

**Analysis of the Questionnaire  
Related to the Work of Majoritarian Members of Parliament of Georgia**

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**3<sup>rd</sup> Round**

**Introduction**

Since November 2004, the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) has been implementing the project “Active Citizens – Accountable Government” throughout the whole territory of Georgia.

The project is aimed at promoting active citizenship by enhancing citizen participation in decision-making processes and increasing the accountability and transparency of government.

Within the framework of this project, among other activities, ISFED administers a quarterly questionnaire on the activities of majoritarian Members of Parliament of Georgia in their respective rayons. The aim of the questionnaire is to identify the main problems facing majoritarian MPs in their constituencies and the kind of assistance that would be most effective in helping them improve their work. The results and analysis of the questionnaire will be publicized in order to provide information regarding the work of majoritarian MPs and their local offices to the larger community.

Making the information available to the public regarding the work of majoritarian MPs promotes communication between citizens and majoritarian MPs and their local offices, and provides insightful and valuable information to the different organizations that work on these issues. This is testified by the high public interest towards the analyses of the first and second rounds of the questionnaire.

A significant number of the majoritarian Members of Parliament (58 Members) participated in the first round of the questionnaire. The number of respondents reduced to 53 in the second round. Unfortunately, only 50 MPs participated in the third round. This reduction can be partly attributed to the summer season and the vacation period.

However, we hope that the majoritarian MPs will cooperate more actively with ISFED in the future and will participate in the future rounds of the questionnaire, bearing in mind that the aim of this project is to assist and improve MPs’ activities on the local level.

Sincerely,  
Tamar Zhvania  
ISFED Executive Director

## Summary of Findings

The results of the third round of the questionnaire indicate that majoritarian Members of Parliament continue to face many problems that prevent them from working effectively with their electorate, and hamper the functioning of their local offices. These problems can be divided into the following categories:

- a) The functioning of MPs' constituency offices;
- b) Relations with citizens;
- c) Parliamentary work;
- d) Working in rayons.

a) The functioning of the local offices of majoritarian MPs is hampered by inadequate funding. A great majority of offices do not have a computer, which most definitely decreases their efficiency. Moreover, the majority of offices that have a computer do not have access to the Internet or e-mail, which indicates that the use of modern technology is limited. As observed by ISFED coordinators, if the offices were equipped with generators, sufficient office furniture, equipment and other basic working conditions, (i.e. heating, water supply, etc.), they would function more efficiently.

The staff of many constituency offices is under-qualified, largely due to the inability of the offices to provide sufficient salaries to its staff. The majority of MPs emphasized the need to raise the qualification of their personnel in different fields.

b) As it appears, bureaus of majoritarian MPs receive citizens on a daily basis, but the MPs themselves meet with citizens quite infrequently. The same reason was put forward to explain this issue as in the first two rounds: the existing Parliamentary schedule, which does not provide enough time for MPs to meet with their constituents; and the overwhelming number of laws that are being discussed in the Parliament. These factors hamper the ability of MPs to effectively carryout their primary responsibilities: legislative duties and constituency outreach.

c) The attitude of majoritarian MPs toward parliamentary work remains the same in the third round – the majority of MPs are content with the work of the Parliament; nonetheless, MPs have identified several areas in which the work of the parliament could be improved. The number of majoritarian MPs who are dissatisfied with the parliamentary agenda has increased slightly. Nevertheless, the top priorities in the improvement of the parliamentary agenda remain the same – allocating more time for legislative discussions by MPs and soliciting citizen input.

d) MPs have stated that the local problems they have raised were in most cases fully or partially resolved. Nevertheless, only two MPs (as in the second round)

indicated that their initiatives resulted in a law or an amendment adopted by the Parliament. This indicates that majoritarian MPs are not very active in proposing legislative changes.

After the second round of the questionnaire, the number of MPs who participated in town hall meetings has increased slightly. In addition, an absolute majority of MPs expressed their desire to participate in town hall meetings organized by ISFED in the future.

