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16 May 2017, Tbilisi, Georgia



საქართველოს პოლიტიკის ინსტიტუტი
GEORGIAN INSTITUTE OF POLITICS



ANNUAL REPORT

2017



Georgian Institute of Politics

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A Letter from Our Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The stories you'll read in this annual report are just a sample of our activities in 2017. The report highlights many notable achievements and represents milestones in the development of the Georgian Institute of Politics over the past year.

PROF. KORNELY KAKACHIA

Executive Director

The Georgian Institute of Politics has come a long way since its beginning in 2011. The organization has grown substantially in recent years, enabling us to take on new challenges, deepen and broaden our research, and expand our outreach to—and engagement with—new audiences and partnerships. During 2017, we have significantly expanded and deepened our activities. We launched two new programmes: "Georgia in European Politics" and "Georgia on the European Way: Creation of Effective Model for DCFTA and SME Strategy Implementation". Both of the programmes were successful and GIP plans to continue to work on similar projects in the future. GIP is proud to be member of the Horizon 2020 EU-LISTCO research consortium coordinated by Freie Universitaet (Free University) Berlin and is looking forward to close cooperation with our partners in the future.

In addition, while the external environment for the think tank community remains challenging, GIP has continued to build upon the sustainability and the financial strengths that have become hallmarks of the organization. We have also increased our media outreach: our events and reports were covered in over 80 articles published by Georgian and foreign language media, compared to 60 in 2016. Our team has grown and initiated a number of new projects. We have started producing the GIP monthly digest, which is delivered on a regular basis to over 900 subscribers in Georgia and abroad.

Our reputation for credible research has resulted in our sustained media presence. Beyond our own writing, GIP experts and their research were featured on the BBC, Deutsche Welle, Newsweek, Le Monde, Figaro, Voice of America, Eurasianet, and other global news outlets. GIP also doubled the number of events it held, and expanded our geographical reach to the regions.

As GIP begins its 8th year, we have been giving a lot of thought to how we are evolving and to strategies to maximize the positive impact of our work. It is in anticipation of the exciting times ahead that I offer my continued thanks to the GIP Board and Advisory Board for their ongoing guidance, to GIP staff and affiliated fellows for their innovative and inspiring work, and to GIP's donors and network of partners for supporting our mission.

As we move forward in 2018 and beyond, we also need resources to maintain our momentum and our preeminence in an increasingly competitive environment. With the ongoing support of our donors, partners, Board and volunteers, GIP is ready for the challenges and achievements ahead. We are looking forward to accomplishing much more in 2018!



Who We Are

Team:



PROF. KORNELY KAKACHIA
Executive Director



RENATA SKARDŽIŪTĖ - KERESELIDZE
Programs Manager



DR. BIDZINA LEBANIDZE
Senior Policy Analyst



LEVAN KAKHISHVILI
Policy Analyst



JOSEPH LARSEN
Policy Analyst



MARIAM GRIGALASHVILI
Policy Analyst



DR. NATIA DAGHELISHVILI
Project Officer



MARIAM AKHALKATSI
Communication Coordinator



GIORGIA PTSIAURI
Finance Manager



Who We Are

ADVISORY BOARD

Eiki Berg - University of Tartu, Estonia
Alexander Kupatadze - Kings College, London, UK
Nona Mikhelidze - Instituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Italy
Menalie Sully - Institute for Go-Governance, Austria
Licinia Simao - University of Coimbra, Portugal
Cory Welt - PONARS Eurasia, USA

BOARD

Ivane Chkhikvadze - Open Society Georgia Foundation
Levan Natroshvili - Transparency International Georgia
Giorgi Sordia - University of Georgia
Erekle Urushadze - Transparency International Georgia

INTERNS 2017

Mariam Apriashvili - University of Tartu
Givi Silagadze - Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University
David Rypel - Masaryk University, Czech Republic
Giorgi Davidian - International Black Sea University
Sandro Kharazashvili - Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University
Dachi Shanidze - Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

AFFILIATED ANALYSTS

Elene Panchulidze - PhD Candidate at Caucasus University (joined GIP staff as Policy Analyst in 2018)
Irakli Jgharkava - MA the College of Europe in Natolin
Mikheil Sarjveladze - PhD candidate at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Cologne

GIP is also thankful to the contribution of invited authors:

