

GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA

STATE INTER-AGENCY COMMISSION

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



**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY FOR CIVIC EQUALITY
AND INTEGRATION AND 2016 ACTION PLAN**

FEBRUARY 2017

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Introduction

Over the recent years, one of the most important tools for the implementation of Georgia's state policy concerning ethnic minorities was the "State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration and 2015-2020 Action Plan" which was approved by the Georgian Government on 17 August, 2015 with decree N. 1740. The strategy is based on the principle of equality and on the approach "more diversity, more integration," aimed at creating an equal environment for full participation of ethnic minorities in all spheres of public life, preserving the culture and identity of minorities, and encouraging tolerance.

The implementation process of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration continued throughout the 2016 reporting period. The State Inter-Agency Commission, with coordinated support from the Office of the State Minister, continued working towards achieving the following key goals identified by the strategy:

- Equal and full participation in civic and political life;
- Creating equal social and economic conditions and opportunities;
- Ensuring access to quality education and improving knowledge of the state language;
- Preserving the culture of ethnic minorities and maintaining a tolerant environment.

The Commission included employees of the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality as well as representatives from relevant state institutions, ministries and organizations, members of the Tbilisi Assembly, and representatives of regional administrations from areas with dense ethnic minority populations. The following agencies are actively involved in the activities of the Commission:

- The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality
- The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia;
- The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia;
- The Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia;
- The Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia;
- The Ministry of Justice of Georgia;
- The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia;
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia;
- LEPL- Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia;
- The Ministry of Corrections of Georgia;
- The Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia
- The Public Defender's Office;
- The Central Election Commission;
- Tbilisi City Assembly;

- Batumi City Hall;
- Kvemo Kartli Regional Administration;
- Samtskhe-Javakheti Regional Administration;
- Kakheti Regional Administration;
- Georgian Public Broadcaster;
- LEPL- National Center for Teacher Professional Development;
- LEPL- The National Assessment and Examination Center;
- LEPL- Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration;
- LEPL- David Agmashenebeli National Defense Academy of Georgia;
- The National Parliamentary Library of Georgia.

During the reporting period, the Commission held meetings, workshops, thematic discussions and consultations in Tbilisi and the regions, after which recommendations were developed. Further, in collaboration with relevant institutions in the Commission, the 2015 performance report and the 2016 action plan were drafted. Reports were presented to the Georgian government, as well as the Council of National Minorities under the Public Defender’s Office and civil society organizations, international organizations, and experts. In addition, thematic working groups created within the framework of the Commission held meetings on various important issues with representatives from non-governmental organizations, experts, and other concerned actors working in this field. During the reporting period the working process in “Access to Media and Information” and “Small and Vulnerable Ethnic Minority” thematic groups was especially active.

Throughout the year, the Commission carried out work in various directions. Special attention was paid to ensuring access to quality education and improving the level of knowledge of the state language, which is an important tool for the integration process.

I. Equal and Full Participation in Civic and political Life

To accomplish the mid-term goals and objectives set out by the strategy, specific programs/projects and activities were carried out by the following institutions: the Ministry of Justice of Georgia and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, the Ministry of Corrections of Georgia, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia, the Georgian Public Broadcaster, Georgia’s Central Election Commission, as well as various regional administrations of areas with ethnic minority populations.

Supporting Small and Vulnerable Ethnic Minority Groups

Registration of Roma People

Since 2011, the Ministry of Justice of Georgia, Public Service Development Agency, along with the non-governmental organization “Innovations and Reforms Center,” have been registering the Roma people. Appropriate procedures have been carried out with regards to birth registration and citizenship, as well as resolving issues connected with the issuance of IDs.

2011-2016 Statistical Data on the Registration of Roma

Case Category	Total	Case Completed	Case in Progress
Determining Citizenship	14	14	0
Status of Stateless Persons	16	14	2
Recorded Birth	37	37	0
Total	67	65	2

The “Supporting Small and Vulnerable Ethnic Minority” working group under the State Inter-Agency Commission is actively working on analyzing the issues connected with the living conditions of the Roma community in Georgia and is trying to find possible solutions.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia has developed and implemented a policy aimed at helping small and vulnerable ethnic minorities:

- Under the “Social Inclusion Support Program,” various events were held aiming to create a corresponding environment for inclusive education;
- In accordance with the international commitments, in order to protect the Roma culture and identity, training modules were developed which increased the level of acceptance of Roma people among the young generation. Meetings were planned and conference presentations conducted;
- Based on the statistical data, 225 Roma children were registered at Georgian public schools during the 2016 reporting period. Subprogram activities, such as reading and theater clubs, united Roma people and local peers around a common interest;
- Public schools involved in the subprogram activities conducted meetings aimed at creating a friendly environment for Roma people;
- With support from the Ministry of Education and Science, a Roma person living in Batumi started a vocational education training program at the primary level. After completing the basic education stage, he enrolled at the Professional College “Black sea” based on his alternative exams score. At present, he is successfully studying in the Computer Network and Systems Administrator program.

During the reporting period, special emphasis was directed towards protecting the linguistic rights of small ethnic minority groups. The Ministry of Education and Science Decree N1255 determined schools/classes which started teaching in the languages of small ethnic minority groups: Ossetian, Avar, Udi, Assyrian and Kurdish languages.

In particular:

- Ossetian language- Kvareli municipality, Tsitskanaantseri public school: Grades I-IX, Lagodekhi municipality, Poni and Areshperani public schools: Grades I- XII;
- Avar language- Kvareli municipality, villages Tivi, Chantliskuri and Saruso public schools: Grades I-IX;
- Udi language- Kvareli municipality, Zinobani public school, Grades I-VI;
- Assyrian language- Mtskheta municipality, Old Qandi public school: Grades VI-XI;
- Kurdish language- Under the Decree of the Minister of Education and Science, Tbilisi N79 public school was chosen to teach the Kurdish language.

Under Decree N702 issued by the Minister of Education and Science on 13 September, 2016 “v” subsection was added to Command N1255, which established two-hour long elective classes of Chechen language in the public schools of the following villages of Akhmeta municipality: Omalo, Duisi, Dumasturi, Birkiani and Jokolo, Grades V-VI.

Gender Mainstreaming

The State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration and Action Plan provides measures to eliminate gender inequality and promote protection of women’s rights, encouraging and supporting the active participation of women in public life.

The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality held several thematic meetings in the regions populated by the ethnic minority groups. Special attention was paid to gender equality issues, including the early marriage problem. In addition, the Office of the State Minister and the Peace Foundation USA organized training session “Women’s rights and participation” in Akhaltsikhe municipality. Four meetings were organized in Gardabani municipality with local teachers regarding the importance of the active participation of women in public life.

The Ministry of Justice of Georgia conducted a meeting with the local population at the Sadakhlo municipality community center on human trafficking, domestic violence and protection of ethnic minority groups.

The Tbilisi City Assembly held the following activities:

- The Human Rights Protection and Civic Integration Committee, with support from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and International Foundation for Electoral

Systems (IFES), organized a training session for national minorities living in Tbilisi on “Gender equality, women’s political participation”.

- “Tbilisi Friendship House” held a conference-“Involvement of minority women in Tbilisi Municipality activities”. The participants discussed the gender equality strategy and drafted recommendations.

David Agmashenebeli National Defense Academy introduced in its curriculum in 2011 gender equality principles and the United Nations Security Council resolutions in its curriculum. The National Defense Academy conducts teaching seminars on “Gender equality and the United Nations Security Council resolutions” for every new cohort of undergraduate students and it is included in the career planning school’s curriculum. Since 2013, gender equality principles and the United Nations Security Council resolutions have been fully included in the National Defense Academy school curriculums accordingly. In 2016, an additional 4-hour assessment lecture on gender equality principles was added to the curriculum for IV year cadet students.

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia with support from the prevention component of the USAID-funded project “Reduction of Domestic Violence in Georgia,” prepared and printed 500 brochures about domestic violence issues in four languages (Georgian, Russian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani). The brochure includes information on forms of violence and victim assistance mechanisms, as well as State control services and its beneficiaries.

In addition, the ministry conducted information sessions in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli municipalities for the following target villages: Gardabani municipality villages Martkopi and Sartichala, Ninotsminda municipality village Gandza, and Marneuli municipality village Sadakhlo.

A 16-day campaign was conducted in Akhalkalaki regarding domestic violence which aimed to raise awareness about the issue. University students were given brochures, T-shirts and bags.

Activities undertaken by the Administration of the State Attorney-Governor in Kvemo Kartli region

Kvemo Kartli regional municipalities started offering the municipal service “Women’s Room”, which seeks to make tailored information and services accessible for women. “Women’s Room” organized meetings at which important issues for the public, and possible solutions, were discussed. The center also held numerous information sessions regarding early marriage, existing mechanisms for violence against women and the national strategy for protecting human rights.

