

GEODEM 2023: WOMEN IN POLICY-MAKING: The Achilles Heel of Georgian Democracy



Agenda

May 24, 2023

Venue: Radisson Blu Iveria

9:30 – 10:00	REGISTRATION, COFFEE BREAK
10:00 – 10:15	Opening Remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Renata Skardziute-Kereselidze, Deputy Director, Georgian Institute of Politics○ H.E. Heidi Grau, Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation in Georgia
10:15 – 11:45	Panel 1: Women Voters in Georgia and Representation of Their Needs in Georgian Party Agendas <p>Moderator: Dr. Iago Kachkachishvili, Tbilisi State University</p> <p>As the 2024 Parliamentary elections approach, the strategies of Georgian political parties are gaining momentum. It will be interesting to observe how Georgian parties plan to achieve electoral success and the issues they prioritize. Despite the fact that more than a year is left before the upcoming elections, it is crucial for both ruling and opposition parties to begin addressing the needs of all electoral segments in their programs.</p> <p>According to the official statistics of CEC, women voters compose more than 52% of the overall Georgian electorate. As a result, it is an anomaly in Georgian party competition that parties often avoid addressing women's issues. This panel aims to explore whether Georgian political parties sufficiently address the demands of the female electorate by answering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What do women voters expect from the Georgian political parties?</i>• <i>Why do parties need to understand and react to the women voters' needs?</i>• <i>How well do Georgian parties address the female voters' demands in their political agendas?</i>• <i>How can the international actors and international experience help the parties in terms of working with the female electorate?</i> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teona Kupunia, Deputy Director, National Democratic Institute, NDI• Tamar Sabedashvili, Deputy Country Representative, UNWomen Georgia• Nino Dolidze, Executive Director, International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)• Tamta Mikeladze, Director, Social Justice Center (SJC)
11:45 - 12:00	COFFEE BREAK
12:00 – 13:30	Panel 2: Women Politicians and Intraparty Democracy <p>Moderator: Dr. David Aprasidze, Ilia State University</p> <p>Adequately addressing the needs of the female electorate in party programs and strategies requires the decisive role of women politicians. Their active involvement in campaigning and shaping their parties' vision is of utmost importance. Following the representative model, women politicians can better understand the problems faced by female voters and advocate for solutions within their party agendas. The introduction of gender quotas has increased the number of women MPs in the Georgian</p>

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Parliament. However, it is important to explore how women politicians are represented within their parties and the extent to which they can influence the party agenda. As such, the second panel discusses the role of Georgian women politicians in creating party platforms and examines the challenges to intraparty democracy in this context. This panel addresses the following questions:

- *How does the organizational structure and intraparty democracy work in terms of empowering the women politicians?*
- *How relevant is the situation in the Georgian parties to adopt the women members' visions in the party agendas?*
- *How can political parties increase the actual involvement and efficiency of their female members in the party strategy?*

Speakers:

- **Salome Kandelaki**, Policy Analyst, Georgian Institute of Politics (GIP)
- **Khatia Dekanoidze**, Member of Parliament, Independent MP
- **Ana Natsvlshvili**, Member of Parliament, Lelo for Georgia
- **Ana Buchukuri**, Member of Parliament, Gakharia for Georgia party

13:30 –
14:30

LUNCH

14:30 –
16:00

Panel 3: Women's Political Engagement and Increased Participation

Moderator: **Levan Tsutskiridze**, Executive Director, Eastern European Centre for Multiparty Democracy (EECMD)

Based on the CEC data, female voter turnout is higher than that of male voters, suggesting that this segment of the electorate may require more instruments and accessibility to voice their specific needs and visions, especially in the regions and ethnic minorities. However, the Georgian political environment lacks such mechanisms. Political parties often struggle to engage with female supporters, particularly in the regions, and the reasons behind this should be a subject of thorough discussion. This panel focuses on the following questions:

- *What are the attitudes of women voters in Georgia?*
- *What steps should the parties take to ensure more active engagement with the women supporters?*
- *Except for the political parties, how can civil society empower women's narratives and their political engagement?*
- *What are the international experiences to motivate female voters and what can the Georgian parties and CSO share in that regard?*

Speakers:

- **Mariam Kobaladze**, Researcher, Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRG Georgia)
- **Dr. Sonja Schiffers**, Director, Heinrich Böll Foundation South Caucasus Regional Office
- **Tamar Bagratia**, Gender Expert
- **Elene Rusetskaia**, Director, Women's Information Center (WIC)

16:00

CLOSING REMARKS