



## Report on monitoring the Election Administration Officials' Certification

The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) monitored the entire process of Election Administration Officials' Certification conducted by the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Georgia. Based on the monitoring results, ISFED states that though in general, Election Administration Officials' Certification procedure carried out in calm environment, during the organization and conduction of the certification process significant irregularities were observed.

### Preparation Period

On February 19, 2008, the Central Election Commission announced the Election Administration Officials' Certification. On the same day the CEC started receiving applications for the certification, which proceeded till February 29, 2008. Submission of the applications was organized at central and district election commissions. In total 4897 applicants applied to the CEC, out of which, 1910 applied in Tbilisi and 2987- in district election commissions.

During the preparation period, the Central Election Commission actively cooperated with local observer organizations: Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA), New Generation-New Initiative (nGnl) and International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED). The CEC took into consideration the part of the recommendations and reservations stated on prior certifications by these organizations. Specifically, during the preparation period, the CEC ensured public informing on certification by airing special video spots; The Central Election Commission in advance agreed examination tests with local observer organizations; In addition, during preparation period the CEC insured that applications were received as on central, on district commissions' levels as well. All those were the part of recommendations and reservations.

During the preparation period, specifically, on February 22, 2008 the CEC approved the claim commission (by the resolution # 62/2008), which was recruited with the following members: Lali Lazarashvili, roman Shengelia, George Bareladze, Gocha Mamulashvili and David Doijashvili.

Prior five days to the certification, the Central Election Commission accredited observers of four local organizations (New Generation-New Initiative, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, European Cooperation Society and International Society for Fair

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Elections and Democracy). Two days before the certification, observers were trained on their rights and obligations.

Despite the fact, that the CEC improved many important procedures, significant gaps were still observed during the preparation period. Precisely: while submitting the applications, both central and district commissions run out of manuals. As a result, some applicants were left without books for some time. The CEC lately printed additional manuals and probationers were charged for delivering books on next days. In addition, there were cases, when two applicants were given only one book (for instance in Batumi election district).

### Certification Process

Examinations of Election Administration Officials' Certification was carried out during eight days (March 8,9,10,12,13,15,16,17, 2008), two times a day on - 9:00 a.m. and 17:00 p.m. International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy monitored the entire process of certification by deploying organization's 12 accredited observers.

According to the observers' information, registration process was conducted in a proper way and there were not observed any kind of procedural violations. The process of choosing different variants of tests and locating applicants according to their variants was held according to the CEC resolution as well.

For more transparency, the CEC made random sampling of questions and printed them in certification hall, before starting an examination. Herewith, it must be mentioned that there was observed an occasion, when while printing the questions printing machine broke. This fact hindered starting the certification process (namely, questions of version C were not delivered to the applicants timely). In addition, several examination sheets were not printed properly (tests lacked last 6 question). The CEC must get ready to face such problems in advance.

It must be mentioned, that several times before starting an examination probationers were not given exhaustive information concerning certification instruction. Correspondingly, some of the applicants could not understand the exact meaning of working and answer sheets (more precisely, they did not understand where they should work and where and how they should mark correct answers).

After the starting of examinations, working process was carried out in a calm atmosphere. The process was monitored by the CEC secretary members and accredited observers. During the certification process the facts of assistance and dictation (between the probationers) were observed several times. Applicants, who tried to rewrite the questions, were immediately dismissed off the examinations. In total 17 applicants were disqualified during the certification process.

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ISFED observers monitored the process of filing and sealing the working papers. Answer sheets were put separately in different envelopes, kept in special polyethylene bags, which were sealed up. Sealed bags were signed both by the CEC members and observers, but in some cases bags were not stamped. Finally, sealed and signed bags were sent in the Central Election Commission for checking. Accredited observers of International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy presented opening and scanning procedures of working papers.

According to the CEC data, 3089 applicants out of 4897 attended and participated in certification. As a result, 1455 probationer (47,1% of total number) received enough scores.

During the testing days certain irregularities were observed in regard to the organizational issues. Namely:

- During certification process the problem of testing manual was observed. The manual was incomplete and needed improvement. Particularly, reiteration of right answers in the same text caused confusion among probationers; manuals were not bounded properly; some questions were not numbered, etc.
- It should be mentioned, that in many cases due to the mistakenly given variants of answer sheets probationers didn't take actually collected marks. This confirms inattentiveness of not only probationers but also of secretariat workers. However, claim commission allowed the examination commission to assess similar works again.
- Data presented on the CEC web-site was often not relevant to the actual number of points received by the probationers. In addition, regular presentation of certification results on the web-site was also problematic issue. It would be desirable if CEC would update web-site in more operative manner.
- The instructions distributed during the testing were incomplete and needed improvement. The aforementioned instructions comprised inappropriate and unjustified rules;
- The bias of the CEC representatives towards a certain number of applicants was obviously noticed.

The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy considers, that Election Administration Officials' Certification was implemented in inadequate period, when important amendments were carried in the electoral legislation. This fact may cause incompetence (in various issues) of some certified applicants towards upcoming Parliamentary elections. In addition, ISFED still considers, that the Parliament of Georgia must review the issue concerning alteration of the body responsible for conduction of the certification. For implementing certification more transparently and impartially, certification procedure should be conducted by other independent body.

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To the conclusion, ISFED states that the Election Administration Officials' Certification in comparison with prior certifications was conducted quite sufficiently. ISFED welcomes the fact, that the CEC took into account the part of the recommendations and reservations of local observer non-governmental organizations. Though, ISFED calls the Central Election Commission to take into consideration the gaps that were still observed, while organization and implementation of Election Administration Officials' Certification.

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