



**ARMENIAN COMMUNITY
OF TBILISI:
PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES**

Reports and recommendations



Unity of Georgian Armenians «Nor Serund»



EUROPEAN CENTRE
FOR
MINORITY ISSUES

European Center for Minority Issues

DENMARK'S GEORGIA PROGRAMME 2010-2013
PROMOTION OF JUDICIAL REFORM,
HUMAN AND MINORITY RIGHTS

დანიის საქართველოს პროგრამა 2010-2013
სამართლებრივი რეფორმის, ადამისა და
მცირეობათა უფლებების ხელშეწყობა



Denmark's Georgia Programme
2010-2013 Promotion of Judicial
Reform, Human and Minority Rights

“Armenian Community of Tbilisi: Problems and Perspectives”

Reports and recommendations

323.1(=19)(479.22) + 323.15(=19)(479.22) + 061.2/31

1. სომხური ს.ფსიკოლოგია

2. სომხური ს.ფსიკოლოგია ს.ფსიკოლოგია

საქართველოს
საგარეო ურთიერთობების
სამსახური

The given edition is published by the Unity of Georgian Armenians «Nor Serund» based on materials of the conference, held on November 15th, 2010 in the frames of the project “Armenian Community of Tbilisi – Problems and Perspectives”. The project was supported by the European Center for Minority Issues in the frames of the Denmark's Georgia Programme 2010-2013, as well as co-funded and technically assisted by the Assembly of Tbilisi Armenians. Participants of the conference were representatives of different ethnic communities, state structures, diplomatic corps accredited in Georgia, international and non-governmental organizations, media, Armenian Apostolic Church and public at large (public school administrations, etc.), as well other spiritual persons.

The given edition includes reports and recommendations drafted by working groups during the conference.

Unity of Georgian Armenians “Nor Serund” would like to thank everybody who contributed to the implementation of the project. We truly hope that given publication will be helpful for persons and organizations working on the solution of problems described in the brochure.

Michael Aghakhanyan

Chairman of Unity of Georgian Armenians “Nor Serund”

77-035
3

Irena Oganjanova
Assembly of Tbilisi Armenians

Problems of Condition and Preservation of Architectural Monuments of Armenian Cultural Heritage of Tbilisi

On the strength of its geographical location and historical circumstances, the life of Armenian people at their historical homeland was not notable for stability, often Armenians had to migrate to different countries, including Georgia. Since old times Armenians have been a prevalent part of the population of Tbilisi and until 20s years of the last century, this city was one of the major center of Armenian political life, art and culture that is corroborated by many historical documents.

Therewith, it is not a secret to anybody that a certain part of creators and builders, who made their definitely positive contribution to development and formation of Georgia and its capital city particularly, where representatives of different religious and ethnic groups have lived over the centuries, belongs to Armenian population.

Over the centuries, the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Armenian Catholic Church have existed in Georgia along with Armenian people. And it is quite natural that representatives of such a numerous Armenian community, majority of which have always been parishioners of AAC, should have Armenian religious constructions in the territory of Georgia as well. The point is that religious monuments are of the particular significance in the Armenian community. Presence of them is conditioned by existence and functioning of the local Armenian community. First of all Armenians outside Armenia used to differ in confessional sense of cultural traditions that was implemented in the framework of the church organization.

Register of Armenian churches in old Tbilisi has been remained; it contains detailed description of each Armenian Church of the city. The register facts are proved by many historical sources and evidences. At the beginning of the XX century 27 Armenian Churches (domical basilicas, cloisters, churches, chapels) have been numbered in Tbilisi. There also should be said that in 1930s a lot of them were demolished, but others, owing to certain historical reasons, became the churches of another confession, buildings of two of them were turned into dwelling houses, thereby, there are only two Armenian churches left in Tbilisi, which retain their confessional line - these are Surb Gevorg and Nor Echiadzin churches.

Over the years, one of the paramount issues, disturbing the representatives of

the Armenian community, is the issue of the return of Armenian churches, which are in the territory of Georgia, to their legal owner – Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia. Specifically, there are 5 such churches in Tbilisi: Norashen Sb. Astvatsatsin, Shamkhoretsots Sb. Astvatsatsin, Yerevantsots Sb. Minas, Mughni Sb. Gevorg and Surb Nshan. There is also one more church around Agmashenebeli Avenue – this is Tandoiants Sb. Astvatsatsin, the movie theater “Kolkhida” used to be there during the Soviet period, which because of absolutely unintelligible reasons is not included to the list of Armenian churches, return of which should be demanded by Diocese of AAC in Georgia.

Two of the above-mentioned churches, for some reason or other, are still standing as sorrowful ruins. Others are in a sad state, buildings of these temples have been considered to be in accident condition for many years; there is a critical threat of their destruction.

The main authorities, under the balance of which the churches are during the last years, are Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sports, particularly Department of Cultural Heritage and Committee on Cultural Heritage Protection, as well as Tbilisi City Hall.

Since Georgia gained independence, for the first time in 2005 the government took effective measures for development of the programs and creation of the architectural monuments register, which urgently need strengthening and restoration works. Department of Cultural Heritage made an inventory of derelict and non-operating cloisters and temples. So called “Million Project” of rehabilitation of unique monuments throughout Georgia started on initiative of Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sports of Georgia. In 2006 the budget of the program on cultural heritage support was more than 4 million GEL, the factor is much higher than in 2005. In 2007 the budget totaled about 8 million GEL. In 2008 the total state support of Georgian cultural heritage was about 14 million GEL, and more than 7 million of the sum were appropriated for rehabilitation of cultural architectural monuments. About 300 cultural monuments were rehabilitated due to the worked-out program in the past 5 years, and most of them are religious buildings.

Ministry of Culture, Sports and Monuments Protection together with the Fund of Protection and Preservation of Historical Monuments continues implementation of the joint project on restoration of cultural monuments throughout Georgia, which is financed by the state program of cultural heritage protection and Fund of Protection and Preservation of Historical Monuments. However, there is no temple in the list of the project, which would belong to any national and religious minorities’ communities.

The Armenian churches, which I have mentioned above, are not the exception. Notwithstanding their sad physical state and the real threat of destruction (this

also concerns recently demolished church of Mughni Sb. Gevorg), they were not entered into these lists and were not entered into the list of priority monuments, that gives rise to certain questions of itself. Yet all these churches are located in the central districts of Tbilisi, and each of them has its historical and cultural value, and critical necessity of strengthening works' carrying out is visible with the naked eye.

Assembly of Tbilisi Armenians believes that its aim is to do everything possible to preserve the buildings of the churches until the issue of confessional belonging of these churches be solved – i.e. until the Armenian community, on legal grounds, would be able to find funds for restoration and full-fledged functioning of these churches. Therefore, at present, inclusion of these churches to the list of the state register is an important mechanism, which would legally allow protecting of the churches from the acts of vandalism and further demolition.

All these churches are architectural and cultural monuments, and, therefore, at the territory of each of them there should be identifying signs, which should indicate the status of these church buildings as historical monuments.

