

The Statement of the Media Advocacy Coalition about the Announced Competition for the Selection of the Public Defender for Protection of Customers' Rights under GNCC

"Media Advocacy Coalition believes that the competition for selection of the Public Defender for Protection of Customers' Rights under GNCC lacked transparency." As per the law on "National Regulation Bodies", the public defender shall be selected through the open competition. Nevertheless, the announced competition ended without publication of the competition commission or the list of the applicants. Information on the conducted competition is not available on the official website of the Parliament so far. Furthermore, interviewing process have also been conducted non-transparently.

Conduct of the selection process in this manner raises reasonable doubt in the Coalition about partiality of the competition. The result of the competition also reinforces the doubts, namely the senior specialist from the Field Economy and Economic Policy Committee of the Parliament was selected on the position, while the head of the competition commission was Mr.Zurab Tkhemaladze, the head of the same Committee.

Position of the public defender is of high public value and importance. Independent and impartial operation of the public defender is especially vital in the course of switchover from analogous to digital broadcasting. Regretfully, for the past several years, the position of the public defender under GNCC has been vacant. Accordingly, it

საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



is difficult to recall any important steps taken for protection of customers' rights.

In view of the selection process of the public defender and its result, the Coalition fears that the new public defender appointed as a result of nontransparent competition will fail to carry out her activities in an effective and impartial manner and will not be independent in her activities.

Media Advocacy Coalition calls on the Parliament to thoroughly study the process and outcomes of selecting Public Defender and to monitor activities of the public defender under GNCC.

Coalition member organizations:

- *The network of regional Televisions;*
- *Media club;*
- *The Charter of Journalistic Ethics of Georgian;*
- *Freedom of Information Development Institute;*
- *Open Society Georgia Foundation;*
- *Georgian Young Lawyers' Association;*
- *Civil Development Institute;*
- *NGO for Civil Society;*
- *Levan Mikeladze Foundation.*