



CIVIL
SERVICE
BUREAU

Effective and Transparent Governance in Georgia

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*Effective and Transparent Governance
in Georgia*

2009 AUGUST - 2010 AUGUST ^{N1}



CIVIL
SERVICE
BUREAU

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CONTENT

07 Statement of Director of Civil Service Bureau

IMPLEMENTED PROJECTS

09 Launch of Online Asset Declaration System

11 Improving publicity of asset declarations

13 Amendments to the legislation on Civil Service

FUTURE PROJECTS

16 Unified Online Human Resources Management System

17 Draft of Civil Service Code

20 Assessment of anti-corruption reforms in Georgia
by International Organizations

22 INTERVIEWS





My

greetings, dear reader! I am glad to introduce a publication, which aims to inform you about the reforms recently implemented by the Civil Service Bureau (CSB). Our office is currently in an important stage of its development. Among the reforms carried out by the Government of Georgia throughout previous years, civil service reform is one of the key issues.

Per amendments adopted by the Parliament of Georgia in the summer of 2009, the Information Bureau on Assets and Finances of Public Officials under the Ministry of Justice of Georgia was abolished and its functions were delegated to the Civil Service Bureau. Consequently, the scope of the Bureau's work has broadened significantly. Currently the Bureau coordinates the process of civil service reform and ensures proper functioning of the Online Asset Declaration System. The Bureau is an independent agency, the Director of which is appointed and dismissed by the President of Georgia.

Throughout the reform process, the Bureau implemented a number of projects, including the following:

- Launch of Online Asset Declaration System;



- Publicity of asset declarations. 47, 000 asset declarations of public officials were scanned and uploaded to our web-site;
- Several important draft laws were lobbied in the Parliament of Georgia, including those to simplify recruitment procedures in the civil service;
- Research and analysis of civil service reform in other countries were conducted, and applied in a new draft of the Civil Service Code.

We do not plan to stop on the achieved results. Several important projects are already underway, such as the introduction of an HR Management System in state agencies and lobbying of the new Code of Civil Service in the Parliament of Georgia.

Finally, I hope that the current publication will accomplish its objective by providing the reader with a clearer idea of the scope of work of the Civil Service Bureau and by informing society about our accomplishments and future projects. Furthermore we will gladly respond to any of your questions about the civil service. Your feedback is very much appreciated!

Phone: (995 32) 932102, E-mail: csb@csb.gov.ge, www.csb.gov.ge

IRAKLI KOTETISHVILI
Director of Civil Service Bureau



IMPLEMENTED PROJECTS

LAUNCH OF ONLINE ASSET DECLARATION SYSTEM

On 1 February 2010 the Online Asset Declaration System was launched in order to completely replace the paper declaration system. The system was developed by the Civil Service Bureau and is administered by the Bureau itself.

This transition to a unified online system of asset declarations has significantly improved the declaration process and simplified procedures for filling out declarations for public officials. Now public officials can fill out declarations online, using their unique password. There is no need to print out the papers or visit the Civil Service Bureau office. Declarants can log in on the web-site (www.declaration.ge) and file declarations online.

The Civil Service Bureau actively works to simplify the procedures for submission of declarations. The Bureau informs

WWW.DECLARATION.GE



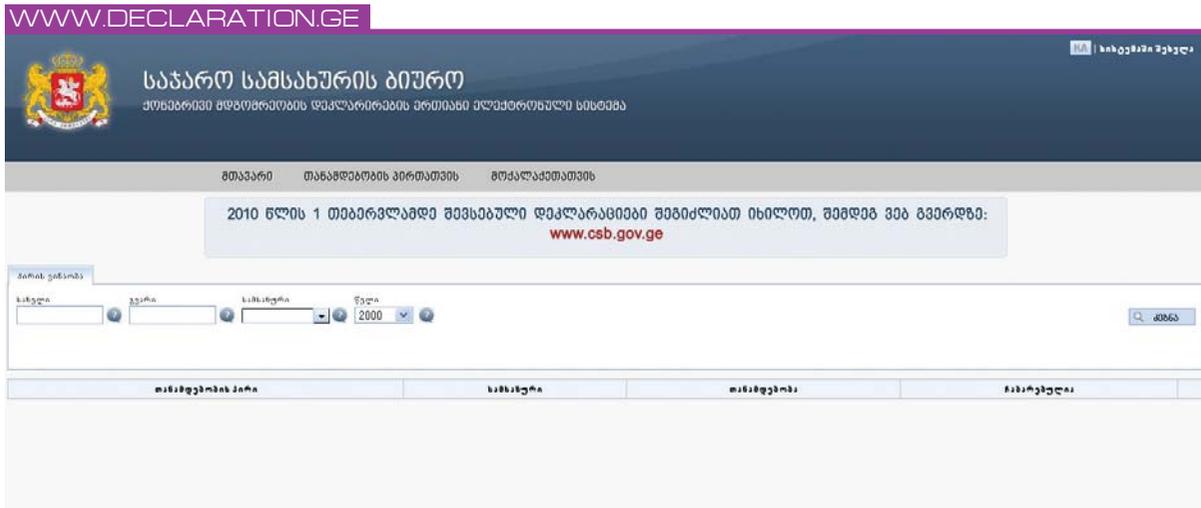
a declarant in writing about an upcoming deadline no later than twenty days before the actual deadline date and defines responsibility envisaged by the Georgian legislation in case of non-submission of declarations. The letter also includes the web-site address, where the declarant has to file the declaration, as well as a username and unique

