



Inside IRIS Georgia

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

IRIS Georgia is a satellite office of the IRIS Center at the University of Maryland. IRIS is an internationally-recognized source of research and advisory expertise for addressing economic growth and governance issues in transition and developing countries. See the Web site at <http://www.iris.umd.edu> for more information.

Roundtable on judicial transparency



In February 2004 IRIS began research on judicial transparency as called for in the year 3 work plan for the Georgia Rule of Law Project.

As part of this research, on Saturday, May 8, IRIS

held a roundtable discussion at the Tbilisi Marriott with 17 participants, including 13 judges from various courts, an ABA/CEELI representative and IRIS staff attorneys. The participants discussed current practices and future perspectives on freedom of information and transparency in the judicial system.

The judges had an opportunity to voice their

opinions about the application of the Freedom of Information Chapter of the General Administrative Code within the court system. The participants discussed current problems in this area as well as preventative measures and solutions. During the last stage of the discussion, the participants developed recommendations for future legal resolutions on freedom of information-related issues.

Software for legal aid organizations

In April, IRIS solicited bids for programming and development of a legal aid database to be used by partner organizations providing legal aid throughout Georgia. IRIS has since selected an experienced programmer to develop and test the database and to train staff on using the database.

A critical part of IRIS Georgia's work plan is to assist local NGOs in providing free legal aid to victims of abuse and discrimination and disabled and disadvantaged citizens. IRIS is assisting NGOs in maximizing their effectiveness and strengthening their ability to be sustainable. Towards this end, last fall

IRIS hired an experienced American legal aid expert, Mr. Joe Dailing.

Mr. Dailing observed the activities of GYLA, Article 42 and the Liberty Institute, and compared the operations of these Georgian NGOs to those of well-established, similar organizations in the United States. He then recommended improving the internal management system of the Georgian legal aid groups emphasizing the importance of comprehensive and flexible data collection systems to track beneficiaries and monitor the quality of work produced by staff attorneys. This system would enable managers to analyze data in different formats to meet

emerging client needs and to spot recurrent legal problems among client populations.

By analyzing the data, legal aid organizations would be able to build new strategies to address specific problems facing clients and base these strategies on statistical evidence.

The technical work for the database has begun and will be completed by the beginning of October 2004. Legal aid centers will be equipped with the new system and the staff of the legal aid offices will be provided with sufficient training to be able to use the software effectively.

Featuring IRIS grantee Judicial Training Center



The Judicial Training Center has launched a new project with the financial support of IRIS. The project aims to train 120 judicial assistants from Tbilisi and other regions on Administrative Law and procedures and state procurement policies.

Participants from Tbilisi and other regional courts will be divided into six groups of 20 people each. Judges from the Supreme

Court and District Court will serve as trainers. In addition, there will be an expert in State Procurement Law contributing to the classes. Two lecturers will conduct each session.

The lectures will be held from May 15 through June 30, and participants will also receive supplemental training materials.

The purpose of the lectures is for judicial

assistants to improve their knowledge of administrative legislation and to learn about procurement-related procedures. These meetings will be an opportunity to discuss various related issues and to share information among participants.

Discussion on credit bureau legislation

The Georgian Enterprise Growth Initiative (GEGI) is actively involved in the drafting and lobbying of the Law on the Formation of Credit Information Bureaus. At GEGI's request, staff attorneys from IRIS have joined the working group as experts.

The draft law aims to support the development of banking and credit systems in Georgia. Citizens' credit information will be stored in credit bureaus and used by banks when issuing credit.

This draft law is closely related to the processing and storage of citizens' personal data, which is one of IRIS's priorities.

IRIS has been working on the issue of protection of personal data for several years. During the first

stage, IRIS worked with the Department of Informatization of Georgia to draft the Law on Personal Data. Attorneys from IRIS prepared legal opinions on the suggested draft, completed a comparative study of the European experience and analyzed applicable Georgian legislation. The recommendations were then submitted to the Department of Informatization, which considered the majority of them and amended the draft accordingly. However, the fundamental provisions in the first version of the draft law remained the same.

In the second stage of the initiative, IRIS developed its own version of the draft Law on the Protection of Personal Data. This legal act is based on

international principles of protection of personal data and provides effective legal mechanisms for data protection. The draft law is not yet considered to be final, but rather will be subject to further changes and discussion, since protection of personal data is a matter of public concern.

The new Law on the Formation of Credit Information Bureaus will incorporate the articles drafted by IRIS staff for the draft Law on the Protection of Personal Data.

IRIS staff delivers public lectures

During the last month, IRIS attorney David Usupashvili delivered three lectures on a number of topics related to the rule of law and freedom of information.

Seminar at GIPA

On April 22, Mr. Usupashvili spoke to students from the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs on administrative law guarantees for transparency and accountability of public agencies. The seminar lasted for four hours and addressed major concepts of the General Administrative Code of Georgia and its Freedom of Information Chapter. About 30 students attended the seminar,

including students from Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Lecture for students from the Tbilisi Political School

On April 24, Mr. Usupashvili traveled to Bakuriani to attend the spring session of the Tbilisi Political School. The school invites distinguished mid-career professionals from the public and private sectors to speak on a regular basis. About 40 people attended the seminar, which lasted two hours. Usupashvili spoke about the legal culture and rule of law in Georgia, and participants sought to establish links between the cultural development of Georgian society and the process of building

statehood.