We also think that it is obligatory to take certain measures for prevention of free admittance of unauthorized persons on site of these churches in order to stop arbitrary usage of these territories for private purposes. I would like to explain:

1. Yerevantsots Sb. Minas Church – situated in Gelati street, district of Avlabar. The church was founded in 1790 and was thoroughly reconstructed in 1883. Sb. Minas used to be a domical basilica. During the Soviet rule the dome was demolished and the building was used as factory premises for many years. After the threat of the church building collapse was recognized, civilians began to use it as the place of junk and trash dumping, or the place of their personal belongings keeping. The territory of the church also became a reason of arguments and conflicts among the families, which live at the church adjacent houses. One of these families raised a brick wall in the arch aperture of the church building for the purpose to fence about “its section” from the neighbors. There are also two more families conflicting, they also live at the church building adjacent territory. According to the neighbors' statement, in February of the current year the members of one of the families twice tried to set the church building on fire on the inside, to annoy the family, which kept its belongings and tools there. Thankfully, both arsons were timely noticed and put out. Recently, the National Congress of Armenians in Georgia carried out cleaning works in the church building. However, the door of Surb Minas is open (the keys are kept by one of the families, living nearby), there is no glass or lattice in the window aperture, in a word, practically anyone can easily get into the church. That's why it is not ruled out that the third arson or another attempt to raise or demolish the wall at the territory of Surb Minas may take

especially respected. In fact, the name “Mughni” is traditionally connected with the ancient village of the same name not far from Ashtarak (Armenia), where the relics of St. George were carried from to Tbilisi.

As far back as 1990, the building of the temple was recognized being under the threat of collapse. Over time, physical condition of the building became worse and worse; east façade of the church is in the grave condition, plants grew out through its roof, and under-dome arches collapsed here and there and no longer could bear the dome mass. Therefore, the question arises again: what is the reason that the physical condition of the abovementioned historical monument, which is on the state balance of Georgia, and, respectively, should enjoy the right to be under the special protection of Ministry of Culture, was not timely studied, and another question – why the Ministry did not take necessary measures for its strengthening.

After the church building collapse, the government of Georgia allocated 50 thousand GEL (about USD 27 000) for carrying out researches at the territory of Mughni, which are guided by NGO “ARCHITEX”. At the present, laboratory analysis of soil and underground waters were performed. By the end of the month (November) “ARCHITEX” company will present the report on the works done.

I would hope that this report and the promised subsequent actions for the mentioned church’s reconstruction plan working out will be held openly in complete agreement and cooperation with the representatives of appropriate authorities of Armenia, as well as in cooperation with the Diocese of AAC in Georgia, and public Armenian organizations in Georgia, which are concerned about the present situation. Transparency of the processes, which are taking place, is obligatory, and systematic control and close cooperation would be a good sign of goodwill and mutual understanding, thereby, anxiety of the representatives of Armenian part of the city inhabitants would distinctly decrease.

4 – Since 1989, once the tallest church in Tbilisi – Shamkhoretsots Sb. Astvatsatsin, or as it is sometimes called Karmir Avetaran, situated in the district of Avlabar, stands in the ruins. The start of the temple construction is dated to 1775, at that time the church existed as a community of monks. Then, in 1809, the church building was reconstructed on the means, collected by the Armenians. Nowadays, the Shamkhoretsots temple is the ruins.

5 – I think that Norashen Sb. Astvatsatsin Church in Leselidze Street is the most famous church, which attracted attention of the public through the scandals around it. The church was founded in 1467 by Sadat. Then the church building has been permanently reconstructed, the last reconstruction was done in 1900. In all the documents and records Norashen is noted as one of the main Armenian Churches of the city.

I will not hold on the acts of vandalism, committed by Taniel Sikinchelashvili, the dean of the neighboring church, from 1994 to 2008. I am fully confident that most of you are well-informed about his actions. But we, in the framework of the meeting, more worry about the present physical condition of the church, and search for certain measures to prevent the church from demolition.

The walls of Norashen were painted by the two representatives of the abovementioned artists' dynasty of the Ovnatanyans. Mkrtum Ovnatanyan (his frescos were destroyed by the abovementioned fire in the Surb Nshan Church) finished wall painting of the Norashen Church, started by his father – Ovnatani Ovnatanyan, who was a court artist at the court of the King of Georgia Irakly II. I would remind that the frescos of Ovnatani Ovnatanyan are entered into the register of UNESCO, and are under the organization's aegis, and bear the status of "World Cultural Heritage". Some of the frescos in Norashen have been irrevocably perished, practically all of the rest are in bad or just a gravely bad condition, but they still can be rescued if due attention would be timely attracted to the issue.

And the second point – cracks on two bearing walls of the Norashen Church are visibly widening that gives rise to great apprehension. I guess it would be quiet difficult to tell about a physical condition of the church in details, as at the present any civilian may get into the Norashen Church practically without obstruction. Meanwhile, Ministry of Culture and its subordinate authorities, on the balance of which the church is, have full legal rights to carry out a complete inspection of the church building and to take certain measures to improve its physical condition, in agreement with the both parties of the conflict (Eparchy of GOC and Diocese of AAC).

Over the years the farfetched arguments over the certain monuments of Armenian cultural heritage are going on. In its report "concerning the state in the field of the religious freedom for the year 2005" the Department of State of the United States of America expressed its own attitude towards the issue of historical Armenian churches' belonging, which have "uncertain" status. The following is said in the part, which describes the situation in Georgia: "Most of the problems, disturbing traditional religious groups, proceed from the property issues. Roman Catholic and Armenian Apostolic Churches could not return the property and churches, which were closed by the Soviet rule, most of them were lately passed to the Georgian Orthodox Church. A famous Armenian Church "Norashen", as well as other four, comparatively smaller churches in Tbilisi and one in Akhaltsikhe, are still standing close." Once again the quotation from the report of the Department of State of the USA confirms all I have reported above, and, to the great regret, points to the fact that the issues in the field practically are not solved, or are solved extremely slowly, the quotation from the report dated by 2005 still continues to be urgent.

At the end of my report I should remember and cite the words of Ms Natia Murachashvili, the public relations manager of the monuments protection and restoration agency of Ministry of Culture, who said the following after the Mughni Sb. Gevorg Church collapse:

“All the monuments in the country are gradually rehabilitated, but first those, which are in the bad condition. If the church was not included to the program, it means that its state was not considered so grave that it could be collapsed the other day.”

I do not think that such statement is somehow worth to be commented...

Assembly of Armenians of Tbilisi and the whole Armenian community of the country would like to hope for attention from the side of the state authorities towards the problem of the churches, which are not passed to us, and to expect upon certain assistance for the near solution of the issues concerning physical preservation of these churches as architectural monuments until the issue of their confessional belonging would be finally solved, and for all that, these churches would be passed to their legal owner – Diocese of Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia, and the representatives of the Armenian community would have opportunity to pray in their temples, and independently, without anyone's assistance or permission, would take care about the churches' physical condition and preservation.

