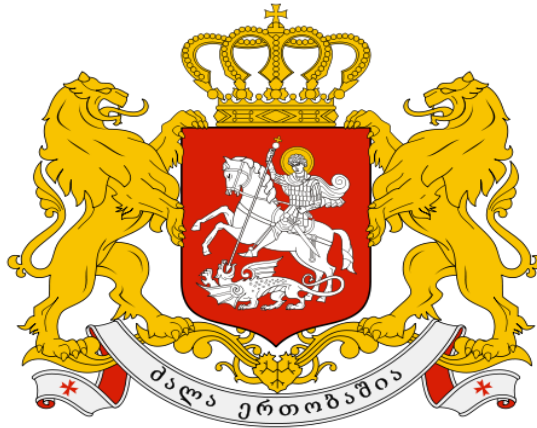


GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA

STATE INTER-AGENCY COMMISSION

**OFFICE OF THE STATE MINISTER OF GEORGIA FOR RECONCILIATION AND CIVIC
EQUALITY**



**Assessment of the Implementation of the National Concept for
Tolerance and Civic Integration and 2013 Action Plan**

February, 2014

OFFICE OF THE STATE MINISTER OF GEORGIA FOR RECONCILIATION AND CIVIC EQUALITY

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Activities implemented within the strategic directions:

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Introduction

In 2013 the implementation of the National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration and 2009-2014 Action Plan was carried out on the basis of the government issued Order № 348 of May 8, 2009. According to this Act, the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration was given the task of developing a policy for national minority related issues, and coordinating and reporting to the Government and the President's Council. In order to have effective coordination of these processes, the Georgian State Minister for Reintegration, based on Order № 14 of July 3, 2009, established the State Inter-Agency Commission.

The Commission was composed of the representatives of the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration, as well as representatives from relevant state institutions, ministries, departments and organizations, the Tbilisi city council and three representatives of the regional administration from areas with minority populations. The make-up of the committee is given below:

- The State Minister's Office for Reconciliation and Civic Equality;
- The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia;
- The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs;
- The Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure;
- The Ministry of Justice;
- The Ministry of Education and Science;
- The National Curriculum and Assessment Center;
- The Teacher Professional Development Center;

- The National Examination Center;
- The Central Election Commission;
- The Public Defender's Office;
- Georgia Public Broadcaster;
- The City Council;
- Kvemo Kartli regional administration;
- Samtskhe-Javakheti regional administration;
- Kakheti regional governor;
- The President's Administration;
- The National Security Council;
- National Parliamentary Library of Georgia;
- The Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs;
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs .

The Commission works with the relevant committees in the Georgian Parliament, local Government agencies, the Public Defender's Office, members of civil society, and international organizations. The committee regularly holds meetings and working groups.

The complex report of the work implemented in 2013 was developed through an intense joint working group made up of the members of the State Inter-Agency Commission and the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality.

It should be noted that the above-mentioned report describes the activities implemented by the executive and legislative Government of Georgia in six key areas determined through the Concept: rule of law, education and state language, the media and access to information, political integration and civic participation, social and regional integration, and culture and identity maintenance.

I. Rule of Law

The rule of law is one of the important directions in the National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration and Action Plan. In this regard, the activities are carried out by the Ministries of Justice and Internal Affairs, as well as the regional administrations of areas populated with ethnic minorities. Throughout the year, members of the State Inter –Agency Commission drafted and implemented a variety of measures which aimed towards achieving the set goals, including the preparation of a draft law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, the registration of Roma people, and conduction of training workshops for ethnic minority representatives and civil servants.

The Drafting of a Comprehensive Bill on Equality

In 2012, the Ministry of Justice set up a working group that was tasked with preparing a draft law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. The bill was aimed at creating an institutional mechanism for eliminating all forms of discrimination, as well as the systemization of anti-discrimination provisions and their compliance with international standards. The bill would prohibit any crimes committed on the grounds of discrimination. The prohibitions set forth in the bill apply to both public and private sectors and individuals. In order to effectively carry out the fight against discrimination, the draft law provides for the creation of appropriate institutional mechanisms.

It should be noted that government agencies, as well as local and international non-governmental organizations and the diplomatic corps accredited in Georgia, were actively involved in the drafting of the law. Meetings were held to discuss the draft law with: non-governmental organizations working on human rights issues, women's rights and gender equality, non-governmental organizations working on issues related to persons with disabilities; and representatives of religious and ethnic minorities. The bill was also sent for international examination to the United Nations (OHCHR), the OSCE (ODIHR) and the Council of Europe (ECRI). The bill was also examined by a Swedish expert who was invited on the recommendation of Thomas Hammarberg. The comments, suggestions and recommendations given by the International organizations and experts were reflected in the bill. The final version of the bill was presented to NGOs on December 17, 2013, by the Ministry of Justice of Georgia.

Registration of Roma People

Throughout 2013, the Ministry of Justice of the State Services Development Agency, NGO "Center for Innovation and Reform," and the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) collaborated on the issue of registration of Roma people. The registration process began in 2012. The activities confirmed that 81 Roma people had documented problems. The problem of lack of registration and identity cards was resolved for 18 of them. The importance of fact of birth was established legally for 13 Roma persons and two gypsies were granted the status of 'stateless person.'

In 2013, the NGO Center for Innovation and Reform investigated the data retrieval of five Roma persons. Also, it was decided that the cases were going to be reviewed by the State Service Development Agency for the legal importance of the fact of birth.

Statistical Data on the Registration of Roma People in 2013

Category of proceedings	Total	Closed cases	Cases in progress
Determination of Citizenship	11	11	0
Status of Stateless person	10	8	2
Fact of Birth	2	0	2
Total	23	19	4

The work of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (MIA)

In the 2013 Development Concept of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, special attention was paid to the issue of rights of ethnic minorities. This issue has also been reflected in the 2014 Concept.