The following courses were carried out: a one-month course in information technology, training program “Successful women in parliament”, a three-month elementary English language course, and others. During the report period, 35 events were conducted by the “Women’s Room, ”attended by 200 women.

Improving Access to State Administrations, Law Enforcement Agencies and Mechanisms for Representatives of Ethnic Minorities

Activities undertaken by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia:

During the reporting period, the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) of Georgia actively pursued a policy of equality in relation to ethnic minorities.

The Academy offers a variety of programs, including detective-investigator, a special educational program for police officers and neighborhood police officers which includes topics “Policing a Multi-ethnic Society” and “Gender Equality”. Based on statistics from 2016, 35 ethnic minority representatives completed the abovementioned training programs (16- Azerbaijan, 15- Armenia, 3- Ukraine, and 1- Yezid).

The Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs accepted first cohort of students on a one-year education program in the Georgian language for the 2016-2017 academic year (2- Armenian and 4- Azerbaijani students).

The following campaigns were carried out during the reporting period: “Maintenance of Law and Crime Prevention Program for Public Schools”, a painting and essay competition across the schools of the country within the frames of the road safety social campaign “For Your Sake, For Your Safety” about the topic “Let’s Protect Traffic Rules Together for the Sake of Each Other”. The competition was open to pupils from both Georgian and non-Georgian schools.

Activities undertaken by the Administration of the State Attorney-Governor in Samtskhe-Javakheti region

Throughout the reporting period, in the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti, responses to ethnic minority appeals were given in compliance with procedures established by the law. Accordingly, citizens were provided with appropriate assistance/consultation, including in those municipalities densely populated by ethnic minorities, Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki. Ethnic minority representatives did not face any obstacles by not knowing the state language, since they were provided with all relevant information verbally in their native language or in languages they understood.

Regional administrations and municipalities operate a “One Window Principle”, through which members of ethnic minorities are able to meet with relevant state agency representatives upon request. In total, 2076 citizens appealed to regional administration offices with various needs and concerns, 146 of whom were representatives of ethnic minorities. The most common plea made by citizens, regardless of ethnicity, was social assistance, material wood allocation and medical assistance. A Timber Allocation Permit was issued for 117 ethnic minority representatives.

During the reporting period, regional representatives were involved in the activities carried out by the central agencies and non-governmental organizations regarding the needs of ethnic minority communities, increasing the level of civic activity among them. During the selection process for the municipality employees, contestants had the opportunity to take tests in their native language.

Activities undertaken by the Administration of the State Attorney-Governor in Kvemo Kartli region

Regional Administration Decree N61 created an Advisory Board regarding ethnic minority problems, consisting of the Governor, deputy governor, Kvemo Kartli region governor/ mayor, representatives from the Public Defender's office and the non-governmental organizations. During the reporting period, the advisory board held two meetings. During the meetings, board members discussed issues identified by the ethnic minorities and possible solutions.

Encouraging ethnic minority participation in the political decision-making process

Activities implemented by Tbilisi City Assembly:

Tbilisi City Assembly Commission on Protection of Human Rights and Civic Integration provided detailed information about its internship program to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. According to the information provided by the ministry, information regarding the internship program was sent to higher education institutions.

Tbilisi City Assembly hired five outstanding students from ethnic minority communities to take a three-month internship program. Two representatives of ethnic minorities went through the internship program in Tbilisi City Hall's Department of Culture.

Raising Awareness/ Information Meetings on Education Issues

The Activities of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia:

- On July 19, 2016, with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Alexander Rondeli Strategy and International Relations Research Center held a public discussion and presentation in Akhalkalaki regarding inclusion of ethnic minority issues in the education system/ new national curriculum.
- In cooperation with the Council of Europe and European Union, brochures regarding ethnic minority language courses and bilingual education were created and translated into 13 ethnic minority languages identified by the European Charter on Languages. Ethnic minorities participated in the process of creating/translating brochures.

- Meetings with representatives of resource centers and school principals were held in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti, Samegrelo, Adjara regions and Kutaisi regarding state and minority language teaching programs, and bilingual educational programs for the purpose of providing information.

Improved Access to Public Services for Ethnic Minority Community Representatives

Activities implemented by the Ministry of Corrections of Georgia:

Brochures regarding the rights of accused/ convicted ethnic minority representatives were reprinted and translated into 5 minority languages by the Ministry of Corrections of Georgia (Russian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Turkish and English).

The number of brochures regarding the rights and responsibilities of the probationers translated into Armenian language was 800, Azerbaijani- 2000, Russian- 700.

During the first stage, brochures regarding the rights and responsibilities of the probationers were distributed at the Kvemo Kartli Regional Probation Agency: Azerbaijani- 500, Russian language- 200, Samtskhe- Javakheti Regional Probation Agency: Armenian- 400, Russian- 200 and Azerbaijani- 100.

In December, 2015, the Penitentiary and Probation Training Center (PPTC) started the mandatory training, certification and periodic re-training process for penitentiary system staff members. PPTC developed training programs that focus on human rights and fundamental freedoms, standards of treatment of prisoners, particularly emphasizing national and international regulations regarding the treatment of vulnerable categories in prison (including ethnic minorities).

During the reporting period, in total 2417 special penitentiary system staff members completed the preparation/ training programs, including antidiscrimination regulations, as well as the rights and treatment of accused/ convicted ethnic minority representatives.

Raising awareness regarding actions against trafficking

Since 2006, the Ministry of Justice of Georgia has been devoted to the fight against trafficking through the Interagency Council on Combating Trafficking in Persons.

A prevention mechanism is one of the key components of the state policy to combat trafficking. In this regard, special attention is paid to vulnerable groups, including ethnic minorities. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Justice of Georgia held informational meetings and training sessions in the regions populated by ethnic minority communities regarding the state policy on combating trafficking in persons, illegal migration issues and existing defense mechanisms. Brochures regarding trafficking issues were prepared and distributed in five languages (Georgian, English, Russian, Turkish and Azerbaijani).

Distributing Information Materials on Public Services and the State Programs

Understanding the importance of the ability of ethnic minority communities to access public services, throughout the reporting period the Ministry of Justice distributed informational materials regarding public services and the current state programs in those regions populated by ethnic minority representatives. All relevant information was provided in their native tongues or in languages they understood. These materials were distributed through the community centers and Houses of Justice (the average number of brochures distributed at one community center was 80-100).

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia translated and printed brochure “Agriculture Cooperative Guide” in the Azerbaijani and Armenian languages (Azerbaijani- 1500, Armenian- 1500), which were distributed among regions populated by national minorities (Samtskhe- Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli) through the Ministry of Agriculture’s Info-Advisory Services.

Raising Awareness among Ethnic Minorities on Human Rights and Protection Mechanisms

The Ministry of Justice of Georgia implemented the project “Strengthening Civil Society” through the Training Center of the Justice of Georgia in 2016. The aim of the project was to strengthen civil society, and raise the awareness of people living in the regions on their legal rights and personal/practical skills development. Within this project, during a three-month period, trainings were conducted in 33 community centers (including those in ethnic minority villages) for local residents regarding both legal and social issues. The trainings were conducted free of charge and 5350 participants attended them.

Providing Equal Electoral Conditions for Ethnic Minority Voters

During the elections in 2016¹, significant emphasis was put on the equal participation of ethnic minority voters in the election. The Central Election Commission (CEC) has continued to work actively in this direction and the following measures were taken in this regard:

Translation of Materials Related to Election Procedures into Ethnic Minority Languages

- The following documents were translated and printed for Armenian and Azerbaijani voters: the ballot, voter’s memorable card, voter’s manual, the unified list of voters, and the poster describing the voting process to be hung at the polling station.
- For the Armenian and Azerbaijani members of the Precinct Election Commissions (PEC), the following documents were translated and published in a bilingual format: the PEC member

¹In 2016, the Central Election Commission conducted the following elections: 28 January, 2016 Gardabani municipality regional representative election; 22 May, 2016 Tbilisi Assembly mid-term elections; 8 October, 2016 Georgian Parliament elections; the election of Municipal mayor in Akhaltsikhe and regional representative election in Bolnisi, Kharagauli, Chiatura, Zugdidi and Tsalenjikha municipalities; 8 October, 2016 district governors elections in Tbilisi, Tsalka, Chiatura, Abasha and Zugdidi municipalities; and the mid-term election in Lagodekhi and Senaki held on 30 October, 2016.

guidelines, PEC chairman handbook, functioning guidelines regarding voter-flow handbook, PEC Secretary handbook for polling day, the Voter Registration Commission handbook, guidelines for commission members in charge of the ballot box and special envelope supervision, guidelines for commission members accompanying mobile ballot boxes; and the PEC member training film “Polling Day Procedures” was made available with relevant subtitles.