Shota Gelovani

Sergii Glebov

Mariam Tabatadze

Joseph Jorjoliani

Jelger Groeneveld

Lincoln Mitchell

Tatia Dolidze

Richard Giragosian

Teona Surmava

Silvia Stöber

David Cadier

Mikheil Peradze

Giorgi Vardishvili

Tornike Zurabashvili

Gvantsa Ichkiti

Giorgi Sanikidze

Marco Siddi

Tornike Tsiramua

Volodymyr Dubovik





HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



Highlights of the Year

In 2017 GIP successfully applied for the Horizon 2020 three-year research grant and became a member of the research consortium EU LISTCO (Europe's External Action and the Dual Challenges of Limited Statehood and Contested Orders). EU LISTCO consists of 14 partners from the EU and its neighborhood countries including Free University Berlin, Carnegie Europe, Instituto Affari Internazionali and Global Public Policy Institute. Together with its partners, GIP will conduct research on global and diffused threats and their impact on EU's external governance in its neighborhood countries as well as on general issues of limited statehood and contested orders in EU's neighborhood.

In the spring, GIP organized the annual international conference on democratization and Europeanization issues supported by National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The conference offered new perspectives on many issues regarding Georgia's European integration perspectives. Dirk Schuebel, Head of Division in the European External Action Service (EEAS), highlighted the importance of the post-Eastern Partnership perspective of EU-Georgia relations, an issue that GIP analysed in 2017 and which was discussed at the conference for the first time.

In March 2017, GIP issued the report "The First 100 Days of the Georgian Dream Government: A Reality Check". The report served an important role in helping to assess the government's performance and spark discussions about its accountability and transparency. The report also analysed the election programme of the ruling party in detail and explored to what extent the ruling party stuck to their election promises after being elected.

GIP, together with an international consortium of non-governmental organizations, conducted two surveys on civil society organizations (CSOs) and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in all regions of Georgia during the summer of 2017 in the framework of the project "Georgia on the European Way: Creation of an Effective Model for DCFTA and SME Strategy Implementation". The surveys analysed the opportunities offered by the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) and identified the main challenges for local Georgian small and medium enterprises and civil society organizations.

Throughout the year GIP has been actively involved in the activities of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions. GIP analysts participated in network workshops on conflict resolution and trust-building issues and presented papers at different European forums.

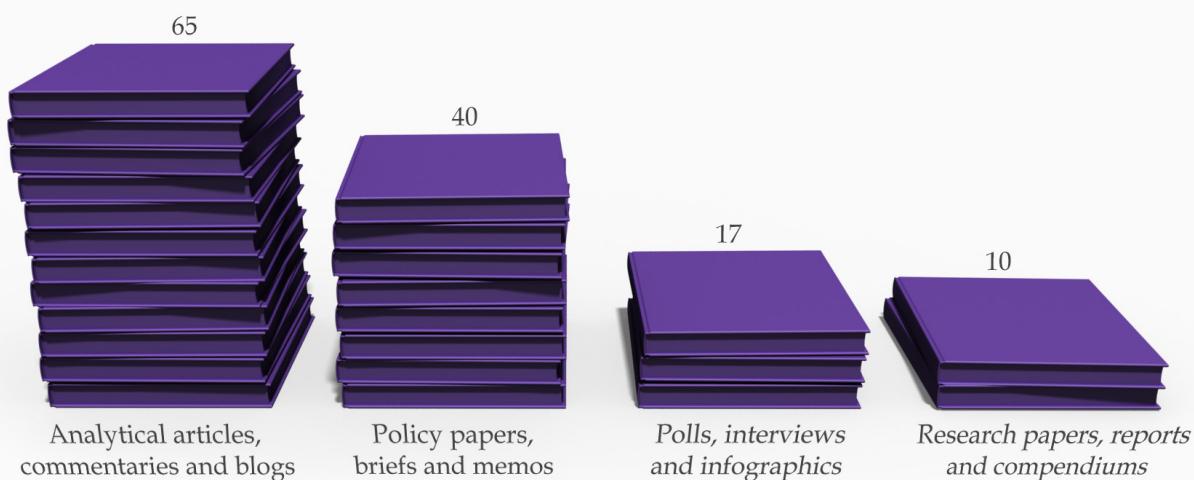


Publications

GIP is proud to have produced 132 publications throughout 2017, which were published in English (71) and Georgian (61) and related to a wide range of topics.

Our publications fall under four major categories of analytical articles, policy-oriented papers, polls and interviews, and research papers and reports (see Chart 1).

Chart 1: Number of Publications by GIP



In March 2017, GIP published a compendium of policy memos: "Religion and Soft Power in the South Caucasus: Policy Perspective". The compendium, edited by Ansgar Jödicke and Kornely Kakachia, contains nine contributions by thirteen established and emerging authors from the Caucasus and beyond. This comprehensive study is an important product for sparking discussion about the role of religion in domestic politics as well as the foreign affairs of South Caucasus countries. The publication was made possible with the financial support of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SCOPES-Program).