The screenshot shows the website www.declaration.ge with the title "საბარტო სამსახურის ბიურო" (Civil Service Bureau). The main content area is titled "მომხმარებლის პანელი" (User Panel) and contains a list of 13 declaration items on the left and a form for "მომხმარებლის მონაცემების შევსება" (Filling in user data) on the right. The form includes fields for name, surname, organization, and address. A tooltip is visible over the form, providing instructions: "დასაყვების ადგილის მოთხოვნის ჩამონათვლიდან აირჩევი შეესაბამს, თუ ჩამონათვლი არ იქნება შესაბამისი, მაშინ კლავიატურის მეშვეობით." (Select from the dropdown list, if the dropdown list is not suitable, use the keyboard).

password assigned by the Civil Service Bureau.

The online declaration software is quite elaborate. Each field of the program has a help button which gives a declarant detailed information about what he/she should indicate in the field. If the declarant still has questions, hotline operators of CSB are available to explain any issue concerning declarations in a professional manner.

Submitted declarations are public and are available on the web-site www.declaration.ge. Search of declarations on the web-site is possible by name, surname and organization.



According to the research conducted by the OECD, online electronic declaration systems function only in very few countries.¹

IMPROVING PUBLICITY OF DECLARATIONS

One of the most ambitious projects of the Civil Service Bureau was uploading archived asset declarations on the website of the Bureau (*www.csb.gov.ge*).

The project was a result of hard work on a large volume of information – 47, 000 declarations were scanned and converted into PDF format. Prior to the implementation of this project, the procedure for obtaining a copy of a declaration was quite burdensome. Interested individuals had to apply to the Civil Service Bureau in person

¹ OECD Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia OECD-EU SIGMA programme Draft Study “ASSET DECLARATIONS FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS – A TOOL TO PREVENT CORRUPTION” (March 31, 2010)



CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU
EFFECTIVE AND TRANSPARENT
PUBLIC GOVERNANCE IN GEORGIA

WWW.CSB.GOV.GE

Search [input] Main About us Search for asset declarations Contact us

SEARCH FOR ASSET DECLARATIONS

Declarations submitted from February 1, 2010 are available on the following web-site: www.declaration.ge

Organization: [dropdown]
Last name: [input]
Name: [input]
[Search]

Number of downloaded Declarations from creation of web-site: 27393

7, Ingorokva st., Tbilisi, Georgia, Tel: (+995 32) 92202, Fax: (+995 32) 923376, E-mail: csb@csb.gov.ge

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and wait for their request to be approved which caused time delays, especially if the person requested copies of multiple declarations. In addition, making a copy of the declaration was not free of charge.²

The uploading of assets declarations on the website has eliminated all of the above mentioned problems. Any interested person can now visit the website (www.csb.gov.ge) and instantly gain access to the asset declaration of any official free of charge. More than 26869 declarations have been downloaded since the launch of the web-site.

² According to the Law of Georgia on the Fees for Making Copy of Public Information, the cost of one copy of a sheet of A4 and A5 format paper is 0,05 GEL, the cost of printing from a laser printer – 0, 10 GEL; the cost of copying information on a CD makes up to 2,65 GEL, and the cost of recording on a diskette is 1,3 GEL.

AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGISLATION ON CIVIL SERVICE

During the last 6 months, the Civil Service Bureau has initiated several amendments to the Law of Georgia on Civil Service and to the Law of Georgia on Conflict of Interests and Corruption in the Civil Service.

On December 4, 2009, important amendments were passed in the Law of Georgia on Civil Service, particularly:

- The obligation to submit an application for a competition only in written form was cancelled and, instead, electronic applications also became acceptable
- The obligation to submit notification of submission of an asset declaration from Tax Agency upon entrance into the civil service was abolished
- A CV was defined as an alternative to an autobiography
- The obligation to keep Work Record Card was cancelled
- The number of officials who are obliged to submit asset declarations has been increased

According to the Law of Georgia on Civil Service, the information on labor activity had to be registered in the Work Record Card and the records of service. The system was outdated and, in fact, it was impossible to control it. Work Record Cards could be easily purchased. As such, any person could apply changes on his own. In addition, in accordance with the Labor Code, the obligation of keeping the Work Record Card has been canceled since 2006 and currently it is not used in the private sector.

In practice, the records of service were never used and it was rather a mere formality. As such, the obligation of keeping Work Record Cards and records of service at the Civil Service agencies was cancelled through amendments to the law passed on December 4, 2009.

According to the changes, the Work Record Cards issued before the amendments retain their validity, but new Work Record Cards are not issued any more. Per request of a civil servant, if the Work Record Card was issued before the law came into force, the employing agency is obliged to make relevant records in it.



On December 4, 2009, the Law of Georgia on the Conflict of Interests and Corruption in the Civil Service was amended as well. The necessity of the amendments stemmed from the introduction of the Online Asset Declaration System which consequently caused various gaps in the current legislation.

The law had certain problems: some articles were outdated and did not fully reflect the list of the officials for whom submission of an asset declaration was mandatory. These gaps were corrected by adding the following officials to the list: Head of the Chancellery of the Government of Georgia, his/her Deputy, Head of structural subdivision and officials with equal status. Before the amendment, these officials were listed as Head of State Chancellery, his/her Deputy, Head of structural subdivision and officials with equal status in the list of officials, causing some problems as these officials were not obliged to fill in the asset declarations. After the changes, the problem was solved.

In addition, the Head of Administration of the President of Georgia, his/her Deputy, Head of structural subdivision and officials with equal status were added to the officials' list.

It should be noted that when it came to declaration and publication of economic interests (Chapter IV of the Law of Georgia on the Conflict of Interests and Corruption in the Civil Service), heads of certain legal entities of public law (for example, Head of Georgian Public Broadcasting, State Purchasing Agency, National Agency of Civil Registry and Heads of other Public Law entities) were also defined as public officials, the exact list of whom is approved by the President of Georgia. **The amendment is logical as the legal entities of public law are funded from the state budget. Hence, the assets of their heads should be transparent for public.**

The amendment relieved the Civil Service Bureau from the obligation to provide a copy of a submitted declaration to the agency appointing an official, since such a declaration is available on our web-site for every interested person.

The ten day extension granted by the Head of the Bureau in case of delay of submission of the declaration has been cancelled. According to the changes, no later than twenty days before the actual deadline date the Civil



Service Bureau warns the civil servant about the deadline and explains the measures envisaged by the Georgian legislation for not submitting the declaration on time. If a person still does not submit the declaration, he/she may be fined in the amount of 1000 GEL.

According to the Law of Georgia on the Conflict of Interests and Corruption in the Civil Service, a personal identification number was not required when filling in an asset declaration. Per amendment to the law passed on December 4, 2009 it became obligatory to indicate a personal identification number in the declaration. This allows for more precise identification of a person.

As stipulated by the amendments, all information contained in the official's asset declaration, except the secret page, personal identification number, permanent address and private phone number, is public.

Amendments to the Law of Georgia on Conflict of interests and Corruption in Civil Service and Law on Civil Service carried out in July 2010 are important as well. According to the changes:

- Submission of official's asset declaration will be performed only once a year
- In addition, amendments include abolishment of reserve system of civil servants except when directly stipulated by the legislation
- In order to maintain progress of anticorruption activities and strengthen existing mechanisms, Interagency Anticorruption Coordination Council was established by the amendments.

