



NGOs offer local self-governance election system to inter-fractional group

As it is known, the inter-fractional group was set up on election issues by the December 26, 2013 order of the Chairman of the Parliament. It aims preparation of amendments on self-governance elections to the Organic Law of Georgia "Election Code" and other laws and their submission to the Parliament.

The inter-fractional group already held its first working meeting and NGOs, parliamentary and non-parliamentary political parties had opportunity to participate.

We think that amendment of the current election system is the priority for the local self-governance elections. In particular, the new system should ensure conduct of fair election and proportional transfer of voters' will in mandates.

We should note, that the current election system has been criticized by NGOs and political parties, since it fails to reflect voters' will in mandates proportionally. Moreover, the number of lost votes is great and the principle of equality of a vote is not observed.

Although the necessity of amending election system has been discussed actively (we have stated the issue of its timely examination already in 2013 in inter-fractional group) the issue was not reviewed in the format of the inter-fractional group in 2013 and was postponed for future. Regrettably, the inter-fractional group working on election issues managed to convene and have its first open discussion on the issue only in January 2014.

We, the NGOs are eager to have the election system that will solve the problems of applicable system and reflect voters' will in elections in a better way. Accordingly, in the course of elaborating the recommendations, we intend to offer to inter-fractional group such system for self-governance elections, which will respond the existing challenges.

We opine that it is possible to introduce important changes for developing election system if the government makes timely political decision and introduces amendments to the Election Code until the middle of February. However, implementation of key changes will be questioned if resolution of the issue is delayed since amendment of election system also requires wide-scale public awareness raising campaign, along with the necessity of trainings for the election administration employees and other technical-administrative issue.

In the course of selecting electoral system firstly we have determined the priorities that should be envisaged by the new election system. These are:

- Proportionality – proportional reflection of the votes in mandates;
- Minimal number of so called “lost votes”;
- Assistance to representatives of small parties and independent candidates;
- Representation of different groups of public (minorities) and gender equality;
- Increased trust of population to elections;
- Candidates’ oriented policy;
- Less probability of the second tour;
- Simplicity.

In view of the listed criteria we offer the inter-fractional group revision of the following election systems:

•For elections of local councils:

a)For proportional elections – Party List proportional representation system (List PR);
For majoritarian elections – in case of multi mandate districts vote in blocks, while in a single mandate district alternative vote;

b)The system of mixed membership

•For election of Gamgebeli (Mayor) – alternative vote system.

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For the election of Gamgebeli (Mayor) we support the 50% barrier, which is envisaged by the election system offered by us. We think that the barrier will reflect will of the majority of voters and will ensure high degree of legitimacy of the elected candidate.

We remain hopeful that the inter-fractional group will examine submitted recommendations timely and will be governed by the mentioned principles and the interests of Georgian citizens in the course of making decision on alteration of election system. This will be step forward on the way to state's democracy development.

The detailed information about the priorities of the election systems offered by organizations is available on the [following link](#).