Meeting with the Public Defender of Georgia

Under the Memorandum of Understanding signed on February 4, 2010 between the Ombudsman and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, annual meetings were held in the MIA Academy. The Public Defender delivered a lecture on minority rights issues to MIA Academy students. The meeting was attended by senior officials and faculty members of the Academy.

Special Education Program for Training the MIA Academy

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has conducted a number of educational events, including the Academy curriculum, with particular attention being paid to human rights training programs.

In 2013, the MIA Academy substantially increased the duration of basic training, a fact which was reflected in the following disciplines, such as human rights, racial discrimination and violation of human equality, and non-discrimination issues. Great attention is paid to the special training and retraining programs for district inspectors and patrol officers. Training of the National Guard is also underway. Such trainings include special education programs with topics such as "a multi-ethnic police force in society."

Training on the Rights of Minorities and Anti-discrimination Issues

In September 2013 the NGO Democratic Initiative of Georgia started the project "Support for equality through education." Within the scope of the project, from November-December 2013, the MIA Academy conducted trainings on the rights of minorities and non-discrimination issues which involved 60 police officers.

Work of Regional Administration in Ethnic Minority Populated Areas (Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, and Kakheti)

The Samtskhe-Javakheti State Attorney Governor's Office took appeals from ethnic minorities, all of which were dealt with according to established procedures. Ethnic minorities had no language barriers: they were given the oral explanation in their native languages and the responses were written in the state language. District administrations are set up based on the "one stop shop" principle, which is convenient and time-saving for citizens and in which, if desired, they can meet the relevant officers. The regional administration responds to the oral and written statements within the provided legal terms.

The Kvemo Kartli State Attorney Governor took certain measures to protect the rule of law, in particular- and for the purpose of raising the level of knowledge of public officials in municipalities in the rule of law- systematic monthly informative meetings and trainings were held on newly acquired laws in the Georgian legislation.

The Marneuli Justice House has continued to work with success, thereby enabling citizens to receive services in an accelerated manner. Particular attention has been given to the education of young people and the development of their awareness. Workshops were organized for the purpose of informing them about their constitutional rights.

The Kakheti State Attorney Governor's Office, through the local authorities, conducted systematic monitoring to ensure the implementation of effective protection from the discriminatory treatment of ethnic minorities, as well as from ethnic and religious intolerance and xenophobic attitudes.

II. Education and the State Language

According to 2013 data there are 213 non-Georgian language schools and 77 non-Georgian language sectors functioning in Georgia.

The “Teach Georgian as a Second Language” Program

The program entails assigning qualified teachers of Georgian language and literature to non-Georgian language schools in the villages of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions, populated by ethnic minorities, where the issue of knowledge and training in the Georgian language is particularly acute.

During the period of 2009-2013, more than 1000 Georgian language and literature teachers participated in the competition, out of which only 92 have been successfully tested and interviewed – as a result of which 78 were employed. The new trainer - teachers go through the following trainings: "Georgian as a Second Language teaching methods" (50 pm), "Ethnic and Religious Tolerance" (5 pm), and intensive Azerbaijani or Armenian language learning (50 h). After completing this training, teachers are assigned to rural schools in Samtskhe Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions inhabited by ethnic minorities. Teachers participating in the program, in addition to hourly rates receive a salary of 1000 GEL from the State. The program is implemented in the following municipalities: Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Tsalka, Dmanisi, Kutaisi, Rustavi and Sagarejo.

10 teachers were selected on the basis of the same competition in 2013, with eight of them being employed as certified teachers. The teachers participating in the program, besides teaching the Georgian language, conducted training sessions for other teachers, organized various events (Christmas, Summer and Fall festivals, days dedicated to poets and writers, religious / ethnic festivals, exhibitions, competitions, and performances) which aimed at increasing the motivation in local communities to participate in state programs and learn the Georgian language.

After the arrival of the new teachers in rural areas, a club was set up for Georgian language learners – the "Georgian Language Club" in which students, teachers, parents and community representatives who speak Georgian gathered and together identified established texts and developed the communication language. In some villages the number of applicants was so great that the teacher had to divide the group. It is also the duty of the teachers involved in the program to train the local Georgian language teachers and help with their professional development. For the effective conduction of clubs and classes, the Teacher’s Professional Development Center within the Program donated large high quality colored banners to the new schools involved.

Summer School

From July 15 to August 5, 2013, in Bakuriani, summer schools were held in two stages which involved 216 participants (36 teachers and 180 students from Armenia and Azerbaijan). The program included an interactive method (sport and fitness exercises, games, and fun at the start) with Georgian -language instruction. The only language of communication during the summer school is Georgian, which activates the learning of the state language.

Georgian Language Houses

Since 2012, the process of employing the teachers participating in the “Teach Georgian as a Second Language” program at Georgian Language Houses. The trainer/teachers participating in the program conduct intensive trainings and teach Georgian to locals.

In 2013, the above-mentioned trainer/teachers were employed at the Iormughanlo and Marneuli Language Houses and there they have been teaching the Georgian language to local teachers and community representatives.

Exchange and Friendship Projects

53 % of the participants of the program "Teach Georgian as a Second Language," were involved in the planning and implementation of the exchange programs. Armenian and Azerbaijani language schools became friends with Georgian language schools in various regions. The trainer - teachers found partner schools in different cities (Tbilisi, Gurjaani, Gori, Rustavi, Sagarejo, Chaqvi, Zestafoni, Khashuri and others) and arranged exchange activities- visiting each other and living together for a week; attending lessons; preparing a joint concert/play; introducing various dishes to each other; and visiting Georgian Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic, Islamic Mosques and other cultural monuments. The budget for this project for 2013 was made up the amount of 1 435 803 GEL .

