



EMBASSY OF GEORGIA TO THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA
PERMANENT MISSION OF GEORGIA TO THE OSCE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, 29 September 2009
Working Session 1: Rule of law I

Statement of Mr. David Rakviashvili
Deputy State Minister for Reintegration, Georgia

Mr. Moderator,

Responsiveness of the Government of Georgia to the constructive criticism has been one of the reasons to our success in democratic reforms and we will continue to listen carefully to the suggestions of our partners.

Nevertheless today's statement comes a bit of a surprise as it talks about alarming trends and patterns in Georgia.

Let me share with you some factual information in this regard. Considering the time constrain, I'll only focus on three main issues:

Ombudsman/Public Defender:

It's hard to deny that over the past 4 years we witnessed gradual upgrade and development of Ombudsman's institution. Successful remedial actions on numerous occasions, increase in funding of the Public Defender's Office, creation of new National Preventive Mechanisms and quite a few other measures provide an indication of this progress. Notably, the previous Public Defender has been one of the most outspoken persons in Georgia. He recently accomplished his tenure and continues his career as an active opposition politician.

However, more should be done. The newly elected Public Defender is gaining support of the major political forces.

Legislation:

Georgia's legislation in this sphere is one of the most liberal ones in Europe. Notably, no prior permission is required in order to organize a demonstration. The only requirement is that of notification.

Recently Parliament of Georgia has introduced several procedural legislative amendments clarifying some aspects pertaining to the exercise of the freedom of assembly. These amendments were driven by our recent experience of demonstrations, when while exercising the freedom of assembly, some persons attempted to impede the functioning of the state institutions. The amendments aim to prevent such practice, for instance special provision has entered into force to define that one can not block the road, unless there is a sufficient need to hamper the

movement of traffic, i.e. sufficient quantity of demonstrators.

Freedom to assembly:

Let me reiterate that peaceful and compromise-driven resolution of recent wave of street protest rallies in Georgia, staged by the radical opposition, clearly showed that further enhancement of legislative and institutional dimensions directly related to the freedom of association, fair trial and above all the protection of the individual rights of the citizens are well underway in Georgia.

Let me use this opportunity to underscore the readiness of Georgian authorities to look into the alleged setbacks in legislative, law enforcement and judiciary spheres. We look forward that EU, Council of Europe and other reputable international organizations will continue rendering cooperation and assistance on these matters.

Thank you