Study of Armenian churches in Tbilisi – is study of the culture, which sprang up and existed over the centuries at the territory of Georgia, the culture, which is not only the part of Armenian culture, but is the part of the national Georgian cultural heritage as well. Our requests are caused by the needs of the citizens of Georgia, particularly Armenian Community in Tbilisi of 86-thousand, main part of devotees are the parishioners of the Armenian Apostolic church, and quick solution of these issues is necessary for provision of spiritual needs and arrangement of religious life of our fellow citizens.

David Manusajev
Tbilisi Armenians Public Council
on the Issues of Education

Native Language Education, Problems and Perspectives

Historically, literacy of Tbilisi Armenians, provided by the parish schools, was the foundation of authoritative, numerous and various sites of education and culture, which appeared in Tbilisi in the 19th century. First comprehensive Armenian educational institution – “Tiflis Armenian School” was opened in 1824. Since 1837, on demand of tsarist functionaries, it was reorganized into diocesan theological seminary, and was called Nersisyan’s school. First girls’ school was opened in 1869. First city children’s library began its functioning in 1872.

Notwithstanding the counteraction of tsarist administration, according to the data of 1901, more than 60 comprehensive Armenian educational institutions have been functioning in Tbilisi, 2 of them were girls’ schools, 6 – private educational institutions and a boarding school Lisitsian with coeducation uncommon for those time.

Adoption of “the law about confiscation of the Armenian Church’s property”, which bereaved Armenian schools and other cultural-educational sites of moneyed assistance, was taken by the Armenians as encroachment upon their language and culture. Protest demonstrations were held in all the Armenians-settled cities and villages, which often were over with police skirmishes. The law was abrogated several months later after the forced change of the governor-general, and Armenian schools opened their doors again, letting in thousands of pupils. The Armenian Publishing Society, closed down in 1900 by the tsar’s decree, was able to resume its activity after the first Russian revolution.

After the Sovietization of Georgia, the policy of compulsion of Armenians to refuse native language education in favor of Russian language education became tougher and more consistent.

In 1924 at the celebration of Nersisyan’s school centenary, the people’s commissar of education A.V. Lunacharsky made a speech, saying the following: “The Nersisyan’s seminary was a great site of the culture for Armenian people and it takes a worthy place in the history of its spiritual culture”. The same year of 1924, the school, which was a legislator of the school-educational movement of the South Caucasus Armenians, was closed down.

The Soviet Government policy of Russification led to significant decrease of the Armenian language use. A great group of Russian-speaking population,

speaking Armenian as second or third language, appeared. Adherents of Armenian language inclined to the standard literary Armenian language. So, a vivid and original Tiflissian dialect of Armenian language endangered. If in the 20s and at the beginning of 30s, the dialect was the language of the most city dwellers, and movies were produced in it, then by the middle of the 30s it got into the category of “the vestiges of the past” that led to its consistent dying out. Uniformity was given a significant part in the process of socialism formation. A numerous stratum of the Soviet technical intelligentsia, which appeared owing to industrial economics development and on the ground of totalitarian unification of the education, had a hostile attitude towards the idea of Armenian-language schools. Consequently, at the end of the Soviet period in Tbilisi there were only two comprehensive Armenian schools and six sectors at Russian schools left. Teaching was often held in complete classes, where different grades pupils used to study in the same classroom. The schools keep floating due to the teachers’ selfless devotion.

Whereupon Georgia obtained independence, the interest of Tbilisi Armenians towards the native language education increased. The schools, existed at that moment, were overfilled with the pupils, one more Armenian sector was opened. It is notable that the ribbon at the grand opening was cut by the first president of Georgia – Zviad Gamsakhurdia. However, activation of migration processes, and specially, migration expectations, as well as the level of education weakened during the Soviet period, inclined soon to the side of Russian schools. These factors along with demographic failure of the 90s led to decrease of the pupils’ number. Pressure at the emotional level had also its influence upon the number of the pupils.

Attitude of the president E. Shevardnadze towards the problem of Armenian schools contingent decrease was expressed by the following phrase: “The schools will operate until there is at least one pupil”.

Nowadays, demographic failure is overcome, and migration expectations tailed. It seemed that the city’s Armenian Community has a right of hope, at least the hope of stability in respect of school native language education. However, in 2010, optimization took place; three Armenian sectors and one school went through it. During the process of optimization two school buildings were vacated. Armenian sector of the school No 146 was closed down, tertiary education grade of Armenian sector in the school No 131 was closed (this is exactly the sector, opened by the first president). Seven pupils of the grade were disabled to continue studies at school, located at the district of their residence, as a result, two of them just dropped the studies. The teachers were discharged. The number of the native language teaching hours was decreased, and the number of the teaching hours in Georgian and Russian languages was decreased. We hail switching to the

bilingual studies. But the fact that in the case such switching has a sporadic, non-system character and is caused by the financial realities of tough optimization, does not make us happy. It is also unpleasant that optimization was performed at the background of stabilizing number of the contingent. It causes concerns that the mentioned reason of the situation destabilizing optimization – financial incapacity of schools and sectors - is not yet overcome, that may lead to the chain of more destabilizing optimization and schools closing down.

Judging by the president M. Saakashvili's initiative, according to which 123 school-leavers of Armenian-speaking and 180 school-leavers of Azerbaijan-speaking schools entered the preparatory section and in a year of intensive study of Georgian language would become the students according to the results of preliminary examination in general skills in native language (the program "4+1"), multi-linguistic aspect in Georgia is not the aim of the authorities' policy. Rather the contrary, this initiative, in principle, may be considered as an example of positive discrimination, which offers the incentive to the native language study to two main minorities. This is much more pleasant as in the immediate past among the chorus of different opinions, a point of view of Mr. Nodar Grigalashvili - the Head of Parliamentary Committee on the issues of education, science, art and sports - that the long-term aim should be of complete translation of the education into Georgian in all schools, in addition the Parliamentary Committee on education asserted that teaching in any language except the Georgian is unconstitutional, as only Georgian language is mentioned in the constitution as an official language.

A question arises, are the problems of Armenian schools result of inertia of such attitude of the functionaries combined with the lack of professionalism, or active and competent state policy collide with the objective obstacles? Recently, some problems, occasioned by the education reform itself, arrive at certain solutions. Voucher financing of small-contingent (up to 400 pupils) schools, and the schools of minorities are all small-contingent, is put on the same footing as voucher financing of schools in the villages (GEL 420). We would like to express our satisfaction that recommendations of the Assembly of Tbilisi Armenians were taken into account while making these changes. Hope appeared that owing to the finally improving trans-boarding cooperation with Armenia in the field of tutorials, the problem of the poor translation of the recently used textbooks will be solved. In addition, the textbooks for schools in minorities' languages are free of charge again. Though, there are particular questions left, for example, why the consistent switching of the part of the subjects' teaching in the official language is being carried out not for the subjects such as Labor or Chemistry, which require minimum or reasonable language competence, but for the subjects, which require superior language competence – learning of History and Geography of Georgia, in addition, according to the textbooks, which were written under the CIPDD's

(Caucasian Institute of Peace, Development and Democracy) estimation “with purely ethnocentric position and do not reflect the variety, existent in Georgia”?