The “Georgian Language for Future Success” Program

The Ministry of Education and Science’s National Teachers Professional Development Center is implementing the program "Georgian Language for Future Success" which aims to integrate ethnic minorities living in Georgia and improve the learning quality of Georgian language in non-Georgian language schools. To achieve this goal, the program has two main directions: sending teachers to non-Georgian language schools, and creating learning resources.

Within the program, in 2013, the sending of teachers to non-Georgian language schools occurred in three stages:

1. At the end of 2012, 56 participants were selected through competition and throughout the month of January, 2013, went through intensive training in professional skills, cultural diversity, multilingual Georgian language teaching methodology and modern methodology. The selected teachers were sent to non-Georgian language schools in the Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions.
2. A competition was announced within the program in June 2013, as a result of which 128 participants were selected.
3. Based on program needs, another competition was announced in October; the selected participants were sent to regions in November.

Before being sent to the regions, all the participants went through a ten day training in the following topics:

- Georgian as a second language, teaching methodology;

- Classroom management and professional skills;
- Cultural diversity and coexistence;
- Inclusive schooling;
- Teaching and learning resources;
- Teamwork and leadership in the implementation process of school initiatives.

At this stage, the program employs 274 people who help the local teachers with the teaching process and the conduction of Georgian language lessons. This facilitates pupils and teachers to improve the level of knowledge of the Georgian language and, also significantly improves local knowledge of the Georgian language.

Chart 1: Non-Georgian Language Schools Participating in the Program (%)

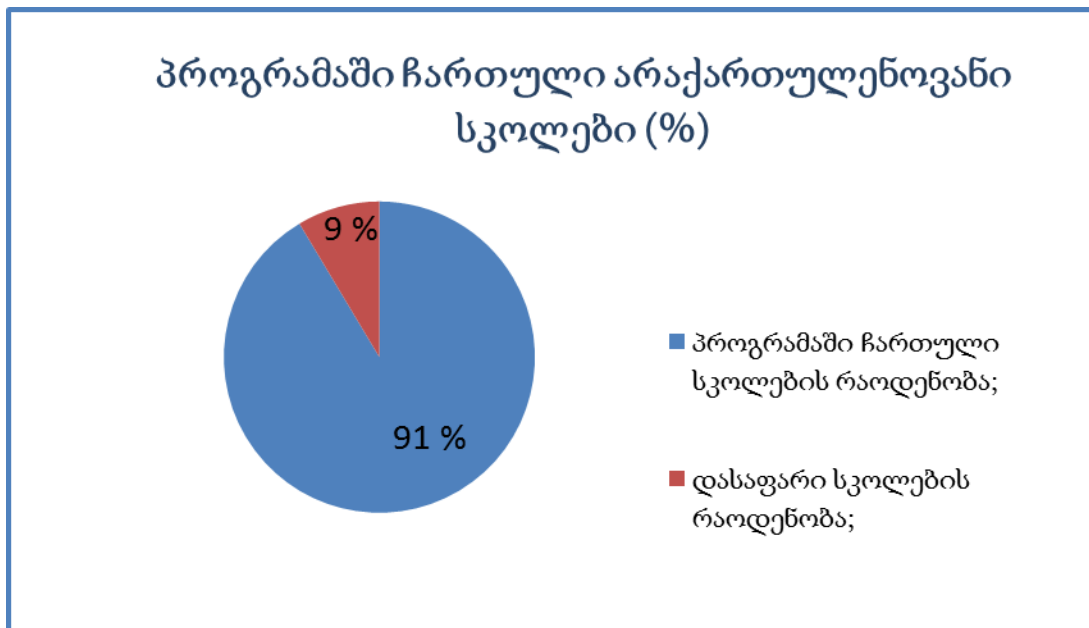
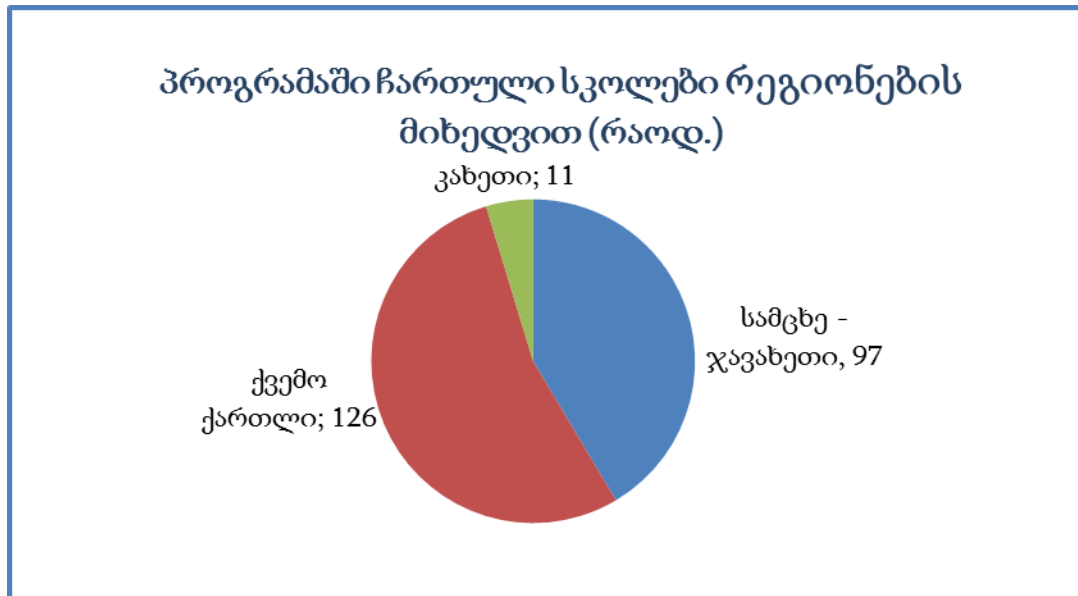


Chart 2: Schools Participating in the Program Based on Regions



The main activities of participants in the program:

- Planning and implementing Georgian language lessons with local teachers;
- Implementing extracurricular activities and initiatives;
- Establishing Georgian language communities / clubs;
- Teaching Georgian language to host families.