For the 2016 Parliamentary elections, the CEC offered a simple verification mechanism to voters and their family members. On the official website of the CEC, a photo-electronic version of the voters list was posted (the latest photo in digital format was taken from the agency electronic database), where each voter had an opportunity to verify information regarding themselves and their family members. The database also provided information about the location of the polling station. For the ethnic minority community members, the electronic database (voters.cec.gov.ge) was available to view and verify information in the Armenian and Azerbaijani languages.

Voters also had an opportunity to verify information about themselves and their family members through the 7000 payment terminals across Georgia. The voters list for the parliamentary elections in 2016 was put on payment terminals, thus providing greater access and ease of service to voters.

In this direction, the CEC offered another innovative approach- a special application made for phones and/or tablets using the Android system which allowed voters to verify information about themselves and their family members and their polling station.

In addition, during the reporting period, the following measures were taken by the CEC:

- Informational and advertising videos prepared by the CEC were translated into Armenian and Azerbaijani languages and broadcasted on the regional TV channels and on the Public Broadcaster.
- For the Parliamentary Election in 2016, the CEC printed information about voting procedures and available services in the Armenian newspaper “Vrastan” and the Azerbaijani newspaper “Gurjistan”.
- The CEC employed 4 members (Armenian-2, Azerbaijani- 2) of the ethnic minority community to work at the information/call center and provide information about the Parliamentary Elections 2016 to the ethnic minorities in Armenian and Azerbaijani.

Offering Small Grants to Civil Society Organizations and Minority Communities- Funding Informative Campaigns about the Importance of Elections and Strengthening its Culture

The CEC grant component prioritized informing vulnerable groups (including ethnic minority voters) in order to increase participation at the Parliamentary Elections in 2016. The Grant

Commission decided to fund 8 projects implemented by local NGOs. The target group for the 7 projects was ethnic minorities and the total budget allocated for these projects amounted to GEL 199,377. 1 project target group included both ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. The budget for this particular project was GEL 27,790. These projects fully covered regions populated by ethnic minority community members.

Procedure Trainings for Ethnic Minority Members of Election Administrations

For the Parliamentary Election held on 8 October, 2016, there were 344 polling stations set up in the regions populated by ethnic minority community members (Georgian-Azerbaijani- 2017 polling stations, Georgian-Armenian- 133 polling stations, Georgian-Armenian-Azerbaijani- 4 polling stations). Across the country, 47,341 members of election administrations went through a special training program, including 2714 representatives of ethnic minorities (Armenian- 1343, Azerbaijani- 1338, Ossetia- 13, Russian- 12, Avar- 7, and Ukrainian- 1).

In accordance with the training concept developed for the Parliamentary Elections 2016, Armenian and Azerbaijani election administration members attended an intensive training course. For the first stage of the training, members of the District Election Commission were instructed regarding rules on choosing a PEC chairman. The second stage focused on the full composition of the PEC, and discussed in detail the polling day and election commission competences. The third stage was dedicated to PEC officials (chairman, deputy chairman, secretary) teachings. In this phase, the study consisted of reviewing the authority of PEC officials, covering innovative training modules- conflict management and security of the elections, which were tailored based on recommendations provided by experts, International Fund for Electoral Systems- IFES, the Central Elections Commissions Educational Center, and the memorandum between the CEC and the MIA of Georgia, taking into consideration international practice. During the fourth stage of teaching, PEC members conducted simulation exercises focusing on voting day.

Educational Programs for Ethnic Minority Voters

During the reporting period, the following projects were implemented to educate ethnic minorities regarding their voting rights: “Electoral Development School”, “Elections and Young Voters”, and “Elections Administrator Course”.

Electoral Development School

The CEC and training center, in cooperation with the Council of Europe and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), implemented an informative education project “Electoral Development School 2016”. The project aimed to promote elections through increasing civic participation, promoting elections among youth, developing skills to conduct trainings for the members of elections commission and sharing accumulated information of the CEC in order to create additional human resources.

The course covered the following topics: the state institutional arrangement, the election system in Georgia, election legislation, parties involved in the election process, the inclusiveness of the electoral environment, gender and elections, voters lists, the pre-election period, voting procedures, closing the polling stations, counting the voting results, and electoral disputes.

The course was implemented in 20 municipalities, including the 4 municipalities² populated by ethnic minority community members. The number of participants was 453. In total, the number of female participants was 298 (65.78%) and male- 155 (34.22%). It should be noted that 7 ethnic minority representatives attended the training program, female- 5 (71.43%) and male- 2 (28.57%).

Elections and Young Voters

The Training Center of the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, with financial support from IFES, implemented the training of trainers (ToT) for the project “Elections and Young Voters”. The learning process covered the following topics: historical background of the election and modernity, election and democracy, electoral administration, voter and electoral stakeholders, other parties involved in the electoral process.

The training course was conducted in 73 public schools in 21 municipalities (including 14 municipalities³ populated by ethnic minority community members and 7 mountainous regions) for 1235 pupils at XI-XII grade.

Courses for Electoral Administrator

The CEC Training Center and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, with financial support from IFES, implemented informative-educational project “Courses for Electoral Administrator”. The aim of the project was to raise awareness regarding the electoral procedures and support the process of finding qualified staff members for the election commission.

The course covered the following topics: procedures before the voting starts, voting procedure, closing the polling station, procedures before opening the ballot box, opening the ballot box, protocol procedures before drawing up a statement, drawing up a statement regarding election results, publication of the statement, complaints during Election Day.

The project was implemented in the 22 municipalities, including 11 municipalities populated by ethnic minority groups⁴. The total number of participants in the training program was 804; the number of ethnic minority representatives in the process was 377.

²The project was carried out in the regions with a dense population of ethnic minorities: Gardabani, Marneuli, Telavi and Akhaltsikhe.

³The project was carried out in the regions with a dense population of ethnic minorities: Marneuli, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Tetrtskaro, Gardabani, Rustavi, Tsalka, Telavi, Lagodekhi, Sagarejo, Mtskheta, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Akhaltsikhe.

⁴The project was carried out in the regions with a dense population of ethnic minorities: Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsikhe, Bolnisi, Gardabani, Tetrtskaro, Lagodekhi, Marneuli, Ninotsminda, Sagarejo, Tsalka, Dmanisi.

Awareness raising campaign for ethnic minority voters

The CEC Training Center, for the parliamentary election 2016, conducted an awareness raising campaign for ethnic minority voters' with district election commission members, and organized a simulation of voting procedures. The aim of organizing these kind of events for Armenian and Azerbaijani voters was to allow them to fully understand and use their voting rights.

Meetings were held in 53 villages in those regions densely populated by ethnic minority groups (Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli)⁵.

Providing Access to Media and Information

Improving ethnic minority community members access to information

During the reporting period, the **Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB)** took measures under 2016 Action Plan.

TV Broadcasting

From 22 August, 2016 the Public Broadcaster's informational program "Moambe" ("Messenger"), which also airs on Channel 2, continued to air on Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. The Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB), in cooperation with the Association of Regional Broadcasters implemented the project "Making information available in languages understood by ethnic minorities", with financial support from the US Embassy.

The GPB offered audiences everyday informational program in three languages, lasting an average of 26 minutes in each minority language. These aired on Channel 2 (Abkhazian language- 23:00, Ossetian- 23:30, Russian 00:00).

The Ministry of Corrections of Georgia provides a variety of channels, within the technically possible limit of 15 channels, at penitentiary institutions for the accused/ convicted persons from different nationalities. In addition, the ministry is trying to include all possible TV channels that can be accessed through satellite broadcasting for free. In such institutions, TV broadcasting is possible in four languages: Georgian, Russian, Turkish and Azerbaijani.

⁵The meetings were held in the following municipalities and villages- Sagarejo municipality- Duzagrama, Keshalo, Tulari; Lagodekhi municipality- Kabali, Uzuntala; Telavi municipality- Karajala; Gardabani municipality- Nazaralo, Kesalo, Kalininio, Birliki; Marneuli municipality- Kizilaklo, Algeti, Shaumani; Bolnisi municipality- Talaveri, Nakhiduri, Bolnisi, Kvemo Bolnisi, Darbazi, Kianeti; Dmanisi municipality- Zemo Karabulakhi, Aamalo, Kizilkilisa; Tsalka municipality- Nardevani, Aizma, Kushi, Arsarvani, Choliani, Tejisi, Khachkoki, Kaburi, Chivtkilisa; Tetrtskaro municipality- Durnuki, Dageti, Samshvilde, Shikhilo, Agtaklia, Karatakia; Borjomi municipality- Kochio, Alatumani, Bejano; Akhaltsikhe municipality- Abatkhevi, Tsira, Tsruti, Patara, Pamaji, Orali, Kulalisi, Sadzle; Akhalkalaki municipality- Akhalkalaki, Gulikami, Diliska; and Ninotsminda municipality- Didi Aragiali, Jigrasheni.