The general questions arise as well:

1. Is the learning of native and official languages, as well as obtaining of the complete set of standard knowledge declared and aimed, if the program’s unavoidable increase is not financed?
2. Is the policy of the development of education in the minorities’ languages active, particularly of the Armenian minority, if it explains stoppage of the teachers’ training by the lack of interested persons? The school-leavers of the Armenian schools, considering that education in Armenian language has no perspectives, do not pin their future to the profession of Armenian and Georgian languages, though exactly the lack of bilingual teachers impedes reforming and decreases perspectives of the Armenian-speaking schools. The closed circle crops up. Is not the role and aim of the state in such case to find, persuade and encourage the interested persons? The Article 14 of Hague recommendations on the rights of national minorities to education specifies this directly. “Ensuring of primary and secondary education in the language of minorities considerably depends on availability of teachers, trained for teaching of all the subjects in native language. Therefore, proceeding from the obligation to ensure appropriate opportunities for education in the language of minorities, the state should provide corresponding conditions for appropriate training of teachers and favor the access to such trainings”.

In the situation, when no more opportunities to get higher education in Armenian language are left, it is quite difficult to get the job without good knowledge of Georgia language, tendency of the relative number increase of the children from Armenian-speaking families, who get education in Georgian-speaking schools, is strengthening. Thereby parents try to give their children a chance of success in the future, believing that they will be able to teach the native language by themselves. Underestimating the native language education, the parents take the risk of the child’s language and educational development. There should be noted that such a complete immersion may lead to bilingualism only in the case when the children’s native language is of high prestige and is widely used outside the schools. The children are expected to learn Georgian language as their native language and to learn the subjects’ contents along with language bearers without any special methodological supporting. The pupils often find themselves in the situations, when they do not understand what they are asked of. Most of the children conclude that they are not capable of studying at all. In such situations, the children become sullen and the Georgian language

knowledge, developed over the period, will never reach the required level. The children do not learn to read and to write in the native language and will not be able to express sophisticated thoughts in it. According to Beatrice Scholter, the representative of Swiss Organization SIMERA (materials of No 7 conference): "Seeing that the children, who speak Georgian at home, have better progress, the children, who belong to the language minorities may conclude that everything, obtained at home (including the language) interferes their lives. At the same time, hostile attitude towards the language and the culture arises. Such psychological stress sometimes is called "double-cultural ambivalence": shame towards the native culture and hostility towards another one. Thereby, those, who are taught in such an environment, often become semi-lingual: they will know sufficiently neither their native nor the second language."

However, it should be assumed that inequality of vital opportunities is caused not only by insufficient knowledge of Georgian language, the life is much more difficult, the sphere, psychological guidelines, and the ethnic origin itself, may be the factors, which cause inequality of vital opportunities. Besides, within the liberalization of the Georgian Society, obligation of the official language study for Tbilisi Armenians turns into the right and natural desire of the Georgian language study. It is obvious that a lot of problems may be solved by switching to the bilingual teaching, which seems to be full-fledged if the staged introduction of the subjects' teaching in Georgian will take into consideration the increasing requirements towards the competence of the pupils and will be completed by the provision of the complete standard of knowledge in Georgian and Armenian languages with the native language teaching up to the last grade and teaching of Georgian language according to the program of the Georgian-speaking schools.

In our opinion, the Armenian-speaking schools of Tbilisi, along with other schools of national minorities, which preserved opportunity of poly-cultural and poly-lingual thinking for our city, possess the potential for creation of harmonious civil society of the democratic and Europe-oriented Georgian state.

Karina Barsegyan
*Association of rights protection
of Armenians in Georgia*

Stereotypes and phraseology expressing the hatred

Multiculturalism – one of the tolerance aspects, which means requirement of the cultures' mixing for the purpose of their mutual penetration, enrichment and development in the universal course of the mass culture. This is a solvable problem on conditions that each person should enjoy the right of his or her convictions expression, which differ from the values of majority. In addition, this will need benevolence and goodwill displaying from all the sides, and first of all from the side of the state.

The centuries-old conjoint living of many nations on the territory of Georgia formed much common in their spiritual life, culture, psychology. Thereby, the country citizens of different nationalities take Georgia as a common homeland, and Tbilisi is considered as the city of peaceful coexistence not only for different nationalities, but for different religions as well.

However, after Georgia gained independence, as well as other countries of the South Caucasus, xenophobic statements and ideas about purity of the dominating ethnic group became more and more popular among the certain part of the citizens. It is enough to take a quick glance to feel unfriendly (and sometimes naked hostile) attitude of certain groups towards ethnic Armenians – citizens of Georgia.

Only several years ago the First State Television Channel in the news program "Moambe" ("Reporter") interviewed 2200 respondents who were asked the question - "Who won't you like to be your neighbor?" Results of the interview showed that citizens of the country would not like to have any relations with: homosexuals – 79.2%, drug addicts – 77.5%, alcoholics – 64.4%, AIDS-infected – 37.8%, and 4.5% of the interviewed said that would not like their neighbors to be ethnic Armenians.

If several years ago the newscasts of TV channels were the sources of xenophobic rhetoric, then nowadays entertainment TV programs on the independent TV channels became the sources of the hatred language.

On March 2nd, 2010 on "Imedi" TV channel during the program called "Simartlis Dro" ("Time of Truth"), the host addressed the program guest with the question: "Have you been ashamed of your Armenian parentage?" that stirred up violent reaction among the representatives of Armenian population of the country, following that, TBC TV Studio, which is the program producer, made

the amende honorable to the Armenians of Georgia for such an impolite question.

In Georgia they produce movies, performances, shows and make entertainment TV programs, where the national minorities representatives appear as the characters with speech defects, or associate with the representatives of certain professions, which take second-rate social niches (so, the Kurds are street cleaners, Azerbaijanis – greens sellers, and Armenians – shoemakers, jewelers or hairdressers) and appear in comic aspect.

Xenophobic sayings of famous historians, writers and poets are spread in mass media and on various internet-sources. In most cases, these phrases either are taken out from the general context that completely changes the meaning of the said, and can be proved by example of the quotations from Tacitus's "Annales", or present the product of a certain group of people, activity of which is directed at discrediting of the Armenian's image. Thus, a negative statement about Armenians, which was ascribed to A. Dumas (father) from his book "the Caucasus" enjoys popularity in Georgian mass media. As it turned out, it has nothing common with the abovementioned author, and in truth, this statement was taken from the paper of a famous Armenianphob Velichko, citing someone Kerte, which was slightly adapted and ascribed to Dumas.

Many similar examples can be cited. But the abovementioned ones, perhaps are the most popular in the environment of Georgian youth, and are mostly used during the discussions on the forums on global social networks.