საჯარო სამსახურის ბიურო

№ 2578
12 იანვარი 2010

აღივსებელი: ირინა სიმანული
მისამართი: საქმის ელ. ქ. თბილისი, ჩხთაძეძის ქ.
სამსახური: საქართველოს პარლამენტი

ქალბატონო ირინა,

გვითხვით, რომ "საჯარო სამსახურის ინტეგრირებული მართვის სისტემის შესახებ" საქართველოს კანონის მე-14 მუხლის შესაბამისად, თქვენ ვალდებული ხართ შევცნოთ თქვენთვის პირის პირდაპირი მფლობელობის ფულადი 01.04.2010-დან 01.06.2010-ის ჩათვლით. ამ ვალდებულების შეუსრულებლობის შემთხვევაში დაგკისრებათ ვარაუდით 1 000 ლარის იჯივლით.

საქართველოს პრეზიდენტის 2010 წლის 14 იანვრის #22 ბრძანებულების შესაბამისად 2010 წლის 1 თებერვლიდან თანამდებობის პირის პირდაპირი მფლობელობის ფულადი მფლობელობის შესახებ ინფორმაცია ვალდებულია აღვუვლით.

ვალდებულებული ხართ შევცნოთ თქვენთვის პირის პირდაპირი მფლობელობის ფულადი 01.04.2010-დან 01.06.2010-ის ჩათვლით. ამ ვალდებულების შეუსრულებლობის შემთხვევაში დაგკისრებათ ვარაუდით 1 000 ლარის იჯივლით.

www.declaration.ge

მომხმარებლის სახელი: ირინა სიმანული პაროლი: 353544623083

მნიშვნელობა: 1

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პატივისცემით,
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UNIFIED ONLINE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Our office started working on the development of a unified online HR management software for managing human resources in civil service agencies. A unified online database of public officials will be introduced in all civil service agencies and will be used by the agencies in their everyday work. The HR departments of the relevant civil service agencies will be able to reflect any relevant information (name, position, annual leave, business trips, promotion, rewards and disciplinary sanctions and others) in the database. In practice, the database will serve as an electronic personal file for every civil servant.

The establishment of such a system is key for raising HR management transparency and efficiency in the public sector and for increasing effectiveness of evaluation of work and developing recommendations.

The unified electronic database will serve as useful tool for research of civil service and better definition of civil service policy.

The launch of the software is planned for October 1, 2010.



DRAFT OF CIVIL SERVICE CODE

Civil service reform is one of the main priorities of the Government of Georgia. The Civil Service Bureau has developed the draft of the Civil Service Code with the aim to raise civil service standards to a new level.

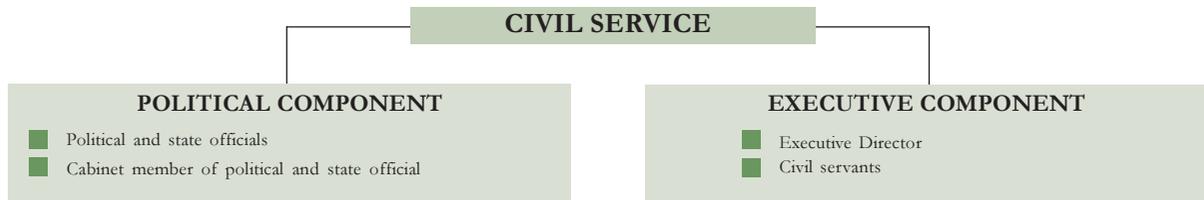
The Draft Code is based on Western standards and includes only very essential provisions of civil service.

According to the draft, the labor relations will be mainly regulated by the labor legislation based on a labor contract.

The draft also regulates the issues related to the conflict of interests and corruption.

The Draft Code defines the code of conduct of civil servants taking into consideration recommendations of the international organizations.

One of the most important provisions is the separation of political and executive parts and the consequent division of civil service institutional structure into political and executive offices. Political offices will be responsible for making political decisions only, and will not directly participate in the administration of the agency itself. The executive offices will be stable and beyond the influence of political processes. The Draft Code introduces a position of Executive Director (Head of entity, CEO), responsible for management of the agency.



Such a model of separation of political and executive offices is well-practiced in countries like Sweden, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. In these states, agencies are managed by Heads (General Director, Chief Executive, Permanent Secretary), while the policy is developed by the government ministers. Change of ministers/political officials does not cause change of Executive Head of an agency.

Contrary to the current legislation, the draft envisages reduction of the minimal age for civil servants from 21 to 18 years.

