



## **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Mission to Georgia**

**Project title: Support for Domestic Election Observation and Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) in the Georgian Presidential elections 2004**

**Implementing partner: National Democratic Institute (NDI)**

NDI using services of the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (hereinafter referred to as Fair Elections) will undertake to implement project activities directed at observing Presidential Elections in Georgia and to perform parallel voter tabulation during the mentioned elections.

### **Project Purpose/Objective(s):**

Fair Elections is a non-governmental, non-partisan organization that works to:

- Promote democratic political processes in Georgia;
- Involve citizens in public life and governance and increase civic education;
- Strengthen civil society;
- Establish a system of civic control over government activities;
- Ensure fairness and objectivity in elections and referenda and monitor these processes and their administration;
- Develop and lobby policy recommendations that promote democratic legislation; and
- Monitor the publicity and transparency of governmental structures and the activities of self-governing bodies.

Fair Elections' objectives for the January 4<sup>th</sup> presidential elections are to:

- Ensure transparency of the 2004 election preparation and raise public awareness of existing problems in order to promote solutions;
- Observe polling and counting procedures in order to prevent fraud and ensure transparency of the process;
- Observe consolidation of election results in order to prevent alteration of precinct data at the district and central levels;
- Conduct parallel turnout and parallel vote tabulations in order to increase public confidence in election results.

### **Background:**

Georgia will hold presidential elections on January 4<sup>th</sup> of 2004. The transparency and fairness of the presidential elections are vital for the stability and continuing democratic development of the Georgian state. The developments that followed the November 2<sup>nd</sup> elections clearly demonstrated that the will of Georgian public is to

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have free and fair elections, and that they will not tolerate a fraudulently elected government.

For the November 2<sup>nd</sup> parliamentary elections, Fair Elections deployed observers to more than 2 300 polling stations throughout Georgia. The organization conducted parallel turnout and parallel vote tabulations, and released their prediction of the election results on November 3<sup>rd</sup> with a confidence level of 99%. Fair Elections' observers gathered PEC and DEC protocols from all observed polling stations and district election commissions, and scrutinized this data together with the forms filled out by the observers. The organization filed over 400 appeals to the election commissions and courts at different levels.

For January 4<sup>th</sup> presidential elections Fair Elections will carry out a comprehensive election program to preserve the integrity of these elections and increase the people's confidence in their outcomes.

Fair Elections' volunteers will monitor pre-election developments including the formation of the election commissions at all levels, and their adherence to legislated deadlines and procedures. The central office will process the monitoring data received from its district offices, analyze it, and distribute it to the public via the mass media and by posting the information on its web site.

On election day, Fair Elections' trained observers will conduct a full-scale monitoring of polling and counting procedures throughout the country. Parallel turnout and parallel vote tabulations will be conducted in a specially selected sample of polling stations in order to help deter and detect fraud in consolidation of election results, and provide the public with early data on the outcome of the elections. On election day Fair Elections will maintain communication with the general public via the mass media.

Following election day, Fair Elections will release a statement assessing the quality of the elections in the country. The statement will be written in Georgian, Russian and English, and distributed to the government, political parties, Georgian and international NGOs, other interest groups and the general public. Upon the conclusion of a nationwide data analysis, Fair Elections will develop an election report outlining the major aspects of the 2004 elections, including an assessment of the pre-election developments and recommendations for future improvement of the election process in Georgia.

The purpose of the project is to promote democratic development in Georgia through free and fair elections that will ensure the legitimacy of Georgia's new government and increase public confidence in its government. This is in direct support of the OSCE's objectives to build confidence and security measures in the region, to protect the fairness of the elections, and to promote democratization of the country.

OSCE involvement in the project would be important in terms of its lending multilateral support for the work of the domestic observer organization, and also in the results that will be achieved within the framework of the project.



Election observation is of great importance to Georgia's developing democracy. Considering the protests that followed the November 2<sup>nd</sup> elections, and the attempts of the government to defraud the public, it is vital that the January 4<sup>th</sup> elections achieve public credibility. The assessment of this domestic observer organization will play an important role in shaping public perception of the elections.

In its activities, Fair Elections will communicate closely with other Georgian and international NGOs involved in election work as well as with the new government of Georgia. It is in the interests of the new government to hold democratic elections that can meet expectations of the Georgian public and the international community.

### **Approach:**

#### Volunteer Mobilization

Fair Elections will mobilize its regional volunteer network to implement election activities. The organization will aim at covering the vast majority of the polling stations in each of the regions of Georgia. Many of the January 4<sup>th</sup> observers will be the same as those who observed the November 2<sup>nd</sup> elections and provided comprehensive data on the conduct of elections in their districts. Fair Elections will also work on recruiting new volunteers to assist with the election program implementation. Volunteer recruitment will be based on direct communication with the public via a presentation of the monitoring plans to the citizens of Georgia, and encouraging them to participate in it by way of a media campaign and the distribution of key printed materials.

#### Volunteer Training

Volunteers will be involved in pre-election and election day monitoring. Due to the limited amount of time before the presidential elections, instead of organizing a training for district coordinators and volunteers on pre-election monitoring, the central office will distribute written instructions on how to monitor the pre-election period – what to focus on during the monitoring, how to obtain the required information, and when and how to report to the central office.

No later than two weeks before the elections, the district coordinators will be trained on election day observation. Although the vast majority of the district coordinators have experience in election monitoring and administration of monitoring efforts at the district level, it is still important that the leadership brief them on the specifics of the presidential elections and discuss the specifics of the January 4<sup>th</sup> monitoring. Following this training the district coordinators will conduct field trainings of the same kind for their observers in the districts.