Oleg Panfilov - Director of Extreme Journalism Center, State University professor, author and presenter of the program "Georgia with Oleg Panfilov" on the Russian-Speaking channel "First Caucasian", journalist and blogger is also distinguished by anti-Armenian propaganda. There should be noted that some collaborators of the channel have been also caught in stirring up the hatred language on the global social networks. Blogsphere means blogs, connected with each other, which may present a dynamic worldwide informational appearance and important environment for public mind and cultural information study, the sphere is often taken into account in academic and non-academic papers, which investigate up-to-date global social tendencies and are quite popular with the youth, definitely impressing upon formation of their certain store of knowledge. It means that anti-Armenian propaganda is spread not only on TV or printed media, but also by means of different internet sources. Thereby the hatred language is propagated into the life and society that is obviously confirmed by the following examples:

One of the participants of the program "Nitchieri" ("Talented"), broadcasted on "Rustavi 2" TV channel, 13-year-old Anna Khanchalyan, was driven to tears because of those distressing comments, which were sent to official site of "Nitchieri". Negative attitude towards her on ethnic factor was much painful to

her.

The result of stereotypes about Armenians instilled in the life and society by mass media can be also proved by the incident, occurred on July 9, 2010, in the cab, which belongs to “GIG taxi” company, when during the passenger carrying, taxi drivers had a talk by transmitter and one of them said the following: “only lousy Armenians remain in Tbilisi”. The company management, particularly Head of Security Service –Dato Gurgenidze, was reported about the fact. In the result of “Multinational Georgia” and the company representative reaction, the driver, who ventured himself to outrage Tbilisi resident Armenians, was discharged, and the rest staff was given a strict warning, to avoid such incidents in future.

At present, a certain part of Georgian elite shows evident malevolent attitude towards Armenians that becomes apparent in anti-Armenian publications and in the context of numerous topics and problems, a significant part of which has already become traditional. These topics are the following: “claims” of Armenians as to Tbilisi, Armenians’ “desire” to strengthen their dominating position, “separatism” of Samtskhe-Javakheti Armenians, the plans of Armenians to create the Great Armenia on the territory of Georgia, as well as frequently appearing materials where authors inform the Georgian society about Armenians’ “claims” as to Georgian history and culture. There are also some publications in Armenian printed media, which are inappropriate and abusive to Georgians that is also unacceptable for us. This all have certain influence upon psychology and attitude of Georgian people, arousing certain distrust of Armenians.

Anti-Armenian rhetoric in Georgian printed media has historic background and traditions. Many Georgian-speaking newspapers with naked anti-Armenian orientation, published in Tbilisi at the end of 19th and at the beginning of 20th centuries, used to work in a quite notable manner: the newspaper “Tsnobis Furtseli” (“News Leaflet”), “Akhali Droeba” (“New Times”), “Sakhalkho Gazeti” (People’s Newspaper), “Iveria”, “The Caucasus” showed their deep aversion to Armenians, blaming them for economic decline of Georgians.

For the past twenty years, these traditions are not only carried on, but they get new impulse. Over the last period, the newspapers “Asaval-Dasavali”, “Tsiskari”, “Khvalindeli Dghe”, “Akhali Taoba”, “Georgian Times” permanently offer anti-Armenian articles to their readers, where they accuse Armenians of almost all the problems and troubles, ever occurred in the history of Georgia.

In 2006 Malkhaz Gvelukashvili’s article titled “Abkhazian war was Armenian-Georgian” was published (“Tsiskari”, April 05, 2006, No 24).

Today’s printed media and some academic circles still continue showing Armenians as aggressors.

In 2008 the conference titled “Armenian separatism and terrorism” was held in the building of Caucasian International Academy. It was organized by “Sukhumi

T7035
73

State University”, operating in Tbilisi. On the forum, it was particularly noted about “guiding role of Armenia in separatism spreading in the country’s regions and implementation of terrorism policy on a state level by Yerevan”. Reporters tried to prove that “Armenians are not autochthons of Ponto-Caucasian space, and Armenia was founded on historically Georgian and Azerbaijani territories”, and “Armenian genocide is a myth for implementation of expansion aims”. Towards the end of the conference, it was announced “about necessity to combine efforts of Georgian, Turkish and Azerbaijani scientists for the purpose to withstand aggressive manifestations of Armenians”. It is symbolic that scientists arranged the conference on the days when the whole Armenian nation all over the world has been revering the memory of genocide victims in Ottoman Empire, when about 1,5 million people were killed, and a lot of Armenians, living in Georgia, are descendants of the victims of those tragic events.

One of the conference contributors was a professor of Sukhumi State University, historian Guram Markhulia, known to many people for his emphasized Armenianphobia and several articles, directed to stir up interethnic discords. Bondo Arveladze – historian and Armenia-investigator is also known for his anti-Armenian publications.

In Gubaz Megrelidze’s article titled “Stop, Yerevan!” (“Asaval-Dasavali”, June 22-28, 2009 No 25) the talk was about provocative and subversive activity of “Norashen” magazine, published by Diocese of Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia, where supposedly the history forgery is propagandized, as well as appropriation of Georgian historical sites by the Armenian Church. The article was printed on 8 clipsheets.

Publication of a theologian, David Kartvelishvili titled “Heresy does not lead to the Church”, appeared on the site of “Georgia Online” this summer, where the author reviews political problems between Georgia and Russia by means of rather provocative methods, and often mentions the neighboring state Armenia and condemns “communication (of ROC and especially Russian Patriarch) with heretic and recreant Armenians”. Catholicos of all Armenians was called “the Head of heretics-monophysites” by the author of the article.

Unfortunately, propaganda, directed to discrediting of the Armenian Apostolic Church, is conducted not only in the Georgian printed media, but in the churches as well. Many vergers of the Georgian Orthodox Church assert before the faithful representatives that the Armenian Church is a heretic church. In addition, notwithstanding frequent corrections and explanations, it can be considered as deliberate mistake that orthodox priests call the followers of Armenian Apostolic Church “Gregorians”.

Georgian priests often say that christening in AAC is not full-fledged and valid, thus, followers of AAC should not expect to get salvation. Thereby, certain doubts

and panic arise in the environment of poorly educated Armenians that leads to not infrequent cases of re-christening and the Orthodoxy adoption, or it sows mistrust to their church. In addition, such activity of priests has influence on consciousness of orthodox parishioners, who, often due to kind motives, offer their Armenian friends to adopt the Orthodoxy "for salvation".

Recently, in October 2010, making of the children chain, which would tie main religious churches of the city, including the mosque, the synagogue and the Armenian church, was intended within the framework of the festival "Everything for Georgia – Georgia for everybody". The human chain should have tied the Georgian Orthodox Church as well, but the deans of two Orthodox churches, situated at the territory of Old Tbilisi, refused permission to conduct such action at their territory, expressing their refuse in the form inadmissible for their rank.

Abrupt transformation of the society from one state to another provoked the rise of nationalistic and xenophobic attitudes that presents a real threat especially in the youth environment. In the light of the abovementioned problems, with which the representatives of the Armenian community are often faced, it is worth to think about psychological traumas, experienced by the representatives of the young generation of Armenians, as these traumas definitely impress upon personality formation and may engender certain complexes.

Thereby, formation of tolerance in the youth environment acquires special attention as well as the youth's upbringing in the vein of internationalism. The gist of internationalism lies in the respect of culture and history of other nations, understanding of their problems, intention to assist in the problem solving, ability to use unique experience in behalf of the people. We suppose that ethnic variety in Georgia is an important factor of prosperity and wellbeing of our country.