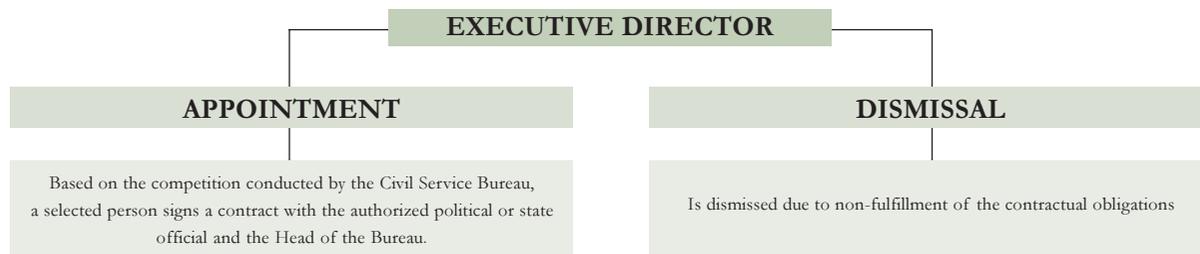
According to the Draft Code, foreign citizens will also be eligible for appointment to the civil service, except for political and state official positions.

The Draft Code distinctly separates positions to be filled through direct appointment/election from those to be filled through competition.

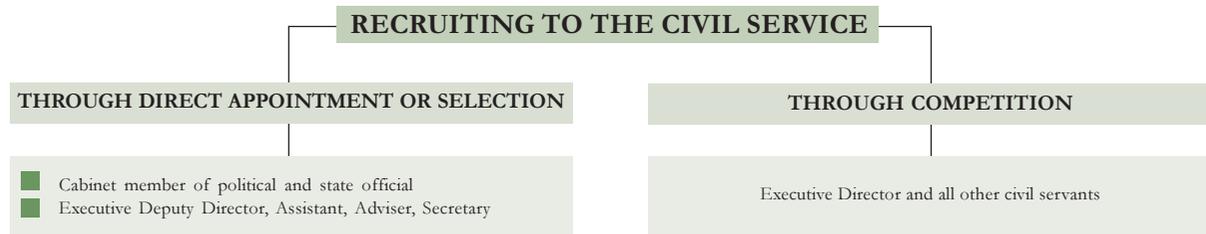
The Civil Service Bureau will be responsible for conducting recruitment for the position of Executive Director. The qualification requirements will be defined by the authorized political or state official in agreement with the Head of the Bureau.

The authorized political or state official and the Head of the Bureau will sign a contract with the selected candidate based on the general principles of the contract defined by the Draft Code.

The contract with the Executive Director may be terminated due to non-fulfillment of the contractual obligations and will not be linked to dismissal of the authorized political or state official.



The executive Director will have full discretion to recruit civil servants at his/her agency (though the recruitment in every case should be conducted in a non discriminatory manner meeting the principle of competitiveness).



Such a system of recruitment to the civil service is, for example, practiced in New Zealand. According to the New Zealand State Sector Act (1988), the head of the agency is hired based on the competition conducted by the state Commissioner. Other than adhering to the minimum requirements, the Head enjoys full autonomy of hiring within the agency.

The Executive Director is evaluated by the authorized political or state official based on the reports presented by the Executive Director. The Executive Director reports twice a year or more frequently.



ASSESSMENT OF ANTI-CORRUPTION REFORMS IN GEORGIA BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

According to the Second Round Monitoring Report posted by OECD on its web-site on April 15, 2010 Georgia has successfully undertaken anti-corruption reforms. Furthermore, OECD positively notes that Georgia has taken into consideration recommendations of the organization³.

The establishment of Anti-corruption Council in 2008 and criminalization of corruption in line with international standards are considered to be the most positive factors of anti-corruption policy.

Decrees of the President of Georgia defining rules of competition and testing of civil servants adopted in 2009 are perceived as an important progress in the prevention of corruption. Adoption of rules on protection of whistle-blowers in the Law of Georgian on “Conflict of Interests and Corruption in the Civil Service” is viewed as one of the major achievements in the fight against corruption.