### **Methodology**

The questionnaire was developed by the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). It was run from April 15, 2005 to July 15, 2005 by 75 ISFED rayon coordinators, who approached constituency offices of majoritarian Members of Parliament with the request to complete the questionnaire. Those MPs who were not reached at their constituency offices were not contacted in their Parliamentary offices this time, due to the summer recess.

According to the Constitution of Georgia, there are 85 majoritarian Members of Parliament elected in single mandate constituencies (rayons). Out of 85 rayons in Georgia, the 10 majoritarian Members of Parliament from Abkhazia and South Ossetia were not elected in November 2, 2003 elections, and therefore, the questionnaire was not administered in those territories. In addition, during the reporting period, re-run and by-elections had not yet been held in single mandate election districts of Kobuleti, Batumi, Shuakhevi, Tkibuli and Isani, and thus, these rayons were not represented by majoritarian MPs in the Parliament. Therefore, at the time of the administration of the questionnaire, there were 70 acting majoritarian MPs in the Parliament of Georgia.

Out of the 70 MPs, ISFED representatives were able to collect completed questionnaires from 50 (71.43%). This analysis is based on the answers provided by majoritarian MPs or their authorized staff. All percentage data is calculated based on the information provided by the 50 majoritarian MPs or their authorized staff, who participated in the third round of the questionnaire.

The questionnaires were not filled out in 20 rayons due to different reasons. These rayons are: Abasha, Ambrolauri, Baghdati, Borjomi, Gurjaani, Dmanisi, Zugdidi, Lagodekhi, Martvili, Mestia, Ninotsminda, Oni, Rustavi, Sagarejo, Sachkhere, Keda, Kutaisi, Kharagauli, Khelvachauri and Khulo.

In the three rayons of Adjara region (Keda, Kelvachauri and Khulo) the questionnaires were not completed because the respective majoritarian MPs are not in the country due to political or other reasons and thus do not fulfill their obligations.

ISFED coordinators clearly communicated the role and the purpose of the questionnaire to all majoritarian MPs and/or their staff. However, most MPs were unable to complete the questionnaire because they did not visit their respective rayons in the reporting period. This fact is testified by the representatives of local bureau, as well as ISFED rayon coordinators.

All questionnaire results are published on a quarterly basis and presented to the public.

## **Analysis**

### **1. General Information**

The questionnaire was completed by 71.43% of all majoritarian MPs (50 out of 70). In comparison to the second round, 3 less MPs filled out the questionnaire. ISFED hopes that MPs will be more active in the future and that this number will increase.

### **2. Questions Related to the Constituency Office and Working Conditions of MPs**

100% of constituency offices are open. 90% of MPs state that the buildings for their local offices were provided to them on time.

70% of MPs evaluate their working conditions as normal, 14% think that their working conditions are dissatisfactory. 82% of MPs are convinced that their working conditions need to be improved.

54% of MPs think that funds allocated from the state budget are not sufficient for the functioning of the local office; 46% of them stated that the effectiveness of their offices would increase if they had more staff; and 82% consider that the effectiveness of the bureau would increase if the staff was paid higher salaries.

64% of constituency offices have more than three employees. 82% of MPs think that their staff need more expertise in order to effectively fulfill their duties. 52% consider that the staff should be trained in public relations, and 32% believe trainings in the research sphere is their priority.

68% of the constituency offices do not have a computer, and 32% have one or two computers. 86% of the offices do not have access to the Internet and 70% do not have an e-mail address they can be reached at by the citizens.

12% of MPs work in their offices 1-2 days per month; 30% work 3-5 days, 16% of MPs 6-10 days, and 38% work 10-14 days a month in their constituency offices.