Proceeding from this, it is absolutely necessary to form such a self-consciousness in the Georgian society in whole and in the youth specifically, which would be open for perception of other nations' values, ability to overcome personal-psychological barriers at communication, irreconcilable attitude towards arrogance and rudeness, irreconcilability to propagation of national or religious exceptionability and tolerant attitude towards religions.

Functionaries, representing mass media, should bear legal liability for insult and use of the hostility language. disciplined responsibility for such breaches should be done. It is also desirable to give wide coverage of positive life experience, the past and the present of the nations, living in Georgia, demonstration of their activity, aimed at development and prosperity of Georgia, which is able to form a positive image of the country citizens of not-titular ethnic groups, by means of mass media.

Harmonious and profound process of the minorities' representatives' integration into the Georgian society may be implemented only by observance of these rules.



Participation of Armenians in political, social and business life of Tbilisi

Traditionally, Armenians lived in Georgia and its capital, where they formed a city community of honorary freemen and enjoyed particular privileges. Armenians were always treated with great respect and special warmth. This used to happen during the reign of David the Builder, carried on during the reign of Queen Tamara, and in general, lasted over the centuries. Representatives of the Armenian Community considered and still believe Georgia to be their homeland. They made a great contribution into the process of prosperity and development not only of the capital, but also of many towns and regions of the country. The government's attitude and different privileges, allotted to Armenians, living in Georgia and Tbilisi, created the ground, where the community representatives were able to contribute into the country's improvement and development.

At present, about 86 thousand of Armenians live in Tbilisi that is about 7% of the capital's population.

Since 1991, after Georgia gained independence, Tbilisi Armenians found themselves in front of new realities and, unfortunately, they faced a number of problems, which entailed a gradual deviation from active influence and participation in the life and development of the capital and the country in whole. It would be reasonable to draw your attention to some of them, particularly the problems of Tbilisi Armenians' participation and involvement in economic, social and political life of the city and the country.

Economic life

Historically, Tbilisi Armenians were engaged in trade, finances and craft – i.e. generally business and industry activity. However, this structure was dramatically changed during the policy of dispossession of the kulaks, conducted by the communists. Unfortunately, the positions of Tbilisi Armenians, held by them before sovietization, were not returned even after Georgia's independence restoration. Because of unstable political and economic situation at the beginning of the 90s of the last century, and because of radicalization of ethnic nationalism, armed conflicts and many other factors, a lot of entrepreneurs, who possessed a certain capital, including Tbilisi Armenians, left the country and settled down abroad. Imaginary obstacles were raised for many of those Armenians, who remained in the country and decided to open big business, as opposed to those,

who had small and medium-size business.

Armenians, who had small and medium-size business, at the end of the 80s - at the beginning of the 90s, were covertly and informally allotted a sphere in business, which was not pretended by anyone. Naturally, a considerable number of Tbilisi Armenians, who tried to find their position in own business opening, were involved exactly in "permitted" business of shoemaking. This lasted until recently. At present, when after the 90s the country's economic take its course to liberal development, many shoemaking factories opened that naturally overfilled the market and established severe competition, this resulted decrease of the business-structure number, owners and workers of which were ethnic Armenians.

After the Rose Revolution in 2003, the government of Georgia chose the new economic development policy, directed at provision and development of service business, and this was happening in the light of the production share reduction. Unfortunately, Tbilisi Armenians, with their strong qualifications and good craft knowledge, could not find their place and role in the new priority way of the country's economic development.

Another specific obstacle, restricting the employment factor among Tbilisi Armenians, is the institute of clannish and ethnic favoritism. In other words, it means that even knowledge of the official language and professional skills are not only the guarantee of employment, especially in the business sphere – some entrepreneurs prefer to hire their relatives and friends than good specialists. It is natural that most of Armenians do not fit into the idea of clannish and ethnic relationship. This approach is the vestige of the past and still has its impact on the country's economic development in many spheres. In this context, informal boycott of ethnic Armenians hiring from the employers' side should be noted, as their capital is based upon finances, received from Azerbaijan. Obstacles, caused by poor knowledge of the official language, and lack of the skills, which allow filling tax bills correctly, deserves separate attention. For example, 114 out of 130 interviewed Tbilisi Armenian entrepreneurs have faced the problems during the process of financial documentation completion. By the way, I would like to emphasize that after recommendations, provided by several public organizations of the Armenian Community of Tbilisi, in November Tbilisi City Hall announced about the training courses opening for representatives of small and medium-size business, which would concern the filling of financial accountability documentation.

Political participation

Over the last decade, ethnic minorities in Georgia, which represent the numerous groups of the country population, were mostly taken as destabilizing factor and threat than potential in the cause of a common state construction. That's

why, practically, formation of the Georgian society and the state construction has started and in future have not intended active participation and self-actualization of ethnic minorities in it, and Armenians particularly. The processes of marginalization established inequality.

Moreover, established negative public opinion towards participation of not only ethnic Armenians, but of the people with multi-ethnic parentage, in the higher hierarchical stages of the state governing, raised a psychological barrier in their way. At the beginning of the third millennium, our society still remains of sort, where they try to find “a foreign particle” in the genealogical tree of the person, claiming it to be his or her defect, and by means of this - measuring the factor of acceptable activity in the process of the state governing.

The level of Tbilisi Armenians contribution, both in the governing state structures and institutions of civil society, such as political parties, non-government organizations, etc., is too low in Georgia. There are only two persons, who hold high posts in the central executive authorities, and only few people hold the posts of the middle level of management. There is no Tbilisi Armenian in the parliament of Georgia, though the Armenian Community is represented by three deputies.

The last elections to the local autonomous bodies, held in May, 2010, proved the lack of interest to Tbilisi Armenians, when the community counts 10% of the city’s active electorate. From one side, opposition political parties, practically having no practice of working with the Armenian community, are unaware of its specific problems, but from the other side, there is a threat to lose other non-Armenian votes, touching upon so called “not popular” topics concerning the problems of the Armenian Community. This can be added by existence of stereotypes that supposedly Tbilisi Armenians always vote for the authorities. Such stereotype is established because of the several reasons, including disorganization of the protesting electorate of the Armenian Community itself, lack of access to the mass media, statements of some ethnic Armenians functionaries, which establish the background, etc. Because of such state of things, none of the opposition parties did not include ethnic Armenians into the access-list (some of them did not enter into any lists at all) at the last elections to Sakrebulo. There should be separately noted that the ruling elite disparaged the issue of Tbilisi Armenians entering into the election lists. There was no Armenian surname in the list of the National Movement as well. In other way, raising barriers towards Tbilisi Armenians for participation in the activity of the political authorities, the problems of employment and promotion. The reason – professional evaluation of state employees that provides the official language proficiency. Such requirement is often unrealizable for the Armenians in view of several reasons. The Armenian Community representatives, who do not know the official language, cannot pass

the testing, and, that is much worse – even do not try to take participation in it, thereby, they are made to hold not-prestigious and unpromising niches in the state authorities.