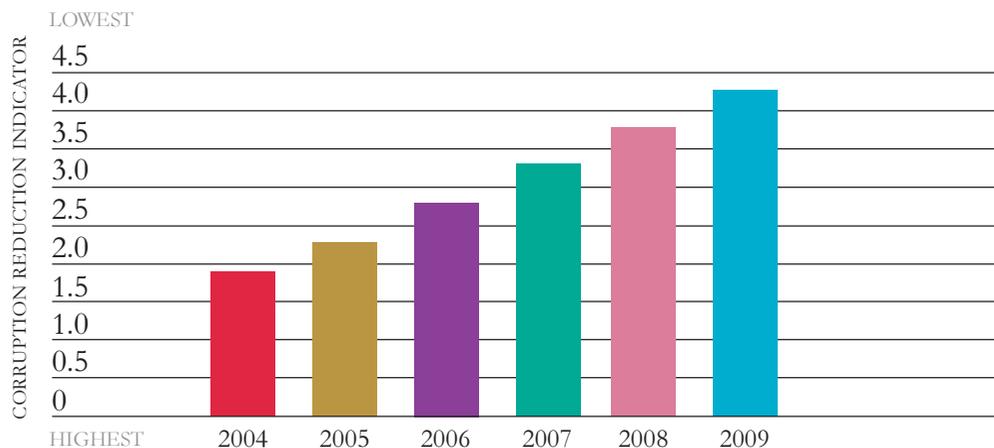
The report notes that from 2009 the Civil Service Bureau is responsible for the administration of Asset declarations of Public Officials and views the uploading of declarations on the web-site as one more step forward.

During the previous five years, the level of corruption in Georgia has decreased significantly. Corruption Perception Index (CPI) increased from 2.0 to 4.1 (where 10 indicates the lowest level of corruption and 0- the highest level of corruption). According to this indicator Georgia is ahead of some EU members, particularly Bulgaria, Romania and Greece.⁴

³ OECD Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia Istanbul Anti-Corruption Action Plan Second Round Monitoring Georgia Draft Report (30 March, 2010)

⁴ www.transparency.ge





Progress achieved in the fight against corruption has significantly influenced economic factors. In the latest Doing Business report Georgia has moved up from 16th to 11th spot and it ranks in the top 100 in all of the indicators and in the top 10 in four indicators.⁵

	2010	2009
SINGAPORE	1	1
GEORGIA	11	16
SWITZERLAND	21	15

⁵ www.doingbusiness.org





INTERVIEW

FRANCISCO CARDONA

*Principal Administrator
SIGMA/OECD*

ORGANISATION
FOR ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION
AND DEVELOPMENT



OLGA SAVRAN

*Manager; Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ACN)
Anti-Corruption Division; Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs; OECD*

Throughout previous years the Georgian Government has carried out reforms to improve and further develop the Civil Service. How would you evaluate steps of Georgian Government towards minimization of risk of corrupt activity and increasing transparency in government actions?

Francisco Cardona: In this regards I would say that civil service reform is a political Endeavour. By professionalizing the civil service you may produce a positive effect on reducing corruption. The main goal of the civil service reform is to make sure in a democratic context that the civil service is governed by the rule of law, acts according to the principle of legality and respects the rights of citizens. This is the main goal of civil service reform, although as a side effect, as I said, you may reduce corruption. In this regards I would say that Georgian government is ready to undertake a major reform of the civil service in order to modernize the civil service, how the civil service is managed and how fit the civil service is to serve the Georgian society

and this is a good move. This is a very positive development and we are very eager to get involved with you in that development.

Olga Savran: If I start from the first part of your question about anti-corruption measures the best judgments will be the two reports published by the anti-corruption network of OECD. One report was published in 2006 and another just a week ago on our website. There you will see an official assessment of OECD of Anti-corruption Network of Georgian government. But overall I think we agree with many international observers that there has been a major progress in reducing an administrative corruption in Georgia, however our assessment was that this progress was mainly achieved due to very strong effort of law enforcement, prosecutor's office, detection of crime and prosecution and probably less of that progress is due to any systemic reform of civil service where your question starts from. In terms of transparency of government we also observe a lot of progress in terms of proactive or on demand delivery of information by various government agencies through NGO-s, civil service society and ordinary citizens. In this case, there is a lot of improvement in the transparency, however, I can not tell you if in OECD reports we have clear assessment whether this is due to any systemic reform or it was a political decision implemented by many entities. The report indicates that Georgian system of party finances contains basic rules in line with the European standards and practice. Its weakness, however, lies in the lack of proper monitoring and control over party – financing by public authorities. The CEC has neither a mandate nor the resources to closely and rigorously control compliance with party financing- legislation. Without a such mechanism of monitoring and supervision the system of political party financing is incomplete and makes regulation of party donations useless. Well, I think that the report says that there is no clear evidence based proof that there is such a problem in Georgia at the moment.