The current geopolitical environment for building the rule of law in Georgia was also analyzed. At the end of the seminar, participants reviewed recent constitutional changes.

Lecture to members of the NGO Memorial

On May 5, Mr. Usupashvili delivered a lecture to members of the nongovernmental organization Memorial. This organization unites mostly elderly citizens who were victims of political repression under the communist regime. Leaders of the organization approached IRIS with the request to explain and interpret basic

constitutional rights and the purpose and essence of the recent constitutional reform. This lecture followed a presentation on election-related rights and procedures that IRIS made to the group last year.

Over 50 participants, all of whom were in their 60's and 70's, attended the two-hour meeting. Usupashvili briefly gave an overview of the constitutional reforms and answered questions from participants. Most of the participants expressed their support for the ongoing political processes and their willingness to participate in active public life.

Institute of Law roundtable

On May 10, the Institute of Law of the Academy of Sciences held a monthly roundtable. Legal expert Levan Izoria presented draft commentaries on Article 35 of the Constitution, which deals with the right to education; one of the most important social rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia.

Judges from the Constitutional Court, legal experts, representatives of NGOs and the general public attended the meeting. Participants discussed important aspects of the right to education. The expert further presented

a comparative analysis of this social right with western experience. The judges from the Constitutional Court raised issues on the settlement of constitutional claims related to social rights, including the right to education.

Institute of Law roundtables and discussions, which occur monthly and cover various legal issues from the Constitution, will be held through August 2004.

Films on children's rights



The documentary club of the Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union has already produced two films in 2004: *Where Exactly Are the Human Beings?* and *My City Does Not Look Like Any Other*.

The first film concerns the public's attitude towards Articles 6 and 9 of the Convention on Children's Rights ("Every child has the right to life" and "Every child has the right to grow up in a family"). The

second film depicts a city seen through the eyes of a child as it explores violations of a child's right to development (Article 27). This film received several awards at a regional film festival in April, including Best Director, Best Script, Best Music, and Best Documentary.

On April 29, Sandra Roelofs, the First Lady of Georgia, visited the Young Teachers Union. Pleased with the film and taking a copy with her, she said the President would be very interested in the children's initiative and attitude towards urban problems.

Introducing IRIS staff

Andro Gigauri, Junior Staff Attorney and Public Relations Coordinator



Andro Gigauri

Andro works as Junior Staff Attorney and Public Relations Coordinator for IRIS Georgia. He represents IRIS in the NGO Anti-Corruption Coalition and serves as the team member of the public awareness campaign. His main tasks

also include assisting to the development of IRIS's website and monthly newsletter.

Andro has previously worked for different USAID-funded offices, including ABA/CEELI, IRIS Georgia and IFES He

also served as the research assistant for the OSI supported anti-corruption research project.

A native Georgian, Andro speaks fluent Russian and English.

IRIS Georgia's calendar of events – May 2004

Date	Events
May 1	GYLA's workshop in Khashuri on children's rights and problem of juvenile delinquency
May 3, 4, 5	Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union, discussion of Nodar Dumbadze's story "Hellados" Liberty Institute's debate in Telavi on local government Liberty Institute's workshop for journalists in Gurjaani (through May 9)
May 6, 7	Green Wave's radio program on the history of Georgia, XII-XIX centuries Institute of Law's roundtable on the constitutional right to education GYLA's roundtable on domestic violence
May 8	Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union, presentation of the film "Magdana's Donkey" IRIS's roundtable for Judges on FOI issues
May 10	ICCC's radio performance No. 9
May 12, 13	GYLA's workshop in Gori on FOI Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union, evening for the famous Georgian writer Otia Ioseliani Green Wave's radio program on the foundations of Georgian liberalism
May 14, 15	GYLA's workshop in Kutaisi on rights of detainees GYLA's workshop of ECHR for students (through May 16) GYLA's workshop in Ozurgeti on amended constitutional system of Georgia
May 18, 19	Liberty Institute's debates in Gori " Human rights and integration with Europe" GYLA's workshop in Gori on property rights GYLA's workshop in Dusheti on Miranda rights for juveniles AYEG's conference on licenses and permits UNAG's training for public officials (through May 21)
May 20	Internews's documentary aired on Imedi TV channel GYLA's workshop in Tkhvuli region, village Mukhulo, on constitutional amendments Liberty Institute's debates in Akhaltsikhe on teaching religion at schools Green Wave's radio program on Vazha-Pshavela AYEG's conference on licenses and permits
May 21, 22	GYLA's workshop in Gurjani region, village Chandara, on amended constitutional system AYEG's conference on licenses and permits GYLA's workshop in Kutaisi on social security
May 24, 25	ICCC's radio performance No. 10 AYEG's conference on licenses and permits GYLA's Bus Tour in West Georgia (through May 29) Liberty Institute's debates in Poti on higher education
Apr 27	GYLA's workshop in Kutaisi on amendments to the Criminal Procedures Code GYLA's workshop in Telavi on freedom of information Liberty Institute's debates in Rustavi on corruption Alfami's exhibition "Society and Art Images" Green Wave's radio program on "Tergdaleulebi" AYEG's conference on licenses and permits Internews's documentary aired on Imedi TV channel
Apr 28	GYLA's workshop in Bolnisi region, village Rachisubani, on right to social security GYLA's workshop in Kutaisi on property rights GYLA's workshop in Gurjani region, village Velistsikhe on participation in local budgeting Liberty Institute's Debates in Kutaisi on educational system

Editorial Policy

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