Evidently, the issue of the Armenian minority's active participation in the process of political decision making is the most hard-achievable in Georgia. The example of unsuccessful integration of the community's representatives into governmental, parliamentary and administrative authorities of the country is on hand. In the same conditions, it is difficult to talk about the quality of responsibilities and the minorities' participation in the processes of the united Georgian state construction that of itself is a serious threat factor, fraught with disintegration and instability in the future.

However, there should be noted that over the last period several NGO (Fund of strategic international investigations) started implementation of the projects, oriented to the integration of minorities (Greeks) into the structures of state authorities. The president of Georgia recently made a speech, telling about the initiative of employment of the citizens of Ossetian origin to the state structures. We'll watch over how the experiment, actually positioning the policy of positive actions towards ethnic minorities happens. It is possible that in the future such approach would become necessary in relation to Tbilisi Armenians as well.

Information obtaining in the native language

Notwithstanding the fact that Tbilisi Armenians know the Georgian language better than Armenians of Samtskhe-Javakheti, the Armenian is the main communication language for many families. Naturally, this category of people have limited access to the information about the processes running in the society and in the country. In the light of the said, reduction of the broadcasting time in the Armenian language on the Public Television, had negative influence upon information awareness and, respectively, involvement of those Tbilisi Armenians, who have insufficient knowledge of the official language. In October of the current year 156 out of 211 interviewed residents of Isani-Samgori district said that they do not watch the Public Television as it does not cover the problems of Tbilisi Armenians; 121 said that after the reduction of Armenian-speaking programs on TV, they do not get satisfying information about the events, which take place in the country, because of poor knowledge of the Georgian language. In other words, the present situation in the mass media may be characterized as certain regress in the view of the native language information obtaining access limitation. The number of the programs in the Armenian language has reduced considerably since 2003, and even the time, given for the programs in Armenian is not always stable. For example, the programs of the First Public Channel, which were transferred to the Second Channel, are reduced impromptu in favor of "more important news"

such as football or debates between the members of political parties.

Civil activity and public sector

The history of establishment of the Armenian community organizations in Georgia springs from 1989. Over the period of the first president Zviad Gamsakhurdia's reigning, known for his radicalism and intolerance towards the national minorities, in the corners of Georgia, where the minorities live dispersedly and compactly, but are not the majorities of the population, for the purpose to preserve their language and culture, as well as for united protection of the rights and interests, the minorities began to unite into the national community-organizations, which mostly were like the organizations – “fortresses”, thus they self-isolated from the rest part of the population, creating the illusion of security and psychological comfort. Participation, just only for show, of ethnic minorities in the social life of the country was possible only through membership in the community unions of such type. In addition, by the end of the 90s, along with activation of international organizations' activity, the first NGO of minorities appeared in the abovementioned regions, which unfortunately are still oriented to solving of “narrow local” problems. At present, there are several community organizations, operating in Tbilisi, but only a small part of them is oriented to raise the level of civil participation in the processes, which take place in the capital and in the country. Influence upon social and political processes is scanty. The other issue is the mood of Tbilisi Armenians with respect to challenges, existent for the Georgian statehood. Many members of Tbilisi Armenian Community honorably discharged their civil duty and continue to take active part in the wars and conflicts for territorial integrity of Georgia. More than 1000 thousand Tbilisi Armenians take active part in mandatory military service, as well as in international military missions of our state in Iraq and Afghanistan. The fact this is the only sphere where Tbilisi Armenians are presented adequately to their number may be stated with regret. We all want to hope that in the nearest future Tbilisi Armenians will be able to show their potential in all the directions, which are important for the statehood establishment.

Group 1.

Problems of Condition and Preservation of Architectural Monuments of Armenian Cultural Heritage of Tbilisi

Recommendations and offers

To the Ministry of culture, monuments protection and sport of Georgia and Tbilisi City Hall:

- Perform conservation of six church buildings “inexpressible” to Armenian community and Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia in Georgia, for the purpose of prevention of their further destruction and admission of unauthorized persons on their territory.
- Perform identification of the Armenian architecture monuments in Tbilisi which are not on the balance of given departments. In case of necessary parameters satisfaction, include them in the Civil Register of architectural monuments with corresponding financing.
- At the Ministry of culture, monuments protection and sport of Georgia, create a Commission together with representatives of the Armenian community of Tbilisi and competent historians, for compiling a list of architectural monuments having special historical and cultural value, that were constructed on funds of Armenian art patrons of Tbilisi. So to aim these monuments protection against destruction or unauthorized actions, and also for an establishment on these buildings identification tables, specifying their cultural status and/or memorial boards with a name of the historical person, who brought special contribution to the City development and prosperity.

To Tbilisi City Assembly:

- Reconsider sums from the City budget allocated for the Ministry of culture and monuments protection for the Cultural heritage support Program for 2011 and redistribute a part of these sums for needs of the Armenian community connected with: historical and cultural heritage protection; inclusion of the given monuments into the State Register list; carrying out mentioned preservation; and for establishment on these buildings identified tables specifying their cultural status.

To the Armenian community:

- Initiate creation of public structure, which will be engaged in monitoring of architectural monuments condition of the Armenian cultural heritage of Tbilisi, and also will be focused on their protection and restoration. One of primary aims of given structure should be identification of Armenian architecture monuments which are under the State protection, and also those that fit parameters of given status, but aren't allocated by it.
- Creation of communal councils at each of inexpressible Armenian architectural monuments of religious appointment (invalid), whose purpose will be protection and restoration of inexpressible Armenian temples of Tbilisi.

To the Georgian Patriarchy:

- Till settling question of a confessional accessory, assist the Armenian communal organizations of Tbilisi in negotiation with the Ministry of culture, monuments protection and sport of Georgia concerning prevention of the further destruction, church buildings conservation performing, which are the Armenian architectural monuments of religious appointment, and protection against illegal actions related to them.

To mass-media:

- For the purpose of decrease in heat and in order to avoid unhealthy tendencies connected with contradictions round the status of "inexpressible" or "disputable" churches, we recommend to pay more steadfast attention to the themes causing solidarity at flocs of both churches, in particular to a question of physical protection of these cultural monuments, instead of finding-out their confessional accessory.

To international organizations:

- Additional financial support to the Georgian government focused on conservation and further restoration works in territory of six "inexpressible" Armenian churches of Tbilisi, being historical monuments of architecture, as well as a part of a cultural heritage of Tbilisi.
- In forms comprehensible and not contradicting their status, promote search of fair problems solve connected with the Armenian architectural monuments of religious appointment in Tbilisi;
- Support of efforts focused on overcoming of intercommunal contradictions and achievement of the consent.

Group 2.

Education in native language, problems and prospects.