What can you say about the direction of civil service reform in Georgia?

Francisco Cardona: You should spend time and effort, first, to determine the goals of civil service reform; and try to make a consensus with as many people as possible from different institutions, associations, state organizations, political parties, etc. in order to create a certain common understating on what the



final destination of this reform is, because otherwise we may lose sight of the important issues at stake. Before starting any reform we need to make sure that, first the reform will be credible; second, will be useful; and third, will be accepted by the majority of the society in general. This will be my recommendation at this point.

From February 1, 2010 electronic asset declaration system was launched. Currently, declarations from Public Officials can only be submitted electronically. Administrator of the mentioned system is the Civil Service Bureau. Could you please, share your view on this innovation?

Olga Savran: From our view, this is a positive step and it is also good that there is one agency that is responsible for those asset declarations. I think you are moving in good direction, but much has to be done to understand the value added by this system and its effectiveness. Moving to some small technical issues, I understand that those asset declarations are submitted electronically and then you take this form in PDF form and put online. And final question for asset declaration we have during our recent interview with Georgia was verification of those asset declarations. Not necessarily to have a huge system that will verify everything. This is the area which was not reflected in the recent report for Georgia, because the government did not accept that, but we will still insist that it will be useful to explore whether there is a need for a random or other forms of verification of declarations.

47,000 asset declarations of public officials were scanned and converted to PDF format. These declarations were uploaded to the web-site of the Civil Service Bureau. All previous and current asset declarations are available to public. Could you please, provide your point of view on how does publicity of asset declarations promote development of anti-corruption reform?

Olga Savran: That goes in line with our earlier recommendation that the asset declarations should be made public proactively and we are happy that Georgia has moved in this way. As you know, in the past the declarations were only available upon demand.



Please, comment on any other issue you consider relevant

Olga Savran: We know that Georgian anti-corruption reforms are quite successful and very unique in the former Soviet Union region and Georgia received lots of compliments on that. However, in the area of civil service reform it will be probably useful for Georgian authorities to see how similar reforms were taking place in other countries in Eastern Europe, especially, for instance, in the recent candidates or new members of the European Union. What we observed is a lot of slow down or even reversed reforms and major threat that is observed in those countries is politicization of civil service, when due to elections new government changes everybody in the public administration and in this way they do not ensure that the civil service produces services for the society or the state and not for the party and power. While this threat may seem to be irrelevant for Georgia, it is a longer term threat and authorities should be aware of that. This is partly concern of anti-corruption issue and without any doubt should be part of future reforms in Civil Service of Georgia.





MR. PER EKLUND

Ambassador, Head of EU Delegation to Georgia



Since 2004, one of the main objectives of the Government of Georgia is to improve and further develop the system of civil service. In this regard, a number of reforms have been undertaken, in particular: 1) Minimization of risks associated with corrupt activities; 2) Increased transparency of the government activities. How would you evaluate these steps made by the Georgian Government?

The EU highly welcomes modernization of the public administration in Georgia. Making the Civil Service more efficient, accountable and transparent is one of the General Objectives of the European Union – Georgia Action Plan. Let me also stress here that modernizing the Civil Service is not the only one of the key reforms for transition countries like Georgia; it is also a permanent endeavor undertaken by all of the EU member states to improve the quality, accountability and service levels.

From February 1, 2010 an electronic system of asset declarations was launched, compulsory for higher public officials with decision making power. The administrator of the mentioned system is the Civil Service Bureau. Could you please, share your views on this matter?

Well-thought through and implemented e-Government tools have proven useful indeed in improving efficiency and transparency all over the World. Therefore, we highly welcome this and other steps forward by the Civil Service Bureau.



47, 000 asset declarations of public officials were scanned and converted to PDF format. These declarations were uploaded to the web-site of the Civil Service Bureau. All previous and current asset declarations are available to public. Please, share your view on how does publicity of asset declarations promote development of anti-corruption reform.

Transparency is a pillar of Public Administration, together with legality, impartiality, accountability and efficiency. Publicity of asset declarations shall indeed contribute to improving citizens' trust in the Public Service. Similar instruments exist or have been introduced in various EU countries; they are as rule part of broader systems designed to ensure that civil servants would not act arbitrarily for the sake of personal enrichment. Let me add here that European Civil Service management bodies like the Civil Service Bureau of Georgia also make their best to strike the right balance between ensuring the highest level of transparency while paying due attention to individual rights of each civil servant.

