**Information about Georgia**

**Communication from the Public Defender’s Office (PDO) of Georgia**

*The following information is prepared for purposes of paragraph 6 of the Human Rights Council resolution 45/7 on Local Government and Human Rights*

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| Information about laws, policies and programs that have been developed by local authorities explicitly to promote and protect human rights, including those related to the right to equality and non-discrimination and the protection of persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations. |
| **Institutional Characteristics**.According to the Law “On Gender Equality”, municipal representative and executive bodies shall develop and carry out activities to ensure detection and elimination of discrimination locally:   * Gender Equality Councils are established at the local assemblies (Sakrebulo). Those councils strive to ensure systemic work on gender-related issues within the municipality and are in coordinated collaboration with the national level Council on Gender Equality (established by the Parliament of Georgia); * A municipality mayor designates a public servant responsible for the gender-related issues (so-called gender advisors) in an appropriate City Hall. An advisor schedules activities and has coordination functions.   Georgian election law has some temporary rules for submitting party lists for the municipal assemblies (Sakreulo) elections of Georgia to be held until 2028. Those rules introduce the so-called gender quotas. In more detail, the law states, that at least one person in every three on the party list must be of the opposite sex. This provision was examined by the Constitutional Court of Georgia and it declared unconstitutional the reading of the norm that at least one person in each of the three on party lists must be a man.  **Programs.** Local Self-Governments adopt social and healthcare programs that support persons with disabilities, large families, people with scarce economic conditions, other vulnerable groups.  **Support from the PDO**. The PDO conducts meetings regularly with the representatives of the local self-government agencies on equality issues. To achieve more sustainable results, currently, PDO plans to create for them an electronic course on anti-discrimination. In addition, based on municipalities’ applications, PDO consults them on drafting their programs in a non-discriminatory manner. |
| Information about challenges faced by local authorities and promising practices, to promote and protect human rights, including in relation to the right to equality and non-discrimination and the protection of persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations. |
| In 2021 PDO issued the [special report](https://www.ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2021050515544521055.pdf) that examines the compliance of social and health care programs of local self-governments with the principle of equality. The report outlines good practices, as well as challenges at local levels:   * The research revealed that some social and healthcare programs contain discriminatory criteria and are flawed. Examples could be the practice of using discriminatory incentive criteria and terms; the existence of discriminatory criteria on the grounds of sex, age; unequal regulations on marriage status/registration requirements; the practice of unjustified registration/duration of residence in the municipality, which may have a discriminatory effect on beneficiaries; the place of birth as a prerequisite for receiving social and health benefits; the problems related to the detailed nature of the programs; gaps in programs tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities; * PDO positively evaluated some aspects of municipal programs, such as the program on support for victims of violence and newcomers from penitentiary institutions, left without the support of the family, individuals who recently left the state care system.   PDO in its latest special report [“On the Situation of Equality and Combating and Preventing Discrimination”](https://www.ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2022022413261538101.pdf) indicated additional recommendations for specific municipalities. Those recommendations focus on ensuring equality on ethnic and linguistic grounds and concerns:   * providing a translation of information posted on the websites and social media pages of the municipalities into the native languages of non-dominant ethnic groups living in their territories; * providing a translation of normative acts of public interest (including municipal social and health care programs) into the native languages of non-dominant ethnic groups living in their territories in a timely manner.   The institutional challenge at the local level is that, in most cases, gender advisors have formally designated functions. |
| Information about key principles that should guide local and national governments in the promotion and protection of human rights. |
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In general, through its parliamentary and special reports, as well as by other communications, PDO recommends the government and local level bodies to develop any laws, programs, and policies in a non-discriminatory manner and in compliance with human rights standards.