

საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



NGOs' Statement on the Process of Selecting Candidates for the Board of Trustees of the Public Broadcaster of Georgia

On January 23, 2013 the Parliament of Georgia held the second stage of the voting process for selection of the candidates of GPB Board of Trustees. As a result, four candidates were selected on 9 vacant positions.

We would like to note that one of the key challenges of Georgia's democracy is to relieve the GPB of political influence. Therefore, manning the Board with professional, trustworthy and politically impartial candidates is the decisive stage of the process. Importance of the process is highlighted by the interest of public, media and NGOs to the issue, as well as statements of the diplomatic corps which welcomed the transparent activities of the competition commission and stressed the necessity of selecting board members among the nominated 27 candidates to the Parliament.

We, would like to state that the trustees' selection commission gained significant trust among the society, since activities were conducted in an open and transparent manner, with observance of legislative requirements. The quality of the work was reflected on the list (comprised of 27 individuals) submitted to the Parliament which offered great choice to the legislative branch and other competent entities.

Taking into account established public mistrust to democracy procedures in the period of different state authorities, not only the final outcome of the process, the Board staffed from 9 members is decisive, but also trustees' selection process. Unfortunately, after acquiring the trust by the Commission, the Parliament fell short to continue the process in a way, that to avoid questions about its political bias on GPB Board.

Regrettably, the statements of the ruling Coalition already in the first days of the functioning of the commission in terms of extension of the competition deadline and granting additional opportunity to other applicants, as well as the instances of withdrawing votes after minority MPs have nominated their candidates, the results of the second stage of voting where no attempt of a consensus was visible among the entities, illustrates ignorance of the meaning of amendments of the Law on Broadcasting, that should have ensured transparency and more pluralism of the public broadcaster on the basis of the consensus.

We urge the Parliament to ensure conduct of the new competition, if any; with the composition of the old commission with a view to reflect already gained public trust in the final version of the Board. Furthermore, we call on the Parliament to make the timely and effective decision in a manner that the new Board was able to ensure smooth functioning of the public broadcaster with a view to provide information to public on states political development and public process, including the upcoming

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local self-government elections, without restriction.

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association

Transparency International – Georgia

Non Governmental Organization "Cida"

Article 42 of the Constitution

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy

Human Rights and Training and Monitoring Center

Georgian Democracy Initiative

Media Development Foundation