Radio Broadcasting

During the reporting period, a weekly radio program “Our Georgia” (duration- 40 min) was aired. The program highlights the ethnic and religious holidays, cultural peculiarities, traditions, challenges, violation of ethnic and religious minority rights and difficulties in the field of civil integration.

During the 2016 reporting period, Pirveli Radio continued its broadcast of programs for ethnic minorities. Throughout the year, an audio version of the new program “Moambe” aired on the radio in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages, and Radio 2 continued airing informational and entertainment programs in the Georgian language (Duration – 25 min).

The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia carried out a project “Radio Journalism and Communication Management”. Under the program, a four-month training program was conducted at Azerbaijani (AGFM) and Armenian (VRASTAN-FM) radio stations. The aim of the training program was to allow ethnic minority youth to gain theoretical and practical knowledge. Within the scope of the project, 5- Armenian and 5- Azerbaijani ethnic minority representatives were employed at the radio stations.

Azerbaijani radio station AGFM broadcasts in the following regions: Marneuli, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Tetrtskaro- FM 101.5; Rustavi, Gardabani, Tbilisi- FM 100.6; Armenian radio station VRASTAN FM broadcasts in the following regions: Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda, Akhatsikhe- FM 106.2.

Printed Media

In order to disseminate operational information in the shortest time, under the umbrella of the Public Broadcaster, a new internet page was launched in five languages: <http://multitolerant.gpb.ge/>, which included sub-pages (www.abkh.gpb.ge; www.os.gpb.ge; www.am.gpb.ge; www.az.gpb.ge; www.ru.gpb.ge). In addition to the latest information, the web pages also include “Golden Fund” unique archival materials in all five languages. At the same time, social network pages were created in five different languages which make the designed product even more interactive.

The Public Broadcaster uploads the complete shows, as well as some exclusive new stories on its YouTube Channel.

Throughout the year, with support of the government, weekly Armenian newspaper “Vrastan” 52 titles were printed, a circulation of 4000 pieces, and Azerbaijani newspaper “Gurjistan” printed 53 titles, a circulation of 2000 pieces. Newspapers were distributed in Tbilisi and regions populated by ethnic minority groups, penitentiary institutions under the Ministry of Corrections of Georgia.

Since 2015, the Georgian- Azerbaijani- language newspaper “Bolnisi” has been printed in the Kvemo Kartli region. The newspaper also operates the internet portal www.bolnisi.ge. The newspaper

“Trialeti Express” is published in Tsalka, while the Municipality of Tetrtskaro prints a monthly newspaper “Didgorelebi”, through which it supplies the non-Georgian population with relevant and necessary information. A Georgian-language regional newspaper “Southern Gate” is published weekly in the region of Samtskhe-Javakheti.

II. Creating Equal Social and Economic Conditions and Opportunities

Social Mobility

During the reporting period, **The Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia**, planned and carried out an informational campaign aimed at providing ethnic minority representatives with information about state programs in health and social security. Where there is a language barrier, local staff provides relevant information in Russian and other respective minority languages.

Different types of activities were planned and carried out during 2016 under the state program “Promoting Health”. The Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, in cooperation with the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC), developed and published the following informational materials: ‘Strengthening tobacco consumption control,’ ‘promoting a healthy lifestyle,’ ‘Hepatitis C nationwide elimination program’ and ‘Supporting access to education’ (90% in Georgian, 5% in Armenian and 5% in Azerbaijani).

Infrastructural Rehabilitation

Activities implemented by the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia:⁶

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, implemented infrastructural projects, including gasification, rehabilitation of roads, irrigation and drinking water systems, outdoor lighting and more.

In particular:

Samtskhe-Javakheti Region

- 40 projects were financed in the Samtskhe-Javakheti Region with a total value of GEL 15 450 642.
- The Municipal Development Fund of Georgia implemented 5 projects in Akhalkalaki with a total cost of GEL 9 417 020.
- The Village Support Program carried out 410 projects with a total cost of GEL 3 665 668.

⁶For the full information please refer to Appendix 1

- 291 projects with a total cost of GEL 21 060 610 were financed by the local municipal budget.

Kvemo Kartli Region

- 57 projects were financed in Kvemo Kartli region with a total cost of GEL 23 269 781.
- The Village Support Program carried out 436 projects with a total cost of GEL 6879074.
- The Municipal Development Fund of Georgia financed 4 projects in Dmanisi and Tetrtskaro with a total budget of GEL 5 390 708.
- The Development of High Mountainous Regions Fund financed 2 projects in Dmanisi and Tsalka with a total budget of GEL 816 001.

Kakheti Region

- 19 projects were financed in the Kakheti region (Lagodekhi and Akhmeta municipalities) with a total value of GEL 5 511 190.
- The Village Support Program financed 2019 projects with a total cost of GEL 1 849 276.
- The Municipal Development Fund of Georgia financed 1 project in Lagodekhi municipality with a total budget of GEL 970 301.

Activities undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia:

Kvemo Kartli Region

- Rehabilitation of mountainous irrigation system and canal and other types of distribution networks in Marneuli municipality villages: Beitarapcho, Kasumlo, Kushu, Baitalo, Aghmamedlo, Kachagani, Tekalo.
- Reinforced distribution at ravine-channels with rehabilitation of concrete rings arrangement - Marneuli municipality, village Talaveri.
- Rehabilitation of the Lochini irrigation system main building in order to improve access to water in the Samgori lower channel- Gardabani municipality, Gachiani village.

Kakheti Region

- Construction of a closed pipeline system in the lower Samgori irrigation zone- Sagarejo municipality, Iormuganlo village.

Samtskhe-Javakheti region

- Enhancing the supply of electricity to the Almalo pumping station located at village Khospio in Akhalkalaki municipality, including villages Khospio, Gulikami, Murjakheti, Chandura, Vachiani and Diliska.

III. Ensuring Access to Quality Education and Improving State Language Skills

Ethnic minority representatives have access to pre-school, school, vocational and higher education opportunities. Ethnic minorities are provided with the option to get an education in their native languages (Azerbaijani, Armenian, and Russian). There are 298 non-Georgian language public schools and 81 non-Georgian sectors. Including 118 Azerbaijani, 131 Armenian, and 49 Russian schools. Further, the Georgian-Azerbaijani sector- 32, Georgian-Russian sector 42, Georgian-Armenian sector- 10, Georgian-Azerbaijani-Russian sector- 1, Georgian-Russian-Armenian sector- 1.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia continued to carry out various programs and projects during the reporting period. The Ministry developed and adopted the Law on “Early Upbringing and Education”, a strategic document on access to education “Education Policy for Civic Integration” was developed, teacher professional development programs were implemented in non-Georgian schools, and more.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and its subordinated entities of public law continued to implement programs and projects during the reporting period.

Under the subprogram “Multicultural Summer School for Ethnic Minorities” 2 activities were carried out: “Multicultural Summer School for Teachers” and “Multicultural Summer School for Students”. The “Multicultural Summer School for Teachers” saw the participation of 30 teachers from non-Georgian speaking schools/sectors of the regions of Georgia (Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti) and 20 teachers from mountainous regions. 12 days summer school program was implemented for teachers in Bakuriani focusing on cultural dialogue and extracurricular activities.

30 students of 9th, 10th and 11th grade of non-Georgian schools/sectors (Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti regions) and 20 students of 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th grade from mountainous regions participated in the “Multicultural Summer School for Students” according to the academic year of 2014-2015 selection process based on essay contests organized by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. The 12-day summer school program in Bakuriani organized activities tailored to advance cultural dialogue among ethnic minority community students.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia carried out the following activities:

- The sub-program “Parent Education and Involvement” aims at increasing parents’ knowledge of risks connected with early marriage. The program is implemented in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Within the project, events and meetings are organized in the regions. Meetings are arranged with parents in public schools, where

discussion topics cover early marriage risks (physical health and legal aspects). Psychologists, local law enforcers and social workers attend. During the reporting period, 11 events were organized in municipalities populated by Azerbaijani ethnic minority representatives (Sagarejo, Gardabani, Dmanisi).