Recommendations and offers

To the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia:

- Create conditions so that the organizations representing the Armenian community of the Country, had possibility of active participation in elaboration and realization of policy and programs connected to education of Georgian citizens with Armenian origin. For this purpose, assist in creation of the centers for elaboration and estimation of study programs for public schools where teaching is conducted in the Armenian language. These centers could be connected with existing establishments, if this will help to achieve aims, connected with elaboration of study programs. Qualified translation of corresponding textbooks should be also included in the center's functions, as unqualified translation which takes place at given stage, negatively affects on a training level and quality of the information, contained in textbooks.
- Taking into account that Public authorities are responsible for establishment of education standards, give organizations of the Armenian community an access to definition of study programs content for teaching the Armenian language and culture.
- Create conditions and stimulate preschool education on bilingual basis, particularly in the Armenian and Georgian languages in those districts of the City where ethnic Armenians live compactly; make corresponding conditions for appropriate preparation of bilingual teachers and promote access to such preparation.
- In case of experimental schools, find such form of additional financial support in which quantity of study hours exceeds quantity of those at usual schools. It is necessary to pay additional attention to schools with bilingual teaching system.
- Restore the Armenian philological faculty at Ilia State University, as well as create conditions for applicants' stimulation to enter the given faculty.
- Order the problems connected with transboundary cooperation between Armenia and Georgia in field of education, particularly in questions that influence on training level at those schools of Georgia where teaching is conducted in the Armenian language.
- Assure realization of general education law, in particular, concerning training

of foreign citizens at public schools. Namely, granting possibility for free education reception at public schools to citizens of Armenia living in territory of Georgia.

To the Armenian community:

- On behalf of the Public perform monitoring over education quality at schools. Create working group (commission, committee), possessing authoritative support of Tbilisi Armenians.

To international organizations:

- For the purpose of the further integration, consider possibility of financing the projects that provide increase of educational level among pupils of Tbilisi schools, in which teaching is conducted in the Armenian language,
- Support programs and initiatives, concerning observance of the minority rights to education, reflected in a number of the international documents recognized by Georgia.

Group 3.

Stereotypes and phraseology expressing the hatred

To the Georgian Parliament:

- The Georgian authorities should work to pass legislation to strengthen the criminal law on violent hate crimes. The systematic use of such penalty enhancement provisions in appropriate cases will send a strong message of condemnation of hate crimes.

To the Georgian Government:

- Creation of the special responsible body combating hate crimes, racism and xenophobia

To the Council of National Minorities at the Public Defender's Office:

- Create an incorporated group consisting of representatives of the Armenian community, non-governmental sector of Georgia, the Public Defender's Office of Georgia, and representatives of executive and legislative authorities for the purpose of monitoring, revealing and reaction to cases of hate speech and hate crimes.

To the Public Defender of Georgia:

- Create psychological support service for people suffered from hate speech, hate incidents and crimes.

To the Armenian community:

- Perform monitoring of TV, radio and printing mass-media, as well as Internet space for cases of hate speech related to Georgian citizens with Armenian origin and the Armenian community as a whole.

To Authorities and international organizations:

- Support programs focused on intercultural education and dialogue, struggle against stereotypes, discrimination by ethnic principle.
- Increase of knowledge level among the Country's citizens in questions of

cultural and religious variety, tolerance, and positive examples of the historical contribution from ethnic minority in developments of Georgia.

- The Georgian authorities should reach an agreement with the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance, identifying specific areas in which international institutions would provide technical support and assistance to combat violent hate crimes, including through expanded law enforcement training.

To international organizations:

- Support programs focused on improvement professional skills of journalists, use of adequate terminology in questions connected with ethnic minority and, in particular, with the Armenian ethnic group.

To Tbilisi City Hall:

- At Tbilisi City Hall, create structure which will be responsible for legal consultation granting, protection and assistance to victims of hate incidents and ethnic basis discrimination.

To the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia:

- The Georgian authorities should provide training for police and prosecutors in identifying and recording bias motivations, and in bringing evidence of bias motivations before the courts. They should commit to take advantage of training opportunities available by international organizations, e.g., the OSCE's Law Enforcement Officer Program on Combating Hate Crimes, and on a bilateral basis, e.g. through the United States Department of Justice as well as through international and local nongovernmental organizations working in Georgia.
- Reaching out to community and other nongovernmental groups - to increase the confidence of hate crime victims to report crimes to the police. The authorities should ensure thorough investigation of any reports of police harassment of hate crime victims and ensure the prosecution of offenders.

Group 4:

«Participation of Armenians in political, public and business life of Tbilisi»

Recommendations and offers

To Authorities:

- Give access to real levers of influence at city authority level. In particular, assign to representatives of the Armenian community of Tbilisi posts at City Hall and Local Administrative Bodies of Tbilisi. The given positions should be preliminary discussed with leaders of the communal organizations of Tbilisi Armenians.

To the Georgian Parliament:

- Make changes into the Selective Code of Georgia, in particular concerning elections to local governments of Tbilisi to admit an exception providing preferential voting, where voters distribute candidates in order of their preference.
- Reconsider borders of the election districts of Tbilisi, so to be equitable to interests of fair representation of the Armenian community in a legislature - Tbilisi City Assembly.

To Tbilisi City Hall:

- Within the limits of corresponding institutional structures should be created the advisory bodies, capable to serve as channels for dialogue between the Government and the Armenian community of Tbilisi. These bodies might have specialized groups on such fields, as education, language, culture, etc.
- Create a monthly publication which will describe activity of Tbilisi City Assembly and Tbilisi City Hall on languages, accessible to the Armenian community of Tbilisi.
- For the purpose of skills improvement, meaning mutual relation with financial and control state structures, create at Tbilisi City Hall courses for representatives of the Armenian community of Tbilisi (on accessible for them languages), concerning correct filling of financial documentations.
- For the purpose of illumination of events about the Armenian community's life and its contribution to culture and the city's history, allocate funds from Tbilisi budget for a TV and/or radio studio activity, which would be capable to

3-38

n3/358



create own programs and to broadcast them on already existing TV or radio channels.

To the Ministry of labour, health and social affairs, and also to corresponding departments of Tbilisi City Hall:

- Pay attention to a heavy social status of veterans from among Tbilisi Armenians (and their families), participating in military conflicts for preservation of territorial integrity of Georgia, and whenever possible to give them social privileges.

To the Armenian community:

- For the purpose of political lobbying of the questions disturbing the Armenian community of Tbilisi, to activate organization of meetings with representatives of the authorities, political parties, which are active on the political field of the Capital city.
- Recommend the Tbilisi Armenian community's members to participate more effectively in work of various trade unions or to unite in the profile trade unions, in particular it means, necessity of similar structures for teachers at schools where teaching is conducted in the Armenian language, etc.
- To non-governmental communal organizations to activate and expand contact with the Armenian population of Tbilisi, to increase knowledge level of the population about activity of the Armenian organizations and processes occurring in public and political life of the Capital city.
- Initiate creation of authoritative public institute – Leaders Council, which will coordinate activity of the Armenian organizations of Tbilisi.
- Create an employment database for representatives of the Armenian community of Tbilisi.

To the Public Defender (ombudsman) of Georgia:

- Study and inform corresponding state structures about problems, connected with creation of artificial obstacles on employment of ethnic Armenians – citizens of Georgia in various commercial structures.

To international organizations:

- Elaborate and support the programs, focused on knowledge level increase of Tbilisi Armenians, stimulation and maintenance of their integration into political space of the Capital and the State as a whole.

T 7.035
3



Tbilisi, 2010