



TBILISI SCHOOL OF POLITICAL STUDIES

A FEW WORDS
from the Director

Armaz Akhvlediani



Georgia has a historic opportunity to create a new, democratic state. This is in our society's own hands. By the grace of God, with the support of our friends and neighbours, and through active initiatives by civil society, we shall be able to make Georgia a credible partner of the European Community.

The school and all concerned should be ready to **take on a share of the responsibility and contribute to the country's welfare and prosperity** by subscribing to democratic values, by acquiring as much knowledge as possible, and through basic decency and hard work.

I hope that the school will manage to get the citizens of the next generation to work together for a better future for Georgia and the whole of the Caucasus.

School team

Armaz Akhvlediani
Director

George Oniani
Deputy Director

George Gogashvili
Military Expert, Project Manager

Mariam Ioseliani
Administrative Assistant



MISSIONS *and objectives*

The Tbilisi School of Political Studies (TSPS) was established in August 1999 as a non-governmental organisation, with the aim of promoting the democratic process and the formation of civil society, contributing to the formation of a new, high-level political elite and fostering the development of political culture in society, **both in Georgia and in the Caucasus as a whole.**



SELECTION *process*



The selection process is supervised by a selection board **chaired by the school's Director and comprising several experts, as well as members of the Advisory Board and alumni association.** There is an even number of board members, with the Director casting the deciding vote where necessary. A simple majority is required for decisions.

There is no specific date on which the application process begins. The school constantly receives CVs and applications, which are forwarded to Selection Board members for them to assess each applicant's initial suitability in the light of the school's aims. The first meeting of the board takes place three months before the date of the seminar concerned. On this occasion, the members present a short list of candidates, and this is whittled down in the light of the board's recommendations (30%), the candidate's CV (40%) and his/her letter of motivation (30%). **At this stage, the number of applicants cannot exceed three times the number of places available.** The board subsequently interviews each applicant individually about a month before the seminar, before taking its final decision.



ACTIVITIES *and events*

Two major projects are under way at the school:

1. "GEORGIA – COUNCIL OF EUROPE – DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL SOCIETY", a joint programme of the CoE/EC from October to early June; two or three seminars are held in Georgia, as well as a closing seminar in Strasbourg and a major European city with a leading university. The project was first launched in October 2000.

2. "CIVIL SOCIETY AND HUMAN RIGHTS", a SIDA/SIIA programme from mid-spring to mid-autumn eighteen months later; five seminars have taken place in Georgia and a closing seminar in Stockholm. This project was first launched in April 2004.

In co-operation with the Fribourg Institute of Federalism and the Swiss Development and Co-operation Agency, **the TSPS is planning to launch a project entitled "Federalism – Solution to Secessionism?"**. This will provide vocational training for state officials involved in conflict resolution activities, as well as special training for relevant NGO and media representatives.

Vocational training is to be provided for Georgian media representatives. Masterclasses will be given by leading journalists from Deutsche Welle, Radio Liberty, the BBC, etc.

In co-operation with NATO, there are plans to conduct political training for civilian staff of Georgia's Ministry of Defence.

Special thematic seminars are occasionally organised for the school's alumni, mainly highlighting issues of vital importance to the country's development. In the summer of 2005, a series of seminars covered the problem of corruption. This summer, we plan to discuss conflict resolution and economic development issues

EVALUATION

After each seminar, participants (experts and listeners alike) fill in special questionnaires, in question and answer format, indicating their impressions. Their replies are analysed and at the following seminar reference is made to any corrective action taken in the light of the remarks received. Moreover, on the school's website (currently under development), there is a special link enabling visitors to give their views on the work done by the school. **We also request our donors and partners to give us their assessment of our work.**



FUNDING

The main donors and supporters of the school's activities have been the Council of Europe, the European Commission, NATO, the US State Department, the Government of Italy, the Swedish International Development Agency, the Open Society Foundation and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Our academic partners are the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, the Fribourg Institute of Federalism, the Swedish Institute of Public Administration, Luiss University (Rome), Istituto Affari Internazionali (Rome), Florence University, University of Trieste, Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) and Uppsala University.

ALUMNI

The TSPS has been in existence for over 5 years, so has had time to work out its own unique formula for interaction between participants and experts. This enables it to bring together people from different backgrounds and of differing political affiliations to discuss issues of vital importance to society. While these discussions are academic and can give rise to arguments, the framework is one of mutual respect. The TSPS has succeeded in instilling in participants a culture of dialogue. The link between school and participants does not end on completion of the course.

TSPS alumni are regularly invited guests at seminars and other events organised by the school. Alumni have become one big family, thanks to the school's efforts to keep them actively involved and to encourage them to adhere to its values throughout their lives, and especially as their careers progress. The statistics are indeed remarkable, with the majority of our participants having made significant professional progress. Whether this is a direct effect of the school's training programme or the result of a sophisticated selection process is of little consequence. The fact is that people in high places in the government and business sectors retain links with the school and share its values. Among our alumni are Sozar Subari, Ombudsman of Georgia, George Janashia, First Deputy Prosecutor of Georgia, Zurab Tchiaberashvili, Permanent Representative of Georgia to the Council of Europe (former Mayor of Tbilisi), Nikoloz Natbiladze, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, and George Oniani, Foreign Relations Assistant to the Prime Minister, as well as about a dozen Members of Parliament, governors of several regions of Georgia, more than a dozen judges (including those of the Supreme Court) and journalists.

The alumni association was created in 2005. **While structurally a separate organisation, it also helps the school in the participant selection process.** The association brings together hundreds of graduates of the school who, having got to know each other at seminars organised by the school, are united by the same ideals. In fact, this is one way in which the school's main objective is fulfilled, for the people concerned are willing to unite behind such noble ideas as the building and promotion of a democratic civil society in their homeland.



Advisory Board Members

Sozar Subari

Georgia's "Public Defender"
(Ombudsman)

Zurab Tchiaberashvili

Permanent Representative of Georgia
to the Council of Europe

Ramaz Kukuladze

Vice-President, Bank of Georgia

Irakli Kilauridze

CEO of the Georgian Reconstruction
and Development Company

Mikheil Sarjveladze

Chairman of the alumni Association

Natia Tskepladze

Member of Georgia's Supreme Court

Efim Schuhmann

Journalist, Radio Deutsche Welle



SCHOOL
contacts

Tbilisi School of Political Studies

0102, Tbilisi, Georgia p/b No7

Tel/Fax + 995 32 922862

e-mail: tsps@tsps.ge