



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, 30 September 2009
Working Session 5: Tolerance and non-discrimination I

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

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me welcome statement of the High Commissioner on National Minorities Ambassador Vollebaek. Continuation of the HCNM engagement in Georgia is crucially important, especially for addressing issues of non-discrimination in Abkhazia, Georgia.

Addressing the needs of ethnic minorities and achieving higher degree of their inclusiveness in the process of building Georgia's Statehood are on priority list in the agenda of the Government of Georgia.

Let me share with you some of our recent undertakings:

Early this year Government has approved the National Concept and Action Plan for Tolerance and Civil Integration. These documents form the basis of the Government's policy on national minorities. Among other significant safeguards, the Action Plan provides that the regional councils comprising of local national minority organizations will be formed in most regions that are not densely populated with minorities.

Recent years marked significant advancement on the way to improvement of the conditions of ethnic minorities and their further integration into Georgian society. Statistics confirm high representation of ethnic minorities in high-ranking positions in the government and civil service.

Extensive non-discriminatory legislative regulations have entered into force in the field of Health Care and Labour. Government has made significant efforts to promote broadcasting of the programs in minority languages.

Education and teaching methods are another key issue where progress has been reached. Under the general educational policy on national minorities a special short-term and long-term programs have been developed with a primary goal to promote civil integration of national minorities through the support of quality and inclusive education. Dozens of non-Georgian language schools were rehabilitated. In parallel, access to higher education to national minority students has been one of the primary concerns for the Government of Georgia. Good incentives for minority students have been launched, including Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration implementing the project "support the democratic governance in the multiethnic

communities.”

I also would like to mention the reform of local self governance and its working structure. The “Law on the Budget of Local Self-Governing Units” provides for yearly equating transfers from the central budget to ensure equation of financial resources available among different municipalities in exercising their exclusive competences. The amount of equation transfers is determined based on objective criteria, including the difference between increase of budget costs and incomes of local self-governing units. Thus, one and the same formula applies to all municipalities, ensuring equal distribution of resources between regions inhabited by substantial number of national minorities and other regions of Georgia.

On 19 March 2009 the Advisory Committee has adopted its Opinion on compliance by Georgia with the obligations stemming from the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities. The Government of Georgia appreciates these efforts and reaffirms its willingness to continue close cooperation and dialogue with the Committee in addressing its concerns. The Article-by-Article comments of the Government of Georgia on the Advisory Committee Opinion, providing extensive information on the current state of affairs in every relevant field are available upon request and can be viewed on the website www.diversity.ge, specially created to address the national minority issues.

Thank you for your attention.