One of the major themes in GIP's research portfolio is democratization and Europeanization in Georgia. In May 2017, GIP published a "Compendium of Policy Briefs" containing five policy briefs, each including recommendations on key issues pertaining to Europeanization and democratization in Georgia: the priorities for Georgia's further integration into Euro-Atlantic structures; the development of stable political party platforms; relations between the state and the Georgian Orthodox Church; and the balance of power across branches of government. Financially supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), this publication is intended as a resource for government officials, civil society representatives, academics, analysts, journalists, concerned citizens, and all who are engaged with issues related to Georgia's democratic development.

One of GIP's strengths as a think tank is its ability to identify understudied topics or issues that are increasingly important for Georgia's progress. To this end, GIP analysts have published two policy-oriented papers: "Georgia-China Relations: the Geopolitics of the Belt and Road", and "Mitigating Russia's Borderization of Georgia: A Strategy to Contain and Engage". Both of these publications have sparked a high degree of interest among Georgian media outlets, the government and international stakeholders. Consequently, GIP aims to establish itself as the driver of policy discussions around these topics.

GIP has developed an effective platform for bringing various important issues to the forefront of public discussion. Nevertheless, our analysts understand that one organization, regardless of how successful it is, cannot be the exclusive forum for stimulating policy debates. As a result, five authors from GIP have produced 22 external publications including:

- 2 articles in academic peer-reviewed journals;
- 4 book chapters;
- 5 policy papers;
- 11 analytical articles.

Overall, GIP has had a fruitful and successful year in 2017 in terms of the publications produced; our authors have been engaged not only in policy studies and analysis but also in fundamental academic research, which has resulted in books and peer-reviewed journal articles.

GIP Events

In 2017 GIP hosted 12 events to encourage timely and stimulating debates on important policy issues. GIP staff also took part in a number of international, regional and national events during 2017. To engage with a wider audience and reach different target groups, GIP held roundtable discussions, presentations of research products, workshops, public lectures and its annual Democracy Conference. Some noteworthy GIP events in 2017 include:

- 1) International Conference “Georgia at the Nexus of Democratization and Europeanization: Prospects and Challenges”;
- 2) Policy Conference “Religion and Soft Power in the South Caucasus”;
- 3) GIP report’s presentation “The First 100 Days of the Georgian Dream Government: a Reality Check”;
- 4) Roundtable Discussion “Georgia in European Discourses: Trends and Challenges”;
- 5) Workshop “Association Agreement Monitoring Group: Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia”;
- 6) Presentation of policy brief “Mitigating Russia’s Borderization of Georgia: A Strategy to Contain and Engage”;
- 7) Presentation of policy brief “Georgia-China Relations: the Geopolitics of the Belt and Road”.

Distinguished speakers:

Dirk Schuebel

*Head of the Eastern Partnership Bilateral Division
of the European External Action Service.*

Charles Fairbanks

Professor of Soviet and post-Soviet systems at Ilia State University and a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.

Davit Usupashvili

Former Speaker of Parliament of Georgia from 2012 to 2016.

David Bakradze

Former Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia from 2008 to 2012.

Tamar Khulordava

Chairperson of the Committee on European Integration at the Parliament of Georgia.

Thornike Gordadze

Senior Advisor on Studies, Training and Research at the French Institute for Higher National Defence Studies. Former State Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Georgia.

H.E. Antonio Enrico Bartoli

Ambassador of the Republic of Italy to Georgia.

David Cadier

TAPIR Fellow at the Center for Transatlantic Relations, SAIS Johns Hopkins University (till November 2017), currently a researcher in EU foreign policy at CERI-Sciences Po.

Marco Siddi

Senior Research Fellow, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, European Union Research Programme.



#GeoDem2017

International Conference
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National Endowment
for Democracy

Supporting freedom

Dr.Lika Sajala

Dr. Giorgi Kakhashiani

Prof. Charles H.
Fairbanks

Laura Thornton

Tornike Zurabashvili

OVER
10 EVENTS
60 SPEAKERS
500 ATTENDEES



Education Programmes in 2017

GIP's education programmes seek to provide better access to knowledge for the young generation of Georgians. The programme highlights opportunities for non-formal learning and provides opportunities for young professionals to expand their expertise in policy issues through conferences, workshops, seminars and trainings conducted in partnership with European and American universities.