**Findings:** *The amount of funding for the constituency offices of majoritarian Members of Parliament was constant through the first, second and third rounds of the questionnaire - the amount allocated from the state budget for the bureau is still 250 GEL per month. According to the majority of the respondents, these funds are not sufficient for the proper functioning of the offices, and cannot cover staff salaries and technical equipment for the offices.*

*The number of offices that do not have a computer has increased by 8%. This increase is due to the fact that some MPs who had computers in their bureaus did not participate in the third round of the questionnaire. The lack of computers most definitely decreases the efficiency of the local offices. Moreover, the majority of the offices that have a computer do not have access to the Internet or e-mail. The inaccessibility of modern technology in the offices impedes the ability of the staff to carryout research and decreases the overall effectiveness of the office.*

*The staff of many constituency offices is under-qualified, largely due to the inability of the offices to provide sufficient salaries to its staff. The majority of MPs emphasized the need to raise the qualification of their personnel in different fields (public relations, research, office work, accounting etc.).*

*According to the answers received in the third round, MPs continue to work in their constituency offices on a regular basis. However, due to the summer season, most of the bureaus were closed and MPs, as well as bureau staff, were on vacation.*

### **3. Relations with Citizens**

90% of MPs stated that they have an established time for receiving citizens; 10% do not. According to the answers, 56% of MPs receive citizens more than 5 days per month and 44% of MPs receive citizens less than 5 days per month. 50% of MPs receive more than 50 citizens per month; others receive less.

96% of MPs receive letters and complaints from citizens. 2 MPs chose not to answer this question. All MPs request answers from relevant state services and bodies. 58% of MPs have experienced problems in this process, while 40% have not. 44% of MPs noted that state bodies do not respond on time, which indicates that state bodies do not always meet their legal obligations.

98% of MPs provide citizens with answers they receive from relevant state bodies. 84% of MPs do so at meetings, 56% through the telephone, 50% use the post and only one MP replies to citizens by e-mail.

**Findings:** *During the last three months, the number of MPs having an established time for receiving citizens has increased by 5%, which is most welcomed. Having a set time for receiving citizens is an important way to*

*maximize the effective use of MP resources and increase the number of received citizens. However, the number of MPs who allocate more than 5 days for receiving citizens has decreased by 8%. The number of MPs who receive more than 50 citizens per month has also decreased by the same amount. Although traveling to the rayons is much easier in summer, unfortunately generally, MPs were passive in relations with the constituents.*

*Direct meetings with citizens remain the most popular way of communication for majoritarian MPs.*

*Unfortunately, MPs still face problems in relation to different state institutions. In the majority of cases, state bodies provided delayed answers to MPs' appeals. This incompetence of state structures prevents majoritarian MPs from implementing their obligations towards citizens.*

#### **4. Parliamentary Work**

66% of MPs are satisfied with the work of the Parliament, while 32% are not. 24% of MPs think that the Parliament's work can be improved by better technical equipment; 16% identify the need of a more qualified staff, and 12% state that the MPs should have an opportunity for further education.

56% of MPs are satisfied with the agenda of the Parliament, while 40% are not. 36% believe that the agenda can be improved by providing more time to MPs for legislative discussions; 24% request to allocate more time for public discussions and the soliciting of citizen input.

54% of MPs think that the top priority for the Parliament should be the adoption of laws on local government and self-government; 44% think that law on administrative-territorial arrangement is the most important; a substantial number of MPs name the Tax and Election Codes as priorities.

90% of MPs have brought the issues raised in their respective rayons for parliamentary consideration. 20% of MPs noted that there was no response from the Parliament; 66 % claim that the issue raised by them was partially or fully resolved. MPs from Kazbegi and Mtatsminda stated that as a result of their initiatives, a legislative amendment or a new law was adopted. MPs from Didube and Poti stated that the issues presented by them are still under consideration by Parliament.

80% of MPs consider that further education will assist them in their work and 38% of them would like to improve their research skills.

