pre-trial or trial hearing, before the public defender, etc.)

Levan Ramishvili of the Liberty Institute, one of IRIS’s main partners, commented, “This law is liberalizing media legislation. It aims to bring Georgian legislation closer to International and European standards.”

IRIS Georgia translated the newly adopted law, which will be available on IRIS Georgia web site in the nearest future.

[www.iris.ge](http://www.iris.ge)

## Meeting in the Anticorruption Department at the Security Council

IRIS Georgia staff attorneys met with Irakli Chikovani, the Chairman of the Anticorruption Department at the Security Council.

Possible areas of collaboration between the agency and IRIS were discussed at the meeting. Mr. Chikovani underlined the importance of cooperation with non-governmental organizations in order to make the fight against corruption more effective.

The Anticorruption Department is still in the process of formation

and will be ready to discuss aspects of cooperation in the near future. Mr. Chikovani also underlined that the adoption of a more detailed anticorruption action plan is anticipated.

IRIS representatives promised to assist with the research on strategic anticorruption priorities for administrative reforms, and as such, IRIS will continue to collaborate with the department.

## New Brochure From Article 42

“The Strategy of Defense,” is the name of a new brochure printed by the NGO, Article 42 of the Constitution (Article 42).

This brochure covers some of the lessons-learned by Article 42 through their work in the District Court. Among these are: preconditions for obtaining evidence in criminal cases, some peculiarities of court hearings, the structure of Motions, etc.

“We tried to write this brochure in simple language for the broad audience,” said Ketti Kamashidze of Article 42.



## Advocacy Campaign Against Job Discrimination

### August 23, Tbilisi

Liberty Institute carried out an advocacy campaign against job discrimination based on religion.

Leila Turkadze was fired recently from the Tbilisi City Subway Guard Police. As a member of the Jehovah's Witness congregation, she claimed that the reason that she was fired was because of her religion. While she was employed, her work environment was hostile, and she was subjected to

constant assaults and discrimination.

Liberty Institute asked for the General Inspection's immediate involvement in order to defend the rights of Ms Turkadze, a single mother of three.

As a result of the advocacy campaign Ms Turkadze was reinstated to her position, according to Police Colonel, City Subway Police Chief Michael Saladze.

## Visit of the Evaluation Team

From August 23 to September 3, IRIS participated in a USAID Rule of Law portfolio assessment process, which was conducted by a Washington, DC based team.

As part of the assessment, IRIS organized two roundtables with the participation of grantee NGOs.

The first roundtable focused on public awareness efforts, while the second one covered issues related to the Implementation of the General Administrative Code of Georgia.

“The meeting was very important for us, because we had an opportunity to brainstorm about future possible activities of our organizations, and at the same time to analyze how successfully will our goals be accomplished,” commented Giorgi Meladze, the Director of the Rule of Law program at Liberty Institute, after attending one of the roundtables.

IRIS is now waiting for the results of the assessment and is ready to incorporate recommendations of the team.

**Constitutional Lawsuit**



Liberty Institute recently initiated a Constitutional lawsuit to defend the rights of religious minorities in Georgia and to resolve the issues of the legal status and

registration of religious organizations.

Through this lawsuit, Liberty Institute is demanding that the Constitutional Court revoke some anti-constitutional articles of the Administrative Violations Code and Civil Code of Georgia.

The Admission hearing will take place in the near future.

**Journalist Released from Detention**

**August 6, Gori**

Editor-in-Chief of the independent newspaper "Khalkhis Gazeti" (People's Newspaper)



was released from illegal detention.

Liberty Institute and the broader civil society contributed to his release by leading a campaign to support freedom of the press and conducting protests against illegal detention.

**RECENTLY CONCLUDED GRANTS**

**As our current grant year comes to a close, IRIS Georgia recognizes some of its partners' achievements of the past 12 months.**

*International Center for Civil Culture (ICCC)*

*Development and Cooperation Center—Pluralism Center*

*Institute of Law*



In June, the **International Center for Civil Culture (ICCC)** concluded eight months of grant activities, which included production of radio programs and related listener commentary regarding human rights issues in Georgia.