Preparation of Learning Materials for “Georgian as a Second Language”

In 2013, the 10th- 12th grade non-Georgian language textbooks were created for intermediate stage students. The materials include a student textbook, student workbook and teacher’s workbook. Thematic audio materials for classwork were also developed. Special computer games for teaching purposes, which are meant for non-Georgian language pupils and comply with the new Georgian language textbook themes. 20,000 copies of the above-mentioned student textbooks and workbooks were published, and 2000 copies of the teachers handbook plus the audio materials were published.

In addition, in 2013, the Georgian Language 1st-4th grade textbooks were also published: 1st grade student’s book – 4,000 copies, and student’s notebook – 4,500 copies; 2nd-4th grade student’s book 3,000 copies, and student’s notebook –4,500 copies.

In 2013, 1st – 9th grade textbooks were distributed to all non-Georgian language schools based on their requested numbers.

Four schools are involved in the multilingual education pilot program: Vakhtangisi № 1, Tzakendi, Aktaklia and Karajageli schools. Manuals for “Teach Georgian as a Second Language” were distributed to all these schools (according to the levels, a total of 9 levels). The coordinator of the Educational Resource Center conducted trainings and meetings which dealt with new methods and approaches in

bilingual teaching (linguistic competency evaluation and testing), development of reading skills, using the “reading Ladder,” and subject and language integrated teaching methods).

National Educational Olympics

The National Educational Olympics began in 2009 and aims to stimulate the learning process - to improve, to stir up interest in learning, to identify and encourage talented students, as well as to identify candidates for the international academic Olympics.

The National Education Olympics were held in Georgia in the 2012-2013 school year for all educational institutions, including non-Georgian language schools and were held in Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian languages, and the non-Georgian language pupils also took part in the Georgian Language Olympics.

Georgian language non-Georgian	1749
Subjects in Azerbaijani	2110
Subjects in Armenian	3177
Subjects in Russian	1296

Based on the results of the third round, the winning students were identified. Ethnic minorities, in particular, were among the five winners of the Georgian language in Armenian and one Azerbaijani student, the three Armenian students were among the winners of foreign language learners.

School Graduation Exams

It should be noted that in the 2012-2013 academic year the school graduation exams were not held centrally- they were conducted by the schools. Based on the exam results, in the 2012-2013 academic year the following number of pupils gained secondary school certificates:

- Armenian language pupils - 1257;
- Azerbaijani language pupils - 2151;
- Russian language pupils - 1209.

Improving Access to Higher Education for Ethnic Minorities

Any Georgian citizen who passes the general skills in Armenian, Azerbaijani or any other language can attend a Georgian language program within an institution of higher education. After completing the one-year language preparatory course and acquiring 60 credit points, they may continue their studies in the same institution in their desired undergraduate education program. If the student acquires a grant through the Georgian language -training program, their Bachelor’s program is funded with 2,250 GEL until the completion of their studies).

In the 2013 national entry exams, based on the results of the general skills exam in Azeri and Armenian languages, the following number of students acquired the right to continue their studies in Georgia's higher education institutions:

- general aptitude test in Azerbaijani language - 704 entrants;
- general aptitude test in Armenian language - 186 entrants.

The State education grant for 2013, based on the Unified National Examinations in the general aptitude tests in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages was granted to:

- general aptitude test in Azerbaijani language - 97 entrants;
- general aptitude test in Armenian language - 91 entrants.

The Development of Tolerance and Intercultural Dialogue

Multiple programs and projects were implemented for the development of tolerance and intercultural dialogue. Among them is a project implemented by the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs "Friendly Schools" which was aimed at creating friendships between a variety of schools in the region and establishing long-term relations between them. Tbilisi public schools and the following regional schools were involved in the project: the school in Marneuli region-village Algeti, the school in Tsalka region-village Khachkovi, the school in Akhmeta region village Duisi, the school in Sagarejo region- Lambalosa and the school in Akhalkalaki region- village Kartikami.

During 2011-2013, N(N)LE Bolnisi Language House and NGO Peace, Democracy and Development within the program "Integration of young people via educational and cultural initiatives in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti" has implemented a number of activities in Bolnisi and Ninotsminda. The Bolnisi Intercultural Youth Center was created, where over the course of two years about 120 young Azeris took part in the Georgian language courses. The competitions were held: "My favorite Georgian Story" and "My Favorite Azerbaijani word." Winners were awarded cash prizes, certificates and travel packages to summer camps. The Azeri and Georgian youth living in Bolnisi also attended the Anaklia (2012) and Lopota (2013) youth summer camp. Besides resting, the young people participated in trainings on the following topics: "Tolerance," "What it means to be a citizen," "State language and minority rights," "CV and Cover Letter Writing," and "alternative ways of resolving conflict."

Bolnisi Intercultural Youth Center members were involved in the SOS-CULTURAL project which lasted for a year and a half (2012-2013) simultaneously in both Georgia and Armenia. Georgians from Bolnisi, Azerbaijanis from lower Bolnisi and Armenians from the village of Bolnisi participated in the training cycle (tolerance, teamwork, diversity, ecology, and communication). The project was carried out by the organization "DVV International."

III. Media and Access to Information

Georgia Public Broadcaster

In 2013, the Georgia Public Broadcaster, which by law has an obligation to prepare programs in minority languages, offered its viewers a few renewed TV programs. It should also be noted, that besides the Abkhaz, Ossetian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani –languages, on June 1, 2013 Russian language was also

added to the daily broadcasting news. Therefore, the public broadcaster now covers national and world news for the country in five languages, live on Channel 2 at prime time: 20:00-21:00 PM.

