

Fourth Working Group of the Georgian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

Appeal to International Organizations

We, the representatives of Georgian civil society organizations, are extremely concerned due to the developments in Gali region, where ethnic Georgian population's fundamental right to study in their native language is violated.

Prior to Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, Gali region had 58 schools. In 53 of the 58 schools teaching was conducted in Georgian. After the conflict, 31 schools were restored. In all but one school, teaching was conducted in Georgian (it must be noted that, 90% of Gali population is Georgian).

Since 2008, 20 schools underwent gradual transformation, receiving the status of Russian – speaking schools. However, 11 schools, located in the the so called “Sub-zone” still maintained Georgian – speaking school status. The situation deteriorated from the beginning of 2015-2016 school year, which saw these schools also given Russian – speaking status.

Given these circumstances, 71 pupils, and each or both parents of theirs, were forced to leave homes, and move to another region of Georgia, so that the children would receive education in Georgian. This fact not only infringes on the fundamental human right to receive education in one's mother tongue, but it is also a violation of the universal principle of “family integrity”, forcing Georgian population to leave their homes, while simultaneously altering demographic composition of Abkhazia.

At various levels of international negotiations, the issue of the rights of Georgians living in Abkhazia, namely the right to be educated in their mother tongue, is consistently put forward. International organizations are well informed about this issue. They have been called to support international monitoring to assess what impact current situation has on human lives, but despite this, the problem remains unsettled, while the status of the population there is incessantly worsened.

Georgian civil society calls upon every national, and international institution, to all parties of Geneva International Discussions – to exert influence on the Russification of educational process, and to support fundamental rights of the children living in the Gali Region to receive education in their native, Georgian language.

Note: the text is signed not only by the member organizations of the Georgian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, but also regional non-governmental organizations that are not members of the Platform.

Signatory Organizations:

1. Cultural-Humanitarian Fund "Sukhumi"
2. Association “Peaceful and Business Caucasus”
3. Fund of Women's Entrepreneurs
4. Union of Teachers Education and Universe - (UTEU)
5. Association DEA for Disabled Women and Mothers of Disabled Children

6. Research-Intellectual Club "Dialogue of Generations"
7. Association for the efficient use of the Georgian energy resources
8. Union "Vejini"
9. International Center for Environmental Research
10. Repatriates' Union
11. Association for the Efficient Use of the Georgian Energy Resources
12. "Foundation for Tkibuli Region Development"
13. Georgian Trade Union Confederation
14. "Studiomobile – Accent on Movement"
15. Caucasian Development Group
16. Gori, "Welfare and Development Center"
17. Samtskhe-Javakheti Regional Association "Toleranti"
18. Association for the Development of Civil Society "Spectri"
19. Union "Socium XXI"
20. International Business Development and Investment Promotion Centre
21. Ecofact
22. Civitas Georgica
23. Association "Dioskuria"
24. Association "Amagdari"
25. European Union – Georgia Business Council (EUGBC)
26. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Georgia Office
27. OXFAM Georgia
28. Association European Studies for Innovative Development in Georgia
29. Human Rights Centre (HRIDC)
30. International Association "Georgia's Women for Peace and Life"
31. Public Policy Institute
32. The Greens Movement of Georgia/ Friends of Earth – Georgia
33. Georgian Association "Woman in Business"
34. International Center of Geopolitical research
35. Georgian Young Lawyers Association
36. Journalist Association "Gender-Media-Caucasus"
37. International Society "Caucasian Mosaic"
38. Association "Women for Multiethnic Georgia"
39. "Community Foundation Egrisi" founded in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region working in cross-border villages.
40. Association "Merkuri"
41. Caucasus Environmental NGO network (CENN)
42. "Women for Regional Development"
43. Media Monitoring Centre of Georgia
44. Association "Imedi", Movement of IDP Women
45. Women's Information Centre
46. Kutaisi Information Centre
47. Association "Samegrelo Medea"

48. Taso Foundation
49. Imereti Union of Science - "SPECTRI"
50. Humanitarian Charity Center "Abkhazia"
51. Human Rights Priority
52. Coalition for IDP rights
53. Organization "Gender Justice"
54. Association "Women for Regional Development"
55. Kutaisi Women's Club
56. IDP Association "Consent"
57. Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo-Svaneti Resource Centre.
58. Tskhinvali Regional Profcenter
59. Kvemo Kartli Women's Association "Women and Universe"
60. Union "Women's Center"
61. The Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development
62. Foundation "New Life"
63. Youth Alternative
64. Anti-Violence Network of Georgia - Mtskheta-Mtianeti Committee
65. Caucasian Journalist International Center - CCFJ
66. Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters (GARB)
67. Biological Farming Association "Elkana"
68. Analytic Center "Global Experience for Georgia"
69. Medical-Psychological Center "Mnatobi"
70. Single Parents Union
71. Local Democracy Agency - Georgia
72. International Organization of Human Rights Protection and Prisoners Social Welfare
73. Euromedcenter
74. International Information Center for Georgian and German Women
75. Free Choice
76. Society for Positive Changes
77. Save The Future Generation
78. European Initiative - Liberal Academy Tbilisi
79. Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)
80. Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies
81. United Public Movement "Multinational Georgia"
82. Association of Tea Producers Georgia "Georgian Tea"
83. Association "School-Family- Society"
84. Partnership for Road Safety
85. Foundation "Caucasus Environment"
86. Public Advocacy
87. Healthy Children
88. Healthy World
89. Youth for Justice – Georgia
90. International Foundation "LEA"
91. Junior achievement of Georgia
92. Young socialists of Georgia
93. Association "Deserving Old Age" Women Employment Information Centre (WEIC)