This unique project succeeded in linking the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the well-known Georgian novel *Samoseli Pirveli*, illustrating chapters of the human rights document through the literary plot.

To conduct the project, ICCC grant activities tapped into such resources as the Golden Fund of Georgian Radio, using classic audio clips recognizable to the public and well-known public figures to facilitate human rights discussions.

In July, **The Development and Cooperation Center – Pluralism Center** completed its 10-month program of exploring human rights and Georgian culture. This group of scholars - from such fields as literature, law, philosophy, cinema, and the press – composed articles focusing on human rights issues in their individual fields of expertise.

Program activities also included 20-minute films on each topic, a website featuring the published articles, regional discussions with the Georgian public and chaired by the authors and a final publication, *Human Rights and Georgian Culture*, which was distributed to NGOs and state institutions.



One of IRIS's objectives is facilitating public discussion of state processes. In this respect, the **Institute of Law** of the Academy of Sciences of Georgia has been contributing commentaries, authored by legal scholars, on the Human Rights Chapter of the Constitution of Georgia.

Roundtables with the authors were convened to discuss the important Constitutional issues with the legal community and the general public.

The Institute's grant activities, which concluded on August 15, have also involved modernization of its law library, now equipped with new reading tables and lamps, as well as adequate shelving and bookcases for reference texts.



**Congratulations to Nona Tsotsoria**

Last month we bid farewell to **Nona Tsotsoria**, who served as IRIS’s Chief of Party for the

past year. Nona had been with the Rule of Law program since it began in 2001, serving as staff attorney and Deputy Chief before eventually leading the office.

IRIS congratulates Nona on her new position as Deputy of the Prosecutor General of Georgia and wishes her all the best in her new career.



**Deputy Chief of Party Eka Tkeshelashvili**

Now serving as Deputy Chief of Party is **Eka Tkeshelashvili**, who has been a staff attorney with IRIS since 2002. Before joining IRIS, Eka developed a

substantial human rights background working with the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague, the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights in New York, and International Committee of the Red Cross. Eka has an LLM degree from the University of Notre Dame.

**Schedule of September events:**

<i>Sept 11</i>	Liberty Institute Youth Debate in Akhaltsikhe
<i>Sept 13</i>	GYLA Mobile Legal Aid in Gardabani Region GYLA Town Hall Meeting in Telavi – the right to social security and protection
<i>Sept 14</i>	GYLA Mobile Legal Aid in Kvareli region Internews documentary on pensions “Expectation” on Imedi TV (11 pm)
<i>Sept 15</i>	GYLA Town Hall Meeting in Gardabani on the right to social security & protection Town Hall Meeting in Kutaisi - the available remedies in case of HR violation Mobile Legal Aid: Chokhatauri region, Khvareli region and Akhlagori region Liberty Institute: Press Club Session
<i>Sept 17</i>	GYLA Town Hall Meeting in Dusheti region, Ozurgeti region GYLA Mobile Legal Aid in Tskhaltubo region Liberty Institute Youth Debate in Poti Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union – Karl Popper debate on Education
<i>Sept 18-19</i>	GYLA round table for NGOs on the right to social security GYLA Mobile Legal Aid in Khashuri region
<i>Sept 20</i>	GYLA Mobile Legal Aid in Gardabani region and Chokhatauri region Liberty Institute Youth Debate in Rustavi
<i>Sept 21- 26</i>	IRIS Workshop on Administrative Violations Code AYEG – Workshop for state agency staff in the field of transportation licensing GYLA workshop in Gori region about the land law GYLA workshop in Tbilisi - legislation on domestic violence GYLA Mobile Legal Aid in Kaspi region, Marneuli region, Bagrati region, Akhmeta region and Akhlagori region, GYLA Town Hall Meeting in Lanchkhuti Sakrebulo on the right to property Town Hall Meeting in Kutaisi on FOI related issues Liberty Institute Youth Debates in Kutaisi and Telavi Liberty Institute Round Table in Gori
<i>Sept 27</i>	GYLA Mobile Legal Aid in Telavi region