The technical resources in the editorial offices of Georgia Public Broadcaster in the languages of ethnic minorities were increased, and editors and anchors were added. In addition, co-operation with regional TV companies that air public broadcast news programs in different languages continues.

In 2012-2013 Georgian Public Broadcaster purchased prime air time from local TV stations (the so-called "Prime Time" - 20:00 - 23:00).

Kvemo Kartli TV company Rustavi Channel 4 and Bolnisi channel Bolneli – air “Moambe” in the Azeri language. Zugdidi channel Odishi airs “Moambe” in Abkhazian, while Ninotsminda channel TV Parvana, Akhaltsikhe Channel 9, and Akhalkalaki ATV-12 broadcast “Moambe” in Armenian. These products are supplied through a special Internet service.

An information block is prepared every day that includes 10-15 news items; with each having an average running time of 1 minute. The broadcast in each language averages 9-10 minutes. Local TV stations have the opportunity to repeat the broadcast during morning and evening hours. In addition, minority editorials have the opportunity to prepare reports on topics of interest to them, which has been frequently observed throughout 2013.

Radio Broadcasting

Broadcasting in the languages of ethnic minorities happens through the First Radio station. Currently, the Georgian Public Broadcaster radio station runs "Moambe" news audio extracts in ethnic minority languages. Besides the news in Abkhazian, Ossetian, Azerbi, Armenian and Russian languages, once a week the Kurdish language is also added.

Talk Show “Our Yard”

Based on the interest of viewers, the talk show "Our Yard" changed its format from October 1. Currently, the show airs four times a month as a full movie cycle on various ethnic and religious groups which live in Georgia. The program has two hosts. In 2013, the creative crew prepared films that showcased the history and current situation of the Kurds, Assyrians and Jews living in Georgia. “Our Yard” also offered the art of photography, folk instruments, the history of national costumes and many other interesting topics.

Elections and Public Broadcasting

In order to ensure the equal treatment of voters during the presidential elections, the national minority editorials were actively collaborating on with the Central Election Commission. The CEC pre-election clips were translated into Armenian and Azeri; and a number of important debates were translated and distributed to local TV stations in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti. The national minority editorials received thank you letters from the CEC chairman for their work and contribution.

Total time allocated for public broadcasting for ethnic minorities (2013)

Show Format	Name	Duration in minutes	Quantity	Total hours
TV Informative	“Moambe” in national minority languages	55	255	233
Radio Informative	“Moambe” in national minority languages	55	255	233
TV talk-show	“Our Yard”	40	50	33
Radio Informative	In Georgian language	30	52	26
Total annual (hours)				525

Regional TV channels

JSC Kvemo Kartli TV maintains three frequencies: Rustavi, Marneuli and Bolnisi. The TV news service groups broadcast live daily coverage of important social-political events as well as offering TV news, educational, analytical, entertainment, musical, religious, children's and other programs which have been designed for different target segments of society.

In recent years in Samtskhe-Javakheti, information awareness has been improved in the native languages of ethnic minorities. TV Company Empire has daily broadcasts in Akhaltsikhe. The station's coverage area does not include the Javakheti regions, but once a week TV company Empire broadcasts shows with subtitles through the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda TV companies Parvana and ATV12; those latter companies have broadcasts five days a week. Besides the materials prepared by local correspondents, the central channel newscasts some information programs in synchronized translation. Through information-analytical talk shows, the public has the opportunity to take part in discussions with civil servants and government officials. The station operates 24/7 and offers its audience a wide range of thematic projects: social-political, recreational, educational, artistic and promotional.

The support of print media by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection

In 2013, within the scope of the program “National Minority Culture Promotion,” priority directions still remained in the support of newspapers Vrastani and Gurjistani. Moreover, to the Armenian and Azerbaijani newspapers was added the project on publication of Russian-language the newspapers - Svobodnaia Gruzia and Vecherni Tbilisi, which promote awareness-raising of national minorities in Georgia and their integration into society. Such print media includes information on political, social-cultural and economic fields and applies them to the ethnic minority areas.

Published in 2013 were newspapers in Armenian, Azeri and Russian languages Vrastani (40 editions), Gurjistani (40 editions) and Svobodnaya Gruzia (29 editions), as well as the 90th Anniversary Edition of

Vecherni Tbilisi. To the October – December, these numbers were added to through the tab "Georgian Culture: Yesterday, Today and tomorrow," a newspaper distributed throughout Georgia and Greece.

Regional press

With the support of the municipality of Marneuli, in Azerbaijani villages Azerbaijani language newspapers were distributed Azerbaijani (such as Region Press, Zia, Congress, Ozani, and Tetrtskaro Messenger) throughout the whole year. The Azerbaijani newspaper "Light of the Word" is published once a month and is supplied to the Azerbaijani population of the city.

Regional Municipalities offer to the Kakheti region the following print and electronic media: newspapers Garejis Matsne' and Kvareli; the newspaper Shiraki' and the Internet newspaper Kizikhi' (Dedoplistskaro district municipality), the newspaper Spectrum' (Gurdjaani district municipality); for the coverage of local ethnic minority problems the web-page www.signagi.com.ge has been created, and the population is also informed about the various projects and ongoing processes in the country.

IV. Political Integration and Civic Participation

The Central Election Commission (CEC) is actively engaged in creating an equal electoral environment for ethnic minority voters. In 2012, in the CEC set up a working group which developed the Action Plan for the years of 2012-2014 for the facilitation and promotion of ethnic minority voters in the electoral process. The working group comprises administration staff, representatives of the Public Defender's Office and those of international and non-governmental organizations.

Participation of ethnic minorities

For the full participation of ethnic minority voters and in order to create an equal electoral environment in the elections, the following actions have been planned:

Ethnic minority voter education

Election Systems Development Reforms and Training Center has sponsored five non-governmental organizations within the scope of grant competitions.