- “Transpiration of Public School Students” started operating in 2015 and aimed to make general education facilities more available for students. The scope of the program was expanded during the reporting period to include non-Georgian school students and ethnic minority students attending Georgian public schools.
- During the reporting period, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia developed and the minister with Decree N40 approved the concept of linguistic education. The concept was included in the National Curriculum under primary education. The concept was published on the department’s web portal: www.ncp.ge.
- Special education service “Transit Educational Program” aims to provide support and fully integrate homeless children at public schools. From July 2016 up to 100 beneficiaries became involved in the program. 12 special teachers (academic skills development), 6 trainers (life skills development), and psychologists working in the Social Service Agency’s children’s daily shelters and day care centers were involved.
- During 2016, the “Transit Educational Program for Homeless Children” was carried out. The beneficiaries of the program were children from homeless shelters and day care centers operated under the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (Tbilisi, Rustavi, and Kutaisi). 80 homeless children were part of this program. 21 of them enrolled at public schools and 4 of them started vocational education programs. Training programs were conducted for teachers and school principals in order to equip them with the necessary skills to engage with homeless children during educational activities. Topics discussed during the training program include: “Identifying the needs of children from vulnerable groups” and overcoming stigma connected with homeless children among the parents at schools.
- A training program was conducted for 150 students from 40 public schools across Georgia (including a few school principals). A national campaign was conducted for homeless children’s parents in 20 public schools, which included up to 1000 parents.

Activities undertaken by the National Assessment and Examination Center:

National Educational Olympics

Georgia’s National Educational Olympics of the 2015-2016 academic year was held in every educational institution, including non-Georgian-language schools. The National Olympics in the

aforementioned schools were held in Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian languages. In addition, students from non-Georgian language schools participated in the Georgian Language Olympics.

Georgian Language (non-Georgian language schools)	1127
Subjects (Azerbaijani language)	547
Subjects (Armenian language)	710
Subjects (Russian language)	379

The third round of the Olympics revealed winners which included ethnic minority representatives. Among the winners were 10 Russian-speaking and 1 Armenian-speaking winner in the Georgian Language Olympics.

School Graduate Exams

Based on the results of the 2014-2015 academic year final school exams, secondary education certificates were awarded to:

- 703 Armenian-language students;
- 650 Azerbaijani-language students;
- 926 Russian-speaking students.

Increasing Access to Higher Education

Since 2010, any citizen is able to enroll in the Georgian Language Training Program at institutions of higher education if they pass the General Skills Test under the “1+4” program in Abkhazian, Ossetian, Armenian or Azerbaijani languages and score well enough. After completing the one-year preparatory language course and earning 60 credits, students continue studying at the same higher education institution in the undergraduate program of their choice. If a student receives a 2250 GEL grant for the Georgian Language Training Program and continues studying at the Bachelor’s level, the financial aid is guaranteed until graduation. During the 2016-2017 academic year, the National Assessment and Examination Center offered General Skills Tests in Abkhazian language, which allows students from Abkhazia to take a simplified exam in their language and be part of the program. The program was fully implemented for Osseatian students from the 2015- 2016 academic year.

Based on the results of the 2016 National General Skills Tests in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages, the following applicants earned the right to continue their studies at higher education institutions: 660 applicants based on the Azerbaijani-language General Skills Test and 300 applicants based on the Armenian-language General Skills Test. In total, 960 applicants were admitted to higher education institutions.

Based on the results of the 2016 National General Skills Test in Azerbaijani and Armenian languages, the following students were awarded with State Education Grants: 99 students based on the Azerbaijani-language General Skills Test and 95 students based on the Armenian-language students General Skills Test- in total 194 students.

Enrolled in Academic Programs:

- 3 students based on the Armenian-language General Skills Test (1 received grant);
- 8 students based on the Azerbaijani-language General Skills Test (1 received grant).

One student passed Abkhazian Language and Literature Test and enrolled on a higher institution academic program.

Activities undertaken by David Agmashenebeli National Defense Academy of Georgia:

During the 2015-2016 academic year, 1 non-Georgian (Azerbaijani) student was admitted to the David Agmashenebeli National Defense Academy of Georgia in accordance with the “1+4” program scheme, but left the academy for personal reasons. In general, there are 7 cadet students (3 Azerbaijani and 4 Armenian, from which 3 are at 2nd year, 2 at 3rd year and 2 at 4th year) part of the “1+4” program.

Ensuring the Provision of Vocational and Professional Education

Ethnic minority representatives have access to vocational and professional education. The mission of the LEPL Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration is to overcome the shortage of qualified staff in the public service sector by increasing the qualifications of civil servant employees in regions and mountainous areas with dense minority populations, as well as to integrate regional ethnic minority representatives into the unified sphere of public administration.

The LEPL Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration developed and implemented courses in “Public Governance and Administration” and “Studying State Language”. A course in “Public Governance and Administration” covers six directions (state acquisition, civil organization management, human resource management and public sector operations, procurement, public relations and communication, infrastructural project management). 191 beneficiaries attended the organized courses.

- A credit system was created for the “Public Governance and Administration” course;
- The Academic Council approved a new, updated system of assessment which increased the number of credits needed to obtain a certificate;
- A centralized system for examination was created;
- Under the “Public Governance and Administration” course, a “Technical Supervision of Infrastructure Projects” program was developed;
- Changes were made to the status of the training courses under the sub-program of the Public Governance and Administration program;
- In order to help trainers professionally develop and analyze the results of the first cohort in 2016, a four-day workshop was held which involved trainers and employees as part of the learning process;
- A new training course “Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic Integration” was developed and introduced to 3 regions: Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti. 201 students participated in the training programs conducted (Samtskhe-Javakheti region- 60 participants, Kvemo Kartli region- 107 participants, Kakheti region- 34 participants);
- The school carried out a program titled “Automated Stem (E-document) Training Course. Within the training, 92 administrative officials were made aware of the abovementioned topic during meetings held in regional administrative agencies (Samtskhe-Javakheti- 71 participants, Kvemo Kartli- 21 participants);
- The Academic Council approved a new course “Gender Budgeting”. 17 participants attended the training program;
- Basic Program in Computer Technology was attended by 220 participants (Samtskhe-Javakheti region- 75 participants, Kvemo Kartli region- 145 participants);
- 16 short-term training courses were developed and implemented by Vano Khukhunashvili Center for Effective Governance System and Territorial Arrangement Reform.

Teacher Development Program for Non-Georgian Public School Teachers

Activities undertaken by the National Center for Teacher Professional Development:

“Non-Georgian Teachers’ Professional Development Program”

Since 2016, the Center has carried out a Professional Development Program for Ethnic Minority Teachers which unites the program implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia from the previous year- “Teach Georgian as a Second Language” and “Georgian Language for Future Success” aimed at the promotion of the state language and civil integration of ethnic minorities living in Georgia.

The program is designed to support non-Georgian schools/sectors teachers' professional development and improve the quality of teaching the state language. In addition, the project (2016-2019) aims to help teachers take the national examination and learn the state language. During the reporting period, the following activities were implemented in this direction:

Across Georgia, non-Georgian schools/sectors teachers, libraries and resource centers were provided with the following materials:

- Starting a career as a teacher, professional development and career advancement scheme documents. The electronic version of the publication has been accessible since May 2015.

	Azerbaijani	Russian	Armenian
Resource Center	11	22	13 copies
School	113	40	122 copies
Teacher	2955	1142	2805 copies
Total	3,079	1,204	2,940

- Starting a career as a teacher, professional development and career advancement scheme documents, first part. The electronic version of the publication has been accessible since September 2015.

	Azerbaijani	Russian	Armenian
Resource Center	11	22	13 copies
School	113	40	122 copies
Teacher	2955	1142	2805 copies
Total	3,079	1,204	2,940

- School administration and facilitators were provided with information regarding “Starting a career as a teacher, professional development and career advancement scheme” documents;
- The director of the National Center for Teacher Professional Development on the 23 September, 2016, issued Decree N217, which approved a new self-assessment questionnaire for teachers. The questionnaire was translated into Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian languages and posted on the official website of the National Center for Teacher Professional Development. Information regarding the electronic version of the documents was spread through print and electronic media;
- Training programs and relevant teaching materials developed by the National Center for Teacher Professional Development were translated into Azerbaijani and Russian languages;
- The Center announced a contest for the Azerbaijani, Armenian and Russian language trainers. 320 applicants participated in the competition, out of which 25 were selected atrainers;

- Non-Georgian (Azerbaijani) school teachers enhanced their professional skills in the following subjects: Physics, History and Mathematics;
- During 2015-2016 academic year, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regional public schools received 105 teachers of Georgian as a second language, 135 assistant teachers of Georgian language and literature, history and geography and 14 bilingual teachers of each subject under the National Curriculum. Based on the scope of the program, teachers who were sent to the regions helped local counterparts and assisted them in the teaching process (Samtskhe-Javakheti region- 30 consultant teachers, 42 Georgian language assistant teachers, 5 bilingual assistant teachers, Kvemo Kartli region- 70 consultant teachers, 82 Georgian language assistant teachers, 9 bilingual assistant teachers);
- 221 teachers attended an A1 level language training course offered at target schools. Based on the final assessment, 135 successfully completed the training course. The number of teachers attending the A2 level course was 398, out of which 232 successfully completed the program;
- 105 consultant teachers attended a language and subject integrated teaching methodology long-term course of the second and third module- listening skills development (II) and reading skills development (III). Under the training module, consultant teachers with their local counterparts conduct at least one language and subject integrated lesson. The lessons are reviewed and enhanced with the help of trainers. All the materials developed during the training process are uploaded on the online learning portal- moodle.iliauni.edu.ge.

