



OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2013
Warsaw, 27 September, 2013

Statement by Georgia
Working Session 8: Freedom of Assembly and Association

Madam Moderator, Distinguished Participants,

Georgia has undertaken the responsibility to ensure the right of peaceful assembly and demonstration in line with international standards. Based on the decision of the Constitutional Court of Georgia the Parliament has adopted the amendment and addition to the Law on Assembly and Manifestation, thus bringing the legal framework in line with international standards and established practice.

Georgia is committed to promote and protect human rights and to prevent human rights violations in the context of peaceful demonstrations. Pursuant to Georgian legislation participants of assembly and manifestation are not required to get any prior notification. Citizens have the right to exercise their right to freedom of assembly without any prior notification in any place except of places mentioned in article 5 of the Law (if assembly and manifestation interrupts traffic movement). In case, if a public assembly or manifestation is held on a public main road or interrupts the traffic movement, previous notification of holding of assemblies and manifestations is required.

Furthermore, huge attention is devoted towards raising awareness on human rights protection among police officers. In this regard, a one-year basic and advanced training on *Crowd Management*, which was commissioned by U.S. State Department, was conducted for relevant police staff. The objective of the trainings was to provide police officers with the skills necessary to plan for, manage and respond to crowd issues at demonstrations and public events while respecting human rights and protecting public safety.

Georgia has simplified the procedure of the registration of civil societies. Parliament of Georgia adopted considerable amendments to the legislation on the registration of non-profit organizations aimed at further simplifying registration procedures for Non-profit organizations. The amendments also addressed registration procedures for the regional branches of a Non-profit organization, the

registration of international association in Georgia, as well as the registration of Georgian branches of the non-profit organizations registered abroad.

We appreciate the interest of international community towards the concrete developments in Georgia. In this regard, I would like to inform you that the authorities of Georgia, representatives of civil society and NGOs have all unequivocally condemned violence that erupted after the anti-LGBT protesters thwarted a rally against homophobia. Similarly, the Georgian Patriarchate had denounced the aggressive actions of demonstrators and pledged to examine and take adequate measures towards separate clergymen.

To ensure the safety of the participants of the manifestation against Homophobia, immediate measures were undertaken by the relevant structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. After the manifestation, as a result of an appropriate investigation, the law enforcement authorities of Georgia have made arrests in connection with actions carried out at the manifestation. Namely, four persons have been arrested for resisting police and petty hooliganism, who were later fined by the court decision. Likewise, four persons, two priests and two ordinary citizens had been arrested for illegally and forcefully breaching the right to gatherings and manifestations.

On behalf of the Georgian government, I would like to reiterate our firm commitment to ensuring the free exercise of the democratic rights of assembly and expression, while protecting the safety of all citizens of our country, regardless of their ethnicity, race, sex or religion.

Thank you for your attention.