With financial support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Training Center has funded six non-governmental organizations through grant competitions. It should be noted that the Roma community awareness campaign was carried out regarding election related issues for the first time.

CEC - in collaboration with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) -has funded two non-governmental organizations of national minorities in order to inform voters.

Awareness of ethnic minorities

In order to increase the awareness of voters 11 CEC commercials were translated into Armenian and Azerbaijani languages for representatives of national minorities. Azerbaijani These were then transmitted in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions.

In order to increase the awareness of voters within the banner of “Ethnic minorities” of the CEC website (www.cesko.ge) there were housed Armenian and Azerbaijani translations of presidential election materials in the year of 2013. Additionally, the information was placed on Facebook –on the CEC official Facebook page.

Additionally, the data given in the voters' common list on the official website of the Central Election Commission (www.cesko.ge) became available to national minority voters in the regions densely populated with Armenians and Azerbaijani people.

For the Presidential Elections those voters living in regions densely populated with national minorities were given election data cards in correlation with their personal IDs. The cards were distributed in two stages which aimed to supply voters with information regarding the Election Day and the location of the district and regional election office. Should the data be inaccurate or incorrect, interested persons could obtain further information from the CEC Contacts Center operators in Armenian and Azeri languages. Also, along with the data card, at the second stage flyers (in Armenian and Azerbaijani) were distributed among the electorate with the description of the Election Day procedures.

Documents translated into minority languages

For the Presidential Elections of Georgia in the 73 District EC 3655 polling stations have been set up - including 338 stations in areas populated by ethnic minorities. In order to create an equal electoral environment for ethnic minority voters, electoral documentation was translated and published for 1502 Armenian and 996 Azerbaijani members of commissions. For the ethnic minority voters in densely populated areas different types of documentation were translated and published. The electoral documents were translated with the financial support of the CEC and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in cooperation with the United Nations Association of Georgia (UNAG) and was published with the financial support of United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Meetings with ethnic minority voters in regions

In order to ensure the civil, political and social integration of national minorities, meetings were held with local residents in minority-populated areas: Marneuli (the village of Sadakhlo) Tsalka (the village of Aiazma), Bolnisi (the villages of Pharizi, Tsurtavi and Nakhiduri), Gardabani (the village of Kesalo) and Akhaltsikhe.

The voters of Azerbaijan and Armenian origin were informed by the CEC regarding events and activities planned for minority inclusion in the electoral processes for the 2013 Presidential Elections as well as regarding the importance of their participation in the electoral process and the elections. Additionally, meetings were held with representatives of the national minorities living in Georgia, Ossetians, Chechen, Kist and Gypsy voters. In the village of Gachiani in Gardabani region a meeting was held of an informative character with Gypsies living in Georgia; the goal being to raise their public awareness. The meeting was aimed at increasing the motivation and the process of activation of the Roma community.

An information campaign was held for the Chechen and Kist population in the village of Duisi (Pankisi Gorge). The participants were informed about the voting and election procedures.

A meeting with ethnic Ossetians and mixed (Georgian - South Ossetian) family members was held in the village of Mtisdziri. The participants were informed about the electoral system, elections, voting rules and procedures.

V. Social and Regional Integration

Health and Social Care

The health and social State programs of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs cover all citizens equally, regardless of their ethnic, social or religious origin. However, the availability of use of state guarantees depends on citizen awareness level for which an important factor is the establishment of cooperative communication with the service centers and the necessity of proper service execution. In this connection should be noted that serious barriers stand in the way of using the state guarantees due to the lack of knowledge of the state language which still looms in the regions densely populated with ethnic minorities. Thus, the main objective of the projects implemented by the Ministry is associated with spreading information to the non-Georgian population in order to make that population aware of the planned and implemented new programs.

Awareness of Ethnic minorities on the 2013 State universal health insurance programs

In order to inform the population on medical care services and volume within the scope of universal health insurance programs, publication of informative flyers in Georgian, Russian, Azerbaijani and Armenian languages was planned. 10,000 flyers were produced and were sent to the affiliated agencies of regions densely populated with Azerbaijani and Armenian-speaking populations where they were then distributed among those people. The texts in different languages, along with the Georgian text, were made available on the site <http://www.moh.gov.ge> of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs; and the printed flyers are available in the reception area of the Ministry. Within the project informative meetings were planned and realized with the staff of medical facilities, and with governors and residents of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti. The meetings with medical staff and residents were held in Marneuli, Dmanisi, Bolnisi and Akhaltsikhe.

Ethnic minority- awareness on the social sphere reforms planned in 2013 - state pensions and social assistance

Within the the project meetings of the Ministry were prepared and held in regions densely populated with minorities (Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti, Samtskhe-Javakheti). They were aimed at informing the ethnic minorities on the significant changes planned in 2013 with regard to state pensions and other social benefits.

Within the scope of the Dmanisi Health Center reconstruction project, supported by the joint efforts of the Japanese government and the international organization ACTS GEORGIA, a medical center was repaired and opened.

Presentation of medical information in cancer screening programs in the regions

The cancer screening program of Georgia has been active since 2008 and provides free examination to every citizen. In the minority-populated regions, representatives of the National Screening Center held informative meetings organized by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration. Presentations on healthcare programs were held in the village of Cabal (Lagodekhi district municipality), in the village of Phoka (Ninotsminda district municipality), and in Bolnisi. Informative material was distributed in order to increase citizen participation in the program.

Infrastructure Rehabilitation

Within the National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration and Action Plan, among the most significant activities implemented by the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure in 2013 are the following:

1. Development of strategies in minority-populated regions and municipalities in order to maximize the involvement of the population.
2. Development of infrastructure rehabilitation investment projects and their implementation.
3. Development of a rural support program and implementation monitoring.
4. The promotion of cross-border cooperation.