Educational activities in 2017 included:

Training for local journalists and editors

Topic: Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration issues

Participants: local journalists and editors from Georgia's regions

Period: November - December 2017

Location: Tbilisi and Batumi

Partners: Atlantic Council - Georgia, NATO Liaison Office in Georgia

Supported by: the US Embassy in Georgia

Workshop for Association Agreement monitoring groups: Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia

Topic: Monitoring the implementation of select reform commitments under Association Agreements, including sharing good experience and training in writing policy briefs and written communication
Participants: civil society representatives from Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, members of Association Agreement Monitoring Groups established by Open Society Foundations

Period: 27-28 November 2017

Location: Odessa, Ukraine

Supported by: Open Society Foundations, Eurasia Program

Black Sea Summer University

Topic: EU and the Black Sea region: New realities and a changing geopolitical context

Participants: Students from Black Sea region

Period: 20-26 July 2017

Location: Tbilisi

Partners: CIFE, Nice University, France

Co-funding: Open Society Georgia Foundation

Public lectures – “Reviewing Europeanization – State of the Art”

Topic: EU institutions, policies, and theories of integration

Participants: TSU students

Period: 20-22 June 2017

Location: Tbilisi

Speaker: Prof. Dr. Andrea Gawrich

Briefings for study groups and international delegations

GIP hosted international delegations, journalists, students groups and researchers, and briefed them on the political situation in Georgia.

Topics included: Georgia's internal policy issues, the state of reforms, Euro-Atlantic integration process, elections and ad-hoc issues.