As for future projects, the Civil Service Bureau plans to launch Unified Online Database of Civil Servants and lobby new draft of Civil Service Code. Please, share your opinion on how these reforms affect civil service in general.

Although it sounds as a cliché, civil servants are the primary asset of any Civil Service. A unified electronic database of civil servants will make it possible for every manager in every public body to select appropriate staff knowing their experience, skills and capacities. Such a tool may also contribute to improving civil servants' mobility and to professionalism of the Public Service.

Regarding the Civil Service Code, the European Union is supporting this idea from the very beginning based on the assumption that, as civil servants have a constitutional role to play, their status should be regulated by specific legal acts.

Please, comment on any other issues you consider relevant.

Let me conclude with mentioning Article 197 of the Lisbon Treaty, which foresees that the EU may support the Member States to improve their administrative capacities. This provision of the Treaty reflects the im-



portance given to public administration in the EU. And it is true to say that Civil Service management bodies within the EU co-operate already for many years to define and implement common standards in terms of public administration principles and practices, what we use to call the European Administrative space.

Through our Comprehensive Institution Building instrument and other measures, we are ready to support efforts undertaken by the Georgian authorities, to modernize public administration in Georgia.





VAKHTANG LEZHAVA

Head of the advisors' group (office) of the Prime Minister of Georgia for management and economic affairs



How do you evaluate anti-corruption steps undertaken by the Georgian Government throughout previous years?

I think that the anti-corruption steps undertaken in Georgia after the 'Rose Revolution' are unprecedented. It is hard to find or almost impossible to find the country, which has managed to achieve such a breakthrough and transform from corrupted into non-corrupt country merely within five-six years. It is evidenced by many independent sources, including researches of Transparency International and others. Therefore, it is not only the opinion of the Georgian Government.

Please, comment on the reforms implemented to bring the Georgian Civil Service in line with the Western standards.

In previous years, the Civil Service has greatly approached the universal standards. First of all, efficiency has increased considerably, not only due to decrease of corruption, but also because of the improvements in the motivation system in Civil Service. The Civil Service has managed to attract a pool of talented and skilled individuals. Decision making process is accelerated and became more rational. Coordination between various services is very strong and effective, and the quality of service rendered to the Georgian



population, is in some cases, equal to those of the universal standards. In most cases it meets all the basic standards available for such services. For the amount that the Georgian society pays for the Civil Service, it gets quite effective coordination and services.

Please, share your opinion on the direction of the Civil Service reform.

The reform in the Civil Service should continue in the same direction: first, we should not forget that the fight against corruption is never finished and risks of corruption should always be assessed. Second, the motivation system should be improved and developed in line with the development of economy and social life. Third, the effectiveness of decision making process might increase and, of course, to ensure transparency mechanisms of coordination should be more institutionalized. Fourth, the Civil Service should be based more on the so called principles of meritocracy, i.e. on merits and skills of civil servants. This needs to be developed, supported and in my opinion, this should be the cornerstone of our reforms. We are on the right path and we just have to continue the journey in this direction.

Please, share your opinion on why a draft Civil Service Code, initiated in the Parliament of Georgia in 2007, was rejected?

Everyone has his own opinion why this Code was not adopted in 2007. To my mind, the Code did not fully reflect the progress experienced by the Civil Service during the last three years. Nor did it show the vision by which the Civil Service would have to develop. May be one of the weak points of the Code was that it tried to establish a Model Civil Service (this model can be arguable) in certain abstract environment, which was far from the existing tendencies and reality. The essence is that the Code did not absorb the basic and positive trends that existed in the Civil Service at that time.

Since February 1, 2010, the Electronic Asset Declaration System was launched. Please share your opinion on this innovation.



As for the declaration system, I can assess it in two ways – as a declarant and from the standpoint of my position. As a declarant, I have used the system and submitted my electronic declaration today. It is quite user-friendly and has a good interface. What about commenting from the standpoint of my position I think this is one more step toward more transparency and accountability of public officials. Very few countries have introduced such a high-tech and at the same time such a transparent system.

How does publicity of this system promote development of anti-corruption reform?

The system improves both publicity and transparency as well as contributes to prevention of corruption. In my opinion, many countries can learn from Georgia on this example.