The above-mentioned Ministry prepared Development Strategies in minority-populated regions. This strategy was based on the specific actions of a broad program of infrastructure development and implementation (see Table in Appendices 1 and 2). Local communities were actively involved in the development of these strategies. With the goal of regional and social integration of ethnic groups in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti in 2013, the implementation of infrastructure rehabilitation investment projects continued with funding from local and state budgets.

The regions of Dmanisi municipality (Kvemo Kartli) implemented 19 projects, totaling 4 518 400 GEL. 119 projects were carried out in eight municipalities in the Kakheti region, totaling 29 037 251 GEL. 51 projects with a total cost of 19 442 120 GEL were implemented in six regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti.

The projects included the rehabilitation of local roads, drinking water systems, the restoration of exterior lighting and the building of bridges. The decoration of the facades of apartment buildings was carried out and houses were roofed. In Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti municipalities restoration work was carried out in 47 public schools and four kindergartens. In Samtskhe-Javakheti 23 public schools and four kindergartens were rehabilitated.

Throughout the country, including in minority-populated regions, in 2013, the Village Support Program was implemented the goal of which was to conduct the amount provided by the program for the funding of first line socio - economic needs (local infrastructure facilities, amenities, rural - agricultural works, etc.). The program provides for the active involvement of the population. For the implementation of the program the state budget allocated 50 million in 2013, which was then distributed according to the number of people registered in any given village- the decision was made regarding the amount and purpose of financing only after consultation with the local population (rural congregations, public hearings, surveys, etc.).

Within the program scope in total 3500 rural meetings were held in Georgia. Village development projects under the investment amounted to 50 million GEL.

445 projects have been implemented in the region of Kvemo Kartli, totaling 6 876 958 GEL. In the region of Kakheti more than 550 projects were implemented to a total cost of 6 631 499 GEL, and in the region of Samtskhe-Javakheti more than 430 projects were implemented to a total cost of 3 605 112 GEL.

In agriculture, in particular in the case of the creation and development of small-scale farm holdings and associations, regional development agencies organized thematic meetings, trainings and workshops for local entrepreneurs, including ethnic minorities, with the goal of their involvement.

In order to strengthen the economic and social integration of ethnic minorities, the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia places particular importance on the development of international (cross-border) cooperation (primarily with Armenia and Azerbaijan). The strategic objective of the country is promotion to the rising cross-border cooperation of Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, and Kakheti, as well as their regional development and their competitiveness.

VI. Culture and preservation of identity

As in previous years, 2013 was also marked with a variety of culture-support events, which served the ethnic minorities to maintain their identity and to protect and develop their cultural heritage. To support all of the above, different types of events were carried out, including festivals, competitions, exhibitions, Memorial Lectures, intercultural dialogues, and literary-educational presentations.

In terms of culture protection-development, popularization, and cultural integration of ethnic minorities, the Ministry of Culture in 2013 assisted a number of projects:

- The project Georgian-Armenian- and Georgian-Azerbaijani-language information computer Megagame "Integrated Georgia." The purpose of which was to raise the awareness of Armenian and Azeri populations in the ethnic minority regions and in the capital city of the Cultural Diversity of Georgia. It also aimed to teach the Georgian language and to promote their integration into the Georgian cultural space.
- The LEPL Mirza Fatali Akhundov Museum of Azerbaijani Culture implemented a project which promoted the revival of Azerbaijani carpet-weaving traditions still remaining in densely populated

Azerbaijani villages. At the museum study groups of knitting were set up, where the younger generation has mastered gobelen- and carpet-weaving technology. They created an exhibition of works held in December 2013 .

- A bilingual (Georgian-Ossetian) collection of Poems "Ossetian Romance" by Ossetian writer and public figure, George Dzugaev, was published (project author N(N)LE "Caucasian Mosaic"). The presentation was held at the Writers' House.
- Famous Armenian writer Gagik Davtian's Georgian language collected works were published. The presentation was held at the Ministry, which was attended by Gagik Davtyan himself as well as some representatives of the Armenian and Georgian Writers Associations.
- In the Georgian State Museum of Theatre, Music, Cinema and Choreography an Exhibition was organized displaying Jewish-Georgian cultural relationships.
- The Association of Polish Women living in Georgia marked Friendship Polish Days in the month of May. In this regard the Head of the Polish diaspora in the North Caucasus visited Georgia with a 30 member delegation.
- The D. Shevardnadze National Gallery organized an exhibition depicting the cultural heritage of Georgian Jews.
- On the initiative of the Office of the State Minister and with the support of the Ministry of Culture multi-cultural festival "Under One Sky" was held with the participation of ethnic minority folk music ensembles and children from public music schools.

Cultural Projects organized by the Tbilisi Mayor's Office

An Armenian artist from Yerevan visited Georgia to hold a meeting with No.1 Art School students. The event was organized by the Tbilisi City Hall. Within the same program Tbilisi No.98 Public school students visited Yerevan in one of the most prominent educational complexes and one in which a Georgian language teaching program has been included for the past several years.

City Hall arts schools implemented several educational-cognitive projects and organized a masterclass of which a certain part was dedicated to the familiarization and popularization of the activities of some of the old Tbilisi artists of ethnic minority origin. Ethnic minority students were actively involved in this sector.

Ethnic minorities were actively involved in the projects and activities of the year.

Activities conducted by the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia

The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia actively cooperates with various state agencies and the Center for Tolerance under the Public Defender's Office with communities of ethnic minorities living in Georgia.

As a result of close cooperation with partner organizations, 14 events were held at the National **Parliamentary** Library in 2013. Among them were art- and photo- exhibitions, concerts and book presentations. Unique materials protected in the funds of the National Library were exhibited with relation to ethnic minority activities one more than one occasion.