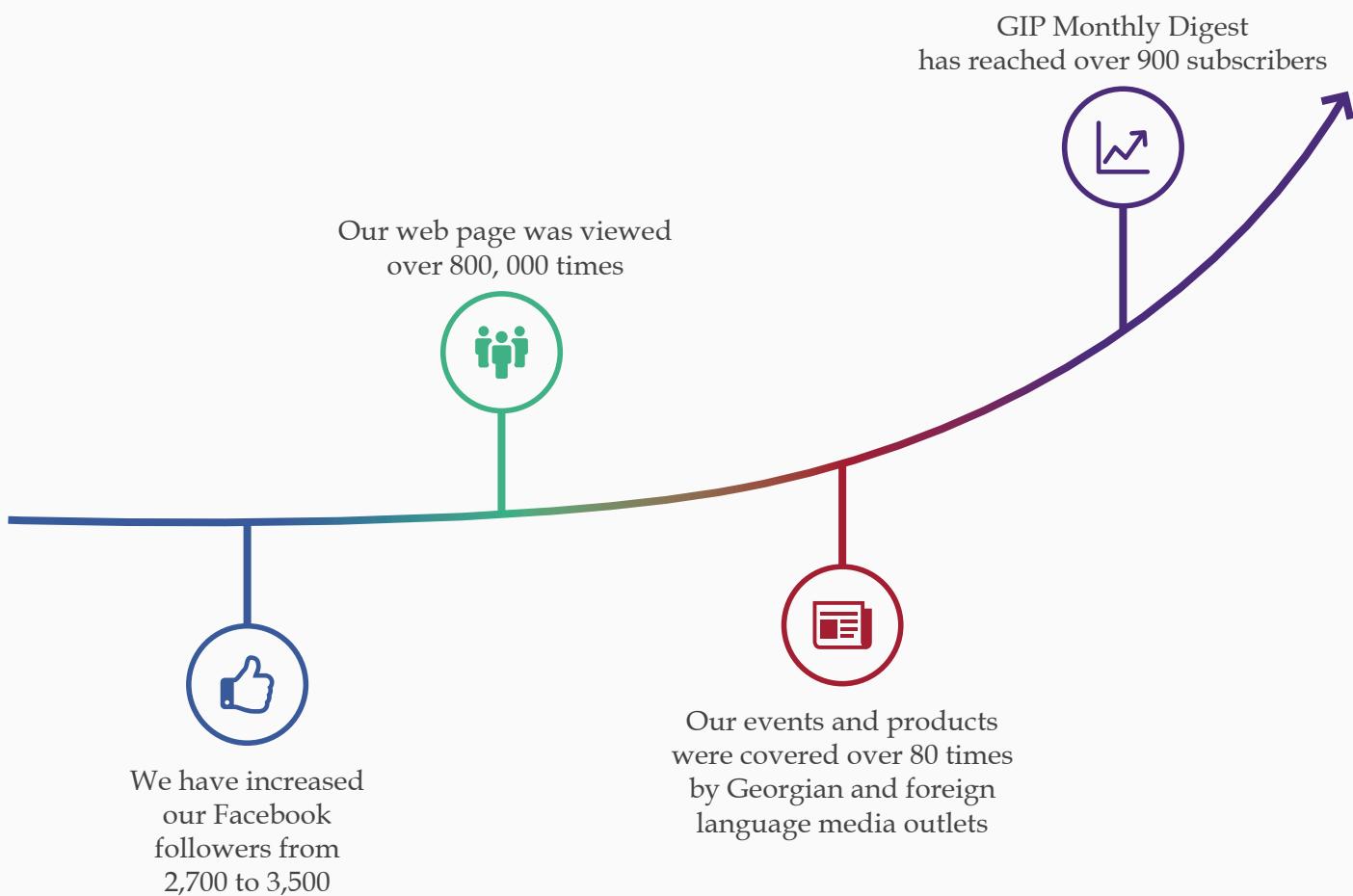


Visibility in Figures

In 2017 GIP increased visibility among our target audience and strengthened communication with national and international media. The GIP website, www.gip.ge, is the main online platform for publishing all our products and events, which are also promoted on GIP's social media platforms on Facebook and Twitter. A growing number of subscribers are receiving our GIP Monthly Digest, which includes highlights of each month's activities and previews of upcoming events.

GIP prepares press releases for journalists and invites them to events to ensure media coverage of our activities and publications. Local and international media outlets regularly ask our policy analysts to comment on ongoing topics. GIP has established cooperation with three Georgian-based media outlets, **Georgia Today**, **Netgazeti** and **Liberali**, to publish some GIP products (blogs, commentaries, policy briefs and expert polls) with priority rights.

In 2017:



Projects Implemented in 2017

“Implementation of Select Reform Commitments Under Association Agreements (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine)”

Keywords: Association Agreement, Eastern Partnership, EU Advocacy, Civil Society

Partners: Open Society Georgia Foundation, Renaissance Foundation, Soros Foundation Moldova

Donor: Open Society Foundations, Eurasia Program

Budget: 24,925 USD

Duration: September 2016 – December 2017

“Parliamentary Monitoring”

Keywords: Political parties, checks and balances, expert polls, democratization

Donor: National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

Budget: 66,626 USD

Duration: October 2016 – September 2017

“Georgia in European Politics”

Keywords: Europeanization, European Perception of Georgia, Black Sea Summer University

Donor: Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF)

Budget: 22,615 USD

Duration: November 2016 – October 2017



Projects Implemented in 2017

“Georgia on European Way: Creation of Effective Model for DCFTA and SME Strategy Implementation”

Keywords: DCFTA, civil society, small and medium enterprises, capacity building, communication campaign.

Partners: Eastern Europe Studies Centre (EESC, lead partner), Association of Business Consulting Organizations (ABCO Georgia), GLOBSEC (Slovakia), Association Caucasus Genetics (Georgia), ATINATI (Georgia) and Young Scientists Union “Intellect” (Georgia).

Donor: European Neighbourhood Instrument of the European Union

Budget: 500,000 EUR
(GIP budget – 70,250 EUR)

Duration: April 2017 – March 2019

“Empowering Regional Journalists for Fact-Based Reporting on Euro-Atlantic Integration”

Keywords: Informed media reporting, Local media, Euro-Atlantic integration.

Partners: Atlantic Council of Georgia

Donor: US Embassy

Budget: 23,400 USD

Duration: September 2017 – July 2018



Plans for 2018

In the coming year, GIP will continue working on the themes that have become our priorities: Georgia's democratization, the consolidation of political institutions and the separation of powers, as well as the role of different internal and external actors. Recognizing the importance of external pressure on Georgia's democratization process, we will continue analyzing the Europeanization process and offering our policy recommendations.

Starting from March 2018, we will have the opportunity to take part in the Horizon 2020 project led by Berlin Free University (Freie Universitaet). Within this project, GIP will contribute to the academic debate on the European level and, at the same time, strengthen its own capacity to deliver research products that are relevant beyond Georgia's borders.

Based on our own experience over the past several years, one of the biggest challenges to engage deeper with our European counterparts is the persistent perception of Georgia as a case study, rather than a partner that could actually contribute to strengthening European integration. For Georgian think tanks, including GIP, this represents a challenge as well as an opportunity to expand our networks, strengthen internal capacities and build trust in the European capitals that are strategically important for Georgia's integration to Europe.

In this regard, in 2018 GIP will work to strengthen cooperation with European think tanks. Through the support of the Open Society Foundations, GIP will expand its working networks with partners in Germany and France, positioning itself to link domestic Europeanization efforts with political developments in Europe.





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