On October 27, 2015, the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia issued Decree N145, which approved the curriculum for the ethnic minority languages. The curriculum was developed by ethnic minority language experts at the National Center for Teacher Professional Development's development and implementation department. The group of experts drafted the standards for teachers and based on this document two training modules were created under the "Teaching Methodology for Ethnic Minority Language Teachers" program: reading/listening skills development (20 hours) and writing/speaking skills development (15 hours), reading materials and training assignments were prepared accordingly.

The Minister of Education and Science of Georgia on April 5, 2016, issued Decree N26, which changed Decree N152 adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia on September 27, 2013, on "Approving the Regulation regarding Professional Exams". According to this change, professional exams are accessible in the Russian, Azerbaijani and Armenian languages for educational programs included in the framework document of (modular) vocational courses. Consequently, during the spring 2016 intake, applicants were given the opportunity to take exams in Russian, Azerbaijani or Armenian. Based on the exam score, 3 ethnic minority representatives got student status, while during the autumn intake 10 non-Georgian applicants were enrolled on educational programs.

According to changes made by the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, non-Georgian students enrolled on vocational education programs through taking exams in the Russian, Armenian or Azerbaijani language, started their studies with the Georgian language module.

During the reporting period, 3 students from the spring 2016 intake finished the Georgian language module, while 10 students did so from the autumn 2016 intake.

Improving and Increasing Knowledge of the State Language

The lack of knowledge of the Georgian language remains a serious challenge. Programs initiated to combat the issue in past years continued during this reporting period. In addition, the target group of this component included public servants, non-Georgian school teachers and, in general, any interested person.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia implements the “Georgian as a Foreign Language Teaching Program”. The program ran in cooperation with the Council of Europe Language Policy Division and is implemented according to the unified European policy for modern language learning. The aim of the project is to offer a full learning package to beneficiaries and teachers of Georgian as a foreign language. Within the system, growth in language acquisition is expressed by the following steps: A, B, C each of which is divided into two main sub-levels- A1-A2-B1-B2-C1-C2. The process of standardizing Georgian language derives from the fact that Georgia became intensively involved in international processes and, therefore, Georgian language was examined through two main contexts: Georgian as a state language, means of communication and as one of the languages in the world, a legitimized language.

Each level is provided with adapted reading literature. From B1 level, teacher’s books will be added to each level. Updated teaching materials will be posted online on the website <http://www.geofl.ge>.

The LEPL Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration under the Ministry of Education and Science implements the “State Language Teaching Program”, within which the following activities were implemented:

- 2 new educational centers were added to the existing 8 in Lagodekhi and Akhmeta;
- Language instruction was undertaken on 3 levels- A1, A2 and B1, which covered over 10 regional education centers;
- In order to provide state language teaching programs to beneficiaries in remote villages outside the municipality, mobile groups were set up which visited these villages to conduct classes. Within the program, 165 groups were created in 66 villages (Samtskhe-Javakheti region-70

groups in 26 villages, KvemoKartli- 69 groups in 34 villages, Kakheti region-26 groups in 6 villages);

- Training materials were prepared and published for each level of the language program;
- In 2016, a unified database of program participants was created;
- Throughout the year, the learning process at the Regional Training Centers were systematically monitored through open and planned lesson observations;
- Within the State Language Teaching Program, 3193 beneficiaries attended training programs conducted (Samtskhe-Javakheti region- 1462, KvemoKartli region- 1266, Kakheti region- 456);
- For the purpose of program development, 4 working groups were created in order to prepare a specific field educational course. Methodists and experts were chosen by the school management. The work was focused in four main directions: law, management, finance and procurement, and infrastructure;
- The electronic format of the final examination was finalized, according materials prepared and tested on a pilot regime at 5 regional education centers (Samtskhe-Javakheti region- 2 regional education centers, KvemoKartli Region- 3 regional education centers).

Samtskhe-Javakhetiregion: Regional Education Centers were created in Akalkhalki and Ninotsminda, where beneficiaries have access to state language programs and other education opportunities provided by the LEPL ZurabZhvania School of Public Administration since 2015. The State Language Teaching Program in Akhalkalaki is conducted through mobile groups which are set up at public schools. During the reporting period, 1668 beneficiaries had access to various services offered by the school.

Kvemo Kartli region:The LEPL ZurabZhvania School of Public Administration offered educational services to 1539 beneficiaries through regional education centers in Marneuli, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Gardabani and Tsakla municipalities.

Kakheti region: The LEPL Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration offered educational services to 499 beneficiaries through regional education centers in Lagodekhi and Akhmeta municipalities.

Additional activities implemented by various agencies in order to increase knowledge of the state language:

In order to provide ethnic minority representatives living in Tbilisi with an opportunity to study the Georgian language, a memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the **Tbilisi City Assembly**, Commission on protection of human rights and civic integration, and the LEPL Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration, on February 16, 2016.

In 2016, within the project “Strengthening Civil Society”, free Georgian language learning courses were offered to non-Georgian citizens by the Ministry of Justice Training Center of Georgia. The Center has been conducting training courses since September 2015, with financial support from various donor organizations and the Public Service Development Agency. During the reporting period, 97 beneficiaries attended Georgian language classes at 4 community centers (Kazreti, Kabala, Poka, Sadakhlo).

In July 2016, a Georgian language training team was chosen based on their experience in the field. 4 trainers out of 6 have experience in teaching non-Georgian schools and speak Armenian or Azerbaijani.

Social division of **the Ministry of Correction of Georgia** provided Georgian language classes to non-Georgian convicts. In 2016, 128 non-Georgian convicts attended Georgian language courses at penitentiary institutions.

The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia implemented an online Georgian language teaching program for ethnic Azerbaijani and Armenian youth. During the reporting period, information about the project was disseminated at governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations working in Tbilisi and regions, and in regional municipalities. The e-learning module allows every internet user across Georgia to improve their Georgian language skills or start learning from a basic level for free. Registration is possible at: <http://teach.ge/Programs/6>.

IV. Maintaining Ethnic Minority Cultures and Promoting a Tolerant Environment

During the reporting period, with the direct support and participation of the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia, past programs/projects and activities were continued to ensure the protection, development and promotion of ethnic minority cultures.

To further assist the expression and integration of ethnic minority cultures into the general public sphere, the activities of the following public entities are vigorously supported: the David Baazov Museum of History of Jews of Georgia, the Mirza Fatali Akhundov Museum of Azerbaijani Culture, the Petros Adamian Tbilisi State Armenian Drama Theater, the Haydar Aliyev Azerbaijani State Theater and the Alexander Griboedov Russian Professional Drama Theater.

Supporting Theaters

The Alexander Griboedov Russian Professional Drama Theater in 2016 organized the following activities: 118 theater performances, including 7 premiers, attended by 5000 spectators; 7 performances in the regions, and 2 performances abroad, attended by 959 spectators.

Regarding the Haydar Aliyev Azerbaijani State and the Petros Adamian Tbilisi State Armenian Drama theaters, the Azerbaijani theater gave 2 performances and 5 premiers, attended by 400 spectators, while the Armenian theater performed 1 local and 7 visiting plays in the regions. Visiting performances were conducted in 9 villages. In total, 2272 audience members attended the events.

Supporting Museums

The David Baazov Museum of History of Jews of Georgia. In 2016, the following activities were implemented by the museum: scientific conference “Tbilisi-Jerusalem”, an inventory of the museum funds and creation of an electronic database, an inventory of the library and museum, and analyzing the history of Jews in Georgia through the 19th century press. Throughout the year 11 events were conducted.

The Mirza Fatali Akhundov Museum of Azerbaijan conducted 3 exhibitions, 1 video clip presentation, 3 meetings/events. **The Smirnov’s Museum** has completed an inventory process.

Protecting and Promoting the Cultural Heritage of Ethnic Minorities

- An inventory process of German cultural heritage in Georgia was finalized, namely in: Tetrtskaro, Tsalka, Marneuli and Dmanisi municipalities and in Didube district in Tbilisi. As a result of the inventory, 150 objects were recorded. During the inventory process of cultural heritage, registration cards were prepared at each site. In addition, a Georgian map was prepared which included the inventory results of the German cultural heritage objects;
- Granting status procedures started for the 150 identified German cultural heritage objects. In 2016, Cultural Heritage Monument status was granted to 40 objects of German cultural heritage, including Trialeti church in Tsalka village (Khrameshi Street).
- Project documentation was prepared for the arrangement of the Norashen church floor. In 2016, with financial support from the Historical Monument Preservation Fund, the Norashen Church rehabilitation process was planned and completed.