**Findings:** *Majoritarian MPs' attitudes toward parliamentary work have not changed since the second round – the majority of them are content with the work of the Parliament. However, generally, MPs think that parliamentary work needs*

*to improve. More advanced technical equipment remains the most effective means for improvement. Unlike the first and second rounds, where MPs stressed the need for further education, in the thirds round MPs identified improvement of research skills as their top priority.*

*The number of MPs who are dissatisfied with the agenda of the Parliament has increased by 10%, which can be attributed to the demanding parliamentary session schedule during the reporting period. However, the list of priority issues, that according to the MPs need to be improved in the agenda of the Parliament, has remained unchanged and includes providing more time for legislative consideration by MPs and for soliciting citizens' inputs.*

*It should be noted that the level of interest in the law on local self-government has remained the same. At the same time, the adoption of the law on administrative-territorial arrangement received significant attention.*

*Like the second round, 66% of the MPs stated that the local issues they brought to Parliament have been fully or partially resolved. Some of the issues raised, include the development of infrastructure, gas, electricity and water supply problems, local budgets, earthquake and flood damage, pension debts, etc. The number of MPs who stated that the raised issues were ignored by local governments has increased by 8%. As in the second round, only 2 MPs stated that as a result of their initiative changes were made to the law or a new law was adopted, which means that MPs were not very active in proposing legislative changes.*

## **5. Working in the Rayon**

94% of MPs have participated in town hall meetings since they were elected.

66% participated in discussions on draft legislation in their rayons. 48% claim that the demands of citizens were considered in the law, whereas 36% stated that they were not. 10% did not answer this question. The issues discussed at meetings include the tax code, local budgets, education reform, law on local and self-governments, special status for mountainous regions and etc.

96% of MPs addressed local governments with requests to solve a local problem. 86% stated that local government paid proper attention to the raised issue, whereas 8% believe that it did not.

**Findings:** *The number of MPs who participated in public discussions on draft proposals in rayons has increased, compared to the first and second rounds of the questionnaire.*

*The number of MPs who have participated in legislative discussion in their rayons has increased by 10%. This indicates that MPs have become more active*

*in the rayons – soliciting citizens' input in the legislative process. The discussed topics have remained almost unchanged: attention is focused on the tax code, the budget and education. The number of MPs who state that the demands of citizens were considered in the law remains low..*

*The majority of MPs have also stated that they cooperate with local governments, and local governments pay proper attention to raised issues. A slight increase of 3% is recorded in the amount of MPs who state that local governments did not pay proper attention to raised issues..*

**Recommendations:** *The analysis of the third round shows that the remarks made by ISFED in the analysis of the first and second rounds of the questionnaire are still valid. Thus, our recommendations remain the same.*

*In order to improve the working conditions of majoritarian MP constituency offices, more funds from the state budget should be allocated to the local bureaus. All offices should have at least one computer, a printer, a fax machine and a generator. The office environment should not depend neither on the personal wealth of the MP, nor on the personal relations of the MP with local government bodies. The state budget should provide enough funds to at least satisfy the minimum requirements for the functioning of the offices. This will ensure that all MPs receive equal opportunities for exercising their duties. As well, providing higher salaries and necessary training to the staff would increase the efficiency of the constituency offices.*

*All majoritarian MPs should have a set time for receiving citizens, and constituency offices should use all available means (local TV, radio, newspapers, flyers etc.) to inform citizens where and when they can meet with their majoritarian MP. In order to support the work of majoritarian MPs and enable them to meet with their constituents regularly, it is necessary to consider changing the Parliamentary agenda. For instance, the Parliament could develop a fixed session schedule and agenda several months prior to the sessions. In addition, if parliamentary committees would have a defined time for their sessions or hearings at the beginning or at the end of non-session weeks, majoritarian MPs would have more time to travel to their constituencies. Another option for solving this problem is to establish Saturdays as citizen reception days, which some majoritarian MPs have already done. All of the abovementioned recommendations would also guarantee that more time is provided for legislative discussions and for soliciting citizen's inputs.*