PTT/PVT observers will undergo special training. Unlike the November elections, for the January elections the PVT training will be centralized in order to improve the quality of the PVT reporting. It is important that PVT observers have answers to all the questions that may arise during their work on election day and that they report accurately to the PVT center during and after the polling. Therefore, the same team from the central office will train all PVT observers within a time period of one week (from five to seven days – two trainings in a day) in different locations.

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Phone and data entry operators will also be trained by the central office on the recording and processing of the PTT/PVT data on election day.

### Pre-Election Monitoring

Fair Elections will monitor the pre-election developments and publicize their findings on a weekly basis through media briefings and by posting the information on its web site. In particular the organization will observe the work of election commissions at all levels, the extent to which they adhere to the legal regulations and deadlines. Fair Elections will also examine whether the new Central Election Commission and the lower level commissions are addressing the problems observed during the November 2<sup>nd</sup> elections, and raise public awareness of this issue.

### Election Day Monitoring

On January 4<sup>th</sup> Fair Elections will observe polling stations, district election commissions and the Central Election Commission. Mobile groups will collect up-to-the-minute information in the districts and assist the polling station observers in emergency situations. Observers will be required to report incidents as soon as they occur to the central office and they will file appeals with the election commissions. The PTT/PVT observers will carry out the parallel turnout and parallel vote tabulations. The turnout figures will be distributed to the public via the mass media every three hours during the election day. PVT results will be released the day after the elections at the organization's press conference to release its preliminary statement on the elections.

### Publicity

Fair Elections will disseminate the information regarding the conduct of polling and counting procedures on election day via mass media and by posting this information on its web site in both Georgian and English. On January 5<sup>th</sup> the press conference will be held to make the preliminary statement assessing the quality of the election conduct. Within three weeks from the elections the organization will develop a final election report covering pre-election, election day and result consolidation process.

Fair Elections is one of the major civil society groups in Georgia that played an important role in preventing as well as detecting fraud during the November parliamentary elections.

The new government of Georgia has expressed its commitment to ensure the free and fair conduct of the presidential elections in January. The parliament has approved the new chair of the Central Election Commission and has started an intensive discussion on addressing the major problems revealed during the November elections.

Fair Elections has been involved in civic work in Georgia since 1995, when the organization was established. The organization has worked with various donors and continues active work to further diversify its funding.

Among Fair Elections' volunteers and staff are people of different genders, and different age and ethnic groups. Fair Elections' nationwide network unites young activists, pensioners, middle-age people, Georgians, Azeris, Armenians and Russians.

### **Assumptions and Risks:**

Fair Elections carried out a similar project for the 2003 November elections. The organization released a parallel turnout updates several times during the election day. On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, the day after the elections, Fair Elections publicized its PVT results as well as a preliminary statement on the conduct of the elections. Fair Elections has observed all national and local elections since its formation in 1995, and has thus gained a substantial experience in the field. However, difficult weather conditions and the holiday season will create technical problems in Fair Elections' election observation. In particular, this will make it more difficult to cover a large number of the polling stations throughout the country, especially in mountainous areas and it will increase transport costs associated with the observer deployment and paper movement on election night.

### **Operation plan/Time table:**

#### *December*

- Volunteer database updated
- Volunteer recruitment continued
- Georgians abroad contacted to observe with Fair Elections
- Volunteer database analyzed and problematic areas identified
  
- Activity action plans, instruction notes and reporting forms developed
- Campaign network and infrastructure finalized
- District coordinators trained
- Pre-election monitoring in progress (monitoring compositions of election commissions, their work, adherence to election timeframes and pre-election campaigns)
  
- Fair Elections' web site updated
- Media campaign in progress
- Press clipping
- Final report outline worked out
- Negotiations with media on Election Day communication
- Preparation for Election Day press conference
  
- Observer package developed and distributed
- Observer trainings in districts
- Deployment plan outline developed
- Mobile groups defined
  
- PVT sample designed
- PVT software developed
- Computer equipment procured

- PVT center established
- PVT observers trained
- PVT operators trained

#### *January*

- Election day observation
- Priority and standard reporting
- Press conference
- Share information (ISFED statement) with all district offices
- Preparation for repeated elections
- Complaint procedures
- Work on final report
- Dissemination of final report (media, Georgian and international NGOs, parties, government, district offices)
- Campaign/financial report for donors

#### *February*

- Complaint procedures
- Dissemination of election campaign documentation to district coordinators
- Campaign assessment seminar
- “Lessons Learned” document developed and distributed

The implementing partner bears the responsibilities for the implementation of the project.

#### ***Staffing requirements***

The following campaign structure will apply to the January 4<sup>th</sup> election program:

**Central Office:** The Central Office will be composed of the Executive Director; the Field Director; the PR Director; the Legal Advisor; the Financial Director; campaign assistants and technical staff.

**Regional Offices:** Three regional offices – Tbilisi office, western Georgia office, and eastern Georgia office (two of them located in Tbilisi) will administer the election observation in the respective regions. The western Georgia office will have two assistants.

**District Offices:** District offices will be set up to coordinate Fair Elections’ election activities at the district level. In particular, district office coordinators will be in charge of recruiting volunteer observers, training them on election observation and managing the election day observation in the district.

**Monitoring and reporting procedures:**

Fair Elections will submit program and financial report to the OSCE upon the completion of the project implementation.

**Legal context:**

The Unified Election Code of Georgia guarantees the right of a domestic observer organization to conduct monitoring of the entire election process by attending the sessions of election commissions at all levels, requesting public information and observing the polling and counting procedures. The domestic organization is also authorized to make appeals to elections commissions and courts on the violation of election procedures, and to carry out parallel tabulation of the votes.

**Budget:**

*Attached*