On the initiative of the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality and with the support of the National **Parliamentary** Library, throughout 2013 a number of meetings were held and presentations given dedicated to the history, folklore and culture of the North-Caucasus people. Among them was a commemoration evening of the 69th anniversary of the deportation of

Chechen and Ingush peoples; and a presentation of the Georgian-Russian translation of the book "Abragebi" written by Kist writers - Kh. Khangoshvilisa and D.Pankeli.

In 2013, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs implemented a number of programs and measures towards ethnic minority youth support and social integration, including:

- Vazha Pshavela's poem "Stumar-Maspimdze" which was performed as a radio-adaptation in Azerbaijani, Abkhazian, Ossetian and Russian languages. The performance was recorded on DVD (5,000 copies) and distributed to pupils.
- On June 21 of 2013, Georgia was visited by a Georgian refugee living in the village of Shaumiani. He arrived together with Armenian youth.
- On June 1 students from the villages of the Akhmeta district visited Tbilisi where they enjoyed excursions to the Ethnographic Museum, attended Khridoli martial arts performances and took part in various lotteries. The young people attended the European Championship in Tbilisi Sports Palace.
- On June 8 in the village Chqvishi of the Vani Municipality, a competition "Galaktionoba 2013" was held with the participation of Gardabani and Marneuli local ethnic minority representatives of non-Georgian educational institutions.

Multiethnic Festivals

In October, on the territory of Lagodekhi Reserve and within the scope of the "Youth Policy Development Programme" the multi-ethnic cultural festival Kakheti 2013 was held. Each municipality represented the culture of ethnic minorities within its territory as well as Georgian folk. An exhibition was organized involving the selling of crafts, as well as an exhibition of the cuisine of ethnic minorities. A concert was held with the participation of local folk dance and music ensembles.

The Youth Festival held in Bolnisi with the support of the Lagodekhi municipality, saw 600 young people participating in the event. As well as sports activities of different kinds, within the festival an exhibition was arranged which allowed for the selling of art works. The festival was brought to a close with a concert by ethnic minorities and folk music ensembles.

VII. Activities carried out by the Office OF THE STATE MINISTER OF GEORGIA FOR RECONCILIATION AND CIVIL EQUALITY

The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, as a member of the [State Inter-Agency Commission](#), has been actively involved in the processes of creation and implementation of the National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration and Action Plan." The Office of the State Minister headed the work of the inter-ministerial committee; conducting the sessions and meetings, conducting thematic discussions and consultations, and implementing different types of activities in accordance with the National Concept of strategic directions.

The implementation process of the Action Plan was held on the background of close cooperation with communities, local governments, community leaders and non-governmental organizations. The Office of the State Minister mediated with the central government for the solution of various issues.

State Inter-Agency Commission meetings and workshops

During 2013, the State Inter-Agency Commission meetings and workshops were held.

At the meeting on July 8 with the Public Defender and representatives the Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender's Office, the 2012 Action Plan Report was presented. The meeting focused on the achievements and difficulties in the implementation process and what results had been achieved.

The above report was submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers at the Cabinet meeting on June 20. The report on the 2012 Action Plan and National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration was translated into Armenian, Azerbaijani, Russian and English languages and is housed on the webpage of the Office of the State Minister.

Commission thematic workshops

On September 20, 2013 a working session of the State Inter-Agency Commission was held dedicated to the state language and education. There the achieved positive results were considered as well as the difficulties and challenges. Commission members discussed the experience of other countries and its relevance / usage in the context of Georgia. The participants agreed to establish thematic groups within the trends and to continue work in this format in the future.

State Inter-Agency Commission work session was held on October 4 which focused on the media and access to information. Current projects and future plans were considered. The participants were briefed on changes in the format of Public Broadcasting programs "Our Yard" and "Moambe" in minority languages. Representatives of non-Georgian print media were invited to the session. The State supports the issuing of three non-Georgian newspapers, such as the Armenian "Vrastani," Azerbaijani "Gurjistani" and Russian "Svobodnaia Grusia." It should be noted that the increase of interest in and need towards the issue is on the agenda of the non-Georgian population. The participants of the work session agreed to continue work in this direction.

Exchange / Study Tour

State Inter-Agency Commission members also participated in international activities aimed at sharing the experiences of different countries. At the invitation of the Estonian Center of Eastern Partnership and with the support of the Estonian School of Diplomacy, Interagency Commission members, headed by the First Deputy State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, visited Estonia on September 2-4. The visit was aimed at sharing the experience of Estonia in terms of integration. Meetings were held with representatives of the ministries of culture and education, as well as with the professionals working on civil integration issues.

Public Participation

In June - July of the reporting period, outdoor meetings were held with national minorities in the region of Kvemo Kartli aimed at familiarization with the activities carried out within the framework of the National Concept for Tolerance and Civic Integration and Action Plan, and with Government policy with regards to the integration of national minorities. Marneuli local residents, representatives of local government and public organizations, local MPs, young activists, students and community leaders were informed about the current projects and future plans. One of these meetings was held with representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, and was dedicated to the education and teaching of the State language as well as to the consideration of current programs in this direction.

On April 12, staff of the Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality was in the Pankisi Gorge with the mission to study the current situation and the problems on the ground.

During the reporting period, meetings were held with the representatives of media and non-governmental organizations. The results achieved in different directions of the National Concept as well as difficulties and further objectives and priorities of the Action Plan were considered.

State- and First Deputy Minister Visits and Meetings

The State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality and the First Deputy Minister had meetings/workshops during the current year in different regions (Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Adjara, and Kakheti) as well as in the capital city. The main objective was to raise awareness of the citizens, promote their involvement, also study of the problems and promotion for their resolution.

During the past year, the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality and the Deputy Minister congratulated national and religious minorities living in Georgia, as well as the diplomatic corps with their national and religious holidays, and participated in appropriate ceremonies.