Supporting Ethnic Minority Cultures

In order to maintain the cultural identity of ethnic minorities, in the frames of the priority “supporting ethnic minorities” active representatives of ethnic minorities are supported, promoted and facilitated in various creative fields through exhibitions, performances, publications and concerts.

The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia continued to support the project of the Mirza Fatali Akhundov Museum of Azerbaijan, “Maintaining Azerbaijan’s Carpet Traditions”. The project serves to promote and disseminate the ancient Azerbaijani technology of hand-woven carpets among youth. Throughout the year, young people are encouraged to learn the tradition of the ancient textile technology in Tbilisi, as well as in the regions, and at the end of the year an exhibition is held showcasing the newly-created carpets. The project had 6 employees, and 15 young professionals were prepared with in the project. 25 children study at the center in the regions (Marneuli, Bolnisi, Tetritskaro);

The following activities were carried out with regards to supporting and protecting ethnic minority cultures:

- A concert dedicated to Mikael Tareverdiev’s 85th Anniversary;
- “Caucasian Mosaic” published Ossetian writer Giorgi Bestauri’s complete collection of poems in a bilingual Georgian-Ossetian format;
- A concert dedicated to Rashid Beibutov’s 100th Anniversary ;
- The Adyghe Center hosted a scientific session on “Adyghe, Abkhazia, Ossetia and Georgia-Supporting Contextual Development of the Caucasian Civilization”;
- A ballet performance “Khamse” was created on the basis of famous singer Foad Bulbul Oghli’s music in Batumi;
- The E. Mechitov “Caucasian Jazz Festival” united bands and musicians in Georgian and in the Caucasus region and hosted a concert;
- The International Carpet Festival was held in Akhaltsikhe- the aim of the festival was to raise awareness of the reading technology of hand-woven carpets and historical traditions, and to facilitate connections between carpet manufacturers.

Promoting Inter-Cultural Dialogue

Activities undertaken by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia with regards to promoting Inter-cultural Dialogue:

- **Project “Multi-ethnic Georgia”** -Within the scope of the project cultural events are held in Marneuli, Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda and Bolnisi municipalities with dense populations of ethnic minority representatives. The project aims to promote the cultural integration of ethnic minorities into Georgian society, raising awareness among youth and increasing

knowledge of art and other cultural activities, and improving creative skills. Within the framework of the project, cultural events were held in Bolnisi, Ninotsminda, Marneuli and Akhalkalaki.

- **“Every culture is different, but equal”**–Within the project, folk music of various ethnic groups, concerts and painting competitions were held in Marneuli and Ninotsminda municipalities;
- Ethnic Culture Society carried out the classical music project “Celebrating Diversity”. With in the project, young talented musicians were chosen from across Georgia to perform in the A. Khachatriani Music School concert hall.
- Center for Supporting Arts, with in the project “Diverse Georgia Posters,” published a catalogue of the same name, and the posters were printed and exhibited.
- **“Sergo Parajanov’s Tbilisi”** – Published a catalogue including the works created by Sergo Parajanov. The book included comments from artists regarding the Parajanov’s work as a director and painter. A presentation event for the book was held at the National Museum of Georgian and Dovzhenko National Center in Ukraine.
- With the initiative of Unit “Demosi,” the project “Where is another Georgia” project was developed, aiming to raise awareness regarding Georgian songs among youth. Marneuli municipality hosted the Georgian song contest-festival “Where is another Georgia”. Participants were 6-17 year old schoolchildren from Georgian and other ethnic minority communities. They performed academic Georgian songs.
- “Georgian and Ossetian Friendship” and “International Society Caucasian Mosaic” carried out a project within exhibitions and other cultural activities were organized in villages close to the demarcation line. A photo exhibition regarding Georgian-Ossetian relations was organized in Ergneti village, also exhibition of Georgian and Ossetian painters’ and concert were hold.
- A cultural event dedicated to Georgian choreographer Omar Khubaev was organized.

The following activities were organized by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia in Pankisi Gorge:

- The project “Our People- Vainakhs” within which talented young artists were selected from Pankisi and Jokolo to participate in an exhibition/concert at the Kote Marjanishvili State Academic Drama Theater;
- The “Caucasian Culture Festival in Pankisi Gorge” project aimed to promote and support the Vainakh culture;
- The project “Promoting Cultural Heritage of Ethnic Minorities” worked to solve the most pressing issues in Tusheti and Pankisi Gorge: promoting the Vainakh culture. Tushetians and Vainakhs organized a concert in Pankisi Gorge;
- On May 21, 2016, Cultural Diversity Day was celebrated in Duisi village, various cultural events were organized. An exhibition of traditional handicrafts and museum exponents were held. Baghater Arabuli’s book “Khevsurian Saga” was presented during the event. A concert

was organized by the local folk groups with the participation of the LEPL Gori G. Eristavi professional drama theatre actors. ;

- In order to preserve and promote the ethnic minority culture, local dance album “Pankisi and Kist Traditional Dances” was released;
- “Photo-School” gave local children the opportunity to gain photography skills and promote arts and handicrafts in the region. At the end of the project, an exhibition was organized;
- The album “Vainakh Art” was published in order to collect and promote Vainakh artwork, traditional culture, decorative art, ancient crafts and technologies;
- Vainakh children’s tales were translated into the Georgian language aiming to popularize Vainakh ancient tales, traditions and culture;
- The NodarDumbadze Children’s Theater organized a tour to Pankisi Gorge and conducted performances in Duisi, Omalo and Jokolo villages;
- The “Shadow Theater” organized a tour to Pankisi Gorge and “The Four Seasons” performance was held;
- Children’s folk ensemble “SiinSigla” was equipped with the necessary costumes and technical equipment.

Administration of the State Attorney-Governor in Samtskhe-Javakheti region was actively involved in organizing events aimed at promoting and protecting ethnic minorities’ cultures and identities. Municipalities with dense ethnic minority populations set up clubs where music and dance lessons are conducted. Music and art schools are actively operating in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda municipalities. In addition, there are funds from the local budget available to finance various institutions and cultural activities. In Samtskhe-Javakheti region there are 183 cultural institutions operating in 7 municipalities, and 11 art and music schools.

Activities undertaken by the Administration of the State Attorney-Governor in Kakheti region

Kakheti Regional Administration finances infrastructure projects in the villages with dense populations of ethnic minorities, from the local budget. The total cost of the projects implemented is GEL 450 000. The Municipal Social Assistance Program issued total funding of GEL 150 000 from various sections. Kakheti regional administration organized in total 35 cultural events across different municipalities.

During the reporting period, libraries in rural villages Jokolo and Kvemo Khalastani were provided with renewed funds of books purchased through allocated municipal funds. The status of the Duisi village library was restored.

- 15 museum exhibits were added to the Pankisi Ethnographic Museum. The items were collected mainly through donations.
- The municipality allocated funds to purchase a forging press;

- Akhmeta Municipality Arts School started to operate in the Jokolo village and opened a new branch. 27 local children had an opportunity to attend art lessons there.
- One music school is functioning in Pankisi Gorge, in Duisi village. The school has 2 staff members and 7 children are taking classes.

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Corrections of Georgia actively organized cultural and sports events in penitentiary institutions across Georgia. The events were attended by the convicts from ethnic minority communities. According to established practice, informational meetings were held twice a month throughout the year.

It should be noted that each prison facility has a special room where the representatives of different faiths can meet spiritual leaders and participate in religious rituals. Women's N5 prison also has a separate room for Muslim convicts to pray.

Activities undertaken by the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia

During the reporting period, the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia actively cooperated with the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, the Public Defender's Office's Center for Tolerance, and Georgia's ethnic minority communities.

Through close cooperation with partner organizations, in 2016 the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia held 4 events, including art and photo exhibitions, concerts and book presentations. The library frequently displayed unique works by and related to ethnic minority representatives in their possession. The library database of dictionaries was expanded to include Ukrainian-Georgian, Abkhaz-Georgian, Russian-Georgian, Armenian-Georgian and Ossetian-Georgian dictionaries.

The aim of the abovementioned measures was to popularize and integrate the cultural heritage, art and traditions of the representatives of ethnic minorities living in Georgia.

The following projects were implemented during the reporting period:

- Event dedicated to 92 anniversary of Sergo Parajanov was held, photos taken by Iuri Mechitov were exhibited.
- Azerbaijani music and poetry evening;
- Georgian and Azerbaijani painters joint exhibition;
- Under the project "Equilibrium," a Georgian library was opened at Bavra village in the Armenian Public school in Akhalkalki municipality.

Activities under taken by Tbilisi City Assembly:

- On March 7, 2017, with support of the Tbilisi City Hall, the Culture Department published the catalogue of the exhibition held in the National Library featuring Georgian and Azerbaijani artists' works.
- During the "Tbilisoba" celebration, there was a corner in Abanotubani dedicated to exhibiting artwork of the Azerbaijani culture. During the celebration, a special concert was organized featuring Azerbaijani folk groups, singers and dancers, and national dishes and sweets were exhibited.
- Mushtaidi Garden hosted the joint event of "Center for Cultural Events" and "Georgian Women's Council" called "Friendship Stories," dedicated to the history of the establishment of the Mushtaidi Garden. The creative groups and artists representatives of ethnic minorities living in Tbilisi attended the event (Ossetians, Abkhazians, Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Azerbaijanis, Germans and Czech).

Tbilisi City Assembly's Education, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, in cooperation with "Tbilisi Youth Center" and with in the "State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration 2015-2020," implements the project "House of Friendship", the aims of which are to support the integration process of ethnic minorities living in Tbilisi. During the reporting period, "House of Friendship" organized meetings and events on various topics.

Activities undertaken by Batumi City Hall:

The "Friendship House," founded by Batumi City Hall and existing under the "Batumi Cultural Center," hosted 9 ethnic Diasporas (Armenian, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Russian, Ukrainian, Hebrew, Greek, German, and Kurdish). A variety of cultural and educational events took place at the "Friendship House" during the reporting period, including the administration of state language courses. During the meetings, discussions were organized regarding the projects implemented by the Batumi City Hall's Education, Health, Social Affairs and Gender department.

Activities implemented by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia:

The Ethnic Minority Integration Program supported the development of ethnic minority youth by equipping them with the necessary tools to be active citizens, think freely and analyze the role of the state. The Ministry carried out a number of programs and projects during the reporting period, including the following:

- The process of staging and recording plays on DVDs continued- Vaja Pshavela “Host and Guest” (Georgian, Abkhazian, Ossetian, Azerbaijani, Russian languages), Akaki Tsereteli “Gamzrdeli” (Georgian and Abkhazian languages), Shota Rustaveli “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin” (Georgian, Azerbaijani, Armenian languages). The abovementioned DVDs were disseminated across the regions;
- Poetically gifted youth of various ethnic minority groups took part in the literary competition “Georgia- My Homeland”. The best submissions were published as a collection of poems and printed in Braille.
- Under the program “Expedition in Chaokhi,” a camping trip was organized for ethnic minority youth representatives living in Georgia- “Chaokhi 2016”. The aim of the expedition was to promote a healthy lifestyle among participants. Azerbaijani and Kist youth participated in the expedition, while the whole trip was organized by Georgian and Armenian youth. The trip lasted 5 days and 20 people participated.
- The Summer Camp project in 2016 was organized at Khvamli Mountain. The project supported the creating of links of exchange among Georgian and ethnic minority youth, the exchange of contact information and cultural tradition. The duration of the archeological camp was one month and 50 young people were involved.
- In order to commemorate World Refugee Day, educational and sports events were organized in Pankisi Gorge: volleyball, football, wrestling, table tennis, running, horse racing, and drafts (among girls). The Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia provided equipment for the renovated judo hall for the training of 100 young people;
- During 2016, a judo training program was offered to 150 young people in Duisi village;
- The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia “Children and Youth National Center” for the integration of youth with disabilities and special needs from occupied territories of Georgia, within the framework of the “Youth Festival 2016” project, implemented “CYNC Week in Gori” and “CYNC Week in Pankisi”, which supports ethnic minority representatives educational activities, civic integration, raising awareness, leadership and teamwork skills for youth living in Jokolo, Birkiani, Duisi, Akhmeta, Gori, Shavshvebi, Khurvaleti, Karaleti, Tiniskhidi, Skrashi, Variani, Berbuki and Verkhvebi. The sub-program involved ethnic minority representatives from Pankisi gorge and the nearby villages of Gori. 70 children between the ages of 13-16 participated in the project.

Every convict in the penitentiary institutions administered by the Ministry of Corrections of Georgia has the right to participate in cultural and sports events regardless of their ethnicity. Since January 2016, penitentiary institutions across Georgia have held 254 cultural and 39 sports events.

V. Awareness-raising campaign on Georgia’s European Integration Process

The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality in cooperation with the Office of the State Minister of Georgia on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, the, carried out an informational campaign of the European integration process and subsequent benefits for the ethnic minority representatives:

- Several discussion meetings were held regarding the Euro-Atlantic integration process in the regions with dense populations of ethnic minorities: Tbilisi, Kvemo Karli region (Marneuli, Dmanisi, Tsalka); Samtskhe-Javakheti region (Akhalkalaki, Aakhalsikhe, Ninotsminda); Kakheti region (Pankisi gorge). The target group of the meetings includes: students and high school students, non-governmental organizations, farmers, and representatives of regional media.
- During the reporting period, materials regarding visa free travel for Georgian citizens were prepared in Georgian, Abkhazian, Ossetian, Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. Informational materials in Armenian, Azerbaijani, Russian and Georgian were distributed in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Khakheti regions.
- During the reporting period, informational videos regarding European integration were prepared (DCFTA and international education programs) in Abkhazian, Ossetian, and Armenian. The videos were posted on the website and social network (Facebook) of the Office of the State Minister's. At the same time, a presentation event was held for ethnic minority representatives, the diplomatic corps, international organizations, local government and non-governmental organizations.
- With support of the regional administrations, the National Examination Center, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia and David Agmashenebeli National Defense Academy, information meetings were organized in Akhalsikhe and Marneuli with local youth. Participants had an opportunity to get information about education opportunities, including the opportunities offered by the Euro-Integration process.
- In cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia, a meeting was held with local farmers in Kakheti region which focused on the agriculture aspect of the Euro-Atlantic integration process, in particular the development of agricultural cooperatives and positive changes.

VI. Activities carried out by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality:

The following activities were carried out by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality:

- An official reception was held for Azerbaijani and Armenian language and literature teachers in order to celebrate International Mother Tongue Day;

- The National Library hosted a commemoration event regarding 72 years since the deportation of Chechen and Ingush people. The event was attended by various scientific groups, public figures, graduate students and guests from Pankisi Gorge;
- A concert dedicated to Georgia's Independence Day was organized. The concert was attended by young people from Tbilisi, Samtskhe-Javakheti, KvemoKartli, Shida Karli and Kakheti regions;
- The National Library hosted a meeting dedicated to the exile of the Caucasian people;
- The Office of the State Minister organized the multiethnic festival "Under One Sky" in Gori and Kutaisi, which is held annually since 2010 and involves talented young people from ethnic minority communities. The festival is organized in cooperation with the following ministries and organizations: the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia, regional administrations, and the United Nations Association of Georgia (UNAG).
- The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality organized lecture/seminars for students in Tbilisi and Samtskhe-Javakheti region dedicated to International Tolerance Day. During the week dedicated to International Tolerance Day, the photo competition "Our Diverse Homeland" was organized with financial support from the United Nations Association of Georgia (UNAG). 13 winners of the competition were awarded gifts. The Office of the State Minister held an official reception which was attended by ethnic minority representatives, the diplomatic corps, international organizations, regional representatives and non-governmental organizations.
- Meetings were held with first grade children from Kvareli municipality villages Tivi, Chantlikuri and Saruso, Telavi municipality villages Karajala, and Akhmeta municipality village Kasristskali. The Office of the State Minister introduced folk-educational children's literature to participants. UNAG provided books to school libraries and stationery as a present to children.
- The Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality congratulated representatives of ethnic minorities living in Georgia, and the diplomatic corps on national and religious holidays.

VII. Fulfillment of International Obligations

Georgia is fulfilling various international obligations with regards to the protection of ethnic minorities:

- The Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) presented a report on the convention regarding the elimination of discrimination, and a discussion was held on May 1-2, 2016.
- The Advisory Committee published a periodic report on implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of the National Minorities in January.

The reports discuss the progress made by the State and the challenges in protecting ethnic minority rights and in the direction of civil integration.

In order to implement the 2016 Action Plan, the Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality worked in close collaboration with civil society organizations, diplomatic corps accredited in the country, local and international experts, and the Public Defender's Office-Council of National Minorities. In addition, the Office of the State Minister had constant communication with ethnic minority representatives in the regions, local government and non-governmental organizations. The Office of the State Minister coordinated activities in the Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions.

Activities, events and projects carried out by the Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Equality under the 2016 Action Plan were organized with the support of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Association of Georgia's (UNAG) project "Promoting Integration, Tolerance